

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership Study Guide

EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 5: VALUES LEARNED IN DISCIPLESHIP

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Exploring Discipleship. This series of lessons studies the spiritual formation of a follower of Jesus Christ – the process referred to as discipleship. The discipleship process occurs after someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, beginning with a desire to live out God’s plan for their life. When we undertake the task of helping a new believer to grow in their faith, we are said to disciple them. This material will benefit anyone wanting to disciple others, especially those who are practising evangelism, following up with new believers and helping them grow in their faith. Discipleship is the duty of every believer, especially those in spiritual leadership!

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 5: VALUES LEARNED IN DISCIPLESHIP

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to discover the values that produce a strong discipleship relationship, and understand the benefits of this relationship to both people.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

What we value tells people much about us. Our values determine what we do and what we think is important. Both parties in a discipleship relationship need to share certain values in order to maintain a beneficial rapport. The values listed in this lesson are important for any relationship – not just discipleship. Some of these take different forms in different cultures, and some relational values that are important in your community may not be listed here. It all really comes down to treating people the way you wish others would treat you!

GETTING STARTED

1. Discipleship is not a one-way relationship. What are some of the benefits to the mentor in a discipleship relationship? What might they learn or experience in the process?

2. Have you been a part of a discipleship group or Bible Study? What are some of the things you learned from other participants? What was the greatest benefit to you?



STUDY

❖ **WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?** A disciple is a follower and student of a mentor or teacher. Christians are students of Jesus. Having accepted the good news of Christ and then endeavoring to share it with others, new believers need to be mentored. Discipleship is a relationship between two people. It can be a mentor guiding a newer Christian, or two believers who offer each other guidance and support. Either way, it is a relationship that should be beneficial to both parties.

➤ Read the verses listed below and write down what you learn from them.

	What do you learn about being a disciple?	What are some of the qualities or characteristics of a disciple?
Matthew 28:18-20 Luke 14:27 John 8:31-32 John 13:34-35 Luke 6:40 John 15:8 Acts 14:20-22		

❖ **VALUES IN A GOOD DISCIPLESHIP RELATIONSHIP:**

➤ **Trust** – If we want to have a good discipleship relationship with someone whether as their mentor or their peer, we need to make sure that the relationship is based on trust. Without trust it will be ineffective, because no one will share openly.

Make sure that you have examined your own life so that the person you are discipling will see that you practise what you preach.

Make sure that you are confidential about the relationship.

Demonstrate that you trust God even in difficult times.

➤ **Grace** – There are many examples of God’s grace in the Bible, and if we desire to be more like Christ, we also will show grace – unmerited favour - to others.

What are some examples of grace in a relationship? How can you demonstrate grace to someone else? Read Ephesians 4:29 to see one way we can be gracious people.



- **Guidance/support** – Guidance and support are important aspects to discipleship. Ensure that any guidance you give is Biblical.

How can you check to be sure the guidance you are giving is biblical and helpful? How might a person need both guidance and support to follow the guidance? What kinds of practical things can you do to help a person follow your advice?

- **Prayer**– In a discipleship relationship there should be an abundance of prayer. It can include praise and worship, intercession, casting burdens on the Lord, and praying through passages of scripture. The goal of discipleship is to become more like Christ and we can't do that without connecting with God in prayer.
- **Study of God's Word**– We cannot become closer to God unless we study His Word.
- **Fellowship** – Group discipleship is a great way to have fellowship with other believers while also learning more about God. Often these groups will spend time building friendships, praying together, sharing burdens, and studying the Word.
- **Accountability** – We are all imperfect human beings. We all struggle with sin whether we recognize it or not. The Bible tells us that it is through our weaknesses that God's power is made evident. Only He is perfect and only He can cleanse us from our sins. If we were already perfect we wouldn't need Him. Proverbs 27:17 tells us that just as iron sharpens iron, one person sharpens another. When someone is being accountable to you, consider the following:
 - o Does this person need additional help? Are you the best person to help? If you don't think so, be honest with the person and help them find someone else.
 - o Keep information confidential. It takes a lot of trust for someone to admit sin.
 - o Consider sharing some of your own struggles if you think this will help. Accountability can go both ways.
 - o Make sure you are following up with the person. You do not want them to feel like you don't really care about them. Commitment to regular contact is crucial.

What are some ways two people can encourage one another to pursue godly living and turn from their sin? What does Ephesians 4:1-3 say about maintaining good relationship?



❖ **Individual and Group Discipleship** : Discipleship can be done one-on-one or in groups. Both are beneficial and both, if done well, will lead to further spiritual growth.

- **Individual Discipleship:** Discipleship can be practised at an individual level where the one-on-one relationship offers guidance, a listening ear, and spiritual support. This relationship allows the individuals to share their struggle with sin or areas of their life that they would hesitate to make public. Study of the Bible or related discipleship material will give structure to the meetings, but providing a safe place for seeking guidance and receiving support is essential in one-on-one discipleship.
- **Discipleship Groups** consist of a number of people who get together for prayer, study and fellowship. These groups have different names (such as cell groups, prayer groups, life groups, discipleship groups, etc.). During these meetings each person is given time to talk about what is going on in their lives and voice requests for prayer. Some of these groups may choose to have age or gender restrictions. Their focus should be on studying the Word of God, discussion, learning from one another, and prayer. People in a group benefit from the sense of belonging, friendship and community, as well as an opportunity to practise leadership.

When might it be best to disciple someone individually? When might group discipleship work better?

- **Beginning a Group:** Choose the right situation for the individual you are discipling. When starting a discipleship relationship with someone else, it is important first to determine where they are at and what their needs are. A one-on-one relationship would be better if they are struggling with some personal issues. Having a close friend they can trust and be accountable to would best suite them. On the other hand, they may prefer to get connected and share day-to-day struggles with others, in which case it would be wise to connect them with a group.



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ A disciple is a follower and student of a mentor or teacher. Christians are students of Jesus.
- ❖ Disciples must be willing to follow their teacher, must be humble and set their own desires aside, and they must be willing to learn.
- ❖ A good discipleship relationship is one that values trust, grace, support, prayer, the study of God's word, fellowship and accountability

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Think about the values outlined in this lesson. What are some of the hazards that could occur if those values are not considered?

2. Can you identify people you would like to personally disciple or introduce to a discipleship group? How can you get this process started?