

The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Growing into more fully-devoted followers of Christ, may this time help all: **Grow Upward** into a more mature personal relationship and commitment to Christ Jesus faithful to God's Word!

Grow Outward to neighbor and world around, learning how to love well and to lead in what matters to God - guided by God's Word, by Jesus Himself, and by the Holy Spirit!

And, **Grow Inward** to discover a more contemplative faith, enhanced by both silence and prayer!

The Scripture for Wednesday, March 2, 2022

[STUDY LESSON 26]

THE GOOD NEWS READING:

John 10:1-18

{1} "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. {2} The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. {3} The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. {4} When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. {5} They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." {6} Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

{7} So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. {8} All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. {9} I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. {10} The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

{11} "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. {12} The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. {13} The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. {14} I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, {15} just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. {16} I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. {17} For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. {18} No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

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. What words or phrases caught your attention as you heard this passage read? Put another way, were you to choose to memorize a verse and cherish it from this text, what verse might that be and why? Take note within yourself, what sort of feelings arise in that word, phrase, or verse?
4. BACKGROUND NOTES: This text serves as essentially the transition from the prologue into the public ministry of Jesus coupled with the expansion of the "testimony of John." Other gospels (synoptics) identify him as "the Baptist," but not here in the fourth Gospel. Here he is John the Witness. Some material is overlap, but, of no surprise, John the gospel-writer offers additional perspective to this one "crying out in the wilderness." The actual account of Jesus' baptism is not formally on record in John. The closest we have is John's testimony (*John 1:32*).

5. What is some of your reaction to the “severity” of God’s testing of Abraham in this story? Do you approve? What questions for God arise from it for you?
6. Paralleling the call of Abram (*Gen. 12:1*) when the Lord calls Abram to go “to the land that I will show you” (*Gen. 22:2*), here again, God in testing Abraham instructs him to go to “one of the mountains that I shall show you.” When and how have you ever felt as if you’ve been led or called by God to a place that you’ve never been to and you tried solely to trust God? What was that experience like for you?
7. This mountain in “the land of Moriah” is believed by some biblical scholars and others to also be that of Mt. Zion, or the location of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (where Solomon’s Temple and Herod’s Temple were constructed). Not far from this location, historians and archeologists believe are also the places where Jesus was crucified and buried. Give this possibility, what similarities or parallels might exist between this story and that of Jesus in Jerusalem and His death and resurrection?
8. Can you recall a time when you understand an experience in life where God called upon you, in your following of Him, to do a “hard thing?” With that, do you sense such “hard things” from God as mostly optional, avoidable, or something one ought to expect and anticipate as a follower of Christ in the world?
9. Enter into, if you are able to imagine this, the experience of Isaac. What could be going through his mind during this ordeal? How might he be shaped? What could he discern about being a father? About who God is?
10. Are you able to rest in the assurance, as you follow Christ, that “The LORD will provide?” How has that happened for you and/or when was a notable time you sensed that assurance or God’s provision?
11. Following (or discipleship) obviously implies some element of being on a journey (externally as well as internally). In what ways do you sense Abraham being molded and shaped as the first patriarch as a result of what the LORD put him through (and he was obedient to agree to)?
12. Spend some time talking or reflecting upon simple obedience as an aspect of discipleship. If willing, share (*or personally identify within yourself*) an aspect of your life where you believe God is calling upon you to exhibit greater obedience.
13. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
14. 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)?
15. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.