

# **Intentional Discipleship**

## **Bible Studies for Lent 2018**

**Prepared and presented by the**  
**The Diocese of Jamaica**  
**and The Cayman Islands**

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# From the Diocesan Bishop

The Bible has always been a central part of the life of Anglicanism. Indeed, it was the Anglican tradition which contributed to the rest of Christendom, the King James Version of the Bible, which today remains sacrosanct for many denominational traditions, and for which no change in its language or contribution from archaeological and biblical scholarship can be accommodated. Additionally, Anglican liturgy is rooted in Scripture and is utilized in almost unparalleled fashion in its liturgies and worship services.

Sadly, many Anglicans do not demonstrate the same penchant in their study of Scripture, whether in personal or communal ways. In many congregations within the Diocese, as may be true for others, Bible Study gatherings are attended by only the faithful few who display a positive level of commitment to this aspect of their growth and understanding of the faith. Within the tradition of Christian spirituality there is a discipline called **study** which has at its centre and imperative **the study of Scripture**, the writings and biographies of the authors of the spiritual classics, and the study and attention to the world of nature as a channel of God's revelation. The exercise of this discipline is one which is basic to the exercise of Christian discipleship in a deepening and mature fashion.

The Anglican Consultative Council, one of the four Instruments of the Anglican Communion, passed Resolution 16:01 at its meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 8-19 April 2016, calling on all Anglicans to become involved in a season of Intentional Discipleship. The Communion-wide Call is stated thus: "For every province, diocese and parish in the Anglican Communion to adopt a clear focus on Intentional Discipleship and to produce resources to equip and enable the whole church to be effective in making new disciples of Jesus Christ".

This Bible Study Guide is a direct response to that call and has been written by a team of committed Anglicans, inclusive of ordained and lay persons, under the oversight of the Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, the Rt. Rev. Robert Thompson. It lends itself to a wide readership and use by individuals and Bible Study groups, and it is our hope that it will be used extensively across the Diocese.



The prevailing milieu in many congregations is that of a preoccupation with declining membership and institutional demands for maintenance of systems and structures. The season of Intentional Discipleship calls us back to a focus on our baptismal covenant and what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in every sphere of life. It is first of all a call to a sense of consciousness regarding our identity in Christ, to grow in our relationship with Christ, to allow the living Christ to shape our lives, and to bear witness to our faith in word and action in the family, in the workplace, in the community, and of course, within the fellowship of the Church. Faithful exercise of discipleship in this mode will lead others to Christ and to a living, growing and vibrant Church. This Bible Study series is one way in which to embark on the path of Intentional Discipleship.

I commend this Bible Study series to the faithful of the Diocese and all who are seeking to discern and pursue a path of Intentional Discipleship.

*Blessings,*  
*+Howard Jamaica & Cayman Islands*

Rt. Rev. Dr. Howard Gregory  
Bishop of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands

# Why Study Intentional Discipleship?

In keeping with the mandate issued at the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) Meeting in 2016 the Diocesan Bishop in November 2017, declared the years 2018 to 2019 as our period of intentional study of study and prayerful reflection on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Needless to say, faithful Christians in many of our congregations have been witnessing to Christ's reconciling love in all sorts of ways, for which we continue to give thanks. Notwithstanding, many of us today, lay and ordained, have long realised the need for an intentional focus on nurturing and equipping new and existing members to deepen their lifelong discipleship and Christian witness.

The invitation to discipleship is firstly, an invitation to a personal and intimate relationship with God whom we know in Jesus. In this regard, Archbishop Rowan Williams reminds us that discipleship is not an activity but a "being", something we are. Discipleship he says, is not an intermittent state; it's a relationship that continues. (Williams). This relationship, both at the individual and communal level, is nurtured through prayer and the deepening of our spiritual life through the reading and study of scripture. What you witnessed to as a disciple must flow from a personal experience. *"What is not believed or lived cannot be transmitted to others. The Gospel can only be transmitted on the basis of 'being' with Jesus and living with Jesus the experience of the Father, in the Spirit; and, in a corresponding way, of feeling compelled to proclaim and share what is lived as good and something positive and beautiful"* (Williams)

The six Bible Studies set out in this booklet are an attempt to deepen our lived relationship with God through Jesus Christ, in communion with other Christians. In approaching these studies there must be a willingness to grow. In the language of Paul, there must be a willingness to "stretch forward to that which lies ahead" (Phil.3.13), becoming less and less our own and increasingly being "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3.3).

## Why Read the Bible Together?

Since the Bible is more heard than read, and because the Christian life is characterized by our ability to listen to God and to each other, we need more, not less opportunities for reading and reflecting on scripture as a community.

Are we open to allowing the biblical text to interpret our lives within our social and cultural context? As we engage these Bible Studies, are we open to allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal to us new and liberating ways for discipleship? That is what we are hoping will happen as we engage these Bible Studies in the context of the witnessing community. There is something crucial available to us in the shared life within the fellowship of the congregation. It is the opportunity to listen to what the Bible is saying to each participant in the group, and to hear what is being said in the present moment and to those in the past.

In the parable of the sower (Mt 13:3-23), Jesus stresses the liberality of God's grace. Like the sower in ancient agriculture, and unlike customary farming methods in Jamaica, God flings seeds far and wide with no concern about focus-grouping or efficiency or target audiences. Some of the seeds land on good soil, some do not. As Jesus says, God "makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45-46). Likewise, Jesus was indiscriminate in his willingness to associate with any and everybody — the loveable, the feared, the controllers of the economy, the jobless youth on the corner, sex-workers, everybody. We are likewise called to be generous and consistent in love in the hope that in imitating Christ, we too will fling the seed of the Word far and wide.

God has given us the tools to make it happen. As we do this, my prayer is that you and I will find ourselves in the study and be challenged into the kind of discipleship that will be pleasing to our Lord.

We extend special thanks to Rev. Michael Allen, Rector, Church of the Ascension, Mona Heights; Rev. Douglas Barnes, Head, Department of Education & Youth; Dr. Thera Edwards, Associate Evangelist, University Chapel Community; Rev. Michael Elliott, Rector, Church of the Holy Spirit, Portmore; Rt. Rev. Leon Golding, Suffragan Bishop, Montego Bay; Rev. Mary Graham, Rector, St. George's Church, Grand Cayman and Mr. Adrian Wallace, Youth representative, St. Michael and All Angels, Victoria Avenue, Kingston the contributing writers for this publication.

*Blessings,*  
*+Robert Kingston*

Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Thompson  
Suffragan Bishop of Kingston

# A Guide to the Lenten Study on Intentional Discipleship

During this Lenten season we embark on a series of studies focused on Intentional Discipleship in which we sit at Jesus' feet; to learn from Him. A single series of studies cannot fully make us disciples, but it should equip us enough to "go and make disciples" of others. A disciple is one who learns from a master, lives by and assists in spreading what is learnt. As Christ's disciples, we have the responsibility of putting His teaching into practice and to pass on same to others with the single goal of nurturing in them, a Jesus-shaped life of compassion, sacrifice, sharing and hospitality.

## Why make disciples?

We make disciples so that Christ's teachings may fan the flame of love and revive in our hearts the promise of heaven. This promise, taken seriously, compels us to extend ourselves to others as we take on the command to make believers in all nations. Discipling or discipleship is expensive. It costs time, energy and money. It may leave us heart-broken from contrary opinions and controversy. Do not quit. Persevere by faith to make Discipleship a way of life.

Each week the chapter centers our focus and reflection as we examine scripture for ourselves, which equips us to support those with whom we share. This study should:

1. *Help to draw us closer to God in Jesus Christ*
2. *Lead us into a deeper contemplation of who we are in Christ*
3. *Teach us more about God's kingdom and our role in partnering with Jesus to invite, receive and welcome others into the kingdom which the church, as a worshipping community represents*
4. *Prepare us to journey with others as they decide to walk in faith*
5. *Help us to live the way Jesus lived bearing fruit for the kingdom as our life's primary goal*

## Each chapter features:

- **Questions for Early Contemplation**

*You get the opportunity to contemplate questions that spark conversation about your own contemporary experiences.*

- **Specific Scripture Lessons**

*These help to guide the direction of the study and provide the principle for application that week.*

- **Commentary**

*A brief commentary offers an explanation of the passage to aid in interpretation and application.*

- **Questions for Group Discussion**

*These questions should help us to engage in conversation bringing in the contemporary context as it helps you to grow in the understanding that as we learn from Christ, through study, reflection, conversation and prayer, we have a duty to share our learning to make disciples of others.*

- **Thoughts for Application**

*These help with strategy building and approaches to invite others to a relationship with God even as we learn who Jesus is for ourselves, what the kingdom of God means to those who believe, and our identity as disciples of Jesus.*

- **Closing Prayer:** *(Some approaches to prayer.)*

- *Focus on a picture and pray about what the picture depicts*
- *Focus on and pray about what the cross represents to you.*
- *Pray over your favourite food to remind you of God's delightful grace*
- *Focus on (a) lit candle(s) and accept Christ as light and life*
- *Pray the lyrics of a best loved hymn*
- *Pray scripture –*

Finally, as we navigate this study series, let us seek to embody our Master's disciplines; carry and share the FLAME of His passion as:

F- FOLLOWERS *(of Christ)*

L- LEARNERS *(of Kingdom principles), an*

A- APPRENTICE *(who practises what is learned*

M- MULTIPLYING *(by mentorship)*

E- EXAMPLE *(who live what I learn and believe)*

I invite us to contemplate and honestly answer these two questions:

1. Have I made any excuses in the past that have held me back from wholeheartedly following the Lord Jesus?
2. What, if anything, is holding me back now?

Then, take time in prayer to identify those things that would hold you back from becoming a fully committed follower of Christ, and a willing conveyor of the love of God – a disciple.

***Rev. Fr. Douglas Barnes +  
Head, Department of Education and Youth  
Diocese of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands***

# ***Intentional Discipleship***

## ***Lenten Bible Study 2018***

### ***Week 1***

#### ***Jesus and the Kingdom of God***

##### ***Who is Jesus – Really?***

#### ***Questions for early contemplation*** (15 mins)

- Write down on a piece of paper two points about God that often comes to your mind.
- Share one of your earliest images of God.
- Share with the group how the Church has been shaping your image of God.

#### ***Scripture Reading:*** (5 mins).

(John 3:1-21)

#### ***Commentary on the theme*** (10mins)

#### **Meeting Jesus**

Today we meet a man, Nicodemus, who came to Jesus on a quiet night in Jerusalem. He met with Jesus face to face, mind to mind, and heart to heart, because he was a true seeker. He really wanted to understand the truth Jesus was teaching. Although he was an older man, Nicodemus did not pretend he had all the answers. He was willing to risk his reputation, his wealth, and power to discover the truth. Nicodemus discovered what God wants all people to discover, new spiritual birth.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee (one of the religious leaders of his day), very well-educated, and tried to live his life according to the law. He knew all there was to know about the religious system of the Jews. Nicodemus was also one of the Sanhedrin, the seventy men who were the caretakers of the Jewish religious system. Only the greatest of men could be a part of this elite group. A member of the Sanhedrin was a member for life. It

made them enormously powerful and revered. It also meant that he was very wealthy. The Sanhedrin decided everything for the Jewish people. Nicodemus was therefore a very important man in Jerusalem. Powerful and wealthy women and men, globally and nationally, tend to impress us. Did his power and riches impress Jesus? Does it affect how He treats us? All people are the same to Jesus. Riches and power do not impress him; He loves every one of us the same. He loves us all completely and fully.

The other religious leaders did not approve of Jesus, so, Nicodemus came secretly at nightfall to find out who Jesus was. He did not come to talk with Jesus about politics or community matters. Instead he got to the point and talked with Jesus about the concerns of his own soul.

Nicodemus would have spent a lot of time studying the Scriptures, but there was still much that he did not understand. Did Nicodemus come to Jesus late one night, because he was hungry? Yes but he wasn't looking for a late-night snack, he was hungry for spiritual food. He was hungry for the truth about the kingdom of God. He was a disciple and no doubt he would in time start to disciple others as they too began to accept and own that Jesus was indeed a teacher sent from God to invite, receive and welcome them into the kingdom; into a relationship with God.

Nicodemus called Jesus “Rabbi” which means he thought Jesus was a good teacher concerning the things of God. We too must acknowledge and not be afraid to share that we believe Jesus is a teacher who comes from God. We have to break rank, like Nicodemus and say that “we know” Jesus is from God and Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God is found where the rule and presence of God abide and are obeyed.

Jesus knows that we all need a new, spiritual birth and is always ready to to address our needs as he does with Nicodemus, immediately. Jesus tells him that no one can really be one with God or part of the kingdom community of God unless they are born again.....Huh? Not surprisingly, Nicodemus is confused. He wonders how someone could be born twice. Would they have to get back in their mother's womb? His mother would not be pleased. No, Jesus tells him, you have to be reborn in water (through baptism) and also receive The Holy Spirit.

This is pretty mysterious. Never to worry though, Jesus totally knows how God works, and since He is the only one who does, both we and Nicodemus will have to take His word for it – that belief is what makes us followers of Christ and inheritors of the kingdom of God.



So, who is Jesus? Jesus is the one who breaks the story of God's plan and promise of the kingdom to all who will believe. Jesus is the one who explains how God set this whole thing up because He loves the world so much. God sent his only Son here to die so that the people who believed in it all would live forever with God.

### ***Questions for group discussion*** (40mins)

- Whosoever believes in Him becomes a disciple. Is this automatic? Who are the central characters in this story and what does each teach us about God and the kingdom of God?
- What are the benefits to the believer of the Seven Wonders of John 3:16?
  - i. God (*as the Almighty Authority*)
  - ii. So loved the world (*the Monumental Motive*)
  - iii. That He gave His only begotten Son (*the Greatest Gift*)
  - iv. That whoever (*This is the broadest welcome ever given*)
  - v. Believes in Him (*An easy escape, but from what?*)
  - vi. Should not perish (*That's Divine Deliverance*)
  - vii. But have everlasting life (*The Priceless Possession*)
- Using the words: [People] "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," discuss what you think keeps people from believing in Jesus and salvation? Is it sin, or is it unbelief?
- The passage speaks of intangible things, such as spirit, light and life. What does it say about them. What does it teach us about God?

### ***Thoughts for Application (15 mins)***

- Imagine that you are listening in on the conversation between the characters Jesus and Nicodemus and you hear John 3:16 for the first time in that ancient world. What information and what would be your reactions?
- If you were Nicodemus, after your conversation with Jesus, how would you convince your friends about the idea that they must be born again, - what does that phrase mean for you in the modern world, in your personal life, your community and your nation?
- Everyone states one thing, that, being in the kingdom means for them and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for this privilege. Also offer a prayer for someone who you would like to have this privilege as well.

### ***Approaches to prayer***

In discipleship the intention is to lead people to find the Kingdom of God exciting as in the parables - Matthew 13:44 & 45 - the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid, then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold what he had and bought that pearl.

Pray that the Lord will send out more labourers into the vineyard.

### ***Closing Prayer (5 mins)***

Pray to together Proper 20 - page 178 (Book of Common Prayer)

Grant us Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. ***Amen***

## ***Intentional Discipleship***

### ***Lenten Bible Study 2018***

#### ***Week 2***

### ***What is Discipleship?***

#### ***Who is a Disciple of Jesus?***

Start with a brief recap of the previous week's study (5 mins).

***For this week, questions for early contemplation*** (15 mins)

- Do I consider myself to be a disciple? If yes, then on what basis? If no, then why not?
- Is there anyone in my life who I would consider a disciple of Jesus? Why?
- What are my ideas about what discipleship is or is not?
- In what ways have I been involved in discipleship?

***Scripture Reading:*** (5 mins).

Romans 12:1-2 & Luke 19:1-10 – The story of Zacchaeus (discuss it from Zacchaeus' point of view)

Mark 10: 17-30 – A principal teaching of this story is that discipleship involves a commitment which demands sacrifice. The story ends with Peter speaking on behalf of the disciples, claiming that they have given up everything to follow Jesus.

Jesus' response points out that discipleship does not mean poverty. It means real life! Everyday life! The Jesus-shaped life.

## ***Commentary on the theme: (10mins)***

### ***Who is a Disciple?***

The Oxford Dictionary defines a disciple as a follower or pupil of a teacher, leader or philosopher, someone who adheres to the teachings of another, making that person their model for life. Jesus' followers were called disciples before being called Christians!

Why follow Jesus? Because He loves you and me and gave His life for us. There is no other reason greater than that! Is that kind of love enough for us to turn our backs on the things of this life that distract us from following Him?

Discipleship began when Jesus called the first disciples. They responded by following Him through His life, death and resurrection. However, a disciple is not expected to live the Christian life in isolation, but rather in and through a community that seeks to support each member in the act of discipleship – being a disciple.

Would you consider such persons as Moses, David, Elijah, Paul to be disciples, who made other disciples and who practiced discipleship? The various texts reveal the role of the older one in preparing, training, and mentoring the younger. Moses had Joshua serve under him for a long time, and gave him both encouragement and warning before passing on the baton of leadership (Deut. 3.21–22; 31.1–8; 34.9). God himself, reinforces the lessons that Moses had taught (Josh 1.1–9). David passed the kingship on to his son Solomon, though in the midst of some very fractured and violent family vendettas. His words (if not his example) amount to encouragement and warning (which Solomon later ignored; 1 Chron. 28–29). Elisha accompanied Elijah for some time, doubtless observing and learning, and then went off on an even longer ministry (1 Kings 19.19–21; 2 Kings 2; 2 Kings 4ff). Paul refers to Timothy as his son in the faith (1 & 2 Timothy)

What about Jesus and Peter? Having been mentored by Jesus, the First Epistle of Peter may be said to contain the mature reflections of the same Peter who had been discipled by Jesus – not only during those three years of historical ministry, but now also through a further thirty years of active service of the Risen Lord. The impetuous and self-reliant, even arrogant, young man was mellowed by the Master.

## ***What is Discipleship?***

Discipleship is about the shape and purpose of our whole lives. Discipleship is essentially about a relationship of grace (which means receiving life and blessing from God), loyalty and obedience. Discipleship is also the essence of Anglicanism which is a calling to a lived out faith – following and living the way of Jesus.

It must be made clear that making more disciples is not the goal of mission, discipleship, or disciple-making. Rather, discipleship and the making of disciples are the natural outcome and expression of mission, and the sole goal of discipleship and mission is to honour and glorify God – experienced as God’s reign and also manifest in the lives and actions of the disciples (a sign of God’s reign). Making disciples is part of the journey, the Way, towards that eternal goal.

Discipleship does not mean holding back for fear of making a mistake, or looking like a fool. Judging from today’s parable, it requires a spirit of risk and boldness, sometimes in big matters, but mostly in small daily occurrences. Discipleship is therefore a journey, walking in the direction set by Jesus towards the place of His final vindication, while knowing that this journey is one which He has first walked himself and therefore is one along which He accompanies us with His presence. For, as Hebrews so aptly portrays Him, this Jesus is simultaneously: our brother (or companion), who is now with us on the road; our pioneer, who once walked this road ahead of us; and our perfecter, who has successfully reached our shared destination in the Heavenly Jerusalem. He is also here with us, such that, even in the darkest valleys, we are not alone. In short ‘Living a Jesus-shaped life’. (The above notes are adapted from ‘Intentional Discipleship and Discipleship Making’, edited by The Revd. Canon John Kafwanka and the Revd. Canon Mark Oxbrow)

### ***Questions for group discussion*** (40 mins)

- What may be said to be three (3) main characteristics of a disciple?
- How may these characteristics be developed in us? As individuals? As a congregation?
- Do I treat my faith as something fragile, keeping it close and protected as if it will break if brought out into the open? Am I

afraid to be a disciple in the fullest sense of my understanding of what that means?

- In my daily life, how open am I before others, with my faith? Would those around me know or see me as a disciple of Jesus?

### ***Thoughts for Application*** (15 mins)

Think about how we may embark upon the journey of discipleship in our congregations?

Consider what ways the journey of discipleship may result in our church carrying out and acting on the Five Marks of Mission?

How can we explore being disciples/discipleship in and through – the family, the work-place and the Board-Room, the community, on the playing field, at school, peer to peer, and in the church – adults and youth/Sunday school/young adults?

### ***Closing Prayer*** (5 mins)

Gracious God, by Your life-giving Spirit, You have, in the past, raised up men and women to serve You as disciples in Your One, Holy, Catholic Church. Grant that we who are seeking to follow in Your footsteps may acknowledge Your call on our lives to be faithful learners and followers of Your Words and actions. By Your Spirit, may we also be given wisdom and strength of body, mind and spirit to serve You with purpose, love and faith as we diligently seek to be Your disciples wherever You have placed us in this Your world and Your Church. Amen.

Great Teacher, raise up from among us, through us and in spite of ourselves, persons faithful and committed to You as the first disciples were, that together we may diligently serve You, Your Church and our Nation. Endow us with the power to live Jesus-shaped lives in all our endeavours and so witness to our world, the love You have for all persons. Grant these graces through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Master, Teacher and Lord. ***Amen.***

## ***Intentional Discipleship***

### ***Lenten Bible Study 2018***

#### ***Week 3***

### ***Why Make Disciples?***

***Start with a brief recap of the previous weeks' study (5 mins).***

Every one of us — young or old, believer or non-believer - is engaged in some form of discipleship. Every one of us follows someone, and every one of us has some influence over someone else. This is evident in this age of social media platforms where each person has followers. As Mark Dever writes in his book on disciple-making, “To be human is to be a disciple. God didn’t present Adam and Eve with a choice between discipleship and independence, but between following him and following Satan. We are all disciples; the only question is, of whom?”

In Matthew 18:1-4 Jesus tells the disciples that if they do not become like children or they will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Earlier, in Matthew 11:25 Jesus said “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.” If we consider the qualities of children and how they are perceived, then we have much to gain.

Children learn about the world through direct experience and are without any prejudice. Children learn to like or dislike, prefer one race over another and renew their experience of the world every moment, each day. Children are naturally curious and ask questions all the time. When instructed to do something or when they see something happen they often ask why. It is for this reason that this week’s study is critical as we will seek to understand why discipleship is essential to our faith.

To make disciples is to engage with God in fulfilling his desire to bless all the peoples of earth. Our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.

***For this week, questions for early contemplation*** (15 mins)

With the foregoing in mind consider the following questions:

- Where in the bible do we receive our instruction to be disciples?
- Why is making disciples so important to Jesus?

***Scripture Reading:*** (5 mins).

Two passages of scripture are offered here for contemplation.

**John 13:34–35.**

**John 14:12, 15-17.**

***Commentary on the theme*** (10mins)

Jesus chose to use dedicated followers, His disciples, to carry the message of salvation to all peoples of the world. He included this as a command in His last words before His ascension to heaven: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

In describing the purpose statement of the church, many people point to Christ’s instruction in the Great Commission to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). But depending on whom you ask, you might find a diversity of interpretations regarding what it actually means to “make disciples.” Most churches today understand it as a command to evangelize the world—to lead people to faith and repentance in every corner of the world and spread the gospel as far as possible.

And while there is certainly an evangelistic aspect to Christ’s command, His instructions go beyond just spreading the gospel. God sent Jesus so that none would perish but rather have eternal life. When we experience His love, it moves us in profound ways. All of a sudden we want to follow Him, not because we have to, but, because we want to be near Him at all times. The joy of His love moves and changes us. As disciples



of Christ, our desire should also be that none should perish. As Jesus modelled, we should not condemn others but help bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

The verb translated as “make disciples”, *mathēteuō*, is complex, its meaning is more than simply gaining converts. It communicates the idea of a learning believer - someone who is growing in his faith and his love for the Lord. “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations.” In Greek grammar, “make disciples” is an imperative, meaning it is a command. It is also in the active voice, that is, it’s what we are to be doing. We should observe that Jesus links his commands with our obedience in John 14:15. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

Making disciples is not a burden, but rather a joy - because we get to share God’s love that has profoundly and deeply moved us. As promised, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came with power on the believers, who then were emboldened to speak the Good News to everyone. God desires that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Discipleship is not only about me, the individual; it is also about sharing the good news and the joy of life in the spirit with others. Sharing this joy goes beyond talking about this way of life. It becomes a way of living, living in love for *all*. To grow in love, we must continue receiving God’s love and forgiveness (Luke 7:47). Paul prays in Ephesians 3:17-19 “that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

Not only do we need to be “*rooted and grounded*” in God’s love for us, we also need an ever-increasing comprehension of His love toward us. It is through bible study, personal reflection, prayer and systematic programmes such as this guide that we increase our comprehension.

As we experience God’s love and respond in love, we will be transformed into His image. We will also be fulfilling His greatest command: to love God and our neighbours (John 12:34-35). This love must inevitably overflow into actions (1 John 3:13). Ultimately, the tangible evidence of our love for each other will serve to witness and prove to the world that we are truly disciples of Jesus.

This should encompass the broken, the weak and the marginalised. We should be patient and show tolerance. We should be generous, not only with money, which is often quite easy to give but be generous with our time a commodity which is increasingly scarce and valuable, as well as our talents. We should keep our promises. We should exercise forgiveness. We should be honest at all times. In short, we should show the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

### ***Questions for group discussion*** (40mins)

- Which passage of scripture in your opinion gives the clearest reason why we should become disciples?
- Identify three passages of scripture that state why we should desire to become disciples.
- Why would you want to become *intentional* in discipleship?

### ***Thoughts for Application*** (15 mins)

From the reading and commentary please list some methods and measures for application of this chapter's theme of 'Why make disciples?' To get you started, listed below are some practical actions taken from Jesus life and ministry.

- He spoke to the crowds, but often He drew the disciples aside privately to teach them the meaning of His parables and miracles. (Mark 4:34, Matthew 13:1-23). **Set aside time to be taught.**
- He sent them out on ministry assignments. (Matthew 10 & Luke 10). **Go on mission walks, be trained to share your faith, go out!**

Some things to keep in mind as you ponder Intentional Discipleship are:

- “Your discipling should help people understand more. Through discipling, you want people to know why Christians pray, why

we share the gospel, why we join the church, why knowledge of God's sovereignty impacts how we live, and more"

- Discipling others absolutely involves modelling faith and godliness with our lives (Philippians 3:17), but effective discipling also imparts the reasons for believing in and living for Jesus (2 Timothy 2:2).

### ***Closing Prayer*** (5 mins)

Lord we come before You just as we are in this time and place with all our imperfections seeking Your perfect way. We ask that You guide our thoughts and direct our steps as we seek to share the joy of living in the overflow of Your love. We ask that we may give of ourselves and our time to show others why Your way is the way.

May we be confident in sharing the Word and having the hard conversations that we need to have with persons we engage. To be bold enough to consistently direct our conversations towards spiritual things.

We pray for persistence in the long days, weeks and months when there seems to be little fruit or progress. We pray that You will use us as instruments as we labour in the vineyard of life. We ask that we will always remember that each and every thought, word or action is in of itself an act of discipleship and so keep our hearts and minds focussed that we can be seen to bear the fruits of the Spirit and, thereby, become effective witnesses of our faith and the transforming love of Christ.

***Amen.***



## ***Intentional Discipleship***

### ***Lenten Bible Study 2018***

#### ***Week 4***

### ***The Cost of Discipleship***

***Start with a brief recap of the previous weeks' study*** (5 mins).

***For this week, questions for early contemplation*** (15 mins)

- What was your best excuse for getting out of a job, chore, or homework?
- When have you done something that was a great cost to you or had to sacrifice one pursuit for another?
- Was it worth the sacrifice? Why?

***Scripture Reading:*** (5 mins).

Luke 14:25-33 NRSV

***Commentary on the theme*** (10mins)

This week's scripture reading features Jesus candidly outlining the cost of following Him. His very sobering words strike at the core of our self-centeredness. If we are to truly follow Jesus we must count the cost, and place Him above all relationships, all possessions, all things. He becomes sovereign over everything in our life (family, house, car, money, etc.), we live our lives His way and become His (1 Cor.6:19). Theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said it perfectly in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, "when Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die".

When we count the cost it might indeed be great. After all ,nobody wants to die or lose all they have worked so hard to attain, but in the words of Jesus, what does it profit a man to gain the world yet lose his soul (Matthew 16:24-26)? Indeed, the cost to follow Jesus is great, but the cost to not follow is greater still. When we pick up the cross we put aside

our own way. But is it really a sacrifice to give up something you cannot keep (for we will all die anyway) in exchange for something you cannot lose (Jesus' offer of eternal life)?

Is it really a sacrifice to suffer for Christ in this life, knowing what we will receive in the next? May we share Paul's resolve to not compare the sufferings of this life with the glory to be revealed (Romans 8:18), for indeed what we gain is far superior to what we give up. When we have truly had our Damascus road experience our lives are never the same and, like Paul we will regard everything (power, position, possession) as rubbish in order that we may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8).

When we have counted the cost, we would have met the real Jesus. The Jesus who gives living water, peace in the midst of trouble, joy in pain, everlasting life, forgiveness of sins, grace to walk in holiness, rest from the worries of this life, fellowship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Philosopher, Dallas Willard puts it this way, "The cross-shaped yoke of Christ is after all an instrument of liberation and power to those who live in it with Him and learn the meekness and lowliness of heart that brings rest to the soul. The correct perspective is to see following Christ not only as the necessity it is, but as the fulfilment of the highest human possibilities and as life on the highest plane."

The call to follow Jesus is not simply an invitation to wear the label "Christian"; it is a summons to lose your life-and to find new life in Him.

### *Questions for group discussion* (40mins)

- Are you willing to follow Jesus as your **Lord** and **Master** (Matt. 8:19)? What would this look like in everyday life (at home, at work, in a heated argument with someone with whom you do not agree, or someone who has wronged you unintentionally/intentionally)?
- We all need to count the cost before becoming a disciple (Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33). So, what is the cost that you have paid so far? What will be the cost that you still may have to pay?
- What is in the way of you accepting that cost? Are you sure; are you confident, that what you will gain far outweighs the cost you will pay? If not, why?

- Christ calls us to Discipleship (Matt. 28: 18-20). We are called to serve the people around us, to follow Jesus' way of doing life instead of our own way. What are you doing in your life personally, and in your church, to reflect this call?

### *Thoughts for Application* (15 mins)

Spend more time with Jesus (prayer, bible study, worship), we become more like the ones we spend the most time with (Exodus 34:29, Acts 4:13)

Be intentional about practicing the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, quiet time, and bible study. Use whatever means necessary (alarms, calendars, join an accountability group) to help you remain committed to being more like Jesus. The more you do, the easier it becomes.

Put into practice Jesus' commands (Matthew 7:24, James 1:23-24); life change comes through obedience to Him

Identify the things in your life that prevent you from being fully devoted to Jesus

- a) Money: practice generosity, (Matthew 6:19-21, Acts 2:45, Acts 20:35, Hebrews 13:5), start tithing (even though there never seems to be enough)
- b) Time wasting: time wasted on social media, TV, etc., do a media fast, use time that would be wasted to study the bible, or learning/practising how to share/defend your faith (2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 3:15), give your time to a worthy cause (soup kitchen, mentorship, disciple-making)
- c) Sexual immorality: fornication, adultery, pornography etc., take immediate action to stop, put measures in place to prevent temptation/yielding to temptation. Be as drastic as you need to be, disconnect internet service, avoid those situations, environments and people that bring temptation, join small accountability groups with persons who will help you remain committed to sexual purity and are themselves committed to sexual purity. Spend time in the bible renewing your mind,

(Romans 12:1-2, 1Cor 6:18, Hebrew 13:4, 1Cor 6:9, Ephesians 5:3, 1Thess 4:3-5)

- d) Idle chatter: try doing a word fast, avoid words of judgement, sarcasm, criticism, gossip, complaining, negativity and instead practice words of encouragement, words that lift up, words filled with grace, words that are gentle (Ephesians 4:29, Matthew 12:36, Proverbs 15:1)

These are just a few things that may keep us from being fully devoted to Jesus because they keep us focusing on fulfilling our own desires. Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the habits in your life that pose a hindrance to your being fully committed. God's grace is sufficient to help us overcome.

We all are called to be disciples and to make disciples. Consider this: the cost of discipleship means asking the question: *What does Jesus want me to do?* or, *if Jesus led my life, how would He do with my gifts and opportunities?*

### ***Closing Prayer*** (5 mins)

Almighty God, whose Son humbled himself by obedience to death upon a cross: Grant that we, denying ourselves and taking up our crosses, may live our lives in radical abandonment for your glory, completely dependent on Your grace. Enable us to live in urgent obedience to Your mission, to the honour and glory of our saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.  
***Amen.***



***Intentional Discipleship***  
***Lenten Bible Study 2018***  
***Week 5***

***Discipleship as a Way of Life***  
***A Jesus-Shaped Life***

***Start with a brief recap of the previous weeks' study (5 mins).***

***For this week, questions for early contemplation (15 mins)***

- Does my life clearly ‘speak’ in every situation of my loyalty and obedience to God through Jesus Christ?
- What are some of the inevitable challenges I face as I strive to live like Jesus in every area of my life?

***Scripture Reading: (5 mins).***

Colossians 1: 9-14

***Commentary on the theme (10mins)***

The call to live for Jesus requires each of us to grow into Him who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” so that our behaviours, attitudes, values, words and actions all reflect the Good News of God in Jesus Christ for all. This process is intentional, ongoing and transformational. It is only embraced through dependence on the unending Love of God in Jesus Christ who daily walks with us, communicates with us and gifts us with all we need on this difficult, risky yet wonder-filled journey.

Paul in his letter to the community of believers at Colossae was cognizant of the varied ‘voices’ that constantly sought to confuse attack, and pressure those “on The Way” to adopt alternative human teachings to that of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Paul certainly was familiar

with anti-Christ voices. He was one of the voices before the crucial turning point is his life.

Through his Damascus life transforming encounter with the Risen Lord, the ‘distracting’ noises to Paul’s spiritual hearing and the ‘impaired lens’ of Paul’s spiritual vision were corrected. He could see Jesus the Lord (1 Cor. 9: 1). The more clearly he could see his ‘new’ Master was the more attuned Paul became to the voice of God in his Master, Jesus the Christ.

The voice of Amazing Love who through grace had sought Paul, forgiven Paul and claimed Paul as His own now enabled Paul to walk without shame as a “faithful servant of Jesus Christ”. No longer imprisoned by his limited understanding of God and God’s will for His children, Paul bolstered the members of this beloved community in their faith. He prayed that the ‘Followers of the Way’ would:

- Allow God in Jesus Christ to reveal Himself to them by listening to Him through His word, His life and His work.
- Be open to God in Jesus Christ and the intimate relationship God in Jesus Christ offers through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Grow into the intimacy of God’s relationship with them.
- Please God through healthy relationships with God, self and others.
- Proclaim the Good News of God in Jesus Christ for all through their ‘life story’.

### ***Questions for group discussion*** (40mins)

How do the following thoughts from William Blake (1757-1827) speak to your story as one called by God to live a Jesus-shaped Life?

*Unless the eye catch fire, The God will not be seen.*

*Unless the ear catch fire, The God will not be heard.*

*Unless the tongue catch fire, the God will not be named.*

*Unless the heart catch fire, The God will not be loved.*

*Unless the mind catch fire, the God will not be known.*

### ***Thoughts for Application*** (15 mins)

The voices Paul cautioned against are still alive today. They continue to mislead the ‘children of God’ with their zealous, sneering declarations.

“Your belief in God in Jesus Christ is inadequate”, “Once born again, you are incapable of sin”. “Sanctity of self-interest is paramount, it is all about **my rights**”, “Why wait on God? You can receive an answer instantly if you consult...”

I am sure that if you were to take a few minutes to think about these voices you would compile an extensive list.

### ***Closing Prayer*** (5 mins)

#### **A Collect for Guidance**

Heavenly Father, in You we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray You so to guide and govern us by Your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget You, but may remember that we are ever walking in Your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

***Intentional Discipleship***  
***Lenten Bible Study 2018***  
***Week 6***

***What next - Discipleship on Me!***  
***At home, at work, in relationships, in the community***

***Start with a brief recap of the previous weeks' study (5 mins).***

***For this week, questions for early contemplation (15 mins)***

- What do we fear about being a Christian disciple?
- Have you had a negative experience speaking about your faith as a Christian, or standing for certain principles, that you wish to share with the group?

***Scripture Reading: (5 mins).***

Philippians 2: 3-11

Mark 14: 50- 72. 15

Mark 15:16-39

***Commentary on the theme (10mins)***

There is no one passage that captures all aspects of the theme for this week. Our theme invites us in every area of our lives to act as Christ's disciples. This requires us to live Jesus-shaped lives in all our relationships, - in our home, workplace, school, community and wherever we are found to represent Christ.

We meet during Holy Week the most important time in the Church's calendar as we prepare for the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. With Holy week in mind, I invite us to reflect on our theme. Easter is a time when the Church invites her members to renew their Baptismal Vows (*see BCP-CPWI- Easter Vigil page 264-266*). Our Baptismal Vows summon us to take on Jesus-shaped lives.

At some stage in Holy week, if we take the journey from the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) to Good Friday, we will encounter the readings chosen for our reflection.

**Philippians 2: 3-9** Following Christ involves allowing the mind of Christ to be formed in us.

**2:3-4** The verses call us to reject selfishness and to be selfless in our service to others. The Jesus-shaped life is one that looks not to its own interest but to the interest of others. Jesus' life was one of service in the welfare of others. A Jesus-shaped life is one that gives itself in service for the good of others. It is one of selfless service.

**2:7** Jesus **emptied** himself. The King James Version of the bible states "He made himself of **no reputation**" This connotes that Jesus made himself void of any status, power, becoming a slave/servant.

**2:8** Jesus humbled himself. Jesus made himself a base. He was obedient to the end - death. More importantly obedient even in suffering - the cross. Christian discipleship is a call to live under the discipline of Christ. As Jesus emptied himself, in humble service and was obedient, even in suffering so as disciples we are to be faithful to the end.

**2:9** Following Jesus will have its reward. It will bring life, renewal of life, resurrection. This should not be limited to a personal renewal or some distant event. Imitating Jesus, inculcating the mind of Christ, should make a difference in how we relate to others and can begin a change (small, though it may be at first) in our homes, workplaces, schools, communities and the nation.

### **Staying the Course: Mark 14-15**

**14: 50** - Staying with Christ is difficult, the disciples fled.

**14: 53-65** Jesus is arrested and ridiculed. He is a threat to the establishment. Faithfulness to God's mission brings Jesus face to face with the powers the day.

**14: 62** Jesus is accused of blasphemy.

**14: 66-72** Peter is tested and tries his best to stay with Jesus but buckles under the pressure fearing for his life.

**15:16-20** Jesus is mocked.

**15: 21-25** Jesus goes the way of the cross and is crucified.

**15: 39** During the suffering the centurion received a revelation, “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

Staying the course with Jesus is very difficult as we see from the story of the Passion. There are many challenges that come our way - religious, political and social - that will tempt us to give up.

The world is the arena of God’s activity. The training ground and arena for Christian discipleship is the world. Jesus’s life was not compartmentalized. His whole life was one of love for God and others. There was never a time when He was ‘off duty’. The way of the cross was one of love, humility, service and obedience. In every area of our lives, as Christians, we are to be faithful to God and are expected to live Jesus-shaped lives.

Holy Week calls us to re-commit to following Christ, to be His disciples, witnesses in the world. In following Christ, we will see the dawning of a new day in relationships, homes, church, businesses, workplaces, schools, communities and nation.

### ***Questions for group discussion*** (40mins)

- The Apostle Paul encourages the Church in Philippi to have the mind of Christ. How does he describe the mind of Christ?
  - What changes may we have to undergo if we are to be intentional in our witness as Christ’s disciples in the home, workplace, school, and community?
  - What are likely to be some of the reactions (negative and positive) to our witness as disciples in the home, work place, school, community and how do we respond?
- Paul states that Jesus emptied himself. How do we understand this? What kind of emptying may the church need to do to be intentional in its discipleship?

- Jesus was not afraid to speak truth to power. Is there a place for Christian witness in the seats of power, government, politics, business etc. and what may that look like for us as disciples? Discuss the implications of this for those who follow Jesus.
- In following Jesus where and what might be the cross or crosses we will have to bear and why; and what should be our reaction to prejudice, violence, etc.?
- How can the church and we as disciples be agents for change in communities?

### ***Thoughts for Application*** (15 mins)

Spend some time in silence reflecting on what it means to follow Jesus and to take up the cross in our time.

Pray for the courage to let go and let God be in charge of your life that you will be able to truly give up what inhibits you from being a witness to Jesus in all situations and from following Him where He is leading you.

### ***Closing Prayer*** (5 mins)

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within reach of your saving embrace: so clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honour of your Name. Amen.

### **Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester**

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits and blessings which thou hast given me, for the pains and insults which thou hast borne for me, O most merciful Friend, Brother and Redeemer. May I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly. *Amen.*

***Final Reflections for going forward  
Discipleship by me!***

Participants should be encouraged to complete a realistic individual plan for Intentional Discipleship

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INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

# BIBLE STUDY

*LENT 2018*



**DIOCESE OF JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

## **PRAYER FOR INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP**

**BY  
BISHOP HAROLD DANIEL**

Heavenly Father, we thank You  
that You have awakened Your church  
to hear again the call of our Saviour Jesus Christ  
to come to Him and learn from Him.

Grant that as we say 'yes' to discipleship,  
Your Holy Spirit will enable us so completely  
to commit all areas of our lives to His service,  
that in our personal, family and church lives,  
our work, recreational and social lives,  
we would act as Jesus would have acted  
if He were in our place.

In His name and for His sake we pray.

Amen

