

BECOMING DISCIPLES OF JESUS

WHY THIS COURSE?

Welcome to the *Becoming Disciples of Jesus* study! This ten-week course will help instruct and strengthen you in your walk as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20). Having heard the gospel of the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ and believed, and having been baptized, it is now important for you to learn to observe the things Jesus commanded.

This course is designed to teach you the foundational teachings of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:1-2 says, “Leaving the discussion of the elementary principles [doctrines or teachings] of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” We are to go onto a perfection that is built on a foundation of the teachings of Jesus Christ. However, how can we go onto perfection, if this foundation is not first laid in our lives?

I am asking you for a commitment of the next ten weeks to lay a foundation of the elementary principles and teachings of Jesus Christ in your life. This course weaves together the foundational principles and practices of Christianity including prayer, worship, Bible study, meditation, fasting, fellowship and good works. This course is meant to be done with another disciple of Jesus who has already laid this foundation and is practicing it in his or her own life. The lead disciple’s purpose is to help you apply what you learn so that you may live as a disciple on a daily basis. There will be daily assignments for each of the 70 days with an in-person meeting at the end of each week. In addition, the lead disciple will contact you at least once during the week to see how you are progressing.

The Holy Spirit is absolutely vital to this process. We are only truly Jesus’ disciples if we have the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9). And we will only truly become practicing disciples by that same Spirit. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment... He will guide you into all truth... He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (John 16)

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to *make disciples*, that is, make students, who hunger and thirst for God and dedicate themselves to knowing Him. We are to learn of Him so that we can follow Him and so that we can, in turn, make disciples and teach others to follow Him. We are all many members, but of one body, with one purpose, in one Spirit, to be disciples of Jesus Christ who lay down their lives for others as Jesus did for us. “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16).

Thank you for making the commitment to Jesus and the commitment to lay this necessary foundation. It will require denial of the self, as Jesus promised it would (Luke 9:23-26), but it will be worth it. You are making a decision that will bless you and positively affect the course of your life for eternity.

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

Each day, as part of our lives as disciples of Jesus, we should be living by faith and practicing those disciplines which build up our faith. These would include things such as prayer, worship, Bible study, meditation, fasting, fellowship and good works. You will be given specific daily assignments that will help you build a habit of praying and studying. As part of your commitment to this course, make yourself responsible to God to fulfill your assignments. You can always increase and expand upon what is given, but look at what is provided as a bare minimum.

We get to know others by making time for one another. Building a relationship with God is no different. Just as you might set a date with another person in order to spend time getting to know him, so it is with God. As schedules change, the times of the day may change as well, but it is essential to spend time with God each day. Your purpose in fulfilling the assignments is not to check off a box that you did it. That would entirely miss the point. The purpose is to help you develop your own personal and, eventually, intimate relationship with God. We are called to know Him (Philippians 3:10) and these practices are foundational for having a successful relationship with Him.

Use the space provided in this study to write out scriptures, answers, thoughts or prayers. The importance of writing down your thoughts and prayers is to see how God elevates your thoughts to be more like His and how He answers your prayers. As you go through this process, you should be getting more acquainted with God, seeing His power and learning from His wisdom. You should begin to see your life, and the lives of those around you, changed. This study is a place to document your testimony.

You should set aside time to talk with the disciple who is leading you through this course. This will help keep you accountable to fulfill the daily assignments. However, the greater purpose is to talk about what the times of prayer, worship, Bible study, meditation, etc. are producing in your life. It is a time to reflect upon your life and have fellowship with one another about what is going on in your heart and mind.

Fellowship is one of the foundational practices of disciples. It is the practice of sharing life with one another. Our fellowship is based on the fact that the most important thing in life to you is the most important thing in life to me: having a relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:1-7). As a result, these will be the most intimate and rewarding relationships in your life, because you will be able to share the deepest parts of yourself with one another.

Christ-like fellowship should be times of confession, prayer, encouragement, comfort, teaching, exhortation and simply learning and caring about each other enough to serve the other person. I assure you these times are as important for the lead disciple as they are for the new student. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). In so doing, handle all exchanges with great love, care and discretion, building faith and trust.



David Liesenfelt

LESSON 1: GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

DAY 1

1. How did man come to exist? Was mankind made by chance or with purpose? (Genesis 1:1-27)
2. In whose image were the animals made? What phrase is repeated in the following verses? (Genesis 1:20-25)
3. In whose image and likeness was mankind made? (Genesis 1:26-27)

WHAT IS P2P? POINTS TO PONDER

As you go through this study, note your own thoughts and consider the value of Biblical knowledge, and how that knowledge can be applied in your life.

P2P: Consider the significance of God making sure we know that He made each of the animals after its own kind, but He made man after His own image and likeness. What does that mean to you, and how does that affect the way you see yourself and others?

4. What gifts, liberties and responsibilities did God bestow upon mankind when they were created? (Genesis 1:26-2:9; Genesis 2:18-25) List below and contemplate what God's attitude was toward mankind from the beginning.

5. What kind of thoughts does God have toward mankind? (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

MEDITATE Meditate on what God was thinking about when He created mankind in His own image and likeness. What were His thoughts about man, His creation? What did He desire to bestow upon mankind? Was He seeking to give man liberty or was there a desire to control? Did he want blessing or cursing?

PRAY Consider who God was from the beginning and what His purpose and plan was in creating mankind. As you think of what He set out to accomplish, pray about what His purpose and plans are in your life today. Give Him praise and thanks for who He is as Creator and God who loves you dearly.

DAY 2

6. In addition to the gifts, liberties and responsibilities God gave mankind, what command did He give them? (Genesis 2:15-17)

7. Read Genesis 3:1-6 to answer the following questions.
 - a. What did the man and woman do when they were tempted to go against God's commands?

 - b. What were the reasons they ate of the tree?

8. How did eating of the tree change their outlook toward one another and toward God? (Genesis 3:7-10)

9. When God spoke to them about what they did, how did they respond to His questions? (Genesis 3:11-13)

P2P: When you have done things that are wrong, have you ever reacted in a way that is similar to Adam and Eve? Do you feel a desire to hide or a desire to justify the self, even if it means blaming others? How do you respond?

10. What impact did disobedience have on their relationship with God? What were the consequences of their sin? (Genesis 3:14-24)

11. What is the effect of sin on our relationship with God? What separates us from God? (Isaiah 59:1-15)

MEDITATE Why does sin separate us from God?

PRAY Ask God to help you understand the nature of sin and why it is so devastating in your relationship with Him. Draw near to God, asking Him to forgive you of any sins that you may have committed.

DAY 3

12. Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree God had commanded not to eat. Has all of mankind sinned, taking of different forbidden fruits? (Romans 3:9-20, 23)
13. What is the ultimate consequence each individual pays because of their sins? (Ezekiel 18:4, 20)
14. Did our sins cause God to give up on us, even though He made us and we became His enemies by sinning against Him? (Romans 5:6-10)

15. What did God do to save us? (John 3:16-17)

16. What must one do to receive the benefit of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? (John 3:14-18; Romans 3:21-26; Romans 10:8-13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

MEDITATE Meditate on what it means to really believe in the saving power of Jesus' death and resurrection. What is required to have Jesus pay for your sins and for you to receive, in trade, His righteousness?

PRAY Thank God that He loves you and paid a price for your life even though you sinned against Him and rejected His instruction to you. Ask God to help you see how much He truly loves you and desires for you to live in righteousness and peace.

DAY 4

17. What right does accepting salvation through Jesus Christ bestow upon us? (John 1:12-13)

18. How do we become the children of God? What benefits and blessing do we receive as a result? (Romans 8:14-17)

19. What kind of mindset does God want us to have in becoming His children? (Philippians 2:1-11)

20. How should being a child of God change the way we live? (1 John 3:10-19)

21. What is the goal in living this new way? Who are we to be like? (Ephesians 4:11-13)

P2P: What steps are you taking in life to come "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"?

22. How do we come to know Jesus? (1 John 2:3-6; John 14:15; John 15:14)

MEDITATE Meditate on how you become a child of God. Why is there a link between being a child of God and keeping His commandments?

PRAY Ask God to show you how to live, how to follow Him and obey His commandments. Ask God to show you what sacrifices need to be made in your life to truly serve Him and others. Ask God to bring you to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

DAY 5

23. How is God continuing to make us in His image, even after death? (1 John 3:1-2; Psalm 17:15)

24. Into whose image and likeness are we still being formed? (1 Corinthians 15:42-49)

25. For what purpose is God redeeming us and transforming us into His image and likeness? (Revelation 1:4-6; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:4-6)

P2P: What would the world look like if it was ruled by Jesus Christ and the children of God?

26. What is the ultimate result of God's work in forming us into His image, redeeming us from our sins, and promising the hope of a resurrection into His image? (Revelation 21:22-22:1-5)
27. Can we count on God to be with us, to help us as He transforms us from who we are today into the image of His Son? (Romans 8:28-39)

MEDITATE Meditate on why God made you. Think about His tremendous love for you, about who He made you to be and His eternal purpose in creating you in His image.

PRAY Thank God for who He is and His promise to transform you into His child, in image, body, thought and mindset. Ask God to bless you with understanding of and insight into your need to cooperate with Him in this process.

DAY 6

28. Read Psalm 111 and Psalm 113. List the specific attributes ascribed to God.

PS2P: What attributes of God do you see in your life and in your relationship with Him?

DAY 7

MEDITATE & PRAY

Spend time further reflecting upon and praying about the parts of Lesson 1 that really inspired you. Realize that the gospel message is being spoken to you!