

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP CURRICULUM

Week 37 - September 9 through September 15

TODAY'S LESSON: *"Becoming a Slave to the Freedom of Others"*

TODAY'S PASSAGE:

1 Corinthians 9:19-27 NLT 19 Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. 20 When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. 21 When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. 22 When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. 23 I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings. 24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! 25 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. 26 So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. 27 I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: What did you learn from what we just read?

1) When we deny our self and put others needs ahead of our own we are walking in Christ footsteps.

- There was nobody greater than Jesus and yet He chose to give up His rights and took our punishment for sin so we could have eternal life with Him in Heaven.
- This sacrifice is mirrored in the life of Paul who chose to become a spiritual slave, striped of personal rights and at the service of God in his efforts to see others saved like he had been.
- *Slave* (douloos): one given over wholly to the needs and service of another, to make oneself a bondman to him

John 15:13 NKJV Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- The Bible asks husbands to lay down their lives for their wives, and for believers to lay down their lives for unbelievers. This is a trait of true followers of Jesus.

- It can feel like you're losing and not gaining according to the world, but the Bible is clear this is a demonstration of the greatest love! God's love.
- Becoming a slave to God or laying down your life for another is a choice we make out of love for others and a desire to serve God.
- It cannot be a forced act, nor can you go through the motions on this one. It takes a heart posture of grateful obedience to do.

1 Corinthians 13:3 NLT If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

- Loving like this will take the self-denial of a slave, but it is the way Jesus loved us.

Philippians 2:6-7 CEV Christ was truly God. But he did not try to remain equal with God. 7 Instead he gave up everything and became a slave, when he became like one of us.

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: Where do you believe the Lord is calling you to surrender your rights and preferences for the eternal benefit of another?

2) It's not about forcing or offending, but finessing others to the kingdom.

- The word finesse means to do (something) in a subtle and delicate manner.
- This doesn't mean we water down the Gospel, but it does mean we don't verbally attack, accuse, or condemn unbelievers or backsliders.
- We find common ground. We build a bridge and meet them where they are at, so we can tell them about Jesus and guide them away from sin and to Him.
- *Common ground* (ginomai pas): to be found, to show oneself (to be) someone to one; (to become all things to all men), i. e. to adapt oneself in all ways to the needs of all

Psalms 34:4 MSG God met me more than halfway, he freed me from my anxious fears.

- When Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord met them in their hiding spot.
- When Moses had become a fugitive, God met him in the wilderness.
- When Peter denied Him three times and returned to his old life, Jesus met him on the shores of Galilee.
- Over and over, we see God coming to us in the midst of our sin and offering love, hope and forgiveness we don't deserve.
- Common ground isn't about enabling or agreeing with sin. It's about loving the sinner with agape love that draws them to repentance.

Romans 2:4 MSG Do you take the kindness of God for granted? Do you see His patience and tolerance as signs that He is a pushover when it comes to sin? How could you not know that His kindness is guiding our hearts to turn away from distractions and habitual sin to walk a new path?

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: Where did God meet you and how did that help you get to where you are today with Him?

3) Operating in agape love and humility will not come easy, but with training we can master it.

- Everything you want to get better at requires time and training to develop.
- Paul knows that our flesh wars against the Spirit so we need to train our flesh to be slaves to God - no longer freemen fulfilling their own desires.
- We must train our flesh to submit to God's word and our will to yield to God's.
- *Training* (doulagogeo): to make a slave and to treat as a slave, i. e. with severity, to subject to stern and rigid discipline.

Galatians 5: 16-17 NLT - So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

- Either you are going to train yourself to obey God or the devil will train your flesh to obey him.
- Christ must become the master of me in order for His love to flow freely through me!
- We didn't get saved just to wait to go to Heaven, but to recruit for Heaven! That is the real prize of this race.

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: Putting in work may not seem enjoyable in the moment but will yield benefits in our lives and the kingdom. Where have you been faithful to training and discipline in your Christian walk that was a struggle before but now you see the fruit of your commitment?

CLOSING QUESTION: What is one thing from today's lesson that you will apply this week?



We have received so much from God and should give generously of all that He has blessed us with.

Matthew 10:8 (NLT)

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!

Encourage everyone to give their tithes and offerings.