

MIDWEEK EVENT

This week's main point is: Believers were never meant to follow Jesus alone.

SCRIPTURE | Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; John 15:16-17; Galatians 6:1-5; Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:24

THEOLOGY CONNECTION | DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is a process that takes place both formally and informally to affect spiritual maturity as people follow Jesus. Informal discipleship, as passages like Deuteronomy 6:4-9 suggest, happens everywhere, in every arena of life. Growing in our faith and deepening our walk with Christ requires our whole life, not just the mind. Formal discipleship refers to periods of instruction. We make disciples through our words and actions, providing verbal instruction from God's Word and non-verbal examples through our lives (Acts 20:17-24).

CHRIST CONNECTION

God's path is a path toward knowing and trusting in Jesus. He is the only path to follow for He is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). No other path leads to God or to eternal peace.

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DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; JOHN 15:16-17

BELIEVERS ARE MEANT TO GROW TOGETHER.

We looked at Jesus's call for believers to "make disciples" last week (Matt. 28:18-20). While making disciples certainly includes sharing the gospel—sin separated us from God; Jesus died for our sin, making reconciliation (right relationship) with God possible for all who trust in Jesus as Savior; He rose again from the dead three days later, defeating death to offer us eternal life—it goes beyond that. Making disciples is about teaching the daily, moment-by-moment realities of following Jesus. Making disciples is about believers who are further along in their faith walk coming alongside new believers to help them grow. This might look like asking and answering questions about God and faith, studying Scripture together, praying together, or even gently correcting misunderstandings and ungodly behaviors carried over from the new believer's old way of life. But even mature believers need to be discipled. This is one reason attending a local church and being involved in a small group is so important. Disciples of Jesus are both constantly growing in their faith and helping others grow in their faith too.

- › **WHAT COMES TO MIND FOR YOU WHEN YOU HEAR THE PHRASE "MAKE DISCIPLES"?**
- › **WHO HAS HELPED YOU GROW IN YOUR FAITH?**
- › **ARE YOU CURRENTLY HELPING SOMEONE GROW IN HIS OR HER FAITH? WHY OR WHY NOT?**
- › **HOW DO YOU NEED TO BE DISCIPLED BY A MORE MATURE BELIEVER RIGHT NOW? WHO STANDS OUT TO YOU AS SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE WILLING TO HELP YOU GROW IN YOUR FAITH?**
- › **WHAT DO YOU THINK DISCIPLESHIP LOOKS LIKE ON A DAILY, PRACTICAL LEVEL?**

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2 ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12; GALATIANS 6:1-5; HEBREWS 3:12-14; 10:24

BELIEVERS ARE MEANT TO WALK TOGETHER.

Discipleship involves growing together, which includes teaching and confronting. But believers are also meant to celebrate one another's wins and support one another through difficult times. While that can certainly happen between a mature believer and new believer, believers at all stages of faith are called to support one another. Jesus knew following Him would be tough. This is one of the reasons He encouraged His disciples to love each other the same way He loved them (John 13:34). Believers are meant to lift one another up, to comfort one another, and to protect one another—physically, emotionally, and spiritually (Eccl. 4:9-12). Paul also says we're meant to "carry one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2); in other words, we're supposed to carry the heaviness of life together through sharing, listening, and showing up for others. Sin is enticing, and living life God's way isn't easy, especially as the world around us calls us to live for ourselves and do what we want. Living for Jesus seems completely radical and maybe even a little weird to those who don't know Him. That's okay, and it's also why we're to "encourage each other daily" (Heb. 10:13) as a guard against sin. More than that, the way we think about and care for one another matters. We can use our words and actions to encourage other believers to love well and do the work God has called them to do (Heb. 10:24). Scripture also tells us to confess our sins to one another, not to gossip, but so we can pray together for healing (James 5:16). Every area of the Christian life thrives on connection. Yes, each person is responsible to God for his or her own actions. Yes, salvation happens between an individual and Jesus. No, no one else's belief, even your parents', can save you. But as we live set apart from the world, living set apart together gives us greater focus on Jesus, greater courage, and greater hope for the future.

- › **WHEN HAVE YOU CELEBRATED A WIN WITH ANOTHER BELIEVER?**
- › **HOW HAS SOMEONE ELSE'S ENCOURAGEMENT CHANGED THE WAY YOU VIEWED YOURSELF OR YOUR FAITH?**
- › **WHO CAN YOU "BUILD UP" IN THE FAITH? WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO DO THAT?**
- › **WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW JESUS ALONGSIDE OTHER BELIEVERS?**
- › **HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THIS TO BE TRUE IN YOUR LIFE?**

WRAP UP

Spend some time encouraging and building one another up. Place students in small groups and explain that each person gets to be the encouraged while all of the others in the group are to share something that student does well or a positive thing about him or her, related to his or her faith or character. If a student is experiencing a difficult time, students can listen. Instead of praying over the whole group as you dismiss, encourage students to pray in their small groups, asking God to comfort those who need it and to help them all learn to follow Him closely while growing together along the way.