

DISCIPLESHIP

INSTRUCTION, IMITATION, AND LOVE

In the Christian life, it is only a matter of time before you will seek out advice, wisdom, or counsel to be more like Jesus. This effort is generally referred to as *discipleship*. At this point, a critical decision has to be made: who are you going to consult when you are in need of “counsel?” Psalm 1 is just one of many passages of Scripture that admonish us to be careful about where we go and who we talk to when we are struggling and in need of direction or seeking change.

When we are talking about counsel, it is typically in the context of someone desiring change in their life. In the biblical perspective, change can be thought of as *discipleship* – which is in a broad sense is a believer in Christ changing to be more and more like Christ. In a more specific sense, discipleship is one believer orienting another to *reality*. Ultimately, this reality is what God says in the Bible, because everything that we need to live a godly life is contained in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16).

So, if a person were to desire change in their life, how does it happen? What are the steps that are needed in order for lasting, effective, and biblical change – *discipleship* – to take place in someone’s life? This Going Deeper, we will discuss three aspects of biblical discipleship and how change happens via (1) instruction, (2) imitation, and (3) loving.

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1. QUESTIONS? Are there highlights, questions, or comments from the text or the message regarding discipleship?

2. BLESSED COUNSEL. Read Psalm 1:1-6. When we seek counsel, where does God exhort us to look? How can we make decisions when seeking counsel that obey this exhortation?

3. INSTRUCTION. Read 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:3-4. When seeking to bring about lasting, godly, and effective conformity to Christ, where should we start? What is our ultimate authority? What should we do when we receive advice, counsel, or some discipleship which seems to contradict the Bible?

4. IMITATION. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1. One of the ways which God's Word exhorts believers to grow in discipleship is to follow the faithful examples of others (Heb 13:7; John 13:15, 34; Matt 11:29; 1 Thess 2:14). What does this tell us about the type of company we should keep in order to bring about effective change in our lives?

5. LOVE. Read 1 Thess 5:14. Who is primary focus of love in the process of discipleship? How does this help us in the process of patiently and graciously disciple others?

6. PRAY. How can we pray for each other to be devoted to God in the midst of the most difficult situations in our life?