

APPRENTICESHIP TO JESUS

By George Miley and Dan Kane

Apprenticeship to Jesus is a fellowship of people seeking to learn together from Jesus how to live their lives.

Foundational Understandings

1 – **Jesus' words are the words of eternal life** – a life in its fullest not only in duration but in quality. We were made to live in this life in the same way a fish is made to live in the water. The cost of not following Jesus is devastatingly high. *John 6:66-68, Matthew 7:24-27, John 17:3*

2 – **The Gospel Jesus proclaimed was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.** This “good news” is: Life at its fullest is lived in God’s kingdom, under His rule, according to His will. This kingdom is immediately available to everybody through turning away from our own ways and relying completely on Jesus. *Matthew 4:17-25*

3 – **One primary purpose Jesus came to earth was to teach us how to live in the kingdom of God.** We learn this through life apprenticeship to Him. The subject is life at its fullest. He is the Master. We are the apprentices. *Matthew 11:28-30, John 10:10, John 13:13*

4 – **During our sojourn outside the kingdom of God the ways of death were deeply ingrained in our thoughts, emotions, decisions, body and social context.** In apprenticeship to Jesus we learn, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, how to put off these ways and put on the ways of life. *John 8:12, Matthew 5-7*

5 – **Jesus teaches us disciplines of the spiritual life that provide the context in which this process can be facilitated.** These have nothing at all to do with gaining merit with God. These disciplines, done in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, are crucial to the training and transforming of the person. *John 15:1-5*

6 – **In apprenticeship to Jesus, we become increasingly aware of and attentive to God’s presence.** In His presence, our souls are healed. Through obedience to the words of Jesus and the gracious action of the Holy Spirit within, our inner being is progressively transformed into His likeness. Outward behavior becomes more and more an expression of this inner transformation. *Matthew 12:33-35, Matthew 23:25-26*

7 – **Through apprenticeship to Jesus, God restores us** so that we may fulfill the purpose for which we were originally created, to reign with Him and exercise dominion over the work of His hands, here on earth and for all eternity. *Matthew 25:34*

What Does Participation in Apprenticeship to Jesus Look Like?

Apprenticeship to Jesus is comprised of periodic gatherings where aspiring apprentices come together seeking to learn from Jesus how to live their lives as Jesus would live them. These gatherings will vary in duration and take place in a variety of contexts, including international settings.

A central activity at each of these gatherings will be to dwell on the life giving words of Jesus as presented in the four Gospels. During extended periods of being alone with Jesus in solitude, the apprentice will meditate on select Gospel passages in order to learn from Jesus, the greatest teacher to ever walk the earth, how to live in the kingdom of God. Following these meditative periods, the apprentices will gather together to discuss their reflections to further their collective understanding.

Intensity will characterize these gatherings as apprentices will devote themselves to a daily practice of spiritual disciplines. Besides the disciplines of solitude and meditation, apprentices will also practice a daily rhythm of prayer and worship. In some contexts, the apprentices will also engage in other

disciplines including fasting, service and simplicity. These gatherings will demonstrate proven practices, employed by saints throughout history, which apprentices can incorporate into their day to day life with God.

While apprentices are encouraged to participate in as many of these gatherings as they are able, Apprenticeship to Jesus is defined by more than attendance at these events. Apprenticeship to Jesus is a way of life, eternal life.

Discerning Someone's Readiness For Participation in Apprenticeship to Jesus

In "The Divine Conspiracy," author Dallas Willard poses the following question: "What would be the thinking, the convictions about reality that would lead someone to choose discipleship (apprenticeship) to him (Jesus)?" He responds, "Obviously one would feel great admiration and love, would really believe that Jesus is the most magnificent person who has ever lived. One would be quite sure that to belong to him, to be taken into what he is doing throughout this world so that what he is doing becomes your life, is the greatest opportunity one will ever have."

Such a response would characterize the thinking and convictions of someone who would enter into Apprenticeship to Jesus. Further, we would see these convictions expressed through the following:

1. **An apprentice demonstrates a genuine hunger for "with-ness."** First and foremost, the apprentice hungers for God. He hungers for God's presence, His Word, and intimate interaction with Him in His kingdom. The apprentice make choices, that are often costly, to be "with" God. (*Matthew 4:20, Matthew 11:12, Matthew 19:27*) Secondly, the apprentice hungers for fellowship "with" other apprentices. He greatly values the shared experience of following Jesus with others. He understands that the body of Christ is one body with many members and that part of "life in the kingdom" is learning to love one another. Therefore an apprentice seeks this "with-ness" through ongoing participation in Apprenticeship to Jesus gatherings. (*John 1:40-42, 45; Acts 2:42-47*)
2. **An apprentice joyfully chooses the denial of self in order to receive the fullness of Life.** Participation in apprenticeship to Jesus will require the apprentice to deny himself of "pleasures" enjoyed outside the Kingdom of God. Lifestyle adjustments will surely be required as the apprentice seeks to grow in the likeness of their Master Jesus. He does not reluctantly enter into apprenticeship to Jesus, but with decisiveness, eagerness and joyful readiness. (*Matthew 13:44, Matthew 16:24-26, Luke 9:62*)
3. **An apprentice has a teachable spirit and demonstrates a willingness to learn,** a posture forever maintained. (*Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 18:1-4*) While growing in the likeness of their Master, the apprentice humbly seeks to discover the inexhaustible treasures found in the Kingdom of God. (*Matthew 10:24-25, Matthew 13:52*)

How Can Someone Explore Participation in Apprenticeship to Jesus?

If after having reviewed the above information you are interested in exploring participation in the Apprenticeship to Jesus fellowship, please contact Dan Kane at dkane@antiochnetwork.org to begin a process of mutual discernment.