

THANK YOU FOR SAMPLING,
"HOW TO BE A MAN: DISCOVERING WHAT IT
MEANS TO BE A DISCIPLE [STUDENT EDITION]"

Teenage guys want to follow Jesus in a way that is real. But most of them don't have a clear picture of how to do this. *How to Be a Man: Discovering What It Means to Be a Disciple [Student Edition]* is a 40-day devotional that teaches guys the eight different attributes of disciples. Guys will no longer have to ask, "What does discipleship look like?" Each week features five days of devotions that focus on one of the following characteristics of disciples:

- Disciples have been transformed by Christ.
- Disciples surrender to a Gospel-centered life.
- Disciples hunger to know God.
- Disciples desire to worship God.
- Disciples pursue personal holiness.
- Disciples embrace Christian community.
- Disciples engage with their surroundings.
- Disciples invest in multiplying disciples.

Teenagers will read this book and learn, maybe for the first time, what it really means to live a life of discipleship.

If you have any questions about *How to Be a Man: Discovering What It Means to Be a Disciple [Student Edition]* or the Adult Edition, please don't hesitate to call us at 1.888.969.6360.

STUDENT EDITION

HOW BE^{TO} A MAN

DISCOVERING
WHAT IT MEANS
TO BE A DISCIPLE



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been talking to a friend about someone and realize halfway through that you aren't talking about the same person?

YOU: So, do you know Katie?

FRIEND: Yeah. She's cool.

YOU: Yeah, so, the other night I ran into her, and we ended up talking for forever. Like, I don't know where it came from, but I just asked her out of the blue if she wanted to grab some dessert together somewhere, and she said yes!

FRIEND: For real!?

YOU: Yes! I couldn't believe it either. We ended up at that ice cream place by the mall for like an hour. Then, later that night, we Facetimed for like another hour. It's crazy. It happened out of nowhere. I think she likes me.

FRIEND: Wait, what is her boyfriend going to say? He's that huge, ugly guy that looks kind of like Thanos, right?

YOU: Wait, what?! Bro, she doesn't have a boyfriend. What are you even talking about?

FRIEND: We're talking about Katie Smith, right? The redhead?

YOU: No, you idiot. Katie Johnson. Short. Blonde.

FRIEND: Ohhhhhh, right, right . . .

While the specifics are undoubtedly different, we've all been in a conversation similar to this one. Isn't it funny that two people can think they're talking about the same thing only to find out that they're on two different pages?

Have you ever heard the word discipleship used? It's a word we throw around a lot when we're talking about our faith. But it's kind of like the imaginary conversation above. It's one of those words that people can hear and not really be on the same page about what it means.

The word "discipleship" means different things to different people. To people who work at your church, they might hear the word and think about youth group or Sunday School. "Yeah, discipleship. That's what we do when we're not in big church." While this answer isn't necessarily wrong (your small group can be an important part of discipleship), it's just not enough. Discipleship isn't only the programs at your church.

For others, the word makes them think about a one-on-one Bible study. Maybe you meet with someone older than you and go through a book of the Bible together. This type of mentoring can be an important part of discipleship. But again, if this is what you think of when you hear the word, it's not a big enough definition.

The purpose of this book is to help you and other teenage guys know what the word discipleship means. To be a disciple is to be a follower. And so discipleship is followership. Discipleship is the journey that every Christian undergoes to be a more devoted follower of Christ. Discipleship is Jesus' call on all who would believe in Him. In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, "[23]Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it" (NIV). Discipleship is what happens when we truly commit to a life surrendered to Jesus.

Here's an important point: Discipleship is *not* the exception. Do you know what that means? It means that discipleship isn't just for the super Christians, the next-level Christians who have their acts together. There aren't two levels of Christians: Christians and disciples. Discipleship is God's expectation of everyone who enters into a relationship with Him. If this is true (which it is), it means you have to KNOW what it means to be a disciple. You have to know what God expects of you.

That's where this book comes in.

This is the third book in the *How To Be A Man* series. We've heard some fantastic stories from guys like you who have read the first two books. I wish I had the space to share even some of these stories. But trust me, what I see from my seat is that God is awakening guys like you to the vital role they play in the spaces God has put them. But for many guys, there is still a pretty big problem: They know they are called to discipleship. But they don't know what a disciple looks like.



The purpose of this book is to show guys, many for the first time, a picture of a disciple. We studied the Bible and what it had to say about discipleship. And we've identified eight characteristics of disciples. Together, these characteristics paint a pretty solid picture of what it looks like to be a guy who is serious about pursuing Jesus. The eight attributes of discipleship are:

- Disciples have been transformed by Christ.
- Disciples surrender to a Gospel-centered life.
- Disciples hunger to know God.
- Disciples desire to worship God.
- Disciples pursue personal holiness.
- Disciples embrace Christian community.
- Disciples engage with their surroundings.
- Disciples invest in multiplying disciples.

How do you feel about this picture of a disciple? When you compare your life against this description, how do you match up? Are some of these things already at work in your life? Are others not? Our purpose for coming up with this definition is to give you a clear picture of what a disciple looks like. You can't hit a target if you don't know what you're aiming at. But the only problem is that once you know what the goal is, you have to go after it.

The purpose of this book is to both equip and challenge you to become an authentic follower of Christ. The men who contributed to this book don't have all the answers. None are perfect. But I know these men personally, and I can tell you that they are deeply committed to their faith. Over the 40 days of devotions in this book, the way to grow in your faith is clearly laid out. As a guy who wants to take his faith more seriously, your job is to let these truths speak into your life. God WANTS you to follow Him and His Holy Spirit helps you to do so. Your call is to surrender your will to God, allow Him to change you, and lead out in a deepening commitment to Him.

As you begin this book, let me challenge you not to do so lightly. The stakes are too high for you to be yet another teenager who has a weak faith. The world needs godly guys like you to impact the world around them for the sake of God.

My prayer, and the prayer of everyone here at YM360, is that this book will be a catalyst for taking your faith to the next level. We hope that God works through these words to lead you to a more authentic pursuit of Him.

Andy Blanks
Co-founder/Publisher, YM360

WEEK 1:

DISCIPLES

HAVE BEEN

TRANSFORMED

BY CHRIST

I love barbeque. But before I can lay into a pulled-pork street taco, I have to choose the perfect pork shoulder from the butcher.

Maybe you're reading this in your room. Your house didn't just happen. It started with blueprints, drawings that told the builders what to do.

Think about a professional ballplayer. They didn't just become a pro overnight. At some point, long ago, they picked up a ball and began to learn the game.

Discipleship is no different. Before we can learn what it means to be a disciple, we have to start at the beginning.

What is the most basic part of discipleship? Before we can even begin to think about what discipleship looks like, we have to be transformed by a saving relationship with Jesus. Discipleship starts with salvation through Jesus' work on the cross. Jesus lived a sinless life and died as a sacrifice for our sins to rescue us from the death that our sin rightly earns for us (2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 6:23). When we accept Jesus' payment on our behalf by grace through faith, we are transformed (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Don't miss that word. "Transformed." You see, we're not just better versions of ourselves. We're something entirely new. And this "newness" is something we need to explore before we jump into defining what it means to be a disciple. That's what we're going to spend this first week doing.

Let me say a word about this transformed life: This new life is lived by the power of the Holy Spirit in us. It's not lived with you trying as hard as YOU can to be like Jesus. We can't work hard enough to be good enough. But we're NOT doing it on our own. God helps us, but the truth is that a transformed life does look a certain way. And we are called to bend our wills and shape our lives to follow Christ. The way we live this out is through our discipleship.

Let's spend a few days focusing our attention on what it means to be transformed.

WEEK 1 DAY 1

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: ROMANS 6:1-4

We probably think we have a good idea of what transformation is. We see someone take an old, rusty car and get it in good shape again. We say it's been transformed. We see someone lose a lot of weight on a TV show, and we say they have been transformed. Maybe we watch a guy who wasn't that good at his sport when he was an underclassman grow into an absolute beast by the time he is a senior. It's not that these aren't transformations. It's just that they are not transformed in the biblical sense of the word.

Read Romans 6:1-4. Here, Paul is addressing an argument he was hearing some people make. They were saying, "if God gives us grace when we sin, then the more we sin, the more grace we get!" Obviously, that makes no sense. Paul pushed back on this argument by reminding the Romans who they were. He said in verse 2 that if anyone has come to saving faith in Christ, they have died to sin. Sin no longer has mastery over them. Paul then goes on to paint a powerful picture of transformation in verses 3-4.

Here, Paul makes an important point. He uses the picture of baptism to describe the transformation we experience when we come to faith in Christ. He says that when a person goes under the water, it's as if they were buried with Jesus. When a person comes up from the water, it's as if they were raised from the dead. But it's the phrase at the end of verse 4 that should get our attention.

Paul says that anyone who has come to faith in Jesus has been reborn, freed to "walk in newness of life." Of all people, Paul understood this. It's why he can say we're "new creations" in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and that our old selves were "crucified" with Jesus (Gal. 2:20). Paul understood that being a Christian means the death of our old self and the birth of something new. This is what it means to be transformed.

Listen: embracing the transformation that happens when we come to saving faith in Jesus is the foundation of what it means to be a disciple. We will never grow into real followers unless we embrace the new life Jesus bought for us. We can't live an "old life" faith. We must see clearly who we are in Jesus and press on into the new purpose and vision Jesus has called us to.

CONSIDER THIS

1. A lot of guys come to faith in Christ but seem to live as if Jesus hasn't made much of a difference in who they are. If we know Jesus transforms us into a new creation, how do you explain Christian guys who do not live as if this were true?
2. Describe the biggest difference in your life before and after your faith in Jesus transformed you.
3. "Disciples have been transformed by Christ" is a foundational statement. Because this is true, take some time and describe how the transformation Jesus has worked in you has impacted your life and the lives of people around you.
4. Spend some time in prayer thanking Jesus for the transformation only He can bring. Thank Him that you are a new creation and that He has led you to a place where He is using you to influence others in His name. Finish by asking Him to help you be more aware of the areas in your life that reflect more of your old self than the new.

WEEK 1 DAY 2

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 4:17-24

Think of the first professional athlete that comes to your mind. What's he like? How would you describe him? Paul spends a large part of Ephesians 4 explaining what a life with Jesus and a life without Jesus look like. And just like you can tell a professional athlete by his attributes, you can tell a true disciple by his attributes.

Read Ephesians 4:17-24. Today and tomorrow, we're going to look at Paul's comparison of an untransformed life with a transformed one. Paul is writing to his friends in the church in Ephesus. Paul says to the Ephesians that since they have been transformed by saving faith in Jesus, their lives must be different than those who don't know God. Those who don't know the Lord, Paul says, have a life that looks a certain way:

- The way they think about God and the world is unclear.
- They don't know the truth about God.
- Their hearts are hard, and they don't listen to God.
- They pursue physical pleasure and money without caring if the way they go about it is pleasing to God.

In vs. 20, Paul writes that there can be absolutely NONE of these characteristics in the life of someone who knows Jesus. In verse 22, Paul challenges us to adopt a simple approach: just as if you'd take off a jacket when you walk in the house, take off this old way of life. Isn't that a simple image? Just take it off! Drop it! Leave your old life behind you like dropping an old coat on the floor. In its place, we're to put on our new self. Like taking one coat off and putting another on, we're to dress ourselves to face the world as a transformed disciple of Christ.

Listen, the reason transformation is so critical to discipleship is that our old way of life is "corrupt" (to use Paul's word). In other words, it's broken. We can't faithfully seek after God as a follower if we're living out of an old, dead way of operating. Paul says the new life that Jesus made possible for us is created to look like Jesus. This is God's gift to us as His children.

To be a follower of Christ, we have to rely on the Spirit, but we have the responsibility to act. We have a choice. We can allow the dirty, stained, worn-out coat of our old life to still hang in our closets, where we will occasionally put it on. Or, we can throw it out, turning our backs to our old way of life. It's your choice. Jesus paid for a new life that imitates His own. The question is, what life are you "putting on" right now?

CONSIDER THIS

1. If you had to name one major hurdle keeping you from living out a more committed faith in Jesus, what would it be?

2. Putting on the "new self" is Paul's way of describing discipleship. It's imitating Jesus in our daily lives. Think of three or four times this week when someone in your life would have recognized something you did as a Christ-like act. How can an awareness of our Christ-like actions lead us to an even greater commitment to Jesus?

3. How is your heart when it comes to listening and obeying God? Is it a heart that listens to God? Or is it a hard heart, a stubborn heart that charges down the path of your choosing?

4. We've said the last two days that a transformed life is yours if you have come to saving faith in Jesus. But a lot of guys reading this aren't living out a transformed life. For many guys, it's because they have a hard heart. If your heart is hardened to God, get on your knees now and pray to God that He would break it. Trust Him that He will. Ask Him to lead you to a place where you are willing to listen and follow.

WEEK 1 DAY 3

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 4:25-32

I am a runner. I laugh because God gave me a love of running, but not necessarily the body of a runner. (Hey, big boys run, too!) I really love trail running. I've run a ton of short trail races and a handful of marathon and ultra-marathon races. Running a long-distance race isn't easy, but it's not impossible. The secret is building up to it. It requires a lot of effort and discomfort to achieve. But when you cross the finish line, all the hard work is worth it.

Read Ephesians 4:25-32. This is the second day where you will look at Ephesians 4. In this passage, Paul makes a list of what it looks like for a disciple to live a transformed life. He starts with a biggie in vs. 25: truthfulness. There is a reason Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" (John 8:44). When we lie, we are putting ourselves on the devil's page. A guy who wants to be a follower of Jesus doesn't lie. A guy seeking to be a follower also doesn't lose control of his temper. Anger is a normal part of being a human. But we can be angry and not sin. A disciple controls his anger, especially with those closest to him.

Paul understood hard work. In vs. 28, Paul shows us the purpose of honest work: to be generous with what we earn. In vs. 29, Paul speaks to the language of a disciple. The ONLY words that come out of our mouth should be words that lift up others. Does this verse hit too close to home? If it does, good. We should never shrink from the standard God sets before us. In verses 31-32, Paul encourages us to be kind and gracious with others, forgiving them, just as Jesus has done for us.

Does this list overwhelm you? It overwhelms me. I see many things on that list that I fall short of. But I'm glad it's overwhelming. I'm thankful it's a tall task. Because if it weren't, it wouldn't be worth pursuing. If God gave me a picture of what it looks like to follow Him, and it was a standard I could easily grasp under my power, it wouldn't be much of a standard. It's like running a long race. If it were easy, everyone would do it. Our faith requires that we give a lot of ourselves. But the payoff is always worth it.

We should be THANKFUL that God expects so much from us. Why? Because that means that we get to journey together with Him, leaning on the Spirit for help and striving mightily to become who He calls us to be. It's in the striving that we become disciples.

CONSIDER THIS

1. What in Paul's list got your attention the most? Better question: What are you going to do about it? You have a choice: you can either ignore the Spirit's conviction or act on it. Challenge yourself to listen and obey God's leading. If there is something in that list that is difficult for you, then put the work in. Address it head-on.

2. When I read this list, I am left with a feeling about what a disciple looks like. Think about this list as a whole. In your own words, describe a person who faithfully lives out these attributes.

3. Do you see yourself in the description you just wrote? If you can't answer, yes, it's OK. It just means that you and God have work to do. We are all on a journey toward faithful followership. God is never through with you. He wants you to follow Him faithfully. Spend some time in prayer today, asking God to reveal areas in your life that need refining. Ask Him for the strength to follow through on becoming more like Him. Trust that He is with you and for you.