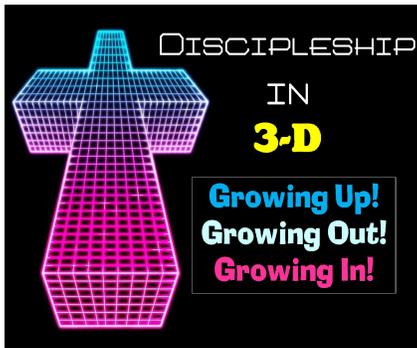


The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Thanks for choosing to dive more deeply, as a Christian, into a three-dimensional discipleship! Using the diversity and wonder of God's Word, powered by the Holy Spirit and the witness of one another, this time together seeks to raise up more fully-devoted followers of Christ.

Our prayer is that we might all:

Grow Upward in an ever-maturing personal relationship to Christ by becoming more fluent in the "first language of the faith," God's Word!
Grow Outward to neighbor and world – learning to love well, to share faith and witness to others we encounter, and to lead in more in that which matters to God!
And, **Grow Inward** by discovering a more contemplative prayer and devotional life enriched by silence, listening, and quiet reflection!

The Scripture for Sunday, September 12, 2021 ~ 16th Sunday after Pentecost

[STUDY LESSON 1]

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING:

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

{1} In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, {2} the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. {3} Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. {4} And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. {5} God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

{6} And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." {7} So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. {8} God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

{9} And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. {10} God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. {11} Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. {12} The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. {13} And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

{14} And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, {15} and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. {16} God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. {17} God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, {18} to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. {19} And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

{20} And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." {21} So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. {22} God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." {23} And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

{24} And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. {25} God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

{26} Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

{27} So God created humankind in his image,

in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

{28} God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." {29} God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. {30} And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have

given every green plant for food.” And it was so. {31} God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. {2} And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. {3} So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

{4} These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

For an overview of Genesis 1-11 consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-1-11/>

For an overview of “The Sabbath” theme consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sabbath-video/>

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).
3. If you had a choice of where to hang out, what would you prefer?
 - a. Majestic scenery (Mountains, rivers, oceans, etc...)
 - b. Animals (Zoo, safari, exhibits where animals are featured)
 - c. Sunbathing, stargazing, moon watching, cloud formations, rainbows in the sky
 - d. People watching
4. What might be your favorite day of creation and why is that for you?
 - a. Day 1: Light and Darkness, Day and Night
 - b. Day 2: Sky - Dome over the waters
 - c. Day 3: Dry land and earth, vegetation plants and trees
 - d. Day 4: Lights in the dome of the sky - stars, moon
 - e. Day 5: Living creatures, birds, sea monsters, cattle, wild animals, everything that creeps
 - f. Day 6: Humankind in God’s image, with dominion over all things
 - g. Day 7: Rest - Sabbath
5. How do you react to the frequent description of the various days of creation with the words, “And God saw that it was good?” (*Gen. 1:4, 12b, 18b, 21b, 25b, 31*)
6. Describe your relationship with the whole of God’s creation. How do you see your responsibility to it? With that, how do you understand having “dominion” (*Gen. 1:26, 28*)?
7. How is your understanding of God informed and shaped by learning that on the seventh day, God rested (*Gen. 2:3*)? And, what, do you believe, are some implications for you (or humanity in general) as a result of God resting from all the work that he had done in creation?
8. What are some of the ways your attitudes, views, and relationships with humanity are shaped by the “*imago Dei*” (image of God) spoken of in Genesis 1:27: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”?
9. Finally, how does this creation story inform and instruct discipleship, or your walk of faith? What applications might there be here in Genesis 1:1-2:4 to how we live as devoted followers of Christ?
10. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following might be inspired to change in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
11. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
12. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.