**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**How do I fulfill God’s mission?**

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” ([Matthew 28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19))

*Christianity is so much more than only another religion. It’s not just another collection of rules and regulations. It’s a real relationship with Jesus Christ. When we give our heart to Jesus, He becomes our Savior and our Lord. Life is not only full of responsibilities, bills, and work, but it can also be full of eternal purpose.*

*As we grow closer to God, He begins to reveal His true purpose and plans for our life. We begin to discover the personal mission and assignment He has designed for each of us. While we may have different gifts, talents, and abilities, each of us is called to the same mission of helping to transform the world with God’s love and power. God calls us to personally share our faith, to help lead others toward a deeper walk with Christ, and to help others fulfill their individual mission. As we lean into God and allow Him to make a difference in our life, He will in turn use us to make a difference in the life of others.*

|  |
| --- |
| First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Who or what do you follow on social media? |

If Jesus were on the earth today, His followers would most likely be tracking all His social media accounts. After all, making disciples was something Jesus prioritized naturally. He taught His followers to understand God’s Word. But He also spent time with them, ate with them, and even cried with them when the situation called for it.

Life can be like this for us as well. Making disciples takes intentionality, but it doesn’t require a college degree. Anyone who is a disciple of Jesus can take part in making disciples as He told us to do!

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your response to this question: Who has been instrumental in your discipleship? How has this person been helpful?



|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Who has been instrumental in your discipleship? How has this person been helpful? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

In the Book of Acts, the early followers of Jesus worked hard to spread the gospel and fulfill Jesus’ command to take His message of love and forgiveness to the whole world. As they advanced the gospel message, we can see that they brought new believers into the church. These believers joined them in fulfilling God’s mission. It’s a beautiful and straightforward picture of what Jesus envisioned when He called us to *be* disciples by *making* disciples of others.

**Seize Opportunities to Disciple Others**

Read [Acts 16:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac16.1-3).

Let’s look at Paul’s first step in helping to disciple Timothy. The church in Lystra could see something valuable in Timothy (verse [2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac16.2)). Paul could see it, too. So, he invited Timothy to join him in ministry. A beautiful part of this story is that Timothy didn’t precisely meet everyone’s expectations of a disciple because of his heritage; his father was Greek, not Jewish. Paul knew it was important for Timothy to be accepted by both Jewish and non-Jewish believers.

We don’t fit the mold either, but Jesus is still inviting us to be His disciples. The people Jesus puts in front of us and calls us to disciple won’t be perfect either. The good news is that someone’s background didn’t keep discipleship from happening in Jesus’ day, and it doesn’t have to in ours either. Our job is to seize opportunities when they come. And they come often!

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Why was it important for people like Paul to bring new people in on God’s mission, even in the early days of the Church? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Who are some people who saw potential in you like Paul did in Timothy? What did they see? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Who is someone in your life right now that God might be calling you to invest in? |

**Invest Time and Energy in Disciples**

Read [Acts 16:4–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac16.4-5).

That Paul took Timothy from “town to town” is easy to overlook, but it’s worth considering. On their journeys, they would have spent a tremendous amount of time with each other, sharing meals, nursing swollen feet, and probably enduring bad housing arrangements. The trio of Paul, Silas, and Timothy also did ministry together, and as a result churches grew spiritually and numerically.

What’s implied in this story is equally as powerful. Like the churches, Timothy was likely strengthened and grew in his faith too. Spending time investing in people, while doing life and ministry together, is a powerful and repeatable process in our own life as well.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Think back through your faith journey. Do you remember a season when someone invested a lot of time into your life? How did that impact you? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some things you’re currently doing to minister to others? Who could you invite to come alongside you in ministry? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**When was the last time you shared a meal with someone whose faith you were trying to strengthen or who was encouraging you? |

Don’t underestimate the power of hospitality as a discipleship tool. Sharing with others was a key ingredient in what made the Early Church great.

**Encourage Disciples in Their Ministry**

One of the hallmarks of the growth of disciples is when they begin to develop a ministry of their own, separate from the person who discipled them. We can see it in Timothy’s life through the letters Paul wrote to Timothy. We should see it in those we’re discipling as well.

Read [2 Timothy 1:3–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Ti1.3-6).

Paul prayed often for Timothy. He spoke words of life and encouragement to him, and wanted to see him again. That’s the heart of a disciple maker. Paul knew God had called Timothy to fulfill His mission.

Those we’re discipling will need our prayer and encouragement as well. Our role is to consistently call out what we see in them. We have the privilege of helping them become who God has created and called them to be.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What can you do to be more intentional in how you encourage others who are pursuing God’s mission? What can you share that you see in them that perhaps they have not yet seen in themselves? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How can you pray more effectively for those you are discipling? |

**Did You Know?**

|  |
| --- |
| *In Judaism, from the first century after Jesus to the present day, people are considered Jewish if they are born to a Jewish mother. That’s why Timothy, Paul’s traveling companion introduced in* [*Acts 16:1*](https://biblia.com/bible/acts/16/1)*, was considered Jewish. Paul wrote about Timothy’s heritage again in* [*2 Timothy 1*](https://biblia.com/bible/2-timothy/1)*, pointing out the faith of Timothy’s mother and grandmother, who were both Jewish. They had taught him the ways of the Lord, even if his father had not. This traditional Jewish law—that lineage is passed on through the mother—is why Paul saw Timothy as fully Jewish. Paul arranged for Timothy to be circumcised to honor the covenant between God and the children of Abraham, and to be positive testimony to other Jews.* |

**Reflect**

**I Disciple Others**

It’s vital to remember that making disciples is a commandment from Jesus ([Matthew 28:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19)). It’s not a suggestion about what we could do if we have spare time. It’s God’s mission for the Church. As a follower of Jesus, it’s our job.

To be clear, making disciples isn’t just the job of pastors or paid staff members at church. It’s the *Church’s* job. That means you and me. We are all called to this mission by Jesus himself. It takes time and energy from every one of us, not just the “super-Christians” or the well-educated among us. Like Paul and Timothy, we can all seek to be discipled by mature people in our own lives and work hard to pass on what is being imparted to us.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Why do you think Christians can become careless about Jesus’ command to disciple others? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What steps can you take to ensure you are being discipled by Christians who are more mature than you? How might this help you as you seek to disciple others? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are the obstacles that prevent you from discipling others as effectively as you could? |

**Activate**

When Jesus called us to make disciples, He wasn’t just asking us to agree with Him. Instead, He was calling us to do what He had done for the men and women who followed Him closely.

**Challenge**

We all need encouragement. Those we are discipling crave it too, whether they’re willing to admit it or not. In our world today, we get emails and text messages regularly. What we receive less often is something handwritten, which can be more meaningful. Take some time to think about those you are discipling or who are dedicated to growing in their faith. How could you encourage and speak life to them? Write a note to them about what you see in them and what they could accomplish for Jesus. Be their biggest fan for a moment! Then, deliver your note in person or mail it to them.

**Prayer Requests**

|  |
| --- |
| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

|  |
| --- |
| **Official Doctrine**Because God wants to build a unified body of believers mature in faith and knowledge like Jesus ([Ephesians 4:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph4.12)), our church operates as a channel of God’s purpose to equip and build people who are continually growing in the Lord and being perfected in His image ([Ephesians 4:11–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph4.11-16); [1 Corinthians 12:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.28); [14:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co14.12)). |

**Learn on Your Own**

|  |
| --- |
| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: I Disciple Others**

Read [Acts 16:1–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac16.1-5); [2 Timothy 1:3–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Ti1.3-6).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about discipling others? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: Disciple Makers See Potential**

Read [Ephesians 2:8–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph2.8-10); [1 Thessalonians 5:10–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Th5.10-23).

Every person has God-given potential. Not only do we need to believe this about ourself, but it’s our job to ask God to help us discover it in others. Discipling others is hard work, but people are worth the effort! We’re given the opportunity as disciple makers to help others discover their true identity and the purpose in life God is calling them to. Remember, the plans God has for them—and you—are greater than you can imagine ([Ephesians 3:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph3.20)).

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**You are God’s masterpiece! Do you struggle to believe this about yourself? If you do struggle, ask God to help you overcome the struggle or reach out to someone to talk with about it. |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What is something positive that you feel is true about someone in your life but they struggle to believe about themselves? How can you share this observation with them and encourage them to see this truth? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: Discipleship Has a Cost**

Read [Matthew 4:18–22](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt4.18-22).

When Jesus called these first disciples, they paid a price. Immediately, they left their jobs. That’s not something God usually calls us to repeat, but we also pay a price in following Jesus in our context today. Primarily, what we often must choose to leave behind is a life of sin and the unwise and unhealthy life habits that can accompany it, as well as nonsinful things that can distract us from following Jesus.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What is Jesus calling you to leave behind that is a struggle for you? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Do you know someone who is fighting to leave behind ungodly things to follow Jesus? How can you better encourage and lovingly support them? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: Discipleship Is a Lifestyle**

Read [1 John 2:3–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn2.3-6).

John makes it so clear for us: If we claim to follow Jesus, we have to *do* what He did. The goal is not to simply agree with what Jesus taught, although that’s important. But it’s not enough unless it’s coupled with real-life action. Jesus’ life seemed to revolve around discipling people. We can disciple people too. Remember, discipleship isn’t limited to sanctuaries and classrooms. Discipleship also occurs when we’re doing life together with people and intentional about our purpose of making disciples.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some opportunities you have to spend time with people when you could be discipling them? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some creative ways you could get more time with people to help you disciple them? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: Disciple Makers Pray Like Paul**

Read [Colossians 1:9–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Col1.9-12).

We spend a lot of time praying God will keep everyone from trouble and hardship. Those are fine prayers, but it’s good for us to see that isn’t how Paul prayed for his followers. He prayed they would endure and persevere through the adversity that would inevitably come in life. Modeling our prayers after Paul’s will not only help those we disciple, but will also help us to understand how God works in our own life in a greater way.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How are you currently praying for those you are discipling? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some ways you could incorporate things Paul shared in this passage into your prayers for those you love? |