

Becoming A Disciple

A SIX SESSION STUDY TO HELP ESTABLISH DISCIPLES



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SESSION 1 THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

INTRODUCTION

Hearing and responding in faith to the gospel message is foundational to life as a disciple. The word gospel simply means “good news,” and it is important for us to have a full understanding of this good news as it was historically proclaimed by the Apostles. In Acts 10:34-48 we see the fullness of the gospel message proclaimed by Peter. This is the first time that the gospel is proclaimed to the gentiles, and we learn from Peter that at the center of the gospel message is the person and work of Jesus Christ.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Read: Acts 10:34-48

Think as you read:

1. What was the core content of the message that Peter preached? What specifically did he say about Jesus?
2. What did Peter say they needed to do to have their sins forgiven?
3. What happened to them when they believed?

Get to the core:

In your own journal or word app, summarize the core teaching in this passage (according to the author) in a way that makes sense to you. Feel free to use bullet points, an outline, or simply write out a summary--anything that helps you remember.

READ FOR INSIGHT

Read **Article 1 - “The Gospel of Jesus Christ”** located in your reader.

CLARIFY IN COMMUNITY

Write down your own thoughts on these questions and then discuss them with others in your church community.

1. How was the gospel first explained to you? Was it different from what you have studied so far in this guide?
2. Did those who shared the gospel with you leave any parts out? Which ones?
3. Why do you think the apostles included all of the elements they did in their gospel proclamation? What are the possible effects of not getting or giving the whole picture of the gospel message?

REFLECT AND RESHAPE

After talking this out in your church community, take some time to reflect on what you have learned. How is God leading you to reshape your life based on what you learned?

SESSION 2 FIRST STEPS OF OBEDIENCE

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the book of Acts we see a clear pattern emerge of people hearing the Gospel proclaimed, repenting (turning from idols and false beliefs and turning to Jesus), being baptized (identifying as belonging to Jesus and his people), and being taught. Those who responded were turning from idols to Jesus, and the first step of obedience was baptism. Baptism was an outward sign of an inward change. They were now identifying themselves with Jesus and his people. This session allows us to take a deeper look at the importance of baptism.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Read: Matthew 28:16-20

Think as you read:

1. How were they to make disciples? What were the steps that they were to follow?
2. Who were they to make disciples from? How far was the message of Jesus to spread?
3. Why was baptism so important?

Get to the core:

In your own journal or word app, summarize the core teaching in this passage (the author's intended meaning) in a way that makes sense to you. Feel free to use bullet points, an outline, or simply write out a summary--anything that helps you remember.

READ FOR INSIGHT

Read **Article 2 - "Responding to the Message"** located in your reader.

CLARIFY IN COMMUNITY

Write down your own thoughts on these questions and then discuss them with others in your church community.

1. What part does baptism play in Jesus' command to make disciples? Why?
2. Why do you think baptism is ignored so often in our culture?
3. What might be some of the consequences of ignoring this command? What about consequences of obeying it?

REFLECT AND RESHAPE

After talking this out in your church community, take some time to reflect on what you have learned. How is God leading you to reshape your life based on what you learned?

SESSION 3 A DISTINCTIVE WAY OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The final part of Jesus' command, to make disciples, is to teach them to obey. This way of life was summarized in the teachings of the early church and was known as the "didache" or "teaching." These disciples were committed to the Apostles teaching which included the Gospel message and the distinctive way of life lived based upon Christ. This way of life flows out of deep rooted trust in the gospel empowered by the Holy Spirit. We refer to the core elements of this teaching as the "essentials of a disciple." In this session we are going to study the basic passage where this concept comes from: Colossians 2:6-8.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Read: Colossians 2:6-8

Think as you read:

1. What do the images rooted, built up, and established communicate concerning our growing in our faith?
2. What are some of the elementary principles of the world?
3. What are some of the elementary principles of Christ, which you have learned so far?
4. What does it mean to be taken captive by a philosophy?

Get to the core:

In your own journal or word app, summarize the core teaching in this passage (the author's intended meaning) in a way that makes sense to you. Feel free to use bullet points, an outline, or simply write out a summary--anything that helps you remember.

READ FOR INSIGHT

Read **Article 3 - "A New Way to Live"** located in your reader.

CLARIFY IN COMMUNITY

Write down your own thoughts on these questions and then discuss them with others in your church community.

1. When in life have you had to learn a new set of first principles (job, sport, etc.)?
2. If you don't learn the first principles (essentials) of your faith, what problems might result?
3. What kind of commitment do you think it will take to fully grasp the essentials of a disciple? How can you mature in them?

REFLECT AND RESHAPE

After talking this out in your church community, take some time to reflect on what you have learned. How is God leading you to reshape your life based on what you learned?

SESSION 4 ONGOING RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

Last session we discussed the way of life for those who living under the lordship of Jesus. As his people, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and empowering us to live in a new way. We sometimes refer to this way of life as “Gospel Living.” It is living in a way that is consistent with the Gospel we believe. God has given us his Spirit, His Word, spiritual gifts, and natural talents that work together in a supernatural way to transform our lives, enabling us to live out our new identity by the power of the Spirit. Our commitment to walk in obedience to the teaching we have received in the power of the Spirit results in ongoing renewal.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Read: Romans 12:1-2

Think as you read:

1. What does it mean to present our bodies to God as a sacrifice?
2. What does it mean to be conformed to this world?
3. What is the key to being transformed? What are we to be transformed into?

Get to the core:

In your own journal or word app, summarize the core teaching in this passage (the author’s intended meaning) in a way that makes sense to you. Feel free to use bullet points, an outline, or simply write out a summary--anything that helps you remember.

READ FOR INSIGHT

Read **Article 4 - “The Renewed Mind”** by **John Piper** located in your reader.

CLARIFY IN COMMUNITY

Write down your own thoughts on these questions and then discuss them with others in your church community.

1. What are some of the core “principles of the world” that pull on you every day?
2. Since the principles of Christ are supposed to control our new lives, do any of the principles of the world strike you as being contrary to the principles of Christ? Which ones?
3. What do you need to be doing regularly to truly internalize the essentials of a disciple so that the Spirit can use them to transform you?

REFLECT AND RESHAPE

After talking this out in your church community, take some time to reflect on what you have learned. How is God leading you to reshape your life based on what you learned?

SESSION 5 PERSONAL CONVICTIONS

INTRODUCTION

What does the life of a disciple look like? Jesus upset the religious establishment of his day by relating to the world in a new way. He wanted His disciples to follow His model for life in the Kingdom. But many people today see Christianity as simply following a list of rules. These rules can quickly become a form of slavery that destroys the spirit of newfound freedom in Christ, and they can build walls between us and the world. If we are going to live by the first principles of the faith, we must be firmly rooted in the way of Christ, not simply living according to the lifestyle opinions or convictions of others.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Read: Romans 14:1-23

Think as you read:

1. What does it mean to have your own convictions before God?
2. What does it mean to judge another? What does it mean to hold another in contempt?
3. What does it mean to cause another to stumble? What does it mean to be strong in faith? Weak in faith?

Get to the core:

In your own journal or word app, summarize the core teaching in this passage (the author's intended meaning) in a way that makes sense to you. Feel free to use bullet points, an outline, or simply write out a summary--anything that helps you remember.

READ FOR INSIGHT

Read **Article 5 - "Weaker Brothers, Pharisees, and Servants"** located in your reader.

CLARIFY IN COMMUNITY

Write down your own thoughts on these questions and then discuss them with others in your church community.

1. What is the difference between a strong and a weak Christian? What is the goal--to be strong or weak?
2. How can we stand on our convictions, live the way we think before God, and not cause another to stumble?
3. If we are mature in our lifestyle choices and understand our freedom in Christ, how might this benefit our witness for Christ?

REFLECT AND RESHAPE

After talking this out in your church community, take some time to reflect on what you have learned. How is God leading you to reshape your life based on what you learned?

SESSION 6 REFLECT & RESHAPE

INTRODUCTION

Think back over the “Reflect and Reshape” sections of each of the five sessions. It is important that we not simply learn new information, but that we prayerfully consider what God is leading us to do in obedience to what we are learning. As we are being shaped by the truths of Scripture, areas of our life will be challenged. We need to consider how God is calling us to reshape our lives--our thinking, feeling, being, and doing. This is a vital part of building our lives around the way of Christ rather than the way of the world.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. ***Are there decisions that you need to make?*** For example, are there life directions that you have been pursuing that you need to change in light of becoming a disciple of Jesus?
2. ***Are there people that come to mind (friends, family, co-workers) that you can share the gospel with?*** With whom in your relational networks can you share what you are learning?
3. ***Are here new habits that you need to build to help you continue to grow as a disciple?*** (time in prayer, studying the Scriptures, committing to your church community, serving others, people to help you grow as a disciple).
4. ***How will you ask God for help?*** Formulate your thoughts and responses not only into an action plan, but also one main prayer request. Consider writing it down and praying over it regularly. Over the next few weeks, watch for ways that you see God answering your prayer.

KEY TRUTHS TO MEMORIZE

What Scriptures from the past five sessions do you need to memorize to help you remember what you learned and what God has called you to do in response?