

LESSON 6
OCTOBER 11, 2026

FAMILY THEME

What Is Discipleship?

LESSON AIM

Understand that discipleship is the lifelong process of following Jesus, growing in Him, and helping others do the same.

STUDY TEXT

[Mark 1:14–20](#)



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digital materials
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BIG IDEAS

1. **Following Jesus Requires Surrender, Trust, and Daily Obedience** ([Mark 1:14–17a](#))
2. **Spiritual Growth Happens Intentionally Through a Relationship With Christ** ([Mark 1:18–20](#))
3. **Healthy Disciples Help Others Follow Jesus and Grow in Their Faith** ([Mark 1:17b](#))

Encourage learners to memorize the Family Scripture of the Month (**Colossians 2:6–7**) along with family members.



AH 6-1



AH 6-2

Leader Lens

This lesson is highly relational and discussion-driven, so resist the urge to turn it into a lecture. Many group members may be familiar with the word *discipleship* but have rarely considered what it truly means to follow Jesus daily. Focus on helping learners reflect honestly on their spiritual growth, relationships, and influence. Create space for conversation, personal examples, and practical application. As you prepare, ask God to show you where you are still growing as a disciple and where He may be calling you to influence others intentionally.

Connect

Choose the option that best fits your group.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: Ask the group to think about a time they stepped into a new season of life, moved away from something familiar, or took an unfamiliar opportunity. What was hardest to leave behind? What excited them most about what lay ahead? After several responses, say: *The first disciples experienced a similar moment in Mark 1. Following Jesus required them to leave behind security and routine in order to follow Him into something greater.*

GROUP DISCUSSION: Ask group members, *What does it take for you to truly follow someone?* Answers will likely involve trust, credibility, consistency, leadership, or shared values. Then ask, *What would make someone leave behind security, career plans, or comfort to follow another person?* After discussion, say, *The disciples responded immediately to Jesus' invitation because they believed He was worth trusting with their entire lives.*

DISCUSSION STARTER: Begin by asking, *Is there a person in your life you have most tried to imitate or learn from? Who has had the greatest influence on your life or faith? What made that influence so meaningful?* Encourage group members to think beyond pastors or formal teachers. Many might mention a parent, coach, mentor, grandparent, or friend. After discussion, say, *Discipleship has always been relational. Jesus changed lives by inviting people to walk closely with Him, and He still uses relationships to shape people today.*

Teaching the Truth

Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 6-2).

Gospel Connection

This lesson explores what it means to follow Jesus as a disciple. Discipleship begins with the gospel because Jesus died and rose again to forgive sin and restore people to God. Through faith in Christ, believers are transformed by His grace, grow to become more like Him, and help others follow Him as well.

Before Jesus gave the Great Commission, He modeled it throughout His ministry. Jesus called disciples who would eventually go and make disciples. Discipleship was never intended to stop with one generation or with one believer becoming a Christian. Following Jesus always leads to helping others follow Him.

[Mark 1](#) presents the opening moments of Jesus' public ministry. As Jesus walked along the shoreline of Galilee, He saw ordinary fishermen working their nets and invited them to follow Him. In that moment, Simon, Andrew, James, and John left behind security, routine, and familiarity to follow Jesus (**Mark 1:16–20**). Their response showed more than belief; it revealed surrendered and transformed lives. The call to follow Jesus would begin a revolution unlike any other event in human history.

✧ BIG IDEA 1 ✧

Following Jesus Requires Surrender, Trust, and Daily Obedience

[Mark 1:14–17a](#)

Jesus sees potential in ordinary people. He did not begin His ministry by recruiting religious elites, professional scholars, or powerful leaders. Instead, He called fishermen with everyday responsibilities and relationships (**Mark 1:16–17**). Tax collectors, physicians, and others from different walks of life would also follow Jesus ([Matthew 9:9–13](#); [Colossians 4:14](#); [Acts 16:14](#)). Throughout Scripture, God consistently worked through ordinary people who were willing to follow Him.

Along the shoreline of Galilee, Jesus offered a simple but life-changing invitation: “Follow Me” (**Mark 1:17**). **Discipleship begins with surrender, trust, and closeness to Christ** ([Luke 9:23](#)). Imagine if the disciples had responded, “We can give You an hour or two each week.” Their lives would never have been transformed, and the world would never have changed through them. Following Jesus required more than admiration—it required leaving behind comfort, routine, and security because the disciples believed He was worth trusting with their entire lives (**Mark 1:18**).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.” A disciple is not someone who merely agrees with Jesus but someone who follows Him ([John 8:31](#)).

Live It Out: Identify an area of your life where following Jesus requires deeper trust or surrender. Ask God to help you follow Him more fully.

Discuss Together:

- *Why do you think Jesus called ordinary people to follow Him?*
- *What makes surrender difficult when following Christ?*

Notice where Jesus called His disciples. He did not wait for them to arrive at the synagogue. He met them in the middle of everyday life while they worked their nets. Jesus still calls people in classrooms, offices, homes, neighborhoods,

Discussion questions are also included on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 6-1) and PowerPoint 6 (editable).



PowerPoint 6

factories, and coffee shops. God often works through ordinary people who are willing to follow Him faithfully.

The word *disciple* can describe both a follower of Jesus and the act of helping others follow Him. Healthy disciples help others follow Christ and become disciplemakers themselves ([Matthew 28:19–20](#)). Discipleship is the lifelong process of helping people surrender to Christ, follow Him daily, and faithfully pass their faith along to others.

Discipleship reaches far beyond attending a Sunday School class or small group once a week. Spiritual growth was never intended to be confined to a scheduled hour on a church campus. True discipleship shapes the way we think, speak, serve, love, and live every day ([Romans 12:1–2](#)). Disciples continually seek to know Christ more deeply, learn from other believers, and help others follow Jesus along the way.

Simon and Andrew were not searching for Jesus when He called them. He came looking for them (**Mark 1:16–17**). Before giving them an assignment, He invited them into relationship. Following Jesus always comes before influencing others for Jesus.

Jesus reminded the disciples that transformation ultimately comes from Him. He did not ask them to transform themselves. Instead, Jesus would shape them, mature them, and prepare them for His mission.

Following Jesus is not a casual commitment. Peter reminded believers that following Christ means following His example, even in suffering ([1 Peter 2:21](#)). Scripture also teaches that Christ’s followers are called to live differently from the culture around them ([Romans 12:2](#)). Deep discipleship begins by learning from Christ through His Word and allowing Him to reshape every area of life.

Live It Out: Follow Jesus more intentionally in everyday life this week through your words, attitudes, relationships, or decisions.

Discuss Together:

- *How would you explain the difference between believing in Jesus and truly following Him?*
- *What are some ways following Jesus should shape everyday decisions and relationships?*

✧ BIG IDEA 2 ✧

Spiritual Growth Happens Intentionally Through a Relationship With Christ

[Mark 1:18–20](#)

The disciples responded immediately when Jesus called them (**Mark 1:18–20**). Their decision was not the end of discipleship but the beginning of a lifelong journey of growth. A disciple is also a *learner* or *pupil*. Following Jesus leads to ongoing transformation over time.

Every disciple remains a work in progress. Spiritual maturity does not happen instantly, and no believer fully arrives on this side of eternity. Growth requires humility, consistency, and dependence on God ([James 4:6–10](#)). In many areas of life, people understand the value of continual growth. Athletes continue practicing. Musicians continue rehearsing. Teachers continue studying. In the same way, healthy disciples intentionally pursue growth in their relationship with Christ throughout life ([1 Timothy 4:7–8](#)).

Purposeful spiritual growth moves discipleship beyond a weekly event or classroom experience. Following Jesus shapes everyday life. As believers spend time in **Scripture, prayer, worship, and daily obedience**, biblical truth begins shaping their conversations, decisions, attitudes, and relationships. Growth becomes visible over time ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)).

Many people feel intimidated by the idea of influencing others spiritually because they assume they must have all the answers first. Yet discipleship often happens through honest conversations about what God is teaching us right now. Believers encourage others by sharing what they are learning, where they struggle, and how God continues shaping their lives. Authentic growth speaks louder than perfection.

Paul encouraged believers to practice what they had learned and observed in his life ([Philippians 4:9](#)). Although Paul never claimed perfection, he consistently pursued Christ and encouraged others to do the same ([Philippians 3:12–14](#)).

Purposeful growth also requires time in God’s Word. Healthy disciples regularly engage Scripture, not merely to complete a reading plan, but to know Christ more deeply and allow His truth to shape their thinking. Even a short passage read prayerfully and thoughtfully can transform a person’s perspective and response to life. Scripture does not simply increase knowledge; it transforms hearts ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

Prayer also plays a vital role in purposeful growth. Prayer keeps disciples dependent on God rather than self-sufficient. As believers pray, God reveals



AH 6-3

AH 6-3 (*Where Should I Start Reading the Bible?*) provides practical starting points to help group members engage Scripture and grow in their relationship with Christ. Give each learner a copy to encourage continued Bible reading throughout the week.

Apologetics

Jesus did not call powerful rulers or famous scholars to change the world. He called ordinary people—fishermen, tax collectors, and laborers—to follow Him. Yet those same disciples eventually faced persecution, imprisonment, and even death rather than deny what they believed about Jesus ([Acts 4:18–20](#)). People might suffer for something they mistakenly believe is true, but few willingly suffer or die for something they know is false.

The disciples' transformed lives and bold witness provide strong evidence that they truly believed Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus still changes lives today as ordinary people follow Him and help others do the same.

areas that need surrender, encourages weary hearts, and strengthens faith for daily living ([Ephesians 3:16–19](#)).

Disciples also need mentors and spiritual community. Growth rarely happens in isolation. Every believer benefits from trusted people who offer encouragement, accountability, wisdom, and perspective. Mature Christians still need other mature believers speaking truth into their lives. Every generation needs faithful believers walking beside them ([Titus 2:1–8](#)).

Jesus never called His followers to remain spiritually stagnant. Just as He called the disciples to leave their nets and follow Him, He continues shaping believers to become more like Him day by day.

Live It Out: Choose one intentional step that can help you grow spiritually this week. Spend additional time in Scripture, strengthen a prayer habit, connect with a mentor, or encourage another believer in their faith journey.

Discuss Together:

- *Why does spiritual growth require intentionality rather than passive belief?*
- *Which spiritual habits most help believers grow in their relationship with Christ?*
- *Why is spiritual community important for continued growth as a disciple?*
- *How can discipleship become more than a once-a-week activity?*

✧ BIG IDEA 3 ✧

Healthy Disciples Help Others Follow Jesus and Grow in Their Faith

[Mark 1:17b](#)

When Jesus called His first disciples, He immediately connected following Him with influencing others. Using their profession as an illustration, Jesus told them they would fish for people (**Mark 1:17b**). From the very beginning, discipleship was never meant to stop with personal spiritual growth. **Following Jesus includes helping others follow Him as well.**

People naturally share experiences that impact their lives. Someone who discovers a great restaurant recommends it to friends. A person who finds a helpful book or meaningful opportunity wants others to benefit as well. In the same way, a growing relationship with Christ produces a desire to help others know Him too ([John 1:40–42](#)).

Simon and Andrew were ordinary fishermen when Jesus called them. They were not religious celebrities or trained scholars. Yet Jesus saw how their lives could influence others when surrendered to Him. Simon would eventually be called Peter, one of the central leaders of the early church ([Acts 2:14–41](#)).

Many believers first come to Christ because they recognize the emptiness of sin, the brokenness of life, or the need for hope. As they follow Jesus, they grow in their understanding of Him as Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. Jesus continues shaping believers throughout that journey, and He often works through them to help others know Him as well ([2 Corinthians 5:17–20](#)).

Paul modeled intentional influence when he invited people to follow his example as he followed Christ ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). Rather than pointing people to himself, Paul pointed them to Jesus through the way he lived ([Philippians 3:17](#)). Healthy disciples understand that influence often happens through consistency, humility, service, encouragement, and everyday faithfulness.

Discipleship was never designed to remain private or isolated. Christianity spread across the Roman Empire because ordinary believers faithfully shared the gospel, invested in others, and lived transformed lives. Even through persecution, hardship, and resistance, believers continued making disciples because they believed Jesus was worth following and worth sharing ([2 Timothy 2:2–3](#)).

The first disciples lived with conviction, courage, and purpose. Because they faithfully passed their faith to others, the gospel spread across generations and around the world.

That responsibility now rests with believers today. Every Christian influences someone. Parents influence children. Grandparents influence families. Friends influence friends. Church members influence younger believers. Teachers, coaches, neighbors, and coworkers all shape the lives of others through their words and example ([Deuteronomy 6:6–7](#); [Titus 2:1–8](#)). The question is not whether believers have influence but how they are using it.

Healthy disciples intentionally create opportunities to encourage others spiritually. Sometimes influence happens through sharing the gospel directly. Other times it happens through mentoring, listening, praying, serving, or walking beside someone during a difficult season. God often uses consistent relational investment to shape lasting faith across generations.

Discipleship flourishes when believers intentionally influence others toward Christ.

Go Deeper

Rome ruled the world when Jesus called His disciples, and most of the disciples were ordinary men with little influence or power. Conditions for travel and communication were less than ideal, even though greatly enhanced by the Roman system of roads. It would have been easy to focus only on survival and remain isolated within their own communities. Yet those first followers faithfully shared the gospel and made disciples wherever they went. Christianity continued to spread because believers refused to keep their faith private. That same mission continues today as believers intentionally help others follow Christ.

D6 Discipleship Journals

Remind group members to bring their *D6 Discipleship Journals* each week for lesson notes, sermon notes, journaling, and class discussion. These journals are designed to support discipleship both at church and at home.

D6

Principle

Discipleship was never meant to be limited to the church building or a weekly Bible study. God designed faith to be lived out and passed down within the home ([Deuteronomy 6:6-7](#)). Parents, grandparents, and families play a vital role in helping the next generation follow Jesus daily through conversations, prayer, encouragement, and consistent example. The home is often the first and most influential place where discipleship begins.



AYG-6

As You Go (AYG-6) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. *As You Go* is also available for FREE download at D6curriculum.com/bonus. (No password required.)

Live It Out: Identify one person God may be inviting you to influence spiritually. It could be a family member, coworker, classmate, neighbor, or fellow church member. Pray for that person this week and look for one practical opportunity to encourage, serve, or invest in that person's faith journey.

Discuss Together:

- *Why do you think Jesus connected discipleship with influencing others?*
- *What differences do you see between the disciples' commitment to Jesus and the way discipleship is often practiced today?*
- *How can believers influence others without pretending to be perfect?*
- *What are some practical ways believers can intentionally invest in others spiritually?*

Respond

Use one of these options to help your group put this lesson into practice this week.

FOLLOWING JESUS MORE DEEPLY: Encourage group members to identify one area of life that has not fully come under Christ's leadership. Challenge them to spend time in prayer this week asking God to help them surrender that area to Him and trust Him more fully in daily life.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH: Encourage learners to choose and practice one intentional habit that can strengthen their walk with Christ this week. Suggestions might include spending additional time in Scripture, strengthening a prayer habit, reconnecting with a mentor, or inviting another believer to encourage and challenge their spiritual growth.

INVESTING IN OTHERS: Ask group members to identify one person who may need encouragement, spiritual direction, or a deeper relationship with Christ. Challenge them to look for one practical opportunity this week to invest in that person through prayer, conversation, service, encouragement, or sharing what God is teaching them.

Notes: