

Portraits of Discipleship

I. Introduction

- A. Scripture uses a number of figures and metaphors to paint “portraits” for us of what being Christ’s disciples is about. Consider six of these portraits of discipleship.

II. Runners in a Race

- A. The Christian lifestyle is likened to *running a race*. For instance, the commitment of those who ran in the Greek games is used to exemplify the self-denial, self-control, and discipline needed to faithfully follow Christ. **1 Corinthians 9:24-25**
- B. The race we are running is more of a marathon than a sprint. It requires continuous dedication and perseverance. **Hebrews 12:1**

III. Soldiers of Christ

- A. Christians are also described as *soldiers of Christ*. This shows our need for endurance in the spiritual battles we fight. *Hymns for Worship, Song 231*; **2 Timothy 2:3**
- B. It also shows our need to avoid distractions that hinder us from dedicating the time needed to train and work for our Commander. **2 Timothy 2:4**
- C. The LORD supplies the spiritual weapons and strength needed for our victory. We must “put on the whole armor of God” to overcome our enemy’s deceit. **Ephesians 6:14-18**

IV. Clay in the Potter’s Hand

- A. As Christ’s disciples, we should also see ourselves as *clay in our Potter’s hand*. *Hymns for Worship, Song 111*; **Isaiah 64:8**
- B. The “clay mentality” allows the Potter to transform us however He pleases. The phrase, “mold me and make me after *thy* will” exemplifies this mindset. **Romans 12:2; James 1:21**

V. Children of God

- A. Christ’s disciples are also *children of God*. **1 John 3:1**
- B. Though each of us has chosen to leave our Father at some point, He welcomes back with open arms those who return to Him on His terms. **Luke 15:20**
- C. Given our Father’s perfect understanding of what’s best for us, we have every reason to trust His guidance. Trust and obedience to Him requires humility and submissiveness, which is fitting for His *children*. **Matthew 18:1-4**

VI. Members of Christ’s Body

- A. Christianity also involves being *members of Christ’s body*. **1 Corinthians 12:27**
- B. This implies being subject to Christ’s headship, but it also involves being a fellow-member with others who are a part of God’s family. While members of the body have a variety of backgrounds and talents, all faithful Christians enjoys equal *access* to God and equal *importance* to the body. **1 Corinthians 12:14-20**

VII. Sojourners and Pilgrims

- A. Moreover, Christians are depicted as *sojourners and pilgrims*. **1 Peter 2:11**
- B. This emphasizes the fact that this world is not our permanent home. The faithful Christian understands that while our time on earth has great significance, it is just a temporary pilgrimage. **Philippians 3:20**
- C. Those whose citizenship is in heaven live *in* the world, but are not *of* the world. **John 17:14-16**

VIII. Conclusion

- A. May we appreciate these and other portraits of discipleship, understanding the depth of both the *commitment* and the *blessings* associated with being Christ’s disciples.