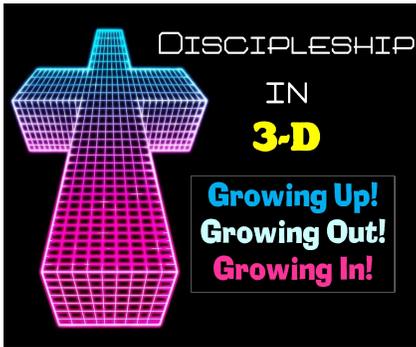


The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! 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 inspire a closer look at how to grow into more fully-devoted followers of Christ. Our prayer is that we might 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 Sunday, October 24, 2021

[STUDY LESSON 7]

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING:

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 51:10-14

{1} The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." {2} Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" {3} Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." {4} Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" {5} He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

{6} When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is now before the LORD." {7} But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." {8} Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." {9} Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." {10} Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." {11} Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." {12} He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." {13} Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

{Psalm 51:10} Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

{11} Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

{12} Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

{13} Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.

{14} Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

For an overview of “Sacrifice and Atonement” theme consider watching:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sacrifice-atonement/>

For an overview of Psalms consider watching: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/psalms/>

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. Samuel had the dubious distinction of being directed to anoint Saul the first king of Israel. Saul turned out to be a king even the LORD regretted ever having placed in “office.” Now, even while Saul continues to serve as king, Samuel is told to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the new king to replace Saul. A risky venture, to be sure, Samuel is obviously hesitant (1 Samuel 16:2). Have you ever had occasion where you sense God calling you do to something you interpreted as risky? What was it like?
4. No one knows the reactions of David’s older brothers at they were “passed over” in the selection process of the soon to be anointed new King of Israel. What might they have been? Have you ever experienced being overlooked or “passed over” for a position or promotion? What was the feeling like for you?
5. Do you find it all ironic or conflicting how God does not, as mortals, look on the outward appearance, but on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7) yet the writer of 1 Samuel notes David was ruddy, had beautiful eyes and was handsome (1 Samuel 16:12)? Where do any observational biases tend to exist for you in reacting and responding to others?
6. As much or as little as one might know about King David, a large percentage might be acquainted with his regrettable and infamous failure surrounding the commission of adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent arrangement to bring about the coverup and murder of her husband, Uriah. A title later ascribed to Jesus was “Son of David.” Included in our faith understanding is the complexity of being both “sinner and saint.” Psalm 51, a psalm of David, is confessional in nature. Which verse of the five presented do you need to pray most at this time in your life? If willing, share why that is for you.
7. Following (or discipleship) obviously implies some elements of calling, obedience, and character. What sense of calling from God (setting apart for a purpose) do you identify in life? Where do you feel strong urges toward greater obedience? Are there any aspects of your character/ethics/values which you feel called to surrender for God to reform or alter?
8. Spend some time talking or reflecting upon “God-moments” of being called and used by God, distinct acts of obedience you’ve been faithful to display, or how following Christ has brought about a new ethic. If willing, share (*or personally identify within yourself*) an aspect of your life where failures or confession of sin have been valuable in shaping your following.
9. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
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. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.