

New Testament Life Lesson 8  
*The First Disciples*  
Text: John 1:35-41

Introduction

Jesus won the battle with his enemy in the desert. He came back the way he had gone, by way of the River Jordan where He had been baptized by John. John was still there, preaching and baptizing.

The Story

When John saw Jesus, he cried out, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

Lots of people followed John. They were his disciples. That means they were special students. That’s how people studied in those days. They stayed close by a wise man and learned all they could from him. He would teach them and train them. That’s what it means to be a disciple. It means to be a follower or a learner.

When two of his disciples, Andrew and John, heard John the Baptist say that, they left him and followed Jesus. Do you think John was upset about his disciples leaving? No, he knew that his job was just to prepare the way for Jesus. He knew that, now that Jesus had come, his ministry would be less important.

Andrew and Philip followed behind Jesus. Jesus turned to them and said, “What are you looking for?”

“Master,” they said, “Where do you live?”

“Come and see,” he said.

They went with Jesus and stayed with him. I'm sure they talked with him and listened to the wonderful truths he had to tell them. Wouldn't you like the chance to visit Jesus at his house?

The very next thing Andrew did was to go find his brother Simon.

"We have found the Messiah," Andrew told him. How excited he must have been! He brought Simon to Jesus.

Jesus knew him without even being introduced.

"You are Simon," he said. "But I am going to call you Peter."

The name Peter means rock. Can you think why Jesus might have given Simon that new name? Maybe because he would be solid as a rock in his faith later on. In our early stories about him, though, he's more like a marshmallow.

Now Jesus had three disciples, Simon Peter, Andrew, and John. This John is sometimes called "John the Beloved," because he never could get over the fact that Jesus loved him.

The next day Jesus walked among the fishermen who worked on their nets by the shore. He was looking for a particular person – someone whose heart God had already prepared to be a disciple. His name was Philip. Jesus saw Philip and said, "Follow me."

Philip gladly obeyed. The first thing he did was rush off to find his friend Nathaniel. He found him sitting under a fig tree. I don't know what he was doing there. Maybe he was taking a nap. I think he might have been praying or reading the Scriptures, though.

Philip rushed up and said, "We found him! We found the one Moses and the prophets wrote about. He is Jesus of Nazareth."

Nathaniel wasn't that excited. "Nazareth!" he said. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

But Philip wasn't about to give up.

"Just come and see," he said.

Nathaniel might have grumbled a little, but he went with Philip.

When Jesus saw him coming, he said, "Look, an Israelite in whom there is no guile." That means, "Here's an honest, open fellow."

Nathaniel was surprised. "How do you know me?" he said.

"Before Philip talked to you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus told him. That's why I think maybe Nathaniel was talking to God under the fig tree. When he knew that Jesus had seen him and heard him, he knew Jesus was the son of God.

"Master, you are the King of Israel," he said.

"Do you think that just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree?" Jesus asked him. "You are going to see far greater things than these."

So now Jesus had his first five disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, John, Philip, and Nathaniel.

### The Life Lesson

The disciples followed Jesus because they believed in Him. They wanted to learn from Him. You can't go to Jesus' house like they did, or sit down and eat dinner with Him. But you can be a disciple, or a learner. He wants you to follow Him, just as Simon Peter, Andrew and the rest, did. And He wants you to learn from Him. How can you do that? By listening and learning in Sunday School and in the church service for one thing. By reading your Bible and

spending time learning God's Word, for another. While you can't see Jesus, He is still there, and still as real as He was to his first disciples. You can talk to Him and think about Him and get to know Him better and better.

You can do something else the first disciples did. You can bring others to Jesus. They didn't know much about Him at the time, but they believed He was the Messiah. They went right away to their friends and relatives and said, "Come and see."

Can you do that? Yes, you can invite your friends to come to church with you. You can tell them, "I have found the Messiah. Come and know Him, too."

## Review Questions

What did John say when he saw Jesus returning from the wilderness?

*Behold the Lamb of God.*

Which two disciples left John the Baptist and followed Jesus?

*Andrew and John*

Who did Andrew bring to Jesus?

*His brother Simon.*

What new name did Jesus give Simon?

*Peter*

Who did Philip bring to Jesus?

*Nathaniel*

What did Nathaniel say when Philip told him about Jesus?

*“Can anything good come from Nazareth?”*

How can you be a disciple, and learn of Jesus?

*Listening in Sunday School and preaching service, reading your Bible, etc.*

How can you bring others to Jesus like Andrew and Philip did?

*By inviting friends to church, by telling them about Jesus.*