

FOUNDATIONS
OF
DISCIPLESHIP

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

A 7-DAY JOURNEY
TO FOLLOWING CHRIST

JAY & CLAIRE EVANS



contents

DAY 1

THE CALL TO FOLLOW

DAY 2

COUNTING THE COST

DAY 3

SURRENDERING OUR WILL

DAY 4

GROWING IN
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

DAY 5

WALKING IN OBEDIENCE

DAY 6

LIVING AS WITNESSES

DAY 7

PERSEVERING IN FAITH

Foundations of Discipleship: A Beginner's Guide

We are thrilled that you have chosen to go on this transformative seven-day journey of discipleship. Our prayer is that this experience will be truly life-changing for you.

Throughout this resource, we will discuss essential elements and principles of discipleship, guiding you through a week-long exploration of topics such as answering the call to follow Jesus, counting the cost, surrendering our will, growing in relationship with God, walking in obedience, living as witnesses, and persevering in faith. Each day, we will provide reflections, Bible verses, and action steps to help you apply these principles to your daily life.

As you engage with this resource, we encourage you to approach it with an open heart and a willingness to be transformed by God's Word. Take time each day to reflect on the lessons, meditate on the Scriptures, and engage in the action steps provided. It is our belief that as you commit yourself to this journey, you will experience a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Christ and become more like Him.

We also want to invite you to visit our website, raisingdisciplesforchrist.com, where you will find a wealth of additional resources on discipleship, parenting, and raising children to love God. We believe that discipleship is not limited to individuals but extends to families and communities. Our desire is to equip and empower you as you nurture and raise disciples for Christ in your own life and within your family.

We hope you thoroughly enjoy this 7-day journey of discovering and establishing the foundations of discipleship in your life. May it be a time of growth, inspiration, and spiritual renewal. Remember, discipleship is a lifelong pursuit, and this resource serves as a starting point for your ongoing journey of faith.

Once again, we are delighted to have you join us. Let us begin this transformative adventure together.

In His love,

Jay and Claire

Foundations of Discipleship: A Beginner's Guide

Day 1: The Call to Follow

Jay and I are excited to embark on this seven-day journey with you as we explore the foundations of discipleship. Today, we begin by diving into the call to follow Jesus. Just as Jesus called His disciples long ago, He is calling each one of us today.

Reflecting on our own lives, we recall the moment when we heard that gentle voice within, inviting us to leave behind our old ways and follow Him. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." This call to discipleship requires us to lay down our own desires and submit to the will of our Master.

Today, we invite you to pause and consider Jesus' call in your own life. What is He asking you to surrender? What cross is He inviting you to carry? Embracing the call to follow Jesus is the first step in the transformative journey of discipleship.

As we respond to His call, we enter into a personal relationship with our Savior. Jesus desires to walk alongside us, teaching us, guiding us, and revealing the depths of His love. He invites us to know Him intimately, to commune with Him in prayer, and to study His Word.

Let us take this day to reaffirm our commitment to follow Jesus. May we open our hearts to His leading and surrender our lives completely to Him. The journey of discipleship begins with a willing heart and a humble spirit.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for calling us to follow You. Help us to embrace Your call wholeheartedly and to surrender our lives to You. Guide us and teach us as we embark on this journey of discipleship. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Spend time in prayer, reflecting on Jesus' call to follow Him. Write down any areas of your life that you sense He is inviting you to surrender. Commit to carrying your cross daily and following Him faithfully.

Tomorrow, we will explore the importance of counting the cost and the commitment required in our discipleship journey.

Day 2: Counting the Cost

Yesterday, we discussed the call to follow Jesus and the importance of surrendering our lives to Him. Today, we will discuss the concept of counting the cost.

In Luke 14:28, Jesus said, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" Similarly, in our discipleship journey, it is crucial to consider the cost of following Jesus.

Discipleship requires sacrifice and commitment. It asks us to let go of our own ambitions and submit to God's purposes. Counting the cost means understanding that following Jesus may involve challenges, persecution, and even laying down our lives for His sake. However, the rewards far outweigh any sacrifices we may encounter along the way.

As we count the cost, we also recognize that our relationship with Jesus becomes the priority. In Matthew 10:37-39, Jesus says, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Discipleship requires us to place Jesus above all else and to be willing to lay down our own desires for the sake of His kingdom.

Today, take a moment to reflect on the cost of discipleship in your life. Consider the areas where you may need to surrender more fully, where you may need to let go of self-centered ambitions or worldly attachments. Remember, in counting the cost, we discover the immeasurable joy and eternal rewards of following Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we humbly come before You, counting the cost of following Jesus. Help us to embrace the sacrifices and commitments that discipleship requires. Give us the strength to let go of anything that hinders our wholehearted devotion to You. May our love for Jesus be the driving force in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Spend time in prayer, seeking God's guidance in identifying areas of your life that may require further surrender. Write them down and commit to laying them at His feet. Seek His wisdom and strength to wholeheartedly follow Jesus, regardless of the cost.

Tomorrow, we will explore the significance of surrendering our will and aligning it with God's purposes.

Day 3: Surrendering Our Will

We've explored the call to follow Jesus and the importance of counting the cost. Today, we delve into the significance of surrendering our will and aligning it with God's purposes.

Surrendering our will is an ongoing process that requires humility and trust. It means relinquishing our desires, plans, and ambitions to embrace God's perfect will for our lives. In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul urges us, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

When we surrender our will to God, we acknowledge His sovereignty and wisdom. We recognize that His plans for us are far greater than anything we could ever imagine. Surrendering our will is an act of worship, a demonstration of our faith and trust in His goodness.

At times, surrendering our will may require letting go of control and allowing God to guide our steps. It means seeking His guidance through prayer and discerning His voice through His Word and the Holy Spirit. Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

As we surrender our will, we find freedom and peace in knowing that God's ways are higher than our ways. We release the burdens of trying to orchestrate our own lives and allow Him to work in and through us. Surrendering our will is not a sign of weakness but of strength, for it is through surrender that we experience the fullness of His blessings and grace.

Today, take a moment to reflect on areas of your life where you may be holding onto your own will. Offer them up to God in prayer, surrendering them completely into His hands. Trust that His plans for you are good, and embrace the freedom that comes from aligning your will with His.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we humbly come before You, surrendering our will to Yours. Help us to release our desires, plans, and ambitions and embrace Your perfect will for our lives. Give us the strength and trust to follow where You lead. May our lives be a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Spend time in prayer, surrendering your will to God. Identify areas in your life where you may be holding onto your own plans or desires. Write them down and offer them up to Him, trusting that His plans are perfect.

Tomorrow, we will explore the significance of growing in relationship with God and nurturing our connection with Him.

Day 4: Growing in Relationship with God

We have explored the call to follow Jesus, counting the cost, and surrendering our will to align with God's purposes. Today, we better understand the significance of growing in relationship with God and nurturing our connection with Him.

Our relationship with God is not stagnant but dynamic, meant to deepen and flourish over time. It requires intentional effort and a genuine desire to draw near to Him. In James 4:8, we are encouraged, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

Growing in relationship with God involves spending time with Him in prayer, studying His Word, and seeking His presence. These practices help us cultivate a deep intimacy with our Heavenly Father. Through prayer, we open our hearts and pour out our joys, concerns, and thanksgiving before Him. In Philippians 4:6, Paul reminds us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

The study of God's Word is a vital component of nurturing our relationship with Him. As we study the Scriptures, we encounter His character, His promises, and His wisdom. In Psalm 119:105, it says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." The Bible illuminates our way and directs our steps, guiding us closer to God's heart.

Another essential aspect of growing in relationship with God is cultivating a spirit of worship and gratitude. In Psalm 95:1-2, we read, "Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!" Worship allows us to express our love, adoration, and awe of our Creator, drawing us into a deeper connection with Him.

As we invest time and effort in nurturing our relationship with God, we begin to experience His love, peace, and guidance in a profound way. Our trust in Him deepens, and our faith is strengthened. We become more attuned to His voice, discerning His leading and finding comfort in His presence.

Today, set aside dedicated time to grow in relationship with God. Spend intentional moments in prayer, pouring out your heart before Him. Engage in the study of His Word, allowing it to shape your thoughts and actions. Lift up songs of worship and thanksgiving, letting your soul be filled with joy and adoration.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come before You with grateful hearts, desiring to grow in relationship with You. Teach us to draw near to You, to seek Your presence, and to hear Your voice. May our lives be a constant offering of prayer, worship, and gratitude. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Set aside a specific time today for focused prayer and Bible study. Write down key insights or verses that resonate with you during this time. Engage in worship through songs or hymns that magnify the greatness of God.

Tomorrow, we will explore the significance of obedience in our journey of discipleship.

Day 5: Walking in Obedience

We have explored the call to follow Jesus, counting the cost, surrendering our will, and growing in relationship with God. Today, we delve into the significance of walking in obedience as we follow our Lord.

Obedience is a fundamental aspect of discipleship. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Our obedience to God's commands is not motivated by a sense of duty or obligation, but by our love for Him and our desire to live according to His will.

As we study God's Word and grow in relationship with Him, we gain a deeper understanding of His commandments. In Psalm 119:11, the psalmist declares, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." The Word of God serves as our guide, revealing His righteous standards and showing us the path of obedience.

Walking in obedience requires us to align our actions, thoughts, and attitudes with God's commands. It means surrendering our will to His and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us from within. Romans 12:2 encourages us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

In our journey of discipleship, we may encounter challenges and temptations that test our obedience. However, we can take heart because God has promised to provide the strength and guidance we need. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, it says, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

Today, let us recommit ourselves to walking in obedience to God's commands. Let us seek His wisdom, lean on His strength, and trust in His faithfulness. As we obey Him, our lives become a testimony of His grace and transformative power, reflecting His love to those around us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come before You with a desire to walk in obedience to Your commands. Strengthen us by Your Spirit and empower us to follow Your will wholeheartedly. Help us to discern what is good and acceptable in Your sight and grant us the strength to resist temptation. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Identify an area in your life where you may need to align your actions with God's commands. Write down specific steps you can take to walk in obedience in that area. Pray for God's guidance and ask Him to help you live a life pleasing to Him.

Tomorrow, we will explore the significance of living as a witness and sharing the love of Christ with others.

Day 6: Living as Witnesses

Throughout our time together, we have discussed the call to follow Jesus, counting the cost, surrendering our will, growing in relationship with God, and walking in obedience. Today, we delve into the significance of living as witnesses and sharing the love of Christ with others.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to be His ambassadors in the world. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commissions us, saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Living as witnesses means allowing the light of Christ to shine through us, reflecting His love, grace, and truth to those around us. It is through our words, actions, and attitudes that others can catch a glimpse of His transformative power. In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Our witness is not limited to sharing the Gospel verbally, although that is a crucial aspect. It also encompasses how we live our lives, treating others with kindness, compassion, and respect. It involves showing love and mercy to the broken, extending a helping hand to those in need, and embodying the character of Christ in all that we do.

Living as witnesses requires sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit, as He guides us in our interactions with others. It means seizing opportunities to share our faith, to testify to the goodness of God, and to invite others into a relationship with Jesus. In 1 Peter 3:15, we are encouraged, "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Today, let us embrace the call to live as witnesses of Christ. May our lives be a testimony of His love, grace, and transformation. Let us pray for opportunities to share the Gospel and to point others to Jesus. Remember, it is not by our own strength or eloquence that lives are changed, but by the power of the Holy Spirit working through us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for calling us to be witnesses of Your love and grace. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit, empowering us to live in a way that reflects Your character. Open our eyes to the opportunities around us to share the Gospel and draw others to You. Use us as instruments of Your peace and love in this world. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Pray for God's guidance and boldness to share your faith with someone today. Ask Him to open doors for conversations and provide opportunities to demonstrate His love. Be attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and step out in faith to be a witness for Christ.

Tomorrow, we will conclude our journey by exploring the significance of perseverance in our discipleship walk.

Day 7: Persevering in Faith

We are happy to reach the final day of our seven-day journey of discipleship with you. Throughout this week, we have explored various aspects of what it means to be a disciple of Christ, from answering His call to surrendering our will, growing in relationship with God, walking in obedience, living as witnesses, and now, persevering in faith.

Perseverance is an essential characteristic of a disciple. In Hebrews 12:1-2, we read, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

The journey of discipleship is not always easy. We will face challenges, doubts, and even persecution along the way. However, it is through these trials that our faith is refined and strengthened. James 1:3-4 assures us, "For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Persevering in faith requires us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the source and sustainer of our faith. We can find encouragement in His example, knowing that He endured the cross for the joy set before Him. As we persevere, we rely on His strength, His grace, and His promises. In Philippians 1:6, Paul reminds us, "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

We want to encourage you to stay rooted in God's Word, seeking His guidance and wisdom in every step. Surround yourself with a community of believers who can support and uplift you in your journey. Keep your heart open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, for He will provide the strength and perseverance you need.

As our time together comes to an end, we want to invite you to continue your discipleship journey with us. Visit our website at raisingdisciplesforchrist.com, where you will find resources, articles, and tools to support you in your walk with Christ. We are excited to announce that our upcoming book that will be released soon. Be on the lookout for more details as the release day approaches.

We want to thank you for joining us on this journey. It has been a privilege to share these foundational principles of discipleship with you. Remember, the journey of discipleship is not a one-time event but a lifelong pursuit of knowing, following, and becoming more like Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the privilege of being called Your disciples. Give us the strength to persevere in faith, even in the face of challenges and difficulties. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. May our lives be a testament to Your transforming power. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Step: Reflect on the past week and the lessons you have learned. Write down one key takeaway or area where you desire to grow as a disciple. Commit it to prayer and ask God for His guidance and strength in that aspect of your journey.

Thank you again for joining us on this journey. May you continue to walk in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.