

Becoming an apprentice of Jesus

We need to follow Jesus in such a way that every aspect of life, values, priorities and purpose are radically transformed. It's time to apprentice yourself to Jesus.

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**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

Live light

Scripture taken from The Holy Bible: New International Version

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question
1	And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.	Luke 1:46-48a	<p>Mary rejoiced out of amazement that God would be “mindful” of her, despite her humble situation according to the measurement of the world. She rejoiced that God’s mind was inclined towards her and her situation. That God would consider our circumstances with an attitude of love and concern is a truly mind-blowing concept giving each of us great basis for praise. We are in God’s thoughts. What unmerited honour!</p> <p>How might it change our disposition, in good times and bad, to know that God’s thoughts are inclined towards us and our situation? What do we learn about the character of God from this truth?</p>
2	...to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear...	Luke 1:74	<p>Serving God is an honour and a privilege simply because God is God. Serving God without fear is an additional bonus—we can serve due to the pure joy of being included in the purposes of God, free from any sense of fear of rejection, imperfection or failure. There is hardship in service of any kind, but what freedom to know that fear is not part of that hardship.</p> <p>Is fear ever part of your motivation for serving God? What is the source of that unfounded fear?</p>
3	Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.	Luke 2:11-12	<p>You will find the Saviour of the world lying in a manger. This is how God chooses to reveal the Christ to humanity. In a dirty feeding trough in a stable. As followers of Jesus, as his apprentices, how do we present ourselves to the world? When people go looking for us, are we to be found elevating ourselves above society, or in humble solidarity with the powerless, rejected and marginalised?</p> <p>What does it look like in your life to “be found in a manger”? How have your ambitions been transformed as an apprentice to Jesus?</p>

Becoming an apprentice of Jesus (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question
4	Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness...	Luke 4:1	<p>It was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness where it wasn't safe, where he was hungry and where he would be tempted to abandon his calling and eternal purpose. This shows us that God actively chooses to develop our character rather than protecting our comfort and convenience. God knows that depth and strength of character and conviction will achieve more for the Kingdom of Heaven than a sheltered Christian experience ever will.</p> <p>Have you ever had the sense that the Spirit is leading you into a struggle? How does God's preference for character development over comfort maintenance impact your life and decision-making?</p>
5	Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.	Psalms 91:1	<p>It is those who choose to dwell in the shelter of the Lord who find rest. A later verse in this Psalm says, "if you make Him your dwelling..." The invitation to dwell in that shelter is God's, the action of choosing to live there is ours. We choose to make Him our dwelling, we choose to remain in His Presence and receive the benefit, and the blessing, of the rest that flows from Him. A deep rest comes from a deep knowing of God and the experience of His Spirit. As we know God deeply and intimately—choosing daily to dwell in Him—our confidence and trust in Him grows and along with it our strength to follow into the hard and uncomfortable places.</p> <p>Do you "dwell in" or merely "visit" the Presence of the living God? Is his Presence the home in which you take your rest, or a place you drop by when it is convenient?</p>
6	For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.	Luke 2:30-32	<p>God's word, love and salvation were always for all people. It was always God's plan to include people in his community, purposes and plans. It was, and is, his dream to bring the outsiders to the inside, to include the excluded, to let all people know that they are unconditionally loved, welcomed and invited into relationship with Him.</p> <p>Is my life characterised by an open invitation to all people into my community, purposes and plans? Do I live a life of inclusion and welcome to all people as an apprentice to Jesus?</p>

Becoming an apprentice of Jesus (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question
7	<p>“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.</p> <p>John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”</p> <p>Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”</p> <p>“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.</p> <p>Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”</p> <p>He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”</p>	Luke 3:10-14	<p>How simple Jesus made repentance. Go and be a good person. The things you did yesterday that were selfish and added pain to the world—don’t do them anymore. Jesus didn’t shame people or call them into a time of self-flagellation. He called them to make a decision to live a good life, to model a different way of being, to begin to reflect the character of God.</p> <p>Do you waste time in guilt and shame? What can you get on with doing differently today that adds life, peace and hope to the world?</p>
8	<p>And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.</p>	Luke 4:27	<p>God sends the prophet, and his healing, to the Syrian rather than to those it might be assumed he would heal. This is God’s pattern—a preference for the unexpected, marginalised and maligned. He reaches out to the ones that his people tend to push away. We see this throughout Scripture—and yet we continue to be surprised that God calls the outsider inside.</p> <p>Why do we continue to find God’s inclination towards the demeaned and denigrated surprising? What would practically change in our lives as we learn how to do all of life from Jesus?</p>

Becoming an apprentice of Jesus (continued)

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9	So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.	Luke 5:11	<p>The “everything” that the disciples left behind on this day included the miraculous catch of fish that Jesus had just provided them with. The fish they’d been up all night before trying to catch. The fish they’d marvelled at, that had caused Simon Peter to fall to his knees in worship. The exact outcome they’d tried to achieve in their own strength—the focus of their current ambition and their existing measure of success—was insignificant compared to the call of Jesus to follow him in “fishing for me.” The disciples began to see that life is found in living for others.</p> <p>Do you assume that following Jesus will lead you to your own ambitions? Or are you ready for your dreams to be superseded by the call to sacrificial, selfless love?</p>
10	Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.	Luke 6:26	<p>When it seems that all people are speaking well of you this is good cause for self-reflection. The religious leaders of the day did not speak well of Jesus; neither were the prophets of the Old Testament universally loved. It is easy to attract crowds with a popular message of self-empowerment and affirmation of success, self-interest and greed. It is easy to think you must be doing something right when there’s adulation and honour coming your way. But, for Jesus, this is a warning sign. Proceed with caution.</p> <p>Are you wanting to be spoken of well, or to say and do what is right?</p>
11	He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!”	Luke 13:32-33	<p>Is there a more inspiring passage in the Gospels? Jesus declares that no matter what happens to him—even the violent death he knew was ahead—he would do what he was called to do. He would continue to reflect the character of God in his interactions with the community, and he would press on towards his goal. Unto death, Jesus would do what was right—not what was safe, comfortable or convenient.</p> <p>What does it mean to you to be Jesus’ apprentice? What is your Jerusalem—the goal you set out towards no matter what the cost?</p>

Becoming an apprentice of Jesus (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question
12	I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.	Psalms 27:13	<p>The goodness of the Lord is not something we wait until the afterlife to experience. Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” and “The kingdom of heaven is within you”. Our hope is for today—that his kingdom would come and his will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. That—more each day—this world would reflect the character and nature of the kingdom of heaven. Our apprenticeship to Jesus is all about partnering with him in this purpose, joining with him in the renewal of all things. We will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living—and we live as the evidence that a better world is possible as the Spirit enables us to reflect his glory in our communities and lives.</p> <p>How have you seen the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living? How can you become a conduit of that goodness to your community?</p>
13	They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.”	Luke 7:16	<p>When Jesus showed up the reaction of the people was, “God has come to help”. Not to condemn, exclude, reject or shame. It should be no different when people encounter those who claim to follow Jesus. If people have any other impression when “the church” shows up, then it is time to consider whether we’ve strayed into religion rather than following The Way of the Christ. Jesus, friend of sinners; here to help. How I pray this is what the world says about the church that bears his name.</p> <p>“God has come to help”. How could your church community become the tangible expression of this statement? What would that look like in your own life?</p>
14	When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’” At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.	Luke 7:20-21	<p>When Jesus was asked whether he was the Christ he didn’t respond with a theological argument. He simply continued on with his current activities, demonstrating in action what the Kingdom of heaven looked like. His attitude was, “if this looks like the Kingdom of heaven, then you know the Christ has come.” He calls his followers to continue in the same way—declaring that the Kingdom is here by demonstrating it in action, example and lifestyle. Our non-violent, selfless, unconditional love for others shouts louder than any street preacher, “the Kingdom of heaven has come.”</p> <p>What are you doing now that says “the kingdom is here” to the world around you?</p>