



The Junction

Life Jesus' Way

Lent Discipleship Guidebook 2023

Week 5

Week of March 26

Discipleship Journey

THE JUNCTION | LIFE JESUS' WAY

Life presents choices. How confident are you in your decisions at every juncture?

This year on our journey through Lent we will learn from Jesus' first disciples what it means to answer Jesus' call in each decisive moment along the way. Our series focuses specifically on Peter's journey following Jesus. Each week in worship Pastor Laurie will preach on another choice that Peter faced as he and his fellow disciples followed Jesus. The purpose of this guide is to learn discipleship from Peter's story.

HOW IS THIS GUIDE ORGANIZED?

This guide follows a 2-4-1 rhythm for the week:

- 2 gatherings with others
Sunday **WORSHIP** introduces the Scripture and theme for each week, and the Connect Group Guide (**MEET**) has discussion questions for your group. (Some groups gather on a Sunday so that just means you have an extra day in the week for rest or reflection.)
- 4 Daily Personal Reflections
We provide four additional worksheet pages to help guide your personal devotions during this Lenten season. The worksheets help us to slow down for about 15 minutes each day to go deeper with the Bible passage for the week: **READ** to listen to God's word – **REFLECT** on what the Bible is saying about loyalty to Jesus – **PRAY** to invite the Spirit to lead us in following Jesus – and **SERVE** to turn our attention outward in love of others.
- 1 Day of **REST**
We all need a day to rest in God's grace toward us.
- Bonus Material
Daily readings from the Gospel of Matthew and a short prayer that you can read + pray at one of your meal times or before bed at night – to stay connected to the bigger picture of Jesus' story as we journey through Lent to Easter.

At one of the low points in Jesus' ministry – a day when many of his disciples decided to turn away from Jesus – He looked at the Twelve and asked them, "Do you want to leave as well?" Peter spoke for all of them when he said, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life – and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:68)

Peter's words capture our hope this Lent: *that this journey will strengthen your belief and lived experience that Jesus is the Holy One of God – and strengthen your resolve to remain steadfast in following him even on the most discouraging days of the journey.*

Week Five | Sunday Worship

DENY – PETER CHOOSES TO DENY HIMSELF AND FOLLOW JESUS

LUKE 9:18-27

Peter and the other disciples have made several transformational decisions in following Jesus. They've said, "Yes" to a new identity, to the risky next step of faith, to the authority of Jesus' words and even to surrendering their material wealth to Jesus' mission in the world. This week we reflect on the ultimate "Yes" – denying themselves in order to follow Jesus' way. You can identify a disciple of Jesus by their willing "No" to themselves in order to say "Yes" to serving Jesus' mission in this world.

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 9:23-24

"Then Jesus said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.'"

BONUS MATERIALS | DAILY READINGS

Monday: Matthew 16:21-28

Tuesday: Matthew 17:1-13

Wednesday: Matthew 17:14-27

Thursday: Matthew 18

Friday: Matthew 19

Saturday: Matthew 20

PRAYER

O Lord,
who has taught us that to gain the whole world
and to lose our souls is great folly,
grant us the grace so to lose ourselves
that we may truly find ourselves anew
in the life of grace,
and so to forget ourselves
that we may be remembered
in your kingdom.

Amen.

Prayer of Reinhold Neibuhr

Meet

WEEK FIVE | CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

*"It is not by telling people about ourselves that we demonstrate our Christianity.
Words are cheap. It is by costly, self-denying Christian practice that we show the reality of our faith."*

—John Edwards

WELCOME

As you begin your study discuss these questions:

- When have you needed to deny yourself for the sake of others? How did that feel?
- Who has been a good example to you of self-denying faith in Christ? Why?

WORD

Anything in the readings or practices from the Discipleship Journey Guidebook from this past week or from the sermon on Sunday that inspired or challenged you?

Read **Luke 9:18-27**.

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. In verses 18-20 Why do you think Jesus asked a general question before his next very personal and very specific question in verse 20? What do you think Peter's response meant to him? What do they mean for us today?
3. Verses 23-26 are a profound summary of what it means to be a follower of Jesus—a disciple, one who learns from a teacher. What are three things in verse 23 that one must do to become his follower? What do each of these mean for us today?
4. What do you think Jesus means by "lose their life for my sake" in verses 24-25? How does this "save" our lives?
5. Can you think of any other stories and teachings in the Bible about denying yourself in order to take up Jesus' cross and mission in the world? What do these stories add to your understanding of Jesus and Peter's interaction in this story?
6. From this passage, what does it mean for you to be a follower of Jesus? What is your risky next step this week following Jesus?

WORSHIP

This week...

- Take 2-5 minutes in silence, resting in the presence of God.
- Thank God together for His goodness and grace
- Ask God for the strength and joy to deny yourselves and live for Him.

WITNESS

Reflect on one way this week that you can say 'no' to yourself in order to say 'yes' to another person that Jesus is inviting you to serve in his name. Who is that person and how can we pray for you?

WORSHIP ON MAUNDY THURSDAY AS A CONNECT GROUP! *As a group you are encouraged to come to the service together on April 6 at 6pm to worship, share communion, and reflect on Christ's great love.*

Read

This week we spend some time reflecting on Jesus' call to deny ourselves in order to follow Him.

- Circle any reference to God or Jesus in these passages.
- _ Underline any examples or commands about how we follow Jesus' example of self-denial.
- ▣ Box any promises or places of hope in these passages.
- ★ Put a star next to the verse that especially captures your attention as you read.

PILIPPIANS 2:3-11

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

MATTHEW 20:20-28

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. 'What is it you want?' he asked.

She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.' 'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?' 'We can,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.'

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

JOHN 13:1-17

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' 'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.' 'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my

3. According to these passages what did Jesus gain through his self-denial? What do we gain through Jesus' actions?

4. Where do you resist following Jesus' example of self-denial? What is at risk for you? What do you risk losing if you do not deny yourself to follow Jesus?

Finish this time of study with a short prayer to God about what you have read and learned.

Reflect

‘NO’ TO SELF AND ‘YES’ TO JESUS

No one likes a narcissist, (except, of course, the narcissist). These days ‘looking out for number 1’ is culturally suspect. However, self-care is culturally celebrated. We’ve elevated the airline safety instruction that directs us to first put on our own mask before assisting others to a rule to live by in all of life. Maybe what we call ‘self-care’ has become ‘ensure your own comfort and security before you deny yourself to secure the comfort or security of another.’ Jesus’ example moves us from self-serving choices to serving others in Jesus’ name.

Jesus calls those who follow him to self-denial. This is not self-denial for the sake of self-denial – that would be self-hatred. Jesus models the purpose of self-denial for us – it is saying ‘no’ to self in order to say ‘yes’ to God’s call that we serve others. This is also important. We do not deny ourselves in order to please or appease other people. We deny ourselves for the same reason that Jesus denied himself – in order to glorify God. Today we reflect further on the three examples in our readings for this week.

Look back on the readings from yesterday and also the example of Jesus’ willingness to suffer the cross that was in the sermon on Sunday from Luke 9. What has Jesus done to deny himself in order to serve you?

Compare Jesus’ kingship (Messiah is a royal identity) to most rulers in history: what difference does it make that Jesus came as a humble servant rather than an authoritarian tyrant?

When we consider all that we risk losing by denying ourselves it is impossible to say, 'yes', to Jesus' command. When we consider all that Jesus gave for our sake, alongside the vindication of the resurrection and ascension that Paul describes in Philippians 2 – how does that affect your willingness to deny yourself in order to say, 'yes', to Jesus' call?

In what ways do you feel you live out self-denial for the sake of pleasing others? How can you live out self-denial for the sake of serving in Jesus name and to the glory of God? Even if the outward actions are the same, what is different inwardly?

Finish your time with a prayer.

Pray (Deny)

RE-ORIENTING OUR SPIRIT TO SAY 'YES' TO JESUS

*“Submission is an event, then a lifetime process.
Once we start kingdom living, we must keep submitting our wills to our King.
That’s what repentance means – turning from our way to God’s way, as a lifestyle.
When we stop repenting, we start regressing.
The reason this happens seems elusive but it isn’t.
When we stop humbling ourselves, we shut off the free flow
of the supernatural ability God calls grace.”*

—Jan David Hettinga *“Follow Me”*

In the book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard identifies several “disciplines of abstinence” that intentionally target places of self-comfort in our lives and lead us to self-denial so that we can surrender to Christ and rest in the comfort of His grace. Prayerfully consider prayerfully practicing one or more of these disciplines in order to make space for and focus on God.

Solitude: Refraining from interacting with other people in order to be alone with God and be found by him. (Solitude is completed by silence.)

Silence: Not speaking in a quiet place in order to quiet our minds and whole self and attend to God’s presence. Also, not speaking so that we can listen to others and bless them.

Fasting: Going without food (or something else like media) for a period of intensive prayer — the fast may be complete or partial.

Sabbath: Doing no work to rest in God’s person and provision; praying and playing with God and others. (God designed this for one day a week. We can practice it for shorter periods too.)

Secrecy: Not making our good deeds or qualities known to let God or others receive attention and to find our sufficiency in God alone (e.g., see Matthew 6).

Submission: Not asserting ourselves in order to come under the authority, wisdom, and power of Jesus Christ as our Lord, King, and Master.

Which of these will you practice over the next 7 days? Spend some time in prayer asking for God’s grace to help you in this practice.

Serve

LISTEN — LEARN FROM — AND LIVE!

We have reflected this week on Jesus' self-denial for the sake of our salvation, and also on the places we are called to deny ourselves in order to follow Jesus. Today's reflection turns our attention outward to the ways that we deny ourselves in order to love and serve another in Jesus' name.

In the table below reflect on your every day roles and the position toward others in each role. In the third column, especially considering your position toward others, write some ways you can or do live out Jesus' call to self-denial toward those you interact with in each role. In the fourth column note for yourself how often you actually choose self-denial in this way. In the last column make any notes on the reasons or excuses you have that make it difficult to deny yourself for the sake of others in this way.

Finish this exercise in prayer, asking Jesus to help you to follow him in your daily interactions with others in these ways.

ROLE	POSITION	WAYS TO LIVE AS SERVANT	HOW OFTEN (Rarely, sometimes, regularly)	WHY?
Teacher	Authority to students, subordinate to department head	Grade with grace (round up) Meet at inconvenient times. Go above and beyond my duty	Sometimes	Entitlement - I use my age & experience to get my way & be served

Adapted from "Saturate Field Guide," Jeff Vanderstelt and Ben Connelly