

Deciding about Jesus
Acts 16:13-15
January 27, 2019

When I was young, I thought the only big decisions I had to make were who I would marry and what kind of work I would do. My, was I wrong! What's more, I had already made the most far-reaching decision in life but didn't really realize how significant it was—the decision to follow Jesus. As we seek to Develop Disciples at NorthWest, we want to help people understand that decision more fully so they can make it more meaningfully.

Video—Deciding about Jesus

Here are five aspects of the decision to become a disciple or follower of Jesus that will help us realize the significance of doing so:

1. It is not a decision we make completely on our own. Rather, God is working on us, and we are responding to Him. He works on us in many ways, including convicting us of sin (John 16:8), drawing us to Jesus (John 6:44), and calling us through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
2. We have to discover Jesus and certain specific things about him before we can meaningfully decide to follow him. Since the decision is to follow him, we need to know what he is like and who he is (Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 2:36; Romans 1:1-4). Since the commitment is total, we must also count the cost to make sure we are truly willing to follow him (Luke 14:25-33). In addition, since *the gospel* is a key part of how disciples are made, we must also understand the basic meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection (Acts 14:21; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Romans 1:16-17; 4:18-25; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:8).

3. We need to understand that the decision we are making is much more comprehensive and glorious than how we usually describe it. Yes, we are indeed getting baptized and becoming Christians, but the decision is so much more than that. We are:
 - a. Becoming disciples of Jesus (John 9:27; Luke 14:26, 27, 33, Acts 14:21)
 - b. Receiving God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Romans 5:17)
 - c. Obeying from our hearts the pattern of teaching that has now claimed our allegiance (Romans 6:17)
 - d. Being set free from sin and becoming slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:18)
 - e. Turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9-10; cf. Acts 14:15; 15:19; 20:21; 26:18)
 - f. Coming to God and being saved completely because Jesus always lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25)
 - g. Being included in Christ (Ephesians 1:13)
 - h. Being rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col 1:13-14)
 - i. Saving ourselves from this corrupt generation, accepting his message, and being added to the number of God's people (Acts 2:40-41; cf. 1 Thess. 2:13.
 - j. Receiving and accepting the word, not as a human message, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work us who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13)
 - k. Beginning a life of obeying the gospel (cf. 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; obey is present tense)
 - l. Being born a second time, from above, of water and the Spirit (John 3:5)
4. We actualize our intent to follow Jesus by humbly putting our trust in him, sincerely turning away from our sins, earnestly confessing in our hearts and with our voices that Jesus is our Leader and Lord, and being immersed in water with faith in Jesus (Acts 2:36-41; 13:32-39; 16:13-15; Romans 3:21-26; 10:9-10 and many others)
5. The decision to follow Jesus is not the final objective. Rather, it is the beginning of the journey of discipleship.