

# Discipleship

Bible Studies





**Study # 1**  
**The Plan**

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“We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God’s plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God’s method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men.” E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*.

**1. What is your reaction to the above quote? Even though *Power Through Prayer* was written more than a hundred years ago, do you think this quote is still relevant for today? Why or why not?**

Although Jesus came to save the whole world, when He was on the earth He spent the majority of His time with just a handful of men and women. He didn’t spend His time building a program or an organization. He did not focus on the multitudes. Instead He poured Himself into a small group of ordinary men and women whom He commanded to make disciples of all nations. They were His plan, and against all expectations it worked. Just two decades after Christ’s ascension when some disciples arrived in the Roman city of Thessalonica, the people cried out “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too (Acts 17:6).”

**Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

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**2. Circle the four “ALL” statements in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). What do you think is the overall message and meaning of these verses?**

At the beginning of Matthew 28:18, Jesus proclaims His universal authority in order to emphasize that the Great Commission is not merely a great suggestion, it is a commandment. The disciples were commanded to make disciples who were to be taught (not just told) to do all that Christ had commanded. Christ’s commands not only include loving God and loving your neighbor, but they also include the Great Commission, the command to go and make disciples. In obeying the Great Commission, the disciples were to make disciples who would obey the Great Commission and disciple others. That was the entire plan; the Holy Spirit working through disciples to make disciples.

**Read Luke 6:40**

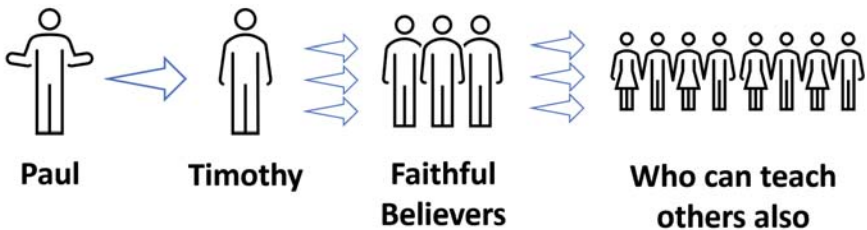
**3. What does the disciple who is perfectly trained (or fully mature) become?**

During the time of Jesus, a disciple was a follower or adherent of a teacher. But it was not the same as being a student in the modern sense. A disciple in the ancient biblical world actively imitated both the life and teaching of the master (rabbi). It was a deliberate apprenticeship which sought to make the fully formed disciple a living copy of the master. The goal of discipleship is for the student to become like their teacher, ultimately becoming a teacher themselves.

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**Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2**

**4. What does the chain of discipleship in this verse tell us about how the gospel spread in the New Testament?**



**5. Why does Paul call Timothy his son? What sort of relationship do you think they had?**

“Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Nor can occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job. Building men and women is not that easy. It requires constant personal attention, much like a father gives to his children. This is something that no organization or class can ever do. Children are not raised by proxy. The

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example of Jesus would teach us that it can be done only by persons staying close to those whom they seek to lead.” - Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*

As we have already mentioned, Jesus did not spend the majority of His time with the multitudes but deeply invested Himself into a handful of men and women, empowering them to become like Himself. Likewise Barnabas discipled Paul (see Acts 9:26-30 and 11:22-26) and Paul discipled Timothy teaching him to teach others who would teach others also. In this way each student became a teacher who taught others to become teachers. It has been said that we all need a Barnabas and a Timothy in our life. We need a mentor who is deeply investing in us and we need a mentee, someone we are deeply investing in. This gives us the opportunity to learn and to share, to grow as followers of Christ and to help someone else grow as a follower of Christ. In nature we see that living things not only grow individually they multiply numerically.

**6. Do you currently have someone who is like a Barnabas to you? Do you currently have someone who is like a Timothy to you? If so, how have these relationships impacted you?**

So often we think of a disciple simply as someone who believes in Jesus. But if we really follow Jesus and obey Him, then we will want to become like Him. We will want to disciple others just as He did, just as He commanded us to. It is not only the job of pastors to disciple others, Jesus wants every disciple to help others become a disciple. This is His plan for how the gospel will spread to the whole world. Spend some time looking at the hypothetical chart on the next page of two churches that each begin with 20 members but have very different approaches to discipleship.

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	<b>Church # 1:</b> The pastor baptizes 500 people every year	<b>Church # 2:</b> Each disciple makes one disciple every two years
<u># of Years</u>	<u># of Baptisms</u>	<u># of Baptisms</u>
2	1,020	40
4	2,020	80
6	3,020	160
8	4,020	320
10	5,020	640
12	6,020	1,280
14	7,020	2,560
16	8,020	5,120
18	9,020	10,240
20	10,020	20,480

**6. Compare the churches, how do you think the experiences of the members in the two churches would be similar or different?**

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**7. Which model seems more attainable? More replicable? Why?**

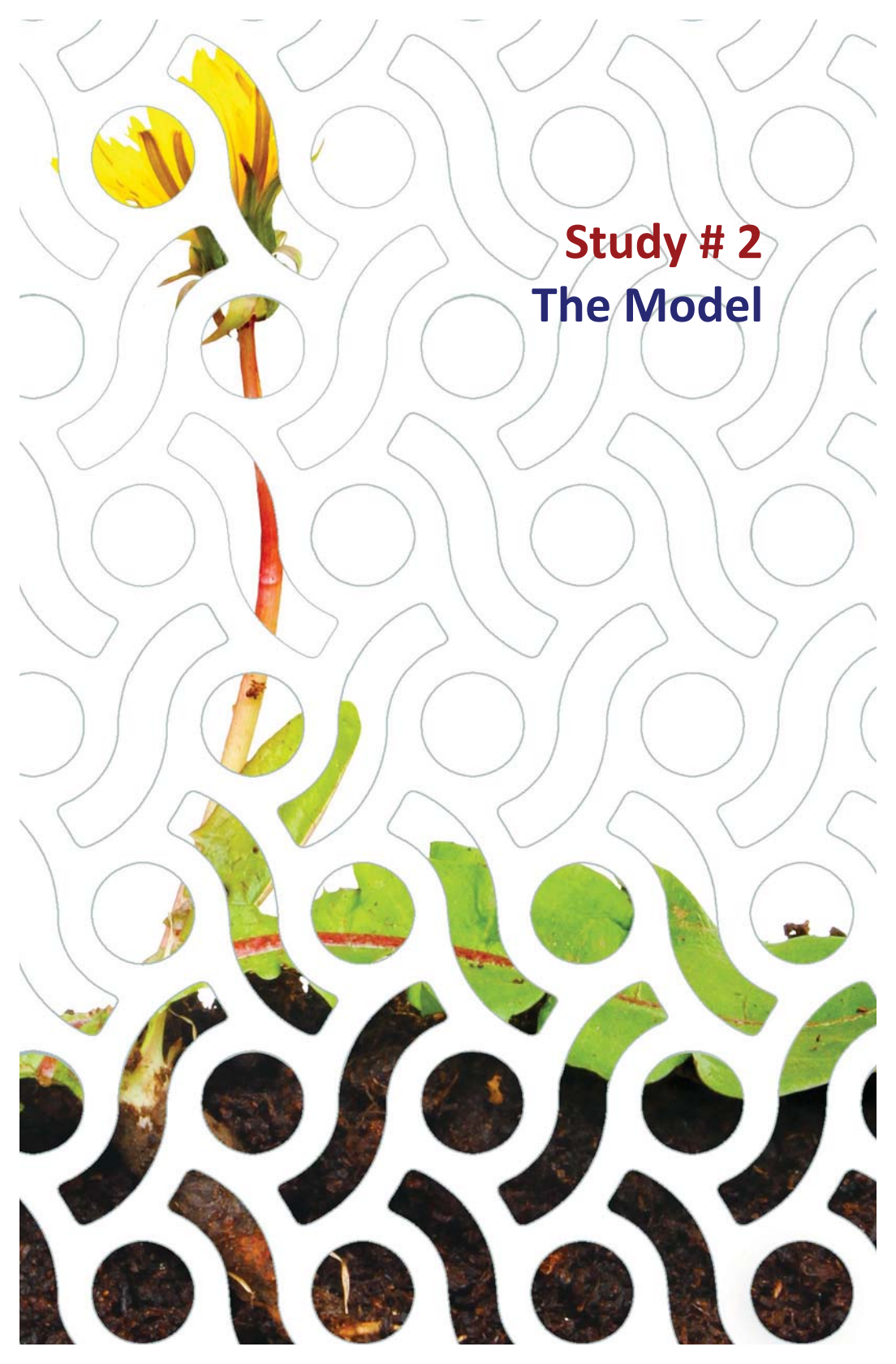
**8. In which church do you think the church members are experiencing more growth in their personal spiritual lives? Why?**

“While we teach, we learn,” said the Roman philosopher Seneca. If you really want to learn something, teach it to others. This simple truth is made plain in Christ’s parable of the ten talents; if we put what we have to work it will grow, if we bury it, it will be taken away. Discipling others is not just for the benefit of others, but so that we ourselves can be better disciples of Christ. So we can truly follow in His footsteps. The twelve disciples seemed to be an average cross section of the culture of their day; fishermen and tax collectors, men with blue collar and white collar jobs. They were not the scholars, privileged or wealthy. They were ordinary people who were willing to follow Jesus. And the Holy Spirit working through them turned the world upside down.

**9. What has been your experience with discipleship in your life? Are you interested in learning more about what it means to be a disciple?**



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**Study # 2**  
**The Model**

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In the last study we focused on God’s plan for changing the world by Spirit-filled disciples making disciples who make disciples. But how does this happen? How did this happen? How were a small group of people transformed in such a way that they became agents of transformation, turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6)? Just because we are busy doesn't mean we are effective. Churches and Christians can spend a lot of energy, time and money doing “ministry” without producing a single disciple. So how did the disciples know how to make disciples? How did they know how to fulfill the Great Commission?

After His resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you (John 20:21).” Jesus was asking the disciples to do what He had already done; He was sending them as He had been sent. He expected them to make disciples in the same way that He had disciplined them. Repeatedly Jesus gave the invitation “Follow Me.” Jesus went fishing for men and said “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men (Matthew 4:19).” He was a fisher for men and He invited the disciples to follow Him and become the same.

In this lesson we will focus on Jesus’ method of making disciples, which can be summarized with a three-part pathway; Grow Deep (lessons 3-5), Go Out (lessons 6-7), and Make Disciples (lessons 8-10). One way to visualize and remember these three parts is imagining the life cycle of a dandelion. For Grow Deep think of a dandelion with roots that reach deep into the soil. For Go Out think of a dandelion that sends out seeds on the wind. And for Make Disciples think of those dandelion seeds sprouting and growing into new dandelion plants.

## **Grow Deep**

Jesus lived a life of depth. It was His deep, abiding relationship with His Heavenly Father that was the source of His life and ministry. We, too, are invited to grow deep in our connection with God and experience an abiding relationship with Him.

**Read John 17:20-26**

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**1. How did Jesus desire His relationship with His Father to be replicated in the lives of His disciples?**

Jesus prayed that we would experience the same sort of love that existed between Him and His Heavenly Father. Far from superficiality, Christ's prayer was for us to experience true depth in our relationship with God.

**Read John 15:1-10**

**2. What does the word "abide" mean? What sort of relationship is Jesus trying to describe with the imagery in these verses?**

Christ said that if we abide in Him in the same way that branches abide in the vine, then the result will be fruit that glorifies God. Fruit isn't just pleasant to eat, it is the way that plants reproduce themselves. The true fruit of the apple tree isn't more apples, but ultimately more apple trees. The result of truly abiding in Christ is fruit that multiples (i.e. produces more disciples). But if we don't abide, we cannot and will not produce fruit. This abiding relationship is the foundation of all true discipleship. If there is no relationship, there will be no fruit, and if there is no fruit, there is no discipleship.

**Read Mark 3:13-14 and Luke 6:12-13**

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**3. What did Christ appoint the disciples to? What did Jesus call His disciples to?**

The disciples were called to be with Jesus. That is what they were appointed to. This truth is so simple it is often easy to overlook. Having called the disciples, Jesus made it a practice to be with them. This was the essence of His training; He Himself was the school. They would abide with Him, living their lives in connection with Him. And as they spent time with Jesus, the disciples would be changed and become agents of change. The disciples spent large amounts of time with Jesus, eating, traveling, working, and living together. In this way they were able to witness firsthand the connection between Jesus with His Father. They were with Jesus when He prayed, fasted, studied, rested and served.

A disciple is someone who spends time with Jesus. They are with Him learning to be like Him. This is how we grow deep. If we are to be Christ's disciples today, we must spend time with Him. We must abide in His word (John 8:31), talk to Him in prayer (John 15:7, 16), and experience His abiding presence through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18).

**4. Reflect on the time you spend with Jesus? Are you satisfied with the quantity or quality of this time? Why or why not?**

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## **Go Out**

Jesus not only lived a life connected to God, He also intentionally connected with people. He left heaven to live among us, attending weddings, eating at feasts, visiting homes, and touching lepers, spending time with those who needed Him the most. His mission was to seek and save the lost and His mission is our mission too.

**Read John 17:18 (see also John 20:21)**

**5. How was Christ sent? What did it look like in His life and ministry? What does this tell us about how God wants to send us?**

**Read Luke 5:27-32**

**6. What kinds of people did Jesus spend time with?**

Jesus spent time with the outcasts of society. Jesus did not exclude on the basis of gender, poverty, social status, intelligence, or ethnicity (see 1 Corinthians 1:25-31), but He did require obedience for someone to be one of His followers (see for example the story of the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-22). If we are to answer the call to discipleship, we must spend significant time with the unreached, especially those who are open to answering the call of God in their lives.

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**Read Acts 10:38 and Matthew 20:27-28**

**7. What did Jesus go about doing? How did His life of service allow Him to draw close to other people?**

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing* pg. 143.

## **Make Disciples**

Jesus spent His life and ministry reaching the lost and training (discipling) the saved. Christ made disciples by faithfully demonstrating how to love God and love people, patiently educating them to deeply understand truth about God and His kingdom, and boldly empowering them to go and make disciples themselves.

Even though Christ was sent to the world, He spent most of His time deeply investing Himself in small group of followers. Jesus risked all on a few; the multitudes could fall away, but everything depended on the twelve! This stands in contrast to the modern emphasis on events, plans, and programs to reach large numbers of people. The wisdom of Jesus’ method is that by deeply investing in a few, He changed the world.

It is only as we spend time with Christ that we can be His disciple and it is only as we spend time with others that we can make disciples. Disciples are not manufactured by the thousands in classrooms or seminars. Jesus

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Disciples are made one on one, through relationships. Disciples are made through the contact of life on life, Jesus' life in contact with ours, and our life in contact with others. In order to obey the command to go and make disciples, we must reach out to others and draw near to them. We must build relationships with those who do not know Christ. Associating with them personally and in the context of small groups, just as Christ did.

**Read Matthew 4:18-20**

Jesus focused His ministry on a small number of people but those He chose were not the ones you would expect to win the world for Jesus. But they were teachable, willing to obey (John 15:14-17), and they had a yearning for God. When Jesus found someone who was eager to learn and willing to follow He, He gave them the invitation "Follow Me" (in just the gospel of Matthew we find the invitation in 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38, 16:24, and 19:21). With these words, Christ is signifying to His would be disciples that He Himself would be their school. The invitation to follow didn't just mean "adhere to my teachings" but also "follow my example and imitate my ways".

**Read 1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1**

**8. What are the risks and rewards of Paul asking others to imitate him?**

"It is good to tell people what we mean, but it is infinitely better to show them. People are looking for a demonstration, not an explanation." Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*



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**Read Mark 6:7-9**

**9. What were the risks and rewards of Christ sending the disciples out to preach?**

Christ not only demonstrated and educated, but He empowered. He took a risk on the disciples and gave them increasing amounts of responsibility, allowing them to learn from their experiences and mistakes, and mentoring them before and after their ministry experiences.

Jesus is our example. He sends us in the same way the Father sent Him (John 20:21). That means that if we are followers of Jesus, we will do what He did; we will Grow Deep, Go Out, and Make Disciples.

**10. Which of these three parts of discipleship; Grow Deep, Go Out, and Make Disciples, do you resonate with the most? Which area do you feel is the most difficult or unfamiliar to you?**



**Study # 3**  
**The Easy Yoke**

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## The Great Disparity

In a recent poll done in Amsterdam, Netherlands participants were asked two questions. The first question was: Do you want anything to do with Christianity? Eight out of ten people responded “No” to this question. The second question was: Do you want anything to do with Jesus? Eight out of ten people responded “Yes” to this question. Why was there such a great disparity? How can so many people be disinterested in Christianity and interested in Jesus? Aren’t Christianity and Jesus the same? If we are honest with ourselves far too often Christianity and Christians look and act nothing like Jesus.

In the New Testament the word *disciple* is used over 250 times and the word *Christian* is only used three times. Yet in Christianity today it is virtually assumed that you can be a Christian (a word we use often) without being a disciple (a word we use infrequently). Could it be that the great disparity between Jesus and Christians today is largely due to the fact that we assume we can be fans of Jesus without being followers, that we can admire and worship Jesus without actually learning to live like Him? Could it be that we have failed to fulfill the great commission by making converts to Christianity instead of disciples of Jesus?

**1. Have you ever felt turned off by those who claim to believe in Jesus but didn’t act like Him? If so, what effect did this experience have on you?**

In this study we will look at how it is that we can follow Jesus and become like Him.

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## God with Us

**Read Acts 10:38 in several different translations.**

**2. What enabled Jesus to live the way that He did, to go about “doing good and healing”?**

Jesus, came as a perfect example, living on earth as a human who was completely dependent on God. The presence of God the Father with Him and in Him enabled Him to live the life He lived (see John 5:19, 30, 8:28, 42, and 14:10). Jesus not only lived in deep intimacy with His Heavenly Father, He was also God’s presence among us (in the words of John 1:1, He was with God and was God). Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. When we come into the presence of Jesus, we come into the presence of God, for Jesus is God (John 14:9).

**Read Mark 3:13-15**

**3. What did Jesus call His disciples to? What did He appoint them to?**

The very core of discipleship is being with Jesus. When Jesus calls us to be His disciples, He is calling us to Himself. He is calling us to be with Him. The effect of sin is twofold; it separates us from God (see Genesis 3:8-10), and causes us to be unlike Him (read Genesis 3:22 in *Youngs Literal Translation*). The purpose of discipleship is to reverse what sin has done. It’s goal is for us to be with Him, learning to be like Him.

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**Read Matthew 4:18-22**

**4. What do you think motivated the disciples to leave their nets and families behind and follow Jesus? Was He worth it?**

Why was it necessary for Jesus' disciples to make such significant sacrifices in order to follow Him? In Jesus day, being the disciple of a Rabbi meant attachment and apprenticeship. It was necessary to live alongside of them in order to become like them. Jesus did not ask would be followers to leave their houses, occupations, family, and money because those things are evil, but because discipleship requires the devoted attention of the disciples. They needed to be fully with Him.

**Read John 14:16-26**

**5. How did Jesus promise to continue to be with His disciples even after He ascended to Heaven?**

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To be a disciple of Jesus it is not necessary to be physically with Him. Through the Holy Spirit we can still live in Jesus' presence today. In fact as we will see in our next study, Jesus promised that His disciples would be better experiencing God's presence through the Holy Spirit than they were with Jesus physically present with them (see John 16:5-7). Jesus' promise to always be with us, "even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20), is made possible through the Holy Spirit. Today it is not usually necessary to leave jobs, and families, and occupations, in order to be with Christ, like it was for the disciples 2,000 years ago. But it is also foolish to think that we won't need to make any sacrifices or changes in order to give our attention to Jesus and devote our lives to Him. We can never hope to be like Him if we are not with Him, and in a world of technology and hurry, where the demand for our attention is at an all time high, it is only through deliberate choices that we can be with Him. We experience the indwelling presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, but prayer and Bible study (see John 8:31) are the primary ways that we spend time with Jesus.

**6. Is there anything that needs to change in your life in order to make room for Jesus? Is there anything that is keeping you from giving Him your attention and regularly spending time with Him? Explain.**

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## The Easy Yoke

**Read Matthew 11:28-30**

**7. What is a yoke? How does it function? Why do you think Jesus is using the imagery of a yoke in this invitation?**

In Jesus' day, it was common to use the imagery of a yoke to describe submission to God and His ways. In fact in the writings of the Rabbis they spoke of how we must choose between the yoke of the world and the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven; "Whoever takes upon himself the yoke of the Torah, they remove from him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns, and whoever breaks off the yoke of the Torah, they place on him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns" (Mishnah Avot 3:5, [www.sefaria.org](http://www.sefaria.org)). Jesus takes this imagery one step further. When an oxen is trained, it is yoked with an older more experienced oxen. The yoke is intended to keep the oxen in sync so that they can pull the load together. As the young oxen is trained the older more mature oxen pulls the majority of the load, while through demonstration and leading, he trains the younger oxen how to pull. By yoking these oxen together, the inexperienced and weak learns from the mature and strong, and is changed as a result. Jesus' invitation to take His yoke upon us is not just to take His burden or teaching upon us apart from Him, the invitation is to be yoked alongside of Him, to gradually

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become in sync with Him, learning from Him who is gentle and lowly of heart. This is the yoke of discipleship. Following Jesus is not always easy but life (and spirituality) are far better with Him than when we are trying to do it on our own. Jesus yoke is easy and His burden is light not because the life He calls us to is easy and light, rather it is light because He is strong and we are yoked with Him and learning to become like Him.

**Read Acts 4:13**

**8. What did the religious rulers conclude had made the difference in the lives of Peter and John, untrained fishermen?**

**9. Do you want to be yoked together with Jesus? Do you want to give Him your time and attention, so that you can be with Him and learn to be like Him? What will you do in order to move your life in this direction?**



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**Study # 4**  
**From the Inside Out**

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In lesson #3 we talked about the great disparity, the difference between how Jesus lived and how most Christians live. This disparity is not Jesus' intention or desire. In this study we will explore how authenticity is at the heart of discipleship and that we must first be disciples before we can make disciples.

**Read Luke 6:39-42**

**1. In your own words, what message do you think Jesus is trying to get across when He uses the image of the blind leading the blind, and someone with a plank in their eye trying to help someone with a speck in theirs?**

**2. Would you trust someone with a plank in their eye to help you get a speck out of yours? Why or why not?**

Jesus uses a humorous example to lay plain a fundamental truth about humanity; we are often oblivious to own our faults and problems (the planks in our own eyes) and yet often keenly aware of other people's problems. Sin does not only injure us, it causes us to be blind to our true selves. Furthermore in our blindness to our own true condition, we can severely hurt others, even as we are trying to "help" them.

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**3. According to Luke 6:40 what do you think the blind leader and the person with the plank in their eye have to do with discipleship?**

The goal of discipleship is for the teacher to reproduce themselves in their disciples, for multiplication to happen because of replication. But this means that it is not just what the teacher teaches that is reproduced in their disciple, but more importantly who they are. If you are a parent, you probably know this to be true. It is not so much what you say to your children that is passed on, but more fundamentally who you are that is ultimately reflected in their lives. We see this law at work from the very beginning of creation. God made Adam and Eve in His image but when Adam and Eve had a son he was born in their image, not God's. He was an imprint of his parents. This should cause us to feel a sense of the true gravity of making disciples. We can't just tell someone what they must do while we ourselves are living differently. We can't just tell them to obey all things that Christ has commanded; we must teach them to obey by showing them. Discipleship is an act of demonstration not proclamation.

**Read Luke 6:43-45**

**4. In your experience, does the statement "For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" ring true? Why or Why not?**

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**5. Is Jesus interested in superficial change? What sort of change does He seem to be advocating for in these verses?**

**Read Luke 6:45-49**

**6. What do both kinds of people in these verses have in common?**

**7. What are the ways these two kinds of people are different? What are the two things those like the man who builds on the rock do differently than those who are like the man who builds on the sand?**

“Whoever \_\_\_\_\_ to Me, and hears My sayings and \_\_\_\_\_ them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock... But he who heard and \_\_\_\_\_ nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation...”

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It is not enough to hear the words of Jesus, we must obey them. But notice that it is those who come to Jesus who obey His words. This is the crucial part. It is impossible for us to obey Jesus and do the things He said (for example loving your neighbor as yourself) without first coming to Jesus and being with Him and learning from Him. Teaching and hearing are not enough to bring about the life that Jesus is calling us to.

**Read Matthew 23:13-28**

**8. How might a cup that is only clean on the outside be dangerous?**

**9. Why do you think Jesus was so concerned with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes? What impact did they have upon others?**

**Read John 13:14-17**

**10. How was Jesus different than the Pharisees?**

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Jesus knowingly set Himself as an example to His disciples. He constantly and consistently demonstrated to them how to live the life He was calling them to. With words like “Follow Me” and “As the Father has sent me, I also send you”; He affirmed that it was not just the words He said but His whole life that they were to follow and learn from. And if we are to be like Jesus then we must live authentically. We cannot preach and teach differently than we live. We must first be disciples before we teach others to be disciples.

**Read Matthew 24:14, Luke 24:46-48, John 15:27, and 1 John 1:1-3**

**11. What is a witness? What makes someone a witness? Why is their testimony persuasive?**

Having an experience is what makes someone a witness, and that experience is their credibility and what makes a witness so persuasive. But if someone is a “witness” to something that they have not experienced they are a false witness, which is something the Bible strongly condemns. If we are to witness to others about Christ we must first have an experience with Him. The light must first open our own eyes before we try to lead someone else, otherwise we will be the blind leading the blind. We must not try to lead others where we have not gone ourselves. It is better to be honest with others about the reality of our own struggles than to try to put on a show and pretend to be something that we are not.

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**12. Do you have a story to tell or an experience with Jesus to share with others?**

**13. Do you wish to have a real and authentic experience with Christ? Are you willing to be authentic and genuine with others instead of trying to pretend to be something you are not? Do you wish for Jesus to disciple you from the inside out?**



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The background features a repeating pattern of white, wavy, organic shapes on a light blue background. These shapes are filled with a photograph of dandelion seed heads against a clear blue sky. The seed heads are shown in various stages of blowing, with some seeds captured in mid-air. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and nature-inspired.

**Study # 5**  
**The Advantage of the Spirit**

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## **The Radical Promise**

In our last study we saw that the foundation of discipleship is being with Jesus. Peter, Andrew, James and John left their nets so that they could physically be with Jesus, living life alongside Him. But how can we be with Him today? Even though we can't physically be with Jesus like the disciples were 2,000 years ago, Jesus did promise that He would be with His disciples, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). In this lesson we will explore the promise and power of the Holy Spirit, through whom Jesus not only dwells with us but also in us (see John 14:16-26).

**Read John 16:5-8**

**1. Put yourself in the disciples sandals; how do you think you would feel if you had been with Jesus for several years and then realized that He was going to leave?**

**2. According to Jesus why would the disciples be better off after He left them?**

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John 16:5-7 is perhaps the most radical promise in the entire New Testament. Jesus promised the disciples it was to their advantage for Him to leave. Was this true? What could possibly be better than being physically with Jesus? Were they really better off *after* He left?

**3. How would you describe the disciples while they were still physically with Jesus? What were they like before Pentecost?**

**4. How would you describe the same disciples after Jesus left them physically and they were filled with the Holy Spirit? What were they like after Pentecost?**

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**5. Why do you think the disciples were so different before and after Pentecost? How did they experience Jesus' presence differently?**

Jesus was no longer beside them, now He was inside of them. Through the Holy Spirit the disciples were more "with" Jesus after He ascended than when they were physically with Him (see Acts 4:13).

**6. Think about Christians today, do their lives more closely resemble the lives of the disciples before or after Pentecost? What does this tell us?**

**7. Does your own life more closely resemble the lives of the disciples before or after Pentecost? Why?**

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**Read Acts 2:38-39**

**8. Who is the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for?**

**Read Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4-5**

In His last instructions to the disciples Jesus commanded them before going out to make disciples to “Tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high” and to “wait for the promise of the Father.”

**9. Why was it important for them to wait for the Holy Spirit? What do you think the consequences would have been if they hadn’t tarried? How do you think the book of Acts would have been different?**

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**Read John 14:16-26, 15:26, 16:8-15**

**10. How does the Holy Spirit seem to relate to Jesus? What things does Jesus promise that the Holy Spirit will do in us?**

**Read John 7:37-39**

**11. How might your life be different if you were to experience the Holy Spirit in a greater way? How might the outpouring of the Holy Spirit impact our churches, families and communities?**

**12. Do you wish to open your heart, surrender your life, and pray to experience the fullness of Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?**



**Study # 6**  
**Going with Love**



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Discipleship is a two way rhythm. First we accept the invitation to come to Jesus and follow Him (growing deep) and then we obey the command to go and make disciples. Notice that the first is an invitation, Jesus does not command us, but invites us; “Come to me... and learn of me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart.” (Matthew 11:29-30) But once we have come to Jesus, He doesn’t just invite or suggest for us to go, He commands it. In our last lessons we have focused on the invitation to come to Jesus and what it mean to be with Him, learning to be like him. Now we will turn our attention to Christ’s command to go and to make disciples.

## **The Great Commandment and the Great Commission**

**Read Matthew 22:34-40 in several translations.**

**1. What are the two greatest commandments? What do you think it means that all of the law and prophets “hang” (NKJV) on these two commandments?**

In Matthew 28:18 Jesus begins the Great Commission by saying “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” No other command that Jesus spoke comes with such a authoritative preamble as the Great Commission. But this does not mean that the Great Commission supersedes the other commandments that Jesus gave. In fact part of the Great Commission is to teach others “... to observe all things that I have commanded you.” This means that it is impossible to fulfill the Great Commission without teaching others to keep the Great Commandments; loving God with all our heart, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Just as the two Great Commandments are the foundation and basis for the Bible (the Law and Prophets), in the same way they are the foundation for the Great Commission. Love is the foundation of the Great Commission.

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**Read Matthew 28:18-20**

**2. Think about the Great Commission from Jesus' perspective. Why did He speak the command with such authority? Why is its fulfillment so important to Him? Why does Jesus want all nations to become disciples?**

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in their love for each other and for us. Their desire is not just to save us but to be with us. They long for the restoration of the closeness that has been lost due to sin. Jesus didn't die for us just to save us from a distance, He loves us and wants to be with us. Discipleship is important to Jesus because disciples are with Him learning to be like Him. Disciples experience Jesus' love for themselves and learn to love others as He does. The Great Commission is motivated by love, the love of God for the world, the love of disciples for God, and the love of disciples for the world. It is love for God that motivates disciples to grow deep and it is love for others that motivates disciples to go out and make disciples.

**3. What are some reasons other than love that people and churches are motivated by to make disciples?**

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**4. What can happen when discipleship is not motivated by love? Why is our motivation so important?**

**Read John 20:21 and 1 John 4:9-10**

The motivation to send Jesus was love. Love was the reason He was born as a child. It was the reason He touched lepers, and hung out with prostitutes and tax collectors. Love was the reason He healed, the reason He taught, the reason He suffered and the reason He died. Love was the reason Jesus called His disciples and love is the reason He sends His disciples. The mission to go and to make disciples is a mission of love. Jesus sends us like He was sent, but in order to go like Jesus we must learn to love like Jesus.

### **How Jesus Loved**

**Read Romans 5:8 and Luke 23:33-34**

**5. How would you describe the love of Jesus towards those that did not love Him?**

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**Read Luke 6:31-36**

**6. How is the love that Jesus is describing in this passage different from the love that we see in the world around us?**

Jesus' love is proactive not reactive. He does not simply love those who love Him, He loves everyone, even those who hate Him.

**Read Mark 2:15 and Luke 15:1**

**7. Why do you think the “tax collectors and sinners” wanted to be near Jesus? Do you think they wanted to be near the Pharisees? Why or why not?**

Everyone wants to be loved and Jesus loves everyone. Jesus made those who were “unwanted” feel valuable and wanted (see Luke 15:1-32). Love brings people together, it breaks down barriers, and opens up peoples hearts and minds. It is only on the wings of love that the gospel of Jesus will spread around the world.

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**Read John 13:1, 13-15, and 34-35**

**8. How did Jesus show His love to His disciples? Why was this such a big deal?**

When Jesus was on the earth He demonstrated that God loves with no strings attached. Knowing that Judas would betray Him, Jesus washed his feet. His love was not a means to an end. He did not love people simply to get them to believe, or behave in a certain way. He loved and served people unconditionally.

**Read 1 John 3:16-18**

**9. How is the love that is described in these verses different than mere feeling or sentiment?**

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8**

**10. What do you think it means that “love never fails”? How does a lack of love cause failure?**

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It was by love that the good news about a God who is love turned the world upside down. In the face of fierce prejudice and persecution by both Jews and Gentiles, it was the love of early Christians that allowed them to build relational bridges over which the gospel spread. In 165 AD, a plague known as the Antonine Plague, spread throughout the Roman Empire, killing between a quarter to one-third of the population. A little less than a century later, in 250 AD, the Cyprian Plague also devastated Rome, killing another 5 to 10 million people. During these plagues many people fled the cities and tried to avoid contact with anyone who was sick for fear of catching the disease. But Christians stayed and cared for the sick and dying, knowing that it meant they would likely succumb to the disease as well. They even cared for the dead, and paid for the burial of pagans who died without family or money. Dionysus of Alexandria writing about the experience of the Christians in a letter, said; “Most of our brother-Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of the danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains” (quoted Eusebius, in *The History of the Church*, trans. G. A. Williamson, 7.22, 305). It was this sort of startling and unexpected love that drew people to Jesus and caused tens of thousands of Romans to convert to Christianity (for more information see Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World’s Largest Religion*).

**11. What are some practical ways that we love the people around us?**

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**Read Romans 5:5**

**12. Do you want God to pour out His love into your heart? How do you expect this sort of love to change you?**

The background features a repeating pattern of teal-colored organic shapes, including circles and wavy lines, set against a white background. A photograph of a nature scene, showing a tall, thin plant stem with a large, flat, dried seed pod or leaf, is integrated into the pattern, appearing to grow through the teal shapes.

**Study # 7**  
**Who Jesus Spent Time With**



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Jesus has sent us in the same way the Father sent Him (John 20:21). In this lesson we will look at Jesus' example, focusing on how He spent His time in order to seek and save the lost.

**Read Luke 19:1-10**

**1. Why did people react with surprise or disgust at the thought of Jesus spending time with Zacchaeus? What does their reaction tell us about them?**

**2. What does this story tell us about Jesus?**

**3. How did Jesus summarize His mission? What did He come for?**

**Read Mark 2:13-17**

**4. What seems to be Jesus motivation for choosing who He spent time with?**

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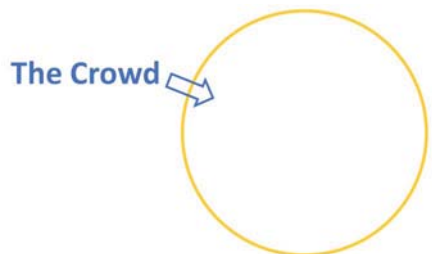
**5. How much time do you spend with people outside of the church?  
How do you feel in these settings?**

Jesus didn't shy away from parties and crowds. He went where there were people who needed Him and who were open to realizing that need. At the same time Jesus was on the lookout for people He could invite into a deeper level of intimacy and closeness with Himself. As we shall see, Jesus did not spread out His time equally with everyone. Jesus' relationships were made of increasingly smaller circles of people which corresponded to higher levels of commitment on the part of His followers and higher levels of investment on the part of Jesus, resulting in higher levels of intimacy.

**The Crowd**

**Matthew 13:1-2, 14:13-21, Mark 6:32-34, and Luke 4:42-44**

**6. What do you think are the reasons that crowds were attracted to Jesus?**



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**Read Matthew 11:28-30, and John 7:37-39**

**7. What sort of invitations did Jesus give to the crowds? What is similar or different between these invitations?**

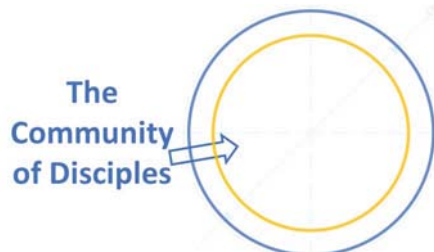
The nature of a crowd is the ability to be lost in it. Discipleship is fundamentally relational and thus requires deeper relationships than the acquaintance a crowd can offer. Thus Jesus was continually inviting people into a deeper relationship with Himself. His invitations were not to those who were content and satisfied but to the weary and spiritually thirsty. He cared for them, served them, and then invited them in deeper. “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He invited them, “Follow Me” Ellen White, *Ministry of Healing*, pg. 73.

### **The Community of Disciples**

**Read Luke 10:1-2, 17-20, Acts 1:15**

Jesus did not just have just twelve disciples. There were many more who sought to follow Him and formed a sort of community or fellowship of believers. Among these would have been Mary, Martha, and other followers of Jesus that are mentioned in the gospel accounts. This community of disciples enjoyed a greater intimacy with Jesus and also joined with Jesus in laboring for His mission.

**Read Mark 8:34-38**



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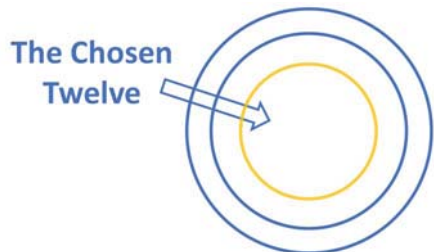
**8. How does this invitation differ from the others that we have already looked at? Do you think Jesus is intentionally trying to turn people away? Why or why not?**

### The Chosen Twelve

**Read Luke 6:12-17, Mark 3:14-15**

From among the larger community of disciples Jesus chose twelve men to deeply invest in. (Note that Jesus not selecting any women to be among the twelve does not mean that He saw women as inferior. Because Jesus would be spending large amounts of time with the twelve on a daily basis, including sleeping in close quarters with them, it would not have been appropriate for Him as a single man to have had women among the twelve.) Although Jesus came as Savior of the world, He intentionally chose to spend the majority of His time with twelve people. Eugene Peterson writes, “Jesus, it must be remembered, restricted nine-tenths of his ministry to twelve Jews.” The life transforming sort of relationship that Jesus came to bring required a depth of investment and intimacy which would be impossible in a larger group. In Jesus’ ministry we can see that He believed that discipleship worked best among a small group of people. Jesus primarily disciples in the context of a small group and expected His disciples to do the same. Notice in Acts 2:41-47 when there is now a crowd of disciples (over 3,000 were baptized in one day) what is the first thing that the apostles do? They arrange the crowd into small groups that meet in homes for prayer, study, fellowship, and service.

**Read Mark 1:16-18**



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**9. What sort of invitation does Jesus give to Simon and Andrew? What sort of commitment does this require on their part?**

### The Core

**Read Mark 1:29-31, 5:37, 9:2, 13:3, Matt. 17:1-2, 26:36-37**

**10. Did Jesus have favorites? Why does Jesus seem to spend so much extra time with these three? What do you think His purpose was?**



The New Testament never explicitly tells us why Jesus chose to have such a close relationship with Peter, James, and John. We do know that James was the first apostle to be executed, Peter and John would be the leaders of the early church, and John was the last apostle to die. Perhaps Jesus chose to invest more deeply in these three in order to prepare them for their future roles.

**Read John 21:15-23**

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**11. Why is this invitation given to Peter significant? What would it mean for Peter to feed Jesus' sheep?**

As we have seen, Jesus, although Savior of the world, did not try to mass produce disciples. Jesus disciplined through close relationships. But He did not choose whom He would deeply invest in in the way we might expect. He did not call the qualified but the willing, focusing His attention on people who recognized their need and were willing to learn and follow. And though few in number, this handful of followers would go on to change the world because they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13) and because Jesus continued to be with them (Matthew 28:20).

**12. Have you ever had someone invest deeply in your life? What was this experience like?**

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**13. Have you ever had the opportunity to invest deeply in someone else's life? What impact did this relationship have upon them and upon you?**

**14. Is there someone in your life who Jesus is leading you to deeply invest in? If so, who is it? What might be your next steps?**

**15. How would you describe the intimacy and commitment in your personal relationship with Jesus? Is your relationship with Jesus most similar to His relationship with the crowd, the community, the chosen, or the core?**



**Study # 8**  
**Discipleship and Community**



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In our last lesson we saw that Jesus did not spend the majority of His time with the multitudes, instead He focused the majority of His ministry career on pouring His life into a small group of people.

### **Read 1 John 1:1-3**

- 1. What are the two types of fellowship described in these verses? What is the fellowship John and the other disciples have experienced? What is the fellowship they are inviting others into?**

### **Read 2 Corinthians 13:14**

The Triune God lives in community and invites us into community with Him. This is the story found in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In Genesis 1:26 God said “Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness...” God is a self-existent community made of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and one of the ways that God made us into His image is by designing us for community. “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created *them* (Genesis 1:27).” It is because we are designed for community that God declared “It is not good that man should be alone (Genesis 2:18).” But sin disrupts community. Sin disconnects us from God and wreaks havoc in human relationships. We can see the breakdown of community beginning just minutes after Adam and Eve ate the fruit in the garden and the effects of sin continue to erode at relationships and communities in our world today. It is no surprise then that feelings of isolation and loneliness are perhaps at an all-time high. Researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s “Making Caring Common” concluded from recent survey data that “alarming numbers of Americans are lonely.” The researchers found that young adults are the loneliest group, 61 percent of young people (18 to 25) shared that they felt lonely

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“frequently” or “almost all the time or all the time” in the last month.

It can be no coincidence then, that as Jesus sought to make disciples, He always did so in the context of a community. For Jesus discipleship was never an individual pursuit, living as a disciple and discipling others always happened in community. God’s original intention is not for us to live to ourselves and for ourselves but to be part of a community founded on love. True discipleship will restore us to community and community can help us to grow as disciples.

**Read Acts 2:41-47**

**2. What did the apostles do with the 3,000 people who were baptized at Pentecost? Why do you think they organized the people in this way?**

Jesus made disciples in the context of a small group or community. When He commanded His disciples to make disciples, He did not expect them to invent some new way of doing it. They were to disciple others, as they had been discipled. At Pentecost the apostles began organizing people into small communities and groups that met in houses. These groups were part of the larger community called the “church”. Notice the rhythm of how the disciples connected to the larger community and to smaller groups, they were “with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house.” In order to make disciples today, our churches need to go small in order to go big. One of the best ways to do this is by organizing small groups within a larger church or community, in order to more effectively live as disciples and to help disciple others. “The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church Volume 2*).” The Greek word *Ekklesia*, usually translated as “church” literally means

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“called out” and was used in Koine Greek to refer to an assembly of people that had been called. *Ekklesia* is used 115 times in the New Testament and refers to a community of people who have been called from the world to a new life in Christ. *Ekklesia* is never used once in the New Testament to refer to a worship service, an institution, or a building (Christians originally gathered in houses and only built “church” buildings after 300 AD). To the New Testament Christians, church was not a building you went to or a worship service you attended, but a community you belonged to. For the earliest disciples, following Christ meant joining His community (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-14). The apostle’s obeyed Jesus’ command to make disciples by planting churches (that is creating new communities of disciples who are seeking to follow Jesus). Even though there is not a single verse in the New Testament commanding us to plant churches, it is just as true today as it was for Jesus and the apostles, that the most effective way to multiply disciples is to multiply communities of disciples, that is to plant churches.

**Read Acts 4:31-35**

**3. In what ways can you see the Holy Spirit working in this community?**

**Read John 13:34-35, Romans 12:5, 10, 16, Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 4:2, 32, 5:19, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:24-25, James 5:16, and 1 Peter 4:8-10**

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#### 4. Which of these passages stands out to you? Why?

In the New Testament there are numerous texts (a small sample of which you have just read) that describe how the community of believers is to relate to “one another”. These “one another” passages show that the community of disciples were not just to love one another (the most frequent usage) but also to share and minister to one another in numerous ways. The New Testament community carried one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2), shared their joys and pain (1 Corinthians 12:26) and shared their gifts and abilities (1 Peter 4:10). These passages describe a community where there is interdependence and vulnerability. Community is built not just upon love but also trust, vulnerability, and authenticity. If we are going to be authentic disciples from the inside out (like we talked about in study # 4) then we must learn to be vulnerable with each other and not pretend to be something that we aren't.

It is interesting to note that it takes the differing gifts of the entire church community in order to make the full body of Christ. Christ alone had all the spiritual gifts and could Himself perfectly disciple others. For us to fully disciple others it must be done in the context of the collective body of Christ so that all of the gifts will be present. There is not a single believer of Jesus who alone has all of the gifts needed to fully disciple others. This is why people are most effectively disciplined in the context of a church community or a small group.

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Consider the following quotes:

“Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say “My tooth is aching” than to say “My heart is broken.” – C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

"Community competence depends on our willingness to share with others what is most intimate and personal. The job of building community is to take personal problems and abilities out of the closet." - John McKnight and Peter Block, *The Abundant Community*.

**5. What are the hardest things for you to share? Is it easier for you to share your burdens or your abilities? Do you find it easier to serve or to be served? In what ways do you find it difficult to be vulnerable?**

**6. Would this type of sharing be easier in a small community or a large one? Why?**

The level of connectedness envisioned by the “one another” passages for the community of disciples is astonishing. God’s disciples are to love one another, serve one another, teach one another, carry one another’s burdens, teach one another, and confess their sins to one another. And this was all to happen not among a group of people with similar ethnic, religious, financial, and political backgrounds (Jew, Gentile, slave, and free were all baptized into one body, see 1 Corinthians 12:13). The New Testament believers were from all walks of life and yet, were called to be

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part of small intimate communities. G.K. Chesterton in his book *Heretics* wrote; “The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world. He knows much more of the fierce varieties and uncompromising divergences of men. The reason is obvious. In a large community we can choose our companions. In a small community our companions are chosen for us.” For a community like the New Testament describes to exist was a completely new phenomenon in the culture of the ancient world; “... in the ancient Near East the idea of a single community *across the traditional boundaries of culture, gender, and ethnic and social groupings* was unheard of. Unthinkable in fact (N.T. Wright, *Paul*, italics original).”

**7. How is the vision of community (church) described in the New Testament similar to or different from our culture and the way we experience church today?**

**8. What are things about the way that we “do” church and community today that are helpful and not helpful in discipling others?**

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**Read Mark 9:33-35 and Acts 1:14**

**9. What sorts of attitudes prevented the disciples from truly experiencing community while they were with Jesus? What changed in their minds and hearts to allow them to experience it in Acts 1?**

**10. Do you want to work together with God and each other to build a biblical community of disciples?**

The background features a repeating pattern of organic, flowing shapes in white, light tan, and golden-brown. These shapes are set against a white background that transitions into a warm, golden-brown sunset or sunrise scene. The scene includes silhouettes of trees and a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a soft, glowing atmosphere. The overall design is modern and artistic.

**Study # 9**  
**Mentoring Disciples**



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In this series of lessons on discipleship we have summarized Jesus' method of making disciples with a three part pathway; Grow Deep, Go Out, and Make Disciples.

**Grow Deep**—Jesus lived a life of depth. It was His deep abiding relationship with His Heavenly Father that was the source of His life and ministry. We too are invited to abide and grow deep in our connection with God.

**Go out**—Jesus not only lived a life connected to God, He also intentionally connected with people. He left Heaven to live among us, attending weddings, eating at feasts, and touching lepers. His mission was to seek and save the lost, and His mission is our mission.

**Make Disciples**—Although He came to save the whole world, Jesus chose to deeply invest Himself in only a handful of disciples. He lived with them, demonstrating what it means to love God, love others, and follow truth. If we truly follow Jesus, then we will not only be disciples, but we will invest ourselves in others, helping them to be disciples as well.

In this lesson, we will focus on the last part of the pathway, Make Disciples, in order to better understand how we go about investing in others and mentoring them.

### **Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2**

- 1. How do fathers (and mothers) train their children effectively? Do they just tell them how they want them to live?**

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Paul characterizes his relationship to Timothy as a father-son relationship even though they were not biologically related (Acts 16:1-2). Yet Paul calls Timothy “a true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2) and a “beloved son” (2 Timothy 1:2). Discipleship is a lot like parenting and spirit-led parenting is the highest form of discipleship. A faithful parent loves their child, deeply invests in them, forms a close connection that allows them to demonstrate how to live, they instruct and educate, and finally empowers them to live life as a responsible adult. Though we often use the term “raising children,” the goal of parenting is actually to raise mature, healthy, productive adults. In the same way, the goal of discipleship is to mentor and invest in someone to help them become a disciple maker. People are multiplied through parenting and disciples are multiplied through discipleship. Effective discipleship, like effective parenting means that we demonstrate, educate, and empower in the midst of a loving and supportive environment.

## **Demonstrate**

### **Read Matthew 4:18-20**

When Jesus invited someone to be His disciple, He often did so with the words “Follow Me”. With these words, Christ was inviting others not just to “adhere to my teachings” but also “follow my example and imitate my ways”.

### **Read 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, Philippians 3:17, and 4:9**

**2. Why is demonstration a more effective way to teach than just explanation?**

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In the great commission Jesus did not say; “Tell them to observe all things that I have commanded you” instead He said “teaching them to observe”. It is ineffective and unbiblical for us simply to tell others what they need to do to follow Jesus. For someone to truly learn to follow Jesus they need a companion at their side who will demonstrate the living gospel as they walk through life together. But notice that demonstration requires closeness. We can tell someone to do something or how to do something from a distance, but if we are going to show them we must be close to them. Effective Discipleship happens through life on life interaction where we are close enough to others for them to see the gospel and teachings of Jesus lived out in our lives.

## Educate

Jesus was not only a living example to His disciples, He also spoke to them words of life (John 6:63, 68). Sometimes Jesus taught His disciples opportunistically in a response to a question they asked as they observed Him. For instance In Luke 11:1-13, the disciples heard Jesus praying and asked him to teach them to pray. Other times, like the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus took the initiative and taught his disciples with words that were simple and practical yet powerful. In the tradition of the prophets, Jesus’ words often comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable. Those who heard Jesus were amazed that His words were so full of authority (Matthew 7:29) and so full of grace (Luke 4:32). Even officers who were sent by the Pharisees to arrest Jesus, when asked why they didn’t, exclaimed “No man ever spoke like this Man (John 7:46)!”

**3. When you think of Jesus teaching, what stands out to you? What about the way that Jesus taught resonates with you?**

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**Read John 12:44-50**

**4. What was the source of Jesus words and His authority?**

Even though Jesus is Himself the truth (John 14:6) and spoke with divine authority He didn't just tell people what to think. Often Jesus told parables without explaining the meaning, wanting His listeners to work out the message in their own minds and hearts. Jesus also asked a lot of questions (the gospels record 173 of them). At first glance, many of Jesus' questions may seem to be merely rhetorical devices. But what if Jesus was truly taking the posture of a listener, and (in Socratic fashion) was asking probing questions to uncover the underlying beliefs and attitudes of His disciples?

**Read or scan through the handout: *Questions Jesus Asked***

**5. What stood out to you as you read the questions Jesus asked?**

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**6. Why is it sometimes more effective to ask questions rather than give answers?**

Often we are quicker to accept truth that we discover rather than truth that comes to us in the form of advice. A well aimed question, asked at the right time and in the right way, can often have a greater impact than a multitude of words, because a question can lead us to realize truth for ourselves. Listening can be a powerful way to lead others. When we ask thoughtful questions and patiently and attentively listen, we provide time, space, and opportunity for someone to hear the Holy Spirit speaking to their own hearts. Often called coaching, this process can be a powerful means of helping someone deepen their relationship with God and move forward in living out their God given purpose.

**7. Has someone ever asked you a question that has had an impact upon your life?**

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## **Empower**

Christ not only demonstrated, and educated but He empowered. He gave His disciples real opportunities for ministry. He took a risk on the disciples and gave them increasing amounts of responsibility, allowing them to learn from their experiences and mistakes, and mentoring them before and after their ministry experiences.

**Read Mark 6:7-13**

**8. What do you think about the fact Jesus sent all 12 of the disciples (including Judas) out to preach? What are the risks and benefits of doing this?**

**9. What was a time that someone took a “risk” on you? How did that impact you?**

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**Read Mark 6:30-32**

Jesus not only gave the disciples ministry responsibility and opportunities, He also spend time afterwards with them so He could talk with them about their experience and use it as a learning opportunity. As Jesus mentored and invested in His disciples He followed a process similar to the one outlined by Patrick O'Connell.

1. I do. You watch. We talk.
2. I do. You help. We talk.
3. You do. I help. We talk.
4. You do. I watch. We talk.
5. You do. Someone else watches. You talk (and then we talk).

**10. What do you think is your next step in living out a life of discipleship? Are you ready to take that step?**

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## Questions Jesus Asked

Jesus asked a lot of questions (173 that we know of). Below is a sample of some of Jesus' questions for us to consider.

**Matthew 5:46:** "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others?"

**Matthew 6:25:** "Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"

**Matthew 8:26:** "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"

**Matthew 9:4:** "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?"

**Matthew 18:33:** "Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"

**Matthew 20:32:** "What do you want me to do for you?"

**Mark 2:8:** Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things?"

**Mark 4:40:** "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

**Mark 8:5:** "How many loaves do you have?"

**Mark 8:27:** "Who do people say I am?"

**Mark 8:29:** "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

**Mark 10:36:** "What do you want me to do for you?"

**Mark 14:6:** "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her?"

**Mark 15:34:** "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

**Luke 6:42:** "How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your



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own eye?”

**Luke 6:46:** “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

**Luke 8:25:** “Where is your faith?”

**Luke 9:25:** “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”

**Luke 12:26:** “Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

**Luke 13:2:** “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way?”

**Luke 24:38:** “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?”

**John 1:38:** “What do you want?”

**John 5:6:** “Do you want to get well?”

**John 6:61:** “Does this offend you?”

**John 9:35:** “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

**John 13:12:** “Do you understand what I have done for you?”

**John 13:38:** “Will you really lay down your life for me?”

**John 14:9:** “Don’t you know me Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?”

**John 18:34:** “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

**John 21:15:** “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”

**John 21:16:** “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”

**John 21:17:** “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

**Study # 10**  
**The Cost of Non-Disciplineship**



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In this series of lessons we have focused on the invitation to discipleship. We have seen that discipleship encompasses far more than simply showing up at a church service or wearing the label of “Christian”. In this lesson we will close the series by focusing on the cost of saying “yes” and the cost of saying “no” to being a disciple of Jesus.

**Read Luke 14:25-33 and Matthew 10:37-38**

**1. Why do you think Jesus spoke so strongly about what it would cost someone to follow Him? What was His motive? Was He trying to discourage people from following Him?**

Because Jesus intentionally spent time with the outcasts (e.g. tax collectors, lepers, and prostitutes) and invited them to become His disciples, people sometimes think that the invitation to discipleship is unconditional. But even though Jesus invites us unconditionally (all are invited), the call is conditional (there are things we must do in order to follow Him). Perhaps this is best illustrated in the parable of the wedding feast Jesus told in Matthew 22:1-14. In the parable, because those who were initially invited refused to come, the servants were commanded to “...go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good.” All were invited and welcomed into the feast. Yet Jesus goes on to tell how the king finds a man at the wedding who refused to wear a wedding garment. So the king commanded for the man to be thrown out. The parable concludes “For many are called, but few are chosen.” All are called but not all are willing to truly follow Jesus and live according to the call.

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And yet it seems that so often today, Christianity not only invites people to “Come as you are” but also to “Stay as you are”. Many are mistaken in believing that they can be Jesus’ disciple without actually following His example or doing the things He commanded. Let us be clear; if our brand or version of Christianity is not calling us to make sacrifices in order to conform our lives to be more like Jesus, then it simply is not the same Christianity that Jesus preached.

In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, many are peddlers of “cheap grace”. The following is a quote from the beginning of his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*.

“Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjack’s wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut [rate] prices. Grace is represented as the Church’s inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing... Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate... Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Him.”

**Read Matthew 13:44-46 and 19:16-22**

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**2. What motivated the different reactions of the two men; one sold everything with joy, and one kept everything with sadness?**

**3. What did each of the men gain and lose from the decision they made?**

The man who sold everything gained far more than he lost. The man who held on to everything lost far more than he kept. Nobody will ask more of us than Jesus, but following Him is the bargain of a lifetime. In the parable of the treasure in the field Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure worth sacrificing your everything for. But in the next parable, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for a pearl, and when he finds it, he sells everything he has and buys it. In the first parable God's kingdom is the treasure to be found, in the second, God's kingdom is doing the searching and sacrificing. Jesus is the merchant who came looking and we are His pearl of great price. He sacrificed His everything to purchase us. Taken together the two parables give us the full picture. Yes, Jesus asks us to surrender

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everything, but He gives us far more in return. The value of the hidden treasure is far more than what the man paid for the field. He has already sacrificed everything for us and what we sacrifice pales in comparison to what we gain. Discipleship is costly but it is a bargain. This is why we can follow Jesus' example and sacrifice with joy (see Heb. 12:2), because what we gain is far more than anything we could ever lose. "Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*).

**4. What cost do those pay who choose not to follow Jesus? What is the cost of non-discipleship that is paid in our homes, our churches, and our communities?**

The cost to follow Jesus may be high, but ultimately the cost of not following Him is far more expensive. Martin Luther King Jr., who, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, sacrificed his life in trying to live for Jesus, spoke the following words in a speech less than a year before he was killed:

"And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. And I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love; I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. (Yes) For I

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have seen too much hate. I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate, myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities, and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love" (a speech entitled *Where do we go from Here*, Atlanta, Georgia, August 16, 1967).

Yes, it is a sacrifice to follow Jesus and to choose to love even your enemies, but carrying the burden of hate is an even higher price to pay.

**Read Mark 1:16-17, John 6:66-69, and John 21:14-22**

**5. What do you think motivated Peter to follow Jesus even at great personal cost? Why did he choose to follow Jesus even when he knew it would result in his own death (John 21:19)?**

When Peter first answered the call, he left his nets without really understanding what it would mean to follow Jesus. But after the resurrection, when Jesus gave Peter (who had recently denied Him) a second chance to choose to live and die as His follower, Peter knew exactly what it would mean. And he chose to follow Jesus. Years later when Peter was in his own prison cell, awaiting his crucifixion, there can be little doubt as you read his letters (1st and 2nd Peter), that he had no regrets in picking up his cross and following Jesus. To Peter Jesus was worth it!

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**6. What would it personally cost you to fully follow Jesus? What specific sacrifices would you need to make in order to fully following Jesus?**

**7. What would it personally cost you to not follow Jesus or only to follow Him half-heartedly? What would you miss out on by not living fully as His disciple?**

**8. Is Jesus worth it? Is following Him worth what He asks of you? Why?**



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**9. Do you choose to surrender your life, pick up your cross and follow Jesus no matter where He leads?**



**Supplement**  
**Small Group**  
**Bible Study Guide**



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**Interpretation**

What does it mean?

**Application**

How is it relevant to me?

**Mission**

How can I share this? Who can I share this with?



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