John 8:31 Pastor Shannon Popp
"The Test of Healthy Disciples" 11.8.26

Small Groups Study Guide: Read the entire Passage first

- Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Other passages to review: —Mark 5:7, James 2:19

READ THE PASSAGE
What does this passage tell us about God? Who He is and what He does.
31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

There is a difference between believing mentally and believing wholeheartedly in Jesus (vs 31)

This test of true discipleship is for you, to determine this about you, not others (vs 31)

Abiding in God's Word is obeying God's Word (vs 31)

Jesus is giving us the prayer, the path, and our purpose. (vs 31)
The Prayer in faith.

There is a difference between a prayer of belief and a prayer of trust (vs 31)
The Path in faith

We are to remain in God's Word, and for God's Word to reverberate through our life (vs 31)

The Purpose in faith.

Our purpose is the scope; our path is the sequence. (vs 31)

The design of God was that people would become the people of God by being with God (vs 31)

To abide in God's word is not to know more facts about God's Word, but to know God more (vs 31)

Put into Practice:
[] Move From Information to Transformation
[] Examine your heart

Small Group Discussion Questions

Scripture: John 8:31–38
Sermon: The True Test of Healthy Disciples

Big Idea: *True disciples don't just believe in Jesus; they abide in His Word, obey His teaching, and grow in their relationship with Him.*

Group Goal: Help one another move from simply knowing about Jesus to knowing Jesus personally, allowing His Word to transform our hearts and our everyday lives.

1. Believing vs. Abiding: Is There a Difference?
Read John 8:30–31 and James 2:19
Jesus speaks to people who had believed Him, yet challenges them to abide in His Word. Even demons believe certain truths about Jesus, but that belief does not lead to loving obedience.

- What is the difference between knowing facts about Jesus and placing your full faith and trust in Him?
- Can you share a time when something you knew about God became something you personally trusted Him with?
- What might keep someone from moving beyond intellectual belief to wholehearted trust?

2. Reading vs. Remaining: Is God's Word Getting Into You?
Read John 8:31–32, James 1:22–25 and Psalm 119:11
Jesus says true disciples abide in His Word. The goal isn't simply to get through the Bible, but to allow the Bible to get through us!

- What does spending time in God's Word currently look like in your life?
- What's going well, and what's challenging?
- Share a specific Scripture that has changed the way you think, respond, or live.
- What is one practical way we can help each other move from reading God's Word to remaining in God's Word?

3. Knowing vs. Obeying: Where Is Jesus Calling You to Grow?
Read John 8:31, Matthew 7:24–27 and Luke 6:46
Jesus teaches that hearing His words without obeying them is like building a house on sand. The strength of our faith is revealed not simply by what we know, but by how we respond to His Word.

- Have you ever known what God wanted you to do but struggled to actually do it? What made obedience difficult?
- Which area of obedience is most challenging for you right now: relationships, forgiveness, generosity, priorities, or something else?
- How can this group encourage you and lovingly hold you accountable without becoming judgmental?

4. Information vs. Transformation: Who Are You Becoming?
Read John 8:31–32, Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18

God's purpose for His Word is not merely to increase our knowledge, but to transform us into the likeness of Jesus. As we remain in His Word, the Holy Spirit changes our hearts, attitudes, and actions.

- Think back over the past year. Where have you seen God changing you to become more like Jesus?
- Who has modeled a life of abiding in Jesus for you? What have you learned from watching their life?
- What is one area where you would love to see the Holy Spirit bring greater transformation in the next six months?

5. The Prayer, the Path, and the Purpose: Who Are You Walking With?
Read John 8:31–36, Mark 3:14 and John 15:4–5
Jesus didn't simply call His disciples to follow instructions; He called them to be with Him. Our relationship with Jesus begins with faith, continues through daily dependence, and carries us into eternity.

- How has your relationship with Jesus changed since you first placed your faith in Him?
- When do you feel most connected to Jesus? When do you find yourself drifting away from Him?
- Who is someone God has placed in your life that you could intentionally help grow as a disciple of Jesus?
- What would change in our church if every disciple intentionally helped someone else become a disciple who makes disciples?

PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS

Small groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth together in deep Christian relationships through the application of God's Word. The goal is to care about each other enough to ask the BIG questions of life, such as: What is God doing in your life? What is He asking you to do about it? Then walk with each other through life.

sharing, caring, praying, serving, and mobilizing each other.
SHARING – We come together each week to share a meal, God's Word, and how His story impacts our daily walk.
CARING – We gather together each week to ask great questions, listen to understand each other, and what God is doing in and through our lives.
PRAYING – We meet together to pray with each other. Not just to speak to God, but to hear from Him each week in community, and daily individually.
SERVING - We work together, using our unique gifts, to serve one another by God's grace and build the body in love each week.
MOBILIZING – We are praying for our neighbors by name and pray through "Good Events" once a quarter.

Main Purpose
Help your group see that the gospel is not merely behavior improvement but identity transformation. In Adam, sin and death reign. In Christ, grace reigns. Because of this, we rejoice — not just in what God does, but in who He is.
Pathway
When people move off track of the purpose, point to Scripture and remind people of the purpose.

Understanding the Questions
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Sermon: The True Test of Healthy Disciples

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- Can you share a time when something you knew about God became something you personally trusted Him with?
- What might keep someone from moving beyond intellectual belief to wholehearted trust?

Biblical Answer: Genuine faith is more than intellectual agreement. True disciples trust Jesus and demonstrate that faith by continuing in His Word (John 8:31) Obedience doesn't earn salvation; it is evidence of a living faith (Ephesians 2:8–10).

2. Reading vs. Remaining: Is God's Word Getting Into You?
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Jesus says true disciples abide in His Word. The goal isn't simply to get through the Bible, but to allow the Bible to get through us!

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- What's going well, and what's challenging?
- Share a specific Scripture that has changed the way you think, respond, or live.
- What is one practical way we can help each other move from reading God's Word to remaining in God's Word?

Biblical Answer: Abiding means continuing in Jesus' teaching, receiving His truth, and putting it into practice. James warns against hearing without obeying, while Psalm 119:11 teaches us to treasure God's Word in our hearts so that it shapes our lives.

3. Knowing vs. Obeying: Where Is Jesus Calling You to Grow?
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- Have you ever known what God wanted you to do but struggled to actually do it? What made obedience difficult?
- Which area of obedience is most challenging for you right now: relationships, forgiveness, generosity, priorities, or something else?
- How can this group encourage you and lovingly hold you accountable without becoming judgmental?

Biblical Answer: Jesus teaches that wise disciples hear His Word and put it into practice (Matthew 7:24–25). Obedience is a response to His love, not a way to earn it (John 14:15). God works within believers to produce both the desire and the ability to obey Him (Philippians 2:12–13).

4. Information vs. Transformation: Who Are You Becoming?
Read John 8:31–32, Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18
God's purpose for His Word is not merely to increase our knowledge, but to transform us into the likeness of Jesus. As we remain in His Word, the Holy Spirit changes our hearts, attitudes, and actions.

- Think back over the past year. Where have you seen God changing you to become more like Jesus?
- Who has modeled a life of abiding in Jesus for you? What have you learned from watching their life?
- What is one area where you would love to see the Holy Spirit bring greater transformation in the next six months?

Biblical Answer: God's Word reveals His truth, renews our minds, and directs our lives (John 8:31–32; Romans 12:2). The Holy Spirit transforms believers increasingly into Christ's likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). Spiritual growth is not simply knowing more about Jesus, but becoming more like Jesus.

5. The Prayer, the Path, and the Purpose: Who Are You Walking With?
Read John 8:31–36, Mark 3:14 and John 15:4–5
Jesus didn't simply call His disciples to follow instructions; He called them to be with Him. Our relationship with Jesus begins with faith, continues through daily dependence, and carries us into eternity.

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- What would change in our church if every disciple intentionally helped someone else become a disciple who makes disciples?

Biblical Answer: Jesus calls His disciples to remain in His Word (John 8:31), depend upon Him (John 15:4–5), and experience the freedom that only He provides (John 8:36). He also calls disciples to make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). Healthy disciples grow in relationship with Jesus and help others do the same.

One Simple Step: Read. Remain. Respond.
This week, choose one small verse to memorize, so that it sticks in your head. Then try to think about it throughout your day, so that you are meditating on God's Word, day and night, and intentionally moving it from your head to your heart.