

DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS

A Small Group Study for Discipleship Training

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“A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained
will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40 NIV)

Instructor Edition

DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS - INSTRUCTOR EDITION

Welcome to a series of lessons on Christian discipleship that are designed for use in a small group setting. New believers and seasoned Christians alike may find these lessons helpful in understanding what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. The lessons are written in a manner that encourages each member of a discipleship group to grow in understanding of Scripture and to apply the teachings of Scripture to one's own life as a Christian. Although the lessons are theological, in that they are a study of the things of God, they are not narrowly sectarian, in that they do not promote views that would be characteristic of a single branch of Christianity. All disciples of Jesus Christ whose faith is centered in Scripture will find the lessons to be a faith-building experience.

Most disciples of Jesus are not able to read the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was written originally or the Greek language of the original New Testament. Therefore, we use a translation in our language that we can read and understand. The lessons are designed with the assumption that most, if not all, of the members of the discipleship group will have a copy of the Scripture that they can read. If some members are unable to read a Bible, the rest of the group must be careful to explain each verse in the lesson and its meaning in the lesson so all may understand and grow as disciples of Jesus. The lessons are not dependent on any single translation of Scripture. Any good translation that is acceptable to the group may be used. Nothing is lost if some members have different versions of Scripture. Comparison of the verses in different translations may actually add to the group's understanding of the passage.

The leader of a discipleship group should be a Christian, but it is not required that the leader have formal training in a Bible Institute or Bible College. The Scriptures speak to us in rather plain language, and the help of the Holy Spirit is promised as we explore God's Word. If the group should find a passage to be difficult to understand, a pastor or other church leader may offer needed assistance. The group that is confused about the meaning of a verse in mid-lesson should go on to the next verse in the lesson and let the group leader consult the pastor or church leader before the next group meeting where a fuller explanation of the confusing verse may be reported.

All of these discipleship lessons are centered in Scripture. As the group works its way through each lesson, it is recommended that every person look up the Scripture reference, one person read it, and the instructor lead a discussion of the passage while encouraging comments and questions from the members of the discipleship group. A wise instructor will use questions to make the group members think deeply about the Scripture passages. A suggested question is listed at the end of each section for the guidance of the group leader, or you may wish to make up your own questions. Participation of all the group members should be encouraged. As you proceed from verse to verse through the lesson, give sufficient time for all the group members who wish to add a comment or question to do so before going on to the next Scripture passage. Comments or questions after the Scripture references are intended to help the instructor understand the meaning of the passage or the reason the passage was selected. These comments are not printed in the student's edition.

The discipleship lessons are of differing lengths, and it is not anticipated that an entire lesson can be covered in a single session. Let the group proceed at a pace they find comfortable. Depth of understanding is more important than speeding through the lessons.

Lesson one

In this first lesson we explore a person's walk with God, that some call one's "faith journey." Beginning with a study of two apostles who met Jesus in miraculous ways, we go on to examine what life is like before we meet Jesus, what God does about our sin problem, what life is like after we meet Jesus, and how we can know that we are children of God.

1. Peter and Paul meet Jesus.
 - a. Luke 5:1-11 We should not expect to see a miraculous catch of fish and hear the call of Jesus to follow him as the Apostle Peter did.
 - b. Acts 26:1-23 We should not expect to see a bright light and hear Jesus speak to us as he did to Paul. Each person meets Jesus in a way that meets his individual need.
How are the calls to discipleship of Peter and Paul different than ours?

2. What the Bible says about life before we meet Jesus.
 - a. Isaiah 53:6 What have all of us done?
 - b. Romans 3:10 Is anyone righteous before meeting Jesus?
 - c. Romans 3:23 How many of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?
 - d. Romans 5:12 Why did sin and death come into the world?
What came between God and us?

3. What God did about our sins.
 - a. Acts 4:12 How many Saviors are there?
 - b. Romans 5:8 What did God do for us?
 - c. Romans 6:23 How do we get eternal life?
 - d. Romans 10:9-10 How can a person be saved?
 - e. Ephesians 2:8-9 Can we save ourselves by good works?
How did God remove our sin?

4. What the Bible says about life after we meet Jesus.
 - a. Romans 8:14-16 When we put our trust in Jesus what is our new relationship with God?
 - b. Romans 15:13 What does God fill us with?
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:17 How radical a change does God make in our lives?
 - d. Galatians 2:20 How would you describe Paul's new life?
 - e. Galatians 5:22-23 What "fruit" is produced in the life of a Christian by the Holy Spirit?
 - f. 1 John 3:9-10 Is it right for someone who is born of God to go on sinning?
What are some indicators that a person is a disciple of Jesus?

5. How we can be sure of our faith.
 - a. John 5:24 What does Jesus promise here?
 - b. Romans 10:9-13 What does God promise here?
 - c. 1 John 2:3-6 What can we know?
 - d. 1 John 3:14 How can we know we have passed from death to life?

- e. 1 John 3:23-24 How can we know that Jesus lives in us?
 - f. 1 John 4:13-16 How can we know that we live in him and he lives in us?
 - g. 1 John 5:1-5 How can we know that we love the children of God?
 - h. Matthew 28:20b What does Jesus promise in this verse?
 - i. John 10:27-29 What does Jesus promise in this verse?
 - j. 2 Corinthians 5:5 What has God given to us that gives us confidence?
 - k. Ephesians 1:13-14 What is the Christian's guarantee?
- How do these promises make us sure of our faith?

APPLICATION – It would be appropriate to ask several members of the group to describe how they met Jesus. If some are unsure of their relationship with God, you could have the group pray for them that they might receive assurance that they are children of God. The aim of discipleship lessons goes beyond information. We need to be applying the truth to our lives as we learn from the Scriptures.

Lesson two

In this second lesson we examine Peter's confession of the lordship of Jesus and Paul's statement of this early Christian confession of faith. From this background we discover our need to make Jesus the Lord of our lives, so we explore some obstacles to his lordship and how we may overcome them. We cannot expect to please Jesus if we are not committed to serve him wholeheartedly.

1. Two confessions of the lordship of Jesus.
 - a. Matthew 16:13-17 Whom did Peter say that Jesus was?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:3 Who helps us to say "Jesus is Lord"?
What does it require of us when we tell others that Jesus is our Lord?
2. Why Jesus should be our Lord.
 - a. Romans 14:9 What has Christ done for us?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:19b-20 Why should we honor God?
 - c. Colossians 1:16-18 Why does the Son have a right to have the supremacy?
 - d. 1 John 5:11-12 Who gives us eternal life?
What do we mean when we say Jesus is our Savior? How is it different to say he is our Lord?
3. What Jesus expects of us if he is to be our Lord.
 - a. Luke 6:46-49 What must we do if we are to call Jesus Lord?
 - b. Luke 9:23-26 What are we to do if we follow Jesus?
 - c. Luke 14:26 Who are we to hate (love less than Jesus)?
 - d. Luke 14:33 What must we be willing to give up to be a disciple of Jesus?
What level of commitment does Jesus ask for?
4. How a disciple of Jesus can be recognized.
 - a. Matthew 11:29-30 Who are we to work for (take his yoke) and learn from?
 - b. John 13:35 How can people know that we are disciples of Jesus?

- c. Galatians 5:22-25 How is Christian character (the fruit of the Spirit) described?
 - d. Philippians 2:5-11 How is the example of Jesus described?
How can you tell if a person is a disciple of Jesus?
5. Some obstacles to the lordship of Jesus.
 - a. John 14:27 What obstacles are listed in the second half of this verse?
 - b. Romans 13:11-14 What obstacles do we find in these verses?
 - c. Ephesians 4:31 List the obstacles you find here.
 - d. Philippians 2:14 What are we warned about in this verse?
What obstacles to the lordship of Jesus can you think of?
 6. Making Jesus Lord in your life.
 - a. Ephesians 3:16-19 For what does Paul pray in these verses?
 - b. Colossians 3:12-17 What kinds of good behavior are listed here?
 - c. 1 Peter 2:1-3 How can we grow up in our salvation?
 - d. 2 Peter 1:5-9 What should we make every effort to do?
What are some signs that Jesus is Lord in a person's life?

APPLICATION – Perhaps some of your group members have trusted in Jesus as their Savior, but they have not yet made him Lord of their life. You could ask them to examine their commitment to Jesus in the quietness of their hearts. Who is Lord of their life—their own self-interest or Jesus? If we want to be serious disciples of Jesus, we must let him have first place in our lives. Any of your group who are unsure of the lordship of Jesus in their life should be surrounded by the other group members and prayed for—that Jesus may become Lord of their life.

Lesson three

This lesson explores **the life of a disciple of Jesus**. Beginning with consideration of what it means to be a disciple we look at the changes God wants in the disciple's heart, mind, and life, the obedience that God expects, and a list of things a disciple must do. The lesson concludes with ten spiritual disciplines of a disciple. These spiritual disciplines form the framework for the next ten lessons in this discipleship series. To be a disciple is to be a learner. It is not a coincidence that the words "disciple" and "discipline" are similar. A disciple is a disciplined learner.

1. What being a disciple means.
 - a. Luke 6:40 Whom should a disciple be like?
 - b. 1 John 2:5-6 How do we walk (live) like Jesus did?
Being a disciple means being like Jesus.
2. Changes God wants in a disciple.
 - a. Matthew 5:8 What does it mean to have a pure heart? (Compare Matthew 15:19)
 - b. Luke 6:45 What will be the result of a changed heart?
 - c. Romans 12:2 What needs to happen to one's mind?
 - d. 1 Corinthians 2:16b What would a changed mind be like?
 - e. Ephesians 4:22-24 How is the new self different than the old?

- f. Colossians 3:5-17 How is the new life different than the old?
What changes need to be made in a disciple's heart, mind, and life?
3. The obedience God expects of a disciple.
 - a. John 8:31 What are we told to obey?
 - b. John 14:23 What are the benefits of obeying Jesus' teaching?
 - c. Acts 5:29 Whom are we to obey?
 - d. Romans 13:1-7 Why should we obey the governing authorities?
 - e. Hebrews 13:17 Why should we obey church leaders?
What kinds of obedience must a disciple give?

 4. Some things a disciple must do.
 - a. Matthew 7:21 How important is it to do the will of the Father in heaven?
 - b. Luke 14:27 What two things must a disciple do?
 - c. Luke 14:33 What should be our attitude toward our possessions?
 - d. John 13:35 How will others know we are disciples of Jesus?
 - e. John 15:8 How do we show ourselves to be disciples?
 - f. Ephesians 5:8-11 How are we to live?
 - g. Colossians 1:10-12 How are we to live?
What is a disciple expected to do?

 5. Spiritual disciplines of a disciple.
 - a. Hebrews 10:25 The discipline of public worship and fellowship.
 - b. Luke 6:12 The discipline of private worship.
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:14-17 The discipline of Scripture reading and study.
 - d. Philippians 4:6 The discipline of prayer.
 - e. Romans 12:8 The discipline of giving generously.
 - f. Matthew 6:16-18 The discipline of fasting.
 - g. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 The discipline of overcoming the enemy.
 - h. James 4:17 The discipline of doing what is right and good.
 - i. Romans 12:6-8 The discipline of using one's spiritual gifts.
 - j. Matthew 28:19-20 The discipline of sharing your faith.
When these spiritual disciplines are exercised in a disciple, the result will be a growing, contagious Christian.

APPLICATION – The life of a disciple requires discipline if we are to become like Jesus. You might ask several of your group members to tell how God has made changes in their heart, mind, or life. Their testimonies might encourage others to press on in their walk with God. Learning takes time and patience. Our goal is that every member of the group may grow to be more like Jesus.

Lesson four

This fourth lesson is a study of the first of the spiritual disciplines expected in a disciple – sharing in the life of the church. God gathers together his disciples in a group that we call the church. Participation in a church helps the disciple grow to be more like Jesus. Beginning with a study of what the church is, we go on to look at two important activities of the church, public

worship and fellowship. The lesson concludes with a list of things that disciples of Jesus do in church meetings.

1. What the church is like.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 1:2 Who is a part of the church?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:27 How is the church related to Jesus?
 - c. Ephesians 4:3-6 How large is the church?
How would you describe the church?

2. The church at worship.
 - a. Psalm 95:6-7 What are we invited to do?
 - b. Psalm 100:1-2 How are we to worship?
 - c. Matthew 4:10 According to Jesus, who should be worshiped?
 - d. John 4:19-24 How are we to worship?
 - e. Revelation 19:10, 22:8-9 Should we worship anyone other than God?
 - f. Acts 20:7a When is a good time to meet for worship?
What do we learn here about worship?

3. The church as a fellowship.
 - a. Psalm 122:1 What made the writer of this psalm rejoice?
 - b. Psalm 133:1 What is good and pleasant?
 - c. Matthew 18:20 How many people are needed for a fellowship?
 - d. 1 Corinthians 1:9 With whom has God called us into fellowship?
 - e. 2 Corinthians 13:14 Whose fellowship is promised here?
 - f. 1 John 1:7 What is a benefit of fellowship with other disciples?
What do we learn here about fellowship?

4. What disciples of Jesus do in church meetings.
 - a. Matthew 28:19-20 Make disciples, baptize, teach.
 - b. Acts 2:42 Teach, fellowship, break bread, pray.
 - c. Acts 4:24 Pray.
 - d. Acts 13:2-3 Worship, fast, pray, place hands on workers, send them off.
 - e. Acts 15:21 Read Scripture.
 - f. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Observe communion.
 - g. 1 Corinthians 14:3 Preach (prophecy)
 - h. 1 Corinthians 16:2 Give an offering.
 - i. Galatians 6:1-2 Restore the fallen, carry each other's burdens.
 - j. Ephesians 5:19-20 Sing, give thanks.
 - k. Colossians 3:16 Teach and admonish, sing, give thanks.
 - l. 2 Timothy 1:8 Testify about our Lord.
How do these activities encourage a disciple of Jesus?

APPLICATION – Participation in the life of a church is essential for the growing disciple of Jesus. Ask your group members to share some of the things they do in church meetings that encourage them. After a number have responded, ask if there is something someone would like to do in church that they haven't yet done. If someone would like to pray or testify or read Scripture, for example, you might pass this information along to a worship leader in your church.

Lesson five

The disciple of Jesus shares with other disciples in the life of the church, as we learned in the previous lesson, but it is important to keep in touch with God as an individual believer, also. This lesson concentrates on a **disciple's personal relationship with God**. To get to know and love someone deeply, one must spend time with that person. We look at the need to spend private time with God, the benefits that result, when and where others have spent time alone with God, and how we might spend our private time with God.

1. Developing a personal relationship with God.
 - a. Mark 1:35 What does the example of Jesus suggest?
 - b. Ephesians 6:10 How will time spent with God help us?
 - c. Philippians 3:10 What will time with God help us to know?
What do these verses suggest to us?

2. The benefits of a private time with God.
 - a. Psalm 42:2 What will happen if I take the time?
 - b. Psalm 138:3 What benefits are suggested here?
 - c. Isaiah 30:15 How can we receive strength?
 - d. Matthew 4:4 What is necessary for life?
 - e. Matthew 22:37 What will grow if I spend time with God?
 - f. Ephesians 6:11-12 How can I prepare to meet my enemy?
 - g. Philippians 3:17 Whose example should we follow?
 - h. Colossians 2:6-7 What are we to do after we receive Christ Jesus as Lord?
 - i. Colossians 3:1-2 How will time spent with God help our hearts and minds?
What are some benefits of spending private time with God?

3. When to spend time alone with God.
 - a. Psalm 5:3 What time is suggested here?
 - b. Psalm 55:16-17 What time does this Psalm suggest?
 - c. Luke 4:42 When did Jesus spend time alone with God?
 - d. Acts 17:11 How often did these people seek God?
What is a good time for getting closer to God?

4. Where others have gone to spend time with God.
 - a. Genesis 24:63 Where did this person go?
 - b. Matthew 6:6 Where does Jesus suggest we go?
 - c. Matthew 14:23 Where did Jesus go?
 - d. Acts 10:9 Where did Peter go?
Where is a good place to spend time with God?

5. How we can spend our private time with God.
 - a. Psalm 37:7a What does this verse suggest?
 - b. Psalm 104:33-34 What two things can we do?
 - c. Psalm 119:11 What activity is this?
 - d. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 What does this verse suggest?
 - e. Hebrews 13:15 What is this activity?

- f. 1 John 1:9 What activity is suggested here?
What are some things we can do in our private time?

APPLICATION – Challenge each member of the group to set aside 10-15 minutes each day to spend alone with God. Suggest they divide the time between praise, Scripture reading, and prayer. If they don't think they can find 10-15 minutes of time, ask them for 5 minutes. Even a few minutes will make a difference in their growth as a disciple. Tell them that we will take a few minutes next time to report on our private times. They should not be discouraged. If they miss a day, tell them to try to meet God privately the next day. It takes a while for patterns to develop. A private time with God every day should be the goal toward which they strive.

Lesson six

Scripture reading and study are the spiritual disciplines examined in this lesson. Whether we call it the Word of God, the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, or the Scripture (or Scriptures), the meaning is the same. God has spoken to us in a Book that is more important than any other book ever written. The disciple of Jesus must make this Book the central focus of his study, because in it we find the path to life eternal. Beginning with two examples of Scripture study, we look at how we got the Scriptures, what the Scriptures are like, why we should study the Scriptures, and the results of that study.

1. Examples of Scripture study.
 - a. Acts 8:26-35 What did the Ethiopian discover when he read the Scripture?
 - b. Acts 17:11 What is the example of the Bereans?
What do we learn from these examples?
2. How we got the Scriptures.
 - a. Exodus 31:18 How did God give his Word to Moses?
 - b. Galatians 1:11-12 From whom did Paul receive the gospel?
 - c. Hebrews 1:1-2 How has God spoken?
 - d. 2 Timothy 3:16 Who gave us the Scripture?
 - e. 2 Peter 1:20-21 Where did the Scripture come from?
How did we get the Scriptures?
3. What the Scriptures are like.
 - a. Psalm 119:105 In this verse, to what is the Word of God compared?
 - b. Psalm 119:160 How are God's words described?
 - c. Isaiah 40:8 How long will God's Word stand?
 - d. Mark 13:31 When will the words of Jesus pass away?
 - e. 1 Peter 1:23 How is the Word of God described?
How are the Scriptures described in these verses?
4. Why we should study the Scriptures.
 - a. Romans 10:17 What comes when we hear the message?
 - b. Ephesians 6:17 How is the Word of God described?
 - c. Colossians 3:16 What happens when the Word of Christ is in us?
 - d. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 What makes the Scripture so important?

- e. Hebrews 4:12 What is the Word of God like?
Why is Scripture study so important?
5. The results of Scripture study.
 - a. Joshua 1:8 What result is mentioned here?
 - b. Psalm 119:11 Why should we hide God's Word in our hearts?
 - c. Psalm 119:52 What result is mentioned here?
 - d. John 20:31 Why do we have John's gospel?
 - e. James 1:22-25 How should we respond to God's Word?
 - f. 1 Peter 2:2-3 Why should we want spiritual milk?
What can we expect to happen when we study the Scriptures? See 1 Peter 3:15.

APPLICATION – Every disciple of Jesus who can read should have a copy of the Scriptures. The new believer will find the New Testament easier to understand than some of the Old Testament. Some kind of daily reading plan is better than jumping around wherever a whim may take you. Select a New Testament book to begin, perhaps one of the gospels, and read one chapter a day until you have completed the book. In addition, a new believer could read one Psalm a day along with the New Testament reading. Making Scripture reading a daily habit is the goal for every disciple of Jesus.

Lesson seven

Prayer is an important kind of communication between the disciple and God. It includes both talking to God and listening to God. In this lesson we look at examples of private and public prayer. From there we study what prayer is like, how we should pray, some reasons for praying, and what God promises to the one who prays. We must remember that prayer is not telling God what he must do. He is the Master and we are the servants. We can tell God what is in our hearts and minds, but he alone decides how to answer us.

1. Examples of prayer.
 - a. Mark 1:35 What does the example of Jesus teach us?
 - b. Acts 12:5 Why was the church praying?
What do we learn from these examples?
2. What prayer is like.
 - a. Genesis 24:63 Is meditation (listening to God) a part of prayer?
 - b. Psalm 27:7-8 According to this verse, what is prayer like?
 - c. Jeremiah 33:3 What will God tell me in prayer if I listen to him?
 - d. 1 Timothy 2:1 What kinds of prayers are listed?
How do we talk to God and listen to God?
3. How we should pray.
 - a. Matthew 6:5-8 What does Jesus teach in these verses about prayer?
 - b. Matthew 6:9-13 In this example of prayer, what do we learn?
 - c. Matthew 7:7-8 What does it mean to ask, seek, and knock in prayer?
 - d. Mark 14:35-36 Whose will is most important?
 - e. Ephesians 6:18-19 What do these verses teach us about prayer?

- f. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 How should we pray?
 - g. Hebrews 4:16 How should we approach God in prayer?
 - h. Hebrews 13:15 What should we include in our prayers?
 - i. James 5:16 For whom should we pray?
What attitudes and methods are important in prayer?
4. Some reasons for praying.
- a. Psalm 55:1-3 Why does the writer of this psalm pray?
 - b. Matthew 26:41 What will prayer help us to avoid?
 - c. Ephesians 6:12 Against whom do we struggle?
 - d. 1 Peter 5:7 What should we take to God in prayer?
What are some more good reasons for prayer?
5. God's promises to one who prays.
- a. Psalm 145:18-19 What does God do for those who call upon him?
 - b. Matthew 18:19 What does Jesus promise?
 - c. Matthew 21:22 What will happen if we believe?
 - d. John 14:12-14 Why will Jesus answer our prayers?
 - e. John 15:7 What must we do to receive his promised answers to prayer?
 - f. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 How does God sometimes answer our prayers?
 - g. Philippians 4:6-7 What does God give when we present our requests to him?
 - h. 1 John 5:14-15 What does God hear?
What are some answers God gives to our prayers?

APPLICATION – This would be a good time to go around the group and ask each person to give a sentence prayer. Or, you could ask for prayer requests and ask one person to pray for each prayer request. The point is, to learn to pray one must pray. If the group is large, it can be divided into smaller groups to allow more persons to pray. A smaller group will make it easier for a person to participate who is nervous in a larger group. For an assignment during the week, encourage each person to set aside a period of time for prayer each day this week. Then next week you can ask for a report from anyone who would be willing to share what happened as a result of their prayer time. Answers to prayer are very encouraging to hear.

Lesson eight

Fasting means going without food for a period of time. It is an act of self-denial and humility before God that is usually practiced in connection with prayer. Prayer and fasting together show that we know how weak we are and how much we depend on God's answer to our prayers. Jesus did not command his disciples to fast as a regular practice, but he did expect them to fast on a voluntary basis when special circumstances occurred. Beginning with two examples of fasting we look at fasting in the Old Testament, fasting in the New Testament, how we should fast, and what some benefits of fasting are.

1. Examples of fasting.
- a. Ezra 8:21-23 Why did Ezra proclaim a fast for everyone?
 - b. Psalm 35:13 How did the writer humble himself?
What do these examples of fasting teach us?

2. Fasting in the Old Testament.
 - a. 1 Samuel 1:6-7 What difficult circumstances caused Hannah to fast?
 - b. 2 Samuel 1:12 Why did David and his men fast?
 - c. 2 Samuel 12:16 Why did David fast and pray?
 - d. Ezra 10:6 Why did Ezra fast?
 - e. Esther 4:15-16 Why did Esther fast?
 - f. Joel 1:13-15 Why did the prophet call for everyone to fast?

In what special circumstances did people in the Old Testament fast?

3. Fasting in the New Testament.
 - a. Matthew 9:14-15 When did Jesus say his disciples would fast?
 - b. Luke 18:12 How often did the Pharisees fast?
 - c. Acts 13:3 Why did the church fast and pray?
 - d. Acts 14:23 Why did Paul and Barnabas pray and fast?
 - e. 2 Corinthians 11:27 Note: Here Paul distinguishes between hunger and thirst and going without food.

What are some reasons why people in the New Testament fasted?

4. How we should fast.
 - a. Isaiah 58:3-7 How is a person's behavior related to fasting?
 - b. Matthew 6:16-18 What did Jesus teach here about fasting?

What do we learn about the proper way to fast?

5. Some benefits of fasting.
 - a. 1 Kings 21:27-28 What happened when Ahab humbled himself?
 - b. Jonah 3:5-10 What was avoided when the people fasted?
 - c. Matthew 6:17-18 What benefit is mentioned here?

What other benefits of fasting can you think of?

APPLICATION – Fasting should be a voluntary practice for the disciple. Still, we want to encourage disciples to fast, not because it is a command, but because it is an appropriate behavior for the disciple of Jesus in the appropriate circumstances. Encourage your group members to fast and pray if they are facing a difficult life situation, and they wish to show God how completely dependent on him they are. Or, you might agree as a group to give up eating of one meal on a certain day to pray for some special need. The time you would have spent eating can be a special prayer time for all members of the group who wish to participate.

Lesson nine

This lesson is about sharing what we have with others. God makes it possible for each of us to have some possessions. Some people have lots of things and plenty of money, while others have only a few things and very little money. Still, God expects all of us to be willing to share what we have, whether it is much or little, with others. Jesus wants us to use our possessions to prepare for our future life with him. In this lesson we learn what Jesus said about giving, how much we should give, the proper attitude of the giver, God's promises to the giver, and the result of giving to the work of God in the world.

1. What Jesus said about giving.
 - a. Matthew 5:42 To whom should we give?
 - b. Matthew 22:21 What should we give to God?
What do we learn here about sharing what we have?

2. How much we should give.
 - a. Matthew 10:42 Is any gift too small?
 - b. Mark 12:41-44 How much did the poor widow give?
 - c. Acts 4:32-35 How much were these people willing to share?
 - d. Romans 12:8 How much should we contribute to the needs of others?
 - e. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 How much money should we give?
 - f. 2 Corinthians 9:6 What is the connection between sowing and reaping?
What does the Bible say about the amount we give?

3. The proper attitude of the giver.
 - a. Luke 3:10-11 What is our duty to people with no clothes or no food?
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:7 What attitude is suggested here?
 - c. Galatians 6:2 Whose burdens should we carry?
 - d. 1 John 3:17-18 What attitude is suggested here?
What are some good attitudes toward giving?

4. God's promises to the giver.
 - a. Matthew 6:31-33 What will God give us?
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:8-11 How much will God give you?
 - c. Ephesians 3:20 What is God able to do?
 - d. 2 Peter 1:3-4 How much will God give us?
What are some promises God makes?

5. The result of generous giving.
 - a. Matthew 6:19-21 What will you store up for yourselves?
 - b. Luke 6:38 What will you get if you give?
 - c. Luke 12:32-33 What happens when you give to the poor?
 - d. Philippians 4:14-19 What does God meet when you give?
 - e. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 What will happen to the generous giver?
 - f. 1 Peter 1:4 What will the generous giver inherit?
What lies ahead for the generous giver?

APPLICATION – When we give generously God promises to meet all our needs, but he does not promise to meet all our wants. We should not give to God's cause so we can get something we want in return. Giving is a loving act. We give because we are grateful for what God has given us. Out of a grateful heart we share what we have with others. Ask the members of your group if they would like to take up a love offering for someone in need. If they agree to this, tell them to bring their special gifts along to the next meeting. Then collect the gifts next time and give the offering to someone in need that the group wants to help.

Lesson ten

The disciple of Jesus has an enemy who is trying all the time to turn him away from the faith. This enemy is called **Satan or the devil** most of the time, although he has more than twelve different names in the Bible. Satan is fighting Jesus and his church. Satan's attempts to turn us away from our faith are called temptations. Satan is powerful, but Jesus has more power, and with the help of Jesus we can overcome the attacks of this enemy. In this lesson we study where the enemy came from, how he works, how to meet the enemy's attacks, and how God helps us overcome the enemy's attacks.

1. Where the enemy came from.
 - a. Isaiah 14:12-14 Where has the morning star (Satan) fallen from?
 - b. Ezekiel 28:14-17 Why was the guardian cherub (Satan) thrown out of heaven?
 - c. Revelation 12:7-9 What happened when the dragon (Satan) led a war in heaven? What are we told about the origin of this enemy?

2. How the enemy works.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 What should we be aware of?
 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:3 What did the serpent do to Eve?
 - c. 2 Corinthians 11:14 What does Satan pretend to be?
 - d. James 1:14-15 What can temptation lead to?
 - e. 1 Peter 5:8-9 What does the devil do, and what should we do? What are some of Satan's activities?

3. How we should meet the enemy.
 - a. Psalm 119:11 What should we do to keep from sinning?
 - b. Matthew 26:41 How can we keep from falling into temptation?
 - c. Romans 6:13 To whom should we offer ourselves?
 - d. Romans 13:14 How can we keep from sin?
 - e. Ephesians 4:27 What should we not give to the devil?
 - f. Ephesians 6:10-12 Whom do we struggle against?
 - g. Ephesians 6:13-18 How can we protect ourselves?
 - h. 2 Timothy 2:19 What must we turn away from?
 - i. James 4:7 What will happen if we resist the devil? How can we protect ourselves from the enemy?

4. How God helps us overcome the enemy.
 - a. Romans 8:31 Who is on our side?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:13 How will God help us?
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:57 What does God give us?
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 What will the Lord do?
 - e. Hebrews 2:18 What is Jesus able to do?
 - f. Hebrews 4:14-16 How does our great high priest (Jesus) help us?
 - g. 2 Peter 2:9 What does the Lord know how to do?
 - h. 1 John 4:4 Who is the greater power? How does God help us overcome the enemy?

APPLICATION – Temptation gives us an opportunity to fall, but it also gives us an opportunity to overcome the enemy. Too often we think first of the opportunity to fall when temptation comes. Instead, we should consider the opportunity to overcome temptation as the main goal when we are under the enemy’s attack. Have your group members repeat the following statement after you. “When I am tempted – I will think first – of the opportunity - to overcome the enemy – with God’s help.” Then tell your group members to ask you or another believer to be a prayer partner if they are experiencing strong temptation.

Lesson eleven

A disciple of Jesus is expected to make choices that are right and good. The old life of selfishness and sinful actions is left behind. The new life is lived in obedience to the Scriptures that tell us how Christians should live. In this lesson we begin with the standard of behavior that Jesus taught, then we look at the life that is right and good, the need to forgive others, how to live in obedience to Jesus, and the result of **doing good** things.

1. The standard of behavior that Jesus taught.
 - a. Matthew 7:12 What are we to do?
 - b. James 4:17 How important is it to do good?
What kinds of actions are expected of us?
2. Doing what is right and good.
 - a. Philippians 2:14 What are we told to do?
 - b. Colossians 1:9-12 What kind of life are we to live?
 - c. Colossians 3:12-17 What do these verses tell us to do?
 - d. 1 Timothy 4:12 What kind of example should we be?
 - e. James 3:18 What do peacemakers receive?
 - f. James 4:10 What will happen if we humble ourselves?
 - g. 1 Peter 1:15 Why should we be holy?
 - h. 2 Peter 1:5-9 What do these verses tell us to do?
 - i. 1 John 3:3 What are we told to do?
What kinds of right and good actions are expected of us?
3. The necessity to forgive others.
 - a. Matthew 6:14-15 How important is it to forgive others?
 - b. Matthew 18:21-22 How often should we forgive?
 - c. Mark 11:25 How does forgiving others affect our prayers?
 - d. Ephesians 4:32 How should we forgive each other?
What do we learn here about forgiving others?
4. How to live in obedience to Jesus.
 - a. John 14:21 What happens when we obey Jesus’ commands?
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:17 What does Christ do for us when we come to him?
 - c. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 With what weapons do we fight?
 - d. Colossians 2:6-7 How are we to live?
 - e. 2 Timothy 2:19 If we confess the name of the Lord, from what should we turn?
 - f. James 2:10 How complete should our obedience be?

- g. 1 Peter 2:19 How are we to live?
What do we learn here about living in obedience to Jesus?
- 5. What we receive for doing good and right things.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 What sort of reward is promised here?
 - b. Galatians 6:9-10 What will happen if we don't give up?
 - c. Ephesians 6:7-8 Who will reward us if we serve wholeheartedly?
 - d. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 What lies ahead if we have been faithful?
What rewards can the faithful disciple of Jesus expect to receive?

APPLICATION – You should impress upon your group the necessity for them to do what is right and good. Have them suggest some ways of behaving that are not right or are not good. Then lead your group in a discussion of what is wrong with the things they suggested, and how they should have behaved in each instance. Point out to them that Paul gives a clear answer about not continuing in sin in Romans 6:1 and 15. Pray for any of your group members who may be struggling with doing good and right things.

Lesson twelve

This lesson is about understanding and using the spiritual gifts that God gives to the disciples of Jesus. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to us when he returned to heaven. These gifts show us that the Holy Spirit is with us and is working in us as Jesus promised. As we use our gifts, the work of God on earth prospers. Our study includes what the spiritual gifts are, why they are given, who decides what gifts to give, how we should use our gifts, and some examples and teaching about spiritual gifts.

1. What spiritual gifts are.
 - a. John 14:15-18 Whom does Jesus promise to send?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:7 What are spiritual gifts?
What are spiritual gifts?
2. Why spiritual gifts are given.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:7 Why are spiritual gifts given?
 - b. Ephesians 4:11-12 Why did God give gifts for people to be church workers?
What are spiritual gifts intended to accomplish?
3. Who decides what gifts to give to people.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:11 Who determines the gifts to be given?
 - b. Hebrews 2:4 How are the gifts distributed?
Who makes the decision about spiritual gifts?
4. How people should use their spiritual gifts.
 - a. Romans 12:6-8 What should we do with the various spiritual gifts?
 - b. 1 Peter 4:10-11 How should we use our spiritual gifts?
How are we to use the spiritual gifts we receive from God?
5. Lists of the spiritual gifts.

- a. Romans 12:6-8 What seven gifts are listed here?
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 What nine gifts are listed here?
 - c. Ephesians 4:11 What five gifts of church offices are listed here?
 - d. 1 Peter 4:11 What two classes of spiritual gifts are listed here? (See 6. below)
What are the specific gifts listed in Scripture?
6. Examples and teachings about spiritual gifts.
- a. Speaking gifts (1 Peter 4:11)
 1. 1 Corinthians 14:3 Prophecy (preaching)
 2. Titus 2:7 Teaching
 3. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Encouraging
 4. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 Message of wisdom
 5. 2 Timothy 2:2 Message of knowledge
 6. Acts 2:1-4 Tongues
 7. 1 Corinthians 14:13 Interpretation of tongues
 - b. Serving gifts (1 Peter 4:11)
 1. 2 Timothy 1:16-18 Serving
 2. Acts 4:34-35 Contributing to the needs of others
 3. Hebrews 13:7-8 Leadership
 4. Luke 10:33-37 Showing mercy
 5. Matthew 8:5-10 Faith
 6. Acts 3:1-10 Healing
 7. Acts 28:3-5 Miraculous powers
 8. 1 John 4:1-3 Distinguishing between spirits
 - c. The gift to be a church worker Ephesians 4:11
What do these examples teach us about spiritual gifts?

APPLICATION – Many people believe that everyone who is a disciple of Jesus has a spiritual gift. Whether it is a speaking gift, a serving gift, or a gift to be a church worker, all gifts are equally important in the kingdom of God. Ask your group members to quietly think what their spiritual gift is, and how they might use it in the work of the kingdom. Then have several members tell what spiritual gift they feel some other member of the group has, as an encouragement to one another. Close with prayer that God would make clear to every member of the group what his spiritual gift is, and how he may put it to use in the kingdom of God.

Lesson thirteen

It is both a duty and a privilege for a disciple of Jesus to tell the good news about Jesus to those who are not believers. Telling the good news is sometimes called witnessing. Jesus commanded us to tell others about him, so it is a duty if we are obedient to him. But we would want to tell others about Jesus even if he had not commanded us to, because we want to share the joy that our salvation brings to us. In this lesson we study the command of Jesus, some examples of telling the good news, why we should tell it to others, where we are to tell it, and how we can tell it.

1. The command of Jesus.
 - a. Matthew 28:18-20 What four things are we told to do?

- b. Mark 16:15-16 To whom are we to preach the good news?
 - c. Acts 1:8 Where were the disciples told to witness about Jesus?
What is Jesus commanding us to do?
2. Some examples of telling the good news.
 - a. Luke 2:17-18 What did the shepherds do?
 - b. Acts 8:4 When the believers were scattered, what did they do?
 - c. Romans 15:20 What did Paul want to do?
 - d. 1 Corinthians 9:16 How important was it for Paul to tell others about Jesus?
Who told the good news?
 3. Why we should tell the good news.
 - a. Luke 12:8-9 What will happen if we tell or if we don't tell others about Jesus?
 - b. Luke 24:48 Who is telling the disciples to witness about Jesus?
 - c. John 20:21 Why should the disciples go out and witness for Jesus?
 - d. Acts 4:20 Why did the disciples tell others about Jesus?
 - e. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 Whose ambassadors are the disciples?
 - f. 1 John 4:15 If someone tells others about Jesus, what does that show?
What are some reasons why we should tell the good news to others?
 4. Where we are to tell the good news (witness).
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 To whom are we to witness?
 - b. 2 Kings 5:2-3 Where did this little girl witness?
 - c. Psalm 34:11 To whom does this verse tell us to witness?
 - d. Mark 5:19-20 Where did Jesus tell this person to witness?
 - e. John 17:18 Where did Jesus send the disciples to witness?
Where are some places where we are to witness?
 5. How we are to witness to others.
 - a. Psalm 73:28 What can we tell others about?
 - b. Matthew 5:16 What does Jesus tell us to do?
 - c. Romans 1:16-17 What was Paul's feeling about the gospel (good news)?
 - d. Ephesians 6:19 For what did Paul pray?
 - e. 2 Timothy 4:2 How was Timothy told to preach?
 - f. Philemon 1:5 What did Paul pray that Philemon would do?
 - g. 1 Peter 3:15 How does this verse suggest that we witness?
What are some ways that we can witness?

APPLICATION – Every disciple of Jesus is expected to be a witness for him. Ask some of your group members to share accounts of how they have witnessed to others, and what the results were. This will encourage the more timid ones to tell others about Jesus. The home is a good place to begin to witness. Other good places are with your friends, at your workplace, in school, anywhere you meet other people. Witnesses don't have to be preachers. Just tell what Jesus has done for you, how he has changed your life. That is a powerful witness, and God will honor it.

Lesson fourteen

Leading a person to put his trust in Jesus is one of the most exciting and important things in your life. Proverbs 11:30 tells us that “he who wins souls is wise.” Some people are afraid they might say the wrong thing, so they don’t try to invite people to put their trust in Jesus. But James 1:5 tells us to ask God for wisdom. He will guide our words. There are many ways to help people to understand their need for salvation and to lead them to the savior. This lesson is one way; it is not the only way. The first part of the lesson shows why we need to put our trust in Jesus, and the second part tells us how to put our trust in Jesus.

1. Why we need to put our trust in Jesus.
 - a. Everyone will die. Psalm 89:48 Romans 5:12
 - b. After death we will face the judgment. Hebrews 9:27 Revelation 20:11-15
 - c. We need righteousness to face the judgment. Proverbs 11:4 Romans 10:3
 - d. But no one is born righteous. Romans 3:10-11 John 3:3
 - e. God has given laws that we must obey. Exodus 20:1-17 Romans 2:15
 - f. But people break them. Matthew 5:21-22 Matthew 5:27-28
 - g. Breaking God’s laws is sin. 1 John 3:4 Romans 6:23
 - h. Breaking even one law is bad. James 2:10 Matthew 5:19
 - i. We can’t argue about this. Romans 3:19 Matthew 5:17
 - j. Law serves a good purpose. Romans 3:20 Romans 7:7 Galatians 3:24
 - k. Sin is the problem. Romans 6:23 James 1:15

2. How we can put our trust in Jesus.
 - a. God’s solution to the problem of sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21 John 3:16
John 14:6 Isaiah 53:6
 - b. God wants us to put our trust in Jesus. 2 Peter 3:9 John 3:17
 - c. We must confess our sins. 1 John 1:9 Proverbs 28:13 James 5:16
 - d. We must repent (turn from sin to God). Acts 3:19 Acts 17:30
 - e. We must believe the Good News. John 3:18 John 3:36 Acts 16:31
 - f. We must put our trust in Jesus. Romans 10:13 John 5:24 Romans 10:9-10
 - g. We must become a disciple (follower of Jesus). 1 John 2:5-6 Titus 3:8

APPLICATION – We may need to help a person pray to put his trust in Jesus. Here is a sample prayer we might use to guide him. This is only one example among others that you may use. Ask him to repeat the prayer after you, then give him a few words at a time to repeat. “Dear God, I know that I will die, and I am not prepared to face you in judgment. I have broken your laws and I know that I deserve eternal punishment. Thank you for sending Jesus to die in my place for my sins. I now turn from my sins and put my trust in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I believe that his death on the cross takes away my sins and makes me righteous in your sight. From now on I will be a follower of Jesus, and I will try with your help to live as Jesus wants me to live. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”