



## A LIFE OF BEING A DISCIPLE

### LESSON 1 – STEWARDSHIP OF TRUTH

#### Opening Prayer

#### INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Let's have a chat—devil's advocate style!

One person in your group needs to volunteer to be the devil's advocate (sorry, this will make you feel dirty 😊) and the rest are going to respond to this statement from the devil's advocate:

*"I went to Sunday School when I was younger. I go to church. I know what Jesus did for me. You can't tell me that I need to read the Bible on my own at home or go to Bible study at church."*

Devil's advocate, try to hold your ground. Others who are discussing, try to win the devil's advocate over with Scripture.

**Before** discussing the statement, read the following passages as a group (devil's advocate included!) and discuss what points the passages add to the discussion. After discussing the passages, the Bible study leader will give you a few minutes to have a discussion between the devil's advocate and the rest in your group.

- John 17:17 – Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.
- John 20:31 – But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- 2 Peter 3:17 – Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- Hebrews 1:1-2 – In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.
- James 2:14-19 – What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.  
But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”  
Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

## A DISCIPLE MANAGES GOD’S TRUTH

1. The writer to the Hebrews uses terms/phrases like “daily,” “so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness,” and “hold firmly.” What does each teach us about studying the Bible?

*“See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.” (Hebrews 3:12-14)*

2. Psalm 1 describes how a disciple manages God’s truth. Read the verses below, then discuss the bolded attributes of a “blessed” person by explaining what is meant by each.

*“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose **delight is in the law of the Lord**, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” (Psalm 1:1-3)*

3. What very natural connections does the apostle Peter draw between the Christian and studying God's Word?

*“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter 2:2-3)*

### **GROUP ACTIVITY**

1. Individually, come up with your best tip for studying God's Word personally. After 30 seconds, share it with your group.
  
2. One of the biggest challenges for the Christian when it comes to Bible reading is that we read it too fast! Luther advocated the “four strands” method of Bible reading. Read Luke 16:19-31 as a group and for five minutes, draw as many truths from the text as you can so see what a blessing slowing down as you study God's Word can be.

*Strand 1* - What teachings are in this section?

*Strand 2* - How does this lead me to confess my own sinfulness?

*Strand 3* – For what does this lead me to give thanks?

*Strand 4* – For what does this lead me to pray?

3. You've heard "having no plan is a plan to fail." On the next page is a personal devotion plan form produced through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's *Grow in Grace*. Work through the form now if there is time or at home sometime this week. Feel free to ask your pastor for advice!

### **CLOSING ACTIVITY**

**Pen a Proverb.** In the space below, write a two-line proverb sharing the wisdom the Holy Spirit reminded you of about the importance and blessing of Bible study.

## MY PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL PLAN

1. Whom might I ask to be my personal Barnabas to be God's gift to help me put this plan into action and begin again (and improve the plan!) when I struggle?
2. What will help me make sure I am pursuing time in Word and prayer not as a "to do" done for God's benefit, but as a gift it is from my gracious God?
3. As you consider plans for time in Word and prayer, be sure to consider these specific questions:
  - What is the best time of the day for me to make this a regular part of my day?
  - How much time will I set aside?
  - What will come out of my schedule to make room for this?
  - Where will I spend this time so as to avoid as many distractions as possible?
  - How can I reduce distractions from other duties and tasks in my many callings in life?
4. What way will I seek to slow down and meditate on what I am reading?
5. What books or other materials do I want to use during my devotional time?
6. If I plan to study Scripture "directly," how will I determine what to read and how much to read?
7. How can I make prayer a more vital part of my devotional time?
8. If I intend to develop a plan for expanding intercessory prayer, how will I structure that?
9. What else could be a blessing to my time in Word and prayer? (Use of hymns, devotional books, etc.)