

When we wait expectantly to hear God’s voice and study His word for personal revelation and direction, we will likely be prompted to engage our community. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says we should be on view for the world to see. That doesn’t mean you have to be a street preacher. God uniquely made you to be who you are, and He can use you for His glory right where you are.

Are you aware of someone who has used their “everyday life” in a way that glorifies God? What made them different in a way that allowed others to see Jesus?

Within your group, share what you see as strengths and opportunities each of you uniquely faces in your daily lives that God can use for His glory if you are willing to take a risk and follow His leading.

WRAP-UP

God not only sees us as we are, He sees who we are becoming. But we may settle for far less than He intends us to be. If Jesus is Lord in our lives, we need to listen for His voice and respond to His prompting. The more we trust and obey, the greater the rewards to us and those whose lives we touch. God made us uniquely and placed us where He wants us. He is able to use us to impact our community for His glory, if we are willing to take the risk and rely on His Spirit to empower us.

Memory Verse

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
- John 10:27 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge- Ready to go further? Find out about how uniquely God made you at newlifepismo.com/identity, Spend Time with God in the Word and Prayer, then find a place to serve at newlifepismo.com/serve.

“Regaining Our Purpose in a Plastic World”

Travis Avila

INTRODUCTION

As followers of Jesus, we know we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation. We also know we have been called to make disciples of all men. But maybe when we look at our lives it is hard to identify ourselves in those terms. Maybe we have settled for a diluted version of Christianity that says, just as long as you are a good, moral person you are living the Christian life. But there are plenty of good, moral people around who have nothing to do with Jesus. So, what differentiates us from those other good people, and how should we live our lives in a way that is significantly different from the world around us? How can we live like the people God calls us to be rather than a weak imitation?

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Do you decorate your home more with live or artificial plants?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Living as the People God Calls Us to Be

If you were asked, “What does Jesus want His followers to do?” you might not know where to start looking. One answer is found in Matthew 28:19.

Matthew 28:18-20 NLT - 18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

For many of us this passage can pose an uncomfortable measure of our obedience to God. We probably ask ourselves, “When was the last time I led someone to the Lord?” But the word translated into “making disciples” is *mathēteuō*. It is a verb that means to teach or instruct someone to follow precepts and instructions. This does not exclusively mean leading someone in the sinner’s prayer. But for many of us, that is the first thing we check to measure ourselves in terms of the “Great Commandment”.

What are some activities you would include as ways we teach or instruct others to follow Jesus' precepts and instructions? In which of these have you been involved?

Perhaps as important as knowing who we are called to be is knowing who we are *not* to be. The world around us does not need more of the same. Many are crippled with anxiety and depression because what the world has to offer doesn't satisfy.

Romans 12:2 NLT - 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Paul has some very important truth packed in this verse. This first thing we see is that our behavior and customs should not be a copy of the world around us.

What would you say are some of the highest values of the culture we live in today? Do you feel they reflect God's values? Are there some you find particularly difficult to avoid?

Paul also tells us God is the one who transforms us by changing the way we think. We need to view life through a Godly, not a worldly lens.

If we allow God to change the way we think, what does this verse indicate we will be able to know?

2. Accept Lordship

1 Corinthians 6:19 NLT - 19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Romans 14:7-8 NLT - 7 For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. 8 If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Periodically we need to check how we view our relationship to Christ. Based on the verses above there is little doubt that we belong to Jesus. But what are the practical steps to living a life submitted to the Lordship of Jesus?

Step 1- Listen to what He says.

John 10:27 NLT - 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

On a very practical level, we should all be aware of the unique ways we hear God's voice. You aren't likely to hear the audible voice of God- it's not impossible, just not likely. There are however, many different ways you might hear from God. Here are a few: reading and meditating on God's Word; pastoral teaching (weekend service); during times of prayer; when you worship in song, or declaring His praises, or kneeling before Him; when you are in a place where you see God reflected in His creation. This is not an exhaustive list, but perhaps you have experienced God's presence and guidance in these or other ways.

What would you say are the best ways for you to hear God speak to you? How often do you expect to hear God speaking to you?

Step 2 – Obediently follow God's prompting.

Whatever way you hear God's voice, you have a choice to follow his prompting or not. The evidence of Jesus' Lordship in our lives is revealed in our action. The more we trust Him, the more we will submit to His Lordship. Luckily, we don't have to rely on our own power to do what He calls us to do.

Acts 1:8 NLT - 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Where does that power come from? Who are we called to be witnesses to?

No matter how God speaks to you personally, God has given us the Bible as an expression of who He is and what He wants to teach us. Because God will not contradict Himself, the Bible is our final authority.

What is the difference in reading the Bible for information (knowledge) versus reading for an encounter with God and personal revelation? How would you describe the perfect setting, actions and attitude to encounter God through His word?

3. Accept Risk, Engaged in Your Community

Matthew 5:14-16 NLT - 14 "You are the light of the world--like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.