

Learning the Way of Jesus

Discipleship as a lifelong response to grace rather than a prerequisite for being accepted by God.

A Grace-Centered, Spirit-Led Journey with Jesus

KEY SCRIPTURES | NIV

Mark 1:16-20 | Matthew 11:28-30 | Luke 9:23-26 | John 13:1-17 | Matthew 28:18-20

About 55-70 minutes | Individual or group study

AN INVITATION

Before We Begin

A disciple is a learner and follower of Jesus. Discipleship is not a spiritual status granted by an organization or a standard of maturity we must achieve before God will receive us. It is the lifelong life that flows from receiving Jesus.

Jesus calls people as they are and then forms them as they walk with Him. The cost of following is real, but it is a response to the grace and authority of the One who first comes near.

Opening Prayer

Jesus, I want to learn Your way. Free me from shallow belief, fearful performance, and loyalty to anything that competes with You. Give me grace to follow daily, courage to surrender, and humility to keep learning. Amen.

CALLED BEFORE FULLY FORMED

Follow Me, and I Will Make You

Read Mark 1:16-20 (NIV)

Jesus calls fishermen to follow Him and promises to make them fishers of people. They leave their nets and begin the journey with Him.

The disciples respond decisively, but they do not yet understand everything. The Gospels will show their confusion, rivalry, fear, failure, and growth. Jesus calls them into relationship before their transformation is complete.

‘I will make you’ keeps formation centered on Jesus. A disciple participates through trust and obedience, but Jesus remains the Teacher and the One who shapes the life.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What belongs to the disciples’ response, and what does Jesus promise to do?
2. How does the rest of their story challenge expectations of instant maturity?
3. What have you believed a ‘real disciple’ must already have accomplished?
4. What may Jesus be asking you to entrust to Him as you follow?

Learn from Me

Read Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

Jesus calls the weary and burdened to come to Him, take His yoke, and learn from Him because He is gentle and humble in heart.

Discipleship is apprenticeship to a gentle Teacher. Jesus has authority, yet His authority gives rest rather than crushing people beneath spiritual weight.

Learning from Jesus includes unlearning patterns of domination, anxiety, pride, and self-salvation. His yoke reshapes both what we do and how we treat people along the way.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. How does Jesus describe Himself as a teacher?
2. What burden might you be carrying that Jesus did not place on you?
3. How can surrender and rest exist together?
4. What do you need to learn-or unlearn-from Jesus?

A DAILY RESPONSE

Take Up Your Cross

Read Luke 9:23-26 (NIV)

Jesus invites anyone who wants to follow to deny self, take up the cross daily, and follow. Trying to preserve life apart from Him leads to loss, while losing life for Him leads to true life.

Self-denial is not erasing personhood, tolerating abuse, or surrendering conscience to a leader. It is refusing to make the self-its comfort, ego, fear, and control-the center instead of Jesus.

The cross represents costly faithfulness to God's love, not suffering manufactured by unhealthy systems. Jesus says 'daily,' revealing discipleship as a renewed relationship and direction rather than a one-time achievement.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What does Jesus say belongs to anyone who wants to follow?
2. What is healthy self-denial-and what can be falsely labeled self-denial?
3. Which fear, comfort, or need for control competes with following Jesus?
4. What might taking up the cross look like today?

AUTHORITY KNEELS

I Have Set You an Example

Read John 13:1-17 (NIV)

Knowing His authority and where He came from, Jesus washes His disciples' feet and calls them to follow His example of humble service.

Jesus does not need to deny His authority in order to serve. Secure in the Father, He uses power to take the lowest place and care for those He leads.

Christian leadership and discipleship must therefore be measured by Christlike service, not titles, access, visibility, or control. The Teacher does not ask His students to embrace a posture He refuses Himself.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What does Jesus know about Himself before He kneels to serve?
2. How does security make humble service possible?
3. Where have you seen authority used in a way that resembles-or contradicts-Jesus?
4. Whom could you serve without seeking recognition or control?

A LIFELONG APPRENTICESHIP

Baptize and Teach Them to Obey

Read Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

The risen Jesus sends His followers to make disciples among all peoples, baptizing them in the triune name and teaching them to obey everything He commanded, with the promise of His continuing presence.

The commission holds baptism and lifelong teaching together. People are not required to master every command before baptism. They are baptized and then continually taught to live the way of Jesus.

Jesus' presence frames the mission. Making disciples is not reproducing institutional loyalty; it is helping people become learners of Jesus who can follow Him wherever He leads.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

1. What elements of the commission belong together?
2. What does the order suggest about baptism and lifelong formation?
3. Whose commands and presence remain central?
4. How can we help people follow Jesus without making them dependent on us?

Your Response

Discipleship is both invitation and surrender. You do not have to claim that you understand or embody everything. You can offer Jesus a willing heart and continue learning in His presence.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What has discipleship meant to you in the past?
2. Which aspect of Jesus' way-following, learning, surrendering, serving, or teaching-most challenges you?
3. Is there a burden or human loyalty you need to distinguish from loyalty to Jesus?
4. What is one concrete way you can practice His teaching this week?

A PRAYER YOU MAY MAKE YOUR OWN

Closing Prayer

Jesus, You are my Teacher and Lord. Thank You for calling me before I am fully formed and promising to remain with me. Teach me to surrender without losing the person You created me to be, serve as You served, and obey from love rather than fear. Keep making me into Your disciple. Amen.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Note for Anyone Walking Alongside Another Person

Do not evaluate whether someone qualifies to call themselves a disciple based on attendance, ministry productivity, or conformity to a group culture. Keep the focus on a person's relationship and direction toward Jesus. Discuss costly obedience honestly while explicitly rejecting abuse, coercion, and surrender of conscience to human authority.

Continue when you are ready: A Community of Grace

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