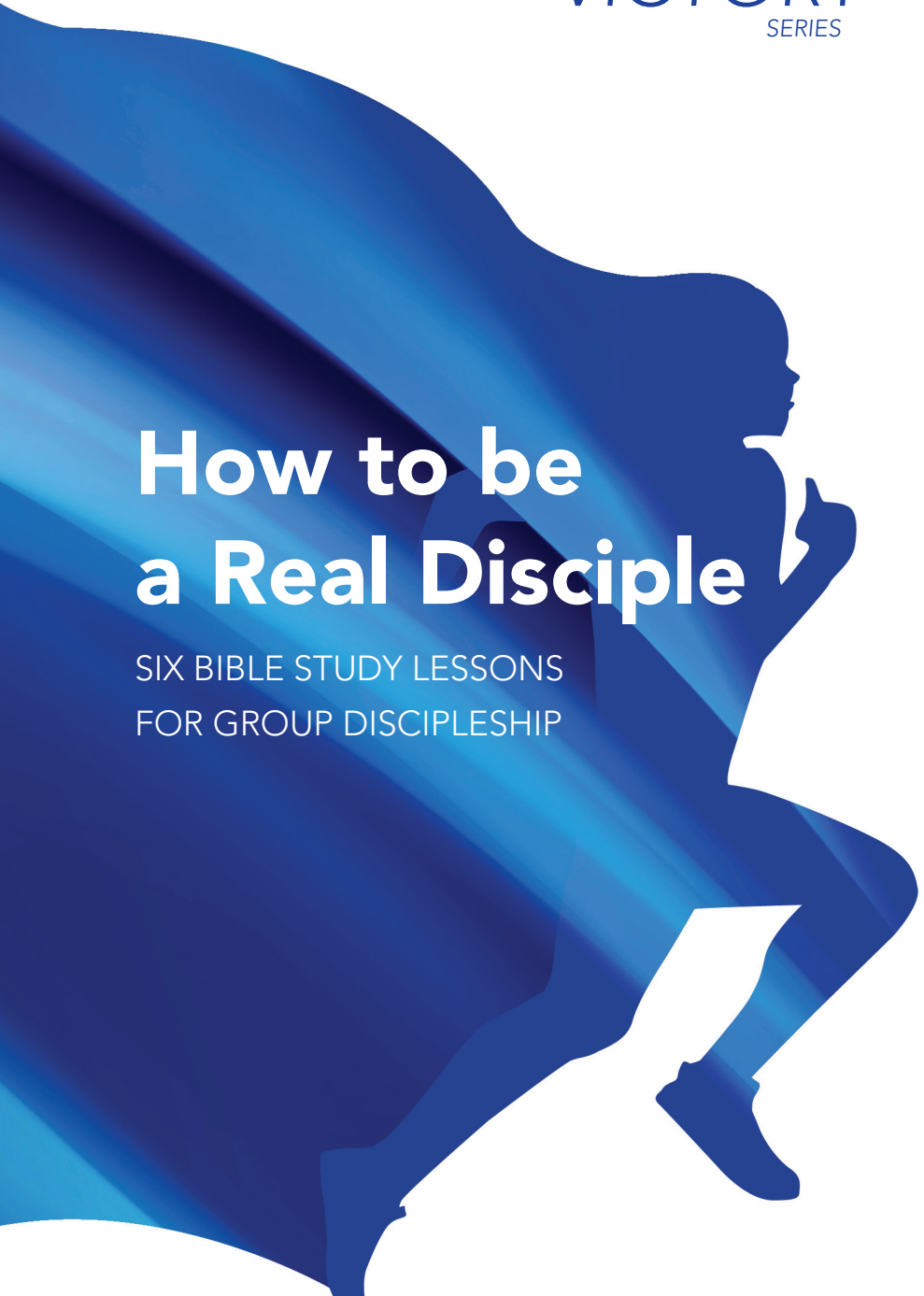


A LIFE of  
VICTORY  
SERIES

# How to be a Real Disciple

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS  
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



# How to be a Real Disciple

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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



**EVERY NATION**  
P R O D U C T I O N S

## **HOW TO BE A REAL DISCIPLE**

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# How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

## **CONNECT** (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other's personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

### *Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:*

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting's topic

## **WORD** (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

### **What:** *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely

*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17*

### *Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively*

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

### **So What:** *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

ROMANS 12:2

**Now What:** *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.*

*Do what it says.* JAMES 1:22

*Tips for Life-Changing Application*

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

## **PRAY** (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a "closing prayer," but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

*"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."* MATTHEW 18:19

### *Tips for Powerful Prayer*

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don't preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long "sermon prayers."
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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# The Marks of a Disciple

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CONNECT

- Do you like reading? Why or why not?
- Name one famous person whose life you'd like to live. Why?
- Who has had the most profound impact in your life. How?

<sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." MATTHEW 28:18-20

## WHAT

Jesus did more than attract crowds. He made disciples. Furthermore, He commanded His disciples to make disciples, not just in Israel, but in all the earth. Jesus told them exactly how to make disciples: by baptizing and teaching full obedience to God's Word. John's Gospel identifies three marks of a genuine disciple.

### 1 A disciple obeys God's Word.

*To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."*

JOHN 8:31

The first mark of a real disciple is obedience to God's Word, or the teachings of Christ. What does it mean to "hold to" the teachings of Jesus?

What did  
Jesus teach?

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**2**

**A disciple loves others.**

*“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* JOHN 13:35

The second proof of true discipleship is love. What is “love?”

*Why is it important for real disciples to love one another?*

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**3**

**A disciple bears much fruit.**

*This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.* JOHN 15:8

(SEE ALSO JOHN 15:1-7.)

*<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

GALATIANS 5:22,23

The third mark of real discipleship is fruit. What does God do to those who bear no fruit? What about those who bear fruit?

*What is the “fruit of the Spirit”?*

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**SO WHAT**

- Why should God's Word be a priority in our lives? How would our lives be different if His Word was our priority?
- What does it mean to love one another and to lay down your life for another? How can you love those who are difficult to love?
- What type of fruit are you bearing in your life? Which fruit of the Spirit is consistently growing in your life? Which is not?

**NOW WHAT**

- Do you have a time and place for Bible reading and prayer? In what areas of your life do you need to obey Him more?
- Name some people who are difficult to love. How can you practically show God's love to them this week?
- How can you be more fruitful? In what areas do you need the Holy Spirit to help you bear fruit?

- 
- Pray that God would reveal Himself to you through His Word and that His Word would be a lamp to your feet and a light for your path.
  - Pray and ask God to make you a fruitful disciple. Tell Him about the areas where you need more of His grace, patience, and self-control.
  - Ask God to use you to demonstrate His love to your family and friends.

## 2

# Count the Cost

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## CONNECT

- What subject did you dislike most in school? How did you get through it?
- Name one of the most expensive purchases you have ever made. Was it worth the price you paid? Why or why not?
- Do you tend to shop on impulse or do you carefully compare costs before buying something?

*27And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?”* LUKE 14:27,28

## WHAT

A disciple is a follower of Christ and in these verses, Jesus makes it clear that if we are to be His disciples, we would have to pay a price to follow Him. Jesus warned His would-be disciples that they should “count the cost” before starting the journey of discipleship. What does it cost to be a disciple?

### 1 Jesus comes before my family and business.

*21Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.* MATTHEW 4:21,22

(SEE ALSO MATTHEW 10:37-39.)

If we are to be Jesus’ disciples, He will take precedence over our family, work, and life. What did James and John have to leave behind in order to follow Jesus?

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### 2 Jesus comes before myself.

*18“I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are*

*How do you think their father felt about their decision?*

*old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”<sup>19</sup> Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”*

JOHN 21:18,19

Discipleship for Peter meant he had to go where he did not want to go. It meant he no longer made all the decisions about his own life. Ultimately, it cost him his life.

*What does it mean to put Jesus before self?*

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### **3 Jesus comes before my reputation and pleasure.**

*<sup>4</sup>Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; <sup>5</sup>in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger . . .* 2 CORINTHIANS 6:4,5

(SEE ALSO 2 CORINTHIANS 6:6-10.)

Following Jesus will mean putting Him before reputation and pleasure, even when it's inconvenient or difficult.

*How did following Jesus cause Paul to experience dishonor and discomfort?*

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Jesus promised that those who follow Him and give up their lives for His kingdom will receive eternal life. We have the privilege of walking with Him and knowing Him more every day. Compare the cost of discipleship with the eternal rewards. Share how you came to follow Christ.



**SO WHAT**

- Why is it important to “count the cost” before beginning this journey of discipleship?
- Give some examples of how we can put Jesus above our family, business, self, reputation, and pleasure.
- Describe someone you know who has paid a great price to follow Jesus. Do you think they regret it? Why or why not?

**NOW WHAT**

- Have you made a decision to follow Jesus? If not, what could be holding you back?
- Have you counted the cost of following Jesus? What might it cost you to be a real disciple? What are you willing to do to follow Jesus?
- In what areas of your life have you not put Jesus first? Name some practical ways you can put Him first this week.

- 
- Ask God for His grace and wisdom as you put Him first in every area of your life.
  - Surrender any concerns or questions you have about your family, work, and life. Ask Him to be above each area.
  - Pray for your friends and family who have not yet made a decision to follow Jesus. Ask God for opportunities to share the gospel to them.



<sup>34</sup>Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup>What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup>Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" MARK 8:34-37

## WHAT

No one should follow Jesus empty-handed. Everyone is to carry a cross. This message of the cross is for all who want to follow Jesus, not just for a few super-saints and ancient apostles. The minimal daily requirement for real discipleship includes self-denial and cross-carrying. What does it mean for Christians to carry our cross?

### 1

#### **Carrying my cross means denying myself.**

*Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* MARK 8:34

What do you think Jesus meant when He demanded His followers to deny themselves and take up their crosses?

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**2****Carrying my cross means losing my life.**

*<sup>35</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup>What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup>Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? MARK 8:35-37*

What does it mean to save your life? What does it mean to lose your life for the gospel?

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**SO WHAT**

- What does it mean to deny yourself? Why is this such a hard thing to do?
- Why can you save your life only by losing it? What do you think this means in your life?
- How does one forfeit his or her soul? Why do you think many choose to gain the whole world in exchange for their souls?

**NOW WHAT**

- Have you taken up your cross and have you begun to follow Jesus? If not, are you willing to do that today?
- What are some ways you need to deny yourself in order to fully follow Jesus?
- What are some areas in your life that need to be brought to the cross?

- 
- Pray for God's strength for you to deny yourself, carry your cross, and follow Him daily.
  - Thank Jesus for what He did on the cross and for saving us so we can have a relationship with Him forever. Acknowledge that apart from Him, we can do nothing.
  - Pray for your opportunities this week to show God's love to those who do not know Him yet.



*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."* MATTHEW 4:19

## WHAT

Many foolishly waste their lives following the crowds. Others arrogantly refuse to follow anyone at all and end up going in circles. A true disciple is one who wholeheartedly follows Jesus where He goes. If we want to follow Christ, we have to know what it requires.

### 1 Following Christ requires self-denial.

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* MATTHEW 16:24

Jesus tells us to carry our cross and deny ourselves so we can follow Him unhindered.

*What is self-denial? Why is it essential in discipleship?*

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### 2 Following Christ requires listening to His voice.

*"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."* JOHN 10:27

We are to listen to Jesus' voice not so we can have a new religious experience or gain more knowledge. We listen to God so we can follow Him.

What does it mean to listen to God's voice today?

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**3 Following Christ requires complete obedience.**

*Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.*

1 KINGS 11:6 (SEE ALSO 1 KINGS 11:1-11.)

Partial devotion to God is always disastrous.

In what ways did Solomon fail to follow the Lord completely? What were the results of his compromise?

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**4 Following Christ requires following the example of others.**

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

Sometimes it is easier to learn by watching than by listening.

Why was it important for the Corinthians to follow Paul's example?

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**SO WHAT**

- Do you follow the Lord with complete obedience? What would that look like in your life?
- How have you been helped in your spiritual life by another person's example? Whose example do you follow?
- Can you tell others to follow your example as you follow the example of Christ? Why or why not?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are you following Jesus? Are you following Him closely or from afar? Was there ever a time when you followed Him closer? What happened?
- What are some practical ways you can follow Jesus closer?
- In what areas of your life do you need to obey Jesus completely?

- 
- Ask God to make you more sensitive to hear His voice.
  - Pray for God's grace in your life so you can deny yourself and follow Him completely.
  - Pray that you would be a good example of what it means to follow Christ.

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# Remain in the Vine

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CONNECT

- What is your favorite vacation spot? What do you like about it?
- What do you do regularly to stay healthy?
- How were you disciplined as a child?

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. . . .<sup>4</sup>Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." JOHN 15:1,4,5

## WHAT

Jesus gave specific instructions to His disciples about remaining in Him. He mentioned the word "remain" eleven times in the first ten verses of John 15. Let us look closely at what this means and what it looks like to remain in Him.

### 1 We will be pruned.

*He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.* JOHN 15:2

HEBREWS 12:11 (SEE ALSO HEBREWS 12:7-10.)

When we remain in Jesus, we will be pruned. Pruning is a process that makes a branch even more fruitful than it originally was by cutting off unfruitful parts.

Which branches  
are pruned?

What is the goal  
of pruning and  
discipline?

### 2 We will be fruitful.

<sup>5</sup>"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. . . .<sup>8</sup>This is to my Father's glory,

that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” JOHN 15:5,8

As we remain in Jesus, we will bear much fruit.

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Can we be fruitful apart from Him? How will we show that we are His disciples?

### **3 We will be prayerful.**

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” JOHN 15:7

Remaining in Jesus also gives us the confidence to ask Him and receive by faith.

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Does Jesus put a limit on what we can ask Him? Why can we have the confidence to ask God for whatever we wish?

### **3 We will be obedient.**

“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love”. JOHN 15:10

If we are remaining in Christ and His love, we will obey Him. Obedience is not obedience if it is delayed or partial.

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How did Jesus set the example of obedience?

**SO WHAT**

- What does a fruitful person look like? How do you know if you are bearing fruit?
- Why do you think some people do not ask and believe God for greater things? Do you ever have a hard time coming to God with confidence?
- What does it look like to obey God completely?

**NOW WHAT**

- In what areas is God pruning you? How have you been responding to His discipline?
- Are you obeying God and His Word? What will you do about it?
- What do you need to ask and believe God for today?

- 
- Ask God to give you grace and strength as He prunes you to become more fruitful.
  - Ask God to make you more prayerful and to be more sensitive to His voice as He leads you to pray for others.
  - Pray for your friends and family to know God and to remain in Him.

# 6

# Go and Make Disciples

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CONNECT

- What was the best and worst part of your week?
- What sports or hobbies did you learn when you were a child?
- Name one person who has supported you in difficult times. What did he or she do for you?

<sup>16</sup>Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:16-20

## WHAT

After Jesus was resurrected, He gave His disciples the apostolic mandate of making disciples of all nations. He did not charge them to gather crowds, converts, or church members. He wanted His disciples to make disciples. As the disciples obeyed, let us see what happened.

1

### The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to make disciples.

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

ACTS 1:8 (SEE ALSO LUKE 24:49.)

Jesus gave specific instructions for the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit.

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*Why do you think He wanted them to wait for the infilling of the Holy Spirit?*

## 2

### The church grew as the disciples were persecuted.

*<sup>16</sup>Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. <sup>17</sup>Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. <sup>18</sup>They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ACTS 5:16-18*

(SEE ALSO ACTS 5:41,42.)

As the disciples were persecuted, the church grew larger and stronger. Persecution never hinders the work of God.

*Why do you think this is so? How did the disciples react to the persecution?*

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## 3

### God's presence was with the disciples.

*"... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." MATTHEW 28:20 (SEE ALSO HEBREWS 13:5.)*

Jesus promised His disciples that as they go and make disciples, He would be with them.

*How did God's promise of His presence transform the disciples?*

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**SO WHAT**

- What does it mean to be a witness? How are we to be a witness? How does the Holy Spirit empower you to be a witness?
- How does persecution make a disciple grow? How do you respond to persecution?
- As you follow God and help others follow Him, how has the presence of God been a source of encouragement for you?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are you obeying Jesus' command to "go and make disciples"? Are you a disciple? Are you making disciples?
- Have you been persecuted for your faith? What happened? Have you forgiven?
- Make a list of your friends and family members who do not know Christ yet. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to be a witness to them.

- 
- Thank God for the power of the Holy Spirit and for His presence in your life.
  - Make a commitment to follow Jesus and to make disciples.
  - Ask God for opportunities and the boldness to obey His command to "go and make disciples."

“And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

LUKE 14:27

**How to be a Real Disciple** is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help disciples follow Jesus together.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The Marks of a Disciple
- Count the Cost
- Carry Your Cross
- Follow Jesus
- Remain in the Vine
- Go and Make Disciples



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