

▷ INTRODUCTION

We have spent the last six weeks seeking a closer walk with God. This week we will discover that when we walk with God we are immediately called to and equipped for ministry. Christian discipleship has both a vertical and horizontal focus. It never has a self-centered focus.

The inward focus of our relationship with God is really a vertical focus. We look to God to discover who we are. We seek to grow in our relationship with Him as well as our information about Him. A natural extension of that growth leads to an outward focus—our calling to ministry. This calling is part of our discipleship. Our continued growth with God is dependent upon our involvement in the ministry to which He calls us.

As we focus on those around us, we do so in the context of what is happening in our encounter with God. We discover opportunities to minister. We sense the urge to be involved in ministry. At the same time, it can be frightening. We wonder if we can do anything of value. We are afraid we are not able, or we think others are more talented.

Scripture describes the Christian as a functioning part of the “Body of Christ.” Within God’s Church the term “inactive Christian” is a contradiction—an oxymoron. The biblical truth is simple. God calls us to ministry. He equips us for ministry. And He empowers us for ministry. You and I are important parts of His Body.

Every member is a minister. Every member is a priest. We have direct access to God. We don’t have to go through another human being to find forgiveness and experience God’s grace. But that is not all that is involved in being a priest or minister. Priests never exist to serve themselves. They exist to minister to others.

Out of our personal walk with God, we are equipped to minister to others around us. The only questions are where and how? God even answers these questions. He places us just where He wants us so that we can be part of His process of building up His Church. He gives us spiritual gifts with which to minister. He then invites us to be involved in ministry. It is our responsibility to discover our gifts and put them to work.

Our gifts will be different. Each of us has a different role to play. But each of us is equally important and needed. Every part of the body has a unique function to fulfill. God has designed His Church with us in mind. Best of all, He empowers our gifts and ministry with His presence. His promise to be with us came in the context of His commission to “Go . . . and make disciples.”

▷ OBJECTIVES FOR THIS WEEK

Our objectives for this week are:

- To understand that every member is a minister.
- To understand the concept of spiritual gifts.
- To accept our calling to ministry.
- To begin exploring our calling to ministry and identifying our spiritual gifts for ministry.

▷ HOLY HABIT—SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

Throughout the last seven weeks we have been exploring different *Holy Habits* or spiritual disciplines. These spiritual skills help open our lives to God's presence. They become habits which give God room to transform us.

We began memorizing biblical verses with our very first week of this study. Now we want to explore the importance of this *Holy Habit* and a way of making it more effective.

Scripture memorization is one of the most powerful tools for shaping the mind. The Psalmist stated: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11, NIV). God's Word is powerful. It can change our lives. Memorizing Scripture is one of the key tools for putting that power to work.

Regularly memorizing biblical passages has a number of benefits for our spiritual journey. These include:

- Saturating the mind with God's Word.
- Providing more contact points for the Holy Spirit to work in our minds.
- Building new thought patterns in the brain. As we memorize Scripture, new thought patterns develop and grow.
- Connecting us with God. Memorized Scripture provides us with a solid foundation for our relationship with God.

Because of how the mind works, it is helpful to have a memorization system. The following pointers are part of a systematic way of memorizing Scripture:

- Choose a Bible version to use as your regular version for memorization in order to re-enforce the memory and avoid confusion. It is better if you stay with the same version for all your memorization.
- Select the passage you wish to memorize. Choose a verse that has a special meaning to you or that has helped you in your relationship with God.
- Write out the passage on a card and carry it with you. Repeat the passage several times throughout the day to memorize it.
- Seek to be word perfect each time you repeat the passage. This will help you in transferring the passage to your long-term memory.
- Meditate on the passage as a way to internalize it. This will help make memorizing easier, and it will help make it more meaningful to your daily life.
- Review the passage the next day, then two days later, a week after that, and finally two weeks later. This review process will transfer the passage to your long-term memory.
- Use the passage in your ministry. This re-enforces the memory process and makes the Bible passage useful in helping others.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Our objective for today's study is to discover who we are within the "Body of Christ." We have an exciting new identity. We have a dynamic new role as vital parts of God's Church.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Dear Lord, Help me with your presence throughout this day. Help me understand that you have a purpose for my life. Help me recognize who I am because of you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE

Our memory verse for today is #13. We will again use the process we have used throughout the last six weeks.

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)—"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

1 Peter 2:9 (KJV)—"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

We continue our memory verse review process today with verse #6 (Matthew 11:28-30) and verse #12 (Galatians 6:1-2). Spend a few minutes reflecting on Matthew 11:28-30. How does being yoked with Christ shape your life today?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Once again it is time to go back to the Bible and explore what God has to say about us in our journey with Him.

READ LUKE 10:1-17—Reflect on this story of Jesus sending His disciples out to do ministry. Imagine that you were one of those disciples. What do you think your experience would have been? How would you have felt when you returned to Jesus?

READ 1 PETER 2:4-10—Compare this passage with Exodus 19:6. What does it mean for us to be a “holy priesthood” or a “royal priesthood?” How can we as priests declare God’s praises?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20—What does it mean to be God’s ambassador?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Dear God, Help me to recognize who I am in Christ. Help me to live this day to your honor and praise. Help me to understand that you have called me to active ministry just as truly as you did your other disciples long ago. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

We are called to ministry. Today we want to study Jesus' call to His first disciples to discover insights that will help us in our own ministries.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Loving Father, I come to you today to open my life to you. Teach me what it means to walk with you. Help me hear your call to ministry. Help me discover where you want me to minister today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Our review of memory verses for today focus on verse #10 (1 Peter 3:15) and verse #13 from yesterday (1 Peter 2:9). Once again reflect on these passages. What insights do they give you as to your identity in Christ?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Now it is time to turn to Scripture in order to understand our calling to ministry. Pray that God will give you a vision of what you can do in His name.

READ MARK 3:13-15—According to this passage, what reasons does this passage tell us Jesus had in appointing twelve disciples?

What does this passage in Mark 3:13-15 tell us about the importance of ministry as part of discipleship?

READ LUKE 4:16-21—What can we learn for our ministry from the focus of Jesus’ ministry?

READ JOHN 14:1-14—What does this passage tell us about ministry and its source? In what ways might we be able to “do even greater things” than Jesus did during His ministry?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Dear Lord and Father, Help me to understand that I am called to ministry. Help me see someone around me today to whom I can minister in your name. Walk with me through this day and transform it with your presence. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Our purpose today is to explore the fact that we are each gifted for ministry. God gives us spiritual gifts to be used in building up the “Body of Christ.”

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Dear God, Open my mind and heart today to hear your Word. Help me believe and understand that you have gifted me for ministry. Open my eyes that I might know how to serve you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Today we review memory verse #9 (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Spend a few minutes reviewing and reflecting on this passage. What can we learn about ministry from this text?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Scripture provides us room to grow with God. Let's open the Bible and explore our giftedness for ministry.

READ ROMANS 12:1-8—What do these verses tell us about ministry and how God equips us for ministry?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11—What do these verses tell us about the purpose of our spiritual gifts and who determines what gifts we have?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26—What are the implications of this passage for our ministries?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31—Reflect on these verses and use them as a starting point for summarizing what you have learned today about your giftedness for ministry?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Dear Lord, You have gifted me for ministry. Yet I don't always know what my gifts are or how to use them. Give me wisdom to understand. Grant me strength to serve. Walk with me through this day and transform it with your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ TODAY’S OBJECTIVE

Our purpose today is to better understand the spiritual gifts God gives to His Church. We want to explore the purpose of leadership gifts within the Body of Christ.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Loving God, You have called me to follow you as your disciple. Use this time to shape my heart. Draw me closer to you. Help me serve you during this day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE

We have now come to memory verse #14 (Colossians 3:17). We will continue to use our memory and review process as we have during the last six weeks.

Colossians 3:17 (NIV)—“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:17 (KJV)—“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

We also want to continue our review process with verse #7 (Ezekiel 36:26-27) and #13 from Monday (1 Peter 2:9).

Spend a few minutes reflecting on today’s verse. How can this shape your life and ministry today?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

Once more it is time to open our Bibles. We want to study what the Scripture tells us about the role of leadership gifts within the “Body of Christ.”

READ ACTS 6:1-7—What does this story tell us about the need for different ministries and their function within the Church?

READ EPHESIANS 4:7-16—What do these verses tell us about the role of the pastor?

What is the purpose of the service given by God's people in using their gifts? What will be the results?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Almighty God, It is amazing to think that you want to use me in your Church. I am excited to think about the gifts you have given me for ministry. Help me identify and use them. Walk with me through this day. Help me be open to your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Today we want to identify the purpose for all of our ministries. They really come back to one ultimate focus—making disciples—people who are passionately in love with Jesus Christ.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Dear God, Help me to know your love more today. Help me to love you more today. Teach me to love others around me. Open my heart that I might know Jesus today in a deeper way than ever before. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Our memory verses for review today are verse #11 (1 Corinthians 3:16), and verse #14 (Colossians 3:17). Once again, spend a few minutes reflecting on these two passages. How can these concepts change your walk with God?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

It is time to open God's Word once again. We want to study and reflect on God's purpose for ministry.

READ MATTHEW 24:1-14—What do these verses tell us about the time in which we live? What does the last verse tell us?

READ MATTHEW 28:16-20—How important do you think Jesus' final words to His disciples are and why?

NOTICE VERSES 18 AND 20. What do these two verses tell us about the context of the gospel commission?

What do verses 18-20 tell us is the purpose of our call to ministry? What implications does this have for you?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

Loving Lord, Help me remember that you have shared your presence with me for the purpose of helping others know and walk with you. Thank you for the privilege of ministry and for the promise of your power. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

Our purpose today is to summarize our study of discipleship and ministry. We want to reflect on how God has fulfilled His promise that if we would seek Him, we would find Him.

▷ INVITATION PRAYER

Dear Loving Father, The last seven weeks have been an exciting journey with you. Help me to realize that this is only a beginning. Help me to see that you want me to know you even better. Open my eyes today to the wonder of your love and what you want to do in me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

▷ MEMORY VERSE REVIEW

Today we want to review memory verses #12 (Galatians 6:1-2) and #14 (Colossians 3:17). Once again, spend a few minutes reflecting on these two verses. How do they help you in your relationship with God and in your ministry?

▷ BIBLE READING AND REFLECTION

We want to continue our daily habit of turning to God's Word for study and reflection:

READ MATTHEW 12:15-21—What do these verses tell us about Jesus and His ministry? What can we learn from this passage to help us in our own ministries?

READ EPHESIANS 3:14-21—What can we learn from these verses about the foundation for any ministry?

What is the result of fully knowing the love of God? (See verse 19.)

What is God able to do for and through us? Who should get the glory?

▷ **COMMITMENT PRAYER**

*Almighty God, We have come to the end of the **Steps to Discipleship** plan. Help me to know that this is not the end, but only the beginning. Help me to continue my daily time with you and your Word. Take my life. Help me walk with you as your disciple. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

This week's study has taken us into the topic of our call to ministry and the gifts which God gives us for that ministry. Each one of us is gifted and called to ministry. Each one of us is a vital part of God's Church. Spend the next few minutes reflecting on what this week's study can mean to our journey together.

How has your daily time with God affected you and your life over the last seven weeks? What difference is it making in the way you live?

Where have you experienced challenges in your discipleship walk during the past seven weeks?

How is "what God has done for you" starting to impact your life?

What gifts do you think God has given to you for ministry? What are some of the areas of special interest or concern that might be areas of potential ministry?

How would you like to see God work in your life during the next few weeks?
