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INTENTIONAL DISCIPLE-SHIP ?

"How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? One - but the bulb really has to want to change." Hmm, sounds all too true about you and me, doesn't it. So, what's YOUR motivation?

Most people get motivated about their favorite personal pursuits. Maybe it's a hobby or sport or health or family or sideline or even work. Whatever it is for you, think about all the time and energy you pour into it. What if you would invest that kind of passion into being a follower of Jesus? What would it look like in your life? What difference would it make if you became intentional about being a "disciple"?

Disciple means learner or follower, someone who is becoming more like the Master. Yes, this involves discipline - probably why you resist it so much. But discipline really means training. Like anything in life, this makes good sense. Buying fitness equipment won't improve your health - you've got to sweat. And training makes you a more valuable employee. It's what makes your hobbies or personal pursuits more fulfilling. What good comes from just going with the flow and choosing the path of least resistance? How's that going to transform your life - to be more like Christ?

The answer - God also gives His disciples the dynamic you need to be a disciple. Matthew 28:18-20 says "**make disciples**" is the primary mission statement of every Christian church. But disciples of Jesus aren't mere groupies, overtly interested in Christ - they have supernatural power to become more like Him.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 says a Christian has become a "**new creation**" - the old self has gone and everything has become new. That's the work of the Holy Spirit when you're born again by trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You receive not only forgiveness of sins and eternal life, you also receive the risen life of Christ empowering you in the indwelling person of the Holy Spirit. You're no longer under the control of sin and self - because new life in Christ flows through you.

And if you're reborn, do you suppose God intends for you to remain a newborn infant in Christ? Of course not. You are to grow up and become like Him. This passage says that as Christ changes your life, you are actually his **representative** or ambassador, as you show and tell the good news about Jesus.

God's blueprint for the church is also His gift to the church. The apostle talks about this ministry of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8 too. Verses 28-30 says God intends for His people to be "**conformed to the image of His Son**" by the Holy Spirit's power. In Romans 12:1-2 he says "**don't be conformed to this world**" in terms of how you think and act "**but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**"

Get intentional about making changes and growing, since God has given you His own power within to make it happen. First, change your mind. This takes new information. You get that from God's Word, the Bible. Intentionally understanding and applying the Bible to your life is HOW you renew your mind. God's truth replaces all the false presuppositions, patterns of thinking, and defense mechanisms you grew up with. It's all re-learned through the lens and power of God's Word, so you grow as a disciple.

God wrote it all down for this very reason. As 2 Timothy 3:15-17 says "**All Scripture is breathed out by God**" for God's intentional purpose "**and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness**" for God's intentional purpose - so you will be "**complete, equipped for every good work.**" So it's not about what you know, it's how you grow.

As a disciple, you'll find that as you read God's Word, you're also motivated to pray, talking and listening to God. As you put His Word to work in your life, you're trusting what He says and living it out. You're also motivated to worship Him, privately and corporately. A "new creation" Christian wants to be with the rest of the flock, encouraging one another because of His powerful working in your life. And you're motivated to serve God and others by using your gifts and resources of time, treasures and talents. You invest in God's kingdom because it all belongs to Him and comes from Him - for His purposes.

Philippians 2:12 says "**it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**" He gives you both the "want to" and the "how to." The disciplines of a disciple of Jesus aren't demanding negative things in your life. They're dynamic positive things that motivate you to grow in the Lord. It's all good - so get at it! Disciple - get intentional - working out what He's working in you!