

TO THE GROUP LEADER: This resource is designed to help you lead others to better understand one of the “Basics of the Faith” booklets published by P&R. The numbers in brackets indicate the page number in the booklet. Below each question is an answer based on what the author presents, or advice on how to discuss the question. You have the freedom to adapt the questions to best fit your group.

A good teaching technique is to distribute the questions to the group and have them write down how they would answer BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, members can refine their answers based on their reading. As a group, members can discuss their views to affirm or modify what they wrote.

1. There is a lot of talk in the church about the word discipleship, but what, exactly, do *you* think it means? (6-9)
Start the study by asking the group to give their initial answers to this question. List them for all to see so you can make corrections, additions, and subtractions as the study progresses.
2. Read Matthew 28:18-20. The only imperative or command given here by Jesus is to **make disciples**. What part does each of the following play in the process of making disciples? (6-9)
 - a. Go – *Literally translated this reads: While you are going... Jesus is saying, while you are living your life for Me make disciples...*
 - b. Baptism – *This should be seen as the beginning of all discipleship, for the covenant child and for a new believer.*
 - c. Teaching – *This is an all-encompassing word, which would include preaching, formal teaching, mentoring, and teaching by way of lifestyle.*
 - d. Jesus’ authority – *It is by His authority we realize making disciples is not a request but a command from our Lord. It is His last instruction to what will become the NT church.*
 - e. Jesus’ ongoing presence – *His promise to be with His church throughout all the coming ages is critical as it assures us He is there not only watching, but participating in making us into His disciples.*
3. How are discipleship and salvation the same? How are they different? (9-11)
*Steve points out the church often separates these. But, they are all part of one system. God saves us to be disciples. We do not have to choose *if* we will be disciples; we are *commanded* to be followers of Jesus.*
4. When does discipleship begin: before or after a person gets saved? (11-13)
True discipleship starts when God the Holy Spirit begins to call a person to Himself. These are the times we are confronted with the truth of the Gospel. We cannot separate salvation from discipleship.
5. What part does the Holy Spirit play in our discipleship process? (12-13)
The Holy Spirit’s job is to make us like Jesus (Romans 8:29). He begins this process by changing our hearts, making us capable of hearing and responding to His call. But He doesn’t stop working when we get saved. The process of making us like Jesus (sanctification) continues as we grow as His disciples.
6. Read Colossians 3:5-17. What part do you play in growing as a disciple? (13-14)
When you got saved, the power of sin was broken. Now you have the Holy Spirit within you, enabling you to do all He calls you to do and to be. This is the on-going work of the Gospel.

7. Hopefully, having already answered all the above questions, you can answer this: What is the distinction between evangelism and discipleship? (14-16)
 We shouldn't think of these two words as being totally distinct as they are overlapping. Discipleship is the over-arching term which includes evangelizing the nations and continuing on after they are saved.
8. What part does the *Gospel* play in the discipleship process? (16-20)
 This is a critical section of the book. Take the class through sections 5-7 and make sure they are clear on this.
9. Can discipleship take place outside the Church? (21-22)
 Nowhere does the Bible teach Christ died for individuals. The terms used are: He died for His people, His body, and His church. Salvation is always understood collectively. When a person is saved (as an individual) he/she is saved into the body of Christ. And it is only within this corporate body that discipleship takes place.
10. When a church takes disciplining its people seriously, where should it begin? (22-23)
 It is often assumed evangelism trumps Christian Education. The two must not be segmented. The reality is, the discipleship of our children must have first priority. For, if we lose our children at the expense of only doing evangelism, we have defeated God's purpose for the family. Focusing only on evangelism causes a church to be weak and ill. If we only win people to Christ, we will be bringing them into a sick church, which is willing to lose its own children.

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

Personal – How well are you currently growing as a disciple of Jesus? Where are you on the following line?

UNSAVED INDIVIDUAL		SAVED INDIVIDUAL				
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Unsaved and outside of the church with no interest in spiritual things	Being nurtured and is very interested in spiritual things	Believing: A new Christian, immature and needing mentoring	Growing: Those actively growing personally. Beginning to get involved in ministry	Becoming: Spiritually maturing. Needs to be trained to disciple new believers	Serving: Spiritually mature. Should be trained to disciple A-E	Leading: Spiritually mature. Should be trained to lead and disciple the church

What plan can you make to move further along in your walk with Jesus? Why not make that plan *now* while it is on your mind?

APPLICATION

Church – Steve gives a number of helpful ideas at the end of the study. (26-29) If you are an elder, why not get your session to meet and discuss your overall strategy for discipleship. If you are a teacher or small group leader, ask your group how well they feel they are being disciple, and see what you can do as a group to move people along.

For Further Study

The Walk, Stephen Smallman. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009.
Beginnings: Understanding How We Experience the New Birth, Stephen Smallman. P&R, 2015.
As Iron Sharpens Iron: Building Character in a Mentoring Relationship, Howard & William Hendricks. Moody, 1995.

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