



DISCIPLESHIP & SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Week 1: Foundation — What Does a Disciple Actually Do?

INTRODUCTION

Discipleship sounds spiritual and beautiful, but what does it actually mean to follow Jesus? In our culture, we often separate belief from practice. We believe in Jesus but live like everyone else. Jesus had a different vision. He called people to follow him—which meant learning his way, adopting his values, and living differently. Discipleship isn't just an intellectual pursuit; it's a lived transformation.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 4:19 | John 8:31-32 | 2 Timothy 2:2 | Colossians 2:6-7

SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN

Jesus's call to Peter, Andrew, James, and John was immediate: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Notice the progression. Jesus doesn't first give them a theology class. He invites them into relationship and begins shaping them through that relationship. Discipleship is apprenticeship.

In John 8:31-32, Jesus defines what it means to be his disciple: continuance in his word. "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Discipleship is rooted in sustained engagement with Jesus's word, not a one-time decision, but ongoing growth in his teaching.

Paul reminds Timothy that everything we learn should be invested in others. "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." Discipleship multiplies. It's not solitary; it's relational and generational.

Living out discipleship means allowing Christ to reshape how we live. Colossians 2:6-7 says we should continue to live in Christ, rooted and built up in him. This foundation enables everything that follows, the practices and disciplines we'll explore over these 11 weeks.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Jesus called his disciples, he didn't ask for permission or wait for the perfect moment. What keeps us from responding to God's call with the same urgency?

2. How is discipleship different from just believing in Jesus? What does it look like to "hold to his teaching"?

3. Jesus's disciples learned by being with him. How does this challenge the way we often approach spiritual growth?

4. Paul says truth-bearers should invest in "reliable people who will also teach others." Who has invested in your faith? Who are you investing in?

5. What would change in your marriage or relationships if you viewed them as discipleship, a mutual shaping toward Christ's character?

APPLICATION

Discipleship begins with a decision and continues through daily choices. It's not a destination; it's a direction, the direction of becoming more like Jesus. As we explore spiritual disciplines over these next weeks, remember: we're not practicing them to earn God's approval or to look spiritual. We're practicing them because they align us with Jesus and reshape us from the inside out.

For everyone in this room, discipleship happens in the relationships you bring with you. Whether you're married, single, a parent, a friend, you're in a relationship with people who are also on a journey with Jesus. Every conversation, every prayer, every act of service is an opportunity to shape each other toward Christ. This happens through the practices we'll explore together. You'll pray for each other, challenge each other, confess to each other, and grow together. That's the power of this group, you're not pursuing no discipleship alone.

The beauty of discipleship is that it's never wasted. Every step toward Christ, every practice that redirects your heart, every moment of surrender—it all matters. And as you grow, you naturally become a discipling influence on others. Your children will see it. Your friends will feel it. Your church will experience it.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to you personally to be a disciple of Jesus? Write a one-sentence definition.

2. Who in your life is discipling you? Have you ever asked them to help you grow spiritually?

3. In your closest relationships, what does it look like to disciple each other? Where do you see this already happening?

4. What's one specific area of your life where you feel Jesus calling you to follow more closely—your schedule, finances, relationships, media consumption, work ethic, or something else? What would alignment look like?

5. Who in your life could you tell about this commitment? Who would you want to check in with you on your progress?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Based on your answer to question 4, identify one small step of discipleship you can take this week in that area. Make it specific and doable. Then, reach out to the person you named in question 5 and tell them about your commitment. Ask them to check in with you next week. When you gather as a group, share how it went. Did you follow through? What did you learn? What did it feel like to have someone know about and support your commitment?