

BECOMING A

Beloved

D I S C I P L E

10 Steps to a Deeper Relationship with Jesus

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INTRODUCTION

I remember the first time I heard Kari Jobe sing, *The More I Seek You*:

*“I want to sit at Your feet, drink from the cup in Your hand,
Lay back against You and breathe, feel Your heart beat.
This love is so deep, it’s more than I can stand.
I melt in Your peace, it’s overwhelming.”¹*

I thought, *what on earth is she talking about?* Sit with Him? Feel His heartbeat? I had never been so overwhelmed by Him that it was more than I could stand!

I was raised in the church where a relationship with God was quite formal. I saw Him as holy and powerful, but not really as my “friend.” Growing up, our family went to church three times a week. We attended Sunday School classes, sang in the choir, and did all the right service activities. I gave my public testimony and was baptized at an early age. Once married, my husband and I joined a local nondenominational church – serving on the Missions Committee and Deacon Board. But I soon found that simply *doing* the right Christian things did not bring deep, satisfying joy.

I believed in Jesus as my Savior but was not enjoying an intimate relationship with Him. I was doing all that I thought God required but needed more of Him in my life. I wanted to go deeper. In fact, I wanted ALL that was available to me. If there was something I was missing (and clearly there was), I wanted it. If other people were laying back against Him and drinking from the cup in His hand, I wanted to as well!

It took many years before I realized that true contentment, peace, and satisfaction can only come through an abiding and intimate relationship with Jesus. Fellowship with Him is what makes our joy complete.² Fullness of joy is found only in His presence.³

Going Through the Motions

Many Christians go through the motions of attending church and following all the rules. Armed with discipline and determination, they do the best they can to read their Bibles and pray. But with little or no relationship with Jesus, they are left wondering, *is this all there is?*

There are far too many lukewarm believers experiencing dry, unfulfilled lives. Should we accept that *average* is all God wants for them? Where is the divine power that enables us to look different from the rest of the world? People should look at our lives and know there is something different about us – on the inside.

Adequate or Abundant Life?

He has promised us the same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead, an all-surpassing peace, and overflowing joy. Growing in the knowledge of who God is and pursuing an intimate relationship with Jesus is the key to experiencing this more *abundant life*.⁴ You will never be satisfied just to know *about* God – you need more of God Himself, through real, personal experience. Daily fellowship with Him will release His anointing to accomplish His purposes for your life.

The Bible says, “*Be filled with the Holy Spirit.*”⁵ This means that you have to remain full of the Spirit of God by pursuing Him on a daily basis. It’s possible to have a glass of water that is not filled to capacity. It’s possible to have a battery that is not completely charged. It’s possible to have food in your stomach, but not feel completely full. You need to continually engage in your relationship with Jesus the same way you continually re-fill your stomach with food to survive.

God is looking for men and women who are willing to walk in moment-by-moment dependence on Him. His eyes “*range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.*”⁶ Jesus is looking for the kind of follower that is no longer content to “just get by” and instead wants to experience everything He has to offer in this life.

Perhaps you’re doing this study because you are at a turning point in your life. Given that it is not “accidentally” on your agenda today, let’s trust that God plans to use it to draw you closer to Himself. Now you can either continue in an “adequate” Christian life, or you can get more and more on fire, becoming a *beloved disciple* that is passionately devoted to Him. Are you ready for more?

More is Available

If you only know the God of history, your God is not big enough. It is possible to know all the familiar Bible stories and still not really know Jesus. And you make little progress in a personal relationship with Him if you only absorb what you have read and been taught. It’s time to stop learning from human sources. He will not be found in textbooks.

You can only know Him more fully by going deeper in the Spirit. You will not be transformed by knowledge but by His love. This requires a transition from *head* to *heart*. He just needs your heart fully devoted and pliable in His hand.

“Nothing can prevent the spiritual rejuvenation of the soul that insists on having it.”

A.W. Tozer

He is Calling

God's original plan was to have intimate fellowship with those He created. He created you for Himself – He wants a relationship with you more than anything! He said, *“I don't want your sacrifices – I want your love; I don't want your offerings – I want you to know me.”*⁷ He wants you, personally and individually and uniquely, to spend time with Him.

Even if you have strayed, He desires to draw you back to Himself. James 4:8 says, *“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”* While you have busied yourself with other interests, He has still been occupied with you. When you abandon all your other pursuits, you will see that He has never deserted you. His love is constant – unchanged by time, place, or circumstance. It is only you that has chosen to separate yourself from Him.

Seek and You Will Find

If you seek Him you will find Him.⁸ To *seek* means to “desire, pursue, and require something; to go after it with all of your strength.” Jeremiah 29:13 says, *“You will find Me when you search for Me with **all** your heart.”* The Amplified version says to seek Him as your *“first and vital necessity.”*

No one has ever sought Him in vain. *“He is a rewarder of those who **diligently** seek Him.”*⁹ Not those who are only half-heartedly wishing, but those who are intentional and determined in their pursuit of Him. The Lord said, *“I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me **diligently** will find Me.”*¹⁰

Many people say they want guidance from God, but they don't passionately desire Him or lay aside other things to pursue Him with all their strength. Each day, you should desire to know Jesus more fully than you did the day before. You will need to forfeit all else to become a *beloved disciple*.

When you insist on having more of Him, you immediately attract the attention of the Holy Spirit. He has so much more in store for you. Could it even be *overwhelming*, as Kari Jobe's song said? Absolutely! Would you expect anything less from the God of the universe?

“Modern man can go everywhere, do everything. But only a rare person now and then is curious enough to want to know God.”

A.W. Tozer

Through the Narrow Gate

There are so many people just lingering at the entrance to the Christian life – like a sheep standing at an open gate, gazing longingly at the fresh pasture available on the other side. Why? Jesus tells us the gate is open, but not wide. *“...Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and **only a few find it.**”*¹¹

He offers His “*secret counsel to the righteous.*”¹² Psalm 25:14 says, “*The Lord confides in those who fear Him.*” Jesus also told His disciples, “*The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but **not to the crowds.***”¹³

Not everyone is going to get it. I want to know the secrets of God – I want Him to confide in me! He also has a deeper revelation of Himself to share with you if you are open to receive it.

A Heart’s Desire

Some people in the Bible clearly demonstrated a passion to know God more intimately than others around them. The great ones of the Kingdom have always been those who loved God more than others did. Those who pursued Him more intensely were rewarded with more of His presence:

- Moses talked with God face to face.¹⁴
- Abraham was called “*a friend of God.*”¹⁵
- Enoch “*walked with God.*”¹⁶
- Daniel was highly esteemed.¹⁷ The King James version says he was “*greatly beloved.*”
- Mary, the mother of Jesus, was highly favored. An angel of the Lord told her the “*Lord is with you.*”¹⁸
- Job was a man who feared God. God Himself said, “*There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright.*”¹⁹
- David was described as “*a man after God’s own heart.*”²⁰

Even today, it’s obvious that some people are closer to God than others. They routinely talk of hearing from God, walking with God, and seeing God work in their lives. These “beloved disciples” speak about Jesus as if they know Him personally! They are sure of Him. They have a single-minded focus. Can you identify some people that seem to enjoy this kind of close, intimate relationship with Jesus? Thomas doubted the Resurrected Savior until he saw the scars for himself.²¹ Like him, do you stubbornly doubt the experience of these beloved disciples?

Intimate with Jesus

Why do some people seem to have a more intimate relationship than others? Does He just like them better?

No – what is available to one is available to all. You can be as close to Jesus as you choose to be. The Bible teaches us that we have a lot to do with the level of intimacy we experience with Him. Like any relationship, you must work at it. It won’t happen on its own. It will take your focused time and attention. You must ask for more, and put more in. You have to want it, pursue it, and chase after it.

Perhaps you feel that you are simply not one of those people capable of a deeper relationship with Jesus. Some Christians just do not believe *they* have been called to a deep, intimate relationship with Him. But you must trust that you have been invited to experience the

depths of Jesus Christ just as surely as you were invited to receive His salvation. Jesus prayed that we might be *“one with Him, just as He is one with the Father.”*²² The whole purpose of this life is for us to enter into the closest possible relationship with Jesus.

I used to feel jealous and insecure that others seemed to have better spiritual gifts than I did. I believed He must love them more or had more planned for their lives. Maybe I was just ordinary. But one of His ‘special ones’ quickly reassured me that He described me as “lovely,” “phenomenal,” and “precious.” What if we all started to believe that’s how He sees us?

Consider where you have become spiritually sluggish. Jesus said, *“Come out from among them and be separate.”*²³ Or are you so satisfied with your own experience that you want nothing more? It is dangerous to stop learning and growing in Him. Evaluate the stubbornness of your heart. Some would rather do anything than to obey His command *“Come to Me.”*²⁴ But a personal relationship with Him changes everything. Be willing to look foolish enough to come.

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You Set the Level

In your personal relationships, you are obviously closer to some people than others. You probably have a wide circle of family and friends, but you have an “inner circle” of closer friends and confidants. You share more with this small group than you would with everyone else. Do you think God treats us this same way?

God’s Invitation to the Israelites

We see this pattern between God and the Israelites in Exodus 19-24. God wanted all the Israelites to consecrate themselves and gather at the foot of Mount Sinai for a very special event. Everyone was welcome to gather there, but no one was to go further up the mountain without specific invitation. On the third day, the Lord appeared in a thick cloud to all the people. Then He invited Moses, Aaron, and 70 of the elders to climb the mountain and eat a covenant meal with Him. They got to enjoy dinner in the presence of God! After the meal, Joshua and Moses were invited to climb up the mountain to an even higher level. Finally, Moses alone was invited to approach the Lord. There, God spoke with Moses *“as a man speaks with his friend.”*²⁵

Why would God let only some of the Israelites enjoy His presence for a meal, and then invite only Moses to meet with Him more closely? These levels of intimacy seem to correspond with *maturity* and *commitment*. Remember that the Israelites who were content to simply gather at the base of the mountain were the same ones that later pooled their jewelry to make a golden calf to worship! On the other hand, Moses and Joshua were both known for their courage, humility, and dedication to the Lord. Moses had personally sacrificed a life of luxury in Pharaoh’s palace. He spent 40 years in the desert preparing for God to use him to set His people free. He took many risks to obey God in leading the Israelites out of Egypt. And we know that whenever Joshua wasn’t serving Moses, he could be found praying in the tabernacle.²⁶ Sent ahead to spy on the Promised Land, Joshua was one of only two who came back with a good

report that demonstrated great faith.²⁷ Eventually, God chose Joshua to replace Moses to lead the Israelites into their new homeland.

The Construction of God's Temple

It's interesting that God called for similar boundaries or levels of intimacy when His first temple was built. He provided Moses with clear instructions for how to create a place where He could dwell with the Israelites on earth saying, "*Make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.*"²⁸ The specific layout of the tabernacle and its courtyard was significant because it illustrates God's prescribed way for man to approach Him. "*Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.*"²⁹

In the outer court area, everyone was permitted to gather and worship. They could bring sacrifices to atone for their sins and cleanse themselves at the laver. But only priests were permitted to enter the "Holy Place," or inner court. Finally, the "Holy of Holies" was a place set apart for the Ark of the Covenant and mercy seat. Whoever entered into the Holy of Holies was entering the very presence of God. Only one high priest was permitted to enter this area once a year.

Thick curtains and veils separated the holy areas from the rest of the temple. The veil served as a barrier to make sure that no one carelessly and irreverently entered into God's presence. Even when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he had to meticulously prepare by washing himself, putting on special clothing, burning incense, and bringing a sacrifice to atone for sins.

It's clear there are some specific requirements for drawing near to such a holy God. While we all have direct access to God since the veil was torn,³⁰ His prescribed pattern calls for greater holiness, maturity, and commitment as we get closer and closer to His inner sanctuary.

Followers of Jesus

Jesus demonstrated the same pattern again in the New Testament. He enjoyed various levels of intimacy with the group that followed Him during His earthly ministry. Jesus allowed at least 70 people to travel with Him regularly.³¹ And following His resurrection, we know that He took the time to personally appear to more than 500 followers.³²

But from this larger group of followers, Jesus chose 12 disciples to share a deeper level of intimacy. They got to walk, talk, and eat with Him on a daily basis. Out of those 12, there were three (Peter, James, and John) that were allowed to experience several unique and special situations separate from the rest. But even among those three privileged disciples, only one was considered the *beloved* disciple. John described himself many times as the "one that Jesus loved." John felt comfortable enough to rest his head on Jesus's chest at the Passover meal.³³ Perhaps to lay back against Him to breathe...and feel His heartbeat (as in the lyrics at the start of this chapter)?

Jesus loved them all, and they all loved Jesus, but some experienced Him more intimately than the rest. Today, not everybody is willing to pay the price to be close to Jesus. Not everyone is willing to commit the time to become a *beloved* disciple.

From the Shallows to the Depths

I love the ocean. Growing up in the middle of the United States, I rarely had access to it. Now that I live on the East coast, I go as often as I can! While spending long days at the beach, I have noticed that some people like to sit on the shore, basking in the sun. Others occasionally dip their toes in the water. Some study the scene cautiously and test the intensity of the water before venturing in, all the while holding the hand of another. And then there are those who dive straight into the crashing waves and enjoy the full refreshment and excitement of the adventure.

This parallels our own levels of intimacy with Jesus. The cautious ones who stay on the shore feel like they are still in charge. They are not willing to abandon themselves completely. It's true there are some real dangers in the ocean. I have been knocked around by a few big waves and seen others affected by riptides, not to mention the possibility of sharks, jellyfish, and stingrays in the water.

The roughest part of the ocean is right where the waves crash onto the shore. Once you get past that point, the depth of the ocean can be quite calm and peaceful. In our early walk with Jesus, it's not uncommon to encounter strong resistance from the enemy and those around us – just like trying to wade through those crashing waves. But continuing to pursue Him into the depths is very rewarding. You are not meant to remain on the safety of the shore forever. By “staying out” you are “missing out.” It's time to dive in!

How Deep?

We determine what depth of God's presence we will experience in our lives by our degree of desire, commitment, and level of mature obedience to His instruction in our lives. You wouldn't put an immature infant in the crashing waves of the ocean. You don't share your deepest secrets with casual friends who haven't established that they are trustworthy with that personal information. In the same way, Jesus walked more closely with a select few while here on earth.

We see a consistent pattern throughout the Bible where everyone is welcome, but few choose to go deeper and reach a higher level of spiritual maturity. I don't know about you, but I want to get as close to Jesus as I can! I want to become a *beloved disciple*.

Choosing Discipleship

A disciple is someone willing to learn. At the time of Jesus, gifted teachers walked from town to town interpreting the Scriptures in the village synagogues. A term of respect for these teachers was *Rabbi*. It literally means “my master.” The rabbi's goal was to raise up disciples who would later carry on his teaching. The Hebrew word for “disciple” is *talmidim*, meaning “one who is dedicated to learning a rabbi's understanding of Scripture and his way of living it out.” Rabbis took on disciples who studied under their direction for years, traveling with them everywhere they went. Because the disciples traveled with their rabbi on a daily basis, lessons

could be taught anywhere – in vineyards, marketplaces, or in open fields. The disciples would sit on the ground or on mats at the feet of the rabbi.³⁴

The rabbi would serve as a living example of what it meant to apply God’s word to everyday life. To follow a rabbi meant that the apprentice disciple would try to imitate their rabbi, learning not only from what he said but what he did. The task of the disciple was to become as much like the rabbi as possible. And given the amount of time spent together and the depth of issues discussed, the bond between a rabbi and his disciple would become very close.

One of the first recorded examples of the rabbi-disciple relationship is found in 1 Kings 19. Elijah, one of Israel’s greatest prophets, called Elisha to become his disciple. The young man gave up a prosperous life to become Elijah’s personal servant, traveling with him everywhere he went. He spent many years studying *from* Elijah, in order to become *like* Elijah. Through this prolonged intimate relationship with Elijah, Elisha was eventually able to carry on his ministry as a prophet to Israel.

Learning from Rabbi Jesus

The Bible makes it clear that this is the kind of relationship Jesus had with his own disciples. And as they walked and talked with Him, their hearts were transformed over time. The changes that Jesus worked in His disciple’s lives did not come easily or quickly. There was no one-day “extreme makeover” that our culture has become accustomed to. Discipleship was a slow process of learning from the Rabbi. Even after walking with Jesus for several years his disciples still messed up! But He never lost patience. He simply kept teaching and correcting them, allowing them time to grow.

As followers of Jesus, we are still called to be His disciples. And He works the same way in our lives. He wants us to mature through constant close connection with Him. Today, we sometimes confuse discipleship with “discipline.” Both the vegan and the marathon runner exhibit tremendous discipline, but have they learned greater self-control or God-control? Of course, discipline is important in your spiritual life. But our goal for discipleship is not just to grow in self-discipline, but to be transformed into His likeness.

Discipleship requires personal, passionate devotion. Many who call themselves Christians today are not truly devoted to Jesus. To be a faithful follower requires complete commitment. Just like Elisha sacrificed everything to follow Elijah, most of Jesus’ disciples dropped everything immediately to follow Him. Jesus reminded one hesitant potential disciple that “*No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*”³⁵ Is there anything holding you back?

Discipleship has always been optional – “*If anyone would follow Me...*”³⁶ This is a deliberate choice and act of your will. It is not something that will happen accidentally. “*Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...*”³⁷ You will need to be in a daily, living relationship with Jesus as your Rabbi to become a beloved disciple. He doesn’t expect perfection – just look at His first disciples! But He does expect you to sit at His feet so that you can learn how to live out His truth in your life.

In the Front Row

I have been teaching university students for more than 25 years. I always find it interesting which students choose to sit right in the front row and which prefer to sit as far in the back as possible. Everyone ends up hearing the same information, but the students in the front want to be right in the middle of the action – absorbing as much energy and excitement as they can.

I found myself doing the same thing on a recent trip to Israel. In this case, I was the student looking for the front row seat! We had a fabulous tour guide named Erez. He was a believing Jew who could tell us all about the Jewish culture *and* about his Messiah. And though he had probably told the same stories hundreds of times, the excitement still poured out of him at every stop.

Erez talked all the time. The problem: the streets of Jerusalem are narrow. And the dusty paths in the mountains around the Sea of Galilee are narrow. You don't necessarily have to walk "single file", but you typically can't walk more than two abreast. So those who positioned themselves up close to him were going to hear more stories than the rest. You can be sure that's exactly where I wanted to be most of the time! I didn't want to miss a single detail.

I imagine that's how Peter, James, and John felt about their Rabbi. I'm guessing that as they walked all over Israel for those three years they each followed Jesus as closely as they could. When He stopped to tell a parable, they probably put their mats down right at His feet. This would have set them apart from the other disciples. On the narrow paths, perhaps John jockeyed for the spot where he could hang onto every word. This would have allowed him to absorb every detail and not miss an opportunity to learn from the Master. As a student of your Rabbi Jesus, where will you position yourself?

John the Beloved Example

It is a joy to Jesus when a disciple desires to walk more intimately with Him. Describing himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved,"³⁸ John provides us an example of what their intimate relationship looked like:

- He was among those first called to follow Jesus.³⁹
- When Jesus called, John immediately dropped everything and followed.⁴⁰
- He was included in the "inner circle" that got to witness special events like the Mount of Transfiguration⁴¹ and the resurrection of Jairus' daughter.⁴²
- He and Peter were given the responsibility to prepare the final Passover meal for Jesus.⁴³
- John leaned His head on Jesus' chest during the Passover meal.³³
- He was among the small group invited to pray with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest.⁴⁴
- Of the 12 disciples, only John stayed close for the entire crucifixion.⁴⁵
- Jesus assigned John to care for His mother, Mary, after He was gone.⁴⁵

- John wrote the Gospel that most people consider their favorite. He had more to say about the concept of love than anyone else in the New Testament, using the word more than 80 times.
- He was the only disciple spared a martyr's death.
- John was given the capstone ending, the grand finale, of the Bible – the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Was John beloved because he was perfect? No – in fact, he has been described by various commentators as volatile, rash, aggressive, and overly ambitious. He argued with the other disciples over who was the greatest and asked Jesus for a special position in heaven.⁴⁶ His nickname was Son of Thunder...did he have a temper?⁴⁷ He once rebuked a man for casting out demons in Jesus' name without being a disciple⁴⁸ – did he prefer to keep such power to himself? He showed no mercy toward the Samaritans, suggesting that Jesus should burn them all up.⁴⁹ He fell asleep when Jesus asked him to pray the night before His death.⁵⁰ He definitely had some maturing to do...don't we all?

Fortunately, even with our own flaws, we can experience the very same intimate relationship with Jesus that John did. In fact, John says he wrote the Gospel for that very purpose! He said, *“We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you **so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.**”*⁵¹

That You May Know Him

Thankfully, many receive, but some receive more abundantly than others. I want to experience the same deep affection that Jesus and John shared. I want the relationship that God and David had. I want to feel as passionately about Jesus as Paul did. Jesus became their whole world! Anything less is just dry old religion.

*“What we need is a **zealous hunger** for God, an **avid thirst** for righteousness, a **pain-filled longing** to be Christ-like and holy. We need a zeal that is loving, self-effacing, and lowly. **No other kind will do.**”*

A.W. Tozer

Jesus desires for you to be His beloved disciple, not just an ordinary one. *Beloved* describes “something or someone counted precious; highly valued, rare and unique.” This study is meant to show you how to experience a deeper and more precious relationship with Him.

The Conditions of Discipleship

In this study, ten steps have been laid out to guide you. They are progressive forward movements into a deeper relationship with Jesus. They involve reaching for more than you have already grasped. “*Add to your faith*”⁵² means that you will likely be asked to do some new things you haven’t done before. No matter where you are in your walk with Jesus, there is always room to grow. Paul said, “*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on...*”⁵³

It is significant that John, who knew Jesus more intimately than most anyone else, still “*fell at His feet as though dead*”⁵⁴ when He appeared to him again on the island of Patmos. Remember John had already seen what the transfigured Christ looked like once before.⁴¹ You may already know Jesus well, but I am convinced He will come along and astound you in fresh, new ways!

While the prospect of ten steps may seem daunting, keep in mind that attaining excellence at anything worthwhile in this life is difficult. And if it’s a goal worth achieving in your worldly affairs, the difficulty does not make you want to give up. Rather, it sharpens your focus with renewed energy and resolve.

The desirability of the end result will be sufficient to sustain you. You just need a little perseverance. The joy and peace of fellowship with Him will fill your life more and more. Sooner than you think, you will become convinced of His goodness, His love toward you, and His desire to reveal Himself to you – there are so many great things in store!

An All-Consuming Passion

Regardless of how superficial your Christian life has been up to now; you can experience the intimacy with Jesus that John did. You’ve seen that there are various levels to all relationships. How deep into the ocean are you willing to go? How far up the mountain do you want to climb? Do you want to sit at the feet of Jesus and drink from the cup in His hand? Don’t settle for an ordinary journey through life. Open your heart to Him more than ever before!

We have seen that it requires *diligent* seeking with *all* your heart. You take the time to do things that are important to you. You keep your appointments to visit the doctor, pick up your kids, and get a massage or a manicure. Do you keep your “appointments” with Him? If you say you don’t have time to pursue Jesus, what else are you doing that is so important? You will have to fight distractions and *decide to protect the time* for fellowship with Jesus. If He truly is the most important thing in your life, He must have a place of priority in your schedule.

In the process of becoming a beloved disciple, you will be asked to give up other things in order to deepen your relationship with Him. In fact, the first three steps are all about yielding your heart more fully to Him. He may need to prune some things out of your life to make more room for Him. You might be asked to give up what you hold in one hand to embrace God’s will in the other. Anything that causes you to lose your “first love” will threaten your fellowship with Him.

Decide now to follow Christ, no matter the cost. Jesus said it would be worth giving up everything you have in order to gain entrance to His Kingdom. In fact, that is exactly what He

demands.⁵⁵ You will need to deny yourself and yield everything to His Lordship in order to become a beloved disciple – but the benefits are well worth the cost. There is no bond on earth that compares to friendship with Him.

To Be All You're Called to Be

Remember His ultimate goal is to produce disciples that look like Him. All He asks is that you are *willing to be willing*. Jesus said to His first disciples, “*Come, follow Me, and I will make you...*”⁵⁶ He will do the work. You don't produce the results – He does. It's more about *being* with Him than *doing* for Him. It's not about attending more conferences or taking more sermon notes. Well organized programs, tools, and books are valuable, but they cannot take the place of personal encounters with Him.

It's more about yielding; less about striving. It's about integrating Him into every part of your life. John 5:39–40 says, “*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to **come to Me to have life.***”

Let Him know that you are seeking more in your relationship with Him; that you want to know more about Him. He will decide how and when to manifest His presence in your life. He deals with each of us in an individual and unique way – your relationship will not look exactly the same as mine. I have never seen a burning bush like Moses or chariots of fire like Elijah, but I have been overwhelmed! I haven't seen physical walls come tumbling down as in Jericho, but my emotional walls have come down. I didn't confront Goliath with a stone, but I have learned to slay giants in my mind.

Stay patient. He is in control. He wants this more for you than you want it for yourself!

*So I say to you, ask and keep on asking and it shall be given you;
seek and keep on seeking and you shall find;
knock and keep on knocking and the door shall be opened to you.
For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives;
and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds;
and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking, the door shall be opened.⁵⁷*