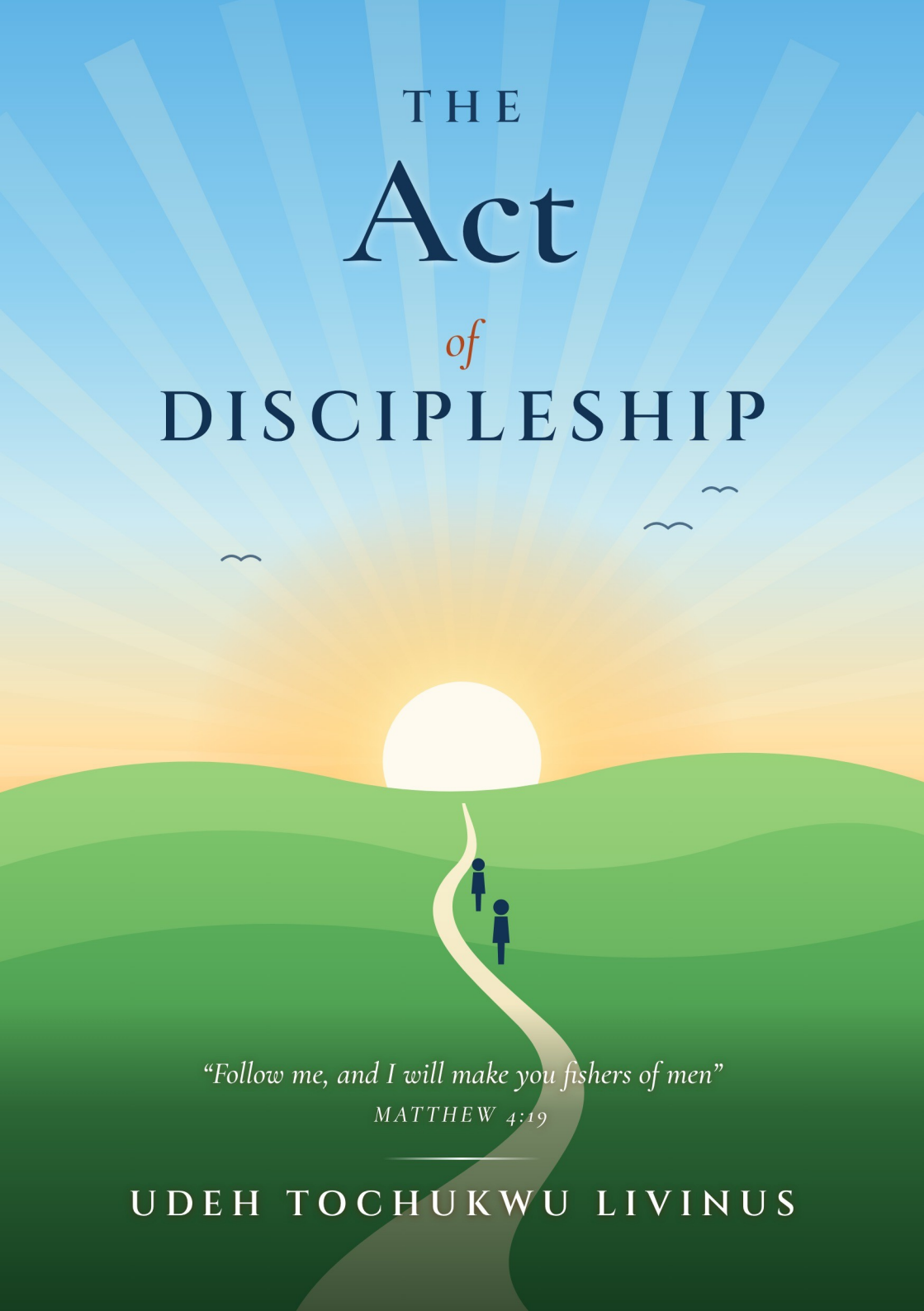


The background of the cover is a stylized landscape. At the bottom, there are rolling green hills. A winding yellow path leads from the bottom center towards a large white sun on the horizon. Two small black silhouettes of people are walking along the path. The sky is a gradient of blue and orange, with several thin, light blue lines radiating from the sun. Three small black silhouettes of birds are flying in the sky.

THE Act *of* DISCIPLESHIP

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"

MATTHEW 4:19

UDEH TOCHUKWU LIVINUS

The Act of Discipleship

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The Act of Discipleship

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Discipleship is a call and training that never ends. It is progressive, and it produces fruit that endures. The best teacher in the school of discipleship is the Holy Spirit.

PASTOR UDEH TOCHUKWU LIVINUS

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the blessed Holy Spirit, my Mentor and Senior Partner. I am the least among the called, but by the grace of God I am what I am today, and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain. Thanks be to God for the body of Christ, for my teammates, the Iron Pillars, and for my fathers in the Lord and in ministry. Not least, I thank God for my twin brother, Engr. Emeka Longinus Udeh, who is a source of inspiration to me. May God bless you all.

Amen.

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CHAPTER ONE

Call to Discipleship

Concept of Discipleship

Discipleship is a call and also a journey. It is a call that requires commitment and focus. It is a lifetime call. The concept of discipleship already existed before Jesus began His ministry. We can see it in the lives of Moses and Joshua. The Bible refers to Joshua as Moses' minister in Joshua 1:1:

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying...” (Joshua 1:1).

Joshua was a disciple of Moses. He was with Moses all through Moses' ministry as a servant of God. He heard God speak to Moses. He witnessed the power and presence of God. So when Moses went up to seek the presence of God on Mount Sinai, Joshua went with him.

So this relationship is one of teacher and student, master and servant, father and son, and so on. We can also see this relationship between Elijah and Elisha, Elisha and Gehazi, John the Baptist and his disciples, and also Jesus Christ and His disciples.

The Greek word for disciple, *mathētēs*, means “learner.” So disciples are students. They are learners. Once you are called a disciple, you are already enrolled as a student, and you must be prepared to perform all the duties of a student if indeed you want to be a good student.

The main subject in this school is Christ Himself, and the Holy Spirit is the teacher. He does not only fill your head with knowledge; He works on your character. Increasingly, your character should reveal more of Christ, and your conduct should testify of the works of Christ in your life.

This shaping does not happen in a day. It is the work of a lifetime, and every lesson the Spirit teaches costs our old self something.

There are two sides to this call: you must be disciplined, and you must disciple others. In this book we use the word in both senses.

Discipleship involves allowing every part of your life to be under the influence of God. It means letting the Holy Spirit fill every aspect of your body, soul and spirit. Your home, your work, your money and your ministry all belong in this school.

Discipleship Is a Lifelong Learning Process

True discipleship never ends. Learning is a continuous, lifetime process. Learners never arrive, and neither does a disciple, for he continues to follow in the footsteps of his teacher, master and leader. He is totally yielded so that he keeps growing. Often we think that discipleship is meant only for new believers or converts in the Lord. But it is not so. Discipleship is for both the young and the old. We do not yet comprehend God, so we need the tutorship of the Holy Spirit in order to come to the full knowledge and stature of God. God gave the ministry gifts “for the perfecting of the saints... till we all come... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–13).

This is what discipleship is all about: “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” So discipleship is a continuous learning process. Paul wrote, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do,

forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13–14). We have not yet apprehended. We know only in part. Disciples know only in part. We still need more of His full stature and knowledge.

Followers of Christ never stop being disciples. Being discipled is as important for long-established Christians as for new ones. It is a task for life. During the discipleship process, believers are equipped with all the spiritual resources to do evangelism and also to combat the great enemy of the church. We learn the secrets of God and put on the armor of light. You cannot be a good Christian without undergoing the discipleship process. In fact, sudden men of God are dangerous. When we see what most men are doing in the name of God, we should ask these questions: “Whose product are they?” “Under whose teaching have they studied?” “How long was their learning process?” and “What materials were used to teach them?” Answering these questions will go a long way toward solving most of the problems we see in the Christian community, especially from prophets and preachers who serve their own belly (Romans 16:18).

You cannot be the product of a good teacher without people seeing the evidence in your life. Good discipleship produces enormous results. Its products are good witnesses and proof producers. They are good ambassadors of Christ, of the church and of the Christian community. They are absolutely obedient servants of God.

Summary

Jesus left the church a complete pattern: a teacher who pours out his life and a learner who receives it, walking together. Let us not settle for fragments of it. In this chapter, we have considered what true discipleship is all about, God’s clarion call to wholesome discipleship, and the call to be true witnesses of the kingdom. The ultimate

investment one can make in his life is discipleship. It is the ground of formation, where character is remolded and the spirit is pruned.

Discipleship is the Holy Spirit's workshop, where a believer's character is shaped into the likeness of Christ.

PASTOR UDEH TOCHUKWU LIVINUS

CHAPTER TWO

Biblical Models of Discipleship

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18–20, NIV).

The command to disciple the nations was given by Christ. When He rose from the dead, He did not come back merely as the Messiah; He came out of the grave with authority as the Lord of lords and the King of kings to rule the whole world. He lives, never to die again, and He draws all men back to God. For this to be achieved, He gave the disciples the authority to disciple all nations. So every believer is saved from the world and sent back into the world to save the world. Discipling all nations is the mandate of the church. It is Christ’s command, and no believer should dispute this injunction.

Winning a soul is only the beginning. Baptism is the doorway; after it comes the classroom. The word Matthew uses here for teaching is *didaskō*, which means to teach or instruct. And the syllabus is fixed: “everything I have commanded you.” We are not free to add our own subjects or to drop the hard ones.