

5 Keys of Discipleship Lesson Plan: Abiding with Christ

Theme: Living in continual dependence on Jesus

Purpose:

To help believers understand what it means to abide in Christ, why abiding is essential to spiritual growth, and how to cultivate a daily relationship with Jesus that bears lasting fruit.

Day 1: What Does It Mean to Abide?

Main Truth

Abiding in Christ is not simply believing in Him—it is remaining in a close, continual relationship with Him every day.

Opening Prayer

Ask God to reveal areas where you have been relying on yourself instead of remaining connected to Christ.

Icebreaker

Ask everyone:

"When do you feel closest to God?"

Allow each person to share briefly.

Scripture Reading

John 15:1–11

Read the passage slowly.

Ask everyone to notice repeated words or phrases.

Possible observations:

- Abide
 - Fruit
 - Remain
 - Love
 - Father
 - Branches
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Teaching

1. Jesus is the True Vine (John 15:1)

The vine is the source of life.

A branch has no life apart from the vine.

Our spiritual strength doesn't come from:

- Willpower
- Church attendance alone
- Knowledge
- Good works

It comes from Jesus Himself.

2. We Are the Branches (John 15:5)

Branches have only one job:

Stay connected.

A branch doesn't struggle to produce fruit.

Fruit is the natural result of remaining attached.

Likewise:

Joy

Patience

Peace

Love

Kindness

Faithfulness

are produced through connection—not striving.

Read:

Galatians 5:22–23

3. Apart From Jesus We Can Do Nothing (John 15:5)

Jesus doesn't say,

"You can do a little."

He says,

"Apart from me you can do nothing."

Many believers live busy Christian lives while neglecting intimacy with Christ.

Activity is not the same as abiding.

4. God Prunes Healthy Branches (John 15:2)

Pruning is uncomfortable.

God removes:

- **distractions**
- **pride**
- **unhealthy habits**
- **misplaced priorities**

Not to hurt us—

but so we'll bear even more fruit.

Read:

Hebrews 12:10–11

Discussion Questions

- 1. What stood out to you from John 15?**
 - 2. What do you think "abiding" actually means?**
 - 3. What are some things that compete for your attention and affection?**
 - 4. Have you ever experienced a season when you felt disconnected from Christ?**
 - 5. Why do you think Jesus chose the picture of a vine and branches?**
 - 6. How have you seen God prune something in your life?**
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Personal Reflection

Ask everyone to quietly consider:

Where am I relying on myself instead of Jesus?

What is distracting me from abiding?

Application for the Week

Spend 15 uninterrupted minutes with Jesus every day.

Not studying.

Not preparing.

Simply being with Him.

Suggested rhythm:

- **Five minutes of prayer**
- **Five minutes reading John 15**
- **Five minutes listening quietly**

Journal:

What did God reveal today?

Memory Verse

John 15:5

“I am the vine; you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing.”

Closing Prayer

Pray that God would cultivate a deeper hunger for His presence.

Day 2: How Do We Abide Daily?

Main Truth

Abiding is a daily choice of dependence, obedience, and love.

Opening Question

How did your quiet time with Jesus go this week?

What challenged you?

What encouraged you?

Scripture Reading

John 15:9–17

Then read:

Psalm 1:1–3

Colossians 2:6–7

Luke 10:38–42

Teaching

1. Abiding Means Remaining in His Love

John 15:9

Jesus doesn't invite us into religion.

He invites us into relationship.

We don't work for His love.

We live from His love.

2. Abiding Includes Obedience

John 15:10

Obedience is not earning God's approval.

It is the response of someone who loves Him.

Ask:

How does obedience strengthen intimacy?

3. Abiding Produces Fruit

Fruit is evidence—not the goal.

Healthy fruit includes:

- **Love**
- **Joy**
- **Peace**
- **Patience**
- **Kindness**
- **Goodness**
- **Faithfulness**
- **Gentleness**
- **Self-control**

Read:

Galatians 5:22–23

Ask:

Which fruit do you most want God to grow in you?

4. Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38–42

Martha was busy for Jesus.

Mary was with Jesus.

Service matters.

But intimacy comes first.

Doing for Jesus should flow from being with Jesus.

5. Practical Ways to Abide

Discuss practical habits:

Daily Scripture

Feed on God's Word.

Psalms 119:105

Prayer Throughout the Day

Conversation rather than a checklist.

Pray while driving.

Walking.

Cooking.

Working.

Worship

Regularly remind your heart who God is.

Confession

Don't allow unconfessed sin to create distance.

Read:

1 John 1:9

Community

Abiding is personal, but not private.

Hebrews 10:24–25

We need one another.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Which practical habit is strongest in your life?**
- 2. Which is weakest?**
- 3. What usually distracts you from spending time with Jesus?**
- 4. How is abiding different from simply reading your Bible?**

5. Why do you think Jesus connected abiding with obedience?
 6. What fruit do you hope God produces over the next year?
 7. How can this group encourage one another to remain connected to Christ?
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Practical Exercise

Draw two columns.

Connected to Jesus

Examples:

- Prayer
- Scripture
- Worship
- Confession
- Gratitude
- Serving from love
- Christian friendships

Disconnecting Habits

Examples:

- Busyness
- Anxiety
- Self-reliance
- Constant phone use
- Entertainment without limits
- Bitterness
- Isolation

Ask:

What needs to change this week?

Weekly Challenge

Choose one abiding habit to intentionally strengthen over the next seven days.

Examples:

- Read one chapter of Scripture each morning.
- Begin each day with five minutes of prayer before checking your phone.
- Memorize John 15:5.
- Practice a "pause prayer" three times each day, simply saying, "Jesus, help me remain in You."
- End each evening by thanking God for ways you saw His presence that day.

Ask an accountability partner or someone in your group to check in with you during the week.

Memory Verse

John 15:4

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."

Closing Prayer

Invite participants to hold their hands open as a posture of surrender.

Leader Takeaway

A helpful phrase to repeat throughout both sessions is:

"The goal of the Christian life isn't to do more for Jesus—it's to remain with Jesus. Fruit grows naturally from a life that stays connected to the Vine."

Book Recommendations

- 1. *Abide in Christ* – A rich devotional companion focused entirely on John 15.**
- 2. *Practicing the Way* – Practical guidance for shaping everyday life around Jesus.**
- 3. *The Practice of the Presence of God* – A simple but profound invitation to experience God's presence in ordinary moments.**

5 Keys of Discipleship Lesson Plan: The Importance of Being in a Small Group

Theme:

"Following Jesus Together"

Big Idea: Jesus never intended for disciples to grow in isolation. Small groups provide encouragement, accountability, spiritual growth, care, and opportunities to practice disciple-making.

Day 1: Why We Need Spiritual Community

Key Truth

God designed believers to grow in relationship with Him **and** with one another.

Opening Question

- When have you experienced the greatest growth in your life? Was someone walking alongside you during that season?

Scripture Study

1. The Early Church Prioritized Community

Acts 2:42-47

The believers devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.

Discussion Points

- What activities characterized the early church community?
 - Which of these happen naturally in a small group setting?
 - Which aspect of community do you personally need most right now?
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2. We Need One Another to Grow

Hebrews 10:24-25

"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds..."

Discussion Points

- Why do believers need encouragement from others?
 - What tends to happen spiritually when we isolate ourselves?
 - How can a small group help us persevere in difficult seasons?
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3. God Uses Others to Sharpen Us

Proverbs 27:17

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Discussion Points

- What does spiritual sharpening look like?
 - Is sharpening always comfortable? Why or why not?
 - How has another believer challenged or strengthened your faith?
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Application

This week:

1. Identify one area where you need encouragement or accountability.

2. Share that need with your small group.
3. Commit to attending your group consistently for the next month.

Reflection Questions

- What keeps me from fully engaging in Christian community?
- Am I willing to be known, supported, and challenged by others?

Prayer Focus

Ask God to develop a desire for biblical community and meaningful relationships.

Day 2: Small Groups Help Us Make Disciples

Key Truth

Small groups are not only places to receive care but also places to learn how to care for and disciple others.

Opening Question

- Who has had the greatest spiritual influence on your life? What did they do that impacted you?

Scripture Study

1. Jesus Made Disciples in a Small Group

Mark 3:13-15

Jesus called the Twelve to:

- Be with Him
- Learn from Him
- Be sent out by Him

Discussion Points

- Why did Jesus choose to invest deeply in a small group rather than only teaching crowds?
 - What can we learn from His example?
 - How does "being with" others help discipleship happen?
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2. We Are Called to Help One Another Grow

Colossians 3:16

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another..."

Galatians 6:2

"Carry each other's burdens..."

Discussion Points

- What responsibilities do believers have toward one another?
 - Which of these are difficult to do outside of close relationships?
 - How can your small group become a place of care and growth?
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3. We Are Better Together on Mission

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

"Two are better than one..."

Discussion Points

- What advantages come from serving and growing together?

- Why is accountability valuable in following Jesus?
 - How can your group help one another live on mission?
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Application

This week:

1. Pray for each member of your group by name.
2. Reach out to one group member outside of the meeting time.
3. Identify one person you could encourage spiritually this week.

Reflection Questions

- Am I approaching small group primarily as a consumer or a contributor?
- How can I help create a healthy community for others?

Prayer Focus

Pray that God would use your group to deepen faith, foster authentic relationships, and multiply disciples.

Suggested Books

For Understanding Biblical Community

- Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Created for Community by Stanley J. Grenz

For Small Group Leadership and Discipleship

- Leading Life-Changing Small Groups by Bill Donahue
- Transformational Discipleship by Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation
- The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman

For Practicing Authentic Community

- The Gospel Comes with a House Key by Rosaria Butterfield
 - Made for People by Justin Whitmel Earley
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Takeaway Statement

Disciples are formed in community, strengthened through community, and sent out through community. Following Jesus was never intended to be a solo journey.

5 Keys of Discipleship Lesson Plan: Serving Others as a Disciple

Theme:

"Saved to Serve"

Big Idea: Disciples of Jesus do not simply receive from God; they participate in His work by serving others with humility, love, and faithfulness. Serving is not an optional activity for mature Christians—it is part of following Jesus.

Day 1: Jesus Is Our Example of Service

Key Truth

Jesus modeled servant-hearted leadership and calls His followers to do the same.

Opening Question

- Who has served you in a way that made a lasting impact on your life?
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Scripture Study

1. Jesus Came to Serve, Not to Be Served

 Mark 10:42-45

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..."

Discussion Points

- How does Jesus' definition of greatness differ from the world's definition?
 - Why do you think serving is central to discipleship?
 - What barriers keep us from serving others?
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2. Jesus Demonstrated Humble Service

 John 13:1-17

Jesus washed His disciples' feet and then instructed them to do likewise.

Discussion Points

- What made foot washing such a powerful example in Jesus' day?
 - What are the "foot washing" opportunities in our lives today?
 - Why is humility essential for serving others well?
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3. We Are Called to Put Others First

 Philippians 2:3-8

Discussion Points

- What does it mean to "value others above yourselves"?
 - Which attitudes make serving difficult?
 - How can serving reshape our character to become more like Christ?
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Application

This week:

1. Identify one person you can serve in a practical way.

2. Perform one act of service that cannot be repaid.
 3. Ask God each morning, "Who can I serve today?"
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Reflection Questions

- Do I view service as an obligation or a privilege?
 - In what areas of life am I most resistant to serving?
 - What would change if I approached each day looking for opportunities to serve?
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Prayer Focus

Ask God to give you the heart of a servant and eyes to notice the needs around you.

Day 2: God Has Gifted Every Disciple to Serve

Key Truth

Every follower of Jesus has been uniquely gifted to serve the body of Christ and advance God's mission.

Opening Question

- What activities energize you and make you feel most useful to others?
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Scripture Study

1. Every Believer Has a Role to Play

 1 Corinthians 12:4-27

Paul compares the church to a body with many parts working together.

Discussion Points

- Why is every role in the church important?
 - How does comparison prevent people from serving?
 - What gifts or abilities has God given you?
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2. Use Your Gifts to Serve Others

 1 Peter 4:10-11

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others..."

Discussion Points

- Why does God give spiritual gifts?
 - How does serving others bring glory to God?
 - What gifts or experiences has God given you that could benefit others?
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3. Serving Is Worship

 Romans 12:1-13

Discussion Points

- How can serving become an act of worship?
 - What is the difference between serving out of duty and serving out of gratitude?
 - How does serving help us grow spiritually?
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Application

This week:

1. Identify one spiritual gift, talent, or life experience God can use.
 2. Begin serving regularly in one ministry, community effort, or discipleship opportunity.
 3. Encourage another believer who is serving faithfully.
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Reflection Questions

- Where has God uniquely equipped me to serve?
- Am I currently using my gifts for the benefit of others?
- What next step is God inviting me to take in serving?

Prayer Focus

Pray for wisdom to discover your gifts, courage to use them, and joy in serving others.

Suggested Books

Understanding Biblical Service

- In the Name of Jesus by Henri Nouwen
- The Jesus Style by Gayle D. Erwin
- The Volunteer Revolution by Bill Hybels

Discovering Spiritual Gifts

- Network by Bruce Bugbee and Don Cousins
- Shape by Erik Rees

Developing a Servant Heart

- The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren (especially the sections on serving and ministry)
 - Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster
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Takeaway Statement

Disciples follow the example of Jesus by serving with humility, using their gifts faithfully, and putting the needs of others before their own. Service is not merely something disciples do—it is part of who disciples become.

5 Keys of Discipleship Lesson Plan: Stewardship as a Disciple

Theme:

"Everything I Have Belongs to God"

Big Idea: A disciple recognizes that all of life—our time, talents, abilities, finances, possessions, opportunities, and influence—has been entrusted to us by God to manage faithfully for His glory and His kingdom.

Day 1: Stewardship Begins with Ownership

Key Truth

God owns everything. We are managers, not owners.

Opening Question

- When you hear the word "stewardship," what comes to mind? Money? Time? Something else?
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Scripture Study

1. Everything Belongs to God

 Psalm 24:1

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it..."

 Haggai 2:8

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine..."

Discussion Points

- How does recognizing God's ownership change our perspective on money, possessions, and opportunities?
 - What areas of life are hardest to surrender to God's ownership?
 - What is the difference between ownership and stewardship?
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2. Faithful Stewardship Matters to God

 Luke 16:10-12

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much..."

Discussion Points

- Why do small acts of faithfulness matter?
 - How does faithfulness in everyday responsibilities prepare us for greater opportunities?
 - Where is God asking you to be more faithful?
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3. We Will Give an Account for What God Entrusted to Us

 Matthew 25:14-30 — The Parable of the Talents

Discussion Points

- What was the master's expectation of his servants?
- Which servant do you most identify with and why?

- What gifts, opportunities, or resources has God entrusted to you?
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Application

This week:

1. Make a list of the resources God has entrusted to you.
 2. Thank God for those gifts and opportunities.
 3. Ask yourself: "Am I managing these for myself or for God's purposes?"
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Reflection Questions

- Do I live more like an owner or a steward?
 - What areas of my life do I struggle to surrender to God?
 - If someone observed my priorities, what would they say I value most?
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Prayer Focus

Ask God for a heart that sees every aspect of life as belonging to Him.

Day 2: Stewarding Our Time, Talents, and Resources

Key Truth

Disciples honor God by faithfully investing what He has entrusted to them.

Opening Question

- Which is easiest for you to give away: time, talents, or financial resources? Which is hardest?
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Part 1: Stewarding Our Time

Scripture

 Ephesians 5:15-17

"Be very careful, then, how you live ... making the most of every opportunity."

 Psalm 90:12

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Discussion Points

- What currently receives most of your time and attention?
- Do your calendar and priorities align with your values?
- How can disciples intentionally make time for worship, relationships, service, and rest?

Application

- Evaluate your weekly schedule.
 - Identify one activity to reduce and one kingdom priority to increase.
 - Schedule intentional time for God, family, service, and discipleship.
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Part 2: Stewarding Our Talents and Gifts

Scripture

 1 Peter 4:10

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others..."

 Romans 12:4-8

Discussion Points

- What abilities, experiences, or spiritual gifts has God given you?
- Are you using your gifts to benefit others?
- What fears or excuses prevent people from serving?

Application

- Identify one gift God has given you.
 - Find one way to use that gift intentionally this month.
 - Encourage someone else in the gifts you see in them.
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Part 3: Stewarding Our Financial Resources

Scripture

 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

 Matthew 6:19-21

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

 Proverbs 3:9-10

"Honor the Lord with your wealth..."

Discussion Points

- What does generosity reveal about our hearts?
- Why is giving an act of worship and trust?
- How can disciples develop habits of generosity?

Application

- Review your current giving habits.
- Pray about intentional generosity toward God's work and the needs of others.
- Choose one practical act of generosity this week.

Reflection Questions

- Which area of stewardship requires the greatest growth for me: time, talents, or resources?
- Am I investing what God has entrusted to me in ways that have eternal impact?
- What would greater faithfulness look like in this season of life?

Prayer Focus

Pray for wisdom to manage God's gifts faithfully and for a generous heart that reflects His character.

Suggested Books

Biblical Stewardship

- The Treasure Principle by Randy Alcorn
- Managing God's Money by Randy Alcorn
- Money, Possessions and Eternity by Randy Alcorn

Time Management and Purpose

- The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer
- Ordering Your Private World by Gordon MacDonald

Discovering and Using Gifts

- Shape by Erik Rees
- Network by Bruce Bugbee and Don Cousins

Living Generously

- Fields of Gold by Andy Stanley
- The Generosity Ladder by Nelson Searcy

Takeaway Statement

Disciples understand that nothing they have is truly their own. God entrusts us with time, talents, and resources so that we may faithfully invest them for His glory, the good of others, and the advancement of His kingdom.

Memory Verse

 **1 Peter 4:10**

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

5 Keys of Discipleship Lesson Plan: Sharing the Gospel and Reproducing Disciples

Theme:

"Making Disciples Who Make Disciples"

Big Idea: Every follower of Jesus is called not only to follow Him personally but also to share the gospel and help others become mature disciples who will, in turn, disciple others.

Day 1: Every Disciple Is Sent to Share the Gospel

Key Truth

Sharing the gospel is not reserved for pastors, missionaries, or church staff—it is the calling of every disciple.

Opening Question

- Who first shared the gospel with you or influenced your faith journey?
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Scripture Study

1. Jesus Gave Every Disciple the Mission

 Matthew 28:18-20 — The Great Commission

"Go and make disciples of all nations..."

Discussion Points

- What commands does Jesus give in this passage?
 - What is the difference between making converts and making disciples?
 - Why do you think Jesus gave this responsibility to all believers?
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2. We Are Christ's Ambassadors

 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."

Discussion Points

- What does it mean to represent Jesus as an ambassador?
 - How does understanding the message of reconciliation affect our urgency?
 - What opportunities has God already placed in your life to represent Him?
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3. The Gospel Is Good News Worth Sharing

 Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation..."

 Romans 10:13-15

Discussion Points

- Why can believers have confidence in the gospel message?

- What fears keep Christians from sharing their faith?
 - How can we rely on God rather than our own abilities?
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Practical Gospel Framework

A simple way to explain the gospel:

1. **God Created Us** for relationship with Him.
 2. **Sin Separated Us** from God.
 3. **Jesus Died and Rose Again** to pay for our sin.
 4. **We Respond** through repentance and faith.
 5. **We Follow Jesus** as Lord and Savior.
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Application

This week:

1. Write down the names of three people who do not know Jesus.
 2. Pray for them daily.
 3. Look for one opportunity to share part of your story or the gospel message.
-

Reflection Questions

- What fears or obstacles keep me from sharing my faith?
 - Do I believe the gospel is truly good news for the people around me?
 - Who has God already placed in my circle of influence?
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Prayer Focus

Pray for boldness, compassion, and opportunities to share the gospel.

Day 2: Disciples Reproduce Disciples

Key Truth

The mission of discipleship is not complete until disciples help others follow Jesus and eventually disciple others themselves.

Opening Question

- Think about someone who invested in your spiritual growth. What did they do that helped you grow?
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Scripture Study

1. Jesus Modeled Reproducible Discipleship

 Mark 3:13-15

Jesus called His disciples:

- To be with Him
- To learn from Him
- To be sent out by Him

Discussion Points

- Why did Jesus invest deeply in a small group rather than only teaching crowds?
 - What does Jesus' model teach us about disciple-making?
 - Why is relationship important in discipleship?
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2. Healthy Disciples Multiply

 2 Timothy 2:2

"And the things you have heard me say ... entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

This verse shows four generations of discipleship:

1. Paul
2. Timothy
3. Faithful people
4. Others

Discussion Points

- What stands out to you about Paul's strategy?
 - Why is multiplication more effective than addition?
 - Who is investing in you? Who are you investing in?
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3. Fruitfulness Is Expected

 John 15:5-8

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Discussion Points

- What kind of fruit should disciples produce?
 - How does abiding in Christ lead to multiplication?
 - What is the difference between striving and abiding?
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A Simple Disciple-Making Process

1. Pray

Ask God to show you people who are spiritually open.

2. Invest

Build genuine relationships and serve others.

3. Share

Share your testimony and the gospel message.

4. Disciple

Help new believers learn to follow Jesus.

5. Multiply

Encourage them to repeat the process with others.

Application

This week:

1. Identify one person you could intentionally encourage spiritually.
 2. Begin praying regularly for one person to disciple.
 3. Share your testimony with someone this month.
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Reflection Questions

- Am I simply consuming spiritual knowledge, or am I helping others grow?
 - Who could I intentionally invest in spiritually?
 - What step of disciple-making feels most challenging to me?
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Prayer Focus

Pray for a heart that sees people the way Jesus sees them and a willingness to participate in His mission.

Suggested Books

Sharing the Gospel

- Share Jesus Without Fear by William Fay
- Questioning Evangelism by Randy Newman
- Lifestyle Evangelism by Joe Aldrich

Disciple-Making

- The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman
- Discipleship Essentials by Greg Ogden
- Growing Up by Robby Gallaty

Multiplication and Mission

- The Trellis and the Vine by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne
 - Contagious Disciple Making by David Watson and Paul Watson
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Takeaway Statement

Disciples share the gospel, invest in people, and help others follow Jesus. The goal of discipleship is not merely spiritual growth for ourselves but spiritual multiplication through others.

Memory Verse

 **2 Timothy 2:2**

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

A mature disciple is not simply someone who follows Jesus faithfully, but someone who helps others do the same.