The Good, the Bad, and the Ornery: Discipleship in the New Testament

1. **Description**

2. **Lexical sense:**
   a. “disciple” (*mathetás* in Greek) – 269 times in 253 gospel verses
   b. “discipleship” – 0 times

3. **In Greek culture**
   a. “Disciple in Greek culture:
      i. common in philosophical, religious and very practical spheres.
   b. Implies dependence on a superior teacher or witness, or apprenticeship
      i. following a particular school of thought
   c. Requires a master/disciple relationship not required of a teacher/student
      i. imitation of the master

4. **Jewish circles**
   a. closest word for “disciple” in Hebrew is *talmid* – Talmud = “teaching”; *talmid* = “one who learns”
      i. 1 Chron 25:8, translated into the LXX as *manthanontes* – “one who learns”
   b. The key relationship, in Judaism, is *not* with a master, but with God,
   c. The prophets, Elijah, Elisha and Jeremiah, had schools, but not disciples

5. **Who Has Disciples In the NT**
   b. Moses: John 9:28
   d. Paul: 1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17

6. **Male and female**
   a. Tabitha/Dorca/“Gazelle” of Acts 9:36 (*mathátria*).
   b. Mary (Martha and Mary)
      i. Sitting at Jesus’ feet
   c. Mary Magdalene – “a disciple of the Lord” in the Gospel of Peter,

7. **First mentions of “disciples”:**
   a. 1st mentions: Matt 5:1; 8:17-27; 10:1-4

8. **Disciples and Masters – likeness, but not in glory:**
   a. No disciple superior to the teacher: Luke 6:40; Matt 10:24-25
   b. It is *enough* to suffer like the Master: John 15:18-21
   c. Service rather than suffering: John 13:12-17

9. **Suffering as an end of discipleship?**
   a. Not because suffering brings God’s pleasure.
      i. a means to accomplish a good…*not* the end in itself.
   b. Jesus cherishes every kindness done for disciples: Matt 10:40-42

10. **Framing Discipleship**
    a. Not precisely what we say, or even do: Matt 7:21-23
    b. Disciples flavor and lighten the world: Matt 5:13-16
       i. but the glory is the Father’s
c. Requires
   i. personal sacrifice: Luke 14:26-27 – hyperbolic
   ii. an internal discipline: Galatians 5:24

d. Two marks of the disciple:
   i. John 15:8 – “bear much fruit”
   ii. John 13:34-35 – “…how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

11. Disciples are family to Jesus
   a. The relationship between Jesus and the disciples – a strong family character: Matt 12:46-50

12. Jesus’ Disciples’ Success?
   a. Evidence, in the Gospels is mixed
      i. e.g., Mark 9:14-29 – failing to pray
      ii. In parallel, Matthew17:14-20 – disciples are of little faith

13. Mark’s Rude Disciples
   a. Mark 4:38-41 – “…do you not care?”
   b. Mark 5:30 – “…yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”
   c. Mark 6:34-44 – “Are we to buy two hundred days’ wages worth of food?”

14. Mark’s Obtuse Disciples
   a. On a boat, with only one loaf of bread
   b. Frustrated: 8:17-21
   c. The Petrine confession: Mark 8:27-30
   d. Jesus great acts: Mark 5:35-43; 6:45; 6:34-44 and 8:1-9
   e. Marks of God.
      i. Walk on water: Job 9:8; Hab 3:15; Psa 77:20; Isa 43:16; 51:9-10; Wis 14:3
      ii. Feeds the thousands: Exodus
   f. Right answer? – “God!”
   g. Political and military? – wrong answer.
   h. Matthews additions: 16:16

15. Mark’s Three Passion Predictions
   a. contrasting selfless Jesus and the disciples
      i. 8:31-33; 9:30-32; and 10:32-34

16. The First Passion Prediction
      i. No exaltation, military victories, independence
   b. Jesus rebukes Peter
      i. as Jesus rebuked unclean spirits: Mark 1:25, 3:12 and 9:25
   c. Disciples deny themselves, take up crosses, and follow.

17. Second Prediction
   a. Mark 9:30-37 – response? Discussing who was the greatest.
   b. Receiving one child (paidion) in Jesus’ name
      i. Not innocence, but powerlessness.

18. Third Prediction
b. Jesus’ closest friends: Peter, James and John
   i. Mark 1:29; 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33
   ii. Sometimes Andrew also: Mark 1:29 and 13:3

c. Bumping Peter.
d. Greatness through servanthood, imitating the Son of Man

19. **What Next?**
a. Following the predictions: Mark 10:46-52 – Bartimaeus
   i. many rebuked him
b. The disciples getting in the way of others
c. Jericho, where something had to fall down: Joshua, ch 6
d. Recognizing personal blindness, and calling out to Jesus
   i. and following him on “the way.”

20. **A Summary of Gospel portrayals**
a. Mark – negative in *most* everything,
b. Matthew softened the negative
c. Luke and John puts disciples in positive light,
d. In all the Gospels, one, some or all of the disciples
   i. deny him publicly (Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:66-72; Lk 22:56-62; Jn 18:25-27),
   ii. ultimately betray him to his enemies (Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-45; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:2-3),
   iii. hide while he is brutalized and murdered (Mt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40; Lk 23:49; Jn 19:25-27).

21. **Positives:**
b. Desired by Jesus at the Passover: Matt 26:17-19
c. Called upon to make yet more disciples: Matt 28:16-20