



**MARKS**

**O F A D I S C I P L E**

# **7 MARKS OF A DISCIPLE**

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).

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## INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ commanded us to go into the world and make disciples. Bell Shoals Baptist Church is committed to that Biblical mandate. Our mission is simple: we want to follow Jesus, love people and make disciples.

Discipleship produces seven measurable characteristics, or marks, that identify us as maturing followers of Jesus. This study, designed to be completed in a one-to-one discipleship relationship, will help you identify these marks and will provide an encouraging environment in which to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

When you complete the study, you will be equipped to share this study with another person. Experiencing spiritual growth in your own life and then helping another disciple grow produces joy that is contagious, and is a very practical way to follow Jesus, love people, and make disciples!

Although not required to complete the lessons, the series of messages, "The Marks of a Disciple" from Dr. Stephen Rummage, is a helpful companion resource for this study. The messages are available at **[bellshoals.com/7marks](http://bellshoals.com/7marks)**, or on the **Stephen Rummage mobile app**.

May God bless you and those you disciple as you begin this adventure with Him.



# MARK # 1

## A DISCIPLE...PURSUES A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

*Optional Resource:*

*"How Jesus Sets Hearts on Fire"*

Available online at [bellshoals.com/7marks](http://bellshoals.com/7marks)

or on the **Stephen Rummage app** on your mobile device.

### INTRODUCTION

What goals are you pursuing? Most of us have goals for marriage, family, finances, health and other interests. The word *pursue* means to "seek eagerly" or "to press on." The Apostle Paul said "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14) The pursuit of a growing relationship with Jesus is the only goal worthy of a human soul.

Read Luke 10:38-42. Jesus was a guest in Mary and Martha's home. As you can imagine, Martha was probably overwhelmed with the task of preparing and serving a meal for their special guest. In the middle of her preparations, she noticed Mary sitting quietly at Jesus' feet, listening to everything He had to say.

1. What did Martha ask of Jesus?

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2. What was Jesus' reason for not granting Martha's request?

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Jesus was not telling Martha that serving was unimportant. Rather, He was telling her that Mary's choice to spend time with Him was very important and would not be interrupted. Although a growing relationship with Jesus will produce a life of service to God and others, the religious leaders demonstrated that we can produce an outward show of service to God but have a heart that is far from Him (Matthew 23:25-26). When our first priority is our relationship with Jesus, He will guide our pursuits and we will experience the abundant life that He promised (John 10:10b).

## **IN THE BEGINNING: RELATIONSHIPS**

Read Genesis 3:8-12. God created Adam and Eve to have a relationship with Him. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they would have wanted to be with God when they heard Him walking in the garden. But after they sinned, they were afraid of God and hid. Sin breaks our fellowship with God.

Read 1 Peter 3:18.

1. According to this passage, what did Jesus have to do so that we could come to God?

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2. What does the phrase “the righteous for the unrighteous” mean?

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3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. Explain the exchange that was made possible when Jesus died on the cross.

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Read Revelation 3:20.

Although in this passage Jesus is speaking to a first century church, the picture of Jesus standing outside a door and knocking beautifully portrays His invitation to us.

1. Why does someone invite another person over for dinner?

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2. Tell briefly about the time you prayed and asked Jesus to come into your life.

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The Bible teaches that our salvation is eternally secure. When you confess that you are a sinner, desire to turn away from your sin, and ask Jesus to come into your life, then Jesus keeps His promise and enters. Your sins are forgiven so that a relationship with Jesus can begin. Jesus paid the penalty of your sin and God now sees you clothed with the righteousness of His Son.

“Whoever has the Son has (eternal) life” (1 John 5:12). Notice this verse is in the present tense. Your relationship with Jesus begins on earth, but continues in heaven after you die. You are eternally secure in the hands of Jesus (John 10:28).

How do we grow in our relationship with Jesus? There are four practical steps we can incorporate in our lives to help us grow in our relationship with Jesus. Let’s look at each one individually.

## **WALK**

Read 1 John 1:7.

Walking in the light simply means to walk with Jesus, since Jesus is the light (John 8:12).

What are two benefits of walking with Jesus listed in this verse?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One of the reasons John wrote this letter was so that “you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus

Christ" (1 John 1:3). In verse 7, he tells how that will be possible: walking moment by moment with Jesus. The Christian life is all about relationship, with Jesus and with other believers. As we walk with Jesus, the Holy Spirit will convict us when we sin. Sin breaks our fellowship with God, but if we confess our sin, Jesus promises to forgive us and cleanse us from our sin (1 John 1:9).

## TALK

1. Read 1 John 5:14-15. Talking to Jesus is called prayer. When we pray, we can ask God for what we need.

What gives you confidence that Jesus will answer your prayer?

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2. According to James 4:3, why might God not answer your prayer?

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Jesus wants you to talk to Him about your concerns, your needs, your relationships, and your desires. He wants you to have His peace and guidance. You can learn to talk to Jesus as you would talk to your best friend (1 Peter 5:7).

Here is a suggested guide for effective praying. You can remember it by the acronym ACTS:

- Adoration**            Praise God for who He is  
(Revelation 4:11).
- Confession**        Admit your sins to God  
(1 John 1:9).
- Thanksgiving**      Thank God for His blessings  
and gifts (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- Supplication**      Ask God for what you need  
(John 16:24).

**LISTEN**

God wants to speak to you, and He wants you to listen. The Bible is God’s Word, so every time you read the Bible, God is speaking. Consistent time spent reading and thinking about God’s Word helps you grow in your relationship with Jesus.

There are several ways you can spend time in God’s Word. Read each passage below and record the benefit gained from listening to God’s Word in that way.

1.      Romans 10:17  

Method	Benefit
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2.      Deuteronomy 17:19  

Method	Benefit
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3.      Ezra 7:10  

Method	Benefit
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4.      Matthew 4:3-4; Deuteronomy 8:3  

Method	Benefit
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5. Psalm 1:2-3

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Method

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Benefit

The more time you spend in God's Word, the faster you will grow in your relationship with Jesus. The last method, meditation, works with each of the first four methods: hearing, reading, studying and memorizing. For instance, when you hear a sermon in church or on the radio, you can ask yourself: How does what I just heard apply to me? When you read, study, and memorize Scripture, meditation occurs as you allow God's Spirit to speak to your mind and your heart.

Which of these five methods do you use regularly?

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Which method would you like add to your spiritual disciplines?

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How can you incorporate this new method in your daily life?

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## **ABIDE**

Read John 15:5.

Jesus uses the illustration of the vine and the branches to teach what it looks like to abide in Him. The branch gets all its nourishment and ability to produce fruit from the vine. Fruit does not appear overnight, but if the branch remains attached to the vine, fruit will come. Our primary job as disciples is to remain in a moment-to-moment, growing relationship with Jesus. When we do,

He will produce His fruit in our lives.

## **THE RESULT: YOUR HEART WILL BURN FOR JESUS**

After the two men talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, they described their hearts as burning within them (Luke 24:32). They were compelled to immediately return to Jerusalem and tell other believers what had happened to them. As you grow in your relationship to Jesus, the Holy Spirit will lead you into action on behalf of God's Kingdom.

Read John 12:1-3.

Here we see Martha, Mary, and Jesus again, but now it is five days before Jesus' crucifixion. Compare this account with the story about Mary and Martha at the beginning of this lesson.

1. How are the stories similar?

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2. How are they different?

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Because Mary listened closely to Jesus, she understood that His crucifixion was at hand. The Spirit of God burned in her heart to act. In a humble and beautiful act of worship, Mary poured out costly perfume and anointed Jesus' feet.

As it did in Mary, a growing relationship with Jesus will

always produce a life on fire for God, resulting in godly activity.

## **APPLICATION**

Read Psalm 5:3 and Mark 1:35.

What do these two verses have in common?

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An important discipline in the life of a disciple is spending time with Jesus daily. An effective way to do this is to establish a consistent time when you can read your Bible and allow God to speak to you through His Word. A good place to start is in the Gospel of John. You might read a chapter at a time, or small sections of verses at a time. Take time to think about what God says to you through His Word. Then, talk to God using the ACTS prayer guide. As you do these things regularly, you will find yourself growing in your relationship with Jesus.

Jesus sensed the need to start each day with a devotional time with God. Should we do any less?

### **SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSE:**

*“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”*

1 Peter 2:2