

Grace Group Discussion Guide

For the week of September 16 - 22, 2018

Main Thought and Passages:

In order to grow into who God has created us to be, we need to know God and learn to follow Him throughout our lives. Following God involves three essential components: 1) a personal relationship with Jesus, 2) fellowship with other believers, and 3) fishing for people.

"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. ¹⁹'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him." (Matthew 4:18-20 NIV)

- Jesus called His disciples to follow Him in fellowship with one another. The Christian life cannot be lived out in isolation but must be done in community. This is where the greatest growth occurs.
- In fellowship, we will experience conflicts. These are necessary to teach us to truly love.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven...⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?...⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-46, 48 NIV, See also Luke 6:27-36 NIV)

- God commands us to love and to do good not just to our friends, but also to our enemies. This is real love and a picture of God's perfect love.
- In community, we are forced to deal with areas in our own lives that hinder us from loving like Jesus which is the goal of discipleship.

"...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and 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 NIV)

- Following God also involves actively inviting others to follow God together with us. As we "make disciples" or "fish for people," we are following Jesus in His mission of love to the world.
- These were Jesus' last words to His disciples reminding us that people far from God matter to Him, so they should matter to those who truly follow Him.

Reflection:

- What stands out to you from the main thought and passages above as it relates to what it means to "follow God?"

Application:

- What is the greatest challenge you face in walking in community with others? What do you think God wants to shape in you through fellowship with other believers?
- How do you think God would want to use you to "fish for people" in your sphere of influence (work, school, community, etc.)? What practical step can you take to do so?

Prayer:

- Pray for one another to walk in true fellowship and community with other believers.
- Pray for one another to "fish for people" in our spheres of influence.