

## The Twelve Disciples

**-Let's see how many names of the disciples we can guess together?** (Simon Peter, James the son of Zebedee, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon and Judas)

**-Were they ordinary men?** (Yes! Some were fishermen, a taxpayer, a doctor, etc. Could be any of us today.)

**-Why do you think Jesus wanted these particular 12 men? (...)**

**-Let me read Mark 3:13-15 and see if you can hear the answer:** “Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – **that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.** (First and foremost, Jesus wanted them to be with Him, to know Him so that He might send them out to preach about Him and drive out demons.)

**-Let's talk about Simon Peter first: What do we all know about Peter?** (Andrew's brother, the one who denied Jesus 3 times! He was impulsive, but became bold in preaching after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus saw him as the “rock on which He would build His church” and knew what an amazing evangelist Peter was going to be. He sees all of us “in process” and when we fall short, He stands with us as we grow in Him.)

**-So what lesson can we learn about Christ when we make mistakes, as Peter did?** (Christians make mistakes at times but when we return to Jesus, we are forgiven and restored.)

**-In John 21: 15-19, after Jesus is resurrected from the grave, He comes to Peter who needed special encouragement after denying Christ three times and who now feels worthless. Jesus asked him if he loved Him 3 more times. Peter said yes. Knowing his heart, Jesus confronts Peter with the difference between just loving Him and being fully committed to Him in service by saying “ Now Follow Me!” We may love Him, but we also need to follow Him each day.**

**-What do you know about James? Here is a hint: Son of Thunder!** (Short-tempered. He was self-motivated by wanting to sit on the right hand of Jesus in heaven and judgmental but he was still deeply committed to Jesus)

**-Let's read Verse #1 together as Jesus speaks to James about his self-motivation:** (Mark 10:43-45: “But this is not to be so among you; instead, whoever desires to be great among you must be your servant, And whoever wishes to be most important and first in rank among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to have service rendered to Him, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”)

**-What lesson can we learn as Jesus was confronting James about his selfish desire to sit on His right-hand side in heaven?** (Christians must be willing to die to self and unto Jesus. Wanting to be first is not the way to be great in God's kingdom, serving others is the way to be on top...putting others first and ourselves second.)

**-Ok, now let's look at John. What do we know about John?** (He was the second of the Sons of Thunder, James' brother, but is known as the “disciple whom Jesus loved” and the one to whom Jesus entrusted His mother while He was on the cross.)

**-Let's read verse #2 together out loud, just keep in mind that this was written by John:** (1 John 3:18,20: "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with *actions* and in *truth*. For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.")

**-After reading this verse that John wrote, what lesson can we learn about John's character that Jesus was willing to entrust His earthly mother to John's care?** (John was transformed by the love Jesus showed him by dying on the cross for him and was willing to put his own love into ACTION by taking care of Jesus' mother. John was transformed by Jesus' action of love. Never give up on what you consider a hopeless situation but choose to exercise God's love, putting it into action. That supernatural power of love that He pours into our lives has no limits and can reach another's.)

**-Now Andrew was Peter's brother and was known for his eagerness to bring others to Jesus, beginning first with his very own brother, Peter. Because Andrew brought him to Jesus, Peter became a follower of Jesus.**

**-What lesson can we learn from Andrew from this story?** (Bring others to Christ. Don't rely on yourself to convince others to believe, that's Jesus' responsibility. What He wants us to do is to take every opportunity to bring them to Jesus by inviting them to a Bible Study or church, or show them Jesus' love by our actions towards them and letting them know how much Christ loves them and we do too.)

**-Another disciple was Philip. He was the fisherman who asked Jesus questions openly and honestly...like how the 5000 could be fed with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes. What can we learn about Jesus from this character trait of Philip's?** (Jesus wants us to ask our questions. Remember that He knows our hearts and wants us to be open and honest before Him. In this way, Jesus can teach us and we can know Him more personally.)

**-Bartholomew was honest and straightforward. He initially rejected Jesus just because Jesus was from a place he considered not so good, Nazareth. But Jesus wasn't offended and instead answered him with a compliment, saying he was a man in whom nothing is false. What can we learn from their relationship?** (Jesus respects our honesty, even when it's challenging. Again, He knows our hearts and our motives.)

**-Does anyone know anything about Matthew?** (A tax collector, dishonest character and an outcast because of his career. But, he did abandon his lucrative job to follow Jesus. Remember, he went on to write the first of the Gospels: Matthew.)

**-What lesson can we learn on why Jesus may have called this kind of man to serve with him?** (Matthew knew the cost of following Jesus and left being a tax collector without ever looking back. Jesus used the very skills Matthew had sharpened as a tax collector to record the greatest story ever lived. Jesus sees each of us sinners as a "work in progress," using the very skills we possess to further the kingdom.)

**-Let's read verse #3 together: Luke 5:31,32 :** ("Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'")

**-So who did He come for?** (He came for ones like Matthew, you and me.)

**-What do we know about “Doubting Thomas”?** (He said he wouldn’t believe Jesus was resurrected until he could actually see Jesus alive and touch His wounds.)

**-Let’s read verse #4 together and see what Jesus told Thomas after He rose from the dead and came to see him:** (John 20:27 “Stop doubting and believe.”)

**-What can we learn from this?** (Jesus always reaches out to us, especially when we experience serious doubt, to restore our faith and trust in Him. Allow your doubts to deepen your faith as you continue to search for the answer, but remember, He has the answer.)

**-Thaddaeus (or Judas, son of James), as well as James (son of Alphaeus), both chose to follow Jesus because they believed in Him, but they did not know how this would change their lives forever. What lesson can we learn from their act of faith, following Jesus without knowing what the future holds?** (Trust in Jesus, Who is sovereign, and He will change your life forever.)

**-Simon was a Zealot. Does anyone know what a Zealot was?** (Fiercely patriotic. The Zealots were determined to end Roman rule in Israel. They believed in the Messiah but didn’t recognize Jesus as the One sent by God. They believed the Messiah must be a political leader.) **BUT Simon allowed Jesus to transform his mind and was saved!**

**-Let’s read Ephesians 1:18 together, verse #5.** (“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe.”)

**-What is the thing we have today that can show us how this can happen to us?** (The Bible. Allow Jesus’ Word to transform your thinking and redirect your passions as He did Simon.)

**-Now what do we know about Judas Iscariot?** (He was the disciple who walked with Jesus for several years, listening to all His teachings and watching Him perform all those miracles, but was the one who didn’t believe and betrayed Jesus. He later killed himself.)

**-What lesson can we learn from Judas’ life?** (Judas was a disciple. He was very familiar with Jesus’ ways and His teachings, but he never truly loved or obeyed Him. This is a warning. When we choose the way of sin, Jesus may not immediately correct us, but that doesn’t mean He approves. Remember, He knows our hearts. His Word says “the wages of sin is death” and that is what Judas chose over the redemption of the Savior. We must choose the Savior.)

**-Let’s read the last group of verses together, #6. (Ephesians 1:4-5, Rev. 3:20:** “For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, *in accordance with His pleasure* and will...Here I am! *I stand at the door and knock*. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with Him, and he with Me.”)

**-Before the foundation of the world was created, God determined that He was going to send His Son for the salvation of our souls. Out of His great love and through the gift of His Son, He now calls us His sons and daughters, *for His pleasure*. It *pleases* Him to call us His sons and daughters. How does that make you feel? (...)**

**-He not only does this but in the second verse it says that “I stand at the door and knock”. What does that mean to you?** (The God of the universe and all that exists, stands at the door of our

hearts and knocks. He desires to make the effort to have a relationship with us. Imagine, GOD *DESIRES A RELATIONSHIP WITH US AND ACTIVELY PURSUES IT!*)

**-We need to ask ourselves, do we make the effort to actively pursue a deep relationship with Him? (...)**

**-How can that look or what can be some examples of that? (...)**

**-As we close today, we have learned something from each disciple, even Judas.**

**-The most important thing we can glean from all of them is to remember that Jesus wants to have fellowship with us. He allows us to decide whether or not to open our lives to Him. Let us choose Him and the abundance that comes by being in His family.**

## “THE TWELVE DISCIPLES” VERSE SHEET

- 1. Mark 10:43-45:** “But this is not to be so among you; instead, whoever desires to be great among you must be your servant, And whoever wishes to be most important and first in rank among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to have service rendered to Him, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”
- 2. 1 John 3:18,20** Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.
- 3. Luke 5:31,32** Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
- 4. John 20:27** “Stop doubting and believe.”
- 5. Ephesians 1:18** I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe.
- 6. Ephesians 1:4-5, Rev. 3:20:** For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, *in accordance with His pleasure* and will.....Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with Him, and he with Me.