

**Introduction:**

- Many people look at discipleship as NT concept because we read about the 12 disciples in the Gospels and we hear about disciple all through the NT. But discipleship is a huge OT concept.
  - Is. 8:16 is the one use found in the OT. *"Seal the law among my disciples."* Disciple - comes from Hebrew word *lamas* – meaning to teach or learn. IE Ps 119 teach me...
  - We see discipling actually taking place in the garden of Eden as God gives instruction to Adam and Eve. Noah had disciplined his sons, for 'the righteous' entered the Ark. Abraham heard God's voice and followed His instruction. They believed in God, heard God and followed God's leading (teachings) and they led their families to believe also.
  - The formal discipling of the nations actually begins with Israel after the Exodus.
  - Israel needed discipling. They had been many years in Egypt and in many ways had forgotten God.
  - Once delivered from Egypt, their hearts were still full of rebellion towards God. They actually made a gold calf in just a few day after being delivered.
- *"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today."* (Deuteronomy 6:4-6, NLT)
- Two truths. God is One. Love Him with everything you have. This should be our perspective.

**I. A Biblical Perspective of Discipleship**

- A. Dt 6:4, 5: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! <sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* NKJV
- B. Two Biblical Views. There are basically two perspectives: Hebrew - OT and Greek NT.
- To the Hebrew-
    - To the Hebrew: there was but one God. God was the beginning and ending of all things. Life was a gift from Him. God was at the center of all things. Everything else revolved around that.
    - Deuteronomy 6:4 *Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."* To the Hebrew/Jew this is called the Shema. It is the very core of their belief. The centrality of their faith.
    - The Hebrew placed as much value on both the inner man as well as the outer man. Man was created to have lively, vibrant relationship with God and that relationship was expressed through a cared for body in community with others.
    - This is the Hebrews approach to knowledge.
      - (1) Jewish people have always had a quest for knowledge. And a sincere desire to pass that from one generation to the next. The purpose of learning was to prepare the whole person for a life of service and obedience to God.

- (2) The Torah (first 5 books of Bible) was given by God as instruction to His people on how to live their lives according to His plan.
  - (3) It was up to the Jewish people to study it, learn it, embrace it and live it in every circumstance of life. \*\*\*A mere understanding of it was not enough--learning required a response.\*\*\*
  - (4) The goal was to pass on to children the teaching and instruction of God that they might revere and obey him. The object and aim of Hebrew teaching was knowledge of God while the Greek thought pursued knowledge of self.
  - (5) The Hebrew system starts with God, for God is the beginning of wisdom. Man can never know himself unless he comes to the knowledge of God. The greek starts with knowledge of man and seeks to rise to understanding of the ways of God, through his 'higher nature.'
  - (6) The Hebrew perspective remained fairly intact until the time of Alexander the Great. He Hellenized the world. He majorly brought Greek thought/worldview to all of the middle east and parts of Asia and Europe. By the time Christianity arrived on the scene many Jews had embraced Greek thought. Add to that the number of Greeks/Gentiles being saved and you have a big mixture of world views taking place. The first school of Theology (study of God) was in Alexandria and it was led by Greek thinkers. This is where Greek philosophy began to be mixed with the scriptures both Old and New Testaments. I want to remove some of the Greek thought that affects us negatively in the making of disciples. I will do this by making a comparison.
2. To the Greek
    - a) To the Greek - man was at the center of all things. This is where the heart of 'humanism' comes from. Man is at the center. Everything is about man. The Greeks exalted the human body because they understood man to be the center of his own world. Physical beauty was prized above all else. Nudity was common, athletics were embraced in public venues because it displayed man (the focus of the center).
    - b) The Greek sought knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself. His desire was for information and understanding--not instruction leading to obedience. The more instruction and information he acquired the better man he became in the eyes of men – because man is the center of his own world. Knowledge and information therefore became a powerful element of pride that allowed man to exalt himself over others and position himself in a place of control. The goal of knowledge was to know oneself (gnosticism). The better you know yourself the freer you can become from this world.
    - c) The Greeks had many Gods. In Abram's day, when he was called by God, to follow Him and Him only, Abram was surround by people who worshiped many gods. Because Abram heard God and chose to follow Him only he was called a friend of God and a man of great faith.
  - C. How has the Greek view affected us?
    1. The greek view can cause Christians to view God as their servant, to be on hand at any time to do their bidding.

2. The charismatic church got bogged down in the prosperity message because man moved to the center and pushed God out to be his servant.
3. Go to the Christian book store and note the number of self-help books that are on the shelves and compare that to the number of books lifting up Jesus or magnifying God.
4. Who/what does your life revolve around? It matters that He is the only one in the middle. God is One God.
5. The church struggles with this today because there are many believers who wrestle with the pressure of culture that says there are many ways to God. NO! There is just one, and His name is Jesus. That is what the Word says, and if that offends you, then you do not know God and He is definitely not in the center of your life and the way you live it. Therefore, it greatly affects how awesome a disciple you can become.

## II. To Be A Good Follower, Listen!

- A. It is important to understand that what we are now reading in Deut. 6 is God and Moses getting the people back on course after the gold calf fiasco. God was ready to kill them all, and would have, if Moses had not interceded for them. Everyone has taken a brief repose from what would have been a fatally awkward moment. God through the prophet Moses now begins a process of systematically discipling a nation.
- B. The word, "hear," comes from the Hebrew word Shema. Shema—means to perceive a message and to give attention to what is heard. To hear – means to perceive, understand and now it demands a response. *"How do I live what I have perceived?"* This is Hebrew thought! To hear requires focus and action. Hearing that leads to obedience is demanded of the people!
- C. Do you know that this is the core/central part of the Jewish faith? It is called the *Shema*. It is the beginning focal point of the Jewish faith. It was where the Jew focused. The starting point of the Jewish faith walk begins here at the Shema. It is what Jesus quotes as the greatest commandment in Mark 12:28 *Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.* NKJV The Shema.
- 1) Jews as they were going to the gas chambers would recite the Shema.
  - 2) The day was started with the Shema and it ended with the Shema.
  - 3) They encouraged one another with the Shema.
  - 4) The Shema was the last word that one said before death.
  - 5) It was the first spiritual thing a parent taught their child.
  - 6) It was proclaimed on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).
  - 7) It was written in the Mezuzah—a scripture box fastened by the door.
  - 8) It was written in the phylacteries that were bound to the forehead and arms.
- D. Are you starting to see that this portion of scripture was the starting point that God used in beginning to disciple a nation? We are studying this because we want to purpose to be better disciples. And if God would start Israel at this point, then we should connect there also.

- E. The Shema is not a prayer! It is called a prayer in many places even in Jewish writings, but it is not a prayer.
- 1) It is the Word of the Lord to Israel! It is a powerful foundational revelation of God.
  - 2) It is the foundational starting block of all that God is discipling Israel in.
  - 3) The Shema is not about behavior modification it is about God apprehending the heart of a people.
  - 4) The Shema is the Jew's supreme affirmation of God's oneness and uniqueness.
  - 5) Often the eyes were covered during the quoting of the Shema, for purpose of no distractions.
- F. Those who heard and embrace (live out Shema)...
- 1) ...Were now God's witnesses. Their very lives would now testify of Him.
  - 2) He who says the Shema bears witness to the world of who God is!

### III. What Are We Supposed to Hear?

- A. God is One--end of the matter--Love Him.
- B. The first thing that we are to hear and respond to is--Dt. 6:4 "**Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!**" It was One God who defeated many Gods in Egypt. If you are going to obey Him you have to love Him first. Love the One God who delivered you!
- 1) The Lord is One. Singular! The verse concentrates on the fact that there is one God, and that Israel owes its exclusive loyalty to him.<sup>1</sup>
    - a. James 2:19 **You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!** NKJV
    - b. 1 Cor 8:5-6 **For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),<sup>6</sup> yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.** NKJV
  - 2) Aaron and Israel had just made and bowed down to a gold calf. The Egyptians had a god for everything. What we learn from this is that we, as fallen humanity, are very susceptible to many gods. This is prominent in our world! If you are of a 'one God' persuasion you are a target in a world of many gods and many ways. You are politically incorrect.
  - 3) The first thing that God is establishing is:
    - a. God is our God, Alone
    - b. God alone is our God
    - c. There is but one God and He is our God.
    - d. The Lord is God, Worship Him only.
    - e. He is our God and there is no other!
  - 4) The fact that God is one emphasizes His Kingship.
    - a. There is but one God
    - b. This demands intimacy-we want to know him.

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<sup>1</sup> Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (30). Chicago: Moody Press.

- c. That is why whole hearted love is commanded—you can't love any other.
- d. Therefore study of the Word is expected so that you can know God better which in turn stirs intimacy with Him and wholeheartedness from us.
- C. This takes us to the second part of the Shema—Love the Lord with...
- 1) You cannot love someone you do not know. This is why God is starting this intense discipleship process with the children of Israel. He wants us to love Him and be loved by Him. You can like someone's appearance, you can read about them, you can admire them but until you know them you cannot love them.
  - 2) The Hebrew word for feelings is the action that results from them. In other words, love is connected to actions or commands; said another way, because God is love it stirs me to love and in turn keep commands not out of 'order given' but as a heart expression.
  - 3) Heart- לֵבָב (*lēbāb*). **Heart, understanding, mind** (also used in idioms such as "to set the heart upon" meaning "to think about" or "to want"). In its abstract meanings, "heart" became the richest biblical term for the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature.<sup>2</sup> Soul-nepes—appetites, desire, life or in the living of life. Connected with actions taken in life.
  - 4) Strength - meod- מְעֹד (*mē'ōd*) **exceedingly, much, force, abundance**. With intensity, vitality, the whole self not in a half hearted way.<sup>3</sup> These three words: heart, soul and strength were chosen to reinforce the absolute singularity of personal devotion to God. Thus *lēbāb* denotes the intention or will of the whole man; *nepes* means the whole self, a unity of flesh, will, and vitality; and *mē'ōd* accents the superlative degree of total commitment to Yahweh.<sup>4</sup>
  - 5) 2 Kings 23:23-25 *But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the Lord in Jerusalem.*<sup>24</sup> *Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the Lord.*<sup>25</sup> *Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses;* NKJV
- D. We are to hear and respond to the fact that the only One God is our God! Therefore love him. All our discipleship rests on this fact alone.

### Conclusion:

- Disciples grow best when they know what they are, when they plan to grow, when they are in accountability with others, and with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Giving yourself to God is an awesome thing. Giving yourself to become His witnesses in the earth in nation changing.

<sup>2, 3 & 4</sup> Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (487). Chicago: Moody Press.