

Disciple 101 Chapter 1

Introduction to a journey of seeking God

The objective of this study is to enable those involved to spiritually grow in the Lord, to mature and broaden your knowledge of God. If you treat this in the way it is designed you will get results. God has inspired me to set this out in the way described and he will work with it.

This is not a cerebral exercise in learning new doctrine although there will be some challenges to your existing perceptions about God. Mainly this is a change in approach – one of heart and faith.

The discipline of focus of the heart and mind is where the work is. You may be in a place where you are a strong believer already. You will be challenged in broadening your knowledge of God in different areas than you are used to. You may be in a place where you are skeptical there is any true knowledge of God – if he exists at all. You will come out of this with the conviction of the reality of God.

I know a man who has a strong faith in the Lord but when he first was challenged with believing God, he was skeptical. He started out with a simple prayer; “Lord if you exist will you make yourself real to me? “

There are a couple of things essential in this Study Program that are a part of the ‘journey’. You are embarking on a ‘journey’ together as a small group. This is designed for a small group seeking God, meeting together on a weekly basis. How large a group I leave up to you. You can pray and ask the Lord.

You are gathering in agreement together on seeking to know God. It is not a doctrinal debate. So whether you approve of a certain thing or not, it is best if you put it aside for the duration. Perhaps you will change your mind on some things toward the end, perhaps not. There is also confidentiality in a group meeting of this kind. You must agree to keep this.

As a group you are going to get used to agreeing in prayer together. There is great power in this. You may not feel comfortable praying in front of others or more than a few words. That is ok as long as you are a part of the corporate group in prayer. As a group you will become used to praying and asking God for things – even what to ask for. You may say, “I am not called to a prayer ministry”. That may be so but if you seek God you must be given to prayer. If Jesus prayed, then we must pray.

Now to Start There is a saying, “You cannot just read about God, you must experience God”.

Every session needs to open in prayer to invite the Lord Jesus or Holy Spirit into your meeting. Corporate prayer is powerful and you will see results in this.

As a group you will keep in mind what your shortcomings are in approaching God and pray accordingly at the end for those things. The baseline for the meeting is approx. 1 ½ hours with a little over an hour spent on study and the rest left for a prayer time even if you are not used to it. You may make the meeting as long as you want with ministry time after if you wish or praise and worship. It is best not to make meetings on a Monday or Friday if you can help it. At the beginning of each session after opening prayer, there needs to be some time for people to consider what God may have been inspiring in them since the last session and comment on this in a few minutes if they wish.

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In each passage given, let 1 person read – don't split it up. The others should listen to what is spoken. We are not in a bible study as much as we are seeking God. We are listening for what he inspires in us – for what he wants to teach us. We want to know what God has for us in life, for life is more than our mere existence in it.

All scripture is taken from 'NIV' version of bible and those worth committing to memory will have that notation beside it. It's up to you what you do with that.

James 4:8 (memory) "Come near to God and he will come near to you."

After each passage, as a group, comment on what it means to you or what you believe may be involved in doing what is spoken of in passage. Do this now for the above.

Next, remember that each passage involves the heart and mind and we are weak when it comes to spiritual things. Everyone starts where they are at in their faith in God. The passage is significant because it is the whole point of why you are meeting. It would be good for someone to lead in a prayer right now for the Lord to draw you all closer to him before moving on. It is good to do that with what you see as significant concepts in spiritual growth.

Hebrews 11:6 (memory) "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Again, discuss implications of this in your lives. It is said that God is the one who gives faith. What does this imply? Give testimony of previous experience in life where you trusted God for something.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Many people have commented that they feel closer to God while out in nature. Discuss this. Where does it come from? You can start with some kind of belief in God and see where it takes you over the course of this study.

Take time in quiet and prayer at the end of today's introduction. It may take a while to get used to a "Prayer time". It is good to have quiet spaces between prayers of different people. It gives time to reflect on what is going on inside and pray a few words about that. In corporate prayer you are not there for yourself only. Avoid long prayers where you are just voicing your feelings to God without asking for something that benefits the group. Keep that for your own private prayer and worship time. Corporate prayer is short and concise for the benefit of the group.

Some things to pray for are; whatever is on your heart for friends, family, your needs; those needs of the community at large as well as governing authorities; praying for the building up of God's people.

Consider what you feel God's Spirit may be doing in your life as you go through the week.

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