

# THE HEART OF A DISCIPLE

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Back in 2016, the missions team conducted an English camp in Kalasin, Thailand, where only a percentage of 0.1% have heard of our Lord. Upon arriving in Northern Thailand, P. Rolf, the local pastor on our team, took us to a famous bridge and a prayer mountain. Our team thought it was simply a mountain we could go up to and pray. When we got there, the entrance that led to the prayer mountain was filled with statues of dragons. Upon reaching the mountain, there stood a huge statue of Buddha about 27 feet high. There was a veranda with a sweeping view of the city and P. Rolf told us this was where we were going to pray. We looked at each other, expecting we'd be arrested any moment then. P. Rolf took out his ukelele and handed us songbooks. He didn't just intend for us to pray there, but to sing praises to the Lord! We were hesitant at first, but as we stood with an overlooking view of Northern Thailand, we were gripped by a profound compassion for the people.

The Psalmist calls to God for His disciples to be blessed, not only for our gain but so our joy in God will reflect

His glory to the nations. When we took the call to follow Jesus, we founded our identity in *whose we are*. Knowing our identity identifies our purpose in life. Disciplemaking was the heart of the Lord's ministry! We no longer aimlessly wander through life, but we have in us a purpose to seek the agenda of our Lord and *pursue* it.

A few days before we were scheduled to go back to Manila, we visited a Pakistani refugee camp in Bangkok. We went from door to door, asking the refugees how they were, and praying for them. We were inside one room when a frantic knock came pounding on the door. We were told that immigration officers were on a floor below us and they were arresting people without question, given that the building we were in was identified as a refugee camp. Panic arose in our midst, but after a moment, someone started praying to the Lord out loud. You see, the family living there owned a hospital in Pakistan but had left their homeland when they were threatened to be killed after the Taliban forcefully took over their hospital. They were told that they could only gain

control of their hospital again if they denounced their faith in the Lord. The harrowing escape that would lead them to Thailand would tell us that they chose to uphold the banner of the Lord despite the threat to their lives. Only the peace of the Lord will afford 15 adults in a small room with barely enough sitting space to pray and sing praises to the Lord amid danger. As the Lord would have it, the immigration officers spared the floor we were on, and another knock came to tell us the coast was clear.

God can do amazing things with a humble instrument who is fully and completely yielded to Him. Making disciples is not a special calling for a few, but a lifestyle of obedience for every follower of God. Oswald Chambers said it truly well: «The best measure of spiritual life is not its ecstasies but its obedience.» The mark of a true disciple of God is measured by his obedience. The command is tough, and the cost is daunting—but the calling of Jesus is clear.✱