



LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

We're on the journey to be more like Jesus and are so glad that you've joined our community! As we follow Jesus' invitation to grow deeper in our relationship with him, we seek to live transformed.

As disciples of Jesus, we want to follow his teachings. Our faculty will guide you as you study and learn alongside your peers. We will look at the cost of discipleship--counting the cost of rejection, suffering and self-denial. As we share this journey with others in the community, you'll have the opportunity to join a D.N.A. discipleship group, as well as engage in other occasions for worship and fellowship.

We will learn ways to steward all that God has given us and examine how we can bring our minds, bodies, spirits and all that we are in full surrender to Jesus. As we abide in Christ, God gives us the fruit of his spirit--love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control--so that his presence becomes evident in our lives.

We have resources available to help you along the way. This includes a Life of Discipleship map with videos from our faculty to help you begin conversations with others as you go deeper in your journey. Formation takes a lifetime, but in your season at Asbury Seminary, our desire is to journey with you in a process of deep, abiding formation. We pray that each of us becomes more like Jesus as we journey together.

QUESTIONS

1. As you think about the cost of discipleship, what is one area that God may be asking you to surrender?
2. Take a moment to think about your life and perhaps write down a specific area you want God to specifically help you grow in this year.



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Joy

Joy is not something that we can manufacture or create. Joy is experienced and expressed through the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Joy is a gift of the Spirit, but it is a gift that we can anticipate as we live in Christ. Although we might grieve and suffer in the darkness, we know that joy will come. Whatever your circumstances or situation, it's not up to you to produce joy. Joy comes to you because you live in God. If you live in the Fruit of the Spirit, you're always anticipating what God will do.

QUESTIONS

1. What is joy?
2. Where are you seeing joy in your own life? What area of your life are you anticipating joy?



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Faithfulness

Faithfulness is a consistent, reliable commitment to another person that creates an environment of mutual trust. Faithfulness makes genuine relationships possible between humans and is a gift of God through the Holy Spirit. While Christians have a natural capacity for the fruit of faithfulness to grow, faithfulness also requires us to make decisions that allow God's faithfulness to become operational in our lives. Therefore, if we live by the spirit, let us also walk by the spirit even when the journey is difficult.

QUESTIONS

1. What is faithfulness?
2. How does God's faithfulness enable our own?



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Kindness

The Fruit of the Spirit Paul lists is designed to help Christ's followers continue on to perfection. This list replaces the works of the flesh with the work of Spirit. Kindness might seem extra, but Paul tells us that kindness is part of God's character. Kindness means that we care for those for whom we are not obligated. Kindness is an attitude not only of not doing harm, but of doing good in thought, word, deed and attitude. God draws us to reconciliation with Himself through His kindness. Through that His kindness flows out to others.

QUESTIONS

1. What is kindness?
2. How is kindness part of God's character?



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The Cost

Jesus requires his disciples to either be all in or all out. Jesus asks his disciples to be willing to give up human relationships, possessions and even life itself. While you must be willing to say no to each of these things, you must also be willing to say an emphatic yes to rejection, ridicule and suffering in the name of Jesus and be willing to follow wherever he leads. But Christian discipleship is commitment to Jesus, and there is nothing greater! If you're a disciple, that means Jesus himself dwells in you and lives his life through you. Will you answer the call?

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to count the cost to wholly follow Jesus?
2. Is there something Christ is asking you to give up in order to fully follow him?



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Community

Community and discipleship doesn't have anything to do with whether you're introverted or extroverted. Community speaks to how we're formed into the image of Christ. We are formed in relationship with a relational Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and with other human beings. While God uses individual leaders, he calls people to himself and raises up people for the nations. The Fruit of the Spirit invites us to grow in our relationship with God with others by our side.

QUESTIONS

1. How has community helped you grow in Christ?
2. How does our human community reflect the character of the trinity?



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Gentleness

Gentleness is a Fruit of the Spirit that the Holy Spirit cultivates. Gentleness is a balanced place that offers a place for love without being pushy or avoiding hard situations. Gentleness allows us to act in ways that offer respect for others and ourselves without being aggressive. Gentleness is the highest form of discipline that the Holy Spirit cultivates in us that allows us to address evil and move in ways that protect and uplift others.

QUESTIONS

1. What is gentleness?
2. How do you need to ask the Holy Spirit to help you cultivate gentleness in your life?



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Goodness

Generosity is a way that exhibits holiness without saying a word, offering a little something extra that others are not expecting. We have more than we need because of God's generous love and grace in our lives. When we live our lives in response to God's love, we live generous, abundant lives that flow into the lives of others.

QUESTIONS

1. How does God's generosity to us enable us to give generously to others?
2. What is something you can do to give generously with your time or money this week?



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Love

Love isn't merely sentimental, emotional or the fruit of our own choosing. God has poured his love into our hearts when we surrender to Jesus Christ. God is the source of love through the spirit and that love simplifies the agenda and curriculum of the spiritual life. Sometimes we take the Fruit of the Spirit and we itemize them, but love is the fruit that produces all these other dimensions, behaviors and dispositions that we find in Paul's writing. When we receive Christ's love, we manifest that love by embodying the remaining Fruits of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS

1. How does love as a fruit of the spirit produce all the other fruits of the spirit?
2. Reflect how you came to experience God's love in your own life. Find someone to share that experience with.



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Patience

Patience involves the ability to tolerate suffering and delay without getting upset. When we are patient, we are able to calmly wait on God in the midst of suffering. Because of God's kindness, God patiently waits for us to come to repentance, and because of God's patience we reflect him best when we learn this virtue. We cannot cultivate patience ourselves, but must yield to God, allowing him to work in our hearts and lives.

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be patient?
2. What is the relationship between patience and perseverance?



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Self-Control

Self-control in the life of discipleship speaks of a transformed heart, a changed life and the power of the Holy Spirit guiding us along our Christian journey. We often look at self-control as refraining from actions we secretly want to do. But in Galatians, Paul reminds believers who they are in Christ. We are set free and the dispositions of our hearts have been changed, so that instead of following the whims of our sinful nature, we live with the mind of Christ. We then walk as Christ walked in the work of faith, the patience of hope and the labor of love.

QUESTIONS

1. What is self-control?
2. How does our belief in Christ result in outward change of behaviors and dispositions?



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Peace

God's peace allows us to know deep in our soul that all is well and all shall be well. Peace is a fruit that humans cannot manufacture. Peace is God's gift to us as an act of sheer grace. We are called to carry the cross of Christ throughout our lives. In good times and bad, God's peace allows us to have a sense of utter well-being no matter our circumstances. Peace settles in the depths of our souls as our souls are settled on him.

QUESTIONS

1. In the past, where have you experienced God's peace?
2. Is there a situation in which you need to experience the deep, settled peace of God?
Take a moment to share this with Jesus and invite Him to bless you with his peace.



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Theology of the Body

The theme of this year is discipleship. We often think of discipling our hearts, affections or minds before God, but one of the key elements is discipleship and theology of the body. This year we'll explore what it means to have a theology of the body, the grace we give and receive through our bodies, and how we can live that theology as sacraments in the world in our friendships, marriages and families.

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to have a theology of the body?
2. As followers of Christ, how are we to live as sacraments within the world?



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Conclusion

I hope you've enjoyed the journey as you watched these videos and learned more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. The journey is only beginning. During the semester, you'll take a deeper dive in your classes, chapels and other gatherings, learning more about what discipleship means.

Visit the Formation website (asbury.to/formation) for more information. Theological education, spiritual formation and Christian discipleship are inseparable. I pray your academic journey is exciting and your formational journey joyful as you surrender to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS

1. Did you learn anything new about the fruits of the spirit from watching these videos? If so, what?
2. How do you hope your theological education and spiritual formation at the Seminary informs your Christian discipleship?