

LIFE IS A JOURNEY



A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE
SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF LIFE

About the Series

When you became a follower of Jesus, you started on the spiritual journey of your life. You went through the gate of conversion and started up the path of discipleship. As you travel the path, you will start to change, not because you have to but because you want to. You won't always make the right decisions; you will stumble, but Jesus and your fellow travelers are there to help you get back on your feet. The further you travel, the more you will learn about God, how to listen to him and how to talk with him. You will learn more deeply who God is, who Jesus is and what he did, and who the Holy Spirit is and what he does for us. And you will learn about walking with other believers (the "church") and inviting others to join you ("evangelism"). Because life is a journey, God does not expect you to get everything right the first time; we are all on a learning curve and God is patient with us. However, you were never intended to walk alone. You were saved into a new family, with new brothers and sisters, and a new father. May this study not only help you in your journey with God, but also in your relationships with each other.

About the Speaker

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Formerly Bill was a preaching pastor at a church in Washington state, and prior to that a professor of New Testament and director of the Greek Program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He also taught at Azusa Pacific University for ten years.

Bill is the author of the bestselling Greek textbook, Basics of Biblical Greek, and many other resources. He was the New Testament chair of the English Standard Version translation of the Bible, and is currently serving on the NIV translation committee. Robin and Bill have been married since 1983 and have three children.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. 1981, in New Testament. Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland.

M.A. 1977, in Biblical Studies. Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

B.A. 1975, in Biblical Studies, minor in Greek. Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota;

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While we become God’s children one disciple at a time, as children we are members of a new family with a new father, new brothers and sisters, and a new home. How do I relate to these people? Do I need to spend time with them? Is this an easy or difficult

task? How does the early church help us understand these issues? How does my love for God show itself to others?

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Disciples are to make more disciples. This is one of the most joyous experiences of your life as you share how God made you alive, and he will do the same for your friends, neighbors, and others. This isn't a frightening process; it is in fact natural for people who have been changed and are living changed lives. How will people respond to you? What is a "personal testimony"? How do I tell people they too can be a disciple of Jesus? What if they don't like me?

Session 1 - Conversion

Introduction

It's always a good idea to look back over your conversion experience. What do you think happened when you became a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you unclear about anything? Could you possibly have misunderstood anything? Did anything happen of which you might not be aware?

Teaching Notes

John 3:16

1. “For God so loved the world”

Starting point: fact that there is a God

This loving God created the world

Something terrible happened to the world

The consequence of that sin is separation from the holy God

Punishment of living, separated from God is death—eternal separation—Romans 6:23

Our Creator is a God of justice

2. Good news: God is also as loving as he is just ...“That he gave his only Son”

What actually happened on the cross — more than a man dying

Forgiveness available

How is that possible? How can one man's death pay the penalty for the sins others?

A. Buried deep in the mercy of God

B. Only possible because Jesus is fully God and fully Human

3. Our response: “that whoever believes in him”

Whoever

“Him” — Christianity is not a religion or philosophy or a set of doctrines

Not simply “believe”

“In” — John breaking the rules of Greek grammar to make a point — “believe into”

Consequences: understand that salvation is not something we earn — earn favor

Become a disciple/follower/Christian, not by doing religious things to earn God's favor

4. “Should not perish but have eternal life”

We enjoy many of the benefits of eternal life here and now

Before you made the decision, Jesus called you to count the cost

Absolutely free and undeserved, and yet it will cost you everything

You counted the cost and made the decision to follow Jesus

God made the world, loved the world, gave his Son for the world

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

What is at least one thing I can apply this week?

Session 2 - Change

Introduction

“Conversion” means you converted from one thing to another. In your case, you changed from not being a disciple of Jesus to being one. It also means that God is now at work in your life, starting to make you be more like Jesus. Does this surprise you? What actually happened when you became a Christian? What does this new life as a follower of Jesus look like? Does my life change automatically?

Teaching Notes

This new life of the new believer is *different* from the life we were living

This should not come as a surprise

1. You were separated from God — death; sins forgiven

2. Formerly were not in relationship with God, but now are

3. You certainly understood that you were called to “Repent”

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord” (Acts 3:19 NIV)

- I changed my *thinking* about who Jesus is and what he did
 - Committed to change my *actions* — turn my back on sin and to live new
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9b

4. Perhaps in addition you understood that you had been *dead* in your sin

And yet, much more happened to you than you probably realized

The more you understand about the change that God worked in you, the more you will understand how different your new life will become. Your new life as a believer is going to be different because you are different.

Before conversion

When you responded in faith (in your actual conversion)

- Rescued from kingdom of darkness and brought into his kingdom of light
- My sins totally forgiven
- Justified — acquitted of all guilt
- Free from all condemnation — Jesus absorbed all of God's wrath against sin
- Redeemed — price paid; freedom secured from mastery/tyranny of sin
- Sanctified — made holy

Caused me to be born again — Made me into a new creation

- Adopted me as child of God, new family ... inheritance
- Home, citizen of heaven
- Given the Holy Spirit as a helper and guarantee of God's promises

What does this new life look like?

1. Life of discipleship — follower; learned

2. “Fruits of the Spirit”

Is this change automatic? What is my role, if any?

1. Not automatic — you can fight against it and win

2. Can't change on your own

3. The desire and ability to live the Christian life is all of God —co-operate (yield)

Philippins 2:12-13

Romans 12:1-2

We constantly need to be reminded to live by God's power

We are called to be the “Salt of the Earth” — life is different

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

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Session 3 - When You Stumble

Introduction

Even though God's power is at work within you, helping you to become more like Jesus, you will stumble. This is not to remove the joy of your new faith; it is to prepare you for the joy of spiritual growth that lies ahead. God knows this and is not surprised, and it does not affect his commitment toward you. What is "sin"? Is temptation sin? How will you tell God that you sinned and are sorry? Does he forgive? Can you be cleansed?

Teaching Notes

1. "Relativism"

- Denial of the existence of absolute truth
- Nothing necessarily right/wrong, true/false
- That everything is relative
- True for one person is not necessarily true for another
- What is true for me this morning is not necessarily true this afternoon

2. "Sin"

"Missing the mark"

3. "Temptation" — being enticed to sin

A. Temptation is not sin

B. Don't have to give in to temptation

C. God is on your side

What will you do when you stumble and sin — miss God's mark?

1. Confess your sin

Agreeing with God that you missed the mark — 1 John 1:8-9

Model of Psalm 51:1-4a, 7, 10-12

- a. No excuses/victim — complete and total admission of sin
- b. Agree with God that sin is *really* bad — no gray
- c. Call to forgive not because you deserve it but because God is merciful

Your tendency will be to do the opposite

Practical advice #1. Get it over with

Confess early — often — fully

Practical advice #2. “Confess your sins to one another” (James 5:16)

2. Receive his forgiveness

3. Be cleansed

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

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Session 4 - Listening to God

Introduction

A crucial element of any relationship is communication, both listening and speaking. God has spoken to us two basic ways, through creation and through his Word, the Bible. What do the terms “inspiration,” “authority,” and “canonicity” mean? Can we trust the Bible? How do I listen to God as I read his word? Am I supposed to do anything beyond reading it?

Teaching Notes

Three terms

1. “Revelation”

God making himself known to us

2. “General Revelation”

Information about God available to all people all the time

Romans 1:19-20

a. Exists — b. Power — c. Divinity (separate from creation)

3. “Specific Revelation”

Information about God available to some people some of the time

Bible

Two parts — Old and New Testament

Four important topics — time only for conclusions

1. “Inspiration”

Comes from God (2 Timothy 3:16a; 2 Peter 1:20b-21)

2. “Authority” — 2 Timothy 3:16b

3. “Canonicity”

Church as whole accepted these 66 as inspired & rejected others

4. “Trustworthy”

Accurately recorded Jesus; not contradictions

What do you do with the Bible?

1. Read it!

a. Healthy relationship needs healthy communication — listen by reading

b. How else know what God is saying to us?

c. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand

2. Meditate on it!

Fill your mind with Scripture

Mull over, reflect, ask God to help you understand and apply

Relationship is worth the effort

3. Memorize it!

God's truth on the tip of our tongue

"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

4. Obey it

Purpose of Bible reading is not increased knowledge — "Fool" (Matthew 7:24-27)

Conclusion

As you obey, you will learn to trust it

As you obey and trust, you will be transformed

Can we be People of the Book — know it and be transformed by it?

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

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Session 5 - Speaking with God

Introduction

Healthy communication requires not only listening but also talking. Prayer is simply talking with God, about anything and everything. He is our new Father, and he wants to hear from you. How do you pray? What do you pray about? What if I have trouble listening to him speaking?

Teaching Notes

When you became a Christian you entered into a relationship with your Creator. Like any relationship, communication plays a significant role. God speaks to us in the Bible and we listen.

God also listens to us as we speak to him in prayer

“Prayer”: talking with God about anything and everything

“How do I pray?”

(Matthew 6:9-13)

6:9a — “Pray like this”

1. “Our Father in heaven”

Teaches us to approach God with familiarity He cares for us as a father cares for his children

2. “In heaven”

Teaches us to approach God with astonishment, trembling, reverence, and awe

First half — Prayer focuses, first and foremost, on God

3. “Hallowed be your name” — May your name be hallowed

“Hallowed” means “holy” — sinless

God is holy — calling on God to act in such a way that the world sees he is holy — sinlessness, perfection

In all I (don't) say and do — you be held up so all can see your holiness — name be revered

4. “Your kingdom come” — May your kingdom come

A kingly *rule* in the lives of his disciples

Calling on God to exercise his kingly rule in me — expand throughout the world

5. “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

God's will — purposes; desires — are always done, perfectly, in heaven

No surprise — being a Christian means it is no longer all about me “I have been crucified with Christ ...”

Second Half - Our opportunity to express total dependence on God for everything

4. “Give us this day our daily bread”

Dependence for physical needs

5. “Forgive us our debts ...”

Dependence for spiritual needs

Note the relationship between God forgiving us, and us forgiving others

Point is so important it is elaborated on after the prayer — vv 14-15

Sign of my true repentance - Matthew 18:21-35

6. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

God does not tempt anyone with sin (James 1:13)

We are dependent on God to resist the power of sin and the evil one

Two practical suggestions

1. “Speaking *with* God” — healthy communication is always a dialogue

2. Memorize it

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

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Session 6 - Learning more about God

Introduction

When you became a Christian, you understood certain things about God. But did you know that he knows everything? That he is present everywhere? That he is all-powerful? How then should we respond to a fuller knowledge of God? What is worship? How should we respond to what we know of God?

Teaching Notes

Three “attributes” — qualities

Goal: paint a picture of God’s majesty and grandeur

Call us to reverence, awe — worship

God cannot, ultimately, be known — “incomprehensibility”

1. Omniscience

“Omni” meaning “all” — knows all

Palms 139:1-4

2. “Omnipresent”

Present everywhere — Psalm 139:7-12

Not that God is huge — he is bigger than huge

Not that he is standing here or sitting there — localized

“In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Not spread thinly throughout creation

3. Omnipotent”

Omni-potentate — all powerful

“Sovereign”

God exercises his sovereign rule — kingly — over his creation

Psalms 139:13-16

So How do We Respond to this Revelation? Worship

What is worship?

Worship is not singing — although song can become an instrument of worship

English: “Worth ship” — attributing worth

Hebrew/Greek: “bow down; serve” “Bowing all that we are before all that he is.”

“Our faithful response to God’s gracious revelation”

Isaiah 6:1-8

1. God’s holiness & Isaiah’s sin (worship) — so God reveals more
2. God’s mercy — humbly receive forgiveness — proper response
3. Will (work to do) — “Here am I. Send me.” — didn’t know what He would say

Normative—true worshippers understand God’s will, mercy, holiness, & our sin

Challenge: Never let God become small

God is without limitation

May we never just sit there and not respond

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

What is at least one thing I can apply this week?

Session 7 - Who is Jesus?

Introduction

Jesus is the best known person in history. He has had more effect on world history than any other leader or philosophy or political movement. Many people know the name, but who is he? What did he say about himself? What did his followers say about him? And what is the significance and relevance of these questions and our answers?

Teaching Notes

Everything in life and death hinges on your answer to this question

Acts 2 — Peter's first sermon — answers this question

2:22-24 — 32-33a — 36-39

Who is Jesus?

- Peter starts with the name: "Jesus of Nazareth" (v 22)
Part of the gospel message: Jesus was a real human being
- Born to Mary and Joseph
- Gathered 12 followers and for 3.5 years preached
- Never married — owned a house — traveled far from home
- Seen as religious rebel
Finally deserted by friends and killed by his own countrymen
- Real human being

Peter makes it clear that he is not just "Jesus of Nazareth"

Much more than a mere human being Acts 2:36 — after resurrection: "Lord"

What does "Lord" mean?

"Yahweh"

Peter is preaching that Jesus is God — Great I AM of the burning bush

“Son of God” used throughout the Bible to describe Jesus

“These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31)

Title of the gospel of Mark — “Jesus Christ, the Son of God”

Explicitly call Jesus “God” in the Bible

John 1:1

Jesus: “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58)

Thomas: “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28)

Paul “Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)

Peter “The righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1b)

Allowing for the Trinity

“Lord” in Acts 2:36

“Incarnation”

“God became incarnate, flesh” “Jesus is fully God and fully human”

Jesus did not just *appear* to be human

Likewise, the Incarnation teaches Jesus is not just a human being
Liar, lunatic, or God

Is the Incarnation important? To understand and to believe? Yes!

1. The only way that salvation could even be a possibility for us—God-man

a. Jesus had to be fully human if he were to die for human sins

“He had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation [sacrifice] for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17).

b. He had to be fully God

No human being ...

Could have carried all sin of world on cross

Could have lived a perfect life — acceptable sacrifice

No human being's death could be applied to my sin

Ultimately: “Salvation belongs to our God” (Psalms 3:8; Revelation 7:10)

Significant ramifications

2. Necessary if you are a Christian

Full humanity — 1 John 4:2-3

Full divinity — Romans 10:9

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Central question of life: “Who is Jesus?”

1. Repent of your misunderstanding — sin
2. Preoccupied not with religion — “Who is Jesus?”

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

What is at least one thing I can apply this week?

Session 8 - What Jesus Did Do?

Introduction

Jesus did many things while on earth, but the most significant of all was dying on the cross. But what exactly happened? What was accomplished? What does the Bible mean when it talks about Jesus being the “lamb of God”? Is there anything that can help me understand the significance of his death? Do I need to be reminded about it on a regular basis?

Teaching Notes

Atonement

John the Baptist — prepare for Jesus

“Lamb”

Two principles

1. Sin against a holy God is a very serious thing — punished by death
2. God is a merciful God who will accept the death of a sinless substitute in our place — forgive our sins

What does it mean that Jesus is the sacrificial lamb of God?

Our sin must be punished by death — Romans 6:23

God in his mercy will accept the death of Jesus in our place “Substitutionary

Atonement” — Isaiah 53:5-6

“Takes away the sin of the world”

On the cross God took our sin away from us and laid it on Jesus - 2 Corinthians 5:21

Two ramifications are especially significant

#1: Only the Lamb of God can take away sin — only acceptable sacrifice

Jesus: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

Peter: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

#2: “Sin of the world” — all of the sin of the world

“He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world.” (1 John 2:2; NIV).

Jesus’ death is sufficient to cover all of the sin of all of the world

Jesus’ work on the cross is sufficient to forgive all the sins of all who believe

Sufficiency of the cross is illustrated at least two ways

A. “It is finished” (John 19:30)

B. Temple veil was torn

Atonement does no good unless you respond

John 6:40

“For by grace you have been saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Grace” is God’s gift of the Lamb

“Faith” is our necessary response to God’s grace — “It is finished”

Wonderful teaching tool — Communion

Only one who died for sin — death sufficient to cover all your sin

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

What is at least one thing I can apply this week?

Session 9 - Holy Spirit

Introduction

Christians are monotheists; we believe in one God. But we are also Trinitarians; we believe in three “persons” of the Trinity — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Who is this third member of the Trinity? What actually does he do? What is his on-going role in my life? What does it mean to be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit? Do I have to do anything, or does he do all the work? Where would we be if it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit?

Teaching Notes

Christians are Monotheists

We are also Trinitarians

Three “persons” of the “godhead”

“Baptizing the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”

The activity of this third member of the Trinity

First activity: Regeneration

“Process whereby God gives us new life, a new birth, new creation”—conversion

Begins with conviction of sin — John 16:7-8

In the midst of conviction, the HS begins to draw people to God — John 6:44

The Holy Spirit is the actual agent of regeneration

Also seals our regeneration

Second activity: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

John 14:16-17

Many ways in which he helps

1. Daily the Holy Spirit guides

“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

2. Daily he empowers

Enables us, not only to hear his voice, but also to obey Philippians 2:12-13

Empowerment: Four Thoughts

1. One of the ways in which God empowers — is to give us “spiritual gifts”

2. Purpose of the Holy Spirit’s Guidance and Empowerment?

Our lives change — look more like Jesus

Romans 8:29 — conformed to image of Son

1 John 3:2 — “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

Goal is that our changed lives exhibit what is called the “Fruits of the Spirit”

“Fruit” simply means the visible results of God changing my life Galatians 5:16, 19-25

3. The Holy Spirit will not empower us — will not produce fruit — without our co-operation

4. At a practical level, what does it look like to be empowered by the Holy Spirit?

How does it differ from working hard?

Begins with our confession of our inability — “I can’t do this alone”

Not an excuse for laziness — Romans 12:1-2

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

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Session 10 - Walking with God

Introduction

When you became a Christian, you started to walk with God. It is a day-by-day process in which sin has less hold on your life and you more and more look like Jesus. But some days are more difficult than others, especially when difficult things happen. Why do these “bad things” happen? Can I keep back parts of myself from God if doing so helps me avoid pain? Are there any consequences to allowing sin in some parts of my life? What does it mean that Jesus is both “Savior” and “Lord”?

Teaching Notes

“Sanctification”

Definition: “Set apart” from sin “Become holy”

What does spiritual growth look like?

More and more we look like Jesus, and less and less like the sinful world

Our attitudes/behavior start to reflect the attitudes/behavior of Jesus

Lives start to show the fruits of the Spirit

This is God’s will for your life: “Sanctification” (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

Practical questions of sanctification:

Have you started the process of growth into spiritual maturity?

Has your life started to change?

Do you look more like Jesus and less like the world?

To help us grow, God will allow difficult circumstances into our life

Genuineness of my faith is being tested and refined — 1 Peter 1:6-7

Can produce a Christ-like character — Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4

When difficult times come, how will you respond?

The temptation will be to compartmentalize

- 1. Compartmentalize your time**
- 2. Compartmentalize money**
- 3. Compartmentalize our affections**

Many others areas

Not the deal we made with Jesus — Savior and Lord

Jesus wants all of us — “followers; disciples” — no part-time disciples

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

“Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33)

What will happen if we compartmentalize our lives?

- 1. Harm your relationship with God — something between God and you**
- 2. If continues, eventually will lose the assurance of salvation**

3. For those who give up: “warning passages”

“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples” (John 8:31)

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

You and I have been reconciled, “if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard” (Colossians 1:23).

“For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end” (Hebrews 3:14).

Jesus is Savior and Lord

Calls us to grow up into sanctification — look less like world and more like his Son

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

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Session 11 - Walking Together

Introduction

While we become God's children one disciple at a time, as children we are members of a new family with a new father, new brothers and sisters, and a new home. How do I relate to these people? Do I need to spend time with them? Is this an easy or difficult task? How does the early church help us understand these issues? How does my love for God show itself to others?

Teaching Notes

New Father

Family bound together by love for our father — through him to one another

This loving unity of the family of God preaches Jesus to world — John 17:21, 23

Authentic biblical community

Our American culture is one of individualism, fragmentation, and isolation

The very thing we crave the most — authentic relationships built upon the redeeming work of Jesus Christ — never find because we are too busy living fragmented, disconnected lives, without margin

We were built for community

Adam — “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18)

Created the church to meet our deep need of community

Model of the early church — Acts 2:42-47

All about God — God is in the center — pervades everything they do

If God is truly in the center of our lives — individually/corporately

1. Growth in spiritual maturity — individually and corporately

2. Fellowship

Impossible to be obedient to God in isolation from the family of God

3. Ministry (“service,” “outreach”)

“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

All gifts are for the edification of the body, the common good

Hard work

“For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works in me” (Colossians 1:29)

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

What is at least one thing I can apply this week?

Session 12 - Inviting Others to Walk with You

Introduction

Disciples are to make more disciples. This is one of the most joyous experiences of your life as you share how God made you alive, and he will do the same for your friends, neighbors, and others. This isn't a frightening process; it is in fact natural for people who have been changed and are living changed lives. How will people respond to you? What is a "personal testimony"? How do I tell people they too can be a disciple of Jesus? What if they don't like me?

Teaching Notes

Great Commission — Matthew 28:18-20

We all are "ambassadors for Christ" — 2 Cor 5:19-21

All disciples are to invite others to walk with us/Jesus—self-replicating

Natural — think through the process

1. In conversion, God changed me ("regeneration")

Changed people will/must live changed lives

Things can't continue as they did before — new birth, life, creation — different

2. As you live out a changed life, people start to notice

Phil 2:14-15

"Light of the world" — Matt 5:14-16

Different — notice

"Salt of the earth" — Matt 5:13

Christians don't live in isolation from the world — Just as salt was used to preserve meat, so also Jesus "calls his disciples to arrest corruption and prevent moral decay in their world" (Blomberg, 102).

Just as salt can become mixed with various impure substances and therefore become worthless as a preservative, so also Christians can mix themselves with the things of the world and become “worthless as agents of change and redemption” (Blomberg, 102).

3. As people start to notice you, they will wonder — “What’s different?”

1 Peter 3:1-4

Two ways they will respond

“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life” (2 Cor 2:14-16).

1. To some we will be the aroma of life — “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16).

2. To others, we will be the stench of death, their death — 1 Peter 4:3-5

4. Key: if you smell like the aroma of life, they will ask you why

“Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Col 4:5-6).

Are you ready? — 1 Peter 3:15b-16a

“Personal testimony”

John 9:24-25

Acts 4:19-20 (cf. 1 John 1:3)

What life was like before you became a follower of Jesus — minimal

Why you decided to become a disciple — actual event

Difference it has made in your life (John 9:25)

- 1. Prepare — practice**
- 2. Personal testimony is only the first step**
- 3. Keep the focus on Jesus**
- 4. Don't take on too much responsibility**

Group Discussion Notes

Take Aways

What are some highlights from this study?

What are questions I still have?

What is at least one thing I can apply this week?