

Chapter 9 – Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus (Five-Day Devotional Study on Discipling)

This five-day devotional study draws from the themes of *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* by Mark Dever, Chapter 9, emphasizing the personal investment required to disciple others. Each day focuses on a key aspect—time, study, prayer, love, and shared calling—grounded in Scripture as the primary guide, with the addition of Dever’s insights.

Day 1: Discipling Requires Time

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.” (ESV)

Context: This passage reflects God’s sovereign design for life’s rhythms, where every activity has its appointed time. In discipling, it underscores the need to prioritize time for relationships that foster spiritual growth. Time spent together, especially during trials, reveals faith and builds trust, aligning with God’s purposes.

Quote: “The life of man is of no greater duration than the breath of his nostrils.” — **Plato**, quoted by **Richard Sibbes** in *The Soul’s Conflict with Itself*, emphasizing the fleeting nature of time and the urgency to use it wisely for eternal purposes.

Theological Reflection: God’s sovereignty over time (Ecclesiastes 3) reminds us that He ordains every moment for His glory. Discipling is an act of stewardship, investing the finite resource of time in eternal souls. As God works through trials to refine faith, our intentional time with others reflects His redemptive plan, joining us to His mission of building His kingdom.

Reflection: Mark Dever notes that discipling demands deliberate time, whether through casual chats or structured meetings. Time is a gift that makes relationships meaningful, especially in trials that expose true faith. Are you intentional about investing time in others’ spiritual growth? Small moments, like a post-church conversation, or larger commitments, like weekly meetups, can deepen faith.

Application: Identify one person you can spend time with this week to encourage their faith. Plan a specific activity—coffee, a walk, or a shared task—and use it to discuss life and faith.

Prayer: Lord, You govern all time. Help me steward it wisely, investing in relationships that build faith. Grant me wisdom to make every moment count for Your glory. Amen.

Day 2: Study of God's Word is Essential

Scripture Reading: Romans 10:13-17

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (ESV)

Context: Paul emphasizes that faith arises from hearing the Word of Christ, tracing the process from sending preachers to believers calling on the Lord. In discipling, studying Scripture is central, as it feeds faith and equips both discipler and disciple to know and follow Jesus.

Quote: “The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid.” — **Martin Luther**, highlighting the necessity of Scripture as the foundation for knowing Christ and growing in faith.

Theological Reflection: The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture underscores that the Bible is God's complete revelation for salvation and sanctification. As Romans 10:17 states, faith comes through the Word, which is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). In discipling, studying Scripture aligns us with God's truth, transforming minds and hearts to reflect Christ's character.

Reflection: Dever stresses that discipling involves engaging with the Bible to deepen love for God. Just as a child studies what they love, we study Scripture to know Jesus. Are you regularly in the Word, not just for yourself but to share with others? Sermons and books supplement, but the Bible remains primary.

Application: Choose a short passage (e.g., Psalm 1 or John 15:1-5) to study with someone you're discipling or hope to disciple. Discuss what it reveals about God and its application to life. If not yet discipling, study the passage yourself and share insights with a friend.

Prayer: Father, Your Word is life. Ignite in me a love for Scripture that spills into others' lives. Help me study diligently and share Your truth to build faith. Amen.

Day 3: Prayer is Vital for Spiritual Growth

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” (ESV)

Context: Paul’s instructions to the Thessalonians call for a life marked by constant prayer, joy, and thanksgiving, reflecting God’s will. “Pray without ceasing” urges a lifestyle of dependence on God, essential for spiritual growth in discipling relationships, where prayer invites supernatural transformation.

Quote: “Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.”
— **George Müller**, emphasizing prayer as an act of trusting God’s desire to work in our lives.

Theological Reflection: Prayer is a means of grace, connecting us to God’s power and will. The command to “pray without ceasing” reflects the doctrine of God’s providence, where He works through prayer to accomplish His purposes. In discipling, prayer aligns us with the Holy Spirit’s transformative work, fostering growth in both discipler and disciple.

Reflection: Dever highlights prayer as crucial in discipling, urging us to pray for those we disciple and teach them to pray. Do you pray consistently for others’ growth? Do you model praying from Scripture? Resources like *Praying the Bible* can help, but the habit of prayer transforms lives.

Application: Pray for someone you’re discipling or could disciple, using a passage like Psalm 23 to guide your prayer. Ask them about their prayer habits and encourage them to pray for specific needs, like holiness or ministry.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to pray without ceasing for those I disciple. Guide me to model prayer that depends on You and draws others to Your heart. Amen.

Day 4: Love Drives and Sustains Discipling

Scripture Reading: John 13:31-35

*“When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, “Where I am going you cannot come.” A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By 婷

Context: Jesus, facing His crucifixion, commands His disciples to love one another as He has loved them—a sacrificial, self-giving love that glorifies God and marks His followers. In discipling, this love initiates and sustains relationships, enabling perseverance and humility.

Quote: “Love is the root of all the virtues; it is the cause of all the happinesses; it is the principle of regeneration.” — **John Wesley**, underscoring love as the driving force of Christian life and relationships.

Theological Reflection: The doctrine of the atonement reveals the depth of Christ’s love, which we are called to emulate (John 13:34). This love, rooted in God’s nature (1 John 4:8), is the foundation of discipling, compelling us to deny ourselves, endure challenges, and humbly give and receive correction for the sake of others’ growth.

Reflection: Dever emphasizes that love motivates discipling, driving us to start, persevere, and humbly receive correction. Jesus’ sacrificial love sets the standard. Are you loving others in a way that risks rejection or inconvenience? Love makes discipling possible, reflecting Christ to the world.

Application: Perform a specific act of love for someone you’re discipling—listening, serving, or encouraging. If challenges arise, pray for perseverance to love like Jesus.

Prayer: Jesus, Your love is my example. Help me love others in discipling with humility and perseverance, reflecting Your glory to the world. Amen.

Day 5: Discipling is a Shared Calling with Eternal Impact

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 2:1-6

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. And the farmer who labors must be the first to partake of the crops.” (ESV)

Context: Paul charges Timothy to pass on the gospel to faithful men who will teach others, illustrating discipling’s multiplicative nature. The metaphors of soldier, athlete, and farmer emphasize discipline and perseverance, highlighting the eternal impact of sharing the gospel through relationships.

Quote: “The only way to keep a thing is to give it away; the only way to be truly rich is to give yourself to others.” — **Charles Spurgeon**, reflecting the kingdom principle of sharing God’s gifts for eternal impact.

Theological Reflection: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) calls all believers to disciple others, a shared mission empowered by Christ’s grace. This calling reflects the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, where every Christian is a minister of the gospel, entrusted with spreading God’s truth for His glory and others’ salvation.

Reflection: Dever reminds us that every Christian is called to disciple, sharing time, truth, prayer, and love. Our lived-out faith leaves a legacy. Are you entrusting the gospel to others? Your influence, even in brief relationships, can extend God's kingdom.

Application: Share one truth or lesson God has taught you with someone this week, encouraging them to pass it on. Reflect on how your actions demonstrate the gospel.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen me by Your grace to disciple faithfully. Use my life to extend Your kingdom, glorifying You forever. Amen.

Conclusion: Discipling is a costly but joyful calling requiring time, study, prayer, and love. By investing in others through Scripture and lived-out faith, you join God's work of transforming lives for His glory. Seek opportunities to disciple, trusting God to use your efforts eternally.