

What Does It Mean to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ?

**A disciple's love for Christ results in ministry
by Annette Gulick 10/1/2001**

Lesson Seven

Bible Passage: John 21: 1-17

Bible Truth: Jesus told Peter that the result of his love for Jesus should be ministry.

Lesson Objective: that students see how to turn their love for Christ into ministry.

What you need: copies of handouts "Nominations", "Identifying my Strengths, Talents, and Gifts," and pencils. If possible ask the Pastor or other church leader to attend the meeting to help the students know how to put into practice their decisions in the commitment.

Opening

"Honey if you love me, smile." Play this game for whatever length of time fits into the lesson; keeping in mind that the commitment and closing need more time than usual. Have everyone sit in a circle and choose someone to be "it" and begin the game. That person goes up to someone in the circle (usually but not necessarily someone of the opposite sex) and says to them, "Honey if you love me, smile." The other person must respond "Honey I love you but I just can't smile" without smiling. If they do smile they become "it." If they don't smile, whoever is "it" must move on and try to make someone else smile. Call an end to the game when you have run out of time and then say,

We all know that if you love someone it shows in your actions and the way you live. Today we are going to see some practical ways that we can show our love for God.

Interactive Learning

Starting with the leader, have each student tell the group two people that they love. Ask a few students why they chose the people they did. Then go around the group again having each student share one thing they have done in the past week to show love to one of the people they had mentioned.

Unfortunately we frequently take for granted the people that we love. If you had trouble thinking of a specific way you showed your love to someone, make sure this week to both show them and tell them how much you love and appreciate them.

Bible Application

We last saw Peter weeping because he had done the very thing he swore he wouldn't do--abandon Jesus. We know that Jesus forgave him because the book of Acts tells us about his important role in the growth of the church, but today we want to see what Jesus said to Peter the next, and possibly last, time they talked face to face.

I want you to close your eyes and imagine that you are Peter. Remember your shame at denying Jesus. Remember how you couldn't stop crying as you watched your beloved master Jesus being crucified and dying on a cross. Remember how numb and empty you felt when your tears ran out. Then how you ran with your heart pounding to Jesus' tomb when the women came and said it was empty and how you thought your heart would burst with joy when you saw for yourself that Jesus really had risen.

Now imagine that you have been fishing all night with Thomas and Nathanael. As you are just beginning to make out the shadows of the trees on the lake's edge in the early dawn you hear a voice, "Friends, do you have any fish?" When you reply "No" he calls back, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." You wearily toss the net over the right side and immediately feel the pulling of the ropes in your hand, as the net becomes heavy with fish.

While their eyes are still closed read John 21: 7-14. Then ask the following questions. [Note: These questions do not have a "right" answer, but it is very important that the students engage their minds and emotions in this activity, so give them time to respond and if they do not respond voluntarily ask a few people to give their opinions.

- *How do you, as Peter, feel about seeing Jesus?*
- *What do you most want Jesus to know?*

Read John 21: 15-17.

- *How do you think Peter felt when Jesus asked him if he loved him?*
- *What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Feed my lambs" and "take care of my sheep"?*

Throughout the Bible God's people are called "sheep." In Psalm 23 God shows himself to be their shepherd and in John 10: 11 Jesus says that he is the "good shepherd." When you see a child herding sheep, you know that the sheep don't belong to him but he has been given the responsibility to take care of them. In the same way, God is the supreme shepherd, the one to whom the sheep belong, but throughout the Bible we see him appointing "under-shepherds" to take care of his sheep.

Here we see Jesus saying to Peter that if Peter really loves him he will accept the responsibility of taking care of Jesus' sheep. In other words Peter's love for Jesus will naturally result in ministry. The same goes for us. If we love Jesus it will show in our lives. And one of the ways it will show is that we will love other "sheep" of Jesus and will use the gifts and talents that God has given us to help them.

Commitment

Before class get seven pieces of paper and write on each one in large letters one of the "strength areas" with its definition and verse and tape these papers on the walls around the room. Explain:

Youth have just as many talents and gifts as adults do, and usually even more energy. The following activity is designed to help you figure out what your natural strengths are and how you can use them in ministry.

Strength	Biblical Base	Definition
Artistic Creativity	Exodus 31:3	The ability to use creativity, especially the work of your hands, to further the Kingdom of God through artistic means.
Evangelism	Acts 2: 37, 38	The ability to share the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with unbelievers in such a way that they become disciples of Jesus and responsible members of the Body of Christ.
Exhortation/Encouragement	Acts 14: 22	The ability to comfort, console, counsel other Christians so that they feel encouraged and strengthened.
Leadership	Romans 12:8	The ability to set goals and communicate them in such a way that people voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish them for God's glory.
Mercy	Acts 9: 36	The ability to feel genuine concern and compassion for people suffering physical, mental or emotional problems, and to turn that compassion into cheerfully done actions to help them.
Service	John 13: 5	The ability to identify unmet needs and to use available resources to meet those needs.
Teaching	Acts 18: 24, 25	The ability to communicate information relevant to the maturity and ministry of the Body of Christ in such a way that its members of all ages will learn and be edified.

Adapted from "Trenton Spiritual Gifts Analysis" available from Charles Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth

Give each student a copy of the handout "Identifying my Strengths, Talents, and Gifts" and a pencil. Allow sufficient time for them to fill it out. When you see that

they have finished, write the names of the "talents" on the board in the following order:

1-Artistic Creativity (1,8,15) 2-Evangelism (2, 9, 16) 3-Exhortation/Encouragement (3,10,17) 4-Leadership (4,11,18) 5-Mercy (5,12,19) 6-Service (6, 13, 20) 7-Teaching (7, 14, 21).

Have the students fill in the lower part of the handout where it says "talents" in this order. Then write on the board beside each talent the numbers of the corresponding statements (ie. 1, 8, 15) and ask the students to write their "scores" for each group of questions beneath the corresponding talent and to then add the three scores and fill in the total score.

Explain that these seven areas are not a complete list of talents that people might have or even a list of all of the "spiritual gifts" mentioned in the Bible. So it may be that their greatest strengths, for example musical talent, aren't listed. Or it may be that they have equal scores in two or more areas. Whatever the case, encourage them to choose the area with the highest score, or if the scores are the same, the one they most enjoy and to move to the part of the room where you have placed the paper with that title.

Once in their groups, instruct them to read out loud the definition and the verse(es) on the paper. Then have them brainstorm and come up with four concrete ways that, as a group, they can use this strength in ministry in the church and then choose one of those four to actually carry out (for example the "teaching" group, instead of saying "we will help teach" could decide to volunteer teaching during Vacation Bible School.) When they have finished bring the students together and have each group share their ideas and what they have committed to do.

Closing

Write the names of all of the students in the room on the board, then read 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27. Explain that every Christian is a part of the Body of Christ and we are made to need each other. Give each student the "Nominations" handout and a pencil then read through the parts of the body and their descriptions on the sheet. Ask that they assign one of these "parts" to each student whose name is on the board according to what they perceive as that student's personality strengths. When they have finished go down the list on the board, asking for suggestions for their nominations, and writing them on the board next to their name.

Close with a prayer thanking God for all of the gifts and variety that He has given to his body, the church.

("Nominations" adapted from Building Community in Youth Groups by Denny Rydberg, Group Pub.)

Nominations



Eye is aware of and sensitive to what is going on around him or her.

Mouth is articulate and a good verbal communicator.



Ear is a good listener. People often come to him or her with their problems.

Head is a natural at administration and organization.



Foot is an initiator, helps motivate people.

Hand is a servant. Always ready to cheerfully help others.



Heart is compassionate and caring. Understands what other people are going through.

Funny bone enjoys life and helps other people enjoy it too.



Brain is analytical and a thinker. Good at resolving problems.

Skin is a peace-maker and brings unity to the group

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Identifying my Strengths, Talents, and Gifts

Read through the following statements and after each statement write the number from 0 to 3 which best describes to what extent this statement represents you, for example, 0-this statement does not represent me at all, 3-this statement represents me very well.

1	I feel good when I can express myself through creativity, design, and/or the plastic arts.	
2	I have lead other people to make a decision for salvation through faith in Christ	
3	I enjoy talking with and encouraging people who are upset, discouraged or unsure of themselves	
4	Others follow me and the examples I set because I have ideas which contribute to the strengthening of my group	
5	I joyfully help disadvantaged people, even though they may do little, if anything, in response to my help.	
6	I like the fact that people ask me to do special jobs.	
7	I enjoy telling Biblical stories and discussing them, knowing that the listeners will be edified because of the power of the word of God	
8	I derive much joy and satisfaction when I produce art or handicrafts	
9	I enjoy getting together with unbelievers and sharing with them the joy and peace I have because of Jesus and His love.	
10	I enjoy helping others work through complicated problems in their lives	
11	I guide small or large groups of people in decision-making processes.	
12	I like to do things to comfort people who are sick or are having problems	
13	I feel satisfaction in doing seemingly insignificant tasks for the glory of God.	
14	I teach children and/or adults about the love of Jesus and know that their faith is strengthened through my efforts.	
15	I enjoy it when I can make beautiful things, especially when they benefit others	
16	I get to know unbelievers in order to introduce them to Jesus.	
17	I like to share with others Biblical alternatives and truths that help to comfort or direct them.	
18	I motivate others in a positive way, to accomplish the goals of the group	
19	I like to work with and help those people who are ignored by the majority of those around me	
20	I am content to take orders rather than give them.	
21	I enjoy the times I share with children and/or adults my knowledge about understanding and applying God's word.	

Talent	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
Scores							
Total Score							

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