



Week Three

This week Pastor Jacob concluded the three-part message series called Disciples of Jesus. In this series we were reminded of four key identifiers of discipleship. Our identity is in Christ, our allegiance is to Christ, our motivation is Christ, and our sacrifice is for Christ. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group go to www.prov.church/signup and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this prayer together:

God, we are called to be followers of your son Jesus Christ. We are not always good at being followers. Remind us of who we are and whose we are in these days of confusing allegiance and motivation. Give us pure hearts for the cause of Christ. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MATTHEW 7.9-11

"Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

- Jesus is appealing to the common ethic of care for children. Are there people who don't care for children and close family members? Yes. But Jesus is digging down to the core level of love and decency. If there is anything in us that desires good for others, then we can see just a glimpse of God's heart towards us. God desires good for us! What are you asking God for these days? Bread? Fish? Peace? Restored relationships? How is God responding?
- *Pray, asking God for what you need, and then look and listen for God's response.*

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 7.12

¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

- This teaching is called The Golden Rule. *Do to others what you would have them do to you.* In a religion and a world with many rules, this is the one to be returned to time and time again. It's a summary of the heart of all of the Law and the words and warnings of the prophets. Is it helpful

for you to go all the way back to this teaching of Jesus when making big or little decisions? Is it a natural part of your decision making or do you have to intentionally remember this rule?

- *Pray that Jesus' Golden Rule would be at the heart of who you are and how you live in the world.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 10.30-37

³⁰ *In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.*

³² *So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

³⁶ *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

³⁷ *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

- Jesus told this story in response to the question, "Who is my neighbor?". Jesus had just given the instruction to love your neighbor as yourself. So the question being asked of him was really, "Who do I need to love?" The response to that? The one you think of as being on the other side, even your enemy. The other characters in the story represented other rules "Take whatever you are strong enough to take", "Ignore the needs of others as long as it doesn't affect you." The Samaritan represents the Golden Rule: *Do to others as you would have them do to you.* Do you ever have trouble showing love to those who are on the other side of worldly divides? In today's world, politics divide as much or more than the religion of Jesus' day. How will you show love to someone that has become an enemy in your heart?
- *Pray to see and act in love when your enemy is hurting.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 25.34-40

³⁴ *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

³⁷ *"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

⁴⁰ *"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

- This teaching from Jesus was groundbreaking. It is still groundbreaking. For so long, showing love to God was seen as a private act of sacrifice and reverence. Jesus says that our love for God is shown in our love for others. How have you demonstrated your love for God this week?
- *Pray that you would see Jesus in every person you see today. Pray that you would notice the hunger and thirst and physical need around you.*

FRIDAY: ROMANS 12.1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Paul's teaching shows that the life of a disciple is about both giving and receiving. Giving your body as a living sacrifice to God and receiving a renewed mind. This begs the questions--What are you giving your life to? What are you taking in?
- *Pray for transformation that comes from a renewed mind and a life of sacrifice to God.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 119.41

Let your love, GOD, shape my life with salvation, exactly as you promised;

- The Psalmist writes and sings of a life shaped by God. We often use the symbol of a heart to express love. We make the shape of a heart by putting our fingertips together. Our physical hearts aren't really shaped like that, and God's love isn't either--but it's a symbol for us that our lives take on the shape of our salvation. We are saved as a result of God's love poured out for us in and through Jesus Christ. How do you picture yourself being shaped or formed by God's love?
- *Pray that your life would be shaped by God's love.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Jacob contrasted Jesus' Golden Rule with the Iron Rule (do what you are big enough to do?), and the Silver Rule (what you wish do not wish done to you, don't do to others). How are those rules being lived out in different areas of our lives and the life of our country? What would it look like if we could operate out of the Golden Rule all of the time?
- If it is true for you, pray this Disciple's Declaration:

The Father has lavished his love on me through Jesus Christ. I am a child of God.

That is who I am.

Jesus, my identity is in you.

No one can serve two masters. I say "no" to gods, and "yes" to God.

A house divided cannot stand.

Jesus, my allegiance is to you.

I am tempted to live my life for myself.

Instead, I choose today to live for you.

Jesus, my motivation is found in you.

In everything, I want to do to others as I would have them to do to me.

Jesus, I will sacrifice everything for you.