

Project 20 : Verse 2 Week 3 (15th October)

PEOPLE MATTER

Connect groups are about pastoral care and discipleship. Take the time to also telephone and text regularly. **Please try make sure you take time during the month to visit at least one or two members of your group, pop in for coffee.** If you notice people are missing from church on Sundays please do make sure they are followed up. No one should be sick and without help and prayer in Net Church, no one should be struggling without support and care in Net Church. Sometimes it is the little things that we do, like a phone call, that make a huge difference.

When you ring before the study could you please encourage each person to:

- bring a Bible to each study
- Bring a notebook for the series.

The notebook is for them to jot down thoughts or questions when they read the passage before the night of the study. And to bring along to the study so that they can write down revelations, teaching etc. Connect groups are all about growth:

- Personal growth – if we are hungry we feed ourselves. As disciples we must get into the habit of studying the Bible for ourselves, feeding on spiritual food.
- Church growth – growing together as a body. That is why we will be studying the passages at the same time as a church.

THE FORMAT

To get the best out of the study please read Each study's assigned reading notes well in advance of the group and make lots of notes. Make sure you understand the answers to the questions listed. Also feel free to add other scriptures in to aid discussion in the question time:

1. Introduce the topic
2. Read the bible passage listed (ask someone else in the group to encourage group interaction).
3. Watch the media clip – make sure you have watched it plenty of times in advance of the study and think of all the potential questions that will arise from this. The link is listed and you can watch this on TV's, large laptops etc just make sure the sound is loud and you have tested the set up before the group arrive. So that during the actual connect group you just turn and push play.
4. Interaction Discussion. We have listed questions for you to promote as much discussion as possible. Interaction is key. Bring in some scriptures to stimulate discussion at different points, and encourage as many group members as possible to participate (don't allow 1-2 to dominate the answers, encourage even the quieter ones to bring forward ideas etc). You may need to think of some additional questions around the verse.
5. Always bring in the biblical viewpoint so that people fully understand what the verses ARE saying (eg what does blessed actually mean for instance).
6. As the discussion comes to a close ask the application questions in section 5 for each person to take a moment and reflect on what this study means for them personally. Make sure you have pens available for people to complete this section. This makes the study living and active.
7. Finally finish in prayer. Ask if there are any prayer needs and also pray into the study and its outworking.

LEADERS GUIDE –1 TIMOTHY 1:2 (WEEK 3 15th OCTOBER)

Read the study notes Appendix A and B supplied on page 3-8 below – these will really help you with this study.

1. Introduce the topic.

Paul started this letter by clearly stating how he identifies himself in Jesus. He knows move on to Timothy, the initial recipient of this letter. It is interesting how he describes Timothy. Let's unpack verse 2 together.

2. Read

Have spare Bibles available and read 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 2.

3. Watch the video – Week 3

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B_vg37ehD08yqlj4BCR06kG9GQ-1Jpea

4. Ask and discuss the questions (encourage as much group participation as possible)

Questions:

Paul describes Timothy as a 'true son in the faith' – what is a 'true' disciple?

Read Matthew 7:17-27 Jesus says there will be those who called Him Lord and yet He never knew them! What does this passage teach us about how to identify genuine disciples?

What does the passage in Matthew 7:17-27 teach us about how to identify false disciples?

Jesus commands us to go into all the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) – is this a command for all of us and how do we 'make' disciples?

Read Matthew 16:24-25 – Jesus commands us that if we want to be His disciples we must lay down our lives and take up our cross and follow Him. How does this look in practice?

Jesus said that all people will know that we are his disciples by the love we have for one another (John 13:35). What is this love? Read 1John3:16, Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:32 and Colossians 3:13

To be a 'true' disciple as Paul describes Timothy, what does Jesus call us to produce in John 15:8 and how do we do this?

How do we ensure we become mature disciples in the faith, forgiving, loving, serving etc?
Leader's Note: Read Appendix B before this study to help you with this question.

Timothy was described by Paul as a valid, legitimate credible son in the faith – how important is it to have spiritual parents and who are these in the church?

5. Over to you... (personal application)

- What did you find challenging in this study?
- Is there anything the Holy Spirit is highlighting that you need to work on after this study?
- Make a decision – let's not just be those who hear God's word but those who live it out. Make a decision based on this study of how you are going to walk this teaching out personally.
- Take time to read 1 Timothy 1 verses 1 and 2 over the next few days and really consider what you are reading. We will be studying verse 3 next.

Appendix A

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE Article by Jonathan Parnell

When Jesus speaks we listen.

That makes sense, right? Jesus is the one to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given (Matthew 28:18). Jesus is the one of whom it will be said, forever, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12). He’s the one to whom every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10) — the one on account of whom all the tribes of the earth will wail (Revelation 1:7), and from whom the fury of God’s wrath will be executed (Revelation 19:15). Jesus has that kind of supremacy — so what he says matters.

And beyond that, we’ve been united to Jesus by faith (Romans 6:5), made alive in him by grace (Ephesians 2:4–5), counted righteous in him because of his work (Galatians 2:16). Jesus, in all of his supremacy, is also our shepherd — so we know his voice (John 10:27). Therefore, by virtue of his power and grace, because he is the Sovereign and our Savior, when he tells his church to make disciples of all nations, we really want to do that.

Toward a Definition

Jesus commissions us to “go” — because of his authority — “and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20). This raises a fundamental question, though — one that even takes priority over the how-to’s of discipleship. What does it actually mean to be a “disciple” of Jesus? If we are going to make disciples, we need to know what that is.

“A disciple of Jesus is a worshiper, a servant, and a witness.”

The standard definition of “disciple” (noun) is someone who adheres to the teachings of another. It is a follower or a learner. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. Applied to Jesus, a disciple is someone who learns from him to live like him — someone who, because of God’s awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus. Or, you might say, as others have put it in the past, disciples of Jesus are themselves “little Christs” (Acts 26:28; 2 Corinthians 1:21).

The four Gospels give us the definitive portrait of Jesus in his life on earth, and if we really want to know what it means to be his disciple, the Gospels are likely where we start. In particular, John’s Gospel shows us three complementary perspectives on what it means to follow Jesus, each patterned after Jesus himself. Building off of John’s profile, we could say that a disciple of Jesus is a worshiper, a servant, and a witness.

Disciple Means Worshiper

Most fundamentally, to follow Jesus means to worship him exclusively. This is at the heart of Jesus’s ministry on earth. As he told the woman at the well, the Father is seeking true

worshippers — not faux worshippers, but true worshippers — those who worship him in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24). Which means, as it did in her case, we shouldn't be so quick to change the subject. If we will follow Jesus, we must worship God — through Jesus, because he is our Mediator (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5), and Jesus himself, because he is God (John 10:30; 20:28–29).

“Worshiping Jesus — gladly reflecting back to him the radiance of his worth — is the greatest act for any creature.” This is the fundamental perspective of a disciple because it is more ultimate than anything else we are or do, and most distinctive in our context. As far as ultimate, worshiping Jesus — gladly reflecting back to him the radiance of his worth — is the greatest act for any creature. As far as context, nothing will irritate our pluralistic society more than being an exclusive worshiper of Jesus. Lots of people are cool with Jesus (at least their notion of him), and even following the “ways” of Jesus, when it leaves out the exclusivity part. Jesus the Moral Teacher, the Nice Guy, the Judge-Not-Lest-You-Be-Judged Motivational Speaker — that Jesus is everybody's homeboy. But that is not the real Jesus. That's a manmade figure — a far cry from the portrait Jesus gives of himself.

To follow Jesus, to be his disciple, doesn't mean community involvement and the veneer of tolerance. It means, mainly, first and central, to worship him — with joy at the heart. Making disciples of Jesus means gathering his worshippers.

Disciple Means Servant

John shows another picture of the Jesus we're to worship, and this time he is kneeling before his disciples to wash their feet (John 13:5). I know, it doesn't sound right, especially when we think of him as the object of our exclusive praise. It didn't sound right to Peter either, until Jesus said, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me” (John 13:8). But Jesus is a servant. He came to earth not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as the rescue for sinners (Mark 10:45).

And as a servant, Jesus says of his disciples, to his disciples, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:14–15). In one sense, the posture of servant should characterize Jesus's disciples on all fronts. But in another sense, being a servant like Jesus has a particular focus on disciples serving disciples. It's a family thing. “Let us do good to everyone,” Paul said, “and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

“Jesus's disciples are on a mission to tell his good news.”

This one-another angle is where Jesus takes us in giving “a new commandment,” just after he washed the Twelve's feet: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34; see also 1 John 3:23). In fact, it is this love that disciples have for one another that identifies us as disciples of Jesus to a watching world (John 13:35), and even assures us of saving faith (1 John 3:14).

To be a disciple of Jesus means to serve like him. It means to serve, primarily, by looking at your brothers and sisters and going low in acts of love, even when it's an inconvenience to yourself, even when it flip-flops the world's social order and expectations. Making disciples of Jesus means making servants who love one another.

Disciple Means Witness

John gives us another helpful picture of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This time it comes in the commission of Jesus, when he says of his disciples, to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21; see also John 17:18). This means that Jesus's disciples are on a mission. It means, in the broadest sense, that they are missionaries, that they are envisioned and empowered to step into this world (not of it, but sent into it) as his witnesses (Acts 1:8).

Jesus was sent for a purpose — to reveal God and redeem sinners (John 1:14, 12) — and he set his face like flint to see it accomplished (Luke 9:51; Isaiah 50:7). We too, as his disciples, filled by his Spirit, are sent for a purpose — to tell his good news (Romans 10:14–17).

To be a disciple of Jesus means to point people to him. It means to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love so that others would know him and worship him. It means, in other words, that we gladly seek more worshipers-servants-missionaries. Which is to say, a disciple of Jesus makes disciples of Jesus, as Jesus tells us to (Matthew 28:18–20). And, of course, when Jesus speaks we listen.

Appendix B

6 TRAITS OF A MATURE DISCIPLE

Article by Kyle Rohane

Discipleship is a lifelong journey. When we hear Jesus' Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), we can be tempted to think Jesus is only talking about evangelism. But Jesus doesn't stop there; he continues, "and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (v. 20). Not only are we called to introduce people to Jesus—we're also told to grow them toward a mature faith.

Over and over, New Testament writers stress the difference between immature and mature disciples. Paul tells the Ephesians that Christ equips his people to grow from infancy to spiritual maturity (Eph. 4:11–14). He laments that he cannot yet walk the Corinthians toward deeper elements of faith because they're only ready for "milk to drink, not solid food" (1 Cor. 3:2). Peter encourages his readers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

For ourselves and for those under our spiritual care, we cannot settle for undeveloped faith. We must encourage those in our ministries when we see signs of maturity, and we should develop those areas where their faith remains immature. So what does a mature disciple look like? Here are a few areas of maturity that we should ask God to grow in others and ourselves:

A mature disciple SERVES OUT OF LOVE.

Scripture is packed with directions for how we should treat our fellow human beings. In Zechariah 7, the prophet chastised God's people for going through the religious motions—fasting, sacrificing, and celebrating—one minute, then treating others poorly the next. Their worship was selfish. God wanted them to "administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other."

This gets to the heart of service in a mature disciple's life. Immature disciples may serve others when it's convenient or when it makes them look and feel good. But mature disciples follow Jesus' example by transforming into continuous servants. They serve others by taking God's love for people and making it their own.

A mature disciple APPLIES GOD'S WORD.

While new disciples may start reading the Bible out of a sense of obligation, a read-it-because-that's-what-good-Christians-do approach to Scripture rarely leads to tangible growth. Christ-followers can certainly benefit from immersing themselves regularly in God's Word, even when they don't really feel like it. That's a habit worth forming. But it's not enough. Many unbelieving Bible scholars read the Bible regularly and study it diligently but remain skeptical of its claims and unchanged by its contents.

As disciples mature, they should start taking Jesus' words in Luke 11:28 seriously: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Mature disciples read the Bible less and less out of Christianly duty and more and more out of a deep love for God's revelation. They trust it completely and let it shape their lives, just as James instructs in James 1:22: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

"The journey of discipleship should not be taken alone."

A mature disciple JOINS IN A COMMUNITY OF FAITH.

The journey of discipleship should not be taken alone. The minute we are adopted as children of God, we become spiritual siblings of millions of other people who are on the same journey. Immature disciples might think they can walk the path of discipleship alone. They say things like, "My faith is between God and me. I don't need to join a church because I get more out of alone time with God." Yet whenever Scripture describes the life of a disciple, it's in the context of a community of faith. Paul addresses the members of the church in Corinth as "mere infants in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1) because there is jealousy, quarreling, and disunity among them. Mature disciples seek unity and community with other growing disciples – belonging to church is vital for growth and maturity.

A mature disciple PRAYS SELFLESSLY.

When we are still immature in our faith, our prayers sound an awful lot like a Christmas wish list. We focus on ourselves—the things we want and need. These prayers of supplication aren't inherently bad. God is our protector and provider, and Jesus directs us to ask God for "good gifts" (Matthew 7:11). But with these simple prayers, we are only dipping our toes into the ocean of a more mature prayer life. Mature disciples use prayer to praise God for his blessings and for who he is. They thank him for his past faithfulness, ask him to bless and heal other people, and confess when they've disobeyed him and hurt others. In short, the prayers of a mature disciple aren't selfish; they're selfless.

"The prayers of a mature disciple aren't selfish; they're selfless."

A mature disciple SHARES HIS OR HER FAITH STORY.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is the greatest gift we can receive. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, his followers are adopted as God's children. We are made holy, receive the Spirit, and enter into eternal loving relationship with our Lord. Immature disciples recognize these truths in their own lives. Mature disciples follow Jesus' instruction to share his Good News with others: "Go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). As mature disciples reflect on the transformation in their own lives and Jesus'

influence on their journey, they yearn for those same things in others' lives. So they share the gospel and its influence on their story of faith with those who need to hear it most.

A mature disciple IS LED and DISCIPLES OTHERS.

When you think through your own faith story, you can probably picture one or more people who took a personal interest in you, taught you the ins and outs of a life of faith, and led you down the path of discipleship. They probably had others who did the same for them. In fact, there's a chain of disciples leading disciples that reaches all the way back to Jesus and his first 12 followers. They left behind lives of comfort and safety to become disciples of Jesus—following him, learning from him, and imitating him (Matt. 4:19–20). But from the very beginning, Jesus made it clear that their discipleship was not for their benefit alone. He called them to “fish for people,” to reach out and grow other people as followers of Christ.

As disciples grow spiritually, they should follow the disciples' example by actively looking for a mature Christ-follower to guide them toward Christ-likeness. But that's not all. For this chain of discipleship to continue, mature disciples should also look for less mature disciples to mentor through the highs and lows of their discipleship journey.

These are only a few key areas of growth you can look for as those in your ministry grow in maturity. Some signs of maturity, like a heart of worship, show up in multiple other traits: selfless prayer, joining in community, and serving out of love. Let's strive for maturity.