

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 4

WORKING WITH GOD

Big Idea

We have the tendency to think of that a Christian's activity is focused on going to events (services or meetings at church), and receiving (information, help and advice) from its different programs and ministries. The reality is that God asks his children to work with him.

Discussion

- What does it mean to work with God?
- How important is it to work with God? Why?

Chapter Summary

ATTEND AND RECEIVE

It is easy to think that life as a follower of Jesus is a life of attending and receiving. It is thinking that the most important activity in the life of a child of God is to attend services, meetings, studies and events that the church puts on. It is expecting that the greatest purpose that God's child has is to receive from God and from these events.

We do attend

A big part of being a child of God is spending time with other children of God. We will see the purpose of this in the next chapter. In the meantime, we can say that attending different meetings and services is a such a big part of the life of God's child, that it becomes easy to think that the most important thing you can do in your Christian life is to attend these different events.

Inside we know that being God's child and part of his family, the church, means more than merely attending and

receiving. There has to be more to it than just being in a place that is comfortable for us. It can't just be a life of going to more meetings and services.

God made us for a great purpose, and his desire is that every one of his children live a life full of purpose.

GOD SAVED YOU TO WORK WITH HIM

God saved us in order to give us a new purpose. You could say that God's son or daughter has, along with his salvation, a new purpose that should be the most important thing in his life. It is the new purpose of working with God.

He saves us by grace

Our tendency is to think and feel that we have to do good things in order to give back to God for our salvation. This is NOT true! It is incredibly important to emphasize that this habit of working with God isn't in order to pay him for our salvation, nor is it to earn our forgiveness, nor is it to deserve his love.

Ephesians 2 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

He saves us to work

In this same passage in the Bible, God says that one of his huge purposes in saving us was so that we would work with him.

Ephesians 2 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Following Jesus means working with him

Now, even though the meaning of being a "Christian" in our day has more to do with "attending and receiving," it wasn't always that way. Rather, Jesus' call to his followers wasn't "attend and receive," but "follow me and work with me." This was the original call that Jesus made when he called his first followers.

This wasn't just his call to them, it remains his call to everyone who wants to follow him. At the end of his time on this earth, just before ascending to heaven after his resurrection, he told his followers to go and make other followers from all of the peoples in all the nations.

Matthew 28 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

HOW WE WORK WITH JESUS

If you are a child of God, then the work that your Father has given you to do is to help others get to where you are. It is helping the people in your life; people in your family, that work with you, that go to school with you, that play with you on your sports teams, in other words your friends and family, to become children of God. The work is to help them be saved, to make their decision to turn to God, be baptized and enter the family of God.

1 - We share genuine friendships with a purpose, with people who are far from God

We work with the people that God has put in our lives. You aren't where you are today by accident. God has put you on purpose in the job where you are, in the house or apartment where you live, in the family that you were born into and on the sports team you play with. He has surrounded you with other people in these environments on purpose. The purpose is that he wants you to help these people find peace with God.

We work with Jesus when we spend time with people who don't have peace with God, when we share our lives and form genuine friendships with them, when we are always praying for our friends that aren't God's children and when we look for opportunities to share a study with them that explains how to have peace with God, like "I Want Peace with God."

2 - We guide others who are maturing in their relationship with God

We also work with people who have already made their decision to enter into peace with God. The reason that this is important is because the Bible describes the life of a follower of Jesus as a life of constant progress and continual changes.

We work with Jesus when we spend time with other people who are sons and daughters of God, in order to help them know God better, leave sin in their lives and live like Jesus lived. For this reason we meet with other Christians and guide them by studying the Bible and sharing our lives together.

3 - We work with the church's projects

We work with Jesus when we unite with his family, the church, and together work to put on the meetings and services, to invite our friends to these events and collaborate with the other projects of the church.

Application

What is the next step you can take to work more with Jesus?

How can you work more in your church?

- What are some of your church's projects?
- What are some of the different meetings or services at your church?
- How can you help more?

Who are the people in your life who are far from God?

- How can you help them to know Jesus?

Who are the Christians that God has put in your life that you could help to mature?

- How can you help these people to develop their faith and their relationship with God?