

SCRIPTUREDEPTH STUDY PACKS

Discipleship Essentials: Following Jesus Daily

A 12-week foundations study on prayer, Scripture, obedience, and life in community.

12-Week Study · Leader's Guide · Free Sample (Week 1)

This is a free sample containing the introduction and week 1 of 12. Get the full leader's guide and participant worksheets at scripturedepth.com/studies/discipleship-essentials.

WELCOME

A Word for the Leader

Welcome to 'Discipleship Essentials: Following Jesus Daily.' As a leader, you have the incredible opportunity to guide new believers and those returning to the basics in their journey of faith. This study is designed to help participants deepen their relationship with Jesus and understand what it truly means to be His disciples. We believe that through intentional study and community, each person can grow in their faith and live out the teachings of Jesus in everyday life.

This study is crafted with the heart of discipleship in mind, focusing on the foundational aspects of following Jesus. Whether your group consists of new believers eager to learn or seasoned Christians looking to refresh their understanding, these sessions will provide a solid framework for spiritual growth. Each week, we'll explore a different aspect of discipleship, from the initial call to follow Jesus to the enduring legacy we leave as His followers.

Our prayer is that this study will not only inform but transform. As participants engage with Scripture, discuss its implications, and apply it to their lives, we trust that the Holy Spirit will work powerfully in your group. You'll find that each session is an opportunity for individuals to encounter God, build community, and be equipped for the journey of faith.

Thank you for your commitment to leading others in their walk with Christ. Your role is vital, and we are grateful for your dedication to helping others grow as disciples. May God bless you and your group as you embark on this journey together.

How to Use This Study

This study is structured to provide a consistent weekly rhythm that facilitates learning and growth. Each session includes a teaching component, a Scripture passage for reflection, guided discussion questions, and a worksheet for personal application. We recommend setting aside 60-90 minutes for each session to allow ample time for teaching, discussion, and prayer.

Begin each session by introducing the week's topic and setting the stage for what participants will explore. Then, delve into the Scripture passage, encouraging group members to share their insights and questions. The discussion questions are designed to prompt thoughtful conversation and personal reflection, helping participants connect biblical truths to their own lives.

The worksheet serves as a tool for participants to engage more deeply with the material throughout the week. Encourage group members to complete it as part of their personal devotion time, fostering a habit of daily reflection and application. This ongoing engagement will reinforce the weekly lessons and support spiritual growth.

As a leader, you have the flexibility to adapt the study to your group's needs. Feel free to print unlimited copies for your group, ensuring that everyone has access to the materials. Our hope is that this study will be a blessing to your community, equipping each person to follow Jesus more closely and live out their faith with purpose and passion.

The Call to Follow

WEEK 1 OF 12

Focus: Luke 9:23-25; Matthew 4:18-22

“He said to all, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever will lose his life for my sake, the same will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits his own self?”

Luke 9:23-25

“Walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers: Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers for men.” They immediately left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them. They immediately left the boat and their father, and followed him.”

Matthew 4:18-22

Teaching

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus presents a profound invitation to those who wish to follow Him. He speaks of denying oneself, taking up one's cross daily, and following Him. This call is not merely an invitation to observe or admire from a distance; it is a call to active participation in a transformative journey. Jesus makes it clear that following Him requires a willingness to set aside personal ambitions and comforts. This is not about self-punishment but about finding true life and purpose in Him. When Jesus speaks of taking up the cross, He is inviting us to embrace a life that may involve sacrifice and challenge, but ultimately leads to true fulfillment.

The context of Jesus' call in Luke is crucial. He had just predicted His own suffering and death, setting the stage for what it means to truly follow Him. This is not a path of ease or worldly success, but one that often goes against the grain of societal norms. Jesus' call to deny oneself is radical because it challenges the core of human nature, which often seeks self-preservation and comfort. By asking His followers to take up their cross daily, Jesus emphasizes the ongoing, daily commitment required in discipleship. It is a reminder that following Him is not a one-time decision but a continual choice.

In Matthew's Gospel, we see Jesus calling His first disciples, Simon Peter and Andrew, as they were casting their nets into the sea. He invites them to follow Him, promising to make them 'fishers of men.' This metaphor speaks to the transformative work Jesus intends to do in their lives. He is not just calling them to a new occupation but

to a new identity and purpose. By leaving their nets and immediately following Him, Peter and Andrew demonstrate the kind of response Jesus desires from all His followers. Their willingness to leave everything behind illustrates the cost and commitment of discipleship.

The immediacy of Peter and Andrew's response is striking. They did not hesitate or question; they left their nets and followed Jesus. This challenges us to consider our own readiness to respond to Jesus' call. Are we willing to leave behind what is familiar and comfortable to pursue the life He offers? This passage invites us to examine what 'nets' we might be holding onto—those things that keep us from fully following Jesus. Whether it's material possessions, relationships, or personal ambitions, Jesus calls us to trust Him enough to let go and follow.

In both passages, Jesus highlights the paradox of losing life to find it. He states that whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for His sake will find it. This paradox challenges our understanding of success and fulfillment. In a world that often equates life with accumulation and self-advancement, Jesus offers a different perspective. True life is found not in clinging to our own desires but in surrendering them to Him. This surrender is not about losing ourselves but about discovering our true identity and purpose in Christ.

The call to follow Jesus is both an invitation and a challenge. It is an invitation to experience life in its fullness, marked by purpose, joy, and peace that surpasses understanding. Yet, it is also a challenge because it requires a shift in priorities and values. Following Jesus means aligning our lives with His teachings and example, even when it is countercultural or difficult. It involves a willingness to serve others, love unconditionally, and pursue justice and mercy. This call to discipleship is a call to live out the values of God's kingdom here on earth.

As we reflect on these passages, we see that following Jesus is not just about personal transformation but also about participating in His mission. Jesus called His disciples to be 'fishers of men,' indicating that their lives would have an impact on others. Discipleship involves being part of a community that shares the good news of Jesus with the world. It is about being a light in the darkness and bringing hope to those around us. This outward focus is an essential aspect of following Jesus, reminding us that our faith is not just for our benefit but for the benefit of others.

The call to follow Jesus is a call to trust. Trusting that His ways are higher than ours and that His plans for us are good. It requires faith to believe that in losing our life, we will truly find it. This trust is built through relationship with Him, as we spend time in prayer, study His Word, and walk in obedience. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we learn to trust Him more deeply, even when the path is uncertain or challenging. This trust is the foundation of our discipleship journey.

Following Jesus is a daily commitment. Taking up our cross daily means choosing to follow Him each day, regardless of the circumstances. It is about making decisions that reflect our commitment to Him, whether in our relationships, work, or personal life. This daily choice is empowered by the Holy Spirit, who equips us to live out our faith. As we rely on His strength, we are able to persevere and grow in our walk with Jesus. This daily discipleship journey is one of growth, transformation, and deepening intimacy with our Savior.

As we embark on this journey of discipleship, let us remember that we do not walk alone. Jesus is with us, guiding and empowering us every step of the way. We are also part of a community of believers who support and encourage one another. Together, we can spur one another on in our commitment to follow Jesus. Let us be open to the work God wants to do in our lives and in the lives of those around us. As we respond to His call, may we experience the abundant life He promises and become a reflection of His love and grace in the world.

Living It Out

This week, take time to reflect on what it means to follow Jesus in your daily life. Consider areas where you might need to 'leave your nets' and trust Him more fully. Identify one specific area where you can practice denying yourself and taking up your cross. This could be in how you spend your time, how you approach relationships, or how you use your resources. Make a conscious effort to choose Jesus' way over your own.

Additionally, seek to engage with others in your community of faith. Share your journey with someone you trust and invite them to pray with you and hold you accountable. Look for opportunities to serve others and share the love of Christ in practical ways. As you take these steps, ask God to deepen your understanding of what it means to be His disciple and to give you the courage to follow Him wholeheartedly.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to you to 'deny yourself and take up your cross daily'?
2. How do you respond to the idea of losing your life to find it? What might this look like in practical terms?
3. What are some 'nets' you might need to leave behind to follow Jesus more fully?
4. How can we support one another in our journey of discipleship?
5. In what ways can we be 'fishers of men' in our everyday lives?
6. What challenges do you face in making daily decisions to follow Jesus?
7. How does being part of a faith community help you in your discipleship journey?

LEADER NOTES

As you facilitate this session, encourage participants to reflect deeply on their personal journey with Jesus. Allow space for honest sharing and be sensitive to those who may be wrestling with the cost of discipleship.

Guide the group through the discussion questions, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to share. Be prepared for moments of silence as participants process the call to follow Jesus in their own lives.

Encourage practical application and accountability within the group. Suggest pairing up for prayer and support throughout the week, fostering a sense of community and shared journey.