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# Week 1b: Discipleship Ministry

**Then Yeshua said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross every day, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).**



The word discipleship comes from the Hebrew word *hanakh*, which means *to make narrow*, *dedicate*, or *train*. This is where we get the word for *Hanukkah*, or the Feast of Dedication. Even as the TaNaKh teaches us to be dedicated ones **(Genesis 14:14; Proverbs 22:6)**, so our **Messiah** expects all believers to be involved in discipleship and nurtured in **His** Word, **"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20a).**

What is the difference between teaching and discipleship? Teaching is instruction that presents an expectation – while discipleship is how to apply what has been learned. This is because people do not know how to apply the knowledge they learned. Through discipleship, we do not simply teach people about their walk with **Messiah**, we walk with them in how to actually live it out. Discipleship transforms a believer into a mature follower of **the Lord** who has a firm grasp of his or her identity in **Messiah**, prays daily, knows the Scriptures, values fellowship, and shares their faith with others. A disciple must learn these things and then

incorporate them into their life in order to grow into them. This process is life-long, and grounded believers continue to grow as they **“are conformed in the image of Messiah” (Romans 8:29)**. Because discipleship is of eternal value, you never outgrow it, but rather, grow into it.

Discipleship is a form of coaching, a **training in righteousness (Second Timothy 3:16)**. Just as in sports, training in these fundamental matters of faith is vitally important because practice is the only way these things will become habits in a person’s life. Day-to-day, when the pressure is on and we feel frustrated, tired, or upset, we will resort to our flesh unless we have developed godly habits that teach us to pray rather than to react. These things must be built intentionally, and will only develop into habits as a person matures. Discipleship, then, is an exercise program through which we are trained in righteousness.

This type of dedication is the normal way of life for a believer. However, **Yeshua** taught that **“the children of darkness are wiser when dealing with their own generation than the children of light” (Luke 16:8).** Although the principles by which they live are unredeemed, they take them very seriously and follow-through on them. Many believers, however, take a more casual approach to prayer and spending time with **God** in **His Word**, thinking, “I’ll get to it when I can,” or “I won’t pray unless I really need to.” This type of attitude is abnormal and dysfunctional, never okay for a believer to have. **God** gives time, talent and treasure for us to redeem; we are to use them for **His** glory **(Matthew 25:14-30)**.

When you lead a person to faith, it is essential that you now disciple them. It would be crazy for a parent to think that their work is done once their child is born. **God** expects evangelism to lead to discipleship just as **He** expects pregnancy to lead to parenting. So also with discipleship, we must feed our own children. It is important that you have a framework for this important process, not making it up as you go along with each person. Therefore, we have a discipleship ministry with a fourteen-week format.