



L.E.A.N. Letter

©

"Are You LIVING As A Believer Or A Disciple?"

Jesus recognized that there is a need for oneness within the body of Christ. This Truth is best identified through the (2) separate prayers Jesus prayed to the Father in regards to His disciples (**John 17:15-17**) and then for all other believers (**John 17:20-21**).

MAKING THE DISTINCTION

Once saved, you are meant to become a disciple of Christ. However, does the life you are living reflect that of a disciple or that of a believer? It is important to identify the distinction between the two (according to what Jesus expects) to better understand the life you are truly living.

The life of a BELIEVER consists of:

◆ Being born again through Spirit.

~ "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (**Romans 10:9**).

◆ Being baptized in water.

~ "Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit'" (**John 3:5-6**).

~ Once saved, being baptized is not a choice, as some have the tendency to believe. Without (full-immersion) in water, as John the Baptist and Jesus demonstrated, you do not enter the kingdom of God. This is the heavenly realm that can be accessed, while here on earth (**Matthew 6:10**), through the power of Jesus Christ's name. Without a baptism you are left ill-equipped to live a life in Christ while living on this earth.

~ Just as a baby is fully immersed in the water within the mother's womb before being born into the world, so, too, must you be fully immersed in water through your baptism. (A water sprinkling on the forehead is not a baptism, but a water anointing... a ceremonial act that was carried over from the Old Covenant.)

◆ Living the Great Commandment.

~ "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself'" (**Matthew 22:37-39**).

~ "And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us" (**1 John 3:23**).

◆ Living a life loving Jesus through obedience.

~ "Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them'" (**John 14:23**).

Please continue reading on the next page...

~ These inspired words are intended to strengthen the body of Christ so that we can eliminate unnecessary confusion and distraction of the world (spiritual obesity), and to set ourselves apart so that we can stand out as the mighty warriors we are called to be In Jesus' name! (These inspired messages/teachings are never to substitute the pure Word of God found in The Holy Bible.) ~

May you be blessed, and may you "Live L.E.A.N. (Loving Everyone As Neighbors)...Live Long!"

~Scripture passages are cited using the NIV Bible.~



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In addition to the above-mentioned, the life of a DISCIPLE consists of:

♦ Prioritizing Jesus over EVERYONE.

~ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-27).

~ To "hate" your blood relatives, as well as your own life, is not to be confused with the perverse nature of "hatred"...a variation of the word which is often used and felt within the world. To "hate" all areas of your life pertains to the serious nature of the separation needed in order to fully dedicate your life as a disciple of Christ, and to ensure that Jesus is made first priority. (This is necessary because of man's sin-nature, and strong desires of the flesh, that seeks to override the will of the Lord.)

♦ Prioritizing Jesus over EVERYTHING.

~ "In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples" (Luke 14:33).

~ Jesus makes it clear that discipleship is an all-or-nothing proposition. Giving up everything in this world allows the Lord to return back to you that in which you are meant to have while serving Him. Hence, He will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4) as long as it is not asked with wrong motives (James 4:3) or a condemned heart (1 John 3:21). Trust that there will be ample blessings that will align with your NEEDS (Philippians 4:19), but not your wants.

♦ Fulfilling the Great Commission.

~ "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:16-20).

~ Baptizing and teaching is the responsibility of every disciple. It is not only reserved for those who are in top leadership positions such as apostles and pastors.

~ Formal ceremonies are not necessary in order to perform a baptism. Waiting for the next scheduled ceremonial gathering may slow down (or in some cases, prevent) the process of entering the kingdom of God. Like John the Baptist and Jesus portrayed, all that is needed is a water source, such as a river (in their case) or a lake, pool, bathtub, etc., and a ready and willing heart.

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UNDERSTANDING THE DISTINCTION

To better understand the distinction between a believer and a disciple, consider this parable. Every Olympian is an athlete, but not every athlete is an Olympian. Athletes are a dime a dozen, whereas Olympians are comparatively few. There are many reasons for this truth. It's not a life that many athletes choose to live because of all that is expected to become an Olympian...the sacrifices made on many levels, the rigorous mental and physical preparation, uncomfortable persecution at times, the toll it takes on the mind and the body, and the time and commitment to prepare for the greatest (athletic) opportunity of their life.

Likewise, every disciple is a believer, but not every believer is a disciple. Believers are a dime a dozen, whereas disciples (like Olympians) are comparatively few (**Matthew 9:37**). There are many reasons for this Truth. It's not a life that many believers choose to live because of all that is expected to be a disciple. The first, and most important, reason is the inability to give up everyone (**Luke 14:26-27**) and everything (**Luke 14:33**) for Jesus (as mentioned previously). In addition to this Truth, there are sacrifices on many levels. There can be rigorous mental and spiritual preparation, uncomfortable persecution at times, it can take a toll on both your spiritual and physical body, and it takes time and commitment to prepare for the greatest (spiritual) opportunity of your life.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the purpose of this message is not intended to bring conviction wherever you are in your walk with Jesus, since there is no condemnation for those living a life in Christ (**Romans 8:1**). It is simply meant to bring forth awareness by ensuring that who you are calling yourself, and the life you say you are living, is truly in alignment with what Jesus is expecting. As always, self-examination is key (**2 Corinthians 13:5**) to ensure that your heart, your words, and your actions align with the Lord's will before forcing His hand to show you the Truth about your life.

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