

# Five-Day Devotional: Discipling Others to Follow Jesus (Chap 7&8)

**Weekly Reading Assignment:** To fully engage with this devotional, read Chapters 7 and 8 of *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* by Mark Dever this week. These chapters explore how to choose someone to disciple and how to approach discipling relationships with clear aims, providing a foundation for the scriptures and applications in this devotional. Aim to read both chapters early in the week to inform your reflections and actions.

This five-day devotional is based on Chapters 7 and 8 of Dever's book. Each day focuses on a key scripture from these chapters, offering a brief explanation of its context and meaning, a gospel-centered application with an ecclesiological emphasis (highlighting the role of the church), reflection questions including one focused on the church, and action steps to help you grow in discipling others.

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## Day 1: Denying Self to Follow Jesus

**Scripture:** Mark 8:34 – “And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’”

**Context:** In Mark 8, Jesus teaches a large crowd and His disciples after predicting His death and resurrection. Peter's rebuke of Jesus prompts a correction, as Jesus clarifies the nature of His mission. This verse is part of His teaching on the cost of discipleship, emphasizing self-denial and sacrifice.

**Explanation:** Jesus' call to discipleship is radical. Denying oneself means setting aside personal desires to align with Christ's purposes. Taking up the cross signifies a willingness to endure sacrifice for the sake of following Him. This verse challenges us, like Bob and Bill in Dever's example, to move beyond mere knowledge or good intentions and live as disciples who reflect Christ's love and truth.

**Gospel-Centered Application with Ecclesiological Emphasis:** The gospel reveals that Jesus denied Himself fully, taking up the cross for our salvation. This empowers us to follow Him in self-denial. The church, as the body of Christ, is the community where we practice this self-denial, serving and loving one another as a witness to the gospel. By discipling others within the church, we help build a community that reflects Christ's sacrificial love.

### Reflection Questions:

1. In what areas of your life do you struggle to deny yourself to follow Jesus?
2. How does Jesus' example on the cross motivate you to take up your own cross?

3. **Ecclesiological Question:** How can your local church help you grow in self-denial and support others in doing the same?

**Action Step:** Identify one area where you can deny a selfish desire today (e.g., prioritizing a hobby over serving someone). Take a specific step to serve a church member or family member in need, strengthening the church's community.

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## Day 2: Building Up One Another

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:11 – “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

**Context:** In 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes to a young church facing persecution, encouraging steadfastness in faith. In chapter 5, he gives practical instructions for Christian living. This verse is part of his call to support one another, fostering spiritual growth within the church community.

**Explanation:** Paul urges believers to actively encourage and edify each other, fostering spiritual growth. This verse underscores the mutual responsibility of all Christians, not just pastors, to disciple one another. Discipling involves intentional relationships where we spur each other toward maturity in Christ.

**Gospel-Centered Application with Ecclesiological Emphasis:** The gospel assures us that Christ is building His church (Matt. 16:18), and we participate by encouraging others. Because Jesus has reconciled us to God and one another, we can build others up through love and support. The church is the primary context for this mutual edification, where members grow together through shared worship, teaching, and accountability.

### Reflection Questions:

1. Who in your church community could use encouragement this week?
2. How can you intentionally build someone up in their faith?
3. **Ecclesiological Question:** How does your church's structure (e.g., small groups, services) facilitate mutual encouragement, and how can you contribute to it?

**Action Step:** Reach out to a church member today—send a text, make a call, or meet for coffee—to encourage them with a specific word of affirmation or a scripture that points them to Christ.

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## Day 3: Prioritizing Family in Discipleship

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 5:8 – “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

**Context:** In 1 Timothy, Paul instructs Timothy on leading the church in Ephesus. Chapter 5 addresses care for widows and family responsibilities. This verse emphasizes providing for one’s household, both materially and spiritually, as a core expression of Christian faith.

**Explanation:** Paul stresses the priority of caring for one’s family, both physically and spiritually. Discipling begins at home, where God-given relationships provide a natural context for modeling and teaching faith. Neglecting this responsibility contradicts the faith we profess.

**Gospel-Centered Application with Ecclesiological Emphasis:** The gospel transforms family relationships by rooting them in Christ’s sacrificial love. Just as Jesus provides for our spiritual needs, we nurture our family’s faith. The church supports this by equipping families through teaching and community, reinforcing that discipling at home strengthens the broader body of Christ.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. How are you currently discipling your family members (spouse, children, parents)?
2. What challenges keep you from prioritizing spiritual care for your household?
3. **Ecclesiological Question:** How can your church better support families in discipling their members, and how can you engage with those resources?

**Action Step:** Plan a specific time this week to disciple a family member, such as reading a Bible passage together, praying, or discussing a spiritual topic relevant to their life.

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## **Day 4: Teaching the Teachable**

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 5:5 – “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

**Context:** In 1 Peter, written to persecuted Christians, Peter encourages perseverance and humble living within the community. In chapter 5, he addresses church leaders and members, urging humility and submission. This verse highlights humility as key to learning and teaching within the church.

**Explanation:** Peter calls for humility, particularly in submitting to godly instruction. In discipling, we should seek those who are teachable—open to correction and eager to grow. Humility is essential for both discipler and disciple, as God blesses those who receive His truth humbly.

**Gospel-Centered Application with Ecclesiological Emphasis:** The gospel humbles us by revealing our need for a Savior. Because Jesus humbled Himself (Phil. 2:8), we can approach discipling with humility. The church fosters this by providing a structure (e.g., elders, small groups) where teachable Christians grow together, submitting to biblical teaching and mutual accountability.

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Are you teachable? How do you respond when corrected or challenged spiritually?
2. Who in your life demonstrates a teachable spirit that you could invest in?
3. **Ecclesiological Question:** How does your church cultivate a culture of humility and teachability, and how can you contribute to it?

**Action Step:** Identify someone in your church who shows a teachable spirit. Initiate a conversation this week to explore how you might begin a discipling relationship with them.

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## Day 5: Holding Fast to the Word of Life

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:16 – “Holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.”

**Context:** In Philippians, Paul writes from prison to encourage the Philippian church to live in unity and joy. In chapter 2, he urges them to shine as lights by living out their faith. This verse refers to the “word of life”—the gospel—calling believers to hold it firmly.

**Explanation:** Paul encourages clinging to God’s Word as the source of life and guidance. Discipling involves helping others understand and obey the Bible, ensuring their faith is rooted in truth. Our efforts in discipling are not in vain when centered on God’s Word.

**Gospel-Centered Application with Ecclesiological Emphasis:** The gospel, the ultimate “word of life,” proclaims Christ’s victory over sin and death. By grounding discipling in Scripture, we point others to Jesus’ transformative power. The church is the community where this Word is preached, studied, and lived out, equipping members to disciple others effectively.

**Reflection Questions:**

1. How central is God’s Word in your current discipling efforts or personal growth?
2. What practical steps can you take to help someone else hold fast to the Word?
3. **Ecclesiological Question:** How does your church emphasize the centrality of Scripture in discipling, and how can you support this focus?

**Action Step:** Choose a short Bible passage (e.g., a Psalm or a few verses from a Gospel) to study with someone you’re discipling or want to disciple. Meet this week to read, discuss, and apply it together.

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This devotional encourages you to live out the call to disciple others by grounding your efforts in Scripture, humility, and the gospel within the context of the church. May you grow in faith and help others follow Jesus more closely!