





Introduction

One of the great longings of a disciple of Jesus Christ is to experience true joy and to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant, . . . enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21). Understanding and living out God’s will for our lives requires the combination of God’s grace and our obedience as we live out our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13).

To help us become fully devoted followers of Christ, LCC has identified five key decisions that are made throughout life in ever increasing depth. These decisions are based upon the “Great Command”

- to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength
- to love others as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31);
- the “Great Commission” to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20); and
- LCC’s mission to “reach, teach and send.”

Just like growth in a marriage does not end with “I do,” the five decisions and their action steps deepen over a lifetime. You will find, along with each decision, some suggested next steps that you can take as you grow in spiritual maturity. This brochure begins with a description of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It then briefly describes the five decisions of a disciple and provides some suggested next steps for acting on those decisions. Ask God to lead you to take these steps one at a time and trust Him to help you take that step as you prepare for the rest of your journey.

The Description of a Disciple of Jesus Christ

A disciple is a person who follows Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:19). This person is passionate about growing in knowing God, in becoming more like Jesus, and in serving those around them out of love.

The Disciple's Identity:

"A disciple is someone who follows Jesus Christ" and who learns by following. True discipleship is found only in devotion to Jesus Christ. The word devoted means set apart, wholly given over and dedicated for a particular use.

When asked what is the most important commandment, Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31). A disciple is fully committed to understanding and living out love for God and their neighbor.

The Disciple's Journey:

The journey of a disciple is one of continuous growth. It begins with understanding and firmly believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Disciples then grow in knowledge (the mind of Christ), character (the heart of Christ), and service (the hands of Christ). This growth should not stop until our final breath. The more growth a disciple experiences, the more aware they become of how much more growth is needed. As we grow in our knowledge of God's perfect holiness, justice, and righteousness, we become more aware of our own imperfections.

- **Knowing God.**

There are two ways we must "know" God. The first is to know about Him. As we learn about His nature, character, and His truth we are able to know right from wrong and to understand His will. The second is to know Him personally. He shows His love for us, demonstrated on the cross. He allows us to call Him Father and friend. He commands us to love Him with all of our being. Our knowing God must go beyond head-knowledge and reach the heart, transforming us and making us more like Him.

- **Becoming Like Jesus.**

Disciples are reborn and transformed into the likeness of Christ. Jesus modeled for us the life of a disciple. He called His disciples "witnesses" which means "martyrs." Disciples are dying to selfish purposes and living for Christ's purposes. Others should see in us the love and characteristics of Jesus Christ. Many of the qualities of Christ-like character are seen in the "fruit of the Spirit:" love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-26).

- **Serving out of Love.**

Jesus teaches that greatness in discipleship is measured in loving service (Mark 10:43-45). The higher we rise in discipleship, the lower we are willing to stoop in service! The disciple's life may be described as one of ongoing service to others. This reflects God's glory and builds up other people. God has given to each of His disciples "spiritual gifts" to be used in service.

By making lifelong, deepening decisions to be a true disciple (knowing God, becoming more and more like Jesus, serving others, and sharing the truth of the gospel) we can experience deep joy and know real meaning in life. Each year we should know God, reflect Christ and serve others more fully than we did the year before. With His help, we pray that you will decide . . .

The Basic Gospel

The Facts:

1. **GOD IS ALIVE AND WELL.** "For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible" (Colossians 1:16).
2. **ALL PEOPLE HAVE A BIG PROBLEM.** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) "...the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).
3. **GOD HAS A SOLUTION.** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The Effective Response (A, B, C)

- A. **ADMIT YOUR NEED.** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
- B. **BELIEVE.** "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).
- C. **COMMIT.** "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30).



Loudonville Community Church
374 Loudon Road
Loudonville, NY 12211