

## Growing as followers of Jesus

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Our hearts have room only for one all-embracing devotion, and we can only cleave to one Lord.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*



The word “disciple” or “learner” is a translation of the Greek word μαθητής (mathetes) which means something like “apprentice.” Jesus did not teach his disciples in a classroom. He taught and showed them what the the coming ruling of God looks like in word and action. He promised to enable them to do the things which he did (things he in turn has seen his Father doing). He then told them to teach others to do these things too.

So discipleship is about being an apprentice and learning by encountering the Father, obeying the Son and learning to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. At St James, our vision of Encountering, Growing and Participating is at its heart a vision of Discipleship.

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*Out of a real and ongoing encounter with the Father, we are growing in obedience as followers of Jesus and we participate in the life and the power of the Holy Spirit.*

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In 1 and 2 Peter, the author begins both of his letters with what Jesus has accomplished, the difference he makes and how that affects and impacts the lives of the believers.

### **Read 1 Peter 1. 3-5 and 2 Peter 1. 1. 3-4**

- List what Jesus has accomplished and what we have received (it might be a good idea to make a list and remember it this week).

After pointing out what God has done (and is doing) for us in Jesus, Peter turns his attention to the believers’ responsibility to live out their calling.

### **Read 1 Peter 1. 13-16 and 2 Peter 2. 5-9**

- What do you think it means to “gird up your minds” and “be sober”? (see The Message translation here under)
- What has changed in your life because of Jesus?

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*So roll up your sleeves, get your head in the game, be totally ready to receive the gift that’s coming when Jesus arrives. Don’t lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn’t know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God’s life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, “I am holy; you be holy.” 1 Peter 1. 13-16 The Message*

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In 2 Peter 2. 5-9, the author speaks of a progression from faith to love. We are called to supplement our faith with goodness (or virtue), goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with steadfastness (or perseverance), steadfastness with brotherly love (or mutual affection) and brotherly love with love.

- Note that “love” is last in this progression. Why?
- What does it tell you about discipleship?

You do not need a degree in Theology to be a fruitful apprentice of Jesus. Spiritual understanding does not depend on human equipment or status. It is a gift of God and He gives it to those the world would never expect.

## Action

The message is simple: Come and learn from Jesus!

Ask yourself those questions regularly this year:

- Have I (Am I planning to) pick up things (role, task, responsibility) that Jesus has not asked me too? This year, I will lay them down.
- If I feel guided to pick a new role, a task, a responsibility... Why do I think I am the person for this particular task, role or responsibility? Do I discern God's guidance and calling or is it more a reflection of my own needs? I choose to wait on God.
- We often end up picking up a new task, role or responsibility without laying down the last one. I choose not to pick up a new thing until I have laid down something of equivalent size.
- Am I walking lightly?

## Prayer

Jesus, your call is simple – You ask me to come and learn from you. Thank you for the promise of your presence and the assurance of your guidance. I commit to converse with you every day and allow your Spirit to guide, challenge and encourage me.