

THE JOURNEY

BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS



UNIT SIX – TO ABIDE IN 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 | ABIDING IN THE VINE

Blessing is not the goal of faith. Our faith's end goal is "Abiding": a deep-rooted oneness, or connection, with Jesus where His life becomes our life.

As we learn to abide in Jesus and draw life from Him, we will find ourselves producing fruit, serving others, and fulfilling the call to spread the Gospel. Any attempt to do these things on our own will lead to burnout, frustration, and emptiness.

To Abide in Jesus is counter to every fallen human impulse we possess, but abiding is the way. It is becoming less like myself and more like Jesus. Is that what you want in your life?

I. WHO IS THE VINE?

Read: Exodus 3:12-15; John 15:1-6

TALK ABOUT IT

What does this image of Jesus as the Vine in John 15 mean to you? Why do you think Jesus chose this image to illustrate the spiritual truth of abiding?

THINK ABOUT IT

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus uses the phrase "I am" to capture the attention of His audience, as well as the readers.

In this last "I Am" statement, Jesus uses a "Vine" metaphor from the Old Testament.

Jesus is the Vine, God the Father is the vinedresser (or caretaker), and we are the branches.

A branch on its own cannot bear fruit. The branch is dependent on the Vine for its life and nourishment.

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ABIDE?

Read: John 15:7-11

TALK ABOUT IT

Talk about a time when you found yourself relying on Christ's strength in a greater way. What did you learn in that season?

THINK ABOUT IT

Central to the act of abiding is resting in Christ's love (v. 9).

As the Beloved, we do not carry the burden of earning Christ's love for us. It is a gift freely given. Our understanding of this truth is the first step towards abiding in the Vine.

As the branch, our priority is to stay connected to the Vine for our existence. We must trust outside of ourselves. This is contrary to the call of the world that says to look inward for life.

Sabbath living is learning to savor our life with Jesus, and this extends beyond Sunday. Sabbath living is saying, "I have limits. I am insufficient for the task. I need rest."

III. HOW DO WE ABIDE?

Read: John 15:5



TALK ABOUT IT

What stands between you and the abiding life?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus could not have been any clearer about our need for abiding in Him. We cannot abide by trying harder or by force of will. We must learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to help us.

Abiding in Jesus is not reserved for the most faithful, nor is it optional. Without abiding, we will not produce the fruit of Christ, nor will we create anything of lasting importance.

Every branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off. Remember, to not bear fruit, the branch has cut itself off from the Vine first.

Remember, our purpose is not to produce fruit. It is to be connected to the Vine and bring glory to God. The Vine will produce the fruit in us. Let us draw nearer to Jesus, and He will see to the fruit.

It's important to control what we can control. Abiding in Jesus is placing Him in the center. When we construct our lives around Him, we are bringing God glory. This is why Bible reading, prayer, worship, and so many other daily disciplines and habits are essential to our health. They are not in themselves life-giving, but they do create the space for us to connect to the Life-giver.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Think about the image of resting in Christ's love. What is your response to this powerful truth?
- 2) If "without Jesus, we can do nothing," why do we try to do so much in our own strength?
- 3) "I have limits. I am insufficient for the task. I need rest." Reflect on these statements together.

4) Discuss a time when you felt "barren" (not producing fruit). What was that experience like? What did you learn about Jesus during that time?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURE:

John 3:1-21

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study John 3:1-21. 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) Spend some time thinking about all of the activities you do during the week. Which activities do you rely on Jesus for His strength? Which activities do you rely on your strength? Where is your opportunity to grow? Prayerfully seek the Lord's help as you learn to fully abide in Him.

3) If our first priority is to remain connected to the Vine, what are some ways that you can do that in your life? Write down 3-5 activities you can do that help you stay connected to Jesus. Are you doing these currently or do you need to re-order your schedule to allow time for them? Cut the things that are keeping you from abiding!



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LESSON TWO | THE FRUIT OF ABIDING

Jesus offers us this guarantee: If we abide in Him, we will bear fruit.

Some of the fruit that Jesus produces in us is consistent and constant. As we are united to Christ, we will take on His character in our lives (think the fruit of the Spirit); these “interior” indicators of our relationship with Him will remain consistent.

We also produce exterior fruits that may be seasonal.

Yet, we have to return again and again to the truth of the previous lesson: we cannot produce fruit in and of ourselves.

I. FRUITFULNESS IS POSITIONAL

Read: John 15:1-17

TALK ABOUT IT

How do we know someone is a disciple/follower of Jesus? How do we balance accounting for the fruit we can see and the fruit we can't see?

THINK ABOUT IT

Being a disciple means being united to Christ, and Jesus shows us the way to know that we are his disciples. Our fruitfulness shows our position (Jn 15:8; Matt 7:15-20).

As we learn to rest in the Vine's love, we will be learning submission and obedience to Jesus. Jesus will sustain us as we abide in Him by our obedience (Jn 15:10). We obey from a heart of love (and not out of duty). We obey out of our

relationship with Him.

“Transformation by indirection” is doing what we can in order to do what we cannot by our direct effort. In our strength, we cannot produce the fruit of Jesus or experience transformation.

I cannot choose to change myself but I can choose my actions. When we account for the things we can control and couple that with the Holy Spirit's power (the One who does the heavy lifting for us), that is when we become fruitful and experience God's transforming power.

“Grace is not opposed to our effort, but it is opposed to earning.”

II. WHAT WILL WE SEE?

Read: Galatians 5:19-26

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you find most exciting about the Fruit of the Spirit? How has the Fruit of the Spirit in other people shown you more about God?

THINK ABOUT IT

In this list of nine Fruit of the Spirit, Paul is describing attitudes and actions of the people of God. We must be careful to not cherry-pick the ones we like the best.

All nine fruit are interconnected and interdependent. They all go together, and we cannot pick and choose. Some will come easily to us, but the ones we find the most



difficult are the ones where God receives the most glory in our lives.

It is essential to remember that fruit grows gradually. Whether fast or slow, in Christian life, we should expect to experience character transformation.

Specific to John 15, Jesus tells us four fruit from our abiding in Him: joy, love of God's people and one another, growing dependence through union and friendship with God, and answered prayers.

III. PRUNING IS COMING

Read: John 15:2

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever experienced pruning? Was that process painful? Was the result worth the process?

THINK ABOUT IT

The last evidence of our abiding in Christ is that we will be pruned. Pruning is not a punishment.

When we are experiencing God's pruning, He is training us to reroute our spiritual life. He cuts off the unnecessary. He trims back any diseased branches. He removes the excess. He shapes us.

Sometimes, God uses the realities of life to prune us. Pruning could occur in outward realities or inward realities.

Pruning never feels good, and in the moment, it certainly does not feel fruitful. From our narrow vantage point, pruning may feel wholly removed from spiritual growth or fruitfulness of any kind. Sometimes, pruned things are "good" things, but they are not good for us.

The essential truth of pruning is this: the pruned branch must grow closer to the Vine in order to receive new life, heal, and thus

become more fruitful. Let us draw nearer to Jesus, and He will see to the fruit.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) How do you respond to the idea that union with God is not only possible but likely as we abide in Christ?
- 2) What does abiding in Christ look like in your life?
- 3) Which Fruit of the Spirit is your greatest opportunity for growth?
- 4) Discuss the idea of "transformation by indirection." Do you agree with this idea?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Psalms 62:1-8; Galatians 5:16-26

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study Ps. 62:1-8 and Gal. 5:16-26. 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) One of the fundamental ways the Holy Spirit speaks to us is through the Bible. Daily engagement is critical to our spiritual health. A helpful way of keeping God's Word close is by memorization. The Holy Spirit will bring to our remembrance the truth of Scripture, but we must take up the discipline of memorization. How can you begin doing this in your life? Try starting with a single verse.
- 3) Take an inventory of the Fruit of the Spirit and the role they play in your life? Where are you strongest? Where are you weakest? Choose one and ask the Holy Spirit to help you begin to develop this Fruit. You'll be surprised at the opportunities to use this new muscle.

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LESSON THREE | CONTENTMENT

Psalm 23 teaches us a valuable gift: contentment. Because Jesus is our Shepherd, we must be His sheep. If we are His, we have no want or lack. Perfect contentment.

Jesus looks after us with great care, knowing our wants and needs yet leading us toward what is truly best for us.

I. CONTENT WITH WHAT I HAVE

Read: Psalm 23:1-2

TALK ABOUT IT

What are some roadblocks to being content with what you have?

THINK ABOUT IT

Scripture tells us roadblocks that rob us of the great gain that comes with godly contentment.

1) Fear

We fear that who we are and what we have will never be enough to comfort us. And we are right.

The remedy for this basic, overpowering fear is found in Matt. 6:25-34. The cure is believing Jesus' words when He says we have a loving heavenly Father who is able to care and provide for us.

2) Pride

In selfish pride, we survey our work and compare ourselves to others to our detriment.

Our relief for selfish pride is to read and consider the call of Phil. 4:10-13. Living with

a whole-hearted love for and trust in Christ will bring humility, opening our eyes to the God who made us and knows the blueprint of our lives.

3) Jealousy

Jealousy is a vicious sin that keeps us far away from the care of the Good Shepherd. We redefine our "needs" based on what someone else has been given. Heb. 13:5-6 speaks directly to our broken perspectives.

4) Love for the World

Without realizing, we fall in love with the world, thinking like the world and wanting to achieve the world's approval. 1 John 2:15-17 points out the difference between the love of God and the love of the world.

II. CONTENT WITH WHERE I AM

Read: Proverbs 3:5-6

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever wanted God to move you somewhere else? Why?

THINK ABOUT IT

Many of us have decided, at some point, that we want to be somewhere different than where we are.

The truth is, we are where we are, and God wants to teach us here. Often, the places where we experience the most profound dissatisfaction are often the very spots God will use to change our lives and teach us lasting lessons.

III. CONTENT WITH WHO I AM

Read: Philippians 3:12-14; 4:10-13

TALK ABOUT IT

One of the fastest-growing industries in the world is the self-improvement business. Why do you think this industry is growing so quickly?

THINK ABOUT IT

“When will I be good enough to feel good about myself?”

Paul issues the need to pursue more of the glory of Christ and a greater encounter with the heart of Father God. To have more of Him is our greatest need.

So how can we handle the impossible challenges every day and the many relentless demands for which we are “not enough”? We must grow in His glory, not ours.

Abiding in Christ dispels want and leads to true rest. He is the power in you to face your days. When we believe God will lead us and provide, contentment grows naturally.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) How do you define contentment?
- 2) What barriers to contentment do you see in your life?
- 3) Share about a time when you wanted something you thought would bring contentment, but instead, it left you dissatisfied.
- 4) How does abiding in Christ lead to contentment?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Colossians 4:2-6; Psalm 34:1-10

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Paul lived a contented life because of the strength He received from Christ (Phil. 4:11). However, that doesn't mean he waited passively, hoping God would fill him with power to overcome temptations like jealousy or pride. Read Phil. 4:8-13 and consider how meditating on the things of God (things that are true, noble, etc.) could have been a way Paul grew into contentment. Then, ask how following Paul's teaching in verses 8-9 might help you develop contentment in Christ.

2) The way you speak about people will affect your ability to be content. Colossians 4:6 reminds us to, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt.” This week, pay attention to how you talk to and about others, and practice being gracious in your speech. Choose your words carefully and refuse to use words that wound, tear down, or discourage. Finally, pay attention to how your attitude is affected by your speech, and ask God to use this act of obedience to shape your heart.

3) To become content with who we are, we must begin to discover our true identity as a beloved son or daughter of God. One of the most significant ways we do that is by modeling Christ's practice of solitude. Author Adele Calhoun notes, “Throughout his three years of ministry, Jesus returned again and again to solitude, where the rush of attention and the accolades of the crowds could be put into their proper perspective. Solitude with God was a way Jesus remained in touch with his true identity in God.” Give yourself 30 minutes of solitude this week. Walk, drive, watch a sunset and be with God. Give Him space to speak to you about who you are to Him.

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LESSON FOUR | HEARING GOD'S DIRECTION

Before we were tired, God gave us rest. On the first full day of Adam's existence, God modeled for him, and us, the priority of Sabbath rest, a day God designated as holy.

In Exodus, when God engraved the fourth commandment on the stone tablets at Mount Sinai, He called upon Israel to observe the Sabbath day as holy.

In Jesus, we find the fulfillment of Sabbath rest. Rather than being a legalistic rule to observe, Sabbath-keeping is an orientation to life in Christ.

I. HIS EASY YOKE

Read: Matthew 11:28-30

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Jesus uses the imagery of a yoke in Matthew 11:28-30? How can a burden be light? What is easy about a yoke?

THINK ABOUT IT

"Come to Me" is Christ's invitation to enter a personal relationship with Him. "Come" is Christ's summons to the spiritually burdened, the weary and exhausted ones, fainting under the heavy load of religion.

Since Jesus was a carpenter in His earlier years, He understood the necessity for perfectly-fitting yokes. Jesus has a particular yoke He offers each of us. His yoke is easy, meaning well-fitting.

II. YOKED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRIST

Read: Ephesians 2:10

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever been paired with a difficult coworker? What were the results of that challenging situation?

THINK ABOUT IT

In Christ's easy yoke, we are not excused from work. We are given assignments we are to accomplish in partnership with Him. Work done in His strength is fulfilling. Wherever God sends us, whatever He asks us to do fits our needs and our abilities perfectly.

Christ invites us to a life of discipleship, one of learning from Him and His example of humility and gentleness. Taking His yoke requires surrender and trust. Learning from Him leads to maturity and deeper peace. In His easy yoke, our desires and dreams become simplified and unified around Jesus Christ.

III. THE RHYTHM OF ENGAGEMENT AND RETREAT

Read: Psalm 23:2b

TALK ABOUT IT

What are some challenges in modern society that keep us from rest? What images do you associate with rest?



THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus lived the unforced rhythm of grace in His life on earth, and He taught His disciples to do the same. Jesus knew from experience and practice that a poured-out time of ministry needs a pouring-in time of retreat.

We need rest, too. Society pressures us to be productive 24/7. We are infected with hurry. The number one enemy of spiritual formation today is exhaustion.

Our spiritual journey must involve ebb and flow, engagement and retreat.

Sabbath means to stop, pause, cease, desist. So, it's okay to take a nap, take a walk, play a while, or do absolutely nothing. In the pause and stillness, God heals us, restores us, transforms us, imparts to us. Our bodies and souls are unified. If our bodies suffer, so do our souls.

Sabbath-keeping is an attitude of living that David captures in Psalm 131:2.

Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul,
Like a weaned child with his mother;
Like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Put this tiny verse on a continuous loop in your heart. Observe the holy in your time. Encounter Jesus. Rest in Him. Wear His easy yoke. It is made to fit!

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) What would the ideal form of Sabbath look like in your life? How effective are you with implementing this rest?
- 2) What keeps you from Sabbath?
- 3) Why do you think we often work out of our own strength and ability instead of partnering with the easy yoke of the Holy Spirit?

- 4) Talk about some ways you can better implement Sabbath into your life.

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 11:25-30; Ephesians 2

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study the At-Home Scriptures: Matthew 11:25-30 and Ephesians 2. 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) Give yourself a full 24 hours of Sabbath rest this week. Use this time to worship, nap, play, be present with people, relax, enjoy God's creation or anything else that joyfully connects you with God and others. Focus on bringing glory to God by trusting Him with all the areas where you usually strive: your time, relationships, finances, and success.

3) Pause and practice the "Palms Down, Palms Up" prayer anytime you detect feelings of stress. First, find a quiet setting and place your palms down as a symbol of your desire to surrender your concerns, frustrations, and anxieties to God. For example, you may silently pray, 'Lord, I give you the fear I have about this month's bills' or 'Father, I release the anger I feel toward my coworker.' After a few moments, turn your palms up as you ask the Lord to fill you with what He has for you. Receive His love, His peace, His faithfulness, and His words. Instead of asking for specific things, take this time to rest in Him.

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LESSON FIVE | OBEDIENCE IN DAILY LIFE

The image of God living in the midst of His people is a foreshadowing of His redemptive plan through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Not only does He live in us, but we are also urged to find an abiding refuge in Him.

In His closing discourse to His disciples and to us, Jesus uses a familiar metaphor to elucidate His desire for us to stay continually connected to Him. He also clarified what the results of that connection, or disconnection, would be.

I. STAYING CONNECTED

Read: John 15:5-6

TALK ABOUT IT

Find two verbs in these two verses you consider to be the key to the metaphor of the Vine and branches. Explain why you chose those words.

THINK ABOUT IT

To “abide” is to live, continue, or remain; so, to abide in Christ is to live in Him or remain in such a close relationship that you can hear His heartbeat.

How does one maintain that connectivity to the Vine? The first step is simply being still before God. The silence allows us to hear the Lord speak to us through His Word, which is alive and active and exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Studying the Word of God with sincerity helps us discover who we are.

II. CALLED TO MISSION

Read: John 15:7-8

TALK ABOUT IT

By what process does a branch bear fruit?

THINK ABOUT IT

A branch is not productive because of its efforts of reaching for the sunshine, nor by vain struggles. The branch draws its life and productivity from the Vine. Without the Vine, the branch is totally fruitless.

Jesus emphasized that abiding involves our response to His teachings.

Any fruit-bearing mission is for God’s glory, not yours. God’s purpose in answering the prayers of those abiding in Him is to support and supply the mission to which He is calling them.

III. MISSION: POSSIBLE

Read: 1 Peter 2:9-10

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you define the word mission?

THINK ABOUT IT

Mission includes a broader meaning than “going.” It also includes “sending” and, in some cases, “staying.”



Wherever and to whatever ministry we are called, we must realize our productivity as fruit-bearing branches is possible only as we abide (live) in the True Vine. Jesus' words are still true: "Without Me, you can do nothing."

Think of the word commission as co-mission. We are co-laborers together with Jesus (see 2 Cor. 6:1). The mission is His. We are simply invited to work alongside Him in its completion.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) What does living out God's mission for your life entail?
- 2) Does being on mission for Christ overwhelm or intimidate you? How, so?
- 3) Knowing that a branch being connected to the vine gives it the ability to bear fruit, how does abiding in Christ "lighten the load" of being fruitful in our Christian journey?
- 4) What does fruitfulness or bearing fruit look like to you?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Psalms 37:3-6; 1 Peter 2:1-12

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Read Psalm 37:3-6 once everyday this week. Note the connection between abiding (being) and working (doing). Journal your observations from this passage and your response to God's Word. Use what you notice to write a prayer that you can recite, especially when you need to understand His will.
- 2) Discernment, the ability to hear the Holy Spirit's voice, is both a spiritual gift and a mark of a growing Christian. If you need direction, invite others to help you discern God's voice.

Together, ask God to give you wisdom and wait quietly for His response. Here are some questions to help you get started: (1) What do I need to be reminded of that God has already shown me about who I am and where He is calling me? (2) What opportunities has God put in my life that He wants me to notice? (3) How is God calling me to trust Him right now? (4) How am I currently experiencing His love?

3) It's exciting to think about the mission God has for us, and He does indeed have good work for us that builds His Kingdom and brings Him glory. That work happens most often in the ordinary interactions with those He has placed in our lives (see Matthew 22:36-40). So, as you go through your day, focus on being fully present in your conversations. Look people in the eye, listen more than you talk, and pray for them. Ask God to help you see others as He sees them and embrace the ministry of loving well the people in your everyday life.



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LESSON SIX | WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

There are numerous ways to evangelize: i.e., confrontation evangelism, leading people to Christ in spiritual church services, and lifestyle evangelism.

“It has been estimated that probably 95 percent of American church members have never led anyone to Christ.”

Jesus came specifically to win the lost. Our aim should be nothing less.

I. EVANGELIZE YOUR FAMILY

Read: Luke 10:30-37

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Jesus used the words “came where he was” in the parable? Do you think Jesus wants us to be selective in our ministry? Why or why not?

THINK ABOUT IT

Members of one’s family can be a major evangelism field. They know all of your strengths and weaknesses which is why it is often difficult to win one’s family.

When you yield your life to Christ, He will let your life touch others around you. For that to happen, however, you should know the Bible and live its principles.

II. EVANGELIZE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Read: Proverbs 3:28

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think the scribe asked the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

THINK ABOUT IT

“Neighbor” does not mean nearness. A neighbor is anyone God has brought to us in His providence. A neighbor is someone brought to you by two things: need and divine encounter.

A neighbor can be one with any kind of need—physical, emotional, bodily, personal—or one who needs the forgiveness of Christ. Do not rationalize this divine moment. Do not defer this time of leading that person to Christ.

A neighbor who is in need of everlasting life is going to be brought before you. Nothing is greater than what you are going to give him, or should we say, nothing is greater than Who you are going to give him—Jesus Christ.

III. EVANGELIZE DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Read: 2 Peter 3:9

TALK ABOUT IT

What does this passage of Scripture mean to you?

THINK ABOUT IT

Different kinds of people populate our world. We are from different sociological, educational, and racial backgrounds, and it

may seem difficult to connect with them.

Have you ever had God prepare a “by chance” or “divine encounter” for you?

With your wonderful lifestyle, if you could befriend an individual and then pray for the Lord to give you the words when He opens the door for you to talk to him about his soul, you probably would find yourself in a beautiful situation, and he would accept Christ.

You should have two things that will help you to become a lifestyle soul winner:

- 1) A passion for souls. You must want them to go to heaven, and you must want to help them get there.
- 2) Never lose sight of the fact that it is difficult in most cases to show a person that you are interested in their soul when they are hungry or hurting, or they need one of life’s basic necessities.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Is evangelism and telling the unsaved about Jesus something you prioritize in your life?
- 2) What keeps believers from being bold concerning evangelism? Do you think these barriers are the same throughout the world?
- 3) Talk about some practical ways you can be more intentional to implement evangelism into your everyday life.
- 4) Do you feel equipped to evangelize? How does abiding in Christ help us with this?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURE:

Luke 10:1-24

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) D.L. Moody faithfully prayed every day for the same 100 people to come to Christ. Miraculously, 96 of those people became Christians before Moody died, and the last four were converted at his funeral. Make a list of people (neighbors) who do not yet know Jesus. Commit to consistently pray for those people and for God to show you how you can be a part of their journey to faith.
- 2) The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37) follows on the heels of Jesus sending out seventy-two new disciples (Lk. 10:1-24.) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study these two passages together. Ask God to show you how they are connected and how they strengthen one another. Prayerfully consider what the Lord wants to teach you from these passages about sharing the Gospel.
- 3) The discipline of service—modeling Christ’s lifestyle of service (Matt. 20:28)—is a powerful sign to our “neighbors” of God’s love for them. Jesus unselfishly spent His days feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, loving the forgotten, and grieving with the brokenhearted. Ask God to show you how you can serve your neighbor and for the humility and courage to act when He calls. You never know how God may use your act of service to soften their heart for the Gospel.



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LESSON SEVEN | HOLY SPIRIT & ABIDING

We can learn so much from the life of the Apostle Paul. One instance is found in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

Paul recognized that he could not rely on his own ability, style, education, background, or skill set. He learned he must depend upon, abide within, and trust the Holy Spirit to do the work.

I. ABIDING GIVES US POWER

Read: Zechariah 4:6; Acts 1:8

TALK ABOUT IT

Would you rather be without running water or electricity in your home for one week?

THINK ABOUT IT

Christians need power to live. We need to remain connected to the Holy Spirit. His power is to help us become greater witnesses for Christ.

Like Paul, Zerubbabel learned he needed the power of the Spirit to accomplish great things. And so do we.

II. ABIDING GIVES US AN ADVANTAGE

Read: John 16:7

TALK ABOUT IT

What does it mean to have an advantage? If you had an advantage, would you use it?

THINK ABOUT IT

As Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to give us an advantage.

Why is it to our benefit that we take advantage of the advantage Jesus gave to us?

- 1) He is our Helper (Jn 14:15-16; 16:7)
- 2) He is our Teacher (Jn 14:26)
- 3) He is the Spirit of Truth (Jn 14:16-17; 15:26)

III. ABIDING PRESERVES US IN THE KINGDOM

Read: Romans 14:17

TALK ABOUT IT

If you could design a kingdom of your own, what would it consist of? Work together as a group to brainstorm about this kingdom.

THINK ABOUT IT

The Kingdom of God consists of several components: the King, the King's standard (rules or laws), and citizens of the Kingdom.

In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul makes the point that the Kingdom is more than following rules. Transformation takes place through the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul defines the Kingdom of God as "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."



1) Righteousness

Righteousness means one is in right standing with God. The role of the Holy Spirit is to point people to Christ. He is the key component of salvation. He convicts sinners of wrongful and sinful actions and moves them toward Christ.

2) Peace

The Holy Spirit gives us peace amid our most dangerous storms. It is great to know that the Holy Spirit is with us in both our good times and challenging times. He provides us peace with God (righteousness) and the peace of God (comfort).

3) Joy

Joy is an attitude of the heart and mind. It is a state of fulfillment, even when things around you are difficult. Joy is based on the internal refuge you find in Christ. With this joy, you are not moved or shaken by the events of the day or the people who come and go in your life.

It is to our advantage to embrace abiding in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in us empowers us to live abundantly as we journey to become more like Jesus.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Talk about times where you may fail to lean into the power of the Holy Spirit and tend to rely on your own strength and ability.
- 2) In what ways do you hear and sense the Holy Spirit in your daily life?
- 3) Do you struggle with depending on happiness and external circumstances to define your joy? How has the Holy Spirit helped you experience joy in difficult times?
- 4) Assess whether you fully utilize the advantage of the Holy Spirit in your everyday life? How can you embrace this advantage more fully? Talk about it.

AT-HOME SCRIPTURE:

John 17

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study this week's At-Home Scripture: John 17. 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) Are you walking in the power and boldness of a Spirit-filled life? This essential "advantage" keeps us in faith and drives us to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. This is abundant life (John 10:10). Think of two ways you can lean on the Holy Spirit this week. At the end of the week, spend some time reflecting on how these activities deepened your awareness of the Holy Spirit's role in your life.
- 3) Spend some time this week in solitude. Feel free to choose an activity that you love for this time (fishing, walking, golfing, relaxing, etc). Avoid any activities that require technology. Pay attention to the ways in which the Holy Spirit speaks to you during this time. As we slow down and pull away from distractions, we can more fully engage with God. Be sure to write down your experience!

THE JOURNEY

LESSON EIGHT | WHAT'S NEXT ON THE JOURNEY?

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish people who had converted from Judaism to become followers of Jesus Christ. It appears that many of these relatively new believers were struggling.

Thirteen times in Hebrews, the writer uses a two-word phrase to help unite these new believers. That phrase is "Let us." The Christian life is meant to be lived in the context of community and fellowship with other believers.

I. CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16; 13:15

TALK ABOUT IT

To what are we, like the Hebrews, drawn to return? How are you being challenged to become mature in your understanding of who Jesus is?

THINK ABOUT IT

To continue on this journey, the following is a list of some "Let us" passages:

- Continue To "Hold Fast" (Heb. 4:14; 10:23)

The importance of becoming an unwavering, devoted disciple cannot be overstated. A disciple of Jesus Christ is someone who has committed to being His lifelong follower.

Holding fast to our profession of faith means we keep believing and speaking of the Father. Reciting the Apostles Creed as an ongoing discipline would be an excellent way of reminding ourselves daily who He is.

- Continue To "Come Boldly" (Heb. 4:16)

How do we dare approach the God of all creation with boldness?

When Jesus died, the veil separating men from God was torn from top to bottom by the hand of God, our Father. For thousands of years, the message of the veil was "Stay out!" Now the message is "Come in!"

- Continue To "Offer Praise" (Heb. 13:15)

All of us have so much for which to praise Him. We could praise Him forever. In reality, that is exactly what we will do. In Heaven, we will praise him throughout eternity.

II. A COMMISSIONED JOURNEY

Read: Matthew 28:19-20

TALK ABOUT IT

What intimidates you about Jesus' call to go and make disciples? How can you begin doing this in your own life?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus' Great Commission tells us to go and make disciples. He has sent us with His authority. He has promised that the Holy Spirit will be with us. And He has told us what to do. Are you doing it?

Are you ready to make disciples? Share the good news of the Kingdom of God. Jesus has come, and the Kingdom is available to anyone who will say yes to Him.

Will you become a disciple-maker?



III. COMPLETING THE JOURNEY

Read: Hebrews 12:1-3; John 14:1-7

TALK ABOUT IT

What comes to mind when you think of Heaven? Is it important that we keep Heaven before us on the journey?

THINK ABOUT IT

Some people say, "It's all about the journey, not the destination." For Christians, both parts are true.

- The Journey Is a Person

Jesus is the Journey. It's all about Him! As we become more like Jesus and learn to abide fully in Him, our greatest joy will come from being with Him daily.

- The Journey Is a Place

The promise of Heaven is not to make us want to escape the present; it is a promise that sustains us through the present.

We might be tempted to think Heaven is the prize at the end of our faithful life, but that is an incorrect understanding. Heaven is the place the faithful will go, but our prize is an eternity spent in perfect union with the Trinity.

"Will you continue this journey, respond to the commission of Jesus, and complete this journey?"

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

1) What strengthens you when you are drawn to return to old ways and habits?

2) What intimidates you about Jesus' call to go and make disciples? How can you begin doing this in your own life?

3) Reflect on your experience of going through The Journey. What's one thing you will take away?

4) Which area do you find yourself needing to continue in more: "hold fast," "come boldly," or "offer praise"?

AT-HOME SCRIPTURES:

Hebrews 11; Revelation 21:22-27

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study Hebrews 11 and Revelation 21:22-27. 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 call to make disciples is clear in the teachings of Jesus. You can be a part of that! After going through The Journey, we hope that you feel the call to now lead others to become more like Jesus. Who are those people in your life? It doesn't have to happen in a classroom. It could be at a coffee shop, around a dinner table, or over Zoom. Write down the names of 1-3 people that you feel the Lord is leading you to intentionally disciple. But don't forget that you still need someone in your life that is discipling you too!

3) Thinking back to the section of the lesson on Continuing the Journey, which of the three "Let us" passages from Hebrews resonated with you the most? Do you sense the Holy Spirit showing you an opportunity to deepen your faith? What is a practical way that you can begin doing that this week?