

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrDQmJ4MMxQ>

There is a life lesson in this scene from Alice in Wonderland.

[Alice, who arrives at a fork in the road, asks the Cheshire cat, Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

The Cat replies, That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.

To which Alice says, I don't much care where.

Then comes this classic line from the Cheshire Cat, Then it doesn't matter which way you go.]

If you don't care much where you are going; then it doesn't matter which way you go.

But I know you care about where you are going. And because you care about where you are going; I think you want to be certain you are going in the right direction.

There are many choices in life when it comes to going in the right direction; but I think there is one choice that is essential to experiencing the life that God intended for all of us to experience.

In Jesus encounter with the first disciples that he called, he said, Come, follow me. Matthew 4:18-22

People who choose to follow Jesus do so because they understand that the choices they make every day will shape them into disciples of Jesus.

Think about the choices that you are confronted with every day.

[education, employment, food, exercise, finances, discipline,

Your choices when placed end to end begin to point you in a direction. And as you line up those choices you soon begin to see where those choices will eventually take you.

Those who choose to follow Jesus and live as his disciples understand that their destination is, as James Harnish says, "a life centering on loving God and loving others." And I mean centering, not centered, to indicate that discipleship is a *lifelong experience* of continuing transformation.

In the DVD you'll watch this week in your small groups, Rob Bell will detail the life of disciples in the time of Jesus. I think you'll find the process enlightening when you think over these next several weeks about what it means to answer Jesus call to be his disciple.

In the video, Rob talks about 3 things that set apart a disciple. **A disciple knows what the teacher knows.** That is the basic definition of a disciple, you know or learn what the rabbi/teacher knows. There are many people who know what there is to know about Jesus. But knowing what the teacher knows isn't all there is to being a disciple.

A disciple knows what the rabbi knows so that he/she can **do what the rabbi does.** Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, that *whoever hears (knows) these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.* Matthew 7:24

But there is one more step. We can *know*, we can even *do*, but is it your desire **to be like the rabbi?** To devote your entire life to following him so that you become like your rabbi in every way. For those who gave their life to following in the steps of their rabbi the ancients had a saying, *May you be covered in the*

dust of your rabbi. It means just what it sounds like- may you walk so closely to your rabbi that you are covered with the dust and whatever else he kicks up as he moves about teaching.

Are you covered in the dust of Jesus? Are you following Jesus so closely that you are covered with everything that he teaches us each day?

There is another image of this saying found in the life of a woman named Mary. (Luke 10:39) Mary, the sister of Martha, sat at the feet of Jesus, literally in the dust with the others disciples as they circled around to hear Jesus teach. Mary teaches us that we need to be under the influence of Jesus teaching- sitting at his feet as we eagerly desire to hear every word.

Centering our life on loving God and loving others means that we make choices daily to be covered in the dust of Jesus. But as easy as that is to say; it is very hard to live out. Choosing to follow Jesus, like Peter and Andrew did, meant dropping everything else and choosing to walk in the dust of Jesus.

To be a disciple of Jesus; to work daily at centering your life around loving God and loving others will require you to do more than just try; it will mean daily training yourself to make choices like Jesus. That is what this series will enable you to do- become like Jesus in your daily choices.

John Ortberg, in his book, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, makes a helpful distinction between trying and training. He says that anyone can *try* to run a marathon, but only those who *train* for it will actually accomplish it.

In the same way, anyone can *try* to be a follower of Jesus, but only those who *train* themselves to make the choices of loving God and loving others every day will discover the life that is found in responding to Jesus invitation.

Since 1755 disciples of Jesus who are a part of the Methodist tradition have been making a covenant with God- a commitment- using a prayer written by John Wesley. The prayer is used at the beginning of the year as a way to renew our commitment to be a disciple of Jesus.

John Wesley's Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will,

Rank me with whom you will;

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by you,

Or laid aside by you,

Exalted by you or brought low by you.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things

To your pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

you are mine, and I am yours.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,

Let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.