

OCTOBER 3, 2021
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
THIS IS US WEEK 3 | WE ARE A FAMILY
LUKE 6:12-16
FALL QUARTER WEEK 4 OF 13

EFCC's definition of a disciple: Someone who is learning to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

EFCC's discipleship values: Pursuit, Obedience, Journey, Wholeness, Together, Mission.

EFCC's discipleship model: being WITH (upward focus), becoming LIKE (inward focus), doing AS (outward focus).

EFCC's discipleship methodology: focus on what we need to learn, what we need to practice and with whom we need to be in relationship in order to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

I think the discipleship value most highlighted this week is **together**. Here is how we've defined it -

"A primary metaphor in the Bible for the church is that of family. And what God has in mind for his people is not just any kind of family! We have been created to live deeply with one another, to carry each other's burdens, to share our possessions, to pray for and confess our sins to each other, to suffer and celebrate together, and to play our part by sharing our spiritual gifts and talents that we might contribute to the whole. The fact is this: in a harsh and often unforgiving world the church must always be the place where people of all ages, backgrounds and passions can find, receive, and give grace. We fundamentally believe that the way of Jesus cannot be successfully lived apart from the people of Jesus."

I don't think much else needs to be added to this.

In the being **WITH**, becoming **LIKE** and doing **AS** paradigm, this week's message focuses us on **doing as**. **Doing as** is an outward focus, but it's not just an outward focus which is directed at outsiders. It's also an outward focus which is directed at insiders.

When Jesus lived among us, He worked to build a family of believers around Him. The Greek word for *church* means "called out ones." When He was here, and even now through His Spirit, He is working to call people to be "called out ones." And these "called out ones" are formed into the church, or His family. As He said, those who do His will are His family (Matthew 12:50). Those who do His will find themselves attached to His church, because it is His will that His people are part of His church.

We don't build His family, He builds it. But as we follow Him and do as He instructs us to, He uses our doing to form the family He died to purchase.

Renewed by Grace

1. What is something you will never buy, even if you become super wealthy?

The first thing that came to mind was a boat. There are two reasons for this. The first is that I get seasick. The second is that boats are money pits. How about for you? What's your thing?

Equipped as Disciples

2. **Review with each other how it went practicing last week's "I will..." statement. Remind the group what you decided to do. Talk about if you did it (and why you didn't, if you didn't), and how it turned out. Did you get the result you were praying for? Why?**

This is a question you and your group are going to see every week going forward. We'll talk more about this in the Leaders Lunch we are having later this month.

Part of my strategy for helping EFCC become better disciples is emphasizing obedience and accountability more. Some groups do this very well. Others do not.

For those groups not used to doing anything as a result of their time together, I expect this will be a bit of a challenge. For those groups not used to being held accountable for what they said they were going to do, I know this will be a challenge.

I do not want to take out any of the elements of fellowship, care, prayer, friendship, etc. that make Life Groups what they are. I do want to add a component of "How are you going to respond in obedience to the text?" and "How did it go last week with your step of obedience." I want to lead us to step up our obedience as a way of being better disciples. I can tell you that adding a more intentional obedience element to my walk with God recently has enriched it.

If your group doesn't respond the way we want them to at first, keep plugging away. Lead by example. Encourage people who aren't adopting the new direction by telling stories of how God showed up when you or others in the group obeyed. Model by having a measurable "I will" statement every time you meet, and model by doing what you said you'd do and talking about how it went - be it good or bad. Encourage people to do an "I will" statement and encourage them when they do one but don't follow through. We want to be like Jesus, who was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Yet we are reminded that we are leading adults and we really can't tell anyone what to do. We can encourage and pray and do our best to influence and inspire. The heavy lifting is up to the Holy Spirit, and He has His ways and He has His timing.

3. **The point was made that God is putting us together in a diverse family for the purpose of formation, not frustration.**
 - **First, What are your thoughts about this idea?**
 - **Second, How have you seen, or are now seeing, God bring formation through your frustrations with others at EFCC? What is He teaching you? How is He using His Word?**

First, I found this to be a very helpful point. This perspective is going to help me a lot as I deal with the diversity that is EFCC. People may be frustrating, but God's purpose is my spiritual growth and maturity. I wonder, when I frustrate others, if I can tell them that I have been put here by God for the sake of their maturity into greater Christlikeness?! Just thinking out loud. Seriously though, having a perspective of formation is crucial to dealing with the frustrations that come from diversity of thought, culture, preferences, opinions and the like. My thoughts about this idea are that I want to have this perspective all of the time, because it's the right way to think about all of the circumstances of life. When I can see everything and everyone as a growth opportunity, then that will immediately change the way I think about and respond to whatever it is that is going on.

Second, I am not going to write about this. I'll share it with my group, but I'm going to keep this out of the written record. I will say this, however. I agreed with Ryan's comments about Colossians 3:13, "13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Sometimes the only thing I can do is to bear with others. And sometimes the only thing they can do is to bear with me. All the time I am to forgive as I have been forgiven. All the time others are to forgive me as they've been forgiven. What's always humbling is that this verse was written to others to teach them how to engage with me! I am the one sometimes that another person has to "bear with." I am the one they have to forgive. What? Me? Puts things in perspective, doesn't it?

4. Four strategies for pursuing formation over frustration were provided.

- **What are they?**

Hold opinions looser than essentials.

Get curious instead of getting offended.

Choose contribution instead of consumption.

Pursue unity around agape rather than affinity.

- **Pick the two that are the most relevant for you and share with your group -**

- **Which ones they are.**

- **Why you picked them?**

- **How you could see yourself applying them.**

I will need to spend some time on these to decide which two I need to focus on. Given how late I am in getting these notes out to you, I'm going to just keep moving forward.

Sent in Love

5. Choose one of your two from Question Four and come up with a concrete application that your group can ask you about next week. "This week I will..."

I have to decide what mine is. In the interest of getting these questions and notes out to you, I'm going to go on ahead and send these without having fully thought through how I'll be applying it.

Here is what I wrote last week: Here is where the challenge may come. Here's why:

- In addition to those who are not normally used to coming up with an application for the message, there is the added challenge of doing so well.
- Your role will be to help your people come up with something they will do which can be measured and marked as complete. For instance, I was leading a Life Group last Wednesday at our Growth Track on Wednesday night and we are using this method of Discovery Bible Study plus very practical application for our time of Bible Study as part of our Life Group time. One of the people at the table had an application to try and bring more people to Jesus (we were studying John 1:35-42). So we talked more about what that specifically meant. And about what he was going to specifically do. By the end of our short conversation he had decided he would invite at least one co-worker to church or to our Wednesday Night Growth Track Life Group. We talked about the fact that we would celebrate the invitation and let God decide when or even if the person would accept said invitation. Success for this person was based on extending the invite,

not on whether or not the invited chose to respond affirmatively. When we next meet, we can ask if the invitation was offered and celebrate a step of obedience.

- Sometimes people think their application has to be this grand gesture. It most certainly does not. For many, obeying the Scriptures even in a small way becomes a grand gesture. It is far better to start with little things, accomplish them, and then move along as He guides. We want to encourage, model and celebrate whatever way a person responds to His Word. Obedience is the path of the disciple. It adds texture, opportunities to live by faith, and the joy which comes from obedience.
- I'll ask you to be patient with your group, if that is what is needed. I'll ask you to model this practice well. And I'll ask you to pray people catch the vision.

One Final Note

You'll see me going back and forth between this DBS method of asking three questions of the text (What does the passage teach us about humanity? What does this passage teach us about God? What are your observations from the text that we have not yet discussed?) and my more normal method of asking questions of the sermon. I'm not going to say how much or when I'll use each one. I'll pray for guidance and go with what makes the most sense for that week.

One thing that will be a constant, however, will be a check-in at the beginning of the group meeting regarding how the applications from the previous week went, and ending with asking people to come up with concrete I WILL statements.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

I will roll out more insights and training on how to facilitate a DBS as we go along. And we will talk more about it at our lunch together.