

In Hebrews we are reminded to do good and share with those in need. God uses us to bless others, and as we are shaped to be more like Jesus, we will open our hearts and our hands to give our talents, our time and our treasure away. Share a story with your group about how others have shared their time, talents, or treasures with you.

- **Grow**

For a believer, Christian maturity can be seen in the way we live our lives. As we develop regular practices and habits that help us grow to be more like Jesus, our identity as a disciple works its way deep into every area of our lives. Our long obedience in the same direction shapes us into the likeness of Christ and that journey and its fruit it produces is the more and better life we all celebrate.

WRAP-UP

Once we experience the unconditional love of Jesus and the Grace of God we are compelled to surrender our lives to Christ. As His disciples we have freedom to live as He fully designed us to, no longer in bondage to sin. Following Jesus is our path to living fully alive.

MEMORY VERSE.

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

- Romans 6:16-17 NLT

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PRAYER (20 MIN) Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge – Can you articulate where you are at as one who gathers, gives, and grows?

“Drop Your Nets and Follow”

More & Better- #2

INTRODUCTION

Let's consider what it means to live fully alive in Jesus. How do we live a life that is more and better than we may have ever imagined? First, we accept the love and grace Jesus offers us. By His grace we have been saved. But our journey to living fully alive doesn't end there. Grace sets us free, but free to do what? Once we shed our bondage to sin, we are free to live the life God created us for. Jesus' life was our example, and so we follow in His footsteps. We allow the lifestyle of Jesus to shape us into His disciples.

Ice Breaker

What is one thing you do regularly that shapes you, either physically, mentally, or spiritually?

Key Passage

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

- John 10:10 Msg

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Grace/Freedom

Romans 6:14-15 NLT - 14 Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. 15 Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!

When the bible refers to grace¹ it is the unearned favor of God, the loving-kindness that motivates and empowers us to follow Christ's example. ¹ Greek-*charis*

What two things are we no longer subject to according to Romans 6:14? But Paul quickly qualifies what this does not mean. Why do you think he clarified that this doesn't mean we can go on sinning?

Romans 6:16-17 NLT - 16 Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. 17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.

In verse 14 Paul said we live under the freedom of grace, but in verses 16 and 17 he says we choose to obey God and His teachings. We are not forced into obedience, but we choose to obey. In this way we are living in freedom even though we live in obedience to God's laws and commandments.

2. Surrender/Lordship (Sanctification)

Mark 1:17-18 NLT - 17 Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" 18 And they left their nets at once and followed him.

When Jesus called His first disciples, they dropped their nets, and followed Him. Each of them surrendered what they had depended on and trusted in Jesus instead. Following Jesus cost them everything. Grace may be free, but it isn't cheap. We too must be willing to drop our nets and follow the Lord.

When you think back to your decision to follow Jesus, what were the "nets" that were most difficult to let go of? What old ways or security did you attempt to cling to that Jesus wanted you to release and trust Him? What was the "letting go process" like in your life? Was it slow and steady, or suddenly cold-turkey?

Our culture has come to expect instant results. And so, we may try to find a version of the "more and better life" that focuses on Grace without observing the Lordship of Jesus. There is little enthusiasm in our world for the long apprenticeship of Christian holiness and sanctification. This

sanctification is how we are shaped into the likeness of Christ- by the continued work of the Holy Spirit leading us to spiritual maturity.

As Eugene Peterson wrote, Christians we are called to be both disciples following in the Lord's footsteps, and Pilgrims on a journey to the Father's House.

*"For recognizing and resisting the stream of the world's ways there are two biblical designations for people of faith that are extremely useful: disciple and pilgrim." – Eugene H. Peterson
A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

What are some specific instances where following Jesus' example (being His disciple) would be counter to our cultural values? If the destination of our life's pilgrimage is the Father's House, what other destinations would you say the world is attempting to reach?

In the bible God has given us instructions for what life with Him and one another should look like. This is where we learn the skills, character, conviction, and knowledge that sets us apart from the world around us. As we intentionally choose to live as God instructs us to, we embrace the more and better life that shapes us to be like Jesus.

3. Gather/Give/Grow

There are three areas that will reflect our being shaped by Jesus, rather than by the world around us. It is how we gather, give and grow.

- Gather

Acts 2:42 NLT - 42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

We are shaped by Jesus when we gather with the body of Christ in community. What activities did the early church observe when they gathered together? Which of these are you gathering regularly with other believers to do together?

- Give

Hebrews 13:16 NLT - 16 And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.