

## Discipleship Way 1

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Who here has been on a long journey? How organised are you with your packing - I was chatting to someone the other week about moving and how random items of no worth can end up getting packed - which is really annoying if you're paying for shipping!

If anyone has gone on a walk with our family, you will discover my wife packs everything for any possible weather and enough food and water supplies for at least a week.

### PICTURE OF MOTORBIKE

When I used to live in Africa I often travelled cross country on a motorbike with only a rucksack on my back. I knew I needed to carry all the essentials which would get me to the destination but also at over 40 degrees centigrade I didn't want to take any baggage that was non-essential.

This coming term I want us together to go on a journey... it is a journey many of us have started. It is the journey of becoming and growing as a disciple of Jesus.

To help us on this journey as a Church we are going to follow a course called the Discipleship Way which I have been writing. The aim of this course is to cover the essentials, to explore God's great love story. To get to know Him better, learn to hear His voice and have intimacy with Him. It's not just about eternity but about the here and now. God created fun, pleasure and enjoyment - He wants us to have life to the full now, today.

Unfortunately we can come with baggage which can get in the way and weigh us down on the journey. This may be cultural, spiritual, mental, emotional or physical. The Bible talks about a Kingdom Culture, a new approach, God's approach which brings life.

My hope and prayer is that as we go through this course we will learn the tools that will help us to grow in our faith and relationship with Jesus and also let go of any baggage which may wear us down and get in the way. This course hopefully will also become something which we can in the future lead others through, helping them also to have life to the full as a follower of Jesus.

## So to begin with what is Discipleship?

Discipleship is the process of becoming a disciple who then disciples others. At the time of Jesus, the people who chose to follow Him, who chose to learn from Him, share life with Him and grow to become more like Him were called disciples. Another word for disciple could be follower, not only in being led and guided by Jesus but also following and imitating Him in belief, thought and action.

The first followers of Jesus, the disciples, not only grew in their faith and relationship with God themselves, but they passed it on. It was as they passed it on that they themselves grew more.

### It starts with an invitation

Jesus said come follow me

[Matthew 4:19](#) "19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people.""

Jesus invited people to hang out with him - he shared life

[John 1:39](#) "39 "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon."

He showed them how to have a relationship with God, he taught them how to talk to God - we call this prayer, he not only taught them in words but he also showed them in actions.

Jesus showed his connection and dependency on Father God

[John 5:19](#) "19 Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."

He then invites people to have the same connection and dependency on him:

[John 15:5](#) "5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Jesus did amazing things to bring life to many and demonstrate God's kingdom reign

He healed many, drove out demons and performed many miracles

He also invited his followers to not only listen to his words but also to join him in his ministry

One time there were 5000 people gathered and no food - Jesus asked his followers to feed the people. They managed to find a young lad who's mum was probably like Jen had made a packed lunch to cover any eventuality!

Jesus took the small lunch blessed it then gave the small pieces to his followers to dish out!

Miraculously the food multiplied and there was not only sufficient for everyone to be filled but there was an overflow a surplus.

Jesus wanted his disciples to join him and learn, he wanted them to experience the power of God for themselves and experience to overflow the generosity of God! AMEN

Jesus also sent the disciples off in pairs to go and do the stuff of his ministry

**Mark 6:7-9, 12-13** "7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. 8 These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ...

**12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."**

I find this amazing how after journeying with Jesus, walking with him, sharing life with him, Jesus entrusts them with his ministry to bring freedom and help people back into a relationship with God.

### **The invitation leads to a commitment**

Notice however how Jesus also instructs them to take nothing with them for the journey, to let go of anything which they may take confidence in, they had to let go of the comfort zone and step out into dependency on God.

They had to travel light, not be burdened down by baggage

Jesus also said we must let go of things to be able to follow him

**Luke 9:23** "23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Jesus way is the way of the cross, it is the way of letting go and putting God first, it is as with Jesus when facing suffering on the cross said 'Father, not my will but yours be done'

It isn't comfortable, it can be painful - but is it worth it?

YES - to have true freedom, to live for God's purpose, it's so exciting and not only brings us life but also brings life to those around us!

Jim Elliot before he was martyred trying to reach a unreached people group with the love of Jesus put it this way:

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

What is your comfort zone and what baggage are you carrying that is going to weigh you down from following Jesus?

It may be unhealthy relationships which are not honouring God, it may be unhealthy habits, unhealthy thought patterns,

It can be distractions - family, money, work, finding a partner, how we use our leisure time.

Basically anything which isn't putting God first and making Him Lord- the one in control, can become baggage and weigh us down from following him.

The baggage doesn't always need to be bad stuff, it may just be stuff, distractions from God's best for our lives

"Don't allow God's good to get in the way of God's best"

It can even be blessing from God in the past which stop us moving forward into what God has in the now and our future.

Need to let go of stuff, to have empty hands to receive what God has for us.

**Philippians 3:12-16 TPT** <sup>12</sup> I admit that I haven't yet acquired the absolute fullness that I'm pursuing, but I run with passion *into his abundance* so that I may reach the purpose that Jesus Christ has called me to fulfill and wants me to discover. <sup>13</sup> I don't depend on my own strength to accomplish this; however I do have one compelling focus: I forget all of the past as I fasten my heart to the future instead. <sup>14</sup> I run straight for the divine invitation of reaching the heavenly goal and gaining the victory-prize through the anointing of Jesus. <sup>15</sup> So let all who are fully mature have this same passion, and if anyone is not yet gripped by these desires, God will reveal it to them. <sup>16</sup> And let us all advance together to reach this victory-prize, following one path with one passion.

AMEN!

Are you ready for the journey, are you ready to learn the essentials which will sustain us for the journey, are you ready to also work through what baggage may need to be off loaded?

I don't want to rally us to a cause, but call us to surrender our lives our all!

“God is not calling us to devote ourselves to His cause: He is asking us to yield ourselves unconditionally to His will.” Watchman Nee

This is just the beginning, I want to challenge us today to commit to taking this journey as a church and as individuals. To be all in. To come along on Sundays, connect in with life groups and also to work through the studies ourselves and with a friend so that we can really be all in with Jesus. Are you up for it? Let's stand and commit ourselves.