

Discipleship: Teaching and training the body to be Christ-like in daily living by emphasizing total commitment to life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

Am I more Christ-like now than I was at this time last year?

The Call to Discipleship

- 2 Corinthians 3:18: *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*
- Colossians 1:28-29: *“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”*
- John 15:8: *“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*

Definitions¹:

1. Disciple - someone who follows Jesus in order to become like Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.
2. Discipleship - the process of helping a disciple grow to Christlike maturity.
3. Disciplemaking – the relational process that leads to fruit toward the lost, toward the church, and down into the life of the individual disciple.

Reflection Questions (5 minutes)

1. How has following Jesus changed your life over time? In what ways have you seen yourself being transformed?
 2. In what areas of your life do you need to surrender more fully to Jesus to continue being transformed? What are some ways you still desire to grow?
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The Path of Discipleship

- 1 Corinthians 15:10: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”*

¹ Definitions are adapted from Justin Gravitt, *The Foundation of a Disciplemaking Culture*, NavPress, 2020.

- 1 Timothy 4:7-8: “*Train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way.*”
- Colossians 3:16: “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.*”

Teaching Point:

- Grace is not opposed to effort; it’s opposed to earning.

Spiritual Disciplines

Practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are habits of devotion, habits of experiential Christianity that have been practiced by God’s people since biblical times.²

- **Prayer:** Deepens intimacy with God and aligns our hearts with His will.
- **Scripture Reading & Meditation:** Grounds us in God’s Word and equips us for obedience and gospel witness.
- **Sabbath:** Focuses our limited attention, prevents busyness, and enables us to work from a position of rest in Christ.
- **Fasting:** Helps us depend on God and prioritize spiritual needs over physical ones.
- **Evangelism:** The fruit of discipleship is overflowing gospel witness.

Ordinary Means of Grace

The means that God has appointed for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace are what we call the ordinary means of grace—namely, the Word, prayer, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and, necessarily joined to these, the church’s discipline and care of souls. These means are appointed by God, are empowered by the Holy Spirit, and point us to Christ, and they sustain us and nourish us in our union with Christ as we rest in the sovereign ends of our triune God.³

Reflection Questions (5 minutes)

1. Which spiritual discipline do you currently practice most consistently, and how has it helped you grow?
2. What is one discipline you would like to develop further, and how could it deepen your discipleship?

² Don Whitney, [What are Spiritual Disciplines?](#), Desiring God, December 2015.

³ Burk Parsons, [The Ordinary Means of Grace](#), Tabletalk, June 2020.

Hindrances to Discipleship

Key Scriptures:

- Luke 14:26-27: *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”*
- Mark 10:21-22: *“And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’”*
- Hebrews 12:1: *“Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*

Teaching Points:

1. **Competing Priorities:** Relationships, careers, and hobbies can distract us from wholehearted devotion to Christ.
2. **Fear of Loss:** Comfort, security, or relationships can make us hesitant to fully surrender.
3. **Sin and Spiritual Complacency:** These can weigh us down and hinder our spiritual growth.
4. **Busyness and Apathy:** We live in a distracted age which dulls our spiritual sensitivity.

Reflection Questions (5 minutes)

- **Discussion Questions:**
 1. What distractions or sins have you struggled with that hinder your discipleship?
 2. How can you overcome these obstacles with the help of the church?
 3. Who can you ask to pray with you or hold you accountable in your walk with Christ?
 4. Who are you discipling, and who is discipling you?

Action Plan:

- Identify one spiritual discipline you will prioritize this year and write a specific plan to practice it.
- Commit to praying daily for God to open discipling doors.

We Shall Be Like Him

1 John 2:28–3:3 (ESV)

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. ²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

³ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Prayer⁴:

O My Savior, Help me.

I am so slow to learn, so quick to forget, so weak to climb.

I linger in the foothills when I should be standing on the heights.

I am grieved by my graceless heart, my prayerless days, my lack of love, my sloth in the race set before me, my stained conscience, my wasted hours, and my neglected opportunities.

I am blind while light shines all around me.

Remove the scales from my eyes; crush the hardness of my unbelieving heart.

Let my greatest joy be to study You, to meditate on You, to gaze upon You, to sit like Mary at Your feet, to lean like John upon Your chest, to appeal like Peter to Your love, and to count all things as loss, like Paul, compared to the surpassing worth of knowing You.

Grant me growth and progress in grace, so that there may be:
more resolve in my character, greater strength in my purpose, higher aims in my life, deeper passion in my devotion, and steadfast constancy in my zeal.

As I hold a place in this world, keep me from making the world my treasure. May I never seek in created things what can only be found in You, my Creator.

Let my faith continue seeking You until it transforms into sight.

Ride forth in me, O King of kings and Lord of lords, that I may live in victory and, through that victory, reach my final goal. Amen.

⁴ Adapted from *A Disciple's Renewal*, The Valley of Vision, ed. Arthur Bennett. Banner of Truth Trust.

Spiritual Health Assessment

Read Psalm 139 then reflect on the following questions.

1. Do You Thirst for God?

- How frequently do you find yourself desiring time alone with your Heavenly Father?
- When was the last time you learned something new about God?
- Is your pursuit of God the highest priority in your life?

2. Are You Governed Increasingly by God's Word?

- How often do you immerse yourself in the Scriptures?
- When was the last time you committed God's Word to memory?
- Do you actively apply the Scriptures when making life choices and prioritizing goals?

3. Are You More Loving?

- Do those who know you best describe you as loving and compassionate?
- How regularly do you seek to love those who have hurt you?
- Are you making sacrifices for others, especially those who have wronged you?

4. Are You More Sensitive to God's Presence?

- Do you often find yourself thinking of and conversing with God throughout the day?
- How quickly do you respond in obedience when you feel a prompting from the Spirit?
- Do you feel a growing enjoyment just being with God?

5. Do You Have a Growing Concern for the Needs of Others?

- How often do you practice hospitality, especially toward those far from God?
- Are you placing yourself in relationships with those who are poor in spirit?
- How regularly do you engage in acts of service, aiming to build genuine relationships?

6. Do You Delight in the Bride of Christ?

- Are you committed to meeting with a small community for honest, deep conversations?
- Do you find joy in engaging with and contributing to your church family?
- Do you practice generosity, supporting the church with both time and money?

7. Are the Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life Increasingly Important to You?

- Do you have a regular, intentional rhythm of practicing the spiritual disciplines (Scripture reading, worship, silence and solitude, journaling, prayer, evangelism, serving, stewarding, fasting, learning, etc.)?
- Are you growing in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?
- Do you find yourself consistently seeking God's will through prayer and scriptural reflection?

8. Do You Still Grieve Over Sin?

- Does your heart feel increasingly pained by sin and evil in the world?
- Are you becoming more honest and transparent with yourself, God, and others?
- Are you committed to regular confession with a trusted friend or church community?

9. Are You a Quicker Forgiver?

- Do you hold any lingering resentments, or are you able to forgive freely?
- Are you becoming less manipulative and controlling, more trusting in God's care?
- Do you seek reconciliation with others, even when it requires humility and loss?

10. Do You Yearn for Heaven and to Be with Jesus?

- Do you find yourself increasingly longing for the presence of God and the fullness of His kingdom?
- Would those who know you best say you are becoming more like Jesus?