

HE Metropolitan Youssef: Effective Discipleship

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HE Metropolitan Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الاله فاي ناطع · Effective Discipleship ~ LECTURE

Different Ways of Learning

1. Pupil

- The word "pupil" comes from the pupil of the eye)
- Pupils learn passively (e.g. by seeing, hearing)
- Children in Elementary School are pupils

2. Student

- The word "student" comes from the same root as "study"
- Students learn by studying (e.g. experiments in a lab, research in the library, writing papers, etc.). There is more effort than just sitting in a classroom and learning by feeding.
- Those in MS, HS, College, etc. are students

3. Disciple

- From the root word "discipline"
- Disciples learn through discipline. Followers of a teacher imitate him and he disciplines them.
- Followers of a Teacher (e.g. followers of Christ, followers of desert fathers) are disciples
- The Lord disciplined His disciples:
 - He started by teaching them as pupils
 - Then He sent them out to do some ministry and then come back with a report (Luke 9: "And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done"
 - When the disciples told Him they could not cast out a demon, He told them "because of your unbelief"
 - When James and John argued about who would sit on the left or right, and the disciples were jealous He told them "no, to be the first, you must be last. To be the greatest, you need to be servant of all."
 - Through discipline, He formed their personalities so that they became His disciples

Christian means Disciple

Acts 11:19-26 When Barnabas and Paul went to Antioch they found there followers of Christ, and they added more to the Lord, "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26)

The word Christian and the word Disciple are **synonymous**

The day I stop being a disciple, I have stopped being a Christian

Christianity is a religion of discipleship: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20)

A servant who simply gives a lesson is making pupils. A servant who assigns homework or activities or research on top of that, is making students. But a servant who disciplines to transform others into the Image of Christ, is the one who makes disciples. Part of making disciples is to teach them as pupils and letting them do research as students; but the discipline which aims toward transforming others into the image of Christ is an essential part of the ministry.

The Copy Machine Analogy

- A disciple of Jesus Christ should look like Jesus Christ - "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18).
- The original image is the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. The copy machine is the servant. The paper is the disciple.
- The goal is to make an identical copy of the original - the Lord Jesus Christ. When you are seen looking like Christ, they will say "he is Christian" - "he is a disciple of Christ."
- Challenges:
 - The original image is PERFECT
 - You can never make an IDENTICAL copy to the original in this analogy (i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ)
 - You don't have a perfect copy machine.
 - If a copy machine has a scratch, all the copies will have the same scratch
 - If there is a weakness in the life of the servant, you may see this weakness in all of the copies.
 - A servant who doesn't attend vespers, his class will be a copy of him
 - A servant who doesn't pay attention to prayer, his class will be a copy of him
 - A servant who doesn't pay attention to fasting, his class will be a copy of him
 - If parents don't care about fasting, their children will be the same
 - If parents don't care about confession, their children will be the same
 - If parents are smoking and drinking, their children may be the same
 - You don't have perfect paper.
- In order to have an image as similar as possible to the original, I need a copy machine and paper that are as perfect as possible. Even with the best copy machine and the best paper, the first challenge still exists - you will never have a PERFECT copy. But you can

have something that reflects the original.

- The factory that produces the copy machine is the Church. So the Church needs to prepare the servants very well
- A very good copy machine like St Paul, with very good paper like Timothy, Titus or Philemon, results in very good copies.

Discipleship is Continuous

- "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Five Generations:
 - St Paul (2) learned from Christ (1)
 - St Paul is teaching St Timothy (3) to commit to faithful men (4) to make disciples (5)
- The chain of discipleship of the Church:
 - St Mark --> St Anianus --> --> Pope Shenouda --> Pope Tawadros
- We can trace our own discipleship
 - I was disciplined by my Sunday School service who was disciplined by this Abouna who was disciplined by this bishop who was disciplined by this pope... back to St Mark, back to the Lord Jesus Christ

In order to make disciples, you yourself must be a disciple

All of us are called to make disciples. Parents should make their children disciples of Christ. Sunday School Servants, Clergy, etc. If you are not a disciple, then you are not a Christian.

How do I become a Disciple?

How do I become a learner?

"The Lord God has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak
A word in season to him who is weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.
The Lord God has opened My ear;
And I was not rebellious,
Nor did I turn away." (Isaiah 50:4-5)

These two verses are about the Lord Jesus Christ. "I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." (Isaiah 50:6)

The Lord Jesus made Himself a Disciple before making disciples

1. Developing the Heart of the Disciple

"The Lord God has given Me
The tongue of the learned,

The Lord Jesus had the Tongue of the Learned

- When Jesus was 12 years old, He sat in the Temple among the teachers, asking questions and listening to them.
- "Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." (Luke 2:46-47)
- The Lord Jesus was **submissive to His Parents - St Mary and St Joseph the Carpenter**. Even though St Joseph was not His father biologically. He submitted them and obeyed them.

One problem in this generation is that I know everything.

- If someone gives me advice, I don't take it well.
- If my parents give me advice, I say:
 - "I'm in college"
 - "I'm in grad school."
 - "Why are you treating me like a kid?"
 - "I know what I'm doing!"
 - We think that we know and understand more than our parents, more than our Abouna, more than our servants.
 - If this is how you think, then you lost the spirit of discipleship.

Pope Theophilus went to the desert to listen to a word of wisdom from the elder St Arsenius. He went as a disciple (despite being the POPE!)

Some people go to confession not to listen to advice, but to challenge and convince Abouna to approve their agenda.

- If you're here for approval, if you think what you're doing is right, go do it.
- But if you're here for advice, here is the guidance according to the Scripture and the Church Teaching.

If I have the Tongue of the Learned, I will go to seek advice without intention of showing off, or of convincing someone, or starting a debate, make an argument, but with the intention of learning.

The Tongue of the Learned is...

- When we open the Scripture, we have to have the heart and tongue of a learner. Be a disciple to the Scripture.
- Be a disciple to the Early Church Fathers and their writings.
- When we go to our Father of Confession, we have to have the heart and tongue of a learner. Be a disciple to your Father of Confession.

- "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6-8) If you have the heart of the disciple, you will learn even from nature.
 - Look at the ant
 - Look at the birds
 - Look at the lilies of the field

A true disciple, at every moment of his life, is learning something

St Antony is said to be like a bee going from one flower to another flower in order to learn spirituality and how to live the true monastic life.

Parents can discipline, Abouna can discipline. But if you do not have the heart of a learner, all of this discipline will be in vain and produce nothing.

2. The Purpose of Becoming a Disciple

"That I should know how to speak
A word in season to him who is weary."

Selflessness

In college to be a doctor, lawyer, engineer. Maybe I am learning to have a good career, good money, comfortable life. But how many are learning in order to serve others and to help them? The heart of the disciple, is the selfless heart. A person who denies himself.

In season

- If you are in a difficult time and no one asked about you and then one month later, someone came and gave you a word of comfort, you might say in your mind "it's too late. I needed this one month ago."
- When the Lord spoke about the faithful and wise steward, He said: "to give them their food in due season."

The Purpose of Becoming of Disciple is to Serve Others

- "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)
- To be truly in the likeness of Christ, I must serve others

3. The Discipline of the Disciple

He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

It is not "I will attend seminary, graduate, and now I've finished my discipleship" - "I will go through preservatives and when I'm finished, I'm done with discipleship"

Discipleship is a continuous life-long process

"Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments." (2 Timothy 4:23) - even in the last moments of his life, St Paul asked for the books and parchments so he could read, learn and continue his discipleship. St Paul who preached in three continents, saw the third heaven, wrote more than half of the New Testament, who was disciplined at the hand of Gamaliel and learned by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ directly - and in the last breaths of his life, asked for the books and parchments to read and to study and to learn.

The Lord gives us an opportunity to learn every morning - and not just every morning, but every moment of every day

4. The Attitude of the Disciple

The Lord God has opened My ear;
And I was not rebellious,
Nor did I turn away."

A true disciple is the one who is not rebellious and does not turn away.

Does not pick and choose "I like this, I will take it. I don't like this, I will leave it." Sometimes even with the Scripture or Early Church Fathers - I like this verse, I will use it. I don't like this verse, I ignore it "It's not fit for the 21st Century." Open Buffet style.

The Lord Jesus did not turn away

- The Father told the Son "You will go and be High Priest. And as High Priest, You will have something to offer. I am not pleased with the blood of animal sacrifices. You will take flesh and offer Your Body." And the Son's response: "The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." (Isaiah 50:5-6)
- ⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:
"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.
⁶ In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin
You had no pleasure.
⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.' " (Hebrews 10:5-7)

Q&A

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How can I, as a servant, disciple my children?

1. I must, myself, be a disciple
 2. My eye is on them to see their points of strength to help them to grow, and weaknesses, to guide them in the right way.
 - We have activities in the Church, conventions, sports, spiritual days, trips, outings, etc. The purpose of all these activities is not to have fun or enjoy a trip or a day, but the purpose as a true servant is to watch my servant; watch their attitude, see the point of weakness and point of strength.
 3. Follow-up
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