



Following Jesus 1

LEARNING TO OBEY

LEADER GUIDE

The purpose of this material is to help someone take their next spiritual step. It is not intended to be handed to someone to do on their own. Each session corresponds to a meeting where you discuss the material in a 1:1 or small group setting. The objective for each session is to help someone engage the Scripture and listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit by putting into practice what they learned.

EVERY MEETING SHOULD INCLUDE 4 COMPONENTS

Care → Learn → Apply → Share

CARE

Start each meeting by asking about their week and follow up on any takeaways or action steps from the previous week.

- What has been going well for you and do you have any stressors?
- This week I was praying for your _____. How's that been going? Anything else I can be praying for?
- Is there any way you were able to put what we discussed last week into practice?

LEARN

The second part of your meeting should be used to discuss the material by sharing answers about the passages and utilizing discussion questions at the end of each session. If they seemed to misunderstand something about the session, go through that Scripture passage and the corresponding questions together to clarify their understanding.

APPLY

Use the last part of your time together to help them get specific about putting their learning into practice. Make sure you pray for them and their action steps.

SHARE

Take time each session to ask about who else God has placed around them and what steps can be taken to:

- Share their story or the gospel
- Offer to help someone else take a next spiritual step

Following Jesus 1: LEARNING TO OBEY

Introduction

What does it mean to follow Jesus? Today, “following” someone often means keeping up with what they say or do (especially on social media). Some people think of following Jesus in a similar way. They may know a lot about Jesus - what He said and did - and admire Him, so they think of themselves as Jesus-followers. But when Jesus asked people to follow Him, He meant much more. Jesus called his followers disciples. “Disciple” is a word we don’t often use these days, but it was a common idea in Jesus’ time. A disciple was a student and a servant, who lived with their teacher (or Rabbi), calling him “Lord,” and patterning their life after his.

DISCOVER

Jesus did much of his teaching through parables and stories. Let’s look at one of them.

READ Luke 6:46-49

- What are your impressions...what stood out to you from this passage?

- What did Jesus’ parable show about Him?

- What did it show about people?

- Jesus prefaced his parable with a question. What was it?

- Consider that question seriously. How would you answer Him?

Jesus pointed out it didn’t make sense to call him “Lord” and not do what he says. Therefore, He said that His disciples would learn to obey everything He commanded them. But what did Jesus command? For the next eight lessons we will focus on eight central commands of Jesus. We might find many more, but this is a very good starting point. Learning to obey even these eight commands will take a life-time. For that reason, it’s best to think of following Jesus as a journey, not a destination.

DISCUSS

- What comes to your mind when you think of Jesus telling you to do something?
- Why do you think some people are uncomfortable with the term “obey”?

TURN & BELIEVE

Before deciding to follow Jesus we were all going our own way. When we encounter Him, we're faced with a choice: continue going our own way or stop, turn, and follow Him. That's what the Bible calls repentance.

COMMAND

READ Mark 1:15

Restate this verse in your own words.

TWO STORIES ABOUT REPENTANCE

Read/listen to these stories carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

The Story of Zacchaeus

READ: Luke 19:1-10

- What do we learn about God/Jesus?

- What do we learn from the people in the story?

- Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

- Who do you most identify with in the story and why?



The Story of Nicodemus

READ: John 3:1-21

- What do we learn about God/Jesus?

- What do we learn from the people in the story?

- Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

- Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How do each of these passages help you better understand repentance:

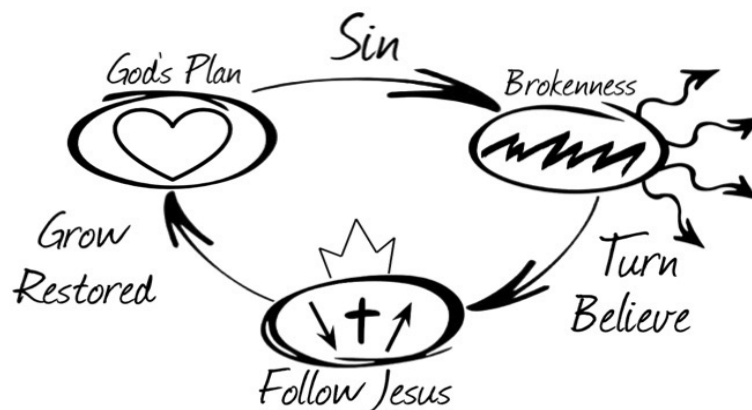
- Romans 3:23

- Romans 6:23

- Romans 10:9-13

THREE CIRCLES

An illustration that helps many people to understand and explain how repenting and believing brings us into an eternal Father-child relationship with God is called the Three Circles. Your discipler will walk through the Three Circles and discuss it with you. Then you can practice drawing and explaining it yourself.



It's important to understand that when we first put our faith in Jesus and ask him to save and lead us, he gives us eternal life, which is absolutely secure, forever. That's why he called it "eternal" life. This is the life change of Salvation. However, we will continue to revert to old patterns of doing things our way. When that happens, we will repent and turn again (return) to Jesus and his way. This ongoing process of repentance is an important and normal part of our discipleship as we continue following Jesus for a lifetime. We call this the life change of Transformation.

BE BAPTIZED

We saw in the previous lessons that a disciple is one who turns from their own way to follow Jesus, and obeys everything he commands. In this lesson, we'll see that one of those commands is that disciples are to identify themselves with Jesus in a dramatic and public way.

COMMAND

READ Matthew 28:19

Restate this verse in your own words.

A STORY ABOUT BAPTISM

Read/listen to this story carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

The Story of an Ethiopian official

READ: Acts 8:26-39

■ What do we learn about God/Jesus?

■ What do we learn from the people in the story?

■ Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

■ Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How do each of these passages help you better understand baptism:

■ Matthew 3:13-17

■ Acts 2:38

■ Romans 6:3-4

NEXT STEPS

- Have you been baptized since you made the decision to trust Jesus to save you and lead you?
- If not, what holds you back?
- Are you ready to publicly identify yourself with Jesus through baptism? Make arrangements this week to do so.

PRAY

Being a disciple or follower of Jesus means you have a personal, intimate relationship with Him. All relationships thrive on daily communication. Prayer is how we communicate to God. We pray about our concerns, hopes, and joys. We pray about the people in our lives. And we pray in response to what God says to us in his Word, the Bible.

COMMAND

READ Luke 5:16

Restate this verse in your own words.

A STORY ABOUT PRAYER

Read/listen to this story carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

■ What do we learn about God/Jesus?

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray

READ: Matthew 6:9-13

■ What do we learn from the people in the story?

■ Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

■ Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How does the following passage help you better understand prayer:

■ Psalm 119:25-27

If you have time, all of Psalm 119 is a meditation on responding to God's word through thoughts, action, and prayer.

NEXT STEPS

- Practice praying with your discipler. This doesn't require special words. Just speak plainly. Follow the example you saw from Jesus in Matthew 6.
- Begin the practice of keeping a prayer journal. Every day, write down something you're thankful for, and something that concerns you. Read or listen to a short passage of the Bible and when something stands out to you, write it down. Tell God what you are thinking about that part.

LOVE

We tend to think of love as an emotion that “happens” to you. But Jesus must view it differently since he commands us to love, as if love is something we can choose to do.

COMMAND

READ Matthew 22:37-39

Restate Jesus' command in your own words.

A STORY ABOUT LOVE

Read/listen to this story carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

The Good Samaritan
READ: Luke 10:25-37

■ What do we learn about God/Jesus?

■ What do we learn from the people in the story?

■ Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

■ Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How do each of these passages help you better understand love:

■ John 13:34-35

■ John 14:15

■ John 15:13

■ John 21:17

■ 1 Corinthians 13

NEXT STEPS

Expand your daily time with God a little this week. Focus on 1 John during your prayer time. (This is a letter written by one of Jesus' disciples that has a lot to say about Love.) When something stands out to you, write it down. Tell God what you are thinking about that part. If a person you know comes to mind as you are praying, make a note of why and pray for that person.

FORGIVE

The idea of forgiveness is right at the heart of Jesus' message. When we turn from our own way to follow the way of Jesus, we receive the gift of forgiveness from Him and enter an eternal Father-child relationship with God. Then, He says that just as we have been forgiven, we are to grant forgiveness to others. Like repentance, forgiveness is an area we must always seek to grow in.

COMMAND

READ Matthew 18:21-22

Restate Jesus' command in your own words.

A STORY ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Read/listen to this story carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

The Unforgiving Servant
READ: Matthew 18:23-35

■ What do we learn about God/Jesus?

■ What do we learn from the people in the story?

■ Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

■ Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How does the following passage help you better understand forgiveness:

■ Colossians 3:12-13

NEXT STEPS

Discuss with your discipler:

- Who in your life has hurt or harmed you?
- In what way would forgiving this person be a challenge for you?
- What is one step you will take this week toward forgiving as you have been forgiven?
- What help will you need?

COMMUNION

Following Jesus is not a solitary matter. It unites us with other Jesus-followers into a family of brothers and sisters who gather together around a shared identity and purpose. One practice we have always shared is a meal where we remember Jesus' sacrifice for us and look forward to our future together with Him in eternity. We call that meal Communion or the Lord's Supper.

COMMAND

READ Luke 22:19-20

Restate Jesus' command in your own words.

A STORY ABOUT COMMUNION

Read/listen to this story carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

The Last Supper

READ: Luke 22:7-20

■ What do we learn about God/Jesus?

■ What do we learn from the people in the story?

■ Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

■ Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How do each of these passages help you better understand Communion:

■ 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

■ Acts 2:42

NEXT STEPS

The Bible is clear that Communion is practiced in Community. Intimate, Christ-centered community takes time to develop. An hour on Sunday mornings doesn't afford us the time to forge the family bonds that come from knowing and being known by a small group of Jesus-followers.

- This week, commit to find a Community Group and to participate.

MAKE DISCIPLES

Disciples who make disciples are Jesus' plan for "building his church." Mass communication and large format programs may have their place, but will never take the place of personal disciple-making.

COMMAND

READ

Matthew 28:19-20

Restate Jesus' command in your own words.

TWO STORIES ABOUT MAKING DISCIPLES

Read/listen to these stories carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

- What do we learn about God/Jesus?

The Woman at the Well

READ: John 4:4-42

- What do we learn from the people in the story?

- Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

- Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

Jesus Drives out Demons

READ: Mark 5:1-20

- What do we learn about God/Jesus?

- What do we learn from the people in the story?

- Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

- Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How does the following passage help you better understand making disciples:

- Acts 1:8
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NEXT STEPS

- Who do you know that needs to hear what you're learning about Jesus?
- Make a list of people in your life who are far from God on the inside cover of your journal and begin praying that they would come to know and follow Jesus.

The acronym FRANC is a good way of calling these people to mind.

F=friends

R=relatives

A=acquaintances

N=neighbors

C=coworkers

GIVE

In the first lesson of this series Jesus told Nicodemus that God's love motivated him to GIVE his one and only son. Giving is certainly an *expression* of love. But maybe surprisingly, giving also *grows* our love for God and people. When we give, we detach our hearts from material things and attach it to the things that matter to God. Joyful generosity is at the heart of God's character and Jesus wants our hearts to echo His.

COMMAND

READ

Luke 6:38

Restate Jesus' command in your own words.

A STORY ABOUT GIVING

Read/listen to this story carefully. Engage your mind and imagination.

The Example of the Early Church

READ: Acts 4:32-37

- What do we learn about God/Jesus?

- What do we learn from the people in the story?

- Is there a sin to avoid, promise to claim, example to follow, or command to obey?

- Who do you most identify with in the story and why?

EXPLORE FURTHER

How do each of these passages help you better understand giving:

- 2 Corinthians 9

- 1 Timothy 6:6-10 & 17-19

NEXT STEPS

- Commit to a systematic plan for giving. The amount or percentage you give isn't important as the habit you're forming.