

Called to Discipleship Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. When was the last time you noticed a new house or new building being constructed? Did you happen to notice the foundation being laid? If so, what do you remember about it?
2. If you were to go on a long road trip, would you prefer to be the driver or a passenger? Why?

Read the following passages: Matthew 4:19-22; Matthew 7:21-24; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

During his earthly ministry, Jesus called people to follow him as his disciples. We see recorded in the earliest accounts of Jesus' ministry that this "call to discipleship" meant more than simply being present with Jesus in a casual sense. These disciples were to learn from him as they spent time with him and they were expected to obey his teachings. In time, Jesus sent them out to bring his message to others—a call for his disciples to make more disciples. Later, Paul wrote about this same concept, but with different metaphors. Paul used the language of statesmanship. In a letter to the believers in Corinth, Paul described followers of Jesus as "ambassadors," entrusted with a message of reconciliation.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Why is often easier to see the sins in others' lives, rather than the sin in our own lives?
2. Using the analogy of a foundation for a house, in Matthew 7, Jesus taught that what he was calling people into was not merely *hearing* his teachings, but *obeying* them. For some of us today, such a call might make us uneasy. ("Obedience" feels so medieval to the modern person!) We need to know that the obedience Jesus calls for leads into a place of blessing not one of manipulation or abuse.) Have you made the decision to follow to Jesus as Lord? If not, what's holding you back from taking that step?
3. What areas of your life might need to change if you decided to truly follow Jesus as his disciple? If you have already made a decision to follow Jesus, this does not exempt you from change. What changes is Jesus calling you to make in order to follow him *more closely*?

4. As Jesus called disciples to himself, he was also calling them into relationship with each other. (We sometimes refer to this concept as “spiritual family.”) High quality relationships with others in God’s family can take time to develop. In addition to participating regularly in a small group, what are some ways you can think of to intentionally build some friendships within the church community?
5. Remarkably, Jesus called his original disciples, these “unlearned and ordinary” men, to share in his mission to bring hope and freedom to others. Have you ever helped someone else make the decision to follow Jesus, or purposely helped someone grow in their faith? What did that feel like?
6. How might you take a step to become a “fisher of men” this week? Is there anyone you need to personally reach out to? Perhaps there is a neighbor whose door you need to knock on to build a bridge of relationship? Identify one simple step you can take to move towards those in your life who don’t yet know Jesus.
7. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? In what sense is the Gospel a “message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

Pray