



FOLLOWING JESUS

- Week 1: Narrative & Discipleship
- Week 2: An Iceberg & Spiritual Formation
- Week 3: Abiding & the Role of the Spirit
- Week 4: It's a Journey
- Week 5: Walking in "The Way" & Spiritual Disciplines
- Week 6: Developing a Rule of Life

TABLE DISCUSSION

What is Christian discipleship?
Who is a disciple?

THE POWER OF NARRATIVE

1. Story shapes the way we view God, ourselves, and the world we live in.
2. Context is everything.

"Paint the corner" means one thing in art class and something entirely different on the baseball field.

"I'm saved" means one thing in a story about going to heaven when you die and something entirely different in the biblical narrative.

FORGIVENESS ONLY NARRATIVE

1. The end is heaven (or avoiding hell).
2. The means is forgiveness (penalty removed).
3. Distinction is made between a Christian and a disciple.
4. Discipleship is about trying hard to change behavior.
5. God is often viewed as distant and transactional.

BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

1. God created something good (Gen 1:31).
2. God created us in his image specifically to participate with him in his creation (Gen 1:26-28).
3. We rejected this story and attempted to write our own, so naturally things went horribly wrong (Gen 3:4-6).
4. Jesus came to reverse our false narrative and reinsert us back into the original story (Matt 28:18-20).
5. The story is ongoing, as Jesus is still taking on disciples through the Spirit to heal us and restore our original purpose (2 Cor 3:7-18).

KINGDOM NARRATIVE

1. The end is God himself and as a result, other people. Heaven is consequential.
2. The means is forgiveness that causes reorientation into the new narrative.
3. No distinction between Christian and disciple. Jesus saves to empower participation with him.
4. Discipleship is about cultivating intimacy with Jesus through the Spirit.
5. God is intimate, personal and inviting.

GOSPEL NARRATIVE

“Repentance, properly understood, should become like gravity, pulling every area of our present and future life into the story of God. It is not just a reconsideration of our sinful past. Repentance includes all the activities and attitudes necessary to spiritual transformation into Christlikeness. It is the implementation process of switching stories.”

Todd Hunter, Christianity Beyond Belief

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

“God’s own ‘kingdom,’ or ‘rule,’ is the range of his effective will, where what he wants done is done.”

Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

KINGDOM OF GOD

1. The range of God's effective will.
 - Immaterial (Ps 51:17; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:20-24; Mic 6:6-8)
 - Material (Ps 24:1, 96)
2. Already here (Matt 4:17).
3. Not yet completed (Rom 8:20-23; 1 Cor 15:20-28; Rev 21:5).

A DEFINITION

"Disciple":
 Hebrew – *talmid*, from *lamadh* = "to learn"
 Greek – *mathetes*, from *manthano* = "to learn"

OLD TESTAMENT DISCIPLESHIP

YHWH primarily disciplined his people on an national level. There was a relationship between individuals and YHWH, and individuals with other people, but the emphasis was the community's relationship to YHWH and his presence with them.

OLD TESTAMENT DISCIPLESHIP

"Although human masters and their disciples in Israel developed an important relationship, God never lost his central place. In fact, these master-disciple relationships were brought about by God to serve the nation with the result that the nation was enabled to hear God's voice more clearly and to follow him more closely . . . The master always pointed beyond himself to God so that the disciple was ultimately following, serving, and walking with God."

Mike Wilkins, *Following the Master*

GRECO-ROMAN DISCIPLESHIP

1. Learner: Emphasis on knowledge.
2. Student: Emphasis on discovering truth. Sometimes associated with formal education.
3. Adherent: Commitment to a way of life.
4. Imitator: Marked by devotion to a master teacher, not just to gain his knowledge but to imitate his life.

GRECO-ROMAN DISCIPLESHIP

"These were the students of philosophy: the majority were listeners, whom the Pythagoreans call 'acusmatics' (hearers). In just one lecture, they say, the very first which Pythagoras gave to the assembled populace on landing alone in Italy, more than two thousand people were so powerfully attracted by his words that they never went home, but with their wives and children built a huge auditorium, and founded what everyone calls 'Greater Greece.' They took their laws and ordinances from Pythagoras as if they were divine commands, and did nothing except by them, and they continued in harmony with the whole group of students."

Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life*, 6:30

DISCIPLESHIP IN 1ST CENTURY JUDAISM

- 1. Yeshiva schools mirrored the Greek Academy.
- 2. Adopted the Greco-Roman model of the master / student relationship.
- 3. Prophets and Revolutionaries
- 4. Discipleship communities

DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS

- 1. Continuity and discontinuity.
- 2. Offered to everyone, not just the elite.
- 3. Invitation not to Torah, knowledge, or imitation but to Jesus himself (Matt 5:17; Jn 5:39).
- 4. Way of life characterized by participation with him in his kingdom mission.
- 5. Jesus is perpetually with his disciples through his Spirit (Matt 28:20).

DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS

"Both in his earthly ministry in Palestine and in his ascended ministry after Pentecost, Jesus emphasized that *the Holy Spirit is the key to discipleship*. The Spirit is the One who convicts unbelievers, regenerates new believers, and causes growth. We must allow for the work of the Spirit in all that we do while making disciples. Although various programs and methods can be helpful, discipleship practices must rely on the work of the Spirit from beginning to end. And we cannot program the Spirit."

Mike Wilkins, Following the Master

DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTS & THE EPISTLES

1. In Acts the term "disciple" is synonymous with "believer," "Christian," and those who "belong to the Way."
2. The term "disciple" drops off in the Epistles because the letters are written to fellow believers. It is replaced with "brothers," "sisters," and "saints," emphasizing the familial relationship between followers of Jesus and the unity of the body under his lordship.
3. The Church, or community of believers, is the primary vehicle the Holy Spirit uses to form people in Jesus.

A CRITICAL DISTINCTION

We must distinguish between Jesus' concept of discipleship and his methodology. The concept remains the same; methodology shifts depending on situation, need, individual, etc.

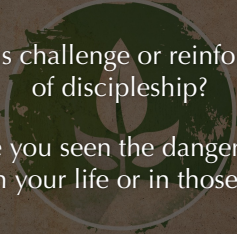
DANGERS

1. Outrunning the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. Pride / Comparison
3. Exclusivity / "Thinning the Herd"
4. Uniformity
5. Gift Projection

TABLE DISCUSSION

How does this challenge or reinforce your view of discipleship?

How have you seen the dangers manifest themselves in your life or in those around you?



CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT . . .

1. Simply the transfer of knowledge.
2. Only for the "really committed."
3. A specific program or method.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IS . . .

1. Fundamentally relational (Jn 17:3).
2. A call to follow Jesus in the kingdom life and journey with him.
 - Live under the King's rule (Matt 16:24-26).
 - Participate in the King's mission (Matt 28:19).
 - Transformation is normative (2 Cor 3:18).

DEFINITION


Discipleship is living in union with Christ and growing in conformity to his image as the Spirit transforms the disciple from the inside out. It is the Spirit driven process of growth from spiritual birth to maturity that ends in the glorification of the one God has purposed to save.

SIMPLE DEFINITION

Discipleship is the Christian life.



RESOURCES



<http://watermark.org/dallas/equipping-webinar>

"What Is Discipleship & Who Is a Disciple?"
Dr. Steve Porter, Dr. Scott Burns, Nathan Wagnon, Nika Spaulding

"Accidental Pharisees"
Nathan Wagnon, Nika Spaulding
