

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

John 8:31 — Continuing in the Word

Opening Reflection: Last Week's Practice

Begin by inviting each person to reflect on their previous commitment.

You might ask:

- What did you commit to practice this past week?
- When did you follow through on it?
- Where did you struggle or drift?
- What did you notice about your heart, habits, or awareness of God?
- Did anything surprise you?

Encourage honesty without pressure. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

Sermon Overview (Leader Guide)

Big Idea:

A true disciple is not defined by initial belief, but by ongoing submission to the words of Jesus.

1. The Tension: Belief vs. Discipleship

- Jesus is speaking to people who *had believed in Him*
- Yet many fall away in the same chapter
- Not all belief leads to discipleship
→ *Belief can begin something that only continuation proves*

2. “If You Continue”

- Continue = abide, remain, dwell, stay
- Discipleship is not a moment, but a pattern
- Connection image:
 - Like branches connected to a vine (John 15)
 - Like not putting your life into “airplane mode” with God

3. “In My Word”

- “Word” (Logos) = Jesus’ teaching and life
- Not just information → transformation
- We encounter His word through Scripture
- His word shapes thinking, identity, and action

4. “You Really Are My Disciples”

- Authentic, not surface-level
- Proven over time
- A disciple is revealed by what they *continue in*

5. Can We Trust the Word?

- Strong manuscript evidence (thousands of copies)
- Historically grounded (people, places, events)
- Coherent across centuries
- Explains human experience (brokenness, meaning, morality)
- Transformative across lives and cultures

6. The Real Struggle (Heart Issue)

- Many claim to follow Jesus, but:
 - Selectively listen
 - Edit what they don’t like
 - Disengage over time
- The issue is not lack of authority
→ It’s resistance to authority
- You don’t drift into discipleship
→ You drift away from it

7. The Call (Hands)

- **Remain** — engage Scripture daily
- **Receive** — allow it to shape and correct you

- **Respond** — act on what you hear

Key Image:

- Grapes grow by staying connected
 - Disciples grow by staying connected to Jesus through His Word
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Group Discussion (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

Remember & Understand

- What does Jesus say defines a true disciple in this passage?
- What does it mean to “continue” or “remain”?

Apply

- Where in your life are you most tempted to “go into airplane mode” spiritually?
- What does it look like practically for you to remain in Jesus’ word this week?

Analyze

- Why do you think people can believe in Jesus but not continue with Him?
- What are some ways people “edit” or selectively follow Scripture today?

Evaluate

- If someone looked at your life over time, what would they say you are “continuing in”?
- Do you think most people today view discipleship as a moment or a lifestyle? Why?

Create

- What would it look like to build a rhythm of *remaining, receiving, and responding* in your daily life?
 - Design a simple, realistic plan for staying connected to Jesus this week.
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Storying Exercise

Scripture: Luke 8:13 (Parable of the Soils — the rocky ground)

Read the passage aloud twice.

Then ask someone to retell it from memory as a group helps fill in details.

Key Focus:

“They believe for a while, but in the time of testing fall away.”

Discussion Questions

- What similarities do you see between this passage and John 8:31?
- What causes people to *not continue* in their faith?
- What are the “rocks” or shallow areas that can prevent deep roots?
- What does it take to move from temporary belief to lasting discipleship?

Help the group see:

→ The issue is not starting well, but staying rooted.

This Week’s Deep Practice Commitment

Give everyone time to quietly reflect and write down their commitment.

Encourage them:

You can continue something you’ve already started

or

Commit to something new based on today’s lesson

Prompt Ideas:

- What is one way you will **remain** in Scripture this week?
- How will you intentionally **receive** (not resist) what it says?
- What is one specific way you will **respond** in action?

Make it:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Realistic

Invite (but don’t pressure) a few people to share.

Closing Prayer

Close by inviting the group to pray along these lines:

- For a deeper desire to remain in Jesus
- For openness to receive His word fully
- For courage to respond in obedience
- For strength to stay connected, not drift

You may also include a moment of silence for personal surrender.