

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (March 30, 2025) FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

When was the last time you had a meaningful conversation with someone in your family, with someone who is a close friend, with someone you work with, go to school with, someone you only know casually? Would your answer change if you were asked when you had your last meaningful conversation about Christian faith? My answer would change.

I have meaningful conversations on a regular basis with others about health, about jobs, about relationships. But something changes, something is elevated, more alive for me, when the subject of the discussion turns to Jesus. I love those moments. It takes a level of trust for those conversations to go well. It takes a level of compassion and honesty too. When mutual respect and honesty is offered the relationship moves deeper and future discussions are often better, more genuine, more freeing.

Christian faith has never relied on, and I believe never will rely on, big marketing campaigns, impersonal ads, generic appeals. It has always advanced, changed hearts and minds, as a result of personal relationships, one life sharing with another the miracle of Jesus. It requires being a good listener even more than being a good talker. And, more importantly, it requires a connection with the Holy Spirit. When we are wondering, “is this the time to talk about Jesus?” we pray, we wait, we listen, and the Holy Spirit leads. Unless the Holy Spirit opens a door our efforts will prove futile ... or worse. We trust He is present with us. He is working behind the scenes in us, and in the lives of those we are talking to. That relieves all pressure. He is the only One who can accomplish anything of eternal value in our life, and theirs. He will, in His timing, take what we say, and the relationships we have, and breathe life into the embers of distracted, disconnected, or dead souls.

He has been good to us. And, patient. What a privilege to be invited to cooperate with Him as He introduces Himself to others.

Ordinary Obedience ... Extraordinary Fruit (Psalm 40:9-10/Mt 28:19-20) NRSV

⁹ I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O Lord.

¹⁰ I have not hidden your saving help within my heart;
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.” (Psalm 40:9-10) NRSV

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:19-20)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What do these passage command us to do and say?
2. What do we learn about God from these two passages?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. What does, “I have told the glad news of deliverance” mean?
4. What does, “teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” mean? What has He commanded us?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. What are the most common topics for conversation today?
6. What are some negative experiences you’ve had, or seen, of people talking about Jesus?
7. What are some positive experiences? Why the differences?
8. It is easy for you to talk to others about Jesus? Discuss why it is easy, or not easy, for you.
9. He commands, “Go! Make disciples.” What is a disciple? How are disciples made? Is there still a need to “make disciples” today? Explain.
10. Who told you about Jesus? How did you respond when they first talked to you? Were you open or closed to Jesus at that point in your life?
11. If someone asked you why you are a Christian, what would you say? What can you tell others about Jesus?
12. Write out a one-minute account of how and why you became a Christian.
13. Who does God what you to talk to about Him this week?

As we spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be a natural part of our day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you wait and listen. Ask Him to help you know when the Holy Spirit is prompting you to have a faith conversation. Ask God to give you compassion and courage when He opens a door. God will be with you because He loves you. Go!