

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ try to grow in their relationship with Christ daily.

## SCRIPTURE

COLOSSIANS 1:9-23

## SERMON OVERVIEW

Today, we are starting the first lesson in our Seniors series and focusing on how practicing spiritual disciplines can help us connect with God better. We can grow in our relationship with Christ on a daily basis by forming spiritual habits.

## OPENING

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### GAME AND ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- We recommend **Bible Name** or another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**.
- What's one good habit you try to practice every day?

## MESSAGE

*Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.*

## READ COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

### POINT 1: We can grow in Christ every day

In this handful of verses, Paul mentioned several ways he prayed for his friends to grow in their relationship with Jesus:

1. be filled with the knowledge of God's will
2. walk in obedience to God's calling
3. bear fruit in their actions
4. grow in knowledge of who God is
5. thank God for his blessings

These things that Paul prayed for are actions we can put into practice today to grow in our relationship with Jesus. Like anything else, the more we try, the better and more comfortable we will become.

*ILLUSTRATION:* Tell a **personal story** about something you got better at through practice and commitment. (Example: sports, piano, exercise, part-time job.)

All relationships require effort and commitment. Our relationships with friends, with people we date, and even with Jesus grow stronger when we invest time and energy into them. Our commitment to Jesus is a daily effort.

## READ COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

### POINT 2: Christ is over all things

Everything we know to be true is from and for Christ. All of creation came about through Jesus (John 1:3) and for him. When our lives revolve around Jesus, and we daily submit all we are to him, we begin to live as we were created to live.

Because Jesus is God, he has no beginning. Before time began, Christ was present. Not only is he the reason all things exist, but he is also the one who holds everything together. After sin entered the world, leaving everything stained by sin's brokenness, Christ became man to reconcile all that is broken and restore peace once again between Creator and creation. Christ is above all things because he created all things, restored all things, and holds all things together. We are included in that phrase, "all things," which means if we want to know the meaning of our lives and how to live it, we have to get to know Jesus.

## READ COLOSSIANS 1:21-23

### POINT 3: Holiness comes from Christ

While we must put forth effort to grow in our relationship with Jesus, it is not our "work" that makes us holy. We are incapable of having a righteousness of our own (Phil. 3:9). We are only made righteous through Jesus, not ourselves.

*ILLUSTRATION:* Tell a **personal story** about needing someone else to get you into something. (Example: a connection got you a job, you got into an event only because you knew someone important or were the guest of someone important.)

Just as you needed [person from your example] to do [what you did in your example], we need Jesus to be made right before God. It is impossible on our own. Only Christ has the ability to bring about righteousness. We desperately need Jesus.

## CLOSING REFLECTION

*Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.*

- How have you grown in your relationship with Jesus?
- What can you do this week to strengthen your relationship with Christ?

## GROUP DISCUSSION

*Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some good daily habits you try to practice in your life?
- Do you have any habits or skills that you practiced a lot to help you improve?
- How much time and energy do you invest in your closest relationships (friends, family, mentors, etc.)?
- How does it impact you when these people invest their time and energy into you?
- How has practicing spiritual habits (like Bible reading, prayer, and going to church) helped you grow in your faith so far?
- How might your relationship with God look if you neglected spiritual habits (like Bible reading, prayer, going to church)?
- How does this passage motivate you to keep following Jesus after high school?
- What spiritual habits do you need to grow in the most right now?

### APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- The spiritual habits of Bible reading and prayer are powerful ways to invest time and energy in your relationship with Jesus. Pick a time you will read your Bible and pray daily and then commit to it. Share this with a Christian friend to keep you accountable.

### PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.

*Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.*

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