

## *Mathētēs and Mathēteuō*

μαθητής (*mathētēs*). n. masc. **disciple, learner**. *Used of a person who follows after and seeks to learn from another.*

The term *mathētēs* occurs very frequently in the nt. Its fundamental meaning is one who seeks to learn from another. A disciple is not only a partaker of information, but also one who seeks to become like his or her teacher (Luke 6:40). In this way, discipleship is about modifying one's entire lifestyle. The term *mathētēs* is often used of the group of people that followed Jesus in his earthly ministry, whether the Twelve themselves (e.g., Mark 6:45) or some larger group (e.g., Luke 19:37). Sometimes the disciples of other leaders are mentioned and contrasted with those of Jesus—e.g., some people approach Jesus to ask why the disciples of Jesus do not fast while those of the Pharisees and of John do (Mark 2:18). The related feminine word μαθήτρια (*mathētria*, “[female] disciple”) is used in Acts 9:32 to refer to Tabitha.<sup>1</sup>

μαθητεύω (*mathēteuō*). vb. **to make a disciple**. *Used to indicate the action of causing another to become a disciple; the passive forms indicate being or becoming a disciple.*

The active forms of this verb mean “to make a disciple.” When Jesus gives his disciples the Great Commission (Matt 28:19), he commands them to make disciples (*mathēteuō*) of all nations. Jesus clarifies this command by instructing them to baptize these converts in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as to teach them to do all that he commanded. Again, the individual who becomes a disciple must alter his behavior as well as his mind.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chris Byrley, “Discipleship,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Chris Byrley, “Discipleship,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).