**ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON TWO**

**Memorize John 6:68**

**Day One:** Read Lesson One and answer the following questions:

From T-Ball to World Series champions, what “level of play” do you see in your congregation?

What makes Jesus the perfect mentor for living today?

**Day Two:**  Read Acts 11:26 and answer the following questions.

Who were called Christians in Antioch?

What makes “Christian” a good name for a disciple of Jesus?

**Day Three:**  Read Matthew 10:24-25 and 1 John 2:6. Then answer the following questions.

What is the goal of a disciple (student)?

Can a person who has no intention of becoming “like Jesus” be his disciple? Why?

**Day Four:** Read John 6:66-69 and answer the following questions.

Why did the Twelve not go away from Jesus when other disciples left him?

What caused some other “disciples” to leave Jesus?

**Day Five:** Read John 12:42-43 and James 2:13-14. Then answer the following question.

“Believer” sometimes means “disciple.” Yet, some believers are not disciples. How can this be?

**Day Six:** Read John 9:26-34 and answer the following questions.

What caused the previously blind man to be a disciple of Jesus?

Why didn’t those who were questioning this man about what happened to him become Jesus’ disciples?

What does this suggest is necessary if we are to be Jesus’ disciples?

MY NOTES AND QUESTIONS TO BRING UP IN CLASS:

LESSON ONE: WHO IS YOUR MENTOR?

In beginning a study of Christian discipleship, we appropriately begin with two questions. The first is about mentoring; the second (see Lesson Two) is about following. You simply cannot understand discipleship until you understand the relationship between a mentor and the one he has taken under his wing.

It is significant that the Biblical model for the development of Christian character is that of a mentor and mentoree (to coin a word). God did not just send prophets to instruct us in the ways of righteousness; he sent his “one and only Son” (John 3:16) to show us the way.

**“Book Learning” Is Not Enough**

He did this because simply giving us a set of instructions about how to live is just not enough. We need more than that; we need an example of how to live.

All of us learn more by observation than we do by instruction. While instruction is important, and we cannot do without it, instruction alone will not give the results we need. A simple illustration will show that this is true, especially when performance is important.

Can you become a baseball player just by reading the rulebook? The immediate and obvious answer is, Of course not! How could you expect anyone to become a player just by reading the rules of the game?” Yet, one illustration of the nature of the restoration of New Testament Christianity is that should the game of baseball be lost to the knowledge of man, the game could be restored if someone found the rulebook and started laying out a field to play the game.

Now, it is true that we would be able to play something that looked a little like baseball if that were to happen, I think you would agree that it would be but a poor caricature of baseball as serious players at all levels play it today. Baseball requires much more than having a diamond with three bases in the right places with home plate and a pitcher’s mound constructed according to the rules. It needs more than having an umpire who knows all the rules, the difference between “balls and strikes” and when a base runner is safe or out.

Baseball play demands players with certain skills. Players need to know how to throw and catch the ball from different positions and in different ways. Throwing from the outfield is different from throwing someone out from third base! Throwing to catch someone stealing second is different from throwing to complete a double play. Pitching is different from all of these – and a good pitcher has many different types of pitches in his repertoire. Hitting the ball and running the bases also require skills that are very different.

But even skills alone are not enough. Good play also requires good strategy. A player may be able to throw well – but if he throws to the wrong base, his play is not adequate to the game! And, depending on the circumstances in the game, every base is the right base to receive a throw at some point. The player with the ball must be able to discriminate when those times are in a split-second and do it instinctively.

**How Do You Learn These Skills & Strategies?**

A new player learns in three ways: observation, coaching and practice. Seeing skillful players play helps the youthful player see what can be done, as well as something about how to do it. But just watching others play will not make you a player. You must get into the game – at first with simple practice in throwing, catching and hitting the ball. In this practice, you will receive your first coaching. Watch a father teaching his son or daughter to play the game to see what I mean. In these early stages of learning to play baseball, the rules don’t mean much to us. That’s not to say the rules are unimportant; it’s just that learning baseball skills are more important at that stage.

Of course, to progress enough to actually get into a game and play, even at the “T-Ball” level, some rudimentary knowledge of the rules is necessary. Otherwise, you might hit the ball and run to third base! But that knowledge of the rules is picked up almost casually. I dare say there are many very competent players at the high school (maybe even the professional) level who have never read the baseball rulebook. They have a functional knowledge of the rules acquired through observation and coaching.

**What Does This Have To Do With Christian Discipleship?**

This is an illustration of the fact that merely learning the details of the “Biblical Rules” for our Christian life is not enough. We may have the physical layout down right – the organization of the church, the external facts about how to conduct a worship service, how to become a member of the team and the “do’s and don’ts” we should follow as members of the Lord’s team.

But if we do not go beyond that to the reformation of heart Jesus calls for, we will come short of what we are called to become. In one of his dramatic dialogues with the Jews, Jesus told them that, though they searched the Scriptures, this was not enough without coming to him so that they could have life (John 5:39). They knew the book (although they distorted much of what it said). But they did not have life.

Jesus came to give us abundant life (John 10:10). The NIV translates that “that they may have life, and have it to the full.” The Message, a very “free” paraphrase, has this, “I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.” As we read the New Testament, we realize that the life Jesus came to bring is not just that we get to go to heaven someday. It is a new way of living in the here and now that prepares us for entry into the heavenly palaces.

Yet, many Christians live their entire lives without any intention of actually becoming what Jesus has called us to become. What is even more tragic is that the church is happy to have it so – as long as people will attend worship, not become involved in some of the “grosser” forms of sin, and not be disruptive of the programs of the church. We have difficulty imagining life beyond gossip, envy, malice, lust, selfishness, resentment, and hurt feelings. True, none of these things are put away easily or quickly. We need to have patience with those who are still struggling with these in their lives. But we can all tell of church members in “good standing” who habitually practice all of these – and more – without any censure or correction. Is it any wonder then that the state of the church is as bleak as it is in so many places?

We need to be able to observe people with good “skills for living” as God would have us live so we can lift our expectations for ourselves. We need coaches who will help us to learn the skills needed to live as a Christian should live. We need practice in developing and applying the skills and strategies required for living the Christian life successfully. We need to train ourselves to be godly (1 Timothy 4:7-8) and to train our senses as we exercise them to be able to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Jesus himself is the “chief mentor” (cf. 1 Peter 5:4 where he is called the Chief Shepherd). We also can see the example of the early church as they followed Jesus. But we also need to be able to see living examples in the living church of how we also should live as Jesus’ disciples.

Without these and without a definite plan to follow in acquiring the skills and strategies we need, we will likely continue to live much as we have lived. We will still be in the world and very much of the world. In Psalm 1:1-3, two sources of mentoring are contrasted. The first leads us in the advice of the wicked and the way of sinners to the seat of mockers. The other, through the law of the Lord leads us to the streams of living water that flow from the throne of God. The first of these is thrust at us constantly by the world around us; the second we find as we look to Jesus and to those who would help us to walk in his steps.

Who is your mentor?