

16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion--how can God's love be in that person? 18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. - 1 John 3:16-18 NLT

Loving others can be challenging. Not everyone is lovable. But the love we are called to offer to others comes from the understanding of the love we have already received from Christ.

In his first epistle, John encourages us to show compassion to those in need. John is referring to needs that can be met financially like food and clothing. But we know there are non-monetary needs as well. What are some of the ways we can meet the various kinds of needs of those we meet; the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.

We are Christ's ambassadors, sent to reflect His kingdom to the world around us. We may not be able to fix everyone's problems, but we can love them well. We won't be perfect, but we can be present. And we can live out our faith by loving God and loving others everywhere we go.

WRAP-UP

This week may you go slowly-not racing through life but keeping pace with the Spirit. Drive the speed limit. Pause before you post. Examine your heart before you scroll. Love the Lord your God-in the quiet morning moments, in your spending habits, and in your search history. Love others-by listening before speaking, sharing before hoarding, forgive before frustration. Practice your faith- not only in the sanctuary, but in the grocery store, the group text, the dinner table, and even your monthly budget. Live within your means, breathe before you react, and remember: the goal isn't to be impressive- it's to be faithful. Just as the Father sent Jesus, so now Jesus sends you: to reach the lost, and to reflect the kingdom. Not to hurry, but to carry peace. Not to fix everyone, but to love them well. Not to be perfect, but to be present.

MEMORY VERSE

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

Challenge- The Great Commission tells us to teach everything that Jesus commanded. Look back over Jesus teaching this week and look for the things He commanded us to do.

Go and Make Disciples! Cultivating -As You Go -Week 1

INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year we studied what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This week we will expand that to include the idea that disciples are those who are sent. At the end of Matthew's Gospel Jesus gives His disciples one final commandment; "Go and make disciples." But when Jesus said "go" He didn't mean we have to travel to a distant land, although some people might do that. We can "go and make disciples" as we go about our everyday lives. It all begins by knowing what a disciple is and then living your life as a disciple of Jesus. For some of us that might mean slowing down and refocusing our lives on following Jesus, loving God and loving others.

Ice Breaker

If you are on social media, who do you follow and how closely do you keep up with them?

Key Passages

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- Matthew 28:16-20 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Are You a Disciple?

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. - Matthew 28:18 NIV

19 And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart, - Ezekiel 11:19 NLT

Even before He gives the disciples their last command, Jesus makes one thing clear. He is the ultimate authority. He has both the power and the right

to be in charge. Given that fact we have two choices, we can accept His authority and obey Him. Or we can rebel and reject His authority. The word for disciple used in the New Testament is *mathētēs* in the Greek. It refers to someone who accepts a teacher's authority, follows him closely and learns from his teaching. The disciple has devoted their life to the teacher and strictly adheres to what they have been taught.

We live in a culture that values independence. So, placing yourself under someone else's authority may require a change of heart. What is your gut reaction to the idea that Jesus has total authority in your life? Are there still some areas you need to hand over control to Him? What do you know about Jesus that would give you the confidence to place your life completely under His authority?

When we become a Christian, we are doing more than joining a club or adopting a philosophy. We are committing ourselves to the lordship of Christ. He has all authority, and as His disciple, we are given a new identity.

19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

- Matthew 4:19 NKJV

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- Acts 1:8 NIV

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

- 2 Corinthians 5:20 NIV

Each verse above tells us who we are as a disciple of Jesus. What three roles do these verses identify and how would you describe the ways we can fulfill each role in our daily lives?

2. The Pace of Jesus

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. - Mark 1:35 NIV

Even when the demands of ministry were great, Jesus always found time to get away from the chaos to a quiet place to commune with God. The pace of our lives affects our communion with God. Our tendency is to run ahead of Jesus when He is "just moving too slow".

Do you have a set time to spend with God each day? If so, what are the things that tend to interrupt it? How can you mute, or turn off those distractions? If you don't have a set time, what time in your day can you tune out everything else and be present with God? Now set a reminder for that time daily and don't let anything prevent you from keeping the most important appointment on your calendar.

40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed--or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

- Luke 10:40-42 NIV

Most of us are familiar with the story of Mary and Martha. While Mary sat at Jesus' feet, Martha was busy with "preparations". The word for preparations (Gr. *diakonia*) doesn't only mean domestic chores, it is used elsewhere to denote ministry. Sometimes we find ourselves racing through life's everyday chores, and sometimes we are so caught up in doing the work of ministry that we neglect the one who we are in service to.

What are some of your everyday chores where you feel rushed or frantic? What can you do to slow down your pace in those everyday activities of life and allow Jesus to join you? If you are serving at church in some capacity, what can you do to keep Jesus as your focus rather than the details of the work?

3. Love God, Love Others

37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' - Matthew 22:37-39 NIV

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13:34-35 NIV

In Matthew 28:19-20 (our key passage) Jesus commands His disciples to go, to make disciples, and to teach them what He had commanded them. In Matthew 22:37-39 we see what Jesus considered the greatest and second greatest commandments- Love God and Love Others. And in John 13 we find that loving one another is what identifies us as His disciples to the world.

The bible commands us to love God. Our culture tends to define love as an emotion or a feeling, but love involves a choice on our part as well. Love for God (agape) is the response we have as we recognize God's sacrificial care and love for us. What are some of the things that help to deepen your love for God? How are you best able to express your love for God- prayer, song, acts of service?