

THE
JOURNEY

BECOMING
MORE LIKE
JESUS

PARTICIPANT'S
GUIDE

UNIT ONE
TO KNOW HIM



THE JOURNEY



DEAR FELLOW TRAVELER,

Welcome to The Journey. We are so glad you are here. We believe that discipleship is a journey of becoming more like Jesus, and we want to come alongside you on this adventure. Perhaps you are new to following Jesus. Or maybe you've been following Him for many years. Regardless of your place on the path, we believe The Journey is for you.

The Journey is a versatile resource designed with the church and home in mind. The content will contain foundational, biblical teaching presented in an interactive format. It's intended for use in community with other believers. We also have built At-Home Exercises into the content for you to engage in at home throughout the week. We hope that these exercises help to strengthen your understanding of Jesus and hold you accountable for meeting with Jesus daily.

Our lives are radically changed by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit through salvation, but our journey with the Lord shouldn't stop at our salvation experience. We must then embark on a journey of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. By digging deeper into this relationship, The Journey will help you extend discipleship beyond Sundays. By immersing yourself into God's Word, prayer, and worship, you will fall more in love with the One who loves you most. Remember, there is always more to learn, still room to grow, and always support available for you on the journey.

We have been praying for you. We have had you in mind as we have been preparing this study. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit would work mightily in your life as you commit to this personal and communal discipleship journey with the Lord.

With you on The Journey,

YOUR DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES FAMILY

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT BIBLE TRANSLATION ARE YOU USING?

All scriptures used in The Journey will be the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

HOW IS THE JOURNEY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER BIBLE STUDIES?

The Journey is an invitation to say yes to Jesus in every part of your life. Centered around weekly class experiences, the focus of The Journey is on the 6 days you aren't with your group. We want you to grow in knowledge, as all Bible studies do, but we also want you to be transformed by the power of God and become more like Jesus. By connecting, growing in knowledge, daily intimacy with Jesus, and participation in community, we hope that you will experience transformation.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH DISCUSSION?

We believe that the discussion of the lesson with one another is a vital part of learning. It teaches us to think critically about what we are hearing, to be dependent on one another (someone else may have an insight that we need to hear), and to build trust and relationships in the group.

DOES THIS WORK FOR SMALL AND LARGE GROUPS?

Yes! We believe that the flexibility of this resource allows it to function in both settings. It can be easily adapted to fit the needs of any sized group!

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LESSON ONE | JESUS, THE GOD/MAN

Who was Jesus? Who is this Man who never wrote a book, never held an office, never commanded an army, never owned a piece of land, never traveled far around the world, and yet millions of people have embraced Him as their Savior and Lord. As we begin this journey together, keep in mind that we have the supreme privilege of not only knowing about Jesus, but also knowing Him in a personal way that impacts every part of our lives.

I. JESUS WAS GOD

Read: John 1:1-3

TALK ABOUT IT

This passage from the opening of John is often cited when explaining the divinity of Christ. Why do you think John refers to Jesus as "the Word"? How does Jesus' relationship in the Trinity (and His pre-existence) confirm that He is indeed God?

THINK ABOUT IT

John 1:1 declares that even before Jesus started creating, He simply "was."

Trinity refers to the reality that God exists in three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This does not mean there are three Gods, rather, there is one God, consisting of three distinct persons who are equal in every attribute.

- 1) The Word was never created, He has always existed.
- 2) The Word was "with God" (that is, the Father and the Holy Spirit).
- 3) The Word "was God."

II. JESUS WAS MAN

Read: John 1:14

TALK ABOUT IT

Was Jesus a real human being or did He only appear to be while on earth? Why does this question matter?

THINK ABOUT IT

God became a Man and came to live with us!

Today, millions of people deny that the historical Jesus was truly divine.

John's Gospel, which places the greatest emphasis on Jesus' deity in the four Gospels, also repeatedly highlights His humanity.

"Jesus wept" (John 11:35) demonstrates Jesus' humanity in the clearest way.

III. JESUS IS THE GOD/MAN

Read: Isaiah 9:6

TALK ABOUT IT

This phenomenon of God becoming Man and yet remaining God is called the "Incarnation." Like "Trinity" this word is not in the Bible, yet it is the best way we can theologically describe God taking on human form. The question is



not if it happened, rather, how and why would a God so lower Himself to become a mere mortal?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus was identified as "the Son of God" even before His birth.

It was His conception that was miraculous. This biological impossibility became possible through God's Spirit.

CALL TO ACTION

Commit to participating in The Journey the next eight weeks to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Be sure to fill out your commitment form for this eight-week unit.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Before today's lesson, how would you have defined Jesus the God/Man?
- 2) What still seems confusing to you about Jesus the God/Man?
- 3) Identify one or more ways that Jesus relates to you as a human, knowing he was fully man?
- 4) How does knowing and understanding Jesus as God/Man impact your daily living?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

John 1:1-14; Isaiah 9:1-7

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study the At-Home Scriptures this week. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of

hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time.

2) The Son of God became the Son of Man so we who were sons and daughters of men could become sons and daughters of God. He came down so we could go up. He became poor that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. He was tempted so we could overcome. He suffered so we could be healed. And He died so we could live. Having learned this wonderful truth, begin reading through the four Gospels with an open heart and eyes to see further evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ.

3) Reflect on what it means that Jesus is called the Word. The lesson defined this description as Jesus being the full expression of God. Take a few moments and write down the ways that this truth connects to your life with God.

4) Since Jesus is God and we are not, we are called into submission to Him. Go for a walk and think about all the ways that you try to be in control of your life, instead of turning them over to Jesus. Ask Jesus to help you submit every part of your life to Him.



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LESSON TWO | JESUS, THE MESSIAH

The story of the Bible is framed within the portrait of the Hebrew nation, the chosen people of God. In Genesis 12:1-3 we are introduced to Abram and the beginning of the Jewish people. This passage is called the "Abrahamic Covenant" and is one of the most important texts in the Bible.

In this lesson, we will see that the Hebrew Messiah and the Savior of the whole world are one and the same – Jesus Christ our Lord.

I. THE MESSIAH PROMISED

Read: Matthew 1:22-23

TALK ABOUT IT

How do we know Jesus Christ is the long-expected Savior of the world?

THINK ABOUT IT

Matthew is writing to declare that Jesus is the promised Messiah-King for Israel.

If the entire Old Testament could be shortened to just two words, it would be these: "He's Coming!" And the New Testament could accordingly be summarized by: "He Came!"

The keyword in Matthew is "fulfilled," which he uses 13 times to show that Jesus Christ is the One whom the Old Testament writers foresaw

II. THE MESSIAH PROFESSED

Read: Mark 8:27-29

TALK ABOUT IT

Consider the people in your life (those you know personally and those you listen to from afar). Who do they say Jesus is? Is it necessary for us to be dogmatic in proclaiming that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah?

THINK ABOUT IT

In the first eight chapters, Mark describes how the demons (Mark 1:24) and the winds and waves (Mark 4:41) knew who Jesus was. Yet the twelve disciples remained slow to come to such faith.

"But who do you say that I am?" In the final analysis, this remains the ultimate question we all must answer.

Peter often got it wrong, but this time he got it right. "You are the Christ." Jesus indicated that He would build His Church upon Peter's bedrock confession.

III. THE MESSIAH PROCLAIMED

Read: John 14:4-6

TALK ABOUT IT

How should we, as Christians, respond to charges that we are narrow-minded when we claim that Jesus is the only way to Heaven?

THINK ABOUT IT

One of the most common alternatives to embracing Jesus as God and Messiah is to dismiss Him as just a "great teacher."



C.S. Lewis argument: "Liar, Lunatic, or Lord." One critical view suggests that the Christ of the four Gospels is simply a legend.

When the Lord appeared to Moses at the burning bush, He identified Himself as "I AM Who I AM" (Exodus 3:14).

Jesus was not a drifter searching for the meaning of life. He knew who He was and why He came, and He invites us to make those same discoveries.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

1) It took time for Christ's disciples to recognize who He was and why He came (Mark 1). In what ways in your life do you struggle or fail to recognize who Jesus is?

2) Peter declared, "You are the Christ," a statement proclaiming that Jesus was the promised Messiah that all of Israel had been longing for. It was a promise fulfilled for them. Have you had any long-awaited promises fulfilled in your life?

3) What may have kept you from having boldness to give a defense and declare Jesus as Messiah?

4) What hope does grasping the fulfillment of the Promised Messiah give you?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

John 14:1-14

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Do you ever feel like God is unreachable or not paying attention to you? In the story of Jesus, we see God's plan of redemption come to a climax. With Old Testament prophecies of His coming and New Testament stories of fulfillment, we can be encouraged that God cares for us because Jesus came and

demonstrated that care. This week, when challenging thoughts arise, remind yourself that Jesus came to earth because He loves you, and He wants to be known by you.

2) Not only did Jesus keep God's promise by coming, but He has also promised to come again. Always be ready to give a defense when asked for a reason of the hope that is within you (1 Peter 3:15). Pray that the Lord will give you boldness to proclaim His name in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to Him.

3) Who do you say that Jesus is? This is the question that every person must answer. Take a few moments to reflect on your response. Why did you answer the way you did? Consider whether or not your daily life reflects that answer, and then discuss this exercise with a friend.

4) Read through the seven primary "I AM" sayings from John's gospel. Each one offers a different perspective of Jesus. Which one do you need to rest in today? Spend some time praying about your answer. (John 6:35, 9:5, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6 and 15:1)



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LESSON THREE | JESUS, THE FRIEND

One of the most unique features of the Christian life is that God seeks a personal relationship with individuals. Jesus expressed this in the most practical terms when He said: "I have called you friends" (John 15:15). This is truly amazing grace!

I. JESUS, FRIEND OF SINNERS

Read: Luke 15:1-3

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do we have trouble believing that anyone can be saved by God's grace? In what ways can religious people be as lost as those who appear to be a million miles from God?

THINK ABOUT IT

In Luke's Gospel account, Jesus is pictured as the Son of Man who has come to save the last, the least, and the lost.

"He is a friend of sinners." It was meant as an insult. Instead, it became the ultimate compliment.

II. JESUS, FRIEND OF SUFFERERS

Read: Luke 17:11-19

TALK ABOUT IT

Who are the marginalized, the "untouchables," in our society who need the Body of Christ to reach out to them with compassion?

THINK ABOUT IT

The Scriptures introduce us to a Friend of

Sufferers who promises to either remove our misery or walk through it with us for His glory.

Samaritans were held in low regard by Jewish people who viewed them as second-class or worse. Can you imagine having all the symptoms of leprosy AND being a Samaritan?

III. JESUS, FRIEND OF SAINTS

Read: John 11:1-7

TALK ABOUT IT

How can Jesus' response to Lazarus' sickness and death serve as a pattern for us when we face suffering?

THINK ABOUT IT

Just as we have friendships that are deeper than others, so it was with Jesus while He was on earth.

The disciples surely did not understand why Jesus delayed going to Lazarus.

We, too, will not fully comprehend all the ways of the Lord, but because of His supreme friendship, we will also look back one day and know He was working everything for our greater good (Romans 8:28).



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- 1) Have you disqualified yourself or distanced yourself from Jesus based on your actions, attitudes, or beliefs about yourself? Considering this, what does it mean to you that Jesus is a friend to sinners?
- 2) Jesus is a personal God that wants relationship with you. What might this look like practically in your life?
- 3) Do you intentionally look to be a friend to the marginalized or sufferers? How can you be more active to be like Jesus in being a friend to sinners?
- 4) Describe how Jesus is a friend to you and how you can reciprocate that friendship.

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Luke 15:1-32

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study this week's suggested passage. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word. Don't rush as you read.
- 2) We love spending time with our friends. If Jesus is indeed such a friend, let us make space for Him through daily prayer and Bible reading. Rather than trying to "find the time," make time for fellowship with our beloved Friend. If this is a struggle for you, schedule it into your calendar or have a friend check in with you for accountability.
- 3) Choose an activity you really enjoy: walking, running, swimming, reading, listening to music, etc. Before you begin, stop and pray. Invite Jesus, your Friend, to join you. Become more aware of Jesus' presence in every part of your life, not just the "spiritual" things.

4) In John 11:6, we read that Jesus delays getting to Lazarus, and as a result, Lazarus dies. Imagine how Mary and Martha must have felt; they didn't know Jesus would raise their brother from the dead. Consider your own life. Have you ever felt like Jesus hasn't heard your prayer or isn't giving an answer? How has that experience affected you? Be honest. Now, what truth do you need to remind yourself of if you find you are discouraged by seemingly unanswered prayers?



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LESSON FOUR | JESUS, THE REDEEMER

To redeem implies that something once held has been lost, and someone must step forward to retrieve it so it can be returned to its original owner.

The late Bishop J.H. King wrote, "We are insolvent, utterly bankrupt, and have nothing to pay. Humanity is absolutely impoverished, nothing to pay, and so we are enslaved."

I. WHO NEEDS REDEMPTION?

Read: Romans 5:12; 3:23; 7:14; 6:23

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Bishop King meant by the statement, "Humanity is absolutely impoverished, nothing to pay, and so we are enslaved"? In what ways are we impoverished and enslaved?

THINK ABOUT IT

It is important to remember that God's Old Testament dealings with Israel and mankind in general stand as the backdrop to the New Testament.

Our efforts at self-justification always fail.

The Old Testament (Leviticus 25:23-55) describes the need for redemption through God's response to those oppressed by poverty.

The Old Testament teaches that whether it is a result of unfortunate circumstances or of our sinful condition, someone paying the redemption price is necessary.

II. WHO CAN PAY THE PRICE FOR OUR REDEMPTION?

Read: Isaiah 47:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30

TALK ABOUT IT

Why is Jesus Christ the only One who can pay the price for sin?

THINK ABOUT IT

Ancient Israel found herself "sold into sin and slavery." But God did not forsake her. He revealed Himself as a faithful "husband" and "redeemer" to His undeserving but much-loved bride.

While God's redemption of Israel was significant, it was a foretaste of the redemption He was bringing to the whole world. That redemption was found in the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus is the only One who can pay the price for our redemption. The reason is because Jesus is "the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16). Jesus alone can address the sin and corruption of the world because He alone is righteous and holy.

III. WHAT OUR REDEEMER ACCOMPLISHED

Read: Ephesians 1:7; Galatians 4:4-5

TALK ABOUT IT

What two key things did Jesus accomplish for us through His death on the cross?



THINK ABOUT IT

The New Testament affirms that it was through Jesus' death and the shedding of His blood, that He bought our redemption.

When Jesus redeemed us, we were adopted into the family of God.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Why do you think people need to be redeemed by Jesus?
- 2) When thoughts of your past remind you of who you once were and how you lived before Christ, how should you counsel and encourage yourself?
- 3) How should the Church respond to broken and sinful people that don't know about redemption yet?
- 4) Through His sacrifice, Jesus paid the price for our sins, and we were adopted into the family of God. It is important to spend time remembering and reflecting on this awesome truth—Jesus paid it all. Share in your own words what the sacrifice Jesus made for our redemption means to you.

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Galatians 3:26-4:7

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Titus 2:14 tells us that Jesus "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." Instead of being slaves to sin, we are entrusted into a life of righteousness (Romans 6:15-23). Life can feel overwhelming, barely offering us time to breathe, but it is in quiet moments that we can see our lives as Jesus sees them and better understand what it means to live a holy life. This week, say no

to one activity you usually do. Instead, spend that time in prayer or Bible reading.

2) This week set two alarms: one in the morning and one at night. At the morning alarm, take five minutes and prayerfully ask Jesus to be with you throughout your day, empowering you to live a holy life (you could even do this as you drive to work). At the evening alarm, take 10-15 minutes and think back through your day. Where did you see Jesus? Where did you not see Jesus? When were you like Him? When were you not like Him? If you have moments that you need to repent of, do it, but then rest in the knowledge that Jesus' grace is sufficient for you. End your prayer by asking Jesus to make you more aware of His presence during the next day.

3) This lesson says, "Like Adam and Eve, we attempt to hide our sinful shame through the 'leaves' of our own making; but our efforts at self-justification always fail. Our self-made cover always dries up and withers." Do you struggle with self-justification? Do you live by the grace of Jesus alone or do you try to live on your own strength? This week to evaluate your motivations, write down the areas where you are most prone to self-justify. Share those temptations with someone you trust and ask God to help you live by His strength.

4) Scripture memorization is a spiritually-grounding discipline. Memorized information fills our minds: birthdates, phone numbers, addresses, sports stats, tv quotes, etc. But are they also filled with God's Word? Being able to bring scripture back to our minds provides strength and comfort when we need it most. This week, memorize Galatians 4:4-5.



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LESSON FIVE | JESUS, THE LIFE-GIVER

We are alive because of God. We are invited into spiritual life—abundant life—because of God. Without God, there would be no life.

I. JESUS CAME TO BRING LIFE

Read: John 1:4; 5:26; 14:6

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you personally know Jesus as the “life-giver”? Do you find it difficult to make that connection in your daily life? Why or why not?

THINK ABOUT IT

When we talk about Jesus, we regularly refer to the Triune nature of God: God is the Father, God is the Son, and God is the Holy Spirit.

We are completely lost without God. But God, who is rich in mercy, has met us at our lowest point and provided a Redeemer—His own eternal Son, Jesus.

The Virgin Birth is important in understanding why it had to be Jesus who would bring us life.

The Torah reveals our vulnerability in two areas: first, it exposes our inability to keep the commandments which results in our sinful condition; second, it demonstrates how our rigid efforts to keep the law leads to self-righteousness and pride.

Jesus came to fulfill the Torah (Matt 5:17).

II. JESUS GIVES ABUNDANT LIFE

Read: John 10:10

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Jesus means when He says He wants to give us abundant life? How does Satan work to distract you and steal abundant life from you?

THINK ABOUT IT

Sin deceives us through “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn 2:16).

Jesus came to bring abundant life. That life is described in the Beatitudes as the blessed life (Matt 5:3-12).

The abundant life consists of genuine love, the love of God that flows through us in Christ.

III. JESUS GIVES ETERNAL LIFE

Read: Romans 6:22; Galatians 6:8; 1 John 2:25

TALK ABOUT IT

How does knowing we have received eternal life affect how we live now?

THINK ABOUT IT

The power of everlasting life begins now, while we are alive on this earth.



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Define in your own words being "fully alive."
- 2) If Jesus has given you abundant life, how should that be reflected in your daily living?
- 3) Since we are made alive in Christ, what do you struggle with that may contradict that truth at times?
- 4) When you face difficulties in the future, what is one truth you can hold onto from knowing Jesus as the "life-giver"?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

John 10:1-21

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) This lesson began with a recognition that every person makes a decision between life and death when they choose to accept or deny Christ. Those who accept Christ will die only once. Those who reject Christ will die twice, and the second death will be eternal torment (Revelation 20:12-15). From that truth, we are faced with two overarching action steps. First, we must decide to accept Christ and live for Him. Second, if we decide to trust in Jesus we are then called to make disciples of others. Spend time in prayer this week, considering how you can do these two things each day.
- 2) Evangelism is not the work of a few. It is the calling of all believers. When we have discovered the life that Jesus gives, we should be propelled into sharing that life with others. Spend some time this week reading about Jesus, the Life-Giver. Reflect on how this truth impacts your desire to share the good news of Jesus with others. Does evangelism come easy to you? Or is it hard?
- 3) This week, share with others some of the things God has been teaching you in The Journey. This kind of personal sharing is always helpful. Don't worry about it being wise

or intellectual. Simply share what God is doing in your life and watch others warm up to the good news.

- 4) Letter to God: Knowing where we have been is helpful in our journey with Jesus. Sometime over this next week, take a few moments to compose a brief letter to God where you will write about the first time you sensed God's presence. Then, note some of the ways God has made Himself real to you since then. End the letter by giving thanks for all God has taught you about who He is, and for the promise that He will continue to reveal Himself in the future.



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LESSON SIX | JESUS, THE ANSWER

Jesus Christ is the ultimate paradox. What are some of the ways this is true?

Once we hear the Gospel, we cannot stay neutral, indifferent, or silent. The crucified and risen Jesus lives as the great Question with whom all humanity must deal.

I. WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

Read: Psalm 100:3; Genesis 3:8

TALK ABOUT IT

Do you believe God created you? How does that belief impact your daily life?

THINK ABOUT IT

Atheists contend that God is an invention of men. However, the Bible powerfully asserts that humanity is the direct creation of God.

Genesis chapter one explains that God made Adam and Eve; chapter two tells us how He did it (1:26-27; 2:7). Chapter three implies that God created people to share unique fellowship with them.

Like Adam and Eve, we wander away from God when we sin (Isaiah 53:6).

II. WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

Read: Mark 3:13-15; John 10:10

TALK ABOUT IT

How have spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, and worship helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus? How would

you describe “the good life”?

Think About It

Before Jesus announced the disciples' assignment, He appointed them to be with Him.

Jesus came to offer more than just human existence. His promise was for life with purpose, and this abundant life only comes in relationship with Him.

There is a “God-shaped” piece missing in the puzzle of every one of us until we enter into a relationship with Jesus.

Living in Christ means we live for His glory, but that always means it's for our good.

III. WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Read: John 6:66-68; 14:1-6

TALK ABOUT IT

We all worship something. What are the common idols of our time and culture? Do our idols signify where we are going?

THINK ABOUT IT

After encountering the cost of discipleship to Jesus, many people choose to forsake Him. Peter shows us the truth in John 6.

In our darkest moments, Jesus will give us hope.

Can we be sure that we can find our way to Heaven and eternal life?



Our journey as Christians, where we are headed, is not as much a place as it is a person: Jesus Christ.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) What does it mean to you that we were not first created to do things for Christ, but instead we were created to be with Him?
- 2) We learned from this lesson that Jesus gives “zoe” life, not just physical life but an abundant quality of life. Talk about ways you may need to adjust your outlook or attitude in life to truly walk in abundance.
- 3) Jesus teaches plainly about the cost of discipleship (or following Him). In what ways has following Jesus cost you or been a sacrifice?
- 4) This lesson referred to the “God-shaped piece” that is missing in all of us. When you found Jesus as the answer of your life, the God-shaped piece that was missing, what did He fill in you that was empty?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Colossians 3:1-11

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) All the lessons on The Journey may be summarized by this assertion from the Savior: “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). It is one thing to know about a person; it is quite another thing to know that individual in a personal relationship. Each person shares a common condition: they all have a past, a present, and a future. We should follow Jesus because He offers redemption for our past, relationship for our present, and resurrection for our future. What is one activity you can do this week to help

deepen your personal relationship with Jesus?

- 2) Write the question, “What am I missing in my life?” on several notecards and stick them all over your house, your car, your desk, etc. (any place you will frequently stop and notice). Each time you see a card, pause and recognize Jesus, the Answer, is there with you. How can Jesus fill the missing parts of your life?
- 3) Jesus deserves our very best—our worship. Set aside time this week to focus on Jesus’ power and glory. On Saturday evening, begin preparing your heart to worship on Sunday. Go early to church expecting to experience God. Worship and thank God for all the ways that He is the Answer in your life. Pray for those around you to also experience God during the service.
- 4) Simon Peter spoke up and replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go, You have the words of eternal life?” (John 6:68). If Jesus has answered the questions of your life, how are you sharing this with others? This could be a child, a friend, a co-worker, a spouse, etc. Discipleship is something happening in us and something we are doing with others. We are disciples, and we are disciple-makers. Ask yourself these questions this week: Who is discipling me on my journey of becoming more like Jesus? Who am I discipling on their journey?



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LESSON SEVEN | SAYING YES

Every disciple's life with God begins by saying yes to Jesus, but this is not a one-time thing. Jesus invites us to say yes to Him over and over: in every moment of the day and in every part of our lives.

Discipleship to Jesus is fundamentally simple.

A disciple, i.e. a student or an apprentice, always begins with submission to their teacher.

I. WHAT DO YOU SEEK?

Read: John 1:35-39

TALK ABOUT IT

Think about John 1:35-39 for a few moments. What do you notice? What jumped out to you about this story?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus challenges the disciples to become increasingly self-aware, and He does the same for us, knowing that over the course of life, the answer to this question might change.

If Jesus stood before you right now and asked you this same question, how would you respond?

II. THE PLACE WHERE JESUS STAYS

Read: John 1:38-39

TALK ABOUT IT

What does their answer tell us about what

these followers really want?

THINK ABOUT IT

If these men are to become disciples they must walk, talk, eat, and live with Jesus. This is the invitation Jesus extends to you.

The work Jesus does in our lives to transform us at salvation and throughout our sanctification is His work.

Do you believe Jesus accepts you as you are?

III. DESIRING JESUS ALONE

Read: John 1:38-39

TALK ABOUT IT

What conflicting motives have led you on the journey of following Jesus?

THINK ABOUT IT

The disciples aren't looking for an easily consumed three-step model of transformation.

They desire Jesus Himself: to be with Him in the place where He is staying. Is that what you want from Jesus?

Sometimes, we find ourselves working for Jesus rather than working with Him.

We have to ask ourselves these questions: Do I want Jesus alone? Or do I want what Jesus can give me?



IV. INTERRUPTED BY JESUS

Read: Matthew 4:18-20

TALK ABOUT IT

Think about Matthew 4:18-20 for a few moments. What do you notice? What jumped out to you about this story?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus doesn't go to Jerusalem and look for influencers. He doesn't search out the charismatic or the powerful. He chooses the insignificant, because God looks at the heart.

Do you ever doubt that Jesus is calling you? What does doubt indicate about our belief?

V. FOLLOW ME

Read: John 1:35-39; Matthew 4:18-20

TALK ABOUT IT

What similarities do you find between these two passages?

THINK ABOUT IT

Something about Jesus compels these men to follow Him. What is it about Him that compels you?

Jesus uses many means to call us into discipleship. How is He calling you?

The first goal of our life with God is to say yes to Jesus every day in every moment.

Before we can begin to think about discipling others (becoming fishers of men), we must be disciples ourselves.

Discipleship is the journey of becoming like Jesus.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

1) What does it look like for you to say yes to

Jesus in your day-to-day living?

2) What kind of things get in your way and keep you from saying yes to Jesus?

3) What do you think whole-life discipleship looks like?

4) When Jesus chose the disciples, he went after fisherman, not influencers or charismatic popular figures. How should this shape how we see potential in ourselves and others?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

2 Corinthians 5:12-21; Luke 9:23-27

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) How can you begin to intentionally say yes to Jesus in your life? Thoughtfully consider the areas of your life where you intentionally, or unintentionally, haven't invited Jesus.

2) Discipleship is the process of learning to live and become like Jesus, which is the abundant life. Non-discipleship is the process of living our own way. It is a life of anxiety, pressure, and dissatisfaction. This week, think about the lordship of Christ. How much of your life falls under His authority? What has it cost you to continue to keep parts of your life under your control?

3) Saying yes to Jesus is saying no to ourselves and our wills. This is intentionally surrendering our lives to Him. During this next week, make this attitude of surrender your chief aim. In everything you do, seek nothing but God. One Christian writer calls this, "Not taking a single step without God."

4) Saying yes to Jesus is to do His will and obey His commands. Dallas Willard says, "The disciple of Christ desires above all else to be like Him." This desire is lived out when we obey His commands. This week, love your enemies by praying for them, bless those who frustrate and curse you, and go the extra mile with someone who is troubling you.



THE JOURNEY

LESSON EIGHT | WHAT DOES JESUS CALL ME?

St. Francis of Assisi famously prayed, "Who are you, Lord, my God, and who am I?" Christians believe that it is only as we find and discover Jesus that we can honestly know who we are.

I. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Read: John 15:15-17

TALK ABOUT IT

What is the significance of Jesus telling the disciples they are no longer servants but friends?

THINK ABOUT IT

We spend our lives building our identity around three primary idols:

- 1) Vocation (what we do)
- 2) Perception (what others think or say about us)
- 3) Possession (what we have)

When circumstances dictate how we feel about ourselves, we aren't living out of the truth of Christ's Gospel.

- When life calls us rejected, Jesus names us Chosen.
- When life calls us orphaned, Jesus names us Adopted.
- When relationships fail, and we feel alone and unloved, Jesus names us Beloved.

II. JESUS CALLS ME CHOSEN

Read: Ephesians 1:3-4

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been rejected? What are the lasting effects of rejection?

THINK ABOUT IT

At some point every human faces rejection. How we cope with that rejection is what makes the difference.

One way many people attempt to avoid rejection is to focus on "what they do" or their vocation.

Ephesians illustrates a significant truth to us: God has blessed us and chosen us in Jesus.

III. JESUS CALLS ME ADOPTED

Read: Ephesians 1:5-9; Galatians 4:4-7

TALK ABOUT IT

How important is family? Once we become a Christian, in what ways does the Church become our family?

THINK ABOUT IT

There is still nothing like face-to-face interaction to foster a sense of belonging and place.

How often do we keep our relationship with God at a distance?

Ephesians tells us that in Jesus, we are adopted into God's family.



IV. JESUS CALLS ME BELOVED

Read: Ephesians 2:4-10

TALK ABOUT IT

When does God's love for us begin? Do you ever wonder if God changes His mind about how He feels about you?

THINK ABOUT IT

The foundational truth of your life is that you are loved. Before you could do anything, own anything, or offer anything, you were and are loved by God.

God's love for us does not start at the moment of our salvation. His love is not conditional, and it is not contingent on our actions.

God does not love us more when we pursue righteousness, and He does not love us less when we sin.

God's love does not give us the freedom to do whatever we desire with no thought to sin. The love of God loves us unto purity.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Since Jesus calls us friend, how should we interact with him? Do you struggle to grasp that He would call you friend?
- 2) How should the knowledge that Jesus has chosen you impact your life?
- 3) In Jesus, we are adopted into God's family. We have a place of belonging. Considering this knowledge, how should we embrace and serve our church family?
- 4) The Bible says that Jesus is moved with compassion for us with an unconditional love. Because we know this, how then should we love others?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

John 15:1-27

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Take a few moments at the start and end of each day to remind yourself of these three truths: I am chosen, I am adopted, and I am loved. If these three things are real, how will your life be different each day? Each evening, jot down a few things that have changed.
- 2) The lesson listed three areas that people center their identity around: what they do, what other people say about them, and what they have. Which of these affects you the most? How has the truth of this lesson changed that?
- 3) Talking about loneliness, the lesson says, "We are touched for the moment by His availability to us, but then we leave and go back to our normal lives where we are convinced that God is unavailable and unreachable by us. He feels absent from our day to day life." Have you ever felt this absence? Spend some time reading Galatians 4 and rest in the truth that you are now part of God's family, and He is always with you.
- 4) Do you struggle to believe that you are the Beloved of God? Choose a color. Make it very specific, not just blue or green. Make it a color that will stand out to you. Every time you see that color, tell yourself, "I am the one that Jesus loves." This simple practice is intended to be a gentle reminder of God's great and gracious love for you. We can never remind ourselves too much of His love.

