

B E C O M I N G

F O L L O W

A D I S C I P L E

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O F C H R I S T

*A N I N E - W E E K S M A L L
G R O U P S T U D Y G U I D E*

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

I hope you are opening this little booklet because you desire to know God. But in the most wonderfully, unexpected way, the Bible presents something more than simply knowing of God. The Bible describes how a person might come to know him personally. More than presenting facts about God, the Scriptures show us how to enter into relationship with God. Biblically speaking, knowing God comes through a personal encounter with him.

In the Gospels, a personal relationship with God is framed as something called “discipleship.” When Jesus entered space and time, he did not simply stand alone on a mountain and preach about God, or sit in a room and write a book about heaven. Instead, Jesus called “disciples.” Jesus’s disciples were people who followed him, watched him, learned from him, and intimately came to know him. And this event of discipleship carried on to future believers, such that even today, Jesus calls his people “disciples,” the ones who follow him, watch him, learn from him, and intimately grow to know him.

Through this personal and small group study, our goal is that you would grow as a disciple of Jesus. To do that, we are going to start where Christians always start: with the Scriptures. Most of the gospel of Matthew is taken up with our cause: showing believers in Jesus how they might become disciples of Jesus.

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By following Jesus’s journey with his original followers in Matthew, we will see how Christ shaped his original followers into his disciples. Then, we will take the journey ourselves – from believer to disciple. I am praying that by the end of these nine weeks, you would not simply know more about following Jesus, but instead, you would be a more faithful disciple of Jesus.

Here’s how to use this book:

Before Sunday morning, September 10th, complete the “Week One” study days. The Sunday sermon will follow your study. After the sermon, you will gather in small groups to learn, apply, and grow together with others. Come to your small groups with questions. Come ready to talk and share and apply the work Jesus is doing in your life. After you have met in your groups, move on to “Week 2,” and so on and so forth for the next nine weeks.

Remember to keep the goal in mind. You are not here to check a box or complete a religious task. You are here to grow deeper in discipleship. May God meet you along the way and shape you over this time.

With you in Christ,
Alec

DAY ONE

Matthew 4:18-22

18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Who found whom?

2. Is there any significance to that?

continued on the next page

Week One

3. Where did he find them?

4. Where does Jesus find us?

5. Who are Andrew and Simon at this point?

6. Was it unusual for a rabbi to take fishermen for disciples?

7. Have you ever wondered if you were good enough to be a disciple of Jesus?

8. What types of things would you think might disqualify someone from being his disciple?

continued on the next page

9. How does this passage speak to your fitness for discipleship?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior of sinners, would you call the likes of me to the path of discipleship? Would you look past my ordinariness and my mediocrity, my sin and my rebelliousness and call me to something grander than just getting by? Would you invite me to be a disciple of you? I will watch and listen for your invitation to deeper places of discipleship today. It's in your name that I ask these things. Amen.

3. What does it look like for you to follow Jesus?

4. What does Jesus mean when he says, “I will make you fishers of men?”

5. How or why will we become fishers of men?

6. Consider how verse 19 acts as a definition of what a disciple is: 1) a follower of Jesus, 2) A proclaimer of God's kingdom to others.

7. What is the response of Andrew and Simon?

8. Would you have responded by leaving everything?

continued on the next page

9. What does it mean for you to leave everything today?

10. How long did they think about it?

11. What would have caused them to leave family, business, and possessions **IMMEDIATELY**?

12. Do you encounter Jesus in this way?

PRAYER

Jesus, that I could experience you with the same power and awe of you as Andrew and Simon did. Jesus, would you reveal your wonder and glory to me such that I might let go of my hold on anything that isn't you? Would you go to work on my heart today, revealing yourself to me? Would you show me today how to follow you and how to be a fisher of men? In your name and for your glory we pray, Amen.

Read Matthew 10:1-9.

1 And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. 2 The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts...

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. To whom does Jesus give authority in this passage and what is the authority he gives?

2. What's the purpose of having authority to heal disease and cast out spirits?

3. Jesus gives them a mission as they go. What is it? (See verse 7).

continued on the next page

4. Which disciples were sent out and which disciples stayed back?

5. Is there such a thing as a disciple who isn't "sent?"

6. Where are you sent?

7. Do you have the authority the disciples had?

8. What is your purpose in being sent?

9. Is it possible to be a disciple and not be sent? What might that say to you?

PRAYER

Oh Lord, you are the one who came proclaiming the kingdom of God. You cast out demons, you healed the sick and the afflicted as a sign of your power. Would you, by the Holy Spirit, send me out as you did the disciples that day? Would you cast away my fears and remove my self-inflicted obstacles so that I might go? Lord, make it clear to where and to whom I am sent. Amen.

Read Matthew 10:9-16.

9 “Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belt, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. 11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

4. Do you have a backup plan in case God's sending does not work? What if you removed the backup plans and just trusted God's goodness as he sends you?

5. How should you deal with being rejected when you witness to Christ's saving death?

6. Does it make you feel better that people shut the door on Jesus and his disciples as they went proclaiming the kingdom of God?

7. Consider the wisdom of verse 16. How does it inform our posture as we go? Consider answering this question in very practical, concrete ways.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, ignite my heart for you that I might take up your sending without reservation or back up plans. Lord, would you allow me to be a part of this great mission of yours, where you continue to call lost people to yourself? Would you let me, even this day, taste just a bit of the joy of seeing the Holy Spirit enter someone's life and change them from the inside out? God, would you give me wisdom and fortitude when I encounter rejection? In your name I ask all of this Jesus, Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 14:22-27

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Describe what has happened during this day.

2. What does Jesus do in response to the craziness of the day's events?

3. How does Jesus's reaction to the day's busyness speak to you personally?

4. What do you think verse 24 signifies?

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5. Where in your life do you feel like you're fighting the waves and the wind is against you?

6. Why do the disciples think it's a ghost? Don't they know Jesus?

7. Are there places where you're not seeing the presence of Jesus?

8. What does his presence bring along with it?

9. How can Jesus enter into the storm you're fighting?

PRAYER

Jesus, my life feels like a constant battering against wind and waves. I have no chance against most of it. It overwhelms me. Lord, I believe you're in the storm with me. Help me to see you in it. Would the presence of Lordship take away my fear. Would your power to walk on water comfort me that even the wind and the waves stand at your command, and therefore, so might the trials I'm facing. Blessed are you O one whom the wind and waves obey. Amen.

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 14:28-32.

28 And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What did Peter do right in this encounter with Jesus?

2. Why did he get out of the boat?

3. What do you think it was like to walk on water? Do you think Peter was more captivated by standing on water or the power of Jesus? Or do you think maybe one led to another quite naturally?

4. Why does Peter sink?

continued on the next page

5. What happened when Peter started sinking?

6. How might this story apply to you? What might be the water? What might be the storm? What is Jesus calling you to do in faith? Where have you failed and been caught by Christ?

PRAYER

Jesus, you are the one who walked on water. Physics bowed to your majesty. There is truly no one like you. Lord, show me how I might respond to your wonder. Show me where to leap forward in faith. Assure me that you are there to catch me. I pray this in your name, O beloved and exalted Messiah, Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 16:13-20.

13 “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Describe how you might be feeling as a disciple of Jesus at this point in the journey? Remember, you haven't seen the cross. Much has yet to be revealed to you.

2. Why do you think Jesus asks the disciples who people are saying he is? Is he interested in the opinion of others or is he interested in something else?

3. Who do people say Jesus is?

4. Why aren't people calling him the Messiah?

5. What's the difference between the Messiah and a Prophet?

6. Who do people around you say Jesus is?

continued on the next page

Week Four

7. Why do many today stop short of calling him the Messiah?

8. Who does Peter say that Jesus is?

9. What does Jesus think of that answer?

10. The most important question you will ever answer in life is this one: Who do you say Jesus is?

11. What might be some implications of your answer?

PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to probe your heart and lead you into the consideration of your answer to #10 above. Who do you really believe Jesus to be? Where would a firm conviction that Jesus is the Christ take you? Ask the Spirit to guide the answer.

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 16:13-20.

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is Jesus’ response to Simon Peter’s answer in verse 16?

2. What does verse 17 tell us about how one comes to know Jesus is the Messiah?

3. What does Jesus mean when he says the following in verses 18 and 19 (interpret each phrase for yourself):

“Upon this rock, I will build my church”

“The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (the church)”

“I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

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4. Consider the proclamations from Jesus to Peter. Do they simply apply to Peter? If not, then who else?

5. What power might you right now possess that you didn't know you had? What is the purpose of that power?

6. If verse 19 is right, could it be possible we underestimate the church?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. I bless you for my confession. I bless you that you have revealed such a thing to the likes of me. Lord, if you could use me to build your church, please show me where, when, and how. Lord, endow me and your people with the keys of the kingdom. Give me the assurance that hell won't prevail against me and your people. Show me where to bind up evil and the evil one. Show me where to loose captives from sin through gospel proclamation. Make me an agent of witness for your glory. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 16:24-28.

24 “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. 28 Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is the context of this passage? What has Jesus been discussing with his disciples?

2. Why do you think the disciples would be so opposed to Jesus's predictions about his death?

3. What might be the difference between being a close disciple of a victorious leader and being a close disciple of a leader who is crucified?

4. How does Jesus's own life and actions set the course for what it means to be his disciple in verses 24-26?

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Week Five

5. What does it mean to “deny yourself and take up your cross?”

6. Name some areas where you might be trying to “save your life.”

7. What is one thing that you are using to “Save your life?”

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you gave up everything for me. You let go of the beauty of heaven to come to the mess of earth. You left a throne. You left praise. You left perfect satisfaction in the presence of the Father, and you took up a cross. You bore my sin. You tasted true death. How can I but praise you for doing something so outrageous for me? Show me how to grasp such wonders. It is in your name that I pray, Amen.

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 16:24-28.

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. 28 Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Have you ever gained a piece of the world and forfeited your soul because of it? Give an example.

2. What was that like? How did it feel? How did others fare because of it?

3. Why would it be worth it to lose your life for Jesus?

4. Have you ever experienced giving some of your life away for the gospel?

continued on the next page

5. What was it like? How did it feel? What happened to others because of it?

6. Consider one way that you might take up your cross.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I have not wanted to give up anything for you. In fact, I have wanted you that you might increase more of world for me. How I have misjudged the glory of heaven Lord. How I have misunderstood the nature of Joy at your return. Show me now, by the discerning light of your Holy Spirit, what it means to let go of my life and take up my cross. Give me true humiliation that I might grasp all that you undertook for me, and that I might ultimately gain my soul. In your name I pray Jesus, Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 18:1-6.

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How is greatness determined in the world?

continued on the next page

2. Why would the disciples ask Jesus who the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is?

3. What place do you think the disciples were imagining they were going to receive?

4. Have you ever considered yourself spiritually superior?

5. What benefit did you think you deserved from God because of your stellar spiritual work?

6. Have you ever thought God owed you something?

7. What did you think he owed you?

continued on the next page

8. According to Jesus, who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven and why?

PRAYER

Jesus, I have sought the glory of myself in so many ways. I have fought for my importance and preeminence with my spouse and with my friends. I have touted myself above others in so many ways, but worst of all, by my own spirituality. I have thought myself deserving because of something I have done. Forgive me, Lord. Cause me to know the true state of myself. As scary as it is Lord, humble me like a child. In your name I pray, Amen.

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 18:1-6.

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What qualities of a child does Jesus want to exemplify as the trait of a true disciple?

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2. How do you apply this lesson spiritually to your life?

3. What does true and deep humility look like?

4. What does trite humility look like?

5. Look up and then write down three verses of scripture that highlight the nature of true humility (See Philippians 2:3-11 for a head start).

6. Meditate on one of those verses for the next three days.

PRAYER

Lord, you have taught very clearly that your followers are to take the unassuming position of a child in your kingdom. God, like a child, I haven't earned anything. I have been given everything. What I have made of my life, spiritually and materially is a rag which is not worthy to clean your feet. Teach me the kind of humility displayed by your son Jesus Christ. Show me what it is to empty myself and to wait for your filling back up. Show me the joy of being nothing and yet receiving everything in Christ. It is in his name that I pray. Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 18:21-22.

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Who asks the question about forgiveness and to whom does Jesus address his response?

2. Jesus is training his disciples (that would include you) for what it means to follow him. In Jesus’s own words, what is one feature that should define you as a follower of Jesus?

3. Have you ever had to forgive someone more than once? How many times are you willing to forgive someone? What happens after that?

4. How many times will people forgive one another in the world? What happens when they are done forgiving?

continued on the next page

5. Does forgiving someone seven times seem like a lot or a little to you?

6. If seven feels like a great deal, how much does 77 times feel like?

7. See Genesis 4:24. How might Jesus be interacting with that passage here?

8. Who do you need to forgive, again?

PRAYER

Lord, search my heart and know me. By your Spirit, would you draw to my attention the people that I have failed to forgive? (Spend some time here).

Would you give me a heart that is soft to forgive them for the 38th time and the 63rd time? Show me how and empower me to forgive. In your name I pray, Amen.

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How do verses 23-35 relate to verses 21-22?
2. Why is the servant's action in verse 28 so surprising?
3. What is Jesus saying to us in the parable about forgiveness?

continued on the next page

4. Why is Jesus's call to forgive different than, say, Ghandi's or Socrates'? Why should you forgive, according to the parable?

5. Does Jesus's reason for forgiving others change anything for you?

6. Spend some time meditating on that which God has forgiven you.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have forgiven me more than 77 times. Your grace is as innumerable as my wrongdoing toward you. I am grateful you have not counted my sins against me. I am thankful you have not sought right payment from me, that you have sought mercy. Would you give me the a spirit of gratitude that leads to the forgiveness of others. Show me how to forgive the ones that have hurt me. Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 26:30-35.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” 33 Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” 34 Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” 35 Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What night is this?

2. Explain what Jesus means in verse 31 when he quotes Zechariah 13:7, “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”

3. Why did the disciples fall away from Jesus?

4. What do Peter’s responses in verses 33 and 35 reveal about him? Was he lying? Did he really believe he would stick with Jesus, even if it meant his death?

continued on the next page

5. What happened to Peter when faced with Jesus's death?

6. Have you ever felt like you let Jesus down? Was that your intention?

7. What happens in the gap between your intentions for Jesus and your actions for him?

8. What would it take for your actions to match your intentions?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I know Peter is like me, and I am like Peter. I know my intentions are great. I know my real life doesn't always reflect it. I want to serve you with my life. I want to be faithful to you as you have been faithful to me. Show me what needs to change in me to make my actions reflect my intentions for you. Amen.

Read John 21:15-19.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” 16 He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” 19 (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. When does this conversation happen?

2. How many times does Jesus ask Peter if Peter loves him?

3. What does Peter think Jesus is doing with the repeated question?

4. What is Jesus actually doing with Peter? Connect it to the cock crows.

5. What does this passage tell us about what it means to fail as a disciple?

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Week Eight

6. Where do you need Jesus to forgive your unfaithfulness?

7. Notice the connection between verse 18 and Matthew 26:35. Peter gets a second chance, but for what?

8. What is Peter's purpose from here on out? How does this relate to your purpose?

9. Make some connections with Jesus's original calling of Peter and other disciples.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, many times I have failed you. I know that my unfaithfulness over and over again is shameful in light of all that you have done for me. Would you forgive me? Would you restore me to your kingdom and call me back to your mission? Lord Jesus, I know that following you begins by continually rehearsing repentance and grace. Show me how my mission for you goes no further than that as well. In your name I pray, Amen.

DAY ONE

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Explain the events that have immediately preceded this conversation between Jesus and his disciples.

2. Why does Jesus claim the authority of heaven and earth at this time?

3. What is the authority that has been given to him? By whom has it been given?

4. With the authority to command his disciples to do anything he wishes, what does Jesus tell them to do?

continued on the next page

5. Write down the verbs in verse 19-20. Explain what each of them means in this context.

6. Look at each of the verbs from Question #5. How might you take part in one or more or all of those?

7. Explain the hope you've been given in this endeavor.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, in order that I might come to the fullest nature of a disciple, show me how to carry out the Great Commission. Lord Christ, in order that I might bring you the most glory, create a desire in me to go, teach, baptize, and disciple others. Show me the great joy in this life-altering mission. In your name I pray, Amen.

DAY TWO

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Let's dig a bit deeper into our reflections from yesterday:

1. Where are you called to “Go”? Are you going? If not, what holds you back?

2. When in your life have you participated in discipling? What would it look like to do so?

3. To whom are you called to teach the commands of Jesus? Are you doing it?

4. What type of radical alterations would you have to make in your life to create the room to be a Great Commission Christian? Leave nothing off the table.

5. What help or training or direction might you need to be a Great Commission Christian? Where could you go or who could you ask for such things?

6. What is the impact of being a Great Commission Christian? How can this be used as motivation?

7. What happens if it is not motivation? How can you change that?

PRAYER

O God my Father, give me a heart for the lost. Give me a heart for just one more disciple. Give me a desire and a want to see many more saved and living for Christ. My heart is too cold to your Great Commission, O Lord. Warm it. Stir it. Give me your Spirit, that I might be empowered to be a disciple-maker. Let me not be a kingdom bench-warmer, but put me in the game. It is in your name and for your glory that I ask these things, Amen.

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