

DISCIPLE



United Methodist Men
Meditation and Action Guide
to accompany

DISCIPLE II

INTO THE WORD
INTO THE WORLD

Bishop Richard B. Wilke

Preface

INTO THE WORD - INTO THE WORLD is the second of the four DISCIPLE Bible series. Don't let the fact that you haven't taken the first course bother you. This study starts with a 16-week study of the Old Testament (the Hebrew Scriptures), and then tackles a 16-week study of the beginning of Christianity (Luke – Acts). If desired, your group can take a break at the end of each eight-week study period.

This supplement is designed for United Methodist men and their friends. It offers personal meditations for men and weekly calls to action.

(1)

Key word — Respect

Personal meditation:

Before you go to bed some clear night, walk outside to a quiet place, stare at the moon, gaze at the starry heavens and ponder the majesty and mystery of God's magnificent creation.

Project for the week:

Find a way to protect God's creation by cleaning up a street, a river or a vacant lot.

(2)

Key word — Pride

Personal meditation:

Think about people in your church and community who quickly and unobtrusively do thoughtful tasks. Say "thank you" to persons who do "behind the scenes" tasks in your life.

Project for the week:

Do some thoughtful task without expecting any expression of gratitude. Straighten up a church closet; mow the lawn for the church, pastor or neighbor; take someone to a doctor's appointment; clean out someone's garage; take someone to lunch; send a letter of thanks.

(3)

Key word — Hospitality

Personal meditation:

When have you received the gift of gracious hospitality? Can you recall when you grew spiritually because the door to a church fellowship group was opened for you?

Project for the week:

Invite one family in your neighborhood to eat a meal with you in your home, or offer to make telephone calls to church visitors. Serve at a homeless shelter.

(4)

Key word — Continuity

Personal meditation:

Remember the men in your life who shared their faith with you. Thank God for their faithful witness.

Project for the week:

Share your faith with your child, your grandchild, or another man. Tell that person how you became a Christian and how you are growing in your faith.

(5)

Key word — Alienation

Personal meditation:

Ponder your relationships with your extended family. Say a prayer for each one according to his or her needs.

Project for the week:

Identify one person in your extended family or church family where a disagreement has resulted in alienation or feeling of separation. Call or write to apologize or simply say, "Hello."

(6)

Key word — Reconciliation

Personal meditation:

When in your life did you wrestle "all night" with God? Over a job or business decision? A marriage proposal? A problem with your child? A tragic alienation? A grievous mistake? A call to the ordained ministry? Give thanks to God for seeing you through that difficult time.

Project for the week:

Spend 30 minutes in prayer for family, friends, associates, and co-workers. Pray for their well-being. Pray for forgiveness and for insight into future relationships. Make amends where possible.

(7)

Key word — Patience

Personal meditation:

Spend twenty minutes alone and quiet. Clear your mind to simply listen.

Project for the week:

Find time to listen to a family member, co-worker, or a friend. Ask how they are doing and just listen. When someone is slow to act or respond, try not to speak too soon.

(8)

Key word — Providence

Personal meditation:

Think back. Who provided food, clothing, and shelter for you when you were young? Did a word of guidance or counsel help you on your way? Do you see God's hand in your life thus far? Give thanks to God for God's care.

Project for the week:

Take food, clothing, or money to a local food bank or shelter. Fast for a meal. Give thanks to God for your home, food, clothes, transportation, children, finances and health.

(9)

Key word — Bondage

Personal meditation:

Have you ever been in bondage? To alcohol? Drugs? Food? A job you hate? A debilitating time schedule? An unending period of grief or anger? Ask the God of Exodus to lead you out of bondage.

Project for the week:

If you are addicted to anything, ask God to help you make the break. Join a support group like AA, an exercise club, a grief-recovery group, a prayer group, or an adult Sunday school class to help you escape that bondage.

(10)

Key word — Called

Personal meditation:

Have you felt called by God to preach? Teach a Sunday school class? Help with the Boy Scouts? Help with the men's group? Did you, like Moses, obey the call? Listen for God's call.

Project for the week:

There may be no burning bush, but God is calling you to serve somewhere. Go to a trusted friend, a mentor, a pastor and discuss your talents and the needs of the church or community.

(11)

Key word — Salvation

Personal meditation:

You are studying the scriptures via DISCIPLE because somewhere, sometime you said “yes” to God. When and where was that?

Project for the week:

In your group meeting this week, give your testimony of when you experienced salvation, when you accepted the Lord as your Savior. Invite others to share, if they feel free to do so. Give the same testimony to someone at your job, your sports group, or your neighborhood.

(12)

Key word — Trials

Personal meditation:

When did you face a severe financial or personal trial? Was there a time when you felt God carried you through a tough time? Say a prayer of thanks for carrying you through.

Project for the week:

Who in your or church or community has lost a job or a loved one? Who is wandering in the wilderness because of a divorce, bankruptcy or relationship problems? Who is now homeless or in jail? Give them a helping hand and a word of encouragement.

(13)

Key word — Laws

Personal meditation:

Have laws helped you lead a healthier, happier life? Adultery, thievery, lying? Are you finding some spiritual law oppressive?

Project for the week:

Ask yourself if there is a spiritual law you are hedging on. Are you resting one day in seven? Are you misrepresenting your product or your services? Are you bending your income tax data? Are you forgetting your parents? Make it right.

(14)

Key word — Justice

Personal meditation:

Life isn't fair. A soldier loses his legs in a bomb explosion. A poor child gets thrown out of school for a minor offense. Addicted on drugs, an inmate gets a "three strikes you're out" prison sentence. Is God revealing some injustice to you?

Project for the week:

Volunteer at an organization in your community that fights injustice (Mothers against Drunk Drivers; legal aid for children in state custody; agencies that hire the handicapped).

(15)

Key word — Compassion

Personal meditation:

God is compassionate. God's people are called to be the same. Has a pastor, a teacher, a co-worker, or a friend helped you over a tough spot, given you a kind word, or offered a helping hand? Thank God and thank him or her (if you can).

Project for the week:

It is your time to be compassionate! Make a call on an elderly shut-in or a jail inmate. Help at the soup kitchen. Read to a developmentally disabled child.

(16)

Key word — Sanctuary

Personal meditation:

Worship sometimes is routine and perfunctory. Other times it is exhilarating and life changing. Think back: when was worship most meaningful? What did you bring to that experience?

Project for the week:

Prepare for worship instead of hoping the choir will sing well or wondering how persuasive the sermon will be. Pray ahead of time for the pastor and that you will be open to the Holy Spirit.

(17)

Key word — Gospel

Personal meditation:

Luke was a non-Jewish Greek doctor who gave us the good news in his Gospel and history (Acts). Think of times you received “good news,” perhaps from a doctor, pastor or employer. Remember when the “good news” of Jesus’ love, forgiveness, new life, and life beyond death got through to you.

Project for the week:

Call on a church visitor, an inactive member or a golfing buddy. Share what a joy Christ Jesus is in your life. Invite him to your men’s fellowship. Say a prayer for him.

(18)

Key word — Messiah

Personal meditation:

As you contemplate John the Baptist, the preparation, birth and dedication of Jesus, think of the preparation for your faith, a congregation established, a mother’s prayers, a father’s example, a Sunday school teacher’s faithfulness.” Say “Thank you, Lord.”

Project for the week:

Take a group of men to attend a synagogue service, or invite a rabbi or Jewish layman to speak to your men’s group. Participate in a confirmation class or a Seder meal, or assist the pastor in serving communion.

(19)

Key word — Prayer

Personal meditation:

Who has prayed for you? Who is praying for you now?

Contemplate the prayers that have been offered on your behalf, and be grateful.

Project for the week:

Can you say, with the disciples, “Lord, teach us how to pray”? In this *DISCIPLE* study, nothing could be more powerful than for you to become a man of prayer. Set a specific time and place for your daily prayers on behalf of your family, church, work and others.

(20)

Key word — Rejection

Personal meditation:

When were you ever turned down, told to go away, fired, rejected? How did God help you? What did you do about it?

Project for the week:

Did a man you know get “laid off”? Did your son or grandson get cut from the football team? Did a friend’s wife leave him? Did a man stand up for his gay son and get ostracized by his friends? Did you experience racial prejudice? Identify one rejected fellow—go to him, be a friend to him.

(21)

Key word — The Way

Personal meditation:

Jesus said, “I am the way.” Again he said, “Not everyone who calls me ‘Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom, but those who do the will of my Father.” (Matthew 7:21). Ask yourself, “Where am I ‘walking the walk’ and ‘where am I off the Jesus trail?’”

Project for the week:

Identify a weakness in your daily walk with Christ and find an accountability partner or small group and work to correct it.

(22)

Key word — Kingdom

Personal meditation:

Jesus taught us to pray for the time when God’s kingdom will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Kingdom issues may come upon us unexpectedly. We come upon an automobile accident. Our best friend’s wife is diagnosed with cancer. A man calls us to help work on a Habitat House. When has that happened to you?

Project for the week:

Put together an emergency first aid kit or jumper cables to carry in your car. Attend a disaster-relief training workshop. Help someone to grow in Christ. Say “yes” to the next request that comes your way.

(23)

Key word — Humility

Personal meditation:

Is it possible to be strong, wise, powerful, or rich and yet be humble? Who do you know who is powerful, yet humble? Contemplate Jesus, strong yet humble.

Project of the week:

Be willing to put God or others ahead of yourself. Challenge yourself to assume a task that requires strength and humility. Tithe this month's income. If you already tithe, make one special gift to a need God has placed on your heart. (Read Malachi 3:8-10)

(24)

Key word — Resurrection

Personal Meditation:

Meditate on the last week in Jesus life—often called “The Passion.” Think for a moment of how God loves you, wants you to love Him and wants you to live forever. Reflect on the questions: “Why did Jesus die for me?” and “What does the Resurrection mean for me?”

Project for the week:

Visit with one of the “saints” of your church. Ask that person if he or she believes in life beyond the grave. Ask that person why they believe.

(25)

Key word — Holy Spirit

Personal meditation:

Some people shy away from talk about the Holy Spirit. They think Holy Spirit experience means jumping and shouting—speaking in tongues. But, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus—do you need to be afraid of Him?

Project for the week:

We receive the Holy Spirit by surrendering — by yielding all that we are — past, present, future into His loving arms. Kneel down, let go. Surrender. Access the power of the Holy Spirit to witness, teach and preach.

(26)

Key word — Jerusalem

Personal meditation:

Stephen was martyred in Jerusalem. Some are being persecuted and martyred today. Have you ever suffered in any way because of your faith or your Christian commitment?

Project of the week:

Is there a bold move you could make that might result in criticism? Hire an ethnic-minority person? Invite a gay couple to join your church? Invite a recently released inmate to your men's fellowship? Stand up for someone? Just do it!

(27)

Key word — Antioch

Personal meditation:

In today's society, as in ancient Antioch, we have all kinds of people—folks from all over—rich and poor, Hispanic, Asian, Africans, European descent. Meditate for a moment on how diverse your city or town is, yet how God loves everyone.

Project for the week:

Attend another church in your community. How does it feel to be different from all the other members of the congregation? Are you welcomed or shunned?

(28)

Key word — Philippi

Personal meditation:

When was your congregation most effective in reaching the unchurched? What did church folks do that worked in making new disciples?

Project for the week:

Go with another man and make calls on neighbors and newcomers to your community. Invite a neighbor or a co-worker to a sporting event or a work project sponsored by your men's group

(29)

Key word — Corinth

Personal meditation:

Change and differences of opinion can cause conflict. St. Paul told quarreling Corinthians to love one another. Can you remember a time when wise, kindly people reduced tension, and built harmony? Thank God for them.

Project for the week:

Challenge your United Methodist Men to go to the pastor and ask how you could help the whole church avoid being a “closed body” and reach out to more children, youth, adults, even of diverse backgrounds.

(30)

Key word — Ephesus

Personal meditation:

St. Paul trained young men to help him. Who gave you guidance, instruction, encouragement when you were young?

Project for the week:

Help a Boy Scout earn a merit badge. Help a young man prepare a devotional for youth fellowship. Go on a youth mission trip as adult adviser. Become a big brother through Amachi, a program of Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

(31)

Key word — Rome

Personal meditation:

The apostles travelled far to share the Gospel. Ask yourself: “Have I ever travelled for the Lord?” When?

Project for the week:

Volunteer for a Volunteers in Mission (VIM) project or a work-, witness- or medical team.

(32)

Key word — Priority

Personal meditation:

There are so many demands on us — family, work, church, time, and money. It takes spiritual discipline to stay well organized and focused on things that matter. Think: how are you doing with your godly priorities?

Project for the week:

Ask God to help you address neglected areas of your life. Perhaps this is your prayer life, time with your family, self-discipline, health care, church involvements or work habits.

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If you had a meaningful experience studying DISCIPLE with other men please consider taking DISCIPLE to your area prison. Consultation and training in Prison ministry is available at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org.



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