

**Immersed in God’s Word,**

**following Jesus – together**

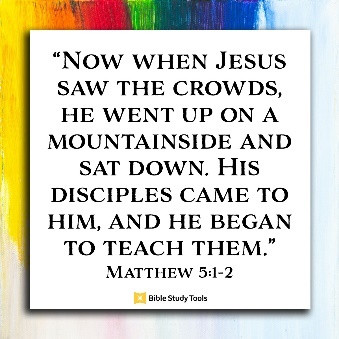
*His disciples came to him, and Jesus began to teach them.*

*~ Jesus, Matthew 5:2*



**Monday, Week 1: Theme for the week: Come and Learn**

Today's theme is not just for the first week, but for the first year [If you are new to IMMERSION as a devotional aid, we start you off here for the next four weeks.] We have two phrases from Jesus that we will be applying. One is His call to “Come, follow Me,” from Matthew 4:19. It is likely familiar to those who frequent Christian circles and walk the Christian walk. The other saying of Jesus, “Come… learn from Me,” is drawn from Matthew 11:29, reflecting that He has something to pour into us that He also poured into His first disciples.

Our response to that call is connected to Matthew 5:2, where we are told, *His disciples came to him, and Jesus began to teach them.* What was taught to those initial disciples would later be passed down to following generations as the message made it way from Jerusalem into Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

The setting for this learning opportunity with Jesus comes at the beginning of His discourse known as *the Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5-7). There Jesus sat down and His disciples gathered around him to be taught. We will spend this year focusing on those teachings of Jesus out of that Sermon. That backdrop will allow us to work through the entire gospel of Matthew, fleshing out this invitation to follow Jesus that culminates in a call to make disciples of all nations. God bless our journey!

**Prayer for the week** Dear Lord Jesus, I want to come and sit at Your feet like Mary did, to learn from You like many disciples did, to follow You like the apostles did. I want to taste and see Your goodness. I’m coming Jesus! Lead me!



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 34:8-11**

***Read*** *vs. 8-11 2x*

8Taste and see

that the Lord is good;

blessed is the one

who takes refuge in him.

9 Fear the Lord,

you his holy people,

for those who fear him lack nothing.

10The lions may grow weak and hungry,

but those who seek the Lord

lack no good thing.

11Come, my children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

***Mark*** the words or phrases that catch your attention.

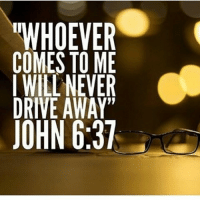
***Meditate****:* Talk (better yet write) with God about those words. Ask him to impress things upon your heart and mind; expect a response from the Lord.

**Pondering Point:** From one follower of God (David) to another (us) comes this call to embrace and enjoy God: *Taste and see that the Lord is good;* Give God a full go!



**Tuesday, Week 1: God’s Mission seen in John 6:35-40**

Looking in on John 6, we see Jesus declare this about God’s mission and His role in it: *“I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”* (6:38-40)

Earlier this section of teaching, Jesus says *whoever comes I will never drive away* (John 6:37). We hope that as His church – as His followers – we can present a similar attitude to the world – driving no one away and always willing to do whatever our Father in Heaven seeks from us. May we indeed look to Jesus and find life, yes! AND may we welcome others in His name.

**Prayer prompts:**

* + Thank God for Jesus as the Bread of Life, your source of life, and as an example for how to live.
  + Pray that among events and people clamoring for your attention, you keep looking to Jesus, that you pursue God daily, that you continue to come to Him for life.
  + Pray that your attitude toward others in life reflects that of Jesus Himself, never turning people away.



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 34:8-11**

Ps 34: 8Taste and see that the Lord is good;

blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

**Teaching or Command of God:**

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk,

so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1 Peter 2:2-3

May my supplication come before you;  
 deliver me according to your promise.

Psalm 119:170

**Pondering Point:** Who gave you your first taste of God? In whom do you see the Lord noticeably present among family and friends? What taste do people get of God through you?

**Wednesday, Week 1: Your Identity in Christ**

*Every Wednesday highlights part of who we are as God’s children.*

Jesus invites people into a world that the Apostle Peter describes as “participating in the Divine nature” and “escaping the corruption in this world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4). Elsewhere Peter describes the evil spiritual realm as warring against your soul (1 Peter 2:11). Jesus has much to teach us and seeks to draw us to Himself that might learn from Him how to live in such environments. **In Christ, I am called and accepted, making me a disciple who is following and learning from Jesus.**

**Prayer prompt:**  Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of all that Jesus taught so you can better participate in His Divine nature and escape the corrupting evil desires. Consider tying it to Matthew 28:19-20 where the disciples were told to go make disciples who would learn all that He had commanded.



**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 34:8-11**

Ps 34: 9 Fear the Lord, you his holy people,

for those who fear him lack nothing.

**Teaching or Command of God:**

Do not be like the horse or the mule,  
    which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle  
    or they will not come to you. Psalm 32:9

 May my cry come before you, Lord; give me

understanding according to your word.

Psalm 119:169

**Pondering Point:** Remember that our Psalmist here (David) spent years on the run with water, food, and safety in short supply. Don’t confuse daily comforts with daily needs. Ask God for proper perspective on this matter of *daily bread* in your life.

**Thursday, Week 1: Discipleship Point**

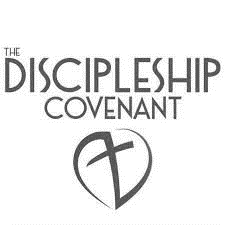
**Called to follow Jesus (**Matthew 4:18-23**)**

*As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.**“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.* Matthew 4:18-20

**Discipleship Point about Jesus’ Covenant with Me:**

Hope has fashioned a discipleship covenant on paper that reflects the biblical expectations Jesus shares with His followers. We will look at it in full throughout next week’s devotional time.

For today, we recognize that such a covenant with Jesus exists – an agreement to live as His disciples.



That covenant reads, “I acknowledge that the discipleship covenant is not so much with a church or with its pastor, but primarily with Jesus and His rightful calling on my life. I fully understand that although this may not be taught or expected at every church (be it Lutheran or otherwise), it is biblical and in accord with the will of Jesus for ME as HIS DISCIPLE. Having counted the cost of discipleship, I want to follow Jesus and join Him on His mission of making disciples.”

**Prayer:** Father God, in view of Your mercy, I offer my body as a living sacrifice, an act of worship; may it be holy and pleasing. Transform me by renewing my mind that I will be able to test and approve what Your good, pleasing, and perfect will is. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 34:8-11**

Ps 34:10The lions may grow weak and hungry,

but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.



**Teaching or Command of God:**

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. Psalm 91:7

 May your unfailing love come to me, Lord,  
 your salvation, according to your promise

Psalm 119:41

**Pondering Point:** Even the strongest (lions) go through bouts of weakness and hunger but God care for His own. Internalizing this truth can bring great relief from anxiety.



**Friday, Week 1: Discipleship Prayer**

Scripture for the Day: Isaiah 55:6-11 (*read verses 1-13 in your bible)*

Our focus in on verses 6-11 of Isaiah 55. They are printed for you on the following page. Be ready to read through this section of God’s Word multiple times, viewing it through a different “lens” of invitation from Jesus each time. The three lenses relate to our theme for the week and year.

* Come and hear
* Come and learn from Me
* Come and follow Me

For instance, considering *the ways of God* *(55:8),* how might

* “come and hear God’s ways” be different from
* “come and learn God’s ways from Me” and
* “come and follow Me regarding God’s ways”?

***6****Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.****7****Let the wicked forsake their ways, the unrighteous their thoughts.  
Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,  
    and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

***8****“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
    neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.****9****“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways*

*higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.****10****As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not*

*return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and*

*flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,****11****so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return*

*to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve*

*the purpose for which I sent it.*

My thoughts in response to the lens of “Come and hear”:

My thoughts in response to the lens of “Come and learn from Me”:

My thoughts in response to the lens of “Come and follow Me”:

**Discipleship Prayer:** Spirit of God, teach me to forsake evil ways and turn to God. Teach me how to come to Jesus and learn from Him every day – day and night. Help me hear and respond to Jesus’ call to follow Him. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**Micro-Meditation: Psalm 34:8-11**

Ps 34:11Come, my children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the Lord.



**Teaching or Command of God:**

Come and hear, all you who fear God;  
    let me tell you what he has done for me. Psalm 66:16

 Let your compassion come to me that

I may live, for your law is my delight.

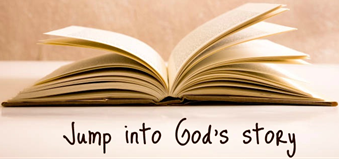
Psalm 119:77

**Pondering Point*:*** *Come and I will teach you,* said David;

C*ome and learn from me*, said Jesus in Matthew 11:29.

Make a conscious decision to come and learn from Jesus.

 **Saturday, Week 1: Scripture’s Story for the Week**



Jesus calls first disciples

**Matthew 4:18-23**

*Parallels in Mark 1, Luke 5, John 1*

****A note about stories: Telling Bible stories (storying) is one of the simplest ways to share God's Word -- and we can all tell stories. Most people remember stories better than mere details, both in terms of speaking and listening. AND storying does not require one to remember all of the particulars to be effective. The Holy Spirit is quite capable of using us and His Word without direct quotes or perfect reciting of all details.

Today’s story begins a life-long journey for Peter and Andrew, for James and John. It may be good to go back into your own memory banks and reflect with the Lord about His calling on your life: When and where, the how and through whom, etc. There is room on the next page to record some of your reflective meditation with God:

When, where, how and/or through whom Jesus has called me:

**Prayer prompt:** Ask Jesus to help you grow into your life as a disciple. Include conversation aboutyour identity as a disciple, about orienting your life around Him, and about a willingness to re-orient your schedule as He sees fit.



**Sunday, Week 1: Call to worship God, to gather together**

Thoughts on Jesus’ calling us to come – to come and follow, to come and learn. Keep that in mind as you ponder these scriptures**:**

* *But I, by your great love can come into your house;  
  in reverence I bow down toward your holy temple.* Ps. 5:7
* *All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*  John 6:37
* *“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”*  Matthew 4:19
* *“come…learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.* Matthew 11:28-29

**Prayer prompt:** Ask God to bless the early part of the year so that you are able to focus on Him first. Ask that He help you maintain Him as central to your heart, agenda, schedule, energy and relationships.