



Connecting, Discipling, and Transforming

Sermon Based Group Discussion - Prepared for Weekly Discipleship Bands

Weekly Discipleship Band/Class Guide

Week/Date: #21, Sunday, May 17, 2026 Sermon Title: *The Prayer They Never Expected*

Primary Scripture Text: John 17:1-11 Primary Theme: Jesus' prayer for his disciples, and why it matters.

Group Leader/Facilitator: _____ Location: _____

Our Purpose:

The Deep Dive exists to help us grow together as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ through meaningful Christian conversation, biblical accountability, intentional spiritual formation, and practical obedience to the Word of God.

We gather weekly to:

- Connect authentically with one another in Christian fellowship.
- Grow deeper in our understanding of Holy Scripture.
- Support our collective understanding of God's Word.
- Encourage one another in faithful discipleship.
- Strengthen our witness to the world.
- Develop intentional habits of prayer, service, generosity, worship, and mission.
- Become transformed by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

Our purpose is not merely to gain additional information about God, but to experience transformation through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Opening Scripture:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 – NIV

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, as we gather here in the name of Jesus Christ, open our hearts and minds to the truth of your Word. Deepen our faith, strengthen our fellowship, and transform our lives through the power of your Holy Spirit. Teach us to listen carefully, speak graciously, encourage faithfully, and respond obediently to your call upon our lives. Shape us into courageous disciples who love deeply, serve joyfully, and witness boldly. May everything we say and do here in this place bring glory and honor to your holy name.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Deep Dive:

One Dozen Useful Questions that Shape Obedient Disciples:

- Connecting — Building Christian Fellowship and Understanding
- Discipling — Growing in Faith, Accountability, and Obedience
- Transforming — Living Out Our Faith in the World

1. *Jesus defines eternal life in John 17:3 as “knowing” the Father and the Son.*

How is biblical “knowing” different from merely knowing facts about God, and what does that difference look like in everyday discipleship?

2. *In the sermon, eternal life was described not merely as endless duration, but as relationship.*

What practical evidence would demonstrate that a person is truly living in relationship with Christ rather than merely practicing religion?

3. *Jesus prayed for his followers to remain in the world without becoming shaped by the world.*

Where do you see the greatest pressures today pushing Christians and churches toward compromise?

4. *The sermon emphasized that discipleship requires obedience, surrender, and submission.*

Why do modern Christians often prefer inspiration and encouragement over obedience and sacrifice?

5. *John 17:6 says, “They have obeyed your word.”*

What specific area of obedience is most difficult for you personally right now, and why?

6. *The sermon stated that “discipleship is not admiration without surrender.”*

What are some ways people can admire Jesus intellectually while still resisting his lordship over their lives?

7. *Jesus prayed for unity among believers “so that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:11).*

What are the greatest threats to unity within the modern Church, and how can faithful disciples help preserve unity without compromising truth?

8. *The illustration of entering first grade emphasized how overwhelming new stages of life can feel.*

How has God stretched or called you beyond your comfort zone in your spiritual journey?

9. *The sermon warned that spiritual comfort can become spiritual danger.*

What habits, routines, or attitudes can quietly lead believers into spiritual stagnation?

10. *Jesus glorified the Father through obedience, even when obedience led to suffering and the cross.*

What does it mean for Christians today to glorify God through costly obedience?

11. *Brennan Manning described discipleship as living “as though Jesus were near.”*

How would your decisions, conversations, priorities, or daily habits change if you consciously lived with that awareness every day?

12. *Jesus prayed for disciples who would continue the mission after he returned to the Father.*

What does faithful participation in Christ’s mission look like for you personally, your family, and our congregation at Foundations Methodist Church?

Optional Closing Challenge: Jesus did not pray merely for church attendance, religious activity, or temporary enthusiasm. He prayed for transformed disciples who know him, obey him, remain unified in him, and continue his mission in the world. The question before every believer is not simply: “Did Jesus pray?” The deeper question is: “Will we answer what he asked for?”

Personal Reflection and Action Step:

What is the *one specific thing* God is calling me to believe, to change, to begin, to stop, to confess, or to do this week as a result of this study and discussion?

Prayer Concerns and Praises:

Prayer Requests:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Praises and Celebrations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Weekly Accountability Check In:

This Week:

- Did I spend intentional time in prayer? Yes _____ No _____
- Did I spend time reading and reflecting on Scripture? Yes _____ No _____
- Did I intentionally encourage or serve another person? Yes _____ No _____
- Did I share my faith, witness, or invite someone into spiritual conversation? Yes _____ No _____
- Did I respond faithfully to God’s direction in at least one area of my life? Yes _____ No _____

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of Christian community, the truth of your Word, and the transforming work of your Holy Spirit. Continue shaping us into faithful disciples who reflect the character of Jesus Christ in our homes, our congregation, our workplaces, and our community.

Strengthen us to stand firm in faith, to grow in holiness, to serve with humility, and to live courageously for your perfect kingdom. Send us now into the world as witnesses of your grace, truth, mercy, and love.

It is in the strong and saving name of Jesus Christ our Lord that we pray. Amen.

Our questions for the week, *One Dozen Useful Questions that Shape Obedient Disciples*, are created, produced, and published from the Sunday worship sermon by the same title each week. Please obtain a copy of these, fresh each week, review the questions, and bring a copy to your discipleship meeting.

This collection is meant to supply choices to our discipleship meetings, with the expectation for the group to discuss two or three, depending upon their leadership and context. We look forward to your growth in Christ as a result of your participation in *The Deep Dive*.

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