



Unit 3: Disciple of Christ

Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of God.

Welcome to the Disciple of Christ Bible Study!

We are delighted to be part of your life and help you grow healthier and stronger in your Christian walk. Sometimes it may seem like a difficult journey, but it is well worth any hardship or sacrifice. There is nothing greater in this life or the next that can compare to a vibrant and loving relationship with our triune God.

God loves you and has a great plan for your life. We want to help you in developing that plan and keeping it front and center. God's intention is for you to live your life as a disciple of Christ. A disciple is a student and follower of Jesus Christ who studies and acts in obedience to His teachings to become like Him. Jesus intentionally made disciples and that is our goal. In fact, *the greatest legacy that you or I will leave behind is the disciples we have made in Jesus' name.*

Disciples are not perfect, nor do we have all the answers. However, we love God and strive to please and serve Him daily. If we waited for only perfect disciples, we would have an exceptionally long wait indeed! Keep this in mind as you set out to disciple others. Our enemy, Satan, seeks to make us feel unworthy so that we do nothing. It is his old trick, but we are aware of his schemes.

We will learn from each other as we hold each other accountable. For example, God may give you a Bible verse or a word that your discipleship team needs to hear. We should never "be too holy" to receive a word from other followers of Christ. You have a bright future in God's kingdom, and we are blessed to be a small part of it.

Executive Director¹

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Lesson One
Position in the Kingdom

Day One

Share in Jesus' Suffering

I was paying bills one day when I noticed a late charge on the statement. This was an error. Not only am I careful in paying bills on time, but I also keep a record of when it was sent. I called the credit card company and kindly explained the situation. No matter how I reasoned, the representative would not take the charge off our account.

I was angry and frustrated by the time our conversation ended. Anders, my husband, walks in about this time and asks, “what’s going on.” After telling him about the situation, he takes the bill and comes back a few minutes later with the news—the late fee had been removed from our bill. *How did he do that?*

Some people have a personality for getting what they want. As we will see in our lesson today, Zebedee’s sons, James and John, wanted something from Jesus. They wanted special positions in Jesus’ new kingdom. Basically, they were asking for the number 2 and number 3 positions after Jesus. It was a big and audacious (daring) request.

Known as the “sons of thunder,” they were not lacking in boldness. However, these high positions were not something to be demanded, but granted. Their request called for finesse (skill). Perhaps they did not think they had the relational graces to succeed. But aha, they may have thought, *Mother always gets her way—let’s get her to ask Jesus.*

Were James and John frustrated with their positions and influence among the other disciples? Since they were fishermen by trade, they would not have had an abundance of power and authority within their community. Perhaps now was their opportunity to make a change.

1. Share a time when you felt unnoticed and unappreciated.

2. Would you like to have a position of authority and respect? Yes No (Underline One)

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #1–2 with your discipleship team.

There have been times when I have felt like James and John, wanting power and respect. This *is* the way the way the world thinks. However, God views positions of authority and respect differently—opposite to the world’s view.

Definitions: *Worldview* is defined as the sum total of our attitudes and expectations about the world that directs our thoughts and actions. *Biblical worldview* is based on the belief and trust in God's Word to direct our thoughts and actions. In the Bible, the *world* can refer to all that is under Satan's power and opposed to God (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2).

Read Mark 10:32–34 and answer questions 3–6:

Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.” Mark 10:32b–34

3. Where did Jesus tell the disciples they were going (v. 33a)?

5. What would the chief priests and teachers of the law do to Jesus (vv. 33b–32)?

5. What would the chief priests and teachers of the law do to Jesus (vv. 33b–32)?

6. After Jesus was killed, what would happen three days later (v. 34b)?

Right after Jesus had told the disciples the horrific news of His persecution and death, James and John began thinking and plotting for their positions in the kingdom. They did not have in mind the things of God but were concerned with their own worldly status. The other disciples were probably thinking about their positions too, but kept their desires hidden.

Read Matthew 20:20–23 and answer questions 7–11:

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. ²¹“What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” ²²“You don't know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. ²³Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” Matthew 20:20–23 (cf. Mark 10:37–40)

7. What was the favor the mother of Zebedee's sons asked Jesus (v. 21)?

8. When Jesus answered the mother's request, to whom did He direct His answer (v. 22)?
9. Did the brothers understand what they were asking for (v. 22)? Yes No (Underline One)
10. To help in their understanding of the request to sit on Jesus' right and left what question does Jesus ask (v. 22b)?
11. Who grants permission to those who will sit on Jesus' left and right? (v. 23)?
12. Read Matthew 20:24. Why were other ten disciples indignant with James and John? (Indignant is to be angry, annoyed, and displeased.)

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Matthew 20:24

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #7–12 with your discipleship team.

If the other ten disciples were not interested in having those high positions for themselves, they would not have become angry. They would have happily gone about their own business. Jesus recognized the worldly mindset and used the occasion to teach all the disciples that position equals service and sacrifice to each other.

The world and God's kingdom have different sets of values and attitudes. Our job is to learn kingdom values—it is in this way that our deepest and genuine needs are met. From Jesus' teaching we learn three principles about attaining position in God's kingdom.

Three principles about attaining position in God's kingdom

1. Position in God's kingdom requires us to share in Jesus' suffering.

Right after their mother knelt and made the request of position, Jesus replied to the sons—they were present and the ones behind the request (Matthew 20:22). In effect, Jesus is saying to the brothers, *You think you are asking for a royal and effortless position but that is not how it works.*

He then asks James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" This Jewish expression meant to share someone's fate (destiny, future). Jesus had the cross in front of Him and would be suffering for the sins of the world.

However, Jesus did not mean they would die for the sins of world because He alone could redeem humanity. His position as the Son of God and Savior of humanity cannot be shared. Jesus *was* referring to His suffering, pain, and rejection at the hands of evil men.

13. Are you willing to suffer, experience pain, and be rejected by other people because of following Jesus? Yes No Maybe (Underline One)

14. Describe any suffering, pain, or rejection you have experienced because of following Jesus.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #16–17 with your discipleship team.

Jesus also asked if they were able to “be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with (Mark 10:38)?” Historically, the Jews defined the word baptism as, “to go down” or “to perish.” The word later became identified with suffering and death. Jesus wanted to know if the brothers were willing to follow Him into death for God’s purposes.

James and John did not understand the fate that awaited Jesus, nor themselves. Nevertheless, they replied in unison, “We can” (v. 39). Sometimes we are all like James and John, *ready to follow Jesus and not knowing exactly what that entails.*

As with James and John, whether we know our future suffering or not, we can depend on Jesus to help us through it. Jesus has sent His Holy Spirit to empower and strengthen us. In day two, we will see that even those seeking Jesus for the first time may suffer for His namesake

—End Day One—

Day Two

Putting God's Plans First

Tara was from a very prominent, wealthy, and strict Pakistani family. When she was 12 years old, she saw an ad in the newspaper and sent off for something free. It turned out to be a Bible with correspondence lessons. The packages were delivered to the servants and then given to Tara. She did not see the harm in completing the Bible study lessons, but still had the sense not tell anyone about it. She hid the Bible and the lessons in her bedroom.²

When she was 16, because of her exceptional grades, she was invited to a special study class in Iran. Her brother accompanied her. While walking through the courtyard of her hotel, she came across a man looking into the sky and apparently talking with someone.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“I’m talking to God.” he answered.

“You can’t talk to God,” Tara argued politely. “He will not come down to speak with you, and you cannot go up to Him unless you die.”

“I not only spoke with God, I got an answer.”

“You are not a prophet or an angel. How could you possibly get an answer from God?”

He invited her to come to a special location to learn more. She convinced her brother it was “religious” research and he allowed her to go—he waited outside. While she was there, a father brought his crippled daughter to the front of the gathering, and everyone started praying for God to heal the girl.

Tara couldn’t believe what she saw. The crippled girl’s legs slowly straightened, she stood and then walked down the center aisle of the church and looking into Tara’s eyes said, “Emmanuel.” Then she walked back to her father.

When Tara returned to Pakistan, she fervently studied the Bible to find answers. She found another Christian church, but she would learn that all Christians are not alike. The pastor of this church was more concerned for his own safety than for her salvation. Being responsible for someone converting to Christianity could mean a death sentence. So, he called Tara’s father and told him of her interest in Christianity.

² The Voice of the Martyrs, *Hearts of Fire* (Nashville: W Publishing, 2003), 159–192. The following story of Tara is gleaned and quoted through the listed pages.

Her father was furious and went into a rage. Even though she denied being a Christian, he struck her again and again and yelled at her, “You are no longer my daughter!” Her brother joined in the beating. They found the Bible and grew even more angry. They beat her with an electric cord and whatever else they could find.

Afterward, they removed everything from her bedroom, including furniture and clothing, and left her battered and bloody body in a heap on the floor. They decided to marry her off and have her retrained. In fact, her father’s last words to her were: “Either you marry, or you die!”

She laid on the floor for three days and when she finally lifted her head, she found her hair was stuck to the floor in dried blood. Tara uttered her first prayer to the one and only true God. “God, I don’t know what to do. Please show me and I will follow you.”

Tara did not know what following God would mean. Nor did she know what He would ask her to do. Perhaps it would mean that her father would change his mind or show some interest in Christianity. She had seen God heal a crippled child so certainly He had the power to change a man’s will.

15. What are your thoughts concerning Tara’s suffering in her search for the truth?

When Jesus finished teaching about His suffering and rejection by the chief priests and teachers of the Law (Mark 8:30–32), Peter took Him aside. He was not pleased about Jesus’ prediction and rebuked (scolded, reprimanded) Him. However, Jesus turned and rebuked Peter in strong terms.

Read Mark 8:33–34 and answer questions 16–18:

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Mark 8:33–34

Definitions: Stated another way, “*Get behind me, Satan,*” would read “get away from me, Satan.” The phrase meant that Satan, the adversary, is tempting someone to turn away from God and must be rebuked. In this context, Peter was being used by Satan to deter Jesus from His mission. The phrase “*take up your cross*” means to die to oneself through total surrender to Jesus. In the first century, the cross was a means of death and so in carrying it, one was carrying their own execution device. *Rebuke* is to warn, scold, reprimand, or strongly admonish.

16. What did Jesus say to rebuke Peter (v. 33)?

17. What did Jesus say to the crowd and His disciples about wanting to be His disciple (v. 34)?

Peter, like James and John, did come to understand what it meant to take up his cross and follow Jesus. Peter and James suffered and were martyred for their faith. John also shared in Jesus' suffering through exile on the Island of Patmos.

Action Step

18. Memorize: *Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."* Luke 9:23

Accountability: Share your answers to #15–18 and memory verse #21 with your team.

The world speaks loud and clear regarding their opinion of who holds a high position and why. However, we must seek high positions according to how Jesus defines it. *It means putting God's plans first no matter the suffering and rejection.*

When we are faced with suffering and rejection, we may be tempted to feel sorry for ourselves. The life of humility is not an easy one—the flesh has a strong desire for recognition and popularity. Pride is a constant battle for most of us.

In the world's eyes, Tara had every right to pity herself. After all, in seeking the truth a pastor betrayed her trust—plus she was not even a believer. But she did not go down that pity path.

Notice that she did not blame God either. Even though she had been beaten senseless by her own father and brother, she did not say, *God, You must not be real, or You must not love me because I was reading your Book and seeking after you and this is what you allowed to happen to me.* Instead, she prayed for God's will and direction.

After Tara had prayed, she felt strangely peaceful and fell into a deep sleep. After a while she felt someone lifting her head and softly caressing her cheek. She heard a voice saying, "Emmanuel, Emmanuel."

The presence of the Lord Jesus had entered into this battered girl's room to assure her that He was with her. Emmanuel is one of Jesus' names and it means "God with us." Just as Jesus was with His disciples on earth, He is with us through His Holy Spirit.

Even though Tara was not a Christian, she was following the direction the Lord was leading her. She had completed the Bible lessons, and she followed up leads about other Christians. Her obedience did not make her popular, safe, or powerful. She was beaten to a pulp and had been

given an ultimatum to marry or die. In her mind, this would mean her search for God would be over. She put truth first and obediently made plans to leave her home.

She searched her room and found only one thing her father and brother had missed: a small travel bag from her last trip to Iran. It had some clothes, money and her passport. She changed out of her bloody clothes and slipped out her bedroom window.

Tara made her way to the bus station and bought a one-way ticket to a city several hours away. She had been to this city with her family and had noticed a church there. But her troubles were not over. Some of the women of the church were jealous of her youth and beauty. They started false rumors and soon she was not welcome. In addition, her father and brother had come into town making their intentions known—*They were going to kill her.*

Nevertheless, with all this going on, she came to understand the real meaning of Emmanuel. She knew Jesus had come to earth to save her from her sins so she could be with God. A couple of months after she had left her home, she trusted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. With Jesus in her heart, she set off for a new start and another town.

Putting God and His plans first *does not* mean that we will be free of difficult, even tragic, circumstances in our lives. It *does* mean that He is working in us to shape our character and make us like Jesus. But even in the hard times, God will take care of us and provide our needs. Plus, Jesus has prepared a place for us in heaven where all pain and hardships are forgotten, and joy is constant.

19. Read Matthew 6:33. What does God promise to provide when we seek Him first?

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'
³²*For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*
Matthew 6:31–33

Tara kept thinking about God and what He wanted. In the new city, she finally found a pastor who had her best interests at heart. She was able to live with his family for four and a half years and work as the church's secretary. Tara also started a literacy program and a children's ministry at the church. She brought in many new members as she shared the good news of Jesus Christ.

One day a family member recognized her, and again she was on the run. She has had to live a secret life for 15 years now. She has been imprisoned, betrayed several more times by "church members" as well as others—but she still clings to Jesus, seeks God's will, and pursues His presence in her life. May Tara's example, keep us clinging to Jesus, seeking God's will, and pursuing His presence in our own lives.

—End Day Two—

Day Three

Service to Others

God may or may not answer our prayers in the way we would choose, but He is still good and wants the best for us. Tara's *great* reward will be in heaven, but God has blessed her on earth, also. She has felt His presence and seen miracles that few ever experience. God has also given her a wonderful Christian husband and they now have a baby son.

We have been learning about the first of three principles regarding position in God's kingdom—position requires us to share in Jesus' suffering. Understanding this principle may remind you of Unit One, Lesson 4, *God is Sovereign*. He is the Supreme Ruler in control of all circumstances.

When Jesus was falsely accused, He was brought before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. He knew His suffering and circumstances were not in Pilate's hands but God's. Whether or not pain and suffering were involved, Jesus always put His Father's sovereign plans first.

20. Read John 19:10 and 19:11a. Did Pilate really have the power to free or crucify Jesus? Yes No (Underline One).

When Pilate asked Jesus, "*Do you refuse to speak to me?*" Then Pilate said, "*Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?*" (John 19:10)?

Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (John 19:11a).

Action Step

21. Memorize John 19:11a above.

Accountability: Share your memory verse #21 with your discipleship team.

Finally, we can be the cause of our own heartaches and troubles. In other words, we must not invent or make up suffering that we have brought upon ourselves. Our wrongdoing, no matter what form it takes, is not suffering with Christ.

For example, dominating or controlling others is wrong. It may be that Jesus knew what was in the hearts of His disciples as they vied for position in His kingdom. They may have viewed these #2 and #3 positions as a way to control and exercise authority over others. We do not know for certain what was on the disciples' minds, but we do know that Jesus addressed the subject which leads to our second principle.

2. Position in God's kingdom is not about dominating others.

Read Matthew 20:25–26a and answer questions 22–24:

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Matthew 20:25–26a (cf. Mark 10:42–43a) Gentiles are pagans not born into the Jewish family of God.

Definition: *Dominates* is a verb meaning to have control, power or authority over somebody or something. It is also defined as having a commanding influence over someone.

22. Who did Jesus direct His teaching to about greatness, position, and service (v. 25a)?

23. How did the rulers of the Gentiles and their high officials lead? (v. 25)?

24. Why was Jesus bringing up the rulers of the Gentiles and high officials (vv. 25–26a)?

Jesus uses the expression “lord it over,” which means to rule over like lords or to be domineering. Lords were the masters or leaders during that time period. They enjoyed their positions and gave no thought to the needs, feelings, or welfare of those under them.

Jesus uses an example of the rulers of the Gentiles as a word picture so the disciples could immediately understand this particular type of behavior. The disciples were able to picture a man in a commanding position, an oppressor full of pride and haughtiness. Jesus is emphatic (forceful and definite) and says that *His disciples will not “lord it over” others.*

Dominating or oppressing others is a continuing problem that can have long-term and detrimental (harmful) effects. After I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I shared this good news with everyone I knew. One of those I shared with was named Joanne. We were having a nice lunch and enjoying each other’s company when I began to talk about Jesus. She threw her fork down on her plate and told me she did not want to hear it!

Visibly angry and irritated, she told me that she “grew up” in the church, where her father was an elder. They would go to church every week acting like everything was wonderful while in their home, her father was abusing her and her mother.

Finally, her mother got enough courage to go to the pastor for help. The pastor said that the husband was the ruler of the home and she just had to live with that. Joanne snarled that she would *never* darken the door of any church, especially this particular denomination that her family had been involved with.

Both the husband and the pastor were setting up false dominating positions that have no place for Christ’s disciples. Position in God’s kingdom is not about dominating people, and certainly not

about criminally abusing them. A domineering spirit is a spirit of pride and arrogance. It says: *I want my way and I don't care how it affects you.*

God hates pride and warns us throughout the Bible. For example, we are told, *The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.* Proverbs 16:5

25. If you were the pastor when Joanne's mother had asked for help, how would *you* have handled the situation as a disciple of Christ?

26. Prayerfully consider and answer: Do you have a dominating or domineering spirit?
Yes No Sometimes (Underline One)

27. Read Ephesians 4:2. What will you do to develop a more humble, modest, and gentle spirit?

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2

Accountability: Share your answers to #25–27 with your discipleship team.

Having a prideful or dominating spirit must be dealt with immediately. We all have this tendency to some extent, and we must acknowledge it and confess it before God. Take a moment and pray: *O God, change my heart so that I have no desire to rule over anyone but to humbly accept the place and position that You have ordained and chosen for me. Amen.*

We have learned two principles about attaining position in God's kingdom. *First*, position in God's kingdom requires us to share in Jesus' suffering and *second*, position in God's kingdom is *not* about dominating others. The *third* principle Jesus teaches makes it abundantly clear that He does things differently from the way worldly leaders think and act.

3. Position in God's kingdom calls for compassionate service to others.

Read Matthew 20:26–28 and answer questions 28–33:

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:26–28
(cf. Mark 10:43–45)

28. What did Jesus tell His disciples about becoming great and being first (vv. 26–27)?

29. What was the reason Jesus gave for disciples to become servants and slaves (v. 28)?

30. How did the Son of Man give His life as a ransom (v. 28)? (See also Hebrews 2:14–15.)

Jesus turns everything upside down! If you want to become great, serve others to the point of acting like their slave! He is not saying it is wrong to want to be a leader or even a great leader, but the rules for prominence (importance, status) in God's kingdom will be in serving others.

31. Why or why is it not difficult for you to put your own needs aside and serve others?

32. Explain why or why not you think it was difficult for Jesus to put aside His earthly needs and serve others?

33. Put your own interests aside and serve someone in love today. Write the circumstances of your service and what you learned.

Accountability: Share your answers to #28–33 with your discipleship team.

Jesus came down from the highest position of the universe. Remember the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, and therefore hold the identical preeminent (top) position in heaven and on earth. They created and ruled together in perfect peace, love, and harmony. They have never lacked anything—past, present, or future. Yet, Jesus came to earth to live in a human body and die for our sins. There is no greater act of compassionate service to others.

When we love Jesus and abide (dwell) in Him, we can compassionately serve others. He enables and empowers us through His Holy Spirit. Without Jesus, we are naturally selfish, self-centered, and self-serving. I mean, who would really desire to be a servant or a slave to everyone or . . . anyone?

On December 21, 1948, Mother Teresa began the *Missionaries of Charity* on the streets of Calcutta, India. God alone was with her as she rounded up five puzzled children from nearby hovels (shacks). Using a stick in the dirt, she began teaching them the alphabet. She also taught how to keep clean and healthy.

By 1997, just before her death, 4,000 sisters had joined her order and over 400,000 co-workers. The *Missionaries of Charity* were in 120 Countries, feeding 500,000 families, teaching 20,000 children, treating 90,000 lepers, abused people, prostitutes, and AIDS patients.

Mother Teresa might not be of the same Christian denomination as you and me and we would disagree on certain theological issues, but oh, how she loved and followed Jesus. She instructed her sisters from Matthew 25:40, *“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*

After a novice (beginner) had ministered to one of the destitute, one so repulsive that normal people could not bear to look, let alone smell such a person, Mother Teresa would take the novice’s hand, palm out. One by one she folded the novice’s finger and thumb back into the palm as she said these five words, *“You did it to Me.”*

If you are interested in a better position in God’s kingdom, use Mother Teresa as an example—serve others for Christ. She willingly gave her life to the dying and destitute of Calcutta as she followed her Lord. She never married, owned a house, or went on vacations. She simply served God full-time the best she knew how—all her adult life.

Jesus wanted to make sure His disciples, then and now, understand greatness and service. Before James and John had asked to sit on Jesus’ right and left, Jesus had taught on this subject. The disciples had been arguing, but when Jesus asked them what they were arguing about they got noticeably quiet.

But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. ³⁵Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” Mark 9:34–35

The only way to have the strength and humility to be the very last and servant of all is to dwell or remain in Jesus. Ask Him for the power and compassion to live a life of loving service.

Pray: *Lord Jesus, Help me to remain in You and please give me the power, strength, humility, and compassion through Your Holy Spirit to live a life of loving service to others. Thank you. Amen.*

—End Day Three—

Day Four ***Making Disciples***

Without Jesus working through us, we may become legalistic about service. It becomes strictly a task, a duty, a discipline separated from God's grace. These are the kind of deeds that may not be rewarded in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:12–15).

Definition: *Legalism* is an over-emphasis on discipline usually implying misguided strictness, pride, and superficiality (without depth of character) to the neglect of mercy and the grace of God. It overemphasizes the letter of the law at the expense of the spirit.³

34. How will *you* guard against a legalistic attitude in *your* service to others?

Accountability: Share your answers to #34 with your discipleship team.

Read Matthew 10:39 and answer questions 35–36:

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my [Jesus] sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

35. What does Jesus mean by the statement *whoever finds their life, will lose it*?

36. How do you lose your life for the sake of Jesus, and yet find it?

Accountability: Share your answers to #35–36 with your discipleship team.

Jesus' statement above seems like a paradox (self-contradictory). How can one find their life and lose it? As usual, Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters. We can save or preserve our physical lives from persecution and death by denying Christ but then end up losing eternal life or heaven.

Whoever is willing to stand up in faith and not deny Christ will be given the gift of eternal life. Jesus is especially making the point of one losing their physical life as a martyr for the sake of the gospel. Those who are true disciples have consecrated themselves to our Lord and follow in obedience, even to death.

Jesus statement could also refer to dying to ourselves daily. We can lose our lives by forgoing comforts, desires, possessions and activities for the cause of Christ and the gospel. On the other hand, we can find our lives by protecting ourselves and preserving our safety and fleshly comfort. Satisfying our own felt needs is a recipe for spiritual death. Instead, we must surrender our lives to Christ for His service. This is how we gain our abundant and eternal life now and forever.

³ <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism_\(theology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legalism_(theology))>(assessed 8/15/2018).

When we put others ahead of ourselves and serve them, we will end up having our real needs met. We will please and honor the most powerful Person of the universe—God. Knowing we are doing everything God asks of us, we become more conscious of His hand upon us and our place in His kingdom. This is what give us our purpose and significance.

Our simplest act of kindness, like helping someone clean up a spilled drink, will not go unnoticed and unrewarded in heaven (Mark 9:41). Our position of authority comes from serving others. The more we serve in love, through Christ, the higher our position of authority in the kingdom.

We began our Disciple of Christ Study with three principles from Jesus' teaching as recorded in Matthew 20:25–28: 1. Position in God's kingdom requires us to share in Jesus' suffering (v. 28c). 2. Position in God's kingdom is not about dominating others (vv. 25–26a) and 3. Position in God's kingdom calls for compassionate service to others (vv. 26b–27).

Human nature always wants to put itself first—we want to feel good about ourselves. So, we can fall into the trap of following worldly principles, even in a church or ministry setting. Satan is adept (skillful) tempting us toward ungodly power, position, and pleasure. He will try to entice us in taking our “felt” needs into our own hands, rather than waiting on God. We need to remember that what we feel is not always reality. The reality is that God alone meets and fills our true needs.

These three principles we have discussed set the stage for discipleship and leadership in God's kingdom. Jesus lived as He taught, and He wants us to do the same. To begin living and teaching these basic discipleship principles, memorize the Master's words.

Action Step

37. Memorize: *Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” Matthew 20:26–28

Accountability: Share your memory verses to #37 with your discipleship team.

In serving others, remember to give the credit (praise, recognition) to God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit will lead you in acknowledging God both publicly and privately. Christ did not keep it a secret that He was serving God the Father. He suffered for truth, and we may also. But we will be suffering with and in Christ—following in His steps.

38. At this point in your Christian life, what do you think you can do to live out kingdom values and serve others better?

Jesus wants us to make disciples who clearly understand and practice His teaching on “position in God’s kingdom.” When you and I leave this earth, the greatest legacy that we, or anyone else will leave behind, is the disciples we have made or encouraged in Christ. Our family might be our first mission field, but it cannot be our only one. Even if we are the only Christian in our families and are ministering to them, we still need to reach out to others at the same time. Christ’s mandate (command) is to *make disciples of all nations*.

Read Matthew 28:18–20 and answer questions 18–22:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18–20

39. To whom was Jesus talking? (See vv. 16–17 in Bible)?
40. Why is Jesus’ command also directed at believers today?
41. What would have happened if the first disciples had not obeyed and acted on this directive?
42. What will happen if you and I do not obey and act on Jesus’ order?
43. What gives *you* confidence to carry out Jesus’ command (vv. 18, 20)?
44. **Action Step:** Memorize Matthew 28:18–20.

Accountability: Share your answers #39–43 memory verses to #44 with your discipleship team.

The command to make disciples is for all believers—Jesus promises to be with His followers to the end of the age. God’s assignments for us may be in our own nation or a foreign one. We each have a unique calling as to our location and style in making disciples. By embracing our calling and helping others to embrace theirs, we will indeed make disciples of all nations.

—End Day Four—

Day Five
Doctrine of Prayer

For our discipleship plan, we will be taking key doctrines or subjects from the Bible, putting them into practice and helping others do the same. We desire to be transformed in order “to be” rather than “to seem to be” a follower of Christ.⁴ Therefore, from our very being, our very essence, we will act with undivided and pure hearts to serve Christ and bring glory to God.

Definition: Christian *doctrine* is a principle, policy, or rule of faith that is derived (obtained) from the pages of the entire Bible. Sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ is important to life and discipleship (1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13–14).

Prayer is a key doctrine found throughout the Bible, but even before the Bible was written, man and woman talked with God. Prayer is personally communicating or talking with God. Everything begins and ends with prayer because everything for us begins and ends with our relationship with God. There is nothing for us outside of, or separate from, God.

Adam and Eve had direct communication with God in the Garden of Eden, both before and after they had sinned. Before they were cast out of the Garden, God promised them a Savior from Eve’s blood line (Genesis 3:15). However, after their son Cain killed his brother, Abel, God provided another child for the future of humanity.

Adam and Eve had another son and named him Seth. It was after Seth’s son Enosh was born that people began to call on the name of the Lord (Genesis 4:26). Prayer, or calling on the name of the LORD, would be a mark and distinctive (characteristic) of God’s people from this time forward.

God not only delights for us to call on Him, but He also expects it. He wants us to ask in expectation of receiving what we ask for. In other words, He wants us to have faith that He *will* answer. When you are reading your Bible, take note of the times and reasons people call on the name of the Lord.

45. Why or why do you not regularly call on the name of the Lord in faith?

46. Read 1 Chronicles 5:20. Why did God answer the prayers of the three tribes of Israel?

⁴ *Esse quam videri* is the well-known Latin phrase that is translated *to be rather than to seem to be*. North Carolina adopted this saying as their state motto in 1893. It has also been a popular motto for schools.

They [Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh] were helped in fighting them, and God delivered the Hagrites and all their allies into their hands, because they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him. 1 Chronicles 5:20

It is important to call on the name of the Lord in faith. This means we are trusting in Him for the outcome. God wants us to trust in Him. When we do not call on God or trust in Him, there may be severe consequences. Below is an example of not calling on the Lord in faith but instead using other sources such as a medium for guidance.

47. Read 1 Chronicles 10:13–14. Why did Saul die?

Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance,¹⁴ and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse. 1 Chronicles 10:13–14

48. If there any areas of your life where you are not trusting God, what will you do about it?

Family relationships need prayer. These relationships can be difficult and painful for many reasons. We want to know that we are loved and belong unconditionally. However, sometimes family members have hurt or offended us, causing us to have sinful attitudes toward them. On the other hand, we may have done things, even unknown to us, that have hurt family members and have caused their anger and resentment toward us.

49. Please list and pray for any family relationships that are strained, estranged, or compromised.

Accountability: Share your answers #45–48 with your discipleship team and pray for those family members listed in #49.

Calling on the Lord in faith is one of the basic tenets of Christianity and thus key in being a disciple of Christ. It begins by calling on the name of the Lord for salvation and restoring your relationship with God through Jesus Christ. You are saved from God’s wrath and the penalty of sin because of faith in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. Prayer is the beginning of discipleship

Read Romans 10:9–15 and answer questions 50–51:

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.¹¹ As Scripture says, “Anyone

who believes in him will never be put to shame.”¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,¹³for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?¹⁵And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”
Romans 10:9–15

50. If for any reason you are not sure you have called on the Lord for salvation and restoration, pray to God from your heart, professing Jesus as your Lord who died for your sins and was raised from the dead.

If you trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior after praying above, please let us know so we can rejoice with you. You may either email us at kathleen.skaar7@gmail.com with the month, day, and year of your decision or go to our website, injesussteps.org and locate: “New Decision to Follow Jesus” on the Homepage. Click on “Share With Us” and fill out the form.

Make sure you share with the other disciples in your group. They will also rejoice with you! No matter what age or how many years you have been attending church, this is exciting news that causes much rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15:10).

51. What will you do to make sure you have beautiful feet who bring the good news of Jesus Christ (v. 15)?

Accountability: Share your answers #50–51 with your discipleship team.

The Bible records wonderful examples of Jesus praying. His longest recorded prayer is John 17:1–25. He prayed it right before He and His disciples left the Passover meal and went into the Garden at Gethsemane (John 18:1–3). He wanted to shape the disciples and their prayers for success in their world changing mission. Jesus was setting the course for them and for us.

Read John 17:1–25 from your Bible and answer questions 52–54:

52. How did Christ pray for Himself (vv. 1–5)?

53. How did Christ pray for His disciples (vv. 9–17)?

54. How did Christ pray for all disciples, including future ones (vv. 21–26)?

Christ's prayer is for the restoration (re-establishment, return) of humanity to God. People's relationship with God was broken (not working, lost) when Adam and Eve sinned. Our mission and Christ's are similar in purpose. Christ effected humanity's salvation, and we make Christ known as Restorer (Redeemer, Savior, Rescuer, High Priest) of the means to our relationship with God. We also proclaim Christ as the way of keeping our relationship with God healthy, unified, and joyful.

Jesus' promised us—*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). We are not required to do anything alone or on our own. We call on and trust in the name of the Lord. He will keep us on the straight and narrow path that takes us ever closer and closer to Almighty God until at the end—we see Him face to face.

55. The following are answers to questions 53–54. Please use them as a prayer guide and pray for your discipleship team when together and in your personal prayer time.

How Christ prayed for His disciples

1. Acknowledges His disciples to God and that He is lifting them up in prayer (v. 9).
2. Protection to remain in God's will, love, and purposes (v. 11c). Christ also prayed for the disciples to be protected from the evil one and schemes to tempt them into sin (v. 15).
3. They may have the full measure of joy within them (v. 13)
4. Set them apart to know God's Word and to obey it (v. 17).
5. Jesus consecrates Himself as High Priest and consecrates the disciples for mission (v. 17). (We have been saved in order to be set apart and commissioned for God's service.)

How Christ prayed for all disciples (even future ones)

1. Unity with God so the world may know of God's redemptive plan in Christ (vv. 21–23a).
2. Complete unity with all disciples so that through Christ the world may know God's love (v. 23b). Think John 3:16 also and the need to tell the story of Christ's death and resurrection.
3. Asks that His disciples may see His glory and be with Him in eternity (v. 24).
4. Jesus will continue to make the Father known to all His disciples in order that God's love for Jesus will be in His disciples and that Jesus Himself will be in them (v. 26).

Jesus modeled and encouraged us to pray in praise (worship), thanksgiving (gratitude), confession (plainly telling our wrongs), listening (meditation, being attuned⁵ to His voice), petition (personal requests) and intercession (requests for others). These are all important ways that we relate to God and should all be part of our ongoing communication with Him.

Praise, thanksgiving, confession, listening, petition and intercession all need to be an active part of our lives in order for us to have the full benefit of Jesus' most powerful promise to His disciples. Jesus promises to answer any request (petition, intercession) that His disciples make. He also promises that through Him, God the Father will also answer any request. These promises were not only for the disciples in the audience over 2,000 years ago, but they are also for each succeeding generation of disciples.

In the book of John, Jesus repeats five times that disciples should ask—and they will receive. Do you ever wonder what the angels in heaven must think about our lack of prayer, especially in light of this phenomenal promise? Well, today we are going to make sure that we understand Jesus' promise and use it for the full benefit that He made it.

Jesus not only gave the promise to answer requests, but He also gave instructions for asking in the right way and for the right reason. Most of God's promises carry conditions (qualifications). We will look at two reasons why Jesus will answer our prayers.

56. Read John 14:13–14. What is the reason Jesus gives for doing whatever a disciple asks?

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:13–14

57. What are the ways God the Son brings glory to God the Father? (See John 11:4, 14:10–11, 15:8, 17:4–5; Romans 16:25–27; 1 Peter 4:11.)

Read John 15:7–8 and answer questions 58–60:

⁵ Being attuned to God's voice means that you are in a harmonious or responsive relationship.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. John 15:7–8

58. What condition does Jesus place on disciples for giving us whatever we wish (v. 7)?

59. How are *you* remaining in Jesus and how are His words remaining in you?

60. Bearing much fruit brings God the Father glory and shows that we are disciples of Christ (v. 8). With this knowledge, what will *you* ask God for in Jesus' name?

Read John 15:16 and answer questions 37–38:

You did not choose me, but I [Jesus] chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. John 15:16 (See also: John 16:23–24, 26–27)

61. Who chose you and appointed you to go and bear lasting fruit?

62. When we are bearing lasting fruit in Jesus, what will the Father do when we pray?

Prayer is crucial for followers of Christ. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we find the men and women of God reaching out in praise, thanksgiving, confession, listening, petition, and intercession. Study the various prayers in the Bible and you will learn more about God and discover ways to honor and please Him.

Action Step

Studying the prayers in the Bible will also help us become stronger disciples and confident of our position in God's kingdom. Read the following and think about the purposes or reasons for the prayers and why they have been recorded for us. Then answer questions 63–64.

Ezra—Ezra 9:6–15,

Solomon—2 Chronicles 6:4–11, 14–42,

Jehoshaphat—2 Chronicles 20:5–12

Daniel—Daniel 2:20–23.

New Testament—Study also how God worked in the New Testament in response to people's prayers: Acts 9:11–20, 11:5–30, 12:12–17, 16:25–40, 22:17–30.

63. What are the two most meaningful things you learned by studying the above prayers? List the book(s) and verse(s) where you received these meaningful insights.

64. Give two ways that you will incorporate these meaningful insights into your prayer life.

Accountability: Pray for your team per #55 and share your answers #56–64 with your team.

God works in response to our calling upon Him in prayer. We call on God to save us from sin, enemies, sickness, affliction, trouble, and heartache. God wants us to call on Him and He desires to answer our prayers. Jesus told us five times to ask in His name. Nevertheless, sometimes our prayers are not answered in the way we thought or wanted. We will look at those reasons in the next lesson.

—End of Day Five and Lesson One—

Next—Unit 3: Disciple of Christ, Lesson 2: Prayer and Grace

Disciple of Christ Bible Study Lessons:

- Lesson 1: Position in the Kingdom
- Lesson 2: Prayer and Grace
- Lesson 3: Identity in Christ
- Lesson 4: The First Covenants
- Lesson 5: More Love Covenants
- Lesson 6: The New Covenant
- Lesson 7: Worship in Christ
- Lesson 8: Holy is the Lord
- Lesson 9: Sharing Christ
- Lesson 10: Godly Relationships
- Lesson 11: Why the Bible is Trustworthy
- Lesson 12: Fear the Lord
- Lesson 13: The Holy Spirit
- Lesson 14: Faith and Confession
- Lesson 15: Love

Rev 8/25/2022