

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:

We've established that Jesus' overriding goal for us is that we make disciples, that is, people who have repented of their sins and who are learning and obeying His commandments. Jesus further defined what a disciple is in John 8:32:

If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

True disciples, according to Jesus, are those who are abiding, or making their home, in His word. As they learn His truth from His Word, they are progressively "set free," and the later context indicates that Jesus was speaking about being set free from sin (see John 8:34-36). So once again we see that by Jesus' definition, disciples are learning and obeying His commandments.

Jesus later said,

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8; emphasis added).

Thus, by Jesus' definition, disciples are glorifying God by bearing fruit. Those who bear no fruit are not proved to be His disciples.

Jesus more specifically defined that identifying fruit of His true disciples in Luke 14:25-33. Let's begin by reading just verse 25:

Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them...

Was Jesus satisfied because great multitudes were "going along" with Him? Had he attained His goal now that He had succeeded in gaining a large congregation?

No, Jesus was not satisfied that great multitudes were hanging around Him, listening to His sermons, watching His miracles, and sometimes eating His food. Jesus is looking for people who love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. He wants people who obey His commandments. He wants disciples. Thus He said to those multitudes who were going along with Him:

If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

There can be no mistake about it: Jesus laid down a requirement for a person to be His disciple. But must His disciples actually hate those people whom they would naturally love the most? That seems unlikely since we're commanded in Scripture to honor our parents and love our spouses and children.

Jesus must have been speaking in hyperbole, that is, exaggeration for emphasis. At bare minimum, however, He meant nothing less than this: If we are to be His disciples, we must love Him supremely, much more than the people we naturally love the most. Jesus' expectation is certainly reasonable since He is God whom we should love with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

Don't forget—the job of ministers is to make disciples, which means they are to produce the kind of people who love Jesus supremely, who love Him much, much more than they love even their spouses, children and parents. It would be good for every minister reading this to ask himself, "How am I succeeding at producing people like that?"

How do we know if someone loves Jesus? Jesus told us in John 14:21: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." So it would certainly be reasonable to conclude that people who love Jesus more than their spouses, children and parents are also people who keep His commandments. Disciples of Jesus obey His commandments.