

Junior 1 Year 3 Book 4 Lesson 2  
**Be a True Disciple of Christ**  
Passages: As listed in the lesson.

*Memory Verse*

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’” (Luke 9:23)

<b>Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]</b>	<b>Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]</b>	<b>Good Works [Behavior]</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A disciple’s life consists of spiritual growth and development.</li><li>2. God requires His disciples to surrender their will to Him.</li><li>3. Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. God is seeking those who follow Him.</li><li>2. God blesses His followers.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Lay down my own will.</li><li>2. Establish a daily quiet time to spend with God in Bible study and prayer.</li></ol>

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. Disciples of Christ
- B. A True Disciple

**Life Application:** Becoming a Committed Disciple of Christ

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** God wants us to surrender ourselves entirely to Him so that our discipleship becomes our way of life.

### A. Disciples of Christ

The Lord Jesus loved us so much that He died a brutal death on our behalf, so that through baptism, we can begin a new life. This new life in Christ shouldn't be taken lightly, not only because of what Jesus had to endure, but also because of the salvation that awaits us at the end of it. If we choose to embrace this new life, we enter a lifelong process called discipleship. Let's first go over what a disciple is.

#### 1. A disciple is a learner

The word "disciple" originates from the Latin word *discipulus*, meaning "student," or "learner."<sup>1</sup> A disciple was someone who had the discipline of a student and the willingness to be constantly learning. As Jesus' disciples, we must undergo constant spiritual growth and development in our lives. However long we live, we need to continually learn and grow in spiritual maturity through the many circumstances and trials that we face. Even Jesus Christ had to grow spiritually (Lk 2:52)!

#### 2. A disciple is a follower

A true disciple isn't just someone who absorbs knowledge. Let's read Mark 1:17. The first thing that Jesus said to His new disciples was, "Follow Me." He wasn't just calling them to follow Him physically. A true disciple is also someone who follows the example of their teacher in their actions and words. So, to become Jesus' disciple, we need to learn how to choose thoughtful, deliberate actions that follow His example.

If we are His disciples, our primary goal is to become more like Jesus, because He is not only our chosen master and teacher, but also our sovereign Lord (Rev 4:8, 11). The more time and attention we spend on being His disciple, the more God will guide us through life. As the Bible says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD" (Jer 29:13–14).

### B. A True Disciple

Jesus used three phrases to describe the requirements of a true disciple. Let's read Matthew 16:24. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" What do these really mean, though? Let's go over each action.

#### 1. Deny yourself

To deny something means to resist, reject, or refuse it. A classic example of when someone failed to deny himself is when Peter denied Jesus three times (Mt 26:69–75). Peter had been with Jesus for so long. He had witnessed Jesus' transfiguration, had seen the many miracles of healing and provision, and had walked on water with Jesus' help. But when confronted with the possibility of suffering or death, Peter denied his own master not once, but three times.

We need to learn to deny ourselves instead of deny Jesus. But what does it really mean to deny yourself? We might think of it as telling ourselves, "You're not allowed to have that snack!" or, "It doesn't matter what you feel!" But denying ourselves isn't physical abstinence, nor is it invalidating or ignoring our own feelings or self-worth. Denying ourselves means saying "no" to our inner desires, and saying "yes" to God's. It means saying, "Not by my will, but Yours" (Lk

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<sup>1</sup> "History and Etymology for *disciple*", *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "disciple", accessed October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disciple>

22:42; Mk 14:36). Denying ourselves means submitting to God's way instead of our own. Let's look at a few examples of when we can deny ourselves.

- When someone makes me angry, denying myself means choosing forgiveness, not revenge.
- When someone hates me, denying myself means choosing to show love to them anyway.
- When someone is rude to me, denying myself means choosing compassion and trying to understand the reasons behind their actions.
- When I can't see what is ahead, denying myself means choosing to trust in God.
- When someone ridicules Jesus' name, denying myself means standing up for my faith.

We often want to follow our will, and it feels like we suffer a lot when we don't. But Jesus experienced the same kind of suffering in order to deny Himself and follow God's will (Heb 5:8–9). We must learn to deny ourselves and obey the Lord, even if it is unreasonable, difficult, or painful. If we do so, then the Bible says that "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt 10:32–33).

## 2. Take up your cross

The Romans forced criminals to carry their crosses so that they would be shamed on the road to their crucifixion. Being nailed to the cross also meant that the convicted would die a slow, painful death. Jesus Christ knew that He would experience suffering, humiliation, and pain before a torturous death. This was the cross that He willingly took up of His own choice.

When Jesus calls us to take up our own cross, He is asking us to be willing to die for Him. In other words, He is asking us to surrender ourselves to Him, much the same way He surrendered Himself to God's plan. But what does it really mean to do this?

Let's read Romans 8:13. "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Let's also read Galatians 5:24. "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." From these verses, we can see that taking up our cross is a step beyond denying ourselves. It means being willing to suffer and die for Christ, which requires that we put to death any sin within us (*BSG: Matthew, 7.8*)<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Follow Jesus

As we learned earlier, a true disciple isn't just someone who learns, but someone who also follows. Peter wrote, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet 2:21). John also wrote, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 Jn 2:6), while Paul urged us to "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Following Jesus means doing what He would do (Jn 12:26) (*BSG: Matthew, 7.8*). It is constantly asking ourselves the well-known question: "What would Jesus do?"

To follow Jesus, it is important to become familiar with His words and constantly develop our relationship with Him. We cannot follow Jesus on our own. We need His help, which we can obtain through prayer in the Spirit and through understanding the guidance that He offers in the Bible. This means that we must develop three basic qualities within ourselves:

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<sup>2</sup> TJC Department of Literary Ministry, *Bible Study Guide: Matthew*, (Malaysia: True Jesus Church, 2012), [https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc\\_bsg\\_lesson/matthew-24/?guide\\_id=153](https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/matthew-24/?guide_id=153), 7.8: 13

- An understanding of His word
- Submission to His teachings
- The determination to follow His will

When we better understand His words, we can then learn how to submit to His teachings. But both steps require determination. When we determine to seek out God’s will, He will help us truly follow Jesus.

### Check for Understanding

- 1. What are two attributes of a disciple?** A disciple is a learner and a follower.
- 2. What should our primary goal be as true disciples of Christ? Why?** If we are truly disciples of Christ, our primary goal will be to become more like Him, because He is not only our chosen master and teacher, but also our sovereign Lord (Rev 5:12).
- 3. What three commands did Jesus give His disciples? Briefly explain each.** He said, “[Let] him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”
  - To deny ourselves means to say “no” to our inner desires and “yes” to God’s. It means saying, “Not by my will, but Yours.”
  - To take up our cross means to be willing to suffer and die for the Lord, by putting to death any sin within us.
  - To follow Him means to walk in Jesus’ footsteps and to ask ourselves constantly, “What would Jesus do?”
- 4. What three qualities should we develop to follow Jesus?** We must develop an understanding of His word, submission to His teachings, and the determination to follow His will.

### Life Application

#### Becoming a Committed Disciple of Christ

*(Teachers: See the last page of this lesson for a printable worksheet with the chart below.)*

To level up our discipleship, we first need to ascertain where we currently are. What kind of disciple do you think you are at the moment? Are you a casual disciple? A convinced disciple? Or are you a fully committed disciple of Christ? The following chart lists some characteristics of each. Highlight or mark which column describes you best for each item, and then see what kind of disciple you are.

A casual disciple...	A convinced disciple...	A committed disciple...
Comes to church but barely pays any attention, often playing, leaving the chapel, or doing other things during sermons.	Sometimes pays attention to sermons, and generally learns some sort of teaching to apply.	Pays close attention in sermons, and always walks away with a teaching or lesson that they try to apply to their lives.
Barely prays at home, and has trouble focusing during prayers, unless they need something.	Prays sometimes, and usually has thoughtful prayers that only sometimes lack focus.	Prays often and for a long time, and always has thoughtful, communicative prayers.
Rarely reads the Bible at home.	Sometimes reads and studies the Bible when they have time.	Reads and studies the Bible purposefully every day.
Rarely seeks out God’s will, and never bothers finding out what God wants of them when faced with a decision.	Normally tries to put God first when faced with big decisions, but sometimes forgets to seek out God’s will.	Actively seeks out God’s will. When faced with a big decision, spends a lot of time seeking what God wants them to do.

Dives headlong into situations when emotionally charged, with barely a thought for the consequences or for how they should act as God's child.	Sometimes acts upon strong emotions like anger or hate, but tries their best to avoid acting impulsively when they remember to.	Never acts upon strong emotions like anger, hate, or a desire for revenge or justice. Always strives to reflect God in their actions.
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Once we've discovered which kind of disciple we are, we need to learn the steps that we can take to become a better disciple to the Lord. Becoming a better disciple requires three actions: laying aside our own will, spending quiet time with God's word every day, and communicating with God through daily prayer.

### 1. Laying aside our own will

Our pride makes us resent being forced to abide by someone else's decisions, especially when they are decisions involving ourselves, such as how we spend our time, or our plans for the future. Surely, we have the right to choose our career, or how much time we spend on our hobbies! But Jesus gave us everything, including His own life. This means that as His disciples, we need to give up everything of ours for Him! This includes our will and plans for the present and the future.

It isn't bad to have dreams, but if we surrender our lives to Him, including our future, He can give us the wisdom and strength that we need to accomplish the dreams that we have. Moreover, He can turn our passions into something that can benefit others and glorify Him! Let's take a moment to reflect. What aspect of my life have I not yet laid aside for God? Which parts of my life do I still hold on to, without regard for God's will? Examples may be:

- Our anger at someone, or our desire for vengeance
- Our anxieties
- Personal hobbies that distract us from God's will
- Pride in our abilities
- Our time and effort

The world around us often says that "surrendering" is a bad thing, but for Jesus' disciples, surrendering to Jesus is what leads us to victory over Satan and the greatest reward of eternal life at His side.

### 2. Spending daily quiet time with God and His word

Let's read Mark 1:35. "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." Jesus showed us how to cultivate our relationship with God: amidst life's chaos, set aside a time of solitude and quietness, when we can focus our thoughts entirely upon God, free of any distractions. Why do you think this is so important?

Of the many different types of offerings the Israelites had to give, there were two offerings that were made daily in the temple: two lambs, one in the morning and one at twilight, each along with a grain and drink offering. The Lord said, "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you" (Ex 29:42). This daily offering was a "sweet aroma" to the Lord (v. 41). It reminded the Israelites of God's presence, and it was a sign of their desire to meet God and speak with Him.

From this, we can see that setting time aside for God each day is a way of inviting Him to meet with us; it reveals our desire for a closer relationship with Him. Therefore, to grow in Christ and become a true disciple, we need to cultivate the discipline of having daily quiet time with the Lord. You can start by

picking a time when your mind is most alert and clutter-free, such as in the morning or before you sleep, and make sure you plan ahead. This might mean setting an alarm, placing your Bible on your desk or bedside table ahead of time, or asking a friend or parent to help hold you accountable.

### **What should I do during my quiet time with God?**

*(Teachers: See homework question #5 for additional discussion during this section, if time permits.)*

Setting aside some time and finding a quiet place is just the start! What you do with those precious moments is very important. There are different methods that people use to communicate with God, but here are a few suggestions:

- Read the Bible to try and see what God wants to tell us.
- Fill our hearts and minds with His will by meditating on His word (Ps 1:2).
- Fill out a prayer and Bible study notebook or logbook.
- Use a journal to meditate upon God, track our spirituality, and weed out any sin in our hearts.
- Focus on something specific in your prayer, such as thanksgiving or intercession.
- Spend time singing hymns and studying any associated verses or teachings.

The tools are the same, but the methods can be different for everyone. For example, some spend a few minutes taking apart a single verse so that they fully understand it, then spend time praying about the verse, asking God to help them understand it and apply it to their lives. Another method might be to read a chapter, write out your thoughts in a daily Bible journal, and then pray about your thoughts or any questions you might have. Others might be more logical, and may choose to lay out specific prayers beforehand, or find an interesting topic to study and ask God about.

Whichever way you choose to spend your quiet time with God, He is willing and happy to meet you however you please! Regardless of our method, the deeper we go into God's word, the more our spiritual life will blossom. We simply need the determination to continue dedicating this time for God, no matter how busy or tired we may feel. With the help of the Holy Spirit—and maybe with the help of a spiritual friend—we will be able to grow in our spirituality and become a committed disciple of the Lord.

### **3. Communicating with God through daily prayer**

A true disciple spends a lot of time speaking with their teacher, and there is no better way for us to do that than through prayer! Prayer is our main method of communication with God. For many Christians, prayer is a place of greatest comfort and nourishment. This is because we can pour everything out to God in our prayers, and in turn, we can receive comfort, strength, and wisdom from the Holy Spirit.

Prayers can be difficult for us because we often lose focus, get bored, or run out of things to say. When we don't put any effort into our prayers, we don't receive anything from them. But when we put consistent thought and effort into our prayers, God will give us an overwhelming response! To help us learn to pray with discipline and focus, let's learn a few different methods of prayer.

#### **a. Praise**

*"I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."  
(Ps 18:1–2)*

Select an attribute of God. Write it down and meditate on it before you pray. Think about how this attribute affects your life, and let it fill your heart as you praise God for who He is.

**b. Thanksgiving**

*"[Giving] thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."  
(Eph 5:20)*

Consider how good the Lord has been to you. What has He given? What has He done for you? List all the blessings that you have received from the Lord before you pray.

**c. Confession**

*"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." (Ps 51:1–2)*

Be honest about your sins and admit them to the Lord. Ask Him for cleansing and forgiveness, and the strength to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future.

**d. Petition**

*"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Lk 11:9)*

Write down your request, and reflect on it: Is this in accordance with God's will? If it is, in your prayer, ask earnestly with persistence and perseverance, and never give up in asking.

**e. Intercession**

*"For this reason we also, [...] do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." (Col 1:9)*

Do you know anyone who needs intercession? Pray to God on their behalf with sincerity.

Every time we set aside our own desires and pray for God's will instead, He will give so much more than we can even imagine (Eph 3:20)! Just as the angel answered Jesus' plea in the garden of Gethsemane, when we pray according to His will, He will strengthen us and guide us on our path to becoming a true disciple of Christ. Even if we don't think to ask for it, He knows our need and gives it to us.

### **Memory Verse**

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"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'" (Luke 9:23)

### **Meaning**

To become true disciples of Christ, we need to learn to surrender ourselves in three ways:

1. Deny ourselves by saying "no" to our inner desires, and saying "yes" to God's. This means saying "not by my will, but Yours."
2. Take up our cross and be willing to suffer and die for the Lord by putting to death any sin within us.
3. Follow Jesus by walking in His footsteps and constantly asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do?"

## *Conclusion*

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Jesus has called us all to be His true disciples. As true disciples of Christ, our primary goal is to become more like Him, because He is not only our chosen master and teacher, but also our sovereign Lord (Rev 5:12). The more time and attention we spend on being His disciple, the more God will guide us through life (Jer 29:13–14). He wants us to surrender ourselves entirely to Him so that our discipleship becomes our way of life. By becoming more like Jesus, He will bless us in so many ways in our daily lives and grant us salvation when He comes again to receive His true followers.



Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Explain what Jesus meant by these three steps in your own words.  
*Jesus was telling us that to be a true disciple, we must: (1) deny ourselves by saying “no” to our inner desires and “yes” to God’s; (2) take up our cross by being willing to suffer and die for God and putting to death any sin within us; and (3) follow Jesus by walking in His footsteps and constantly asking ourselves, “what would Jesus do?”*
2. “For if you \_\_\_\_\_ according to the \_\_\_\_\_ you will \_\_\_\_\_; but if by the Spirit you put to \_\_\_\_\_ the deeds of the \_\_\_\_\_, you will \_\_\_\_\_.” (Romans 8:13)  
*live, flesh, die, death, body, live*
3. If *discipulus* means “learner,” what does that mean for our spiritual lives as Jesus’ disciples?  
*As Jesus’ disciples, our lives must undergo constant spiritual growth and development. However long we live, we need to persistently learn and grow in spiritual maturity through the many circumstances and trials that we face.*
4. What three basic qualities do we have to develop within ourselves to truly follow Jesus?  
*We must develop an understanding of His word, submission to His teachings, and the determination to follow His will.*
5. Pick a time of day to spend with God and make a determination to stick to this time for the entire week. For each day, write down what you did during your quiet time with God. It doesn’t have to be long at first. Try out the different methods of reading and prayer that we discussed during class!

<b>Sunday</b>	<i>Personal answers.</i>
<b>Monday</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>	

*Teachers: You may want to brainstorm suggestions during class for this homework, if time permits. Encourage the students to start small, especially if they aren’t accustomed to studying the Bible or praying at home. For example, they can spend 5 minutes studying their memory verse, then pray about it for another 5 minutes. Another way to spend their quiet time is by reading a chapter or story in the Bible, then writing their thoughts, questions, or anything that comes to mind in a notebook. If they already have their own family altars in place already, then encourage them to spend their own time with God separately, as the purpose of this is to develop their own, personal relationship and method of communication with God.*

*What is most important in teaching them to develop a habit is specificity. Vague instructions give too much freedom, and as a result may deter them from trying this activity. Specific instructions (ex: 5 minutes memorizing a verse, 5 minutes praying about what you learned about the verse) will help your students actually carry out the plans that they determine to do.*

## Life Application Worksheet

### Becoming a Committed Disciple of Christ

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Dives headlong into situations when emotionally charged, with barely a thought for the consequences or for how they should act as God's child.	Sometimes acts upon strong emotions like anger or hate, but tries their best to avoid acting impulsively when they remember to.	Never acts upon strong emotions like anger, hate, or a desire for revenge or justice. Always strives to reflect God in their actions.

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