

MY NEXT STEP STUDY GUIDE

The My Next Step study guide presents the material from the book in a format that can be used as a small group, study group or cell group curriculum, or as a study guide for discipleship groups.

HOW TO USE THE STUDY

The study for one lesson or chapter of My Next Step normally lasts between one half and one hour. How long the

study lasts depends on how much discussion is generated by the introduction and application questions.

Preparation

Before the group meets, all of the participants should read the chapter of My Next Step that they will be discussing during the study. However, this shouldn't be a prerequisite to being able to participate in the study.

Big Idea

The Big Idea is an extremely concise summary of the chapter's main idea.

Start the study by simply reading the Big Idea out loud. This serves to establish the topic for the rest of the conversation or study.

Discussion

There are one or two questions that help to start to think about how the study's topic relates to our practical life.

The goal of this portion of the study is to generate discussion and conversation around the topic.

Chapter Summary

The Chapter Summary contains a brief explanation of the material that is taught in the chapter. In this part of the study,

you can read this outloud, alternating readers with each new paragraph.

This serves to provide an overview of the topic to everyone who is participating in the study, both those who read the chapter beforehand and those who didn't read.

Application

The study concludes with an application question. This question should be read out loud and everyone should share their different answers to the question. In this section of the study, we want to focus our attention in how to apply the chapter's main idea to our lives in practical ways.

Study 1

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Big Idea

Many times we act as if being God's son or daughter means to be a good person and go to church. The truth is that God wants his children to live a life of continual transformation as they become more and more like Jesus.

Discussion

- Can you explain briefly what you think it means to live as a Christian?

Chapter Summary

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

There is an interesting phenomenon that exists in churches today. We tend to put a lot of emphasis on making the initial decision to become God's child, and rightly so. Life as God's child starts by coming to faith in Jesus, by deciding to repent and by being baptized. At times however, we don't explain how to live as a child of God after making those decisions.

It is like saying, "Now that you are baptized, just keep coming to church each week and live a good life." I don't know about you, but that sounds really boring. Following Christ has to be more than that!

GOD WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO BECOME MORE AND MORE LIKE JESUS

The goal of following Christ is to become like Christ.

1 John 2 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

God says that if we are his children, we have to become like Jesus, imitate Jesus, treat other people the way Jesus treated others, live close to God like Jesus did and work for God like Jesus worked for his Father.

Constant progress

The Bible teaches that all of God's children should live in a state of constant progress in their lives. We are to progressively allow God to change us. In the words of the apostle Paul, being a child of God means living a life that is always changing and becoming more like Jesus.

Philippians 3 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

HOW CAN WE CHANGE TO BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST?

The good news is that in the Bible, God tells us how to live this life of constant changes that he expects from his children.

1 - God changes us

The Bible teaches that being more and more like Christ is a product of being a child of God. The Bible explains it like this: by entering into peace with God, He makes you His child and then He changes you.

Philippians 1 3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of God lives inside of each child of God, and the Spirit is continually changing him to become more and more like Jesus. The Bible says that the Spirit in us produces a transformation within us.

Galatians 5 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

The Spirit of God literally changes God's children, from the inside out.

2 - Our habits change us

Practically speaking, what the Spirit of God uses to change us are habits that lead us to change. They are habits that put us in a place where God changes us. As we learn to live with these habits in our lives, God changes us to become more like Christ.

*Colossians 2 6 Therefore, as you received Christ
Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,*

"My Next Step" explains the habits that lead to change

In this book, we will learn four practices that will lead us to become more like Jesus. These four disciplines create an environment in us through which God can keep maturing us and changing us.

Application

- In your life, would you say you have the tendency to think that being a Christian means going to church and being a good person?

- When you think of the changes that God desires to see in you, do you expect God to change you or do you think more about how your habits change you?