

## Review

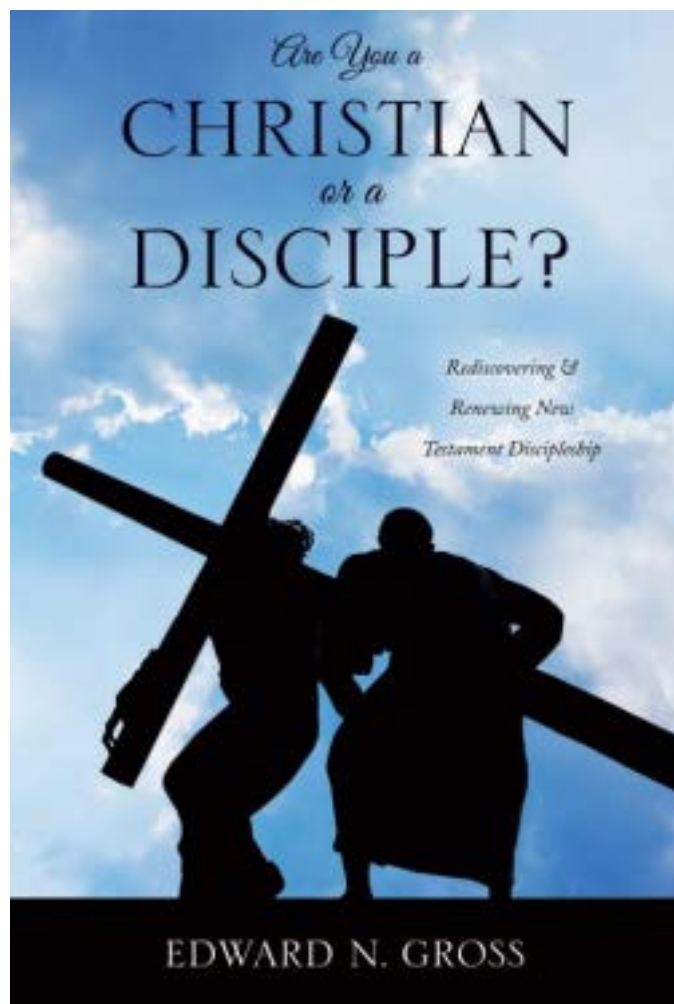
### **Are You a Christian or a Disciple?: Rediscovering and Renewing New Testament Discipleship**

Edward N. Gross

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Reviewed by Pastor Matt Pieters

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Ed Gross' new book "Are You a Christian or a Disciple? *Rediscovering & Renewing New Testament Discipleship*" addresses a question that is of the highest importance. Much of

western Christianity, and consequently global Christianity, has been so influenced by unbiblical ideas and practices that discipleship has become almost a lost word and Christianity-without-discipleship has taken its place. In His book, Gross reminds us of the central importance of discipleship: what it was, how we lost it, and how to recover it. He rightly states, “The New Testament knows nothing of a Christianity disconnected from biblical discipleship...” and yet, “most of us... were **not** taught biblical discipleship by our instructors.” In this gem of a book Gross unpacks for us what Jesus’ call to follow him as disciple means and how, if we are to truly follow Jesus, we must walk down the same path he walked.

In the first section of the book, Gross explains the forgotten historical and biblical call of discipleship. In careful analysis of both history and the biblical text we are shown afresh what it really meant in the first century to be a “Disciple of Jesus” and what it means today. He carefully covers the true nature and hallmarks of what a disciple was and how we have essentially lost this today, so much so that a ground swell of voices from the late John Stott to Kyle Idleman are calling us back to the foundation of following Jesus as disciples.

In the second section of the book, Gross explains the growing challenges today to accept a calling to follow Jesus as a disciple. With a prophetic voice, Gross defines the present crisis today in global Christianity and provides an essential outline toward a solution, boldly stating, “The problem today is that “following Jesus” is not understood as a formal call to a defined disciple-master relationship. Instead, in most of our contexts, it denotes some vague notion of spiritual attachment between us and Jesus.” Rather than shy away from the challenges of biblical discipleship as defined by Jesus, Gross acknowledges the challenges head on in a way that gets at the heart of the issues: following the real Jesus not our imagination, Jesus’ way of evangelism to “make disciples,” embracing Jesus’ “hard” words to follow him, obey, and turn in repentance, not being merely shallow converts.

In the final section of the book, Gross delves into the transformative aspects of being true disciples of Jesus. Gross challenges us to follow Jesus with “total submission.” He shows that following Jesus affects the whole of our lives, demands that we actually know his words, emulate his way of life, and makes disciples the way he made disciples. We are shown that Jesus’ call to be disciples who make disciples actually frees us from modern notions of evangelism and church growth and allows the Holy Spirit to work through

us without pressure and with far greater power. Finally, Gross catalogues the Disciple Making Movement's success globally (DMM) and challenges us to apply it to our context.

“Are You a Christian or a Disciple? *Rediscovering & Renewing New Testament Discipleship*” addresses not only the pressing question of our day, but the timeless question of our hearts – Can you be a Christian and not a Disciple? This book is a must read for anyone who desires to live out authentic Christianity.