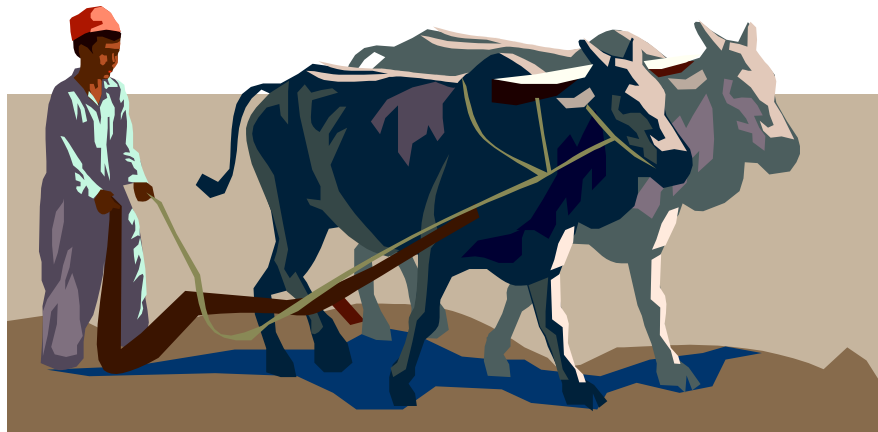


Biblical Discipleship

"Take my yoke and learn of me"

Small group outlines on Christian Discipleship



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Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”

#1 Discipleship and Relationships

Objective: To help people understand what Jesus expects in our relationship to others when he calls us to be disciples.



Ice Breaker: **Who is the closest person to you in the world? If someone told you that you had to abandon that relationship, how difficult would that be for you?**

In this lesson we want to discover what being a disciple of Jesus is all about when it comes to prioritizing relationships. What does he expect of those who follow him? What will it cost us individually? How difficult is it to really follow him? Can I ride the fence when it comes to committing totally to Jesus.

 **Read: Luke 14:25-35**



QUESTION: What are some of the words in these verses that reveal what it takes for us to be disciples?

Possible Answer: Hate people, hate ourselves, carry our cross, give up everything, pay a high cost



QUESTION: Do you think Jesus was attempting to scare people away? What one word describes Jesus teaching in this section to you? (Intense, direct, offensive, scary, overbearing, cultish, other?)

 **Read Luke 14:26**



QUESTION: The word used for “Hate” in this verse is a very strong word in the Greek “Miseo” literally means to hate or disdain. Isn’t Jesus supposed to be a loving Savior? Why do you think Jesus uses such strong language? Shouldn’t he be less offensive? What do you suppose he’s trying to tell this crowd of people... and us?

Answer: Compare Matthew 10:34-39. When we compare the level of commitment that Jesus expects disciples to have for him, all other commitments appear to be hateful or not caring.

 **Read Luke 9:57-62**



QUESTION: Share one creative excuse for not doing something (e.g. the dog ate my homework) What is the problem with these three “wanna-be” disciples?


- What did Jesus mean, “The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but I have no place to lay my head? (Answer: “This won’t be easy... are you CERTAIN about your willingness to sacrifice totally?”)
- Why was Jesus apparently so harsh on the man who wanted to follow him, but wanted to go and bury his father?
- Why was Jesus so hard on the man who wanted to go say good-bye to his family?
- If Jesus were to say to you “Follow me – today – right now! What excuse might you use to put him off? What do you think Jesus response would be?

DISCUSS: Can you see anything in these interactions that might relate to us today? What?

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POINT: Jesus demands that he be absolutely, unquestioningly number one in our relationship priorities. No excuse is a valid excuse. If you really want to be his disciple, then you must HATE (love less) all other relationship without excuse, regardless of how intimate that relationship might be, or what circumstances might present themselves. If we are not willing to follow Jesus FIRST, then we are not worthy of him and he will not permit us to be his disciples.

 **Read: John 9:20-22**

 **QUESTION:** Why did this blind man’s parents not openly state the truth when interviewed by the Pharisees concerning their observance of Jesus? Did they love their son first, or the Pharisees first, or Jesus first, or their social standing first, or their friends at the synagogue first or who else?


If you were severely questioned about your faith and threatened to be excluded from your family or your place of employment, or severed from your closest friends, what might you feel? What would your tendency be?

 **Read John 12:42-43**

 **QUESTION:** What was the belief of some of the leaders in this verse?

- Why were they not willing to tell people that they believed in Jesus? Compare Matthew 10:32-33.
- What will Jesus do to those who submit to peer pressure from family or friends?

 **Read Acts 4:13-20**

 **QUESTION:** What did the people observe about Peter and John?

- How do you suppose people knew that they had “Been with Jesus?” (:13)
- How might people know you had “Been with Jesus?”
- How did Peter and John respond when threatened to stop acknowledging Jesus?
- Do you suppose they loved their families? Do you suppose they loved their families more than Jesus? Why do you say this? (Compare Mark 10:28-30).

 **APPLICATION:**

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you understand the level of commitment expected of you in order to be a disciple of Jesus?

What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week to love him more than others?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: Jesus calls men and women to be his disciples. If we are to truly follow him, we must have a total commitment to him that is far stronger than the commitments we have toward any other earthly relationship. We must never love the praise of men or permit the relationship of men to come between Jesus and us.

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#2 Take Up Your Cross: Death to Sin and Self


Objective: To help people understand that in order to be faithful followers of Jesus, we must die to sin and self by taking up the disciple’s cross




Ice Breaker: **Picture the scene. A popular political leader is speaking to a crowd of listeners. He interjects this statement in the middle of his discourse, “If you want to be part of my party, you must first take a lethal injection.” What would be your initial reaction to his statement? What do you think the reaction of the crowd might be? (Psycho!! Insane!! Crazy!!)**


In this lesson we want to discover that, in essence, this is what Jesus told a crowd in Luke 14. It probably is not what they wanted to hear, or expected to hear. It probably sounded as absurdly radical as would a politician who told a crowd that they had to take a lethal injection. But, what did Jesus mean? How does this apply to us? Why is this a requirement BEFORE we can be his disciples?

 **Read: Luke 14:25-35**


 **QUESTION:** Especially note 14:27. What were crosses used for in the first century? (Answer: they were implements of capital punishment for the most serious criminals) When crucified, a criminal was brutally beaten and flogged and hung naked in the hot sun to die a brutal, humiliating death. Why do you suppose Jesus used this terminology?

 **QUESTION:** Do you think Jesus was attempting to scare people away? What one word describes Jesus teaching in this section to you? (Intense, direct, offensive, scary, overbearing, cultish, other?). **POINT:** He’s practicing “Full Disclosure” and giving them a prospectus of the cost involved in the life of true discipleship!

 **Read John 19:17-18**

 **QUESTION:** What happened when Jesus carried his own cross? Where did it lead him? (Answer: the place of the Skull – Golgotha).
POINT: When a person carried his cross, he was going to be executed in the most hideous, humiliating, and public way.
What word pictures come to your mind when you think of public execution?

 **Read Galatians 2:20; 6:14**


 **QUESTION:** What observations can we make from these two passages that might help us understand what Jesus might have been talking about when he said that we must take up our cross before we can be his disciples?

- What did Paul say concerning his own SELF in Galatians 2:20? (Answer: he said that “I” no longer live.
- What did he mean?
- How might that have been demonstrated in his life?
- What did the cross separate Paul from in Galatians 6:14? What did he mean?
- How might that have been demonstrated in his life? In ours?


DISCUSS: Can you see anything in these verses that might relate to us today? What?

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 **Read: Romans 6:4-7**

-  **QUESTION:** Paul talks in this section about crucifixion. He says that when we are “crucified” there are some things that die. What are two things that Paul specifically mentions? (Answer: SIN, and SELF – the two “S” words).
- What does it mean to “Die to self?”
 - How do you know if you have or are doing this?
 - What does it mean to “Die to sin?”
 - How do you know if you are doing this?
 - Why is it necessary to die to sin and self before we can be disciples of Jesus? (see 2 Corinthians 5:15). Who are you going to live for?
-


 **Read Matthew 10:38-39**

-  **QUESTION:** What are some observations and words used by Jesus to describe dying to self in these verses?
- What do you think he means, “Whoever finds his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life... will find it?”
 - How does this relate to carrying your cross?
 - How do you know if you are doing this?


 **Read Luke 9:23**

-  **QUESTION:** What are some additional issues that Jesus mentions concerning taking up our cross from this verse? (Answer: DENY himself, and DAILY, and FOLLOW)
- What is different between denying “Practices” and denying “SELF”?
 - Why must a person die to himself before following Jesus as his disciple?
 - How do you know if you are doing this?

 **Read Colossians 3:1-9**

-  **QUESTION:** Paul says that we died when we became disciples of Jesus, but then he says, “Put to death... or “Keep putting to death”
- What are some specific things that we are to “keep putting to death?”
 - Describe what these things are specifically.
 - What is the end result of that pattern of life (3:6)?

 **Read Colossians 3:10-17**

-  **QUESTION:** What are some specific things that Paul instructs us to “PUT ON”?
- Can a person “PUT ON” these good things without first “PUTTING OFF” or killing the old things? Why? (Compare Galatians 6:14).

 **APPLICATION:**

Let’s review: Jesus said that before we can become his disciple we must take up our cross. He’s saying in essence that we must take a “Lethal Injection” and kill our old self and our sinful ways. This occurs as we deny ourselves and kill our self-will and sinful nature daily. Only then can we be his disciples. What have you learned in this lesson that will help you understand how to take up your cross in order to be a disciple of Jesus?

What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week to love him more than others?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: Jesus calls men and women to be his disciples. If we are to truly follow him, we must kill our self and our sin so we can be made new. Be honest with the sin or selfish ambition in your life and kill it! Give sin and selfish, self-centered living a “Lethal Injection” or they will kill you!

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#3 Discipleship and Possessions

Objective: To help people understand that possessions can capture our emotions and hearts and prevent us from following Christ as disciples. In order to be a faithful disciple of Jesus, we must separate ourselves emotionally from the attachment to possessions.



Ice Breakers: If your house were on fire, what three personal items would you try to save? What possession or heirloom means the most to you? Why? What do you think would be the ideal salary? What could make this salary ideal?

In this lesson we want to look at Jesus statements concerning wealth and observe his warnings about our emotional attachments to possessions. Attachment to THINGS is idolatry and will keep us out of heaven!



Read: Luke 14:25-35



QUESTION: What did Jesus say in verse 33 that we must give up in order to be his disciples?

Possible Answer: Everything, possessions. Some might say, he wants us to give up things IF it ever comes to that. Is that what he means?



QUESTION: Some people believe that it is more holy to be poor. What do you think?



Read Matthew 19:16-25



QUESTION: What was the young man’s question to Jesus? Why do you think he asked this question? What seems to have been this young man’s view on how one obtains eternal life? (being good morally by not doing “bad” things like adultery etc)

Which of the Ten Commandments did Jesus leave out (See Exodus 20)?
What is the general subject of the first four commandments? (idolatry and worshipping other gods..... loving God first).

Which commandment did Jesus add which was not part of the original ten? (Answer: love your neighbor as yourself cf. Lev. 19:18).

Had this young man kept the commandments in his own eyes? In Jesus eyes? (compare Matthew 5:21-22; 27-28)

What did Jesus understand about this young man’s true love? (answer: he loved his possessions and wealth more than his neighbor OR God.

How did Jesus test this man’s true love? How would you have responded if Jesus told you this?

Why is it so difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom?

DISCUSS: Can you see anything in this interaction between Jesus and this man that might relate to us today? What?

POINT: This man wanted to know what he had to DO to have eternal life, he wanted religion, he apparently was very moral, but he didn’t want to KNOW God. He was an idolater (Colossians 3:5). A better question would have been, “Jesus, how can I really know God?”

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Read: Matthew 4:18-22



QUESTION: How are Peter, Andrew, James & John and the rich young ruler similar? What do they have in common?

Answers: They owned property, made money; knew something about religion and God. Other?

- What is different between Peter’s response to Jesus invitation to follow him and that of the rich ruler? (Answer: Peter dropped everything and followed, the rich ruler went away sorrowful.)
- What do you suppose caused this difference?



Luke 12: 13-21



QUESTION: What does Jesus warn us about in verse 15? What does he mean, “All kinds of greed?” How would “Forbes” magazine describe this man? (Answer: industrious, entrepreneur of the year, hard working, prudent, a “go getter”

How does God describe this man in verse 20?

Is God telling us that it’s wrong to be industrious and save for the future? What is God’s point?



Malachi 3:8-10



QUESTION: How is our giving to God a test of our attitude toward money? A Tithes is 10% of your income and an “Offering” is everything over that. In your own mind, calculate how much you would be giving in your contribution if you gave 10% of your gross income monthly. Are you?



Matthew 6:19-22

QUESTION: Jesus said that where our treasure is, that is where our heart is. What did he mean? How does this relate to the sermon by Jesus in Luke 14:33, “we must give up everything?”



APPLICATION:

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you put possessions in their proper perspective?

How will this affect your contributions and your attitude toward money?

What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week from this lesson?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. Any emotional commitments that come before our devotion to God will prevent us from being his disciples.

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#4 Discipleship: Becoming One with Christ

Objective: To help people understand that discipleship is a process of becoming one with Christ and living our lives like he would live our lives.



Ice Breakers: Have you seen the cereal commercial where his wife walks in and says, “Honey, this article says that you are what you eat.” He responds, “Thanks, you tell me that just as I’m eating a bowl of fruit loops.” Is it true that we are what we eat? (Discuss) Is the statement true that we are what we eat spiritually? (Discuss).

In this lesson we want to look at Jesus statements about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. What does it mean to become one with Christ. How do we eat his flesh and drink his blood?

 **Read: John 6: 24-66**



QUESTION: Why was the crowd still following Jesus (:24-26)? How does Jesus respond to the crowd’s questions? How are his interests different from theirs?



QUESTION: In verse 32-33, how does Jesus use their interest in food to illustrate what he wants them to understand? What does bread do physically that is like what he can do spiritually?



QUESTION: In verses 35-40, what claim does Jesus make? What is the will of the Father? How does this section show what he means by saying he is the “Bread of life?”

In verse 41-42, how does the crowd respond to his teaching? How is the principle of John 4:43-44 demonstrated here?

What promise is repeated three times in verse 44-45. Do you see a pattern in these verses that might give some indication of what it means to eat the bread of heaven? (Listen... learn... come to him. We are drawn by God when we are taught by God, then listen, then learn, then come to Jesus. This is how God draws us and how we eat the bread of heaven

Compare v. 40 with v. 54. What does Jesus mean by “Eating his flesh and drinking his blood?”




QUESTION: Some of these people were following Jesus for what they could “get” from him in the physical sense. What are some physical benefits that people may receive as followers of Christ today? (Answer: friendships, emotional support, financial assistance, sense of belonging – others?). Are some of these things similar to following Jesus to receive physical bread? How?


NOTE: can a person appear to be “following Jesus” from a casual observation, and still not be “eating his flesh and drinking his blood?” Explain what you mean. (Compare Matthew 7:21-23).


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 **Read John 14:20**

 **QUESTION:** How does this passage relate to the idea of “eating his flesh and drinking his blood?” What does it mean that Jesus is in his Father, and we are in him, and he is in us?”

NOTE: the idea in John 6 is that of “keeps on eating and keeps on drinking”. Do you think Jesus is talking about the Lord’s Supper in this conversation? Why or why not? (Answer: No he’s not talking about the Lord’s Supper. He’s discussing the principle of becoming totally one with him)

 **Read: Colossians 1:27 and John 4:14, 6:56, 15:5**

 **QUESTION:** What do these passages say about the idea of Christ being “In us” and us “in him?” What will the results be if we are truly “in him and he in us?”

Compare John 10: 30-33; 17:20-22. What other insights can you see from these passages that relate to the concept of becoming one with God and Christ, and ultimately with each other?

The idea that we have eternal life by eating the Lord’s Supper is an incorrect concept.

 **APPLICATION:**

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you understand what it really means to “eat his flesh and drink his blood?”

What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week from this lesson?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. We must continue to take him into ourselves and become one with him as we live our lives. We truly are what we eat, and if we are to be his disciples and have eternal life, then Christ must be in us and we must be in him. As we continue to take him into ourselves, then our priorities toward things in this life begin to change.


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#5 Marks of Discipleship: Abiding In the Word

Objective: To help people understand the marks of discipleship that Jesus said would identify those who are truly his disciples. In this lesson we will examine the mark of abiding in his word.



Ice Breakers: Let's go around the room and have each one of you share something about your heritage. Where are your ancestors from? What nationality (ies) are your ancestors? In this lesson we will examine a common principle that can deceive us if we aren't careful. The Jews thought that because they were physical descendants of Abraham they had an “inside connection” with God. Jesus is going to confront this misconception and show that true discipleship is defined, not by our spiritual heritage, but by how we live according to his word and teaching.

 **Read:** John 8:31-47



QUESTION: We see that Jesus is speaking to Jews who had “believed him” (v. 31). Why was Jesus so tough on people who merely “believed” him?
(Possible answers: 1) They claimed to believe, but their actions were contrary to what they said they believed? 2) They claimed to believe, but they weren't comprehending the true spiritual meaning of Jesus' teaching (see Matthew 13:10-17).

POINT: A young boy in an adult Bible class was asked, “Do you understand what was just said?” The boy answered, “Yes, I understand. I just don't know what it means!” The Jew who believed him apparently were like this. They believed, but they didn't “Get it!”



QUESTION: The Jews who believed him and even his own disciples did not understand the spiritual nature of everything Jesus said. What is different about the two groups?
(answer: The Jews didn't understand, so they rejected him and his teaching. The disciples didn't understand, but they kept following, kept drawing closer, and kept attempting to learn how to do and become what Jesus wanted).
Do you see any parallels in our lives?

POINT: In our last study we observed many of Jesus disciples would no longer follow him after he told them they must eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:66). They were not willing to pay the cost to follow him. What are some other words that describe what “Abiding in his word” means? (answer: obey, follow, observe, apply... other?).

NOTE: The word “Abide” means to remain or live somewhere. The idea is that we must “continue to live or remain” in Jesus word.



There are three things that the true disciple must do to abide in Jesus word:

1. You must HEAR it (Romans 10:17... faith comes from hearing)

How can we hear God's word? (answer: reading it daily, listening to sermons or scripture on tape, classes, sermons ... other?)

Read Luke 8:18. What does Jesus mean, “Be careful how you listen?”

2. You must RECEIVE the word. (James 1:9-21)

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3. You must DO or OBEY the word (Read Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22-25)

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Begin reading your Bible every day for 10 minutes and keep a diary of what you read and practical ways that you can DO what you are learning. Share this with another person in your group or with the group as a whole next week.



APPLICATION:

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you be a true disciple.
What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week from this lesson?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. We must continue to take him into ourselves and become one with him as we live our lives. We truly are what we eat, and if we are to be his disciples and have eternal life, then Christ must be in us and we must be in him.

True discipleship is characterized by those who abide in his word. We must learn and apply Jesus teaching honestly in our lives. Next week we'll examine another characteristic of true discipleship: Loving one another (John 13:34-35) Begin reading what the Bible has to say about the topic of love for next week's group.

NOTE: Ask who is planning on bringing someone to LIFE GROUP next week? We need to be continually focusing on lost people to lead them to Christ.

Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”

#6 Marks of Discipleship: Love One Another

Objective: To help people understand the marks of discipleship that Jesus said would identify those who are truly his disciples. In this lesson we will examine the mark of loving one another just as Jesus loved.

Before you begin, ask people to share how their personal Bible study and prayer life are progressing. Have they been abiding in the Word as we studied last week?



Ice Breakers: Have you ever noticed that most boxes of soap in the store have a label that reads, “NEW AND IMPROVED?” Why do you think marketing companies put that on the box? In this lesson we’re going to see something that’s very important that’s new and improved. Let’s open our hearts and our Bibles and see if we can discover another mark of true discipleship.

 **Read:** John 13:34-35



QUESTION: What do you observe about these verses that might be different or new and improved compared to Leviticus 19:18?

Milton Jones in his book, *Discipling: The Multiplying Ministry* suggests that this commandment is new and improved in three ways:

1. **New in object.** How is the object of this love different than that of Leviticus 19:18? (Answer: the object of the love is not our neighbor, but other disciples).

POINT: a disciple needs other disciples to experience and express fully the type of love Jesus wants him to know. A disciple should love his neighbor, and even his enemies (Matthew 5:44-46), but this type of love that is New is to be directed toward other disciples.

What does this tell you about Christians who don’t want to have relationships with other believers? How do 1 John 3:15-18; 4:20 relate to the necessity of loving?

2. **New in measure.** Jesus said that his disciples were to love AS HE LOVED. He loved the world (John 3:16). He loved, not because people were so loveable, but because they were so much in need of love. (See also Romans 5:8).

How would you describe the love that Jesus had and how can we love like that?

Do you think love is a feeling? (Answer, the word *agape* is the love commanded here. It is a decision of the mind that is demonstrated by action and attitude rather than being motivated by emotion or feeling. Look at the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7).

What circumstances make it the most difficult for you to love like Jesus loved? (get several responses). How do you know if you are loving (1 John 5:1-3)?

3. **New in purpose.** What is the purpose for this new and improved type of love? (Answer: it has an evangelistic purpose – so that all men will know that you are my disciples). Disciples of Jesus should be able to be identified by non-Christians by the love that we demonstrate toward each other. (See also John 17:20-21).

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APPLICATION:

Loving one another is a foundational characteristic for disciples. As a result, a disciple must be part of a church and display love toward his brothers and sisters in the congregation. It is this love for one another that attracts the non-believer to Christ and makes future discipleship possible.

Too many Christians are critics, faultfinders, and gossips. This demeanor is the opposite of the unique love Jesus has called disciples to have.

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you be a true disciple.

What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week from this lesson?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. We must continue to take him into ourselves and become one with him as we live our lives. We truly are what we eat, and if we are to be his disciples and have eternal life, then Christ must be in us and we must be in him.

True discipleship is characterized by those who abide in his word. We must learn and apply Jesus teaching honestly in our lives and we must love one another as Jesus loved. Next week we'll examine another characteristic of true discipleship: Bearing Much Fruit (John 15:7-8). Keep reading your Bible for 10 minutes every day and having conversational prayer time with God. We'll be sharing next week how we are progressing in this area.

NOTE: Ask everyone to invite one person every day – the “One a day” Challenge. Close with a prayer to help us be true disciples and ask the Lord to open opportunities to lead people to Christ.

Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”

#7 Marks of Discipleship: Bear Much Fruit

Objective: To help people understand the marks of discipleship that Jesus said would identify those who are truly his disciples. In this lesson we will examine the mark bearing much fruit.

NOTE: This lesson will probably take at least two sessions if you look at all the passages. Bearing good fruit is apparently a very important issue with God. Make sure to make some practical application at the end of each session, even if it takes two weeks.

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS: “10x10x1” Read your Bible 10 min, pray 10 min and invite 1 every day! 10x10x1!!!! Keep this slogan before your group every week!

Before you begin, ask people to share how their personal Bible study and prayer life are progressing. Ask your group who they’d like to be sharing Christ with so we can put them on the prayer list. **NOTE:** Put these names on your prospect list and follow up.



Ice Breakers: Who here has a “Green Thumb?” If you could plant an orchard, what fruit trees or vines would you plant? Let’s take the “true or false” quiz together:

- T F The life of the grape is in the branch
- T F You can’t judge a grapevine by its looks
- T F A good gardener is a tough pruner
- T F Pruning a vine will not hurt it
- T F It’s the job of the branch to stay connected to the vine
- T F A vine without fruit is worthless

 **Read: John 15:1-8, 16**



QUESTION: Why did Jesus use the illustration of a vine? (Possible answers: Everybody could understand it? To threaten spiritual non-producers? He was passing through a vineyard?)

Imagine yourself as a branch on a vine. How would you feel as you saw the gardener approaching you with a knife? What does the Father use as his pruning tools?

How would what the disciples are experiencing right now be an example of the pruning process (compare John 6: 65-68; Matthew 15:12-14; 19:21-24)?



QUESTION What do the branches that bear no fruit and the fruitful branches have in common? (ask people if these are possible answers: They both start out tapped into the vine? They both get cut off, but for different reasons? One is dead, the other is growing?)

If you had been one of the disciples hearing this illustration for the first time, what would you have learned?

QUESTION What kind of “Fruit” is God looking for from our lives? (Get several to respond, then explore these verses together)

Matthew 3:6 –10 fruit in keeping with repentance. How would this be apparent? (See Acts 26:20)

Luke 3:7-14 How would the fruit of repentance be demonstrated in the lives of people? How would it be demonstrated in our lives? (See also John 8:3-11).

Matthew 7:15-20 A person’s teaching. Look at the results of what a person teaches and you’ll know the kind of teacher he really is.

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Matthew 12:33-37 By our words (Discuss what is meant in verse 37)?

Matthew 21:19-22 What do you think is Jesus' point here? (see Mark 11:13-17)

Matthew 21:34 – What “fruit” are the harvesters going to collect at the harvest time?
(Souls that are saved?)

Matthew 21:43 What do you suppose is the “fruit of the kingdom?”

Luke 13:6-9 What does this verse tell us about God's patience and desire for us to be fruitful?

Romans 7:4-5 What two kinds of “fruit” are discussed here? What's the difference?
Does Galatians 6:7-8 help us understand this? How?

Galatians 5:19-25 Discuss what the different pieces of fruit are that the Holy Spirit produces? How are the different from the fruit of a “fleshly branch?”

Ephesians 5:8-11 Paul mentions the fruit of the light and the fruitless acts of darkness. Do you suppose that Jesus, as the husbandman, might be examining those two areas in our lives?

Colossians 1:6 What is the fruit in this passage that Paul is discussing? (Souls)

Colossians 1:10 What is the fruit discussed in this passage? (Good works)

Hebrews 13:15 What is the fruit discussed here? (The praise and worship of our lips)



APPLICATION:

God looks for good fruit in our lives. To produce good fruit, we must continue to remain close to Jesus because that is the source of all good fruit. Fruit is the product of the vine, which contains the seed of reproduction within it. In John, there are three characteristics of true discipleship: Abiding in the word, loving one another, and bearing much fruit. Unless we are fruitful in our faith, God will prune us. If we continue to remain unfruitful, he will cut us off.

What have you learned in this lesson that will help you be a true disciple.
What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week from this lesson?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. We must continue to take him into ourselves and become one with him as we live our lives. We truly are what we eat, and if we are to be his disciples and have eternal life, then Christ must be in us and we must be in him.

True discipleship is characterized by those who abide in his word. We must learn and apply Jesus teaching honestly in our lives and we must love one another as Jesus loved. We've now seen that God expects us to bear much fruit and show that we are truly disciples.

Remember the 10x10x1 challenge! We'll be sharing next week how we are progressing in this area.

Close with a prayer to help us be true disciples and ask the Lord to open opportunities to lead people to Christ.

Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”

#8 Discipleship: Imitating Christ

Objective: To help people understand the life of discipleship is a life which uses Christ as our pattern. A Disciple imitates Christ.


INTRODUCTORY MATTERS: “10x10x1” Read your Bible 10 min, pray 10 min and invite 1 every day! 10x10x1!!!! Keep this slogan before your group every week!


Before you begin, ask people to share how their personal Bible study and prayer life are progressing. Ask your group who they’d like to be sharing Christ with so we can put them on the prayer list. NOTE: Put these names on your prospect list and follow up.



Ice Breakers: Some people are good at mimicking others. Who is your favorite person or character to mimic and why? What do the letters WWJD mean to you? (What Would Jesus Do?)


In this lesson we are going to see that another true mark of true discipleship is imitating Christ. Christ should be evident in the way we live, the decisions we make, and the attitudes we demonstrate. WWJD..... as you imitate Christ, this question should become a natural response to almost every event in your life.


 **Read: John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21**

 **QUESTION:** What do you observe about these verses that gives you the impression that we are to imitate Jesus?

In what areas do these verses suggest that we imitate Jesus? (Let people explore, then suggest Love & Service, and Suffering). Do you think these areas are difficult to imitate Christ in? Why?


In what other areas do you think we are to imitate Christ? (discuss).


 **Read: Luke 6:40**

 **QUESTION:** This verse uses the word “student” in the NIV, and “Disciple” in the NASB. The Greek word “Mathates” is used here which means disciple. What is different between the relationship between a student and teacher and that of a disciple and Master? (Get responses from several. **ANSWER:** A student learns information from a teacher. A disciple learns an entire life from a master. The Master and his life IS the lesson in a disciple-Master relationship.

 **Read: Ephesians 5:1**

QUESTION: Have you ever heard the phrase, “Like Father, Like Son?” What does that phrase mean? How is this passage a reflection of that phrase? How can we, who are human, imitate a God that is Supreme? (discuss)

 **Read: 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; Hebrews 13:7**

 **QUESTION** These verses talk a lot about imitating, following examples, being examples etc. In these verses who are we to imitate? Does this pose a problem? For instance, we are supposed to imitate God, then become like Christ, but then we are to imitate people like Paul, faithful people in the church, our leaders etc. Are these verses contradictory? Explain your answer.

Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”

POINT: God is supposed to be our primary focus as we become “God Like (godly).” Christ became flesh and left us an example of how to live, and his life becomes incarnate in the lives of faithful and mature Christians who themselves become examples of how to imitate Christ.

Read: 2 Timothy 3:10-11

QUESTION: What things did Timothy know about Paul from these verses? Is it necessary to know things like that about Christ if we are to imitate Him? How do you think you learn those things? (discuss: Answer: from reading and becoming intimately familiar with Jesus teaching AND his life AND his emotions AND his purpose. We don’t just become familiar with his doctrine, but also his life.

How was Timothy’s life impacted to be more Christ-like as he became more familiar with Paul’s life? (discuss then suggest: Paul imitated Christ, then Timothy observed Christ’s life being modeled in Paul, then imitated those characteristics in his own life) NOTE: Paul was not the perfect example, Christ is. However, we can learn how to imitate certain aspects as we observe them being modeled in others.

Compare Philippians 2:29-30; 3:17 NOTE: we are instructed to take note of those who set a Christ-like example for us. Who do you look at as your main living example in the church? Why?

Read: Acts 4:13

QUESTION: What did people observe about Peter and John? What was it about their lives that made people come to that conclusion about that?



APPLICATION:

From what you know about Jesus life, what is the most difficult aspect for you personally to imitate?

From what you know about Paul’s life, what is the most difficult Christ-like aspect for you to personally imitate?

What aspect of your own personal life would you want other believes to be able to imitate?

What practical suggestions can you share that you will implement this week from this lesson?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. We must continue to take him into ourselves and become one with him as we live our lives. We truly are what we eat, and if we are to be his disciples and have eternal life, then Christ must be in us and we must be in him.

True discipleship is characterized by those who abide in his word. We must learn and apply Jesus teaching honestly in our lives and we must love one another as Jesus loved. We’ve also seen that God expects us to bear much fruit and show that we are truly disciples and that we are to imitate Christ. We do this by becoming intimately familiar with the real Jesus of the Bible, by examining the lives of believers like Paul, as well as those who live faithfully in our own church.

Remember the 10x10x1 challenge! Let’s keep sharing weekly how we are progressing in this area.

Close with a prayer to help us be true disciples and ask the Lord to open opportunities to lead people to Christ.

Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”

#9 Go Make Disciples

Objective: To help people understand the life of discipleship involves being involved in the Mission of our Master – Go make disciples of all nations!


INTRODUCTORY MATTERS: “10x10x1” Read your Bible 10 min, pray 10 min and invite 1 every day! 10x10x1!!!! Keep this slogan before your group every week!

Before you begin, ask people to share how their personal Bible study and prayer life are progressing. Ask your group who they’d like to be sharing Christ with so we can put them on the prayer list. NOTE: Put these names on your “lost sheep to find” list and follow up.




Ice Breakers: Why do communities and governments organize search & rescue groups? (Discuss) God has organized a massive search & rescue mission. That is what the Gospel of Christ and the church are all about. We’re God’s search & rescue mission to a lost world.

 **Read: Matthew 28:18-20**


 **QUESTION:** What do these verses teach about God’s desire for us to be involved in his mission to the world? Why do you think God wants us to go into the entire world and make disciples?


Let’s read the following verses and see why God wants us to tell people the Good News about Jesus.

 **Read: Romans 3:10-12, 23; 6:23; John 3:36; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15**

 **QUESTION:** What do these verses tell us about the seriousness of sin and the outcome of those who die without being forgiven of their sins?


Let’s read the next verses to see the heart of God and what motivates him.

 **Read: John 3:16; Luke 19:10; Romans 5:8-10; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 2:14**


 **QUESTION:** Describe in your own words what you think motivated God to do what he did to save people?

Lost people matter to God. Let’s read these parables to learn how God feels about lost people.

 **Read: Luke 15: 1-2**

 **QUESTION:** For what was Jesus criticized? Why? If we are to imitate Christ as his disciples, how should this principle apply to us? (Possible answers: We should be friends with sinners. The idea is not “Imitation” or “Isolation” but “Infiltration”

 **Read: Luke 15:3-7**

 **QUESTION:** What do you observe about this lost sheep? (Possible answer: he was lost, separated, and didn’t know the way home.) Describe the shepherd’s emotion knowing one of his sheep is lost. What happens when he finds it? How is this a parallel to what happens in heaven when lost sheep are found?

Biblical Discipleship – “Come Follow Me!”



Read: Luke 15: 8-10

QUESTION: What is different between a lost sheep and a lost coin? (Possible answer: the lost coin didn't know it was lost, but its owner did). How are people like this lost coin? What happens when the owner finds the coin? How is this parallel to what happened with the lost sheep?

Read: Luke 15: 11-32

QUESTION: Describe the younger son's life and decisions. How do you think his father felt knowing the kind of decisions he was making? What caused the young man to come home? How did his father react? How did his older brother act? Do you think some Christians may be more like the older brother than the father? How? (Possible answer: Some Christians are not concerned about the lost and could really care less.)
What do we learn about the Father's desire to reach lost people from these parables?
What do we learn about ourselves?

POINTS TO STRESS:

1. In God's eyes, every lost person is precious.
2. One lost person demands an all out effort!
3. We can't stop speaking and seeking until the one who is lost is found and recovered.
4. We should rejoice when that which was lost is found!

Let's now look at our part in finding and recovering lost people.

Read: Matthew 4:19; Luke 19:10; Proverbs 11:30

QUESTIONS: What does Jesus want us to be as his followers? (Answer: Fishers of men, seekers of the lost, winner of souls).
How can you become this in your own life? (Get people to share one or two ideas of how they can be involved in making disciples) (After letting people discuss, share some of these ideas: invite one person every day to church or LIFE Group, pray with someone who is hurting, start making friends with someone you want to lead to Christ, make a meal for a neighbor, help a single mom out by changing the oil in her car, or watching her kids for an hour so she can have some personal time, ... more ideas?)



APPLICATION:

SUMMARY STATEMENT: True discipleship requires counting the cost and dealing with the real issues of life that attach themselves to our hearts. Our commitment to Jesus must be first when it comes to 1) Relationships, 2) Sin and self, and 3) possessions. We must continue to take him into ourselves and become one with him as we live our lives. We truly are what we eat, and if we are to be his disciples and have eternal life, then Christ must be in us and we must be in him.

True discipleship is characterized by those who abide in his word. We must learn and apply Jesus teaching honestly in our lives and we must love one another as Jesus loved. We've also seen that God expects us to bear much fruit and show that we are truly disciples and that we are to imitate Christ. We do this by becoming intimately familiar with the real Jesus of the Bible, by examining the lives of believers like Paul, as well as those who live faithfully in our own church. God wants us to be involved in his search and rescue mission in the world because lost people matter to God. As disciples, let's go make disciples! Remember the 10x10x1 challenge! Let's keep sharing weekly how we are progressing in this area.

Close with a prayer to help us be true disciples and ask the Lord to open opportunities to lead people to Christ.