



Small Group Session 1.2

Why Become a Disciple?

Why should you become a disciple of Jesus? This is a legitimate question to ask. You don't just sign up to a life-long apprenticeship without giving serious thought as to why you should do it. After all, being a disciple will require commitment and effort on your part as well as God's. This is a significant step — if you take it, be sure you are clear about why you are taking it.

Let God Speak First

Begin by quietly asking the Lord to speak into your life. Read Psalm 23 to yourself quietly a couple of times through. Choose a verse that stands out to you. Repeat the verse several times to yourself, emphasising different words each time. For example, if you chose verse 1, then repeat it with the following emphases:

THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

The **LORD** is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

The Lord **IS** my shepherd, I shall not be in want. etc.

Listen to what the Lord might be saying to you as you do this. If you feel able, share what the Lord has said to you with the others in your triad.

Report Back

An important element of Mathetes is that we are learning **together** how to become disciples of Jesus. This means supporting and encouraging each other along the way.

With this in mind, take a few minutes to discuss how you got on with your entries on your 4mation Training card. Go through each of the four categories: Character to ask for, Temptation to resist, Practices to engage in, and Gifts to pursue. Rather than focussing on any failures or difficulties you faced, talk about what God might be saying to you.



Why Become a Disciple?

Read Luke 14:25–33

In this passage Jesus is using strong words and powerful images to teach about the cost of discipleship. It is worth working through this teaching a few verses at a time.

The passage opens by saying that large crowds were following Jesus (v 1). Can you think of some of the motives the people in the crowd might have had for following him around?

In that context, why does Jesus then go on to teach about the cost of discipleship?

There are many today who, like the people in the crowd in Luke's passage, have a mixture of motives for following Jesus, but who have not thought about the cost of true discipleship.

Jesus seems to begin his teaching on true discipleship here by saying that we must hate the people who are closest to us and even our own lives before we can become His disciples (v 26). Why does Jesus use such strong language here?

It is important to note that Jesus is not

saying that He won't let you become his disciple unless you do this, he is saying that it is **not possible** to become His disciple any other way. Why, then, must our love of Jesus be greater than our love for our immediate family before we can become His disciples? Why is it that if we love our lives, we cannot be a disciple of Jesus?

Verse 27 is central to Jesus' teaching about true discipleship. In Jesus' time, the cross was an instrument of execution. Those condemned to die were often made to carry their own crosses to the execution site. Why are carrying our own cross and following Jesus both necessary conditions for true discipleship?

So Jesus encourages His followers to count the cost of true discipleship (vs 28–30). What are the dangers of not counting the cost of true discipleship?

In the next few verses Jesus gives a parable of one king coming up against a more powerful king (vs 31–33). Who are the two kings? Why do we have to give up everything to be a true disciple (v 33)?

How do these verses make you feel about becoming a true disciple of Jesus?

Before you go ...

Read through *The Daily Disciple* together and discuss the tasks. Take a few moments to pray for each other.

The Daily Disciple

Holy Habits



Brother Lawrence was a joyful and gentle 17th Century monk who discovered a simple way of walking continually in God's presence. Brother Lawrence showed that anyone could "practice the presence of God" anytime, anywhere, regardless of their personal circumstances. He found that the "shortest way to go straight to God was by a continued exercise of love and doing all things for His sake. ... Our sanctification (being changed into Christ-likeness) did not depend upon changing our works. Instead it depended on doing those things for God's sake which we commonly do for our own."

The whole of life, according to Brother Lawrence, should be a continual conversation with God in freedom and simplicity. "We need only recognise God intimately present with us and address ourselves to Him every moment. We need to beg His assistance for knowing His will in things doubtful and for rightly performing those things which we plainly see He requires of us, offering them to Him before we do them and giving God thanks when we have completed them."

Brother Lawrence spent many years serving his community in the kitchen. Even there, in the business and bustle of kitchen work, he was still able to connect with God deeply. "He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its turn with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. "The time of work", said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer. In the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great a tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Supper".

"When we are faithful to keep ourselves in His holy presence, and set Him always before us, this hinders our offending Him and doing anything that may displease Him. It also begets in us a holy freedom, and, if I may so speak, a

familiarity with God, where, when we ask, He supplies the grace we need. **Over time, by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of God becomes quite natural to us."**



This is what we are aiming at on Mathetes. We want to be able to develop the habit of including God in all that we do, basking in His love and drawing on His strength and power. So here are your Holy Habits for this week:

It is important that you continue to work on the habit you started in the last Daily Disciple of practicing the presence of Jesus when doing your chosen task, knowing his love for you and doing the task for Him. Now choose a second task that you do regularly most days (e.g. walking or driving to work and from work or school, photocopying, waiting for the bus, dusting). Write your second task in your journal. Whenever you do both of these tasks, remember that Jesus is right there with you, loving you and longing to share that moment with you. Do these tasks for His pleasure.

This week we are going to start to develop another habit in which we regularly thank God for the many good things he has given us. Think of something that you use regularly (e.g. your car, house, place of work). Make a note of it in your journal. Every time you use that thing, acknowledge that it is a gift from God and thank Him for it.

Don't forget to keep up with your daily Bible readings shown bottom right of this page.

Useful Resources

If you would like to read more about Brother Lawrence, have a look at the following website:

www.PracticeGodsPresence.com

Click on the link on the right entitled "Brother Lawrence's The Practice of The Presence Of God, Light Heart Edition print your personal copy [in this section](#)"

A good way to learn more about discipleship is to listen to talks about it. There are a number of good talks available in mp3 format which you can download from the web. The Discipleship Library is a good website to look at first:

www.discipleshiplibrary.com

Here you will find several talks by Dallas Willard and others that you can download onto your mp3 player. I can recommend his four talks on Spiritual Transformation, a subject we will be looking at later in Mathetes



Week 1	Week 2
Mark 4:1-20	Mark 6:1-13
Mark 4:21-29	Mark 6:14-29
Mark 4:30-41	Mark 6:30-44
Mark 5:1-20	Mark 6:45-56
Mark 5:21-43	Mark 7:1-23