



Connect to the Mission

Leader's Guide

Week 2

Topic: Christian and Disciple

PREWORK: Before Class: Read the full leader's guide and watch the videos on the website. Note the time of the videos so you can plan well.

Speaker: Simon Mortimer

Start Script****

When Jesus gives His disciples the Great Commission, He tells them: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus is connecting His disciples to the mission of making more Christ followers. As we learned in week one, if we believe Jesus is who He says He is, then we need to do what He says to do. But before we can go and make disciples, we need to make sure we know what a disciple is and what a disciple does.

For example, think about your belief in Jesus. Belief is only the beginning of the journey of becoming a disciple. Jesus tells his followers the parable of the sower to illustrate -- hearing and believing is not the end goal for what Jesus has in store for our lives.

Jesus says, "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Matt. 13: 18-23).

Jesus is teaching the disciples that the seed of the Gospel sprouting within ourselves and others must be cultivated and nurtured with the good soil of learning about God. We do this through reading the scripture, praying, and pursuing relationships with other Jesus followers. Just like in gardening, we must give ourselves the right conditions so we can grow. So how do we do it? How do we make sure our soil is rich and ready to receive the seeds of the Gospel? Jesus not only wants us to grow and thrive but produce spiritual fruit, evidence of His life in us. Jesus

says, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8). What is that fruit? Paul helps define it in Galatians when he says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22).

When we choose to believe in Jesus and make him Lord of our life, we cannot help but change our lives' direction. In the New Testament, the key term for repentance is the Greek word "metanoia." It literally means a change of mind or direction. When we come face to face with who Jesus is and what He means for our spirits, we cannot help but see that our path might have been askew.

Before Jesus, our life is about us. What we want, what we value, what we can get for our own good. But when Jesus comes to us, His call to be a disciple is to follow in His wants, His values, and what we can do for Him. For many of us, this is the hard part. Why? Simply put, we think we know better than God on how to order our lives. If we would trust that God has plans for us that will give us fulfillment, contentment, and purpose, then we would drop everything and follow. The kingdom of God is upside down when compared to what culture tells us. Jesus says, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:35). When we surrender our control, our worries, and our preconceived notions, that's when we can be truly transformed into a disciple who mirrors the likeness of Jesus – whose radical love changed the world. When we surrender and live under the power of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to love all people like Jesus. We become someone whose joy is contagious and encouraging to the downhearted. We become someone whose faithfulness can navigate the hardships of life with supernatural peace.

As we spoke about last week in the Great Commandment, we are learning to respond to all people with love. Jesus commands us to "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). A defining characteristic of a Christian is their love. How do we get to that level of love like Jesus? The love of Jesus is self-sacrificing, fearless, and humble enough to change the world and we learn about how Jesus loved through scripture. We learn to love like Jesus if we study who He was and what He did. We pray and spend time with God. We spend time with other Christ followers for encouragement, counsel and practice. We listen when the Holy Spirit calls us and then we obey, laying aside our own fears and justifications. "For God so loved the world, that he gave His one and only Son..." (John 3:16). This was the only way we could see real love on display. God gave us the example of his son, Jesus, so we could be like Him and love like Him. But remember, deciding to believe in Jesus and accepting the gift of salvation is only the beginning of being a Christian. God loves you and has a plan for your heart and your life as you turn to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

When we find what our life can be in Christ, Jesus says, "the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field" (Matthew 13:44). When we can finally get a glimpse of what discipleship can be, we gladly will trade the empty promises of this world for the priceless treasure of the love of Jesus being made manifest in us.

The definition of a disciple is someone who is a student of another. A learner. Someone who is curious and open to knowing more and being more like their teacher.

A disciple loves (John 13:34-35)

A disciple serves (Matthew 23:11)

A disciple is generous (Luke 6:30)

A disciple has purpose (Ephesians 2:10)

A disciple is an ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20)

A disciple has help from the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17)

A disciple makes disciples of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:2)

The teacher, the rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, is asking us to be His pupil and to connect to each other and to Him in a love that has overcome sin and death. He is asking us to be part of a love that transforms hearts, communities, and nations. Jesus came not only to just save us from sins but Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). He saved us for something better in our lives. A life of joy, peace, and purpose. A life of belonging and connection. Discipleship is learning to trust Him.

In the Bible, the disciples of Jesus were still learning about who He was and what He wanted for their lives – that was, until the day they took their last breath. Peter grew from fisherman to the rock of the Christian church. Paul went from persecuting Christians to being Jesus' greatest champion of the faith to the Roman world. How will God transform you and your heart as you learn more about Him in discipleship?

End Script****

Tough questions prep:

Is there a difference between being a Christian and being a disciple?

What if someone accepts Christ and doesn't do anything else?

Merriam-Webster defines a Christian as, "one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ," and a disciple as, "one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another." We see that even from a secular viewpoint, there is a distinction between believers and disciples. Disciples go beyond believing; they spread the doctrines of their belief.

Key Scriptures used:

Romans 10:9, John 8:31-32, Matthew 16:24-25, Matthew 25, Matthew 4:19

Class Timeline:

	Estimated time
1. Introductions	15 min
2. Teaching Video	Simon Mortimer, 8 minutes
3. Discussion Questions	20 min
4. Testimonial Video	Brett Ray, 4 minutes
5. Takeaways	10 min
6. Prayer	1 min
7. Invitation for next week	1 min

1.Introduce the content and video for this class (in your own words):

We are going to flush out what being a disciple is according to Scripture and how we often make a distinction between a Christian and disciple as either/or when it should be a both/and. Without ever diminishing that Jesus did the work and that forgiveness is enough for eternal communion with God, Christ has called every person to believe *and* follow in His footsteps. We are not just saved from death and sin, but for the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we believe that Jesus is the Messiah of the world, then we must hold fast to his teachings and live a life of love that reflects Him to others around us. This life of discipleship fulfills us and others with love and purpose.

2.Play the teaching video.

3.Discussion questions:

1. Do you agree that a Christian is also a Disciple? Why or why not?
2. What practices of discipleship do you struggle with? Prayer? Quiet time? Small group? Corporate worship? Making disciples? Serving others? Loving your enemies?
3. Who is a good example of a disciple in your life? What characteristics and behaviors do they exhibit?
4. Where do you see God taking you next in your life?

4.Play the short personal testimony video.

5.Closing / takeaways in your own words:

1. Being a Christian means we are not just saved *from* death but saved *for* a God given purpose and action plan (John 10:10)
2. Jesus asks those who believe in Him to follow Him (Matthew 4:19)
3. There is no distinction between being a Christian and a disciple.

6. Close in prayer Use the PRAY model as we teach them to pray:

P = praise – praise God for who He is and what he has done -- Use attributes to describe Him

R = Repent – helps us confess any sins and change the way we think or feel

A = Ask – petition your request for this group to our Father in Heaven including their understanding of Jesus’ mission

Y = Yield – Submit to God’s will and let go of our will

PRAISE	Matthew 6:9	"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.'"
REPENT	Matthew 6:12	"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
ASK	Matthew 6:11&13	"Give us this day our daily bread." "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]"
YIELD	Matthew 6:10	"Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven."

7. Invite them back next week to learn about

The next week’s topic *Go, Make Disciples and Baptize*