



WITNESS

PRACTICING Jesus

SERMON
STUDY

12.08.2024

Leader Corner

Practicing Jesus

Witness

Matthew 28:16-20

One of the differences between a follower of Jesus and an apprentice of Jesus boils down to obedience. In no uncertain terms, Jesus calls each and everyone one of us to live a life of witness. Not just to learn about Jesus, but to live like Jesus in our everyday lives. So we must wrestle with and defeat the idea that we can love Jesus without also truly loving people. To fully apprentice to Jesus means to become people of obedience, where we put on a type of love that opens our time, our homes, and our lives to see and listen to others. The Great Commission is all about wherever and whenever we find ourselves with others, we do as Jesus would do. People are one invitation or story away from a transformed life.

Main Idea: Others need to know the hope we have in Jesus.

Main Practice: Learn to comfortably share your story with other people.

Main Teaching: Matthew 28:16-20

A few more housekeeping items for this week:

- **Pro Tip:** Be sure to schedule one more gathering to celebrate your group's journey through this study. Also, we hope your group will continue to meet in January. Set a time and place on the calendar when you will gather back together. Also, also, connect with the Small Group Team if you have any changes happening in your small group.
- One final time, leave ample time to do the "with Practice" section and the "Practice" portion of your journals.
- Remind your group about the Rule of Life resource. One of the main purposes for Practicing Jesus is all about transforming our lives by doing the things Jesus did. A Rule of Life isn't a law to enforce, rather it's a guardrail to more thoroughly enjoy this journey with Jesus.

As You Begin Your Group Time:

Of all the practices we've experienced in this study, which one(s) will be most meaningful for you to establish a regular rhythm? If our group were to take a deeper dive into one of these practices, which one would you prefer us to study more?

Connect with Prayer

Have someone pray the following over the group:

Father, we adore You. Your love and affection for us is beyond our comprehension. Who are we to be loved by You? Who are we to be called Your children? Just as You came to seek and save the lost, Lord Jesus we ask that You to create in us that same heart. Holy Spirit, give us eyes to see Your beloved creation as You do. Help us to grow in our capacity to be warm and hospitable to those around us. Let the Good News of salvation be evident in the way we live and to be at the tip of our tongues when you give us the opportunity to speak Your name. Let our lives be marked by Your grace so that others may experience it. In all things, we ask that You be glorified and lifted high, and that in whatever small part we may play, we walk in such a way that others would know You better. Amen.

with Praise

As a group watch, sing, or read the lyrics of the song "So Will I (100 Billion X)" by Hillsong United

with Principle

"Our role isn't to convert anyone, but it is to preach - to tell others the good news of Jesus, through the practice of witness."
(Practicing the Way, page 189)

1. When you hear witness, what are your initial thoughts or feelings?
2. Take some time to discuss the "Learn" and "Listen" sections of your journals. What impacted you from Sunday's worship experience?
3. Read together Matthew 28:16-20.
 - a. How does Jesus describe the theme of witness?
 - b. What words jump out to you in this passage? What questions do you have about them?
4. Read Mark 8:34-38 and Mark 12:28-34.
 - a. How does apprenticing ourselves to Jesus play itself out in these passages?
 - b. How is obedience exemplified in these passages?
 - c. Pair the Mark and Matthew passages. What tensions and/or harmony do you see in these Scriptures?
5. What parts of sharing your story seem easier? What parts of sharing your story might be more difficult to share and why?

with Practice

1 Peter 3:13-17 reminds us to always be prepared to give a reason for the hope we have in Jesus. One way we can prepare for the practice of witness is by knowing how we would share the Good News of what God has done in our own lives when given different opportunities.

Our practice is to *learn to comfortably share your story*. The following exercises prepare our hearts for any situation by contextualizing our story

During your group time together, take time to write your elevator, hallway, and sharing a meal testimonies.

- **Elevator:** Begin by writing out a 30 second to 2-minute testimony of what God has done in your life! Prepare this as though you'll just have an elevator ride to share your testimony.
- **Hallway:** Then expand further and write a different version of your testimony that you could share in a hallway conversation. (Think 5 minutes in length).
- **Meal Time:** Finally, write out your full testimony, something you could share with someone over a cup of coffee, a walk on the trail, or over a meal together.

After doing this, Have 3-5 (or more) people **share** their elevator story with the group.

Then, **pray** as a group for an opportunity this week to share the hope you have in Jesus.

Your assignment for this week is to invite someone over to your home for a meal.

- If you are able, invite someone who does not know Jesus over to your home for a meal! Show this person the love of Jesus through your hospitality. Be curious, ask about their lives, and do as much listening as you can! If the Lord gives you an opportunity to share about Him, do so! But even the simple act of inviting someone into your home and serving them can plant seeds in their heart.
- If you are unable to invite them into your home, consider grabbing coffee, a meal, or spending time together somewhere that you are able to be attentive to one another.

*(Practice adapted from the "Practicing the Way Course Guide," John Mark Comer)

For Further Study

Choose your next study as a group to begin in January.

We recommend one of the 4 week Practicing the Way studies.