

Luke 5:1-11

CALLING THE FIRST DISCIPLES: SIMON

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 5:1-11 and discuss.

1. What gets your attention about this first meeting of Jesus and Simon?

4. When Simon Peter said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" what did he mean?

2. If you had been Simon Peter when Jesus asked him to "put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch," what would you have done?

5. "They left everything and followed him." Why?

3. When they "caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break," how do you think Simon Peter felt?

MY OWN STORY

Share some of your own spiritual journey with your group.

1. In comparison to Simon Peter's call, how would you explain your spiritual beginning?

2. What is the condition of your spiritual boat right now?

4. How does the idea of "putting out into deep water and letting down your nets for a catch" sound to you?

3. Where do you think Jesus is, in relationship to your spiritual boat?

5. What is it going to take to get you going?

Lesson 2

JOHN 3:1-21

JESUS TEACHES NICODEMUS

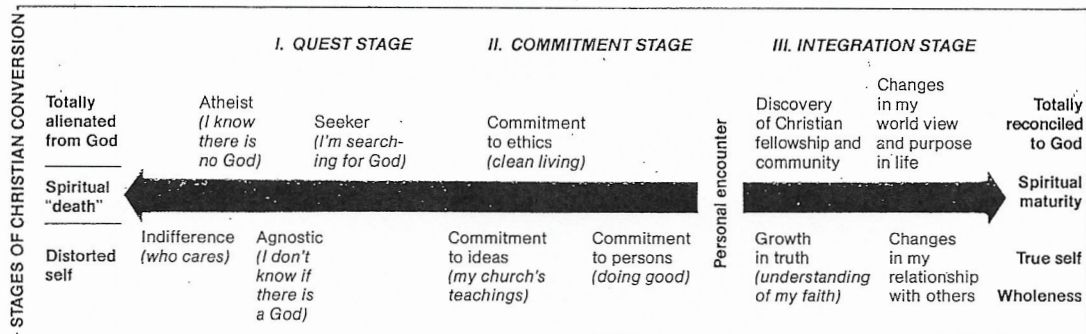
LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read John 3:1-21 and discuss.

1. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus by night?
2. Of the three levels of communication, how did the conversation start out?
3. When Jesus explained, "...unless a man is born again..." what happened?
4. In the conversation that followed, what is the issue?
5. "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up...." To what is Jesus referring here?
6. What is the condition for obtaining eternal life according to verses 16-18?
7. How do you think Nicodemus came away from this conversation with Jesus?
8. Do you think Jesus could have been more kind to the religion teacher?

MY OWN STORY

1. The chart below shows thirteen stages of conversion in the spiritual journey of a person. Where are you now in your own spiritual journey?



*The idea for the chart is taken from Dick Peace's book "Pilgrimage," by Acton House.

2. What is the Spirit's "wind" like in your life right now?
3. Where is the "wind" of the Spirit carrying you?

John 4:1-26

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

1. What was the Samaritan woman really saying in reply to Jesus' question, "will you give me a drink?"

2. What was the woman's response when Jesus said, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water"?

3. How does the woman respond when Jesus explains, "...the water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life..."?

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Read John 4:1-26 and discuss.

4. Why didn't the woman give up on this conversation when Jesus told her, "Go, call your husband and come back"?

5. When Jesus declared that "the time is coming...when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth..." what was her response?

6. What do you imagine was the look on her face when Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he"?

MY OWN STORY

1. How do you respond when someone speaks to you unexpectedly?

2. How would you compare your own spiritual beginnings with God to that of the woman at the well?

3. In your own experience, do you think the circumstances surrounding your own encounter were coincidental or part of the plan and purpose of God?

4. If Jesus were to stop by the "watering hole" where you hang out, what would he probably ask you right now? (be honest).

5. How would you describe the way God is working in your life right now?

Luke 7:36-50

JESUS ANOINTED BY A SINFUL WOMAN

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 7:36-50 and discuss.

1. Do you think the Pharisee was aware of the social custom to greet guests with a kiss and wash their feet?

who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.” Which possibility comes closest to your understanding of Jesus?

2. Do you think Jesus was aware of the purification law prohibiting anyone to “touch” a prostitute?

3. Why do you think the sinful woman came to the Pharisee’s house?

7. In the story about the two men who owed money, what was Jesus saying to Simon?

4. What made the Pharisee so upset?

5. How did the Pharisee feel when the sinful woman “touched” Jesus?

8. What was the tone in Jesus’ voice when he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace”?

6. “If this man were a prophet, he would know

MY OWN STORY

1. Who was the prophet in your life who believed in you and saw beauty in you before you believed in yourself?

3. To whom do you owe the greatest personal debt?

2. How did this affect your life?

4. What could you do to show your deepest gratitude?

Lesson 5

John 7:53-8:11

WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read John 7:53-8:11 and discuss.

1. Which to you is the grossest sin?

4. Why do you think Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground?

2. Who would you have trouble forgiving?

3. If you had been in the crowd when the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus, what would you have done?

5. What was Jesus really saying by these words, "If any of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her"?

6. In the last thing Jesus said to the woman, what was the tone in his voice and what did it mean?

MY OWN STORY

1. What's the hardest thing about forgiving?

2. Why do you think more people confess their sins to the bartender than a pastor/priest?

3. When it comes to forgiving yourself when you blow it, put a dot on the line to indicate where you are between these two extremes.

I ALWAYS PUT
MYSELF DOWN

I HAVE LEARNED TO ACCEPT
GOD'S FORGIVENESS

4. What do you do when you blow it?

5. Who are the people in your life that accept you no matter what you've done?

Lesson 6

Luke 8:26-39

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

1. Stepping off the boat, how do you think Jesus reacted to the demon-possessed man?

2. Why didn't Jesus banish the demons to the Abyss ("locked up" once and for all)?

3. What impresses you about the Legion?

4. After the Legion left him, the man felt:

HEALING OF A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

Read Luke 8:26-39 and discuss.

5. What question do you think bothered the bystanders the most?

6. Why did the bystanders want Jesus to leave town?

7. Jesus wanted the healed man to return home:

MY OWN STORY

1. If I could be free of just one thing, it would be:

2. If my worst affliction were lifted from me, I would most likely feel:

3. At the present moment I am:

4. The most helpful thing my small group can do for me is:

Luke 19:1-10

ZACCHAEUS THE TAX COLLECTOR

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 19:1-10 and discuss.

1. What impresses you about Zacchaeus?

5. What do you think they talked about over dinner?

2. What was it about Zacchaeus that Jesus singled him out?

6. "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham...." What is Jesus saying about Zach here?

3. What do you suppose was Jesus' facial expression when he said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately..."?

7. Do you think the meeting between Zacchaeus and Jesus was coincidental or all part of the plan and purpose of God?

4. Why do you think Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house for dinner?

8. How do you think Zacchaeus felt when he left Jesus?

MY OWN STORY

Suppose Jesus were to invite himself to your house. Bob Munger, in his little booklet "My Heart—Christ's Home," describes the areas of life as the rooms of a house. Take an inventory of your own life, then give yourself a grade on each room as follows: A = excellent rating; B = good rating; C = passing, but needs a little dusting; and D = barely passing, needs a lot of cleaning.

☐ **LIBRARY:** This room is your mind—what you allow to go into it and come out of it. It is the "control room" of the entire house.

☐ **WORKSHOP:** This room is where your gifts, talents and skills are put to work for God...by the power of the Spirit.

☐ **DINING ROOM:** Appetites, desires, those things that your mind and spirit feed on for nourishment.

☐ **RUMPUS ROOM:** The social area of your life—the things you do to amuse yourself and others.

☐ **DRAWING ROOM:** This room is where you draw close to God, seek time with him daily, not just in times of distress or need.

☐ **HALL CLOSET:** The one secret place that no one knows about, but is a real stumbling block in your walk in the Spirit.

Lesson 8

Mark 10:35-45

REQUEST OF JAMES AND JOHN

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 10:35-45 and discuss.

1. If you had been James or John, how would you have felt about Jesus' response?
2. What do you think motivated the disciples to ask a favor of Jesus?
3. What were the disciples really wanting when they asked if they could "sit at your right...and left hand..."?
4. What did Jesus mean when he said, "You don't know what you are asking"?
5. What is Jesus referring to when he said, "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink"?
6. What values did Jesus turn upside down when he met with the disciples?

MY OWN STORY

1. Do/did parents or peers put any expectations on you? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes
2. Are/were you able to live up to those expectations? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes
3. Do/did you put any such expectations on other family members or work associates? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes
4. What would you desire for yourself? (Top three)
 - ☐ good health
 - ☐ college education
 - ☐ good friends
 - ☐ spiritual fulfillment
 - ☐ success in my field
 - ☐ secure job
 - ☐ lasting marriage
 - ☐ life full of surprises
 - ☐ star on athletic team
 - ☐ amount to something
 - ☐ good grades in school
 - ☐ leader in school
 - ☐ happiness
 - ☐ life free of hardships
 - ☐ financial independence
5. If you could pass on to your children three things, what would they be?
 - ☐ moral courage
 - ☐ sense of humor
 - ☐ faith in God
 - ☐ respect for country
 - ☐ family pride
 - ☐ lots of initiative
 - ☐ good self-image
 - ☐ money
 - ☐ opportunity to get ahead
 - ☐ your own values
 - ☐ love of adventure
 - ☐ concern for the poor
 - ☐ peace of mind
 - ☐ basic honesty
 - ☐ hard work

Lesson 9

John 13:1-17

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read John 13:1-17 and discuss.

1. What do you look for in a leader?

2. Assuming the disciples were aware of the custom of footwashing, why didn't they wash their feet when entering the home?

3. Why do you think Jesus washed his disciples' feet?

5. "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean...." What is the point Jesus is making here?

4. Why was Peter so upset with Jesus?

6. How did Jesus expect the disciples to follow his example?

MY OWN STORY

1. If Jesus were to wash your feet today in a new and meaningful way (knowing your needs as he does), what would Jesus do?

3. In your family relationships, what would it mean to practice footwashing?

2. Why do you think people in the church do not regularly practice the equivalent of footwashing?

Matthew 27:11-26

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 27:11-26 and discuss.

1. Each person in this passage looked upon Jesus from a different perspective and saw a different thing. *Discuss each person & their perspective of Jesus.*

2. Why did the religious authorities bring Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor?

5. How would you portray Pilate if you were a film director?

3. Why did the Roman governor offer to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd?

6. Do you think Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent?

4. How would you describe Pilate?

7. Who ended up the biggest winner and who ended up the biggest loser in this situation?

MY OWN STORY

1. How do you react to conflicting pressures from different sources?

3. If you had been in Pilate's shoes, what would you have done?

2. Faced with a similar dilemma, how would you describe yourself?

4. Who in this story would best describe the way you respond to the radical claims of Jesus Christ?

John 20:24-31

JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read John 20:24-31 and discuss.

1. How do you feel when you find the last page of your mystery novel missing?

4. Why did Jesus wait seven days to appear to Thomas?

2. Why do you think Thomas was not with the rest of the disciples on Easter night when Jesus appeared to them in the Upper Room?

5. How did Jesus deal with Thomas?

6. What did Jesus mean when he said, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"?

3. "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." What is Thomas saying here?

MY OWN STORY

1. When you have spiritual doubts, what does that indicate?

4. What have you found helpful in times of doubt?

2. What kind of spiritual "proof" do you need?

5. What evidence of "life" have you seen as a result of believing in Jesus Christ?

3. If you could ask God one question about your own faith, what would it be?

Lesson 12

Luke 24:13-35

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE/20 Minutes. Read Luke 24:13-35 and discuss.

1. Why did the two men take off for Emmaus?

2. Why didn't the two men recognize Jesus when he joined them?

3. When they heard the report from the women about the empty tomb, what did they assume?

4. Why did Jesus begin with Moses and the prophets in explaining what happened?

5. What opened the eyes of the two men?

6. Why did the two men want to return to Jerusalem?

MY OWN STORY

1. Take a moment and indicate from 1 to 10 how you would cope with the following stress situations. 1 is NO ANXIETY; 10 is HIGH ANXIETY.

- _____ DEATH: Your closest friend suddenly dies
- _____ SECURITY: One day your boss tells you that you are fired
- _____ HOPE SHATTERED: The dreams you had for the future are dashed
- _____ LODGING: You don't have a place to sleep tonight
- _____ REPUTATION: You risked everything and the cause you believed in turns sour
- _____ FRIENDS: The old gang breaks up, including most of your friends
- _____ SUICIDE: One of your best friends hangs himself
- _____ BETRAYAL: You feel let down by the one person in the world you trusted
- _____ SHAME: The people in town laugh at you and think you've wasted your life

2. Have you ever felt like running away or throwing in the towel spiritually?

3. What is the thing that triggers a spiritual crisis in your experience?

4. What has helped you recognize Jesus walking alongside you when you are down spiritually?

John 21:15-25

JESUS REINSTATES PETER

LOOKING INTO THE SCRIPTURE

Read John 21:15-25 and discuss.

1. Why do you think John included this story in his gospel?

4. If you had been Peter by the end of the third question, how would you have felt?

2. From the previous story, why do you think Peter was back fishing again?

5. "Feed my lambs...Take care of my sheep... Feed my sheep." What is Jesus saying here?

3. Why did Jesus press Peter three times with the question, "Do you love me unconditionally truly love me unconditionally ...do you love me (like a brother)?"

6. At this point in Peter's life, would you have nominated Peter to be a leader in the church?

MY OWN STORY

1. If you were asked the same question that Jesus asked Peter, how would you respond?

4. How do you think God can help you overcome a recent failure in your life?

2. "Take care of my sheep." If Jesus said this to you three times, what would this mean for you now?

5. In the past few months, where have you seen the most progress in your life?

3. When you blow it, how do you feel later?