

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 37

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God’s guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2	WORSHIP (20 minutes) [ATTITUDE EXPRESSED] PRACTISING THE PRESENCE AND NEARNESS OF GOD
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Definition.

What is “worship”? Worship is:

- *an attitude* of awe, adoration, submission and dedication to God,
- *expressed* in various kinds of prayer and the way we live every day (lifestyle).

In order to worship God, we need to get to know “the God of the Bible”.

In this lesson we learn about expressing our worship by practising the presence and nearness of God.

Meditation.

Theme: Practising the presence of God

Read the Bible passages. Read or explain the following in your own words.

1. God is present everywhere.

Read Psalm 139:7-10. God really exists. God is present everywhere in the universe. God is near to us. But we are not always aware of his existence, presence or nearness, because we are so carnal and worldly! Therefore we need to practise the presence and nearness of God.

2. Enter consciously into God’s presence.

Read Psalm 27:4. “One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD.” We need to want *one thing*, ask for that *one thing* and seek that *one thing*! That one thing is to dwell in the presence of the LORD all the days of our life and to gaze with your spiritual eyes upon “the beauty” of the LORD! That is, to meditate on his divine characteristics.

How do we do this practically?

- Start your prayer and worship with a short period of silence. During that silence remind yourself that God is present and near. Enter consciously and deliberately into the presence and nearness of God.
- Continue your prayer or worship by meditating on one of God’s characteristics. The “beauty” of the LORD consists of all God’s characteristics (attributes), like his power, holiness, righteousness, mercy, love, faithfulness, etc. Think consciously about one of these characteristics of God. Allow the Holy Spirit to explain this characteristic of God to you from the pages of the Bible.
- Meditate on the following two questions: What does this characteristic of God mean for God himself? What does this characteristic of God mean for you personally?

3. Walk consciously with God.

Read Psalm 16:8,11. “I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

How do you do this practically?

- Think as often as possible about the fact that God Himself is standing at your side. That is why you don’t stumble and don’t hesitate! Meditate deliberately on the fact that God is in the process of guiding you in the way of eternal life. He brings you great joy by giving you a place next to him!
- Do again and again what David did. David always set the LORD before him. He deliberately and consciously thought about the presence and nearness of God.
- Daily practise the awareness that God is present in all your activities. Deliberately involve God when you relate to people, when you make plans, decisions and choices and when you work or study.
- Remind yourself that God really stands at your right hand and that he will not allow you to be shaken. Think consciously what it means for you that God is looking at you, listening to you and thinking about you! He is busy to protect you and will not allow you to stumble or to hesitate. God is present, not as a distant or disinterested spectator, but very interested to meet you, to relate to you, to listen to you and to say things to you. He is present for

a specific purpose! Sometimes God is there to warn you, to admonish you or to rebuke you. And at other times God is there to comfort you, to heal you or to strengthen you. Sometimes God is there to motivate you, to encourage you, to spur you on and to help you. And at other times he is there to teach you something, to reveal something to you or to open or close a door before you.

Enoch and Noah walked with God (Genesis 5:22; Genesis 6:9). God called Abraham “his friend” (Isaiah 41:8). Jesus called his disciples “his friends” (John 15:15). God desires us to be friends and live in each other’s presence.

Worship.

Let us worship God in silence for 2 minutes. Practise to be conscious of the presence and nearness of God.

3	SHARING (20 minutes)	[QUIET TIMES] JOSHUA 1 - 4
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Take turns and *share (or read)* from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Joshua 1 - 4).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

4	TEACHING (70 minutes)	[FRUIT BEARING] THE DISCOVERY GROUP
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There are many ways in which Christians can preach and teach the gospel. There is personal evangelism, small group evangelism, mass evangelism, literature evangelism, drama evangelism, music and song evangelism, film-, TV- and radio evangelism. An example of small group evangelism is “the discovery group”. In this teaching you will learn how a small group of people can study and discuss the Bible together in order to discover the gospel message for themselves.

A. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR EVANGELISM

Discover and discuss. What are principles for evangelism in the Bible?

1. Pray for non-Christians.

Pray regularly for your non-believing family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Note what God is doing in their lives (Colossians 4:2-4) Pray that God would open their hearts and touch their lives (Acts 16:14). By praying you show that you are completely dependent on God. Only he can work within people’s minds, hearts and lives.

2. Get involved in the lives of non-Christians.

Jesus went to the places where there were people (celebrations, meals, synagogue and the street) (John 2:1,12). Jesus got involved in the lives of people and what happened where they lived. In this way he could have an impact on their lives (Acts 10:38).The prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles live exemplary lives among people. They got involved in their activities, shared their difficulties and showed interest in their lives.

Therefore, get involved in the lives of non-Christians. Share your life with them. The quality of your life, your dependability, faithfulness, sincerity, sharing, personal interest, helpfulness and love can remove their distrust or dislike for Jesus Christ and open the way to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. Involve non-Christians into your life.

Jesus invited people to get involved in his life (John 1:38-39). Arouse the interest of non-Christians by inviting them into your life situations. Live a quality life in your own home, open your home for non-Christians, invite them “to come and see” who Christians are, what Christians are doing and how they live. Involve them into your activities and your relationships with other Christians. Allow the non-Christians to observe from close by and for a longer period of time in order to discover that a relationship with Christ and with other Christians can have a positive influence on your life.

4. Study the Bible together with non-Christians.

Only by hearing the words of the Bible, that is, the words which Jesus speaks to people, can people come to faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:14-17). Encourage a non-Christian to read the Bible and discover the truth himself (Acts 8:30-31,35).

(1) The method of the discovery group is:

“People read the Bible and discover the truths in it by themselves.
Then discuss it with others”

Use the principles in Acts 17:2-4 in the discovery group:

- Meet once every week in a small group (for example in a home) in order to discover the truths in the Bible and discuss them (verse 2).
- Discuss the truths of the Bible with one another (verse 2).

- Explain (Greek: open, interpret) the difficult thoughts (verse 3a)
- Prove (give evidence of) the truths about God and Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection from other Bible passages (verse 3b).
- Convince. Expect that the Holy Spirit will convince people to begin to believe in Jesus Christ (verse 4).

(2) The purpose of a discovery group is:

“to allow people to discover and discuss the truths about God, people and life from the Bible”

Help the non-Christian to discover what the Bible really says, especially about the following topics:

- Who is God (the God who reveals himself in the Bible) and how does he want to relate to people?
- Who is Jesus Christ (as he has revealed himself in the Bible), what did he teach and what did he do and is he doing now?
- What does a life without Jesus Christ look like and where does it lead to?
- What does a life with God look like and where does it lead to?
- How can a person have a personal relationship to God and also experience it?

5. Let non-Christians discover the truths for themselves.

Instead of preaching and teaching, it is better to let a non-Christian discover the truths in the Bible for himself, think for himself and come to a personal conviction by himself (Luke 10:25-28; Acts 17:11). Do this by asking the right questions, by making him think about the meaning of what he reads and by realising the consequences. This will make a deeper impression on them and they will remember it much longer.

6. Let non-Christians understand the truth in terms of their own needs.

Take into account the good as well as the bad aspects of the culture of the people you address (1 Corinthians 9:19-23, cf. lesson 20). Let the non-Christian discover that the truths of the bible are important for meeting the needs in his life (Luke 4:18-19) and that the God of the Bible is able to meet these needs! Remember that people have very different kind of needs (Matthew 9:36):

- Some people have physical needs. They are sick or handicapped, tired or exhausted, hungry or poor, oppressed or persecuted.
- Some people have emotional needs. They feel insecure, have lost their identity, don't like themselves, live in great emotional tension or suffer from deep emotional wounds.
- All people have spiritual needs. They suffer from guilt or shame because of what they did or because of what others did to them (maltreatment). They may be bitter, hate or harbour feelings of revenge against someone. They may rebel against God. Or they may simply have lost the way in a spiritual and moral sense.
- Most people have behaviour needs. They may be trapped in bad habits (lies, sex, drugs, gambling, etc.) or caught in bad relationships or seek something that can fill the emptiness in their lives. Other people are passive, undertake nothing and develop no new relationships. They have given up on life.

7. Help non-Christians to relate the truth in the Bible to their own lives.

Stimulate the non-Christian to relate the truths of the Bible to his own life. Encourage or challenge him to accept Jesus Christ into his heart and life (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2).

God gave us the Bible not only to give us answers to the questions in our life. He gave us the Bible to change our lives!
This works the best when you discuss this in a personal talk with him after the discovery group meeting.

B. THE DISCOVERY GROUP IS AN APPROACH TO EVANGELISM IN A SMALL GROUP

(3) The procedure of a discovery group consists of a small group of Christians that invite one non-Christian each to participate in discovering and discussing the truths in a Bible passage together.

The discovery group is characterised by reading, discovering, discussing, explaining, proving from the Bible and summarising just as is done in Acts 17:1-4,11. There is no preaching, teaching or challenging to make any decision! The group is characterised by everyone participating in reading, discovering and discussing the truths in a Bible passage without feeling that he is put under pressure!

1. The place, the sphere and the activities.

Choose a quiet place. Keep the group small, unofficial and informal. Use only the Bible. Take about 60 minutes, but never more than 90 minutes. It is best not to make use of typical Christian activities like singing, prayer and a sermon. You don't want to scare non-Christians away with activities that are strange to him. The only activities in a discovery group are: relate to one another in a friendly sphere, read a Bible passage with one another, and then discover, discuss and summarise the truths. You may play soft music in the background, but it is best to limit this to the time you eat or drink together. You could eat together before the meeting and you could serve drinks after the meeting.

2. The participants and the purpose.

Every Christian invites one non-Christian to participate in the discovery group. The Christian could say that the purpose of the meeting is to discover and discuss together the truths about God, people and life from a Bible passage. Every Christian comes to the meeting together with his non-Christian guest. They sit next to each other and form a pair (a team) together during the discussion and leave together after the meeting.

3. The introduction and approach.

After the meal or coffee, the group leader welcomes everyone in the circle. Everyone introduces himself by saying who he is and what he does. For example, I am John, my parents live in London and I am a student studying electrical engineering.

The group leader explains the purpose and the approach to the study: we will read a Bible passage twice and usually discuss three questions. A team of two discusses each question for a few minutes and then we discuss it within the whole circle. The group leader leads the discussion and summarises the answer to each question. He closes the meeting by drawing a summary illustration.

4. Reading the Bible.

All participants use the same Bible translation! It is useful to have some extra Bibles, paper and pens at hand. First everyone participates by reading one verse from the Bible passage in turn until it is completed. Then everyone reads the Bible passage quietly a second time. For example, John 1:19-51.

5. The questions used in the discussion.

The group leader drew up questions that will help the participants to grasp the truths of the gospel (the good news) in this specific Bible passage. He limits himself to three questions – one from each of the following three groups:

The 1st question is about “who Jesus Christ is”.

The 2nd question is about “what Jesus Christ did or does”.

The 3rd question is about “How different people related to Jesus Christ” Or “How can someone become a Christian”.

(1) “Who is Jesus Christ?” Examples of questions:

- Which unique aspect of his personality is revealed in this event?
- What does Jesus say about himself?
- What does Jesus mean when he says (for example) “I am the light of the world”?
- Who do people think Jesus is?
- What did a prophet say about Jesus long ago?

(2) “What did or does Jesus do? Examples of questions:

- How does Jesus show his interest in people as individuals?
- How does Jesus prove that he really understands the needs of people?
- How is the attitude of Jesus different than that of his contemporaries?
- How does Jesus approach a particular problem in life (for example: ignorance, sickness, prejudice, hardness of heart, selfishness, opposition, death)?
- How does Jesus actually help people?
- How does Jesus show that he has authority in a particular matter?
- What is the importance of what Jesus is doing here? What impact does his action have on people?
- What is the significance of what Jesus is saying? Why does he say this?
- Why does Jesus do something? For example, “Why did Jesus come to earth?”
- What do we learn about the human nature of Jesus from his words or deeds?

(3) “How do people relate to Jesus?” Examples of questions:

- How do different people respond to the words or deeds of Jesus?
- How would Jesus like to relate to us?
- What does Jesus expect from us?
- What must someone according to Jesus do in order to have a personal relationship with Jesus?
- How did someone change when he began to believe in Jesus Christ?
- What can a believer expect to get out of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- What are the consequences when you begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- What are the consequences when someone turns down a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Which arguments do people use not to believe in Jesus Christ?
- What is the meaning of (for example) of the words: “To believe in Jesus Christ” or the phrase: “To accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life”?

6. Discover and discuss.

(1) Communication to and fro.

The Discovery Group (Acts 17:1-4) is characterised by:

- *to gather* weekly
- *to read* the Bible
- *to discover* facts for yourself
- *to discuss* questions
- *to explain* difficulties
- to make use of some cross references *to prove* facts
- *to convince* the participants

In a discovery group you do not preach to participants and also not challenge them to make a decision during the meeting! But you do *discover and discuss* facts from the Bible.

(2) The pairs (teams, couples).

The Christian in a pair first helps his non-Christian guest to discover a preliminary answer from the Bible to the question raised and then to discuss it with him. The Christian should not answer the question for the non-Christian, but spur him on to make his own discovery and draw his own conclusion.

Question to encourage the non-Christian participant:

- “Which facts within the Bible passage deals with the question?”
- “What do you think does it mean?”
- “How do we relate this to life today?”

(3) The group leader.

The group leader is not the teacher! He is rather a chairman and coordinator of the group discussion. He is responsible for the following:

- He welcomes the people and explains the approach of the meeting
- He initiates the reading of the Bible passage
- He asks the questions
- He guides the discussion within the group
- He summarises the answer to each question
- He draws a summary illustration at the end of the meeting on the white board.
- He invites everyone to the next meeting before they leave.

(4) Overview of a discovery group meeting

- Introduction and explaining the approach (± 5 min).
- Reading the Bible passage (twice) (± 10 min).
- Each team (couple) discusses a question (± 5 min) before the discussion continues within the whole group (± 8 min).
- The group leader summarises the answer to the first question by making use of the answers the group members gave (± 1 min). Then he asks the second question, etc.
- At the end the group leader draws a summary illustration on the white board (± 3 min). The illustration must contain the answers of the group members.
- The group leader invites everyone to the next meeting.

7. After the discovery group meeting.

(1) A social gathering.

After the meeting you could serve some drinks. Play some pleasant music softly on the background. The couples arrive and leave together.

(2) Contact.

The Christian maintains in one way or another contact with his non-Christian guest.

(3) The decision.

When a non-Christian shows interest in the gospel message, explain the gospel clearly to him by means of the 12 Bible verse method. It is important that the non-Christian understands the gospel well. Sometimes you may ask him whether he desires to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If so, you could pray with him a prayer in which he invites Jesus Christ into his heart and life (John 1:12). Sometimes it is best to wait and only ask him questions that would help him to understand the gospel better.

(4) Frequency.

Some non-Christians come only once to the discovery group. But others come irregularly or regularly. This doesn't matter. The goal is to meet together in a relaxing atmosphere and to discuss the truths of the Bible in a way that helps people understand the gospel.

(5) Follow-up.

When a couple of people have become believers in Jesus Christ, you can organize a “growth group” with them on the same evening and the same place. In this way people can still meet one another during the meal or coffee time.

(6) Concentrate on the message of the gospel.

The discovery group is an Evangelistic Bible Study (EBS). Every meeting is a complete programme. Although some people only come once, they hear the whole gospel. That is why the approach of the discovery group is to discuss the three important questions during every meeting:

- “Who is Jesus Christ?”
- “What has Jesus Christ done for you?”
- “How can you begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?”

C. APPROPRIATE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE FOR A DISCOVERY GROUP

Appropriate Scripture passages for a Discovery Group during a half year cycle.

You could use the following Scripture passages:

1. Luke 2:1-52. The birth and youth of Jesus Christ.
2. Luke 4:1-30. Jesus was tempted and finally rejected.
3. Mark 1:1-45. Jesus is powerful and spiritual, God and yet tempted, Preacher, Teacher and Healer, dependent and merciful.
4. Mark 2:1-27. The spiritual and physical authority of Jesus, the sick and the healthy, the old and the new.
5. Mark 3:1-35. Religious rules and human needs, evil spirits and the Holy Spirit, earthly and heavenly family.
6. Mark 4:35 - 5:43. The authority of Jesus over nature, demons, sickness and death.
7. Mark 10:1-52. Divorce, children, the rich, leaders and the crucifixion.
8. John 2:23 - 3:21. Rebirth, salvation and judgment.
9. John 4:1-42. The Holy Spirit and true worship.
10. John 5:1-47. The claims of Jesus with respect to his relationship to God the Father and the witnesses of Jesus.
11. John 6:24-72. Food that perishes and food that remains for eternity.
12. John 10:1-39. The Good Shepherd and his sheep. Was Jesus a demon or God?
13. John 14:1-27. The claims of Jesus with respect to the only way to God and his teaching about the Holy Spirit.
14. Mark 15:1-47. The trial, rejection, crucifixion and burial of Jesus.
15. Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12. A prophecy about the suffering and triumph of the Messiah (Jesus Christ)
16. John 20:1-31. The resurrection and appearances of Jesus.
17. Acts 1:1-11, Acts 2:1-17. Ascension and Pentecost.
18. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:11. The second coming of Jesus.
19. Revelation 20:11–15. The Last Judgement.
20. Revelation 21:1 - 22:6. The new heaven and new earth.
21. John 1:1-18. The eternal existence of Jesus.
22. John 1:19-51. The calling of the disciples of Jesus.
23. Colossians 1:15-23, 2:9-15. Jesus Christ is absolutely unique.
24. Romans 3:1-31. The gospel.
25. Ephesians 2:1-22. The gospel.

This cycle of 25 meetings can be repeated every ½ year!

D. AN EXAMPLE PROGRAMME OF A DISCOVERY GROUP

1. Introducing.

The group leader explains the goal/purpose of the discovery group, namely, to discover and discuss together from the Bible the truths about God, man and life.

2. Reading.

Read Matthew 9:1-38. Every participant reads one verse in turn. Then everybody reads the Bible passage once more quietly for himself.

3. Questions.

The group leader prepared the following four leading questions.

- Question 1. How does Jesus show his interest in people as individuals?
- Question 2. What aspects of Jesus' personality are revealed in the healing of the paralysed man?
- Question 3. What does Jesus mean when he says, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:37)?
- Question 4. How did different people in this chapter respond to Jesus?

Discuss every leading question first as a team (couple) consisting of the Christian and his non-Christian guest. Take a few minutes to do this. Continue the discussion within the whole group.

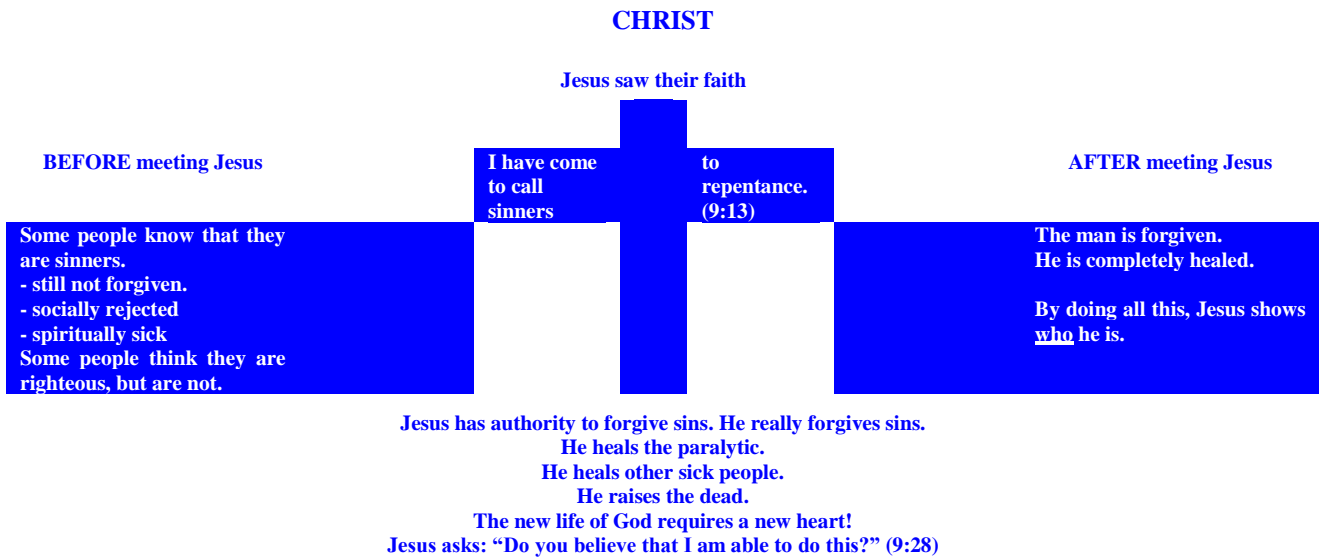
4. Discussion.

Listen to the discoveries made in the various couples. Then discuss the answers in the whole group.

5. Summary.

At the end of each leading question and discussion, the group leader summarises the answer by making use of the contributions of the group members.

At the end of the discovery group meeting, the group leader draws a summary illustration of the discoveries that evening on the white board. The summary illustration of Matthew 9:1-38 may look as follows:



5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[REACTIONS] PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD
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Take turns in the group to *pray short* to God in response to what you have learned today.
Or divide the group into two's or three's and pray to God in response to what you have learned today.

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the teaching of "The discovery group" together with another person or group of people.
Pray and decide whether you should start a discovery group with some non-Christian people.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Joshua 5:13 – 8:35** each day.
Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. Bible study. Prepare the next Bible study at home. **1 Timothy 6:3-19.** Theme: Money in the world.
Make use of the five steps method of Bible study. Make notes.
4. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. Update your notebook on making disciples. Include the worship notes and teaching notes and this preparation.