

Christ's Call to Serve

Printable Notes

In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus begins His public ministry by quoting Isaiah 61:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus begins His earthly ministry by announcing His pursuit of those who were losing in the competitive race for resources, security, honor and power. Luke tells us, everyone was "astonished" at the gracious vision Jesus had for the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed.

I believe that Jesus is calling us to join Him in His ministry to the vulnerable, the excluded and outcasts of society. God wants us to find ways to associate with the least of these and extend grace to those who may feel like they are on the outside looking in.

You are reading these words because someone who cares about you has invited you to go through this challenging material with them. We are trusting that God will direct and move you as you step out in faith during your time together.

We have designed five meetings to interact with Jesus' teaching in the Gospel of Luke and two meetings to go out and practice these truths after lesson 2 & 4.

- Lesson 1: Called--is where we reflect on Jesus calling of His first disciples and our personal calling to proclaim the good news to the poor, the captives, the blind and oppressed.
- Lesson 2: Called to Love—is where we examine and challenge our motivations in serving and loving others.
- Lesson 3: Called to Maturity—is where we pursue and accurate view of Jesus, one's own life and how to love others.
- Lesson 4: Called to Share—is where we discuss the end goal of serving others and our calling to witness.
- Lesson 5: Called to Serve—is where we reflect on how the Holy Spirit is moving and think through our next steps.

Take time before you meet to watch the videos and think through the questions and material of the lesson you will be discussing. It's ok if you are confused and need to ask more questions.

Our goal in gathering together is that you would experience the heart of Jesus for the outsider and He would begin to give you a vision to trust Him as you grow in your love for others. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

We are praying for you!

David Newkirk

Lesson 1 - Called

Take some time and introduce yourselves. What motivated you to start this discipleship material?

Watch this next video as David Newkirk describes an experience that leads to our first question.

(Video of David Newkirk)

1. Have you ever had an experience like this? If so, share how you responded.

In Luke 5, we see how Jesus calls the first disciples to follow Him. As you read this passage, pay special attention to Simon Peter's reaction to Jesus.

Read Luke 5:1-11:

1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. (Luke 5:1-11 ESV)

2. What are the two requests and one command (at the end of verse 10) that Jesus makes of Simon? Which of these seems like the more difficult to obey?

One thing to remember is that how God interacted with people back then is the way God interacts with people today. Jesus first asks Simon to use his boat. After fishing all night and catching nothing, I bet Simon was exhausted! Yet, he still obeyed Jesus. The next request from Jesus to Simon is to throw his net in the water once again. This time there is pushback from Simon. Yet, he still is obedient.

Because of his obedience, what happened? The catch of fish was incredible! Then Jesus gives Simon a command *“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people!”*

You can probably identify with Simon's tension in this story (*“Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing”*).

3. Can you think through a time in your life where you fought through all the “practical” reasons not to obey Jesus, but chose to lower your nets anyway?

4. How did Jesus use your obedience?

This next video is from Yvonne Bock. Yvonne has had the opportunity to work with displaced children in many different contexts. This is her story of saying yes in obedience to Christ.

(Watch video of Yvonne Bock)

As Christ's disciples, we are called to follow His example. He came *“to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed...”* (Luke 4:18-19). The poor to whom Jesus was sent were not just the economically poor, or the spiritually impoverished, but people of low status in society – those who are excluded and marginalized. Likewise, the blind are those who need to receive revelation and experience salvation.

5. Who in your community is being excluded and marginalized? Take a moment right now and identify those who Jesus is talking about in your neighborhood, workplace, school, or city.

6. As you think of reaching out to those you have identified, what objections or fears does this bring up in you?

*** Before the next meeting: Go on a walk around your neighborhood and pray that God will help you identify people that need His love. Ask Him to use you to help meet that need.**

Lesson 2 - Called to Love

Watch this next video from Bob Payne. Listen as he shares about God's love for us and serving others.

(Video of Bob Payne)

As we pursue our relationship with Jesus and experience His love for us firsthand, it should motivate us to love others. If you have never experienced God's personal love for you, it is impossible that you will be able to share His love with someone else.

Take time with your discipleship partner(s) to share a moment when you felt God's deep love for you.

It might have been when you first understood the depth of your sin and the abundant grace God has extended to you through Jesus Christ. Or you might remember how He saved you from a besetting sin. Maybe it was while you were enjoying nature.

Once we have experienced God's love for us, our response is two- fold. Let's look at what Luke says our response should include.

Read Luke 10:25-28

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" **26** He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" **27** And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." **28** And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." **(Luke 10:25-28 ESV)**

Jesus approves of the lawyer's two-part summary of all the Old Testament. Love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind and love your neighbor as yourself.

1. Why does loving God come before loving your neighbor? If we get the order of these two commands mixed up, what are the consequences? What happens if we remove Jesus as our ultimate motive in serving others?

2. Do you have an example of when you were serving with wrong motives?

(Maybe it was a time you were trying to impress someone, or hoping to get something back in exchange, or even trying to squelch some shame in your heart.)

Jesus continues his interaction with the religious leader in Luke 10 about this very thing. After Jesus tells him to love God and love his neighbor, the expert in the law asks, "Who is my neighbor?"

Read Jesus' response to this question in Luke 10:30-37:

30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" **37** He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." **(Luke 10:30-37 ESV)**

3. In verse 30, who was traveling to Jericho?

4. Every other character in this parable has been given a description. Why do you think that Jesus doesn't give this man one?

The question that the religious expert asked Jesus provided the opportunity for an important lesson. Jesus answered the question, but then He followed up His answer with a parable that illustrated the point of His teaching on the subject. The parable amplified the second great commandment (v. 27). In this single parable, Jesus drove home just who it was that this man was responsible for. His neighbor was anyone in need. His neighbor wasn't the person he knew (or was even acquainted with). It wasn't someone who shared his viewpoints or values. In fact, Jews couldn't stand Samaritans and would travel days out of their way to avoid traveling through Samaria. It would be astounding to hear that it was the Samaritan that stopped to help the man on the road. It wasn't the priest or the Levite like many would have assumed. This was the main teaching point that Jesus highlighted when explaining this parable. It was not about who the man on the side of the road was. Instead, it was all about who was being a good neighbor to him.

In the same way, Jesus calls you to be a good neighbor by meeting the needs of the people in front of you.

Last week you had the opportunity to walk around your neighborhood and identify people who God is asking you to love in a tangible way.

Share who God put on your heart.

5. How does the parable of the Good Samaritan help you to better understand how to love your "neighbor"?

6. What are some tangible ways you can share God's love with them this week?

For next week's lesson you are putting your theology into action. Instead of meeting together to go through a lesson, you will be going out to serve together. Watch the video below to find out more.

Matt Bates is the vice president of City Net, a nonprofit that has been working to solve Southern California's homelessness crisis. Take a moment to hear his encouragement as you move forward in your journey to serve others.

(Watch video of Matt Bates)

Decide with your discipleship group what outreach you want to participate in together. If you need some ideas, you'll find the service opportunities button below.

We have been called to love God and love others. As followers of Christ, we become a visual picture of God's love to those we come in contact with. We show His love by caring for people. As we engage in loving others, we are doing exactly what Jesus has asked us to do. The primary way the world will see the love of our heavenly Father is through His followers.

*** Pray that God will use you to love your neighbor with the love that only God can give. Pray that God will remove any barriers that might keep you from serving those in need.**

Lesson 3 - Called to Maturity

Spend some time discussing how your time serving together went. What were the parts that felt encouraging and life-giving? What moments or circumstances were frustrating and difficult? What do you feel like God was doing in your heart as you acted in obedience to Him?

You are going to have another opportunity to serve others together after Lesson 4. Here are some ways to prepare yourself for this next opportunity.

In this next video, David Anderson shares how challenging motivation can be as we seek to serve God and others.

(Watch video of David Anderson)

The Holy Spirit desires to mature believers more and more into the image of Christ. This means that even in the area of serving, there are things the Holy Spirit wants to teach us and ways He wants to grow us. As we mature, there seem to be three key viewpoints in particular that we need to adopt in order to serve others well:

A mature servant needs an accurate view of Jesus.

Read Luke 9:18-22:

18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." 20 Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." 21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." (Luke 9:18-22 ESV)

1. As you choose to serve others, why is it important to have an accurate view of Jesus?

2. As Jesus describes His own identity, why does He quickly point to His coming suffering and death?

Suffering, pain, and sacrifice are the most surprising and arguably most important aspects of Jesus' identity. As His servant you should expect to experience these

things as well. We follow a crucified Messiah and “*share His suffering*” (Philippians 3:10).

A mature servant of Christ needs an accurate view of his/her own life.

Read Luke 9:23-25

23 *And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? (Luke 9:23-25 ESV)*

Jesus is teaching His disciples a counter intuitive way of living. Denying yourselves and taking up your cross to follow Jesus involves embracing His viewpoint about who you are and what He is calling you to.

3. How is Christ’s call in this passage different from what the world promotes?

4. In serving Jesus and others, do you remember a time when it felt like you were losing your life but were in fact saving it? In other words, think of a time when you had to give up something to serve someone else, but looking back, you feel like you actually gained more in the long run.

A mature servant of Christ needs an accurate view of how to love others.

Read Luke 6:30-36:

30 *Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. 32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:30-36 ESV)*

In this section Jesus is describing true love, not the reciprocal “love” that is modeled by this world, in which you give and expect something in return.

5. From your own experience, why is it challenging to love without expecting anything in return?

6. What motivation does Jesus give for this “one-way” love?

7. Which of the three viewpoints discussed in this lesson do you need to grow in the most?

*** Spend some time praying together for the Holy Spirit to move in your heart and to reveal ways that you can participate more in these areas.**

Lesson 4 - Called to Share

1. What do you think the end goal of serving is? Is it meeting the physical and emotional needs of others through your compassion and generosity? Or is it meeting the spiritual need through sharing the Gospel?

Abigail Anderson grew up as a missionary kid on the shores of Lake Victoria in Tanzania. She returned to the United States for university and is currently preparing to return to Africa as a Labor and Delivery nurse.

(Watch video of Abi Andersen)

More than any other Gospel, Luke vividly describes the heart of Jesus for the marginalized and those desperate for compassion. However, throughout all those interactions Jesus never separates their physical needs from their spiritual needs. In Jesus' final words to His disciples, He reiterates the power and importance of sharing the Gospel.

Read Luke 24:44-49.

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:44-49 ESV)

2. What are we called to be witnesses of? What are "these things?"

As a disciple of Jesus, the most important thing you can offer someone you are serving is the truth - "*Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.*" (Luke 24:46-47) This truth is what will transform a person's life. As we seek to love God and love others, as we talked about in the previous lessons, we need to point them to the One who can love them perfectly.

3. On your next assignment, if you had the opportunity to share about Jesus with the person you are serving, what would you do? What would you say? Where would you start?

One of the most effective ways to share the Gospel with someone else is to convey how God has transformed your own life. Our individual stories can become the most powerful evangelism tools because they are deeply unique to us and can bring the Gospel to life for others.

Three sets of questions help us put together an effective testimony. Each member of the group can take turns answering these questions and hear feedback to refine their testimonies.

A. Before you placed your faith in Christ, what was your life like, what was lacking or what power did sin have over your life? Were there methods for improving your life that didn't work?

B. When and why did you place your faith in Jesus? Can you clearly explain the gospel message? (Faith alone in Christ's death and resurrection [Eph 2:8-9, 1 Cor. 15:3-4]. Salvation to all who believe [John 3:16, Titus 3:5]).

C. What difference has Jesus made in your life? How have you seen God work and answer prayer?

(Watch video of Abi Andersen)

God has called us to physically and emotionally serve the marginalized with compassion and sacrifice. He also has charged us to proclaim that He is the Bread of Life and that whoever comes to Him will not hunger and whoever believes in Him will never thirst (John 6:35).

Remember, your next meeting will be your second and final service opportunity together. Spend some time thinking about what to do next. Consider how this lesson will change or impact how you go about serving this time. There may be an extra step God is inviting you to take with those you serve. Pray that you would be open and willing to take that next step.

*** Spend time praying for your next service opportunity. Pray that God would give you opportunities to share about His love and grace with someone.**

Lesson 5 - Called to Serve

Spend some time debriefing about your last assignment:

- 1. What unique opportunities did you experience?**
- 2. What was the most difficult part of your time?**
- 3. Why was it important to have an accurate view of God, your own life, & how to love others during this time?**
- 4. What brought you joy while serving?**
- 5. How did you feel as you left?**

Conclusion to the study:

The heart behind this discipleship material isn't just exposure to service opportunities, but a hope that Jesus' passion for the marginalized and outsiders would be incorporated into the rhythms of your life and your family's life.

- 6. What are some of the things the Holy Spirit stirred in your heart during this discipleship series?**
- 7. Has the Spirit given you a vision of how this might look, even in the context of your busy life?**
- 8. What are some tangible ways you can continue to serve the people in need in your neighborhood or sphere of influence?**
- 9. What does it look like to invite others to join you in this process? Are there other believers in your life that can serve alongside you as you seek to meet the needs of others?**

Watch this final video from David Newkirk, as you wrap up this study.

(Video of David Newkirk)

*** End your time dreaming and praying with one another for what's next for your discipleship group. Also pray that God will give you eyes to see those in need around you and opportunities to love and serve them well, including sharing the saving news of Jesus Christ with them.**