

Discipleship 101

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. – Mark 1:16-18 NIV

What Is Discipleship?

Discipleship is all about following Jesus. The word discipleship is a biblical term and comes from the Greek word μαθητής (*mathētēs*), commonly translated "disciple." In the standard Greek lexicon (BDAG), the word describes "one who engages in learning through instruction from another" or "one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views." So discipleship involves learning, following, and sticking closely to the teachings of another; thus, a disciple of Christ is one who learns, follows, and sticks closely to Jesus and His teachings. In practice, discipleship focuses on the teaching and training of a Christian. Often this happens with the help of a mentor or small group. Normally, a more mature Christian (or group of Christians) takes on the task of "discipling" younger or less mature Christians in their walk with the Lord. Overall, discipleship focuses on what we do in following Jesus.

Getting Started In Discipleship

One quick and easy way to get started in Christian discipleship is to begin meeting with another believer on a regular basis. Discipleship takes time and requires relationship. I like to think about discipleship as truth and life transference in the context of a loving relationship. One of my favorite texts in all of Scripture on discipleship is 1 Thessalonians 2:8, "We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us" (HCSB).

Since discipleship is all about relationships, you will want to prioritize sharing life and getting to know one another. This is where "Discipleship Questions" come into play. The "Discipleship Questions" document was created to guide a person through a discipleship meeting. In practice, a discipleship meeting should flow like a conversation and involves both speaking and listening well. Begin your discipleship time with the "opening questions." These questions will naturally kick-start your discipleship time as you catch up with one another. Next, begin to intentionally turn the conversation more spiritual. This is where the "diagnostic questions" will help. Moreover, this is where you ought to spend the majority of your discipleship time. As you work through these questions, feel free to open up your Bibles and pray for one another. Remember that we are all still "in progress" and encourage one another with the grace of God. Finally, end your discipleship time with the "multiplication questions." These last few questions are crucial because they remind you that discipleship is about the next generation and leaving a legacy of faith!

Discipleship Questions

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. – Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. – Proverbs 27:17 NIV

Opening Questions

- How are you doing?
- What have you been up to this past week?
- How has school and/or work been going?
- How have you been spending your free time lately?

Diagnostic Questions

- How have you experienced God working in your life this past week?
- What are you reading in God's Word at the moment?
- What is God teaching you from His Word right now?
- How is God's Word being applied in your life?
- Have you surrounded yourself with Christian community this past week?
- Have you been exhibiting Christ-like character to others?
- Are you in conflict with anyone? If so, how can you seek reconciliation?
- Are you being intentional about glorifying God in school and/or in the work place?
- In what ways have you been a witness for Christ this past week?
- Have you been sharing your faith with others?
- What have you been doing to revitalize your affections for Christ?
- What have you been doing to put to death sin in your life?
- Do you have a need to confess any sin? Are you struggling with any purity issues?
- How is your prayer life? What is one specific way I can be praying for you right now?
- How is your ministry going? What is one way I can better equip or support you?

Multiplication Questions

- Who are you currently discipling?
- Is there an unbeliever in your life that you are intentionally engaging with?
- Is there a new believer in your life that you could guide towards maturity?

You, therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these things to faithful people who will be competent to teach others also. – 2 Timothy 2:1-2 LEB

Simple Bible Study

Taken and adapted from "Asking the Right Questions" by Matthew S. Harmon

Introduction:

- Always begin your study of God's Word with prayer. Ask the Father to help you understand and apply His Word guided by the Holy Spirit. Next, read your selected passage multiple times and in various translations. I recommend reading your passage in a formal translation (like the ESV), and in a functional translation (like the NLT). Finally, after having read the passage carefully, ask and answer the following questions in relation to your chosen passage in order to interpret and apply the Bible.

Understanding the Bible:

- **What do we learn about God?** (Highlight these words in yellow)
 - Look for God's *character* (who he is, what he is like).
 - Look for God's *conduct* (what he is doing).
 - Look for God's *concerns* (what things, events, people, he is concerned about).
- **What do we learn about people?** (Highlight these words in green)
 - Look for aspects of what it means to be *created in God's image*.
 - Look for the *fallen condition*.
 - Look for *how God's people should live*.
- **What do we learn about relating to God?** (Highlight these words in orange)
 - Look for things to *praise and thank God for*.
 - Look for sin to *confess and repent*.
 - Look for *promises and truths to believe*.
- **What do we learn about relating to others?** (Highlight these words in pink)
 - Look for how we should *interact with and treat others*.
 - Look for ways to *pursue reconciliation with others*.
 - Look for specific ways to *love, serve, and care for others*.

Applying the Bible:

- What does God want me to *think/understand*?
- What does God want me to *believe*?
- What does God want me to *desire*?
- What does God want me to *do*?