

Introduction:

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (**Luke 6:40**, ESV). In context, Jesus is pointing out if we pick a bad teacher, we won’t be able to rise above it. When we follow the blind, we fall into the ditch with them. However, this principle also applies if we pick a good teacher. In fact, if we pick the Good Teacher, when we are fully trained, we will be just like Him. That is what discipleship is all about: being like Jesus. In fact, the term “Christian,” got started because it means “little Christ.” One of the fundamental character traits we see in being little Christs is honoring God. We find this in numerous events. For our study and edification, we will witness this trait in what we often call His high-priestly prayer in **John 17**. While Jesus’s prayer does begin with the request that He be glorified, the basis is so He can glorify the Father (**vs. 1**). Then, in **vs. 4**, He expresses His mission on earth has been to glorify the Father. Here we are listening to Jesus pray. We are with Jesus in this prayer. Let us watch what He does. Let us hear what He says. Let us be trained not because He has us in a class about honoring God, but because He is the class.

Discussion:

I. A disciple honors God by worshiping Him.

- A. Before we learn from what Jesus says in **John 17**, learn from what He is doing. Jesus is praying. That is, He is worshiping. He is expressing the worth of God. He lifts His eyes to heaven and addresses the Father. He seeks the Father’s glory. He states the Father’s worth and submits Himself to the Father’s plan. He is worshiping.
- B. Surely this is the heart of honoring and glorifying God. Any disciple who honors God is going to worship God. As Jesus said when the devil tempted Him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve’” (**Matthew 4:10**, ESV). Perhaps the greatest demonstration of worship is seen in **Revelation 4:2-11**. Surrounding the central throne of God are 24 thrones with 24 crowned elders; that is, kings. There are magnificent spiritual creatures, powerful and majestic beyond our wildest imagination. What do they do? They worship. They fall down in the presence of God, giving Him glory and honor, declaring His worth and humbling themselves by falling off their thrones and casting aside their crowns. This is worship.
- C. In **John 4:23-24**, Jesus says the Father is seeking worshipers. I thought the Father was seeking disciples. I thought Jesus commissioned the apostles to make disciples (see **Matthew 28:19-20**). He did. Disciples are worshipers; worshipers are disciples. The two go hand in hand. We must worship in spirit and in truth.
- D. I find this fascinating. The word translated “worship” in **Matthew 4:10** and **John 4:23-24**, doesn’t have a noun form in the New Testament. There is a related noun for the ones who are worshiping, that is “worshippers.”¹ But there is no related noun for the thing called “worship.”² In other words, this worship is not an object. I can’t hold it in my hand. I can’t bottle it up and put it on a display shelf. It is not a person, place, or thing. I can sing a song, pray a prayer, preach a sermon, give an offering, but I can’t worship a worship. I’d like to even try to make another distinction if possible. Worship is not an act; rather, it is acting. It is not a thing that is done. It is the doing. I cannot passively worship; I can only actively worship. In other words, though we attend something we often call a “worship service” in order to worship, we aren’t worshiping merely because we are in this place at this time. Further, just because we perform the actions everyone else is performing in this assembly, we are not necessarily worshiping. We are worshiping only when we are worshiping. Only when we are honoring, glorifying, submitting to, surrendering to, declaring the worth of, and humbling ourselves before God. In other words, it is not “if I’ve done this thing, I’ve worshiped.” Rather, I’ve only worshiped when I’ve worshiped. Only when my actions are done purposefully to declare the worthship of God and the non-worship of myself have I worshiped in spirit and in truth.
- E. That is what Jesus is doing in **John 17**. That is what disciples do.

¹ The term translated “worship” in these passages (ESV) is the verb προσκυνέω (proskuneo). The word for “worshiper” is προσκυνητής (proskunetes). But there is no corresponding noun for the act of worship or acts of worship.

² To be clear, there are other Greek nouns occasionally translated “worship.” In **Romans 12:1**, the word “worship” translates the noun λατρεία (latreia). This is the noun form of the word translated “serve” in **Matthew 4:10** (λατρεύω/latreuo). In **Hebrews 9:21**, it translates the noun λειτουργία (liturgia). This word refers to actual rituals and actions done in religious action. Our modern word “liturgy” comes from it. In **Colossians 2:18**, it translates the noun θρησκεία (threskeia). This term also has an emphasis on rituals and rites conducted as part of religion. While these words have some semantic overlap with the word we are focusing on in **Matthew 4:10** and **John 4:23-24**, they are not synonyms. Our word does not have a noun form in the New Testament.

- II. A disciple honors God by doing the work He has assigned.
- A. A second and equally important aspect of honoring God is seen in Jesus's declaration about His own mission in **John 17:4**. Jesus didn't only declare God's glory through worship, He also lived God's glory by accomplishing the work God had given Him. In other words, I don't check honoring God off my checklist by "going to church" or even by my own private or family devotion and worship time. Obviously, I cannot honor God without those events. However, if that is the extent of my honoring God, I am not honoring God. Those times of worship are intended to impact our entire lives.
 - B. Consider another event in Jesus's life to see how this plays out. In **Mark 1:35-39**, Jesus is again worshipping. He has arisen early, while it was dark, to go out to a desolate place and pray. Peter finds him when it is daylight and let's Jesus know people are looking for Him. In other words, "Jesus, you're becoming popular. These people want to see and hear You." Now any intelligent campaign manager will let Jesus know He needs to ride the momentum. He needs to jump on this groundswell, head back into that town and let His popularity grow. But Jesus says otherwise, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." Jesus knew what His Father's mission was for Him. And a disciple does the work God has assigned. The disciple doesn't do the work that will make the disciple look good. The disciple doesn't do the work that the disciple thinks is most fun or even most personally fulfilling. The disciple does the work God has assigned. The disciple accomplishes God's mission.
 - C. Clearly, this honors God because it says what God wants, values, desires, plans, charges is more important than my wants, desires. And this shows the great competition at play here. I can choose to do the work that will honor and glorify me or I can choose God's work. But how do I know God's work for me? That leads to our next point.
- III. A disciple honors God by keeping His Word.
- A. In **John 17:6-8**, explains a disciple honors God by keeping God's Word. Jesus gave the apostles the Father's Word and they believed it. Not only did Jesus give the apostles the Father's Word, Jesus allowed the Father's Word to govern His own life. Notice His statement in **John 17:12**. Jesus guarded the ones given Him as apostles and only the son of destruction was lost. Notice: this was to fulfill the Scriptures. Brothers and sisters, can we grasp the importance of this? Yes, the Father and Son had a relationship in which there was personal interaction and communication. I know that for Jesus, the Father's Word was not limited to Scripture. I also understand this is dealing with an issue of prophecy. But do you see that Jesus pointed out His own life and mission were bounded by what Scripture said? How much more should we fulfill Scripture? How much more should our lives and our work and our mission be bounded by Scripture?
 - B. We recognize everything the disciple does is to be done while abiding in God's Word. We're going to hear about this a lot in this series. But do not miss this. As Paul wrote to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, the Scripture, the Word provides us equipping for every good work. It will make the people of God complete, equipped for every good work. I know God's work for me not because of some still small voice in my heart, not because of an inkling or an internal nudge. I know God's work for me because I read, study, learn, know His Word and then apply it to my life. A disciple honors God by keeping His Word.
- IV. A disciple honors God by giving the proper credit to Him.
- A. This fourth one is a bit subtle, I admit. But read with me and see if you too can see the powerful point Jesus makes that demonstrates the worth of God and the honor and glory we should give Him.
 - B. Listen to **John 17:6-14** and listen especially for the words "given" and "gave." God has given Jesus people. He gave Jesus the Word. He gave Jesus a name. And then He passed on to the apostles what God had given Him. Further, He made it clear that it was what the Father had given Him. Listen to **John 17:7**: "Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you" (ESV). Do you see what Jesus does as He teaches and trains the apostles? He makes it very clear who the real source is. He gives proper credit. To me, this is fantastic. Jesus is deity. He is God. He is a unified part of that divine threeness of Father, Son, and Spirit. What is the Father's is His and what is His is the Father's. In a very real sense, all of this is just His because He is as much God as the Father is. Yet, how does He present it to the apostle's? He presents Himself in voluntary submission to the Father, giving the Father credit for all He has and has done.
 - C. Jesus basically says, "Everything I have, I have received from the Father. None of it is because I'm so amazing and have done such amazing work." Paul provides this very same principle in **1 Corinthians 4:6-7**. The Corinthians were arrogant in their service to God. They were competing with one another as if what they had learned, taught, accomplished was because of their own spiritual prowess. Paul asks, "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (ESV). Whether

they were thinking of the resources they had, the opportunities they had, the knowledge they had acquired, the teaching they had done, the strength and growth they had gone through, the people they had baptized, whatever, God was the source behind that.

- D. This is perhaps the #1 hindrance we face in honoring God. I know it is for me. We take too much credit to ourselves, which produces competition, jealousy, envy, and every vile practice to take place even between Christians. When I give myself the credit, I get in a rat-wheel of trying to prove how great I am and the only way I can do that is to prove I'm better than you. That, of course, doesn't honor God at all. When I realize everything I have, do, accomplish is God's gift, God's work, God's fruit and I'm just the branch, I don't have to compete anymore. Of course, I am well aware of the mind game the enemy gets me to play with this. Even while claiming God is the source and it is all God's gift, I can start thinking God gave me a gift or more of a gift than you because I deserve it more. I can think we get gifts based on how worthy we are. Nope. God gives gifts from His worthiness, not ours. God gives gifts in the ways, amounts, and degrees He does because it will give Him the most glory. None of it is about me, it is all about Him.
 - E. Disciples honor God when we give the proper credit to God as the giver of every good and perfect gift.
- V. A disciple honors God by standing out from the world.
- A. In **John 17:14-16**, we find Jesus's words which provide the foundation for a very common saying among Christians: we are in the world, not of the world. As numerous preachers throughout the years have described, we are like boats floating on a lake. It is one thing for the boat to be in the water, it is a completely different thing when the water starts getting into the boat.
 - B. What we need to realize from this is we are not honoring God in a vacuum. We don't live in friendly territory. In fact, we don't even live in neutral territory. We live behind enemy lines. We live in the world and the world has a view that competes with God's on just about everything. According to **James 3:15**, the wisdom of this world competes with the wisdom of God and the wisdom of this world is not only earthly, but also unspiritual and demonic. According to **1 John 2:15-17**, if the love of the world is in us, the love of the Father isn't. The world here doesn't refer to people in the world, but the views, outlooks, spirit, attitude, goals, desires of the world. And all of this, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (or possessions) is of the world and is passing away. Back to **James 4:4**, we learn friendship with the world is enmity with God.
 - C. With this in mind, we come back to Jesus's prayer in **John 17** and realize the disciple honors God by being different from the world. I don't mean we honor God by being involved in a different activity than most of the world on Sunday mornings. I mean by being different from the world. We honor God by thinking differently than the world, by making our choices on a different basis than the world, by behaving differently than the world, by valuing different things than the world, by having a different hope than the world, by having different goals than the world, by having different pursuits from the world.
 - D. But we must be ready. The world will hate us for this difference. Here, I am not just talking about the things and principles of the world, but the people in the world who love this world. They will hate us. They will mock us. They will belittle us. They will intimidate us. They will manipulate us. They will call us names. They will do everything to get us to conform to them. And frankly, they are being successful with many Christians. It is sad to me the number of Christians who are "figuring out" that the Bible says what the people of the world believe. When the mission of God's people starts mirroring the mission of worldly who are socially aware, we are not distinct. When congregational worship starts to look and sound like a concert or little more than a spiritual mixer, we are not distinct. When discipleship is little more than therapy whose goal is to provide us consolation for all the ways we have been hurt and suffered in this world, we are not distinct. When the Bible is little more than a collection of verses, sayings, stories to rubber stamp successful business management practices or self-help strategies, we are not distinct. When Christianity and "church" become the means by which we get to perform for others rather than the means by which we are transformed by Father, Son, Spirit, and God's people, we are not distinct.
 - E. Of course, this takes us back to the principle #3. We honor God by keeping His Word. His Word is truth, and His truth sanctifies us (**John 17:17**). Sanctification means being set apart for holy use and work. Thus, God's truth, God's Word sets us apart for holy work rather than mundane living. Our view of all things needs to be anchored in the Word of God, both the written and the Incarnate.
 - F. But notice one final thing about this sanctification. In **John 17:19**, Jesus says, "For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (ESV). I'm not sure why the ESV uses two different words—consecrate, sanctified. They both translate forms of the same Greek word (ἀγιάζω/hagiazō). In other words, Jesus set Himself apart for holy work in order that His disciples might be set apart. Do you realize what "consecration" of Himself Jesus is talking about? He is talking about the consecration, the setting apart for the

holy work of dying on the cross. Listen to **John 12:23-33** to see this. Jesus was sanctified and consecrated by dying on the cross. We are sanctified by His death on the cross. And when we are letting ourselves be set apart as He was, we will die to ourselves. We go to the cross. No, we are not necessarily executed for our faith, though we may be. But rather, we honor God by dying to ourselves and all this world offers in order to save and have what is truly life and pass it on to others.

- G. This is honoring God, that we would rather live like Jesus Christ though it goes through a cross than be like the world around us. Again, it's okay for the boat to be in the water, but it is a problem when the water starts getting into the boat. We are in the world, but not of the world.

Conclusion:

A disciple honors God. A disciple honors God by worshiping God, by accomplishing the work God has assigned, by keeping God's Word, by give God the proper credit, and by standing out from the world. When we are fully trained, we will be like our Teacher; we will be like Jesus. Be ready, that means we will be led to a cross, but we won't fall into a ditch. May we always live to honor God as our Savior and King does. How are you doing at that?