

Only Fooling Myself

The Patrick Catanach Story

(Discipleship Lesson 31)

Read the entire lesson and then answer the questions that follow.

Someone once said that in order to get an old mule's attention, you sometimes have to smack him upside the head with a two-by-four. The razor wire that surrounds this place, the steel bars on the windows, and the green uniform I wear are God's two-by-fours for me.

Thirty or so years ago, I got caught up in the "Jesus movement." I accepted Jesus into my life, and that started the religious roller coaster ride. I attended some Bible studies and would stop off for a cold drink on the way home. I would read the Bible at home then smoke a joint. On my way home from work, I would go to a topless bar, drink, smoke, and lust after the dancers. I might have accepted Jesus, but I was unwilling to give up my vices. When things didn't go in my favor, and when my marriage started to fall apart, I would get angry at God: "I go to church, I read the Bible. Why don't you help me!" I realize now that in those days, I knew about Jesus but didn't know Jesus.

I started smoking weed in 1966 when I was in Vietnam. I ended up smoking every day for the next thirty-five years. I smoked so I could do my job, to ease the guilt of my infidelity, and to cope with life. In the 1980s, I got involved with a church but didn't stop my drug use or promiscuity. I would show up some mornings stoned. I started doing cocaine more often, along with hash, mushrooms, and alcohol. I had also become obsessed with pornography and spent a lot of time frequenting adult bookstores. There were a few times when my activities almost got me killed or arrested. It was at those times that I would make a deal with God: "Get me out of this, and I'll never do it again." In a short time, I would be back to my old habits.

In 2001, while under the influence, I made a bad decision that led to my present situation. While I was in jail I signed up for every program just to get out of the cell. One of the programs happened to be a Bible study. After a few weeks, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and I rededicated my life to God. I asked for forgiveness for hurting so many people in my life, especially my wife. I promised Father God that I would serve Him no matter what my situation might be. A feeling of love and contentment came over me, and I knew God would protect me no matter what. I was told I was a good candidate for probation or community corrections, and if I did do time, it would be five to eight years. When I returned to my cell an hour after being sentenced to sixteen years, I was on my knees thanking my heavenly Father for the opportunity to serve Him because I knew it was all part of His plan for me.

Now, a couple of years into my sentence, my relationship with the Father grows stronger every day. I used to be imprisoned by sin, facing sure death. God has set me free, and now I can look forward to eternal life with Christ Jesus no matter where I am.

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Answer the following by reading the corresponding discipleship lesson and using your Bible.

1. It may surprise you to know that Jesus never called anyone to become a “Christian,” rather His call was for people to become “disciples.” Look through the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), and on a separate sheet of paper(s), find and list as many scriptures as you can that show Jesus’ calling was to discipleship.
2. In the book of Acts, people were not invited to be “Christians,” rather their call was to become “disciples.” Look through the book of Acts, and on a separate sheet of paper, find and list as many scriptures as you can that show people being called to discipleship.
3. In Scripture, the word “disciple(s)” is used a total of 273 times. In all the Bible, the word “Christian(s)” is used a total of three times. List and write out on a separate sheet of paper the three times that the word “Christian(s)” is used in Scripture.
4. Read Matthew 10:25. *“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”* What is a disciple according to this verse? _____.
5. Read Luke 14:26. *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”* Being Jesus’ disciple means the unconditional sacrifice of one’s life for the whole of one’s life.

True or False.

6. Read Luke 14:33. *“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”* In at least some cases, being Jesus’ disciple meant the literal abandonment of everything, to put the claims of Jesus first.

True or False.

7. Read Matthew 19:29. *“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”* Everyone that has forsaken houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, or lands, for Jesus’ sake, will receive a hundred times as much, and shall inherit everlasting life.

True or False.

8. Read Acts 14:22. *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* Disciples need to continue in the faith.

True or False.

9. Read Hebrews 10:14. *“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”* Read Matthew 19:27, 29. *“Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? [29] And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”* The real objection that some have to the scriptures that emphasize discipleship, is that to be a “Christian” requires no effort (it’s by grace), but to be a “disciple” requires real sacrifice and commitment. The truth is, that the redemption of Christ required no effort on our part; it is perfect and requires no effort from us, but Christ’s call was always for our whole and absolute life.

True or False.

10. Read Acts 11:26. *“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”* Christ’s call was not for two kinds of believers, some to be Christians that remain carnal and some to be disciples. In reality, Christians and disciples were supposed to be the same.

True or False.

11. Read Matthew 28:19. *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* Jesus’ commission to the believers was to go and make, (a. disciples or b. converts) of all nations?

_____.

12. Read Matthew 28:20. *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* Believers are to teach others to obey everything that Jesus commanded.

True or False.

13. Read John 1:12. *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”* Jesus did offer His benefits (forgiveness, justification, etc.) but not without taking His person.

True or False.

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(Discipleship Answer Key)

Do not look at the answer key until you have completed the questions.
Check your answers with the following answers.

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Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16.
4. Read Matthew 10:25. What is a disciple according to this verse?
A disciple is one who becomes like his teacher or master.
5. Read Luke 14:26. Being Jesus’ disciple means the unconditional sacrifice of one’s life for the whole of one’s life.

True or False.

6. Read Luke 14:33. In at least some cases, being Jesus’ disciple meant the literal abandonment of everything, to put the claims of Jesus first.

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True or False.

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