

Small Group & Personal Study: 24/7 Discipleship Series - The Christ Centered Life

A disciple of Christ is one who chooses to follow Jesus. Being a disciple of Christ is more than a one time decision, it is also a daily commitment. In the coming weeks we are going to be looking at the disciplines that a follower of Christ is called to do daily (day after day).

The week we are going to be taking the first step in discipleship and begin learning what it takes to follow Jesus. In Luke 9:23 Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Memory Verse: John 15:5

"I am the Vine, you are the branches, if a man remains in me and I in him; he will bear fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Daily Reading:

Day 1 – Luke 9:18-26

Day 2 – Galatians 2:20-21

Day 3 – 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Day 4 – John 15:1-4

Day 5 – John 15:5-8

Day 6 – John 15:9-11

Day 7 – John 15:12-17

Lesson:

1. Read Luke 9:23: What does it mean to deny self and daily follow Him?

I think in this verse Jesus is telling us to give up control. Jesus is challenging us to make a decision, are we going to make Him the Lord of our life? This is the most important question any of us will ever answer. Am I willing to say yes to Jesus? Yes Jesus, you are Lord of my life! Yes Jesus, you can take control of my life, my family, my career, my finances, my everything! Yes, I give it all up to you! When we are asked to deny ourselves God is not saying to lose all concern for your own body. He is saying; no longer allow anything to be more important than your relationship with me.

Group leaders: Some people in your group, although they believe, they have never made a decision to let Jesus be the Lord of their life. Invite your group to give it up to Him.

2. Read John 15:5 together. What does it mean to remain in Christ?

This is not a one word answer but search for the words that describe what it means to remain in Christ. I think it is a communion with Him. It comes from practicing His presence. Prayer and meditating on the Word of God are part of this practice. Worshiping in the Spirit and Truth is part of this practice. Jesus wants us to be in a love relationship with Him. Remaining (Abiding) in Christ is to become part of Him and allow Him to become part of you.

3. How does John 15:5 instruct and encourage you as a follower of Christ?

I am instructed to make every effort to remain in Christ. This verse tells me that my constant communion with Him is the thing that matters most. This teaches me the importance of constant communication with Him in the word and prayer. I am encourage by knowing that if I remain in Him, He will remain in me and that will be the source of bearing fruit is so encouraging because I begin to realize that I do not have to try to bear fruit. I simply have to remain in Him and by His power at work within me I will bear fruit that lasts. Galatians 5:22 helps me understand what fruit is that comes from the Spirit of the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. These things are from and for God's glory. I can not produce them on my own. It must come from the Spirit within me.

If Christ is the center of our life we will truly experience life in the fullest sense. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, life to the full" John 10:10. Because of Him we have the hope of eternal life flowing through us. Jesus said "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." John 7:37-38. 1 John 5:11-12 says, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life and this life is His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life."

The Discipline of Daily Journaling: This week to help you get the most out of you time with God, if you don't already, may I suggest you begin to journal your thoughts and prayers to God in response to what you read in His word each day. It is as simple as reading the daily scripture, pausing to meditate on the message and then taking time to write down what God is saying to you in your heart as a prayer back to God. As you practice the presence of God each day in the word and prayer and journal your thoughts back onto paper, God will reveal more and more to you and you will begin to experience transformation by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)

4. Share with your group how journaling has been for you this week and what God is revealing to you through His word and in your prayers.

Ask people if they have been journaling. If individuals are not, challenge them to begin this discipline. Allow those who meditate on the word and journal to share how God is speaking into their lives.