



## **I. WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE ~ “Lord what will you have me do?” Acts 9:6**

The purpose of our lives is to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. St. Paul informs us “for this is the will of God, your sanctification” 1 Thessalonians 4:3. The purpose of our whole life can be summarized in one word: discipleship.

## **II. HOW DO WE ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE**

We achieve our purpose by becoming something other than what we currently are. We must follow the words of St. Paul: “Put off your old self who is corrupted according to your sinful nature, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on your new self” Ephesians 4:22.

“All Christian life, therefore, must begin with a deep yearning to become a new person in Christ, and an inner readiness to ‘put off the old self’ – a readiness to become something fundamentally different” Dietrich Von Hildebrand.

Discipleship is about transformation in Christ. It is about moving from one state of life to the next.

## **III. WHAT STEPS DOES JESUS PRESCRIBE FOR TRANSFORMATION?**

**STEP 1:** “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” Matthew 4:17.

“Unconditional readiness to change and true penitence constitutes the first foundation of our progress towards the goal which God’s mercy has assigned us...without a radical breach with our past sins we can demonstrate no readiness to be transformed by Christ” Von Hildebrand

If we are going to change direction, we must take off the old self and put on the new self. This will require a conscience evaluation of our lives; a turning away from sin and turning towards Christ.

**STEP 2:** “Come, follow me” Matthew 4:19.

“To us all has the beatifying call of Christ been addressed: follow me. Nor do we follow it unless, relinquishing everything, we say with St. Paul, ‘Lord, what will you have me do?’” Von Hildebrand.

The decision to follow Christ is a decision to be transformed by Christ. It is a complete surrender to the will of God. The full readiness to change is present in those who have responded to the Lord’s invitation and follow him, as the Apostles did, “leaving everything behind and followed him” (Luke 5:11). What this means is that we are called to relinquish our old self, and open ourselves up entirely to Christ’s actions in our lives.

This is ultimately what a disciple is. Someone who has chosen to put off the old self and follows Jesus. Therefore, we can say with St. Paul, “It is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me” Galatians 2:20.

**STEP 3:** “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” Matthew 6:33.

“We must seek first the kingdom of God. Our search for the kingdom of God and His justice must be the consuming passion of our souls...day and night we must be swayed by the burning desire that God be glorified in all things” Von Hildebrand.

This includes the glorification of God in our words, thoughts and actions. It is a complete surrender to our Lord’s request that we seek “the one thing necessary” (Luke 10:42). For, although we are “troubled by many things” (Luke 10:41), all of our actions must be evaluated according to the one necessary thing: God’s will.

To model our Lord in action, we must first and foremost unconditionally seek the will of the Father. One supreme point of view must govern our entire life, and in subordination to that view all else is judged and settled. We must put on the mind of Christ who says, “I have come to do the will of my Father” John 6:38.

A disciple, like Christ, is someone who follows the will of the father. It finds its highest expressed in the words of Mary, “behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word” Luke 1:38. Seeking the Kingdom of God is a surrender of our will to God’s purpose for our lives.

**STEP 4: Ask for the Holy Spirit**

“How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” Luke 11:13. If we are going to follow God’s will for our lives, we cannot do so without the aid of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who will guide our lives and enable us to seek first the kingdom of God. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth” John 16:13.

“No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’ [follow Christ] except by the Holy Spirit. Every time we begin to pray to Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit who draws us on the way of prayer...That is why the Church invites us to call upon the Holy Spirit every day, especially at the beginning and the end of every important action” (CCC 2670). If we are to direct all our actions towards seeking God’s will, it is the Spirit which gives us the clarity and strength to do so.

The Holy Spirit not only directs our lives towards Christ, he helps us bear spiritual fruit, “evidence of our repentance” Matthew 3:8. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. – John 15:8.

At the heart of discipleship is repentance, following the Lord, seeking his will and invoking the Holy Spirit so that we are better able to bear spiritual fruit.

#### **IV. HOW DO WE LIVE OUT OUR CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP**

There are certain characteristics that embody a disciple:

##### **STEP 1: WORSHIP**

“Worship the Lord your God and serve him only” Luke 4:8. Worships helps us order our priorities, placing the “one thing necessary” at the forefront of our devotion and attention.

We all have a spiritual hunger and an inborn urge to worship. If we don’t worship God we will find something else to worship, whether it is our job, family, money, sports, or even ourselves. Instead of worshipping God and serving him, our lives are at the service of other masters Luke 6:13. We become slaves to sinful behaviours that run contrary to God’s will.

That is why the Lord tells Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, this is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me” Exodus 8:1. Our primary escape from slavery and towards freedom is worship. It is a movement from the bondage of sin to freedom in the life of the Spirit.

“How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, offered himself unblemished to God, to cleanse our conscience from dead works to worship the living God” Hebrews 9:14. Worship is the bridge between the bondage of sin and the freedom we receive from Jesus Christ. A disciple is someone who has been freed from the bondage of sin, who is now free to worship the Lord.

In this way, the words of Mary become our own, “the mighty one has done great things for me, and *holy* is his name” Luke 1:49.

## **STEP 2: CONNECT**

We were not meant to walk through this life on our own (Romans 12:5). “I am convinced that it’s possible to achieve community without discipleship, but it’s impossible to achieve discipleship without community” Christ Surrat.

Being part of a community means we:

- Meet together – Hebrews 10:25
- Encourage each other – 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- Pray for each other – James 5:16
- Serve each other with love – Galatians 5:13
- Forgive each other – Colossians 3:13
- We need to mentor each other and be an example for each other. “*Imitate me*, just as I also imitate Christ” 1 Corinthians 11:1.

We prosper as disciple if we are part of a community, as “iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17). We cannot walk the Christian vocation alone. We need to be in community with other believers.

## **STEP 3: GROW**

“Jesus said to the people who believed in him, ‘You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings’” John 8:31. The best way to remain faithful to Jesus’ teaching is by reading scripture and personal prayer.

It is through reading the Bible we that we encounter Jesus. “Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock” Matthew 7:24.

It is through personal prayer that we are able to hear and discern the will of the Father. That is why “Jesus went off by himself to pray” Luke 5:16. Jesus prayed before every great moment of significant in his life Jesus: before starting his public ministry he spent 40 days in the desert (Matthew 4:1-17); before choosing the apostles he spent the evening alone in prayer (Luke 6:12-13); in the garden before his death he surrendered to the Father’s will, “not my will but your will be done” Luke 22:42. It is through prayer we discover the will of God.

A disciple is someone who encounters the will of God and responds to it through prayer.

## **STEP 4: GIVE (Service)**

Friends and followers of God are designated as “servants of the Lord” in scripture. Jesus said, “I have come not to be served but to serve” (Mark 10:45). That’s how he wants his friends to behave as well. We must include service in our lifestyle. Our hearts are shaped for service. God made us that way because he wants us to be like him.

## **STEP 5: GIVE (Tithing)**

Money brings security and freedom so giving it away can be a risk. Jesus says that the greatest obstacle to putting faith and trust in God is money. Money represents the greatest competition that God has to our hearts. Nothing grows our faith and trust in God like giving. God is generous, he is a giver, and we can use our money to be more like him. The other bonus to giving is that God uses our generosity as an opportunity to abundantly bless us (Malachi 3:10). Giving also increases the spiritual fruit of joy, kindness and generosity in our lives (Galatians 5:22).

## **STEP 6: SHARE**

We are instructed by Jesus “Oo make disciples” Matthew 28:19. This is what is known as the great commission – Jesus gives us a specific task to be accomplished.

If the Holy Spirit enables us to bear fruit in our lives, then other disciples will be part of the fruit that we bear. As Rick Warren says, “The fruit of a disciple is to make other disciples.”

We must proclaim the gospel so that others may “repent and believe” Mark 1:15, in order that they too may discover their true purpose and begin to ask, “Lord, what will you have me do?”

## **IN CONCLUSION**

“We must, then, lose our souls so as to find it. In other words, we should renounce all vain effort to incorporate Christ into our life, but endeavour wholeheartedly, with the full sanction of our central personality, to transpose our life into Christ and entrust it to Him; indeed, to be possessed by Him.” Von Hildebrandt.

It is only in this way that we may answer the question, Lord, what will you have me do? It is only in this way that we will have the ability to fulfill our purpose and become true disciples of Jesus Christ.

## **PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS**

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will. All I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me. Amen.