

**Twelve Ordinary Men**  
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**Discipleship Ministry**

- Why do people find the disciples so fascinating?
  - They were perfectly ordinary men.
    - Not scholars or theologians: they were more outsiders to established religion.
    - Not outstanding with natural talents or intellectual abilities: they were prone to mistakes, misstatements, wrong attitudes, lapses of faith, bitter failure.
    - Jesus even mentioned they were slow learners and somewhat dense (Luke 24:25).
  - They spanned the political spectrum.
    - A Zealot determined to overthrow the Romans.
    - A tax collector hated by Romans and Jews alike.
    - At least four were fishermen.
    - Others may have been tradesmen or craftsmen.
    - Most from Galilee, an agricultural area and an intersection of trade routes.
- As ordinary as they were:
  - They carried on the ministry of Jesus after the resurrection.
  - They turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).
  - They were personally selected by Jesus.
    - He knew them only as the Creator could (John 1:47).
    - He knew their faults long before He chose them, even about Judas (John 6:70, 13:21-27).
  - They were trained in months, more than years.
    - They learned Scripture and theology.
    - They learned how to pray, forgive and serve.
- After all this intensive discipleship training:
  - On the night He was betrayed, they all fled.
  - They appeared to be a monumental failure.
    - They believed they had failed, and apparently went back to fishing.
    - And they were not very good at it (John 21:3-4).
  - Yet they returned to their apostolic calling.
    - They were empowered at Pentecost.
    - Their legacy is with us today.
    - They were living proof that God's strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 2:16).
- What about the length of time with Jesus?
  - By the time Jesus identified and called the Twelve from the larger group of followers, half of His earthly ministry was over.
    - First half – ministry with the crowds.
    - Second half – investment in the disciples.
  - Eighteen months, and there was no plan “B”
    - Jesus had a mission that could not be stopped.
    - “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor 1:27).

- The Twelve were often called disciples.
  - Mathetes* – Mt 10:1, 11:1, 20:17, Luke 9:1.
    - Meaning – learner of student, of which there were multitudes.
  - The Twelve were chosen for a unique office.
    - Apostolos* – messenger or sent out ones, as ambassadors or spokesmen for Christ.
    - Luke loves the term, exclusively uses the Twelve.
    - Matthew writes it only once (10:2).
    - Mark writes it only once (6:30).
    - Otherwise Mark uses the Twelve (3:14, 4:10, 6:7, 9:35, 10:32, 11:11, 14:10, 17, 20, 43).
- Luke 10 – the 70 were sent out 2 by 2.
  - Literally *sent out ones*, word *apostle* not used.
  - Only Luke records this mission.
- The apostolic office:
  - Acts 14:14 and Pauline epistles make it clear about Paul having this same office.
  - He was the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13, 1 Tim 2:7, 2 Tim 1:11).
  - Paul had the same authority (2 Cor 11:5).
  - Paul – apostle born out of time (1 Cor 15:8).
- Is the number 12 significant?
  - After the resurrection, the apostles chose Matthias to fill the vacancy of Judas.
  - What were the qualifications? (Acts 1:23-26).
    - Leadership and exclusive teaching authority.
  - From Pentecost, all believers looked to the apostles’ leadership (Acts 2:37).
  - They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42).
- Supernatural power?
  - Signs / wonders (Mt 10:1, Mk 6:7, 13, Lk 9:1-2, Acts 2:3-4, 5:12).
  - Authentication of the gospel truth, verification it received from Christ himself.
  - The Twelve were the foundation of the church, Christ being the cornerstone (Eph 2:20).
- Key passages to start:
  - Mt 10:1-4, Mk 3:13-19, Lk 6:12-16, Jn 6:60-71
- Matthew 4:17-22
  - What was the message of Jesus?
  - What is the relation between repentance, the kingdom of heaven and the light?
  - How has coming to know Jesus been like coming from darkness into light?
- Matthew 4:17-22
  - What invitation does Jesus give these fishermen?
  - What seems unusual about their response?
  - What prior knowledge of Jesus do you think they had (4:13, 17)?
  - How might have Zebedee have felt (4:22)?

•Matthew 4:17-22

–In what ways does God’s Kingdom seem present now for you? In way ways does it seem “not yet?”

–Spiritually, where are you?

- Preparing the nets?
- Leaving the boat?
- Following hard after Jesus?
- Feeling left behind?

•Matthew 10:1-4

–What did Jesus do before sending out His men?

–Why did Jesus choose a Zealot (guerrilla fighter committed to overthrow Rome) to be on His team with a tax collector (who worked with Rome)?

•Mark 3:13-19

–What qualities did the Twelve possess which might have caused Jesus to select them?

–What are they to do?

- Be with Jesus – what does this mean for you?
- Then go out to preach – what does this mean to you?

–What motivates you to seek after Jesus?

•Luke 6:12-16

–In the context of chapter six, what is significant about Jesus calling these men?

- A Sabbath controversy: the Twelve eating grain, the man with a withered hand.
- The Twelve may have been counter-culture?

–Choosing them was a renunciation of formal Judaism; a judgment on its spiritual leaders.

•These men were FAT: Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

•John 6:60-71

–What teaching do Jesus’ followers find so unacceptable (6:54-56)?

- Why do you think Peter and the others decided to stay? How does this relate to 6:65?
- What words of Jesus do you find hard to accept?
- Have you known anyone who stopped following Jesus? How did their action affect you?
- How do people today make Jesus into an errand boy for their own personal agendas?