



Deep Dive

— BIBLE STUDY —

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

*A Seven-Week Journey into
Biblical Discipleship*

— WEDNESDAYS —
SEPTEMBER 16 – OCTOBER 28, 2026

Introduction

Antioch Christian Church was founded on **Acts 11:26: “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”** That Scripture has always been important to who we are as a church and what we believe God has called us to do.

One important detail in this verse is that they were disciples before they were called Christians. Their identity as Christians was connected to the way they followed Jesus and lived out their faith.

Today, the word *Christian* can mean different things to different people. It may describe someone who attends church, grew up in a Christian family, believes in God, or simply tries to be a good person. This study gives us an opportunity to go back to Scripture and understand for ourselves what it really means to be a Christian and a disciple of Jesus.

At Antioch, part of our assignment has always been to teach people how to live after they get saved—to Build People whose lives increasingly look like Jesus. Salvation is the beginning of our relationship with Christ, but discipleship is the ongoing process of learning, growing, changing, and becoming more like Him.

This seven-week Deep Dive takes us deeper into the foundation of our faith and helps us better understand why we do what we do as a church. Together, we will examine what Scripture teaches about knowing Jesus, surrendering to Him, becoming like Him, loving others, living on mission, and remaining faithful.

Our goal is not simply to know more about Christianity. It is to better understand what following Jesus looks like in our everyday lives. Throughout the study, we will keep coming back to one important question:

Does the way I live show that I am following Jesus?

We invite you to take this journey with us. Show up each week, come prepared, and invest time at home. Read the Scriptures, work through the questions, reflect on what you are learning, and put it into practice.

Let’s take this journey together—not just to learn more about Jesus, but to grow as disciples whose lives look more like Jesus.

Pastors Norris & Tonya McGill

WEEK 1: What Is a Christian?

Christianity is not behavior modification. It is spiritual transformation.

A Christian is not simply someone who believes in God, attends church, or tries to live a good life. According to Scripture, a Christian is someone who has been saved through faith in Jesus Christ, made new by the Spirit of God, and is learning to live as a follower of Jesus.

Teaching Points

1. A Christian Is a Disciple of Jesus. Acts 11:19–26

Acts 11:26 tells us, “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” Before the word *Christian* was used to describe them, they were already known as disciples.

A disciple is more than someone who agrees with the teachings of Jesus. A disciple is a learner and follower whose life is being shaped by the One they follow.

The question is not only, “*Am I a Christian?*” but also, “Am I following Jesus?”

2. A Christian Has Experienced the New Birth. John 3:1–8

Nicodemus was religious, knowledgeable, respected, and morally disciplined, yet Jesus told him, “You must be born again.”

Jesus made it clear that Christianity is not simply becoming a better version of yourself. Something spiritual must happen within us. The Holy Spirit gives us new life.

Religion can change behavior. Jesus changes the person.

3. A Christian Is Saved by Grace Through Faith. Ephesians 2:8–10

We cannot earn salvation through church attendance, good works, giving, serving, or trying to be a good person. Salvation is God's gift received through faith in Jesus Christ.

But notice the progression in Ephesians 2: Saved by grace → created in Christ → called to good works.

Good works do not produce salvation. Good works should flow from salvation.

4. A Christian Has a New Identity. 2 Corinthians 5:17

When we belong to Christ, our past no longer has the final word about who we are.

Scripture says we become a new creation. That does not mean everything changes overnight. It means something has changed at the core of who we are, and God begins the lifelong process of bringing our lives into alignment with our new identity.

We don't change so we can belong to Christ. We change because we belong to Christ.

5. A Christian Belongs to Jesus. Galatians 2:20

Following Jesus changes who has authority over our lives. Paul writes, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Christianity cannot simply be adding Jesus to the life we already planned to live. Following Him means allowing Him to lead our lives. Jesus is not simply our Savior. He is our Lord.

6. A Christian Learns to Live Differently. Romans 6:1–14

Grace does not give us permission to continue living however we choose. Because we have been united with Christ, Paul tells believers to consider themselves “dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Christians still struggle, stumble, and grow. But there should increasingly be a difference between who we were and who we are becoming. Transformation is a process, but growth should produce evidence.

7. A Christian Follows Jesus Daily. Luke 9:23–24

Jesus described discipleship in practical terms:

Deny yourself.

Take up your cross daily.

Follow Me.

Following Jesus is not a one-time decision that has no effect on everyday life. It is a daily decision to allow His Word, His will, and His ways to shape how we live. Salvation begins the relationship. Discipleship shapes the life.

Week #1 Takeaway:

Being a Christian is more than carrying a name. It is receiving new life in Christ and learning to live as His disciple.

The believers at Antioch did not simply call themselves Christians. Their lives caused others to recognize that they belonged to Christ.

The question for us is: What does my life say about who I follow?

Searching the Scriptures:

1. Read Acts 11:19–26. What was happening among the believers in Antioch before they were called Christians? Identify at least four things the passage tells you about this community.

2. Read John 3:1–8. What did Nicodemus already have going for him, and what did Jesus say was still necessary? According to Jesus, what does it mean to be “born again” or “born of the Spirit”?

3. Read Ephesians 2:8–10. According to these verses:

- How are we saved?
- What does not save us?
- What have we been created in Christ Jesus to do?

Explain the relationship between grace, faith, salvation, and good works based on the passage.

4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Romans 6:1–14. Make two lists from the passages:

What is true of my old life?

What is true of my new life in Christ?

Based on these Scriptures, what should becoming a new creation eventually change about the way a person lives?

5. Read Luke 9:23–24 and Galatians 2:20.

Identify the words and phrases that describe what happens to self when a person follows Jesus.

What do these passages teach you about the difference between simply believing in Jesus and following Jesus?

Personal Reflection (Move from “What does the Bible say?” to “What does this mean for me?”)

1. Beyond the Label

If someone knew nothing about your church attendance or what you called yourself, what evidence in your everyday life would tell them that you follow Jesus?

2. Old Life vs. New Life

What is one area of your life where you can clearly see that Jesus has changed you?

What is one area where your old way of thinking or living still has too much influence?

3. Savior and Lord

It can be easier to trust Jesus to save us than to allow Jesus to lead us.

What area of your life is most difficult for you to place under His leadership—relationships, finances, habits, emotions, plans, career, sexuality, time, forgiveness, or something else?

Why is surrender difficult in this area?

4. Evidence of Growth

Think about who you were one year ago.

Where can you see evidence that you are becoming more like Jesus?

Where should there be more growth by now?

5. The Question I Need to Answer

After studying these Scriptures, complete this sentence honestly:

If following Jesus means _____, then one area of my life that needs to change is _____.

What is one specific step of obedience you can take this week?

WEEK 2: Who Is Jesus Really?

Christianity rises or falls on the identity of Jesus.

If we misunderstand who Jesus is, we will eventually misunderstand what it means to follow Him. Jesus is not simply a good teacher, a prophet, a moral example, or someone we turn to when life becomes difficult. Scripture presents Him as the eternal Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Lord over all creation, and the One through whom we are reconciled to God.

To follow Jesus well, we must first know who He truly is.

Teaching Points

1. Jesus Is More Than What People Say About Him. Matthew 16:13–17

Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” Their answers reflected the opinions of the culture around them.

Then Jesus made the question personal: **“But who do you say that I am?”** Peter responded, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

People have always had different opinions about Jesus. Some see Him as a teacher, prophet, historical figure, miracle worker, or religious leader. But discipleship begins when we move beyond what others say about Jesus and come to know Him for ourselves.

The most important question is not simply, **“What do people believe about Jesus?”** It is **“Who is Jesus to me?”**

2. Jesus Is God. John 1:1–18

John begins his Gospel by taking us before Bethlehem: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Jesus did not begin His existence when He was born in Bethlehem. He is eternal. John also tells us that the Word became flesh and lived among us. In Jesus, God stepped into human history.

Jesus is not simply someone who teaches us about God. **He reveals God to us because He is God.** If we reduce Jesus to a good man or great teacher, we have missed who Scripture says He is.

3. Jesus Is Fully God and Fully Human. John 1:14; Philippians 2:5–8

Jesus did not merely appear to be human. He entered fully into human life. He experienced hunger, fatigue, pain, temptation, sorrow, rejection, and suffering, yet He remained without sin.

At the same time, He never stopped being God. Because Jesus is fully God and fully human, He understands our humanity and is able to accomplish what we could never accomplish for ourselves.

He is not distant from our struggles. **He entered our world and experienced life among us.**

4. Jesus Is the Image of the Invisible God. Colossians 1:15–20

Paul describes Jesus as “the image of the invisible God.” If we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus.

In Jesus we see God's compassion, truth, holiness, grace, authority, mercy, justice, and love. Colossians also teaches that everything was created through Him and for Him, and that He holds all things together.

Jesus is not simply part of creation. **He is Lord over creation.** Everything begins with Him, exists through Him, and ultimately belongs to Him.

5. Jesus Is the Only Way to the Father. John 14:6–11

Jesus made an unmistakable statement: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Jesus did not describe Himself as one possible way among many. He identified Himself as the way to the Father. Christian faith is centered on a Person. We are not saved by morality, religion, family history, church membership, or spiritual sincerity. We are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Christianity is not simply believing in God. It is placing our faith in Jesus.

6. Jesus Is Savior and Lord. Philippians 2:9–11

Because of His obedience, death, and resurrection, God exalted Jesus and gave Him the name above every name. Scripture declares that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord.**

We often celebrate Jesus as Savior because He forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. But the same Jesus who saves us also has authority over us.

Following Jesus means more than receiving what He gives. It means submitting to who He is.

We cannot separate Jesus our Savior from Jesus our Lord.

7. Knowing Jesus Is Personal and Ongoing. John 10:27–30

Jesus said: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” Christianity is not simply knowing information about Jesus.

It is knowing Him. A disciple grows in the ability to recognize His voice through Scripture, trust His leadership, obey His direction, and remain close to Him.

The goal is not simply to know more facts about Jesus. **The goal is to know Jesus more deeply and follow Him more closely.**

Week #2 Takeaway

You cannot follow Jesus well if you do not know who He really is. Jesus is not simply a teacher to admire, a helper to call when needed, or a religious figure to believe in. He is **the Son of God, the Savior, the Lord, the Creator, and the One who makes the Father known.**

The question for us is: **Am I following Jesus as He truly is, or only the version of Jesus that is most comfortable for me?**

Searching the Scriptures

1. Read Matthew 16:13–17.

What different answers did people give when asked who Jesus was? What was Peter's answer? According to Jesus, how did Peter come to understand His true identity?

What does this passage teach you about the difference between public opinion and spiritual revelation?

2. Read John 1:1–18.

Make a list of everything this passage says about “the Word.” Consider these questions as you read:

- Where was the Word in the beginning?
- What relationship does the Word have with God?
- What was created through Him?
- What happened in verse 14?
- What does Jesus reveal about God?

Based only on this passage, how would you describe who Jesus is?

3. Read Colossians 1:15–20.

Identify every statement Paul makes about Jesus. What does the passage tell you about:

- His relationship to God?
- His relationship to creation?
- His relationship to the church?

- His authority?
- His work of reconciliation?

Which description of Jesus in this passage stands out to you most, and why?

4. Read John 14:6–11 and Hebrews 1:1–4.

What claims does Jesus make about Himself in John 14? According to Hebrews 1, what does Jesus reveal about God?

Write down the words or phrases in both passages that describe the relationship between Jesus and the Father. Based on these passages, why is knowing Jesus essential to knowing God?

5. Read Philippians 2:5–11 and John 10:27–30.

What did Jesus willingly do in Philippians 2? What did God do in response? What does Philippians 2 say will ultimately happen in response to Jesus?

Then read John 10:27–30. What three things describe Jesus' sheep?

1.

2.

3.

What do these passages teach you about both **who Jesus is** and **how His followers respond to Him**?

Personal Reflection

Move from **“What does the Bible say?”** to **“What does this mean for me?”**

1. Who Is Jesus to Me?

If someone asked you today, **“Who is Jesus to you?”** how would you answer without using a memorized church response? What experiences have most shaped the way you see Jesus?

2. The Jesus I Have Created

Sometimes we emphasize the parts of Jesus we like while ignoring the parts that challenge us. Is there an aspect of Jesus that is easier for you to embrace—His love, grace, forgiveness, compassion, authority, holiness, truth, or Lordship?

Which aspect is more difficult for you? Why?

3. Savior vs. Lord

Where are you comfortable receiving help, forgiveness, or blessings from Jesus but less comfortable allowing Him to direct your choices? What would it look like for Jesus to truly be Lord in that area?

4. Knowing About Jesus vs. Knowing Jesus

Think about your relationship with Jesus right now. Are you primarily learning information about Him, or are you intentionally building a relationship with Him?

What helps you feel closest to Jesus? What has been interfering with that closeness?

5. Following the Jesus of Scripture

After studying these passages, complete these statements honestly:

One thing I understand more clearly about Jesus is

_____.

One belief about Jesus I need to reconsider or deepen is

_____.

If Jesus truly is Lord, one area where I need to respond differently is

_____.

What is one specific step you will take this week to know Jesus more deeply or follow Him more closely?

WEEK 3: Counting the Cost

Jesus never hid the cost of discipleship. He invited people to follow Him, but He also made it clear that following Him would require surrender, obedience, sacrifice, and a willingness to place Him above everything else.

Salvation is a gift of grace that we could never earn. But discipleship changes the way we live. Following Jesus means we no longer build our lives around our own preferences, plans, comfort, or control. We learn to place everything under His authority.

Teaching Points

1. Following Jesus Requires Denying Self. Luke 9:23–26

Jesus said that anyone who wants to follow Him must deny themselves. Self-denial does not mean having no value, no voice, or no identity. It means that our desires are no longer the highest authority in our lives.

Following Jesus means learning to ask: **What does Jesus want—not simply what do I want?**

Discipleship requires us to surrender the belief that we should always be in control.

Following Jesus means self is no longer in charge.

2. Following Jesus Requires Taking Up Your Cross. Luke 9:23

Jesus told His disciples to take up their cross **daily**. For the people who first heard these words, the cross was not a symbol of comfort or jewelry. It represented death, surrender, and sacrifice.

Taking up our cross means being willing to obey Jesus even when obedience is uncomfortable, costly, inconvenient, or misunderstood. The cross is not something we carry only during hard seasons. **It is a daily posture of surrender.**

3. Jesus Must Have First Place. Luke 14:25–27

Jesus used strong language to make one point clear: no relationship can take priority over our relationship with Him.

Following Christ affects our families, friendships, ambitions, loyalties, and decisions. Jesus is not asking us to stop loving people. He is teaching us that every other love must come under our love for Him.

Jesus cannot simply be important to us. He must be first.

4. Discipleship Requires Counting the Cost. Luke 14:28–33

Jesus used the examples of building a tower and going to war. Both require honest evaluation before beginning.

Jesus was not interested in people making emotional commitments without understanding what following Him would require. Discipleship includes a willingness to surrender whatever competes with Christ's authority.

The question is not simply: **“What will I gain by following Jesus?”**

We must also ask: **“What am I willing to surrender in order to follow Him faithfully?”**

5. Following Jesus Changes What We Value. Philippians 3:7–14

Paul had accomplishments, status, education, and religious credibility. Yet after encountering Christ, he reevaluated everything he once considered valuable.

Paul did not say those things never mattered. He said that compared with knowing Christ, they could no longer hold first place. Following Jesus changes our definition of success.

What once defined us may no longer be what drives us.

6. Jesus Will Confront What Competes for Our Hearts. Mark 10:17–31

The rich young ruler wanted eternal life, but Jesus exposed the one area he was unwilling to surrender. His wealth was more than something he possessed. It had become something that possessed him.

Different people have different areas of attachment. For one person it may be money. For another it may be approval, relationships, control, comfort, success, image, habits, or personal plans.

Jesus will often put His finger on the very thing we least want to release.

Whatever we cannot surrender may have more authority in our lives than we realize.

7. Surrender Is a Daily Way of Life. Romans 12:1–2; Galatians 2:20

Paul tells believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. A living sacrifice must continually choose surrender.

Galatians 2:20 gives us another picture: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Discipleship is not one dramatic moment of surrender followed by a lifetime of doing whatever we want. It is learning to surrender again and again as Christ reshapes every area of our lives.

Salvation gives us new life. Surrender teaches us how to live it.

Week #3 Takeaway

Following Jesus will cost us something because following Jesus changes who has authority over our lives.

The cost may involve our comfort, preferences, relationships, habits, plans, possessions, ambitions, or need for control.

Jesus does not ask us to surrender because He wants to take life from us. He calls us to surrender because He knows what kind of life we were created to live.

The question for us is: **What am I still holding onto that keeps me from fully following Jesus?**

Searching the Scriptures

1. Read Luke 9:23–26.

Identify each action Jesus says is required of someone who wants to follow Him. What does Jesus say about trying to save your life versus losing your life for His sake?

What warning does He give about gaining the whole world? Based on this passage, how would you describe the cost of discipleship?

2. Read Luke 14:25–33.

What three examples does Jesus use to explain the seriousness of following Him? What does the builder have to consider? What does the king have to consider? What does Jesus say a disciple must be willing to give up?

What do these examples teach you about making a thoughtful commitment to follow Christ?

3. Read Mark 10:17–31.

What did the rich young ruler ask Jesus? What did he believe about his own obedience?

What specific thing did Jesus ask him to surrender? How did he respond? According to verses 23–31, what did Jesus teach His disciples after the man walked away?

What does this passage reveal about the difference between wanting eternal life and being willing to follow Jesus?

4. Read Philippians 3:7–14.

Make two lists from Paul's words.

What did Paul once consider valuable?

What did Paul value after knowing Christ?

What words or phrases show that Paul was still actively pursuing spiritual growth? What does this passage teach about how following Christ changes our priorities?

5. Read Romans 12:1–2 and Galatians 2:20.

What does Romans 12 tell believers to present to God? What does it mean to be a “living sacrifice”? What changes when the mind is renewed?

In Galatians 2:20, how does Paul describe his old life and his new life? What do these passages teach you about surrender being both a decision and an ongoing lifestyle?

Personal Reflection

Move from “**What does the Bible say?**” to “**What does this mean for me?**”

1. What Am I Holding Onto? What is one area of your life you find yourself wanting to control rather than surrender to Jesus?

Why is it difficult for you to release control in that area?

2. When Obedience Costs Me

Think about a time when following Jesus required you to make a difficult decision. What did obedience cost you? What did you learn about God through that experience?

3. What Competes With Jesus?

What receives the most attention, energy, thought, time, or emotional investment in your life right now?

Could any of those things be competing with your commitment to Christ? What would putting Jesus first look like practically?

4. My Definition of Success

What currently makes you feel successful, secure, important, or accomplished?

How much of that definition has been shaped by culture, family expectations, comparison, or personal ambition?

What might need to change if knowing and obeying Christ became your primary measure of success?

5. The Cost I Need to Face

Complete these statements honestly:

One thing I know Jesus has been asking me to surrender is

_____.

I have resisted because _____.

If I fully trusted Jesus in this area, I would

_____.

What is one specific step of surrender or obedience you will take this week?

WEEK 4: Living Like Jesus

The goal of the Christian life is not simply to know more about Jesus. It is to become more like Him.

Spiritual maturity is not measured only by how much Scripture we know, how long we have attended church, or how active we are in ministry. Maturity is seen in the way Christ is being formed in us—our attitudes, responses, relationships, choices, and character.

We do not become like Jesus through willpower alone. As we remain connected to Christ and yield to the Holy Spirit, God changes us from the inside out.

Teaching Points

1. The Goal Is Christlikeness. Romans 8:28–29

God is not only concerned about what happens to us. He is also concerned about who we are becoming.

Romans 8 says that God is working to conform believers to the image of His Son. That means spiritual growth should increasingly make us look like Jesus in the way we think, speak, respond, forgive, love, serve, and obey.

The goal is not comparison with other Christians. **The goal is becoming more like Christ.**

2. We Become Like Jesus by Remaining Connected to Him. John 15:1–8

Jesus used the picture of a vine and branches. A branch cannot produce fruit by trying harder. It produces fruit because it remains connected to the source of life.

Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Spiritual growth does require discipline, but discipline cannot replace relationship with Christ.

Prayer, Scripture, worship, obedience, and time with God keep us connected to the One who produces real change in us.

Fruit is the result of connection before it is the result of effort.

3. The Holy Spirit Produces the Character of Jesus in Us. Galatians 5:16–26

Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit includes:

Love

Joy

Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
Self-control

These are not simply personality traits. They are evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life.

We may naturally be stronger in some areas than others, but spiritual maturity means allowing the Spirit to develop all of them in us.

The question is not only, “What gifts do I have?” but “What fruit is growing in me?”

4. Living Like Jesus Requires Putting Off the Old and Putting On the New. Colossians 3:1–17

Paul describes spiritual growth with the language of changing clothes. There are attitudes and behaviors believers are called to put off, including anger, malice, slander, lying, and sinful desires.

There are also qualities we are called to put on:

Compassion
Kindness
Humility
Gentleness
Patience
Forgiveness
Love

Following Jesus requires intentional choices about what no longer fits our new life.

We cannot keep wearing old behaviors while claiming a new identity.

5. Living Like Jesus Changes the Way We Treat People. Philippians 2:1–11

Jesus demonstrated humility by putting others before Himself. Paul tells believers to have the same mindset as Christ.

Christlike living means we do not always insist on being first, being right, being recognized, or getting our own way. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is refusing to make yourself the center of everything.

The character of Jesus is often revealed most clearly in how we treat other people.

6. Obedience Is Evidence That We Know Him. 1 John 2:3–6

John connects knowing Jesus with obeying Jesus. A growing relationship with Christ should eventually affect the way we live.

Obedience does not make us perfect, and Christians still struggle. But there should be a growing desire to live in a way that pleases God. John says that whoever claims to live in Christ should **“live as Jesus did.”**

Following Jesus should eventually become visible in the life of the follower.

7. Becoming Like Jesus Is a Lifelong Process. 2 Corinthians 3:17–18

Transformation rarely happens all at once. Paul says believers are being transformed into Christ's image “with ever-increasing glory.” That means spiritual growth is progressive. There will be victories, setbacks, lessons, corrections, and seasons of deeper growth.

The question is not whether we have arrived. The question is: **Am I allowing God to continue changing me?**

Week #4 Takeaway

The goal of Christianity is not simply information about Jesus. It is **transformation into the likeness of Jesus.**

As we remain connected to Christ and yield to the Holy Spirit, His character should increasingly become visible in our lives.

People should be able to experience something of Jesus through the way we love, speak, forgive, respond, serve, and live.

The question for us is:

Where is Jesus becoming more visible in me, and where does He still need to do more work?

Searching the Scriptures

1. Read John 15:1–17.

Identify every time Jesus uses the words **remain**, **fruit**, or **love**. What does Jesus say happens when a branch remains connected to Him?

What happens apart from Him? According to this passage, what is the relationship between remaining in Christ, bearing fruit, obedience, and love?

2. Read Galatians 5:16–26.

Make two lists from the passage.

Works of the flesh:

Fruit of the Spirit:

What does Paul say about the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit? What instructions does he give believers about how to live?

Based on the passage, what evidence should increasingly appear when someone is walking by the Spirit?

3. Read Colossians 3:1–17.

Create two columns from the passage.

Things believers are told to put off:

Things believers are told to put on:

What role do forgiveness, love, peace, the Word of Christ, and gratitude play in the new life?

Which behaviors in this passage are connected specifically to relationships with other people?

4. Read Philippians 2:1–11.

What attitudes does Paul tell believers to avoid? What attitudes does he tell them to develop?

List the ways Jesus demonstrated humility in verses 5–8. What happened after His obedience and humility?

What does this passage teach about what it means to have the “mind of Christ”?

5. Read 1 John 2:3–6 and 2 Corinthians 3:17–18.

According to 1 John, what evidence shows that a person knows Christ? What does it mean to “walk as Jesus did”?

According to 2 Corinthians, who produces transformation in believers? Is transformation described as immediate or ongoing?

What do these passages teach about the relationship between obedience, growth, and becoming like Jesus?

Personal Reflection

Move from “**What does the Bible say?**” to “**What does this mean for me?**”

1. What Do People Experience From Me?

Think about the people who interact with you most often. Would they describe you as patient, kind, gentle, forgiving, humble, loving, and self-controlled?

Which quality of Jesus do you believe people experience most consistently from you?

Which one do they probably experience least?

2. Fruit Check

Review the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23. Which fruit is strongest in your life right now? Which fruit needs the most growth? What situations tend to expose that weakness?

3. What Do I Need to Put Off?

Based on Colossians 3, what attitude, habit, response, or behavior no longer fits the person you are becoming in Christ?

Why have you continued holding onto it? What would “putting it off” look like practically?

4. How Do I Respond When I Don't Get My Way?

Think about your responses when you are frustrated, corrected, overlooked, disappointed, inconvenienced, or misunderstood.

What do those moments reveal about your character? Where would responding like Jesus require a different reaction from you?

5. Where Is God Growing Me?

Complete these statements honestly:

One way I can see that I am becoming more like Jesus is

_____.

One area where God is still working on me is

_____.

One relationship where I need to reflect Jesus more clearly is

_____.

What is one specific change you will practice this week?

WEEK 5: Living on Mission

Following Jesus is not only about what God is doing **in us**. It is also about what God wants to do **through us**.

Jesus never intended for our faith to remain private or contained within the walls of the church. Before returning to the Father, He gave His followers an assignment: **make disciples**.

Every Christian has a mission. We may have different careers, gifts, personalities, and opportunities, but every believer is called to represent Jesus and help others come to know Him.

Living on mission does not always mean going somewhere else. It begins by recognizing that God has already placed us among people who need to see and hear the good news of Jesus.

Teaching Points

1. Every Disciple Has an Assignment. Matthew 28:18–20

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His disciples what we call the Great Commission.

He told them to **go and make disciples of all nations**. This assignment was not given only to pastors, preachers, missionaries, or church leaders. Making disciples is part of what it means to be a disciple.

We are called to help other people come to know Jesus and learn how to follow Him. Notice that Jesus did not simply say, **“Go make converts.”** He said, **“Make disciples.”**

The mission does not end when someone gets saved. We help people learn how to live after they get saved.

Disciples make disciples.

2. We Are Called to Be Witnesses. Acts 1:6–8

Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would give them power to be His witnesses.

A witness tells what they have seen, heard, and experienced. You do not have to know the answer to every theological question to tell someone what Jesus has done in your life.

Your testimony matters. You can tell someone:

Who I was.

How I encountered Jesus.

What Jesus has done in me.

What Jesus is still doing in me.

We are not called to win arguments. **We are called to be witnesses.**

3. Our Lives Should Make Jesus Visible. Matthew 5:13–16

Jesus described His followers as **salt and light**. Salt makes a difference wherever it is present. Light makes things visible.

Jesus said our light should shine in such a way that people see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Our faith should influence how we work, speak, lead, serve, respond to conflict, treat people, handle pressure, and make decisions.

Living on mission means asking: **“Can people see something different in me because I follow Jesus?”**

Our lives should support the message we share.

4. Every Christian Is an Ambassador for Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

An ambassador represents someone else. Paul says God has given believers the **ministry of reconciliation** and that we are **Christ's ambassadors**.

An ambassador does not represent personal opinions or interests. An ambassador represents the one who sent them. Wherever we go, we represent Jesus. That includes:

Our homes.

Our workplaces.

Our schools.

Our neighborhoods.

Our friendships.

Our social media.

Our communities.

The question is not whether we represent Jesus. **The question is how well we represent Him.**

5. The Gospel Must Be Shared. Romans 10:13–17

Paul asks a series of important questions:

How can people call on someone they have not believed in?

How can they believe if they have not heard?

How can they hear without someone telling them?

Our lives matter, but there comes a time when someone needs to hear the message of Jesus. The Gospel is good news:

Jesus came.

Jesus died for our sins.

Jesus rose again.

Jesus saves.

Jesus offers new life.

We should be able to explain why we believe in Jesus and what He has done for us.

Someone cannot respond to a message they have never heard.

6. How We Share Jesus Matters. Colossians 4:2–6; 1 Peter 3:15–16

Sharing our faith does not give us permission to be harsh, argumentative, judgmental, or disrespectful.

Paul tells believers to let their conversation be **“always full of grace.”** Peter tells believers to be prepared to explain their hope, but to do it with **gentleness and respect.**

Our message and our manner should both represent Jesus. People should experience truth from us, but they should also experience grace.

We should never communicate the love of Jesus in a way that does not look like Jesus.

7. Mission Begins Where You Are. Acts 1:8

Jesus told His disciples they would be witnesses in:

Jerusalem.

Judea.

Samaria.

The ends of the earth.

Their mission began where they were and expanded outward. We sometimes imagine mission as something that happens somewhere else. But God has already placed people around us.

Your mission field may include your family, coworkers, neighbors, classmates, clients, friends, community, or people you interact with regularly.

Living on mission means becoming intentional about the people God has already placed within your reach. **You do not have to go across the world to live on mission. Start across the room.**

Week #5 Takeaway

Every Christian has been given an assignment.

We are called to **represent Jesus, share Jesus, and help others follow Jesus.**

Living on mission is not an occasional church activity. It is learning to see our everyday lives as opportunities for God to work through us.

The people around us should be able to both **hear about Jesus from us and see something of Jesus in us.**

The question for us is:

Who has God placed in my life that I can intentionally help move one step closer to Jesus?

Searching the Scriptures

1. Read Matthew 28:18–20.

What does Jesus say about His authority before giving the Great Commission? Identify each command or action Jesus gives His disciples. What are disciples supposed to teach new disciples? What promise does Jesus give at the end of the passage?

Based on this passage, is the mission simply to help people believe in Jesus, or is there more involved? Explain your answer from the text.

2. Read Acts 1:6–8.

What were the disciples concerned about in verse 6? How did Jesus redirect their attention? What did Jesus promise they would receive? What were they supposed to do with that power?

List the four geographic areas Jesus mentions. What principle about mission can you learn from the way Jesus describes its expansion?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–21.

Find and write down the words or phrases related to **reconciliation**.

Who initiates reconciliation? Through whom does reconciliation happen? What ministry has God given believers? What message has He entrusted to believers?

What does Paul mean when he calls Christians “**Christ's ambassadors**”?

4. Read Romans 10:13–17.

Follow Paul's sequence carefully.

According to the passage, what must happen before someone can call on the Lord?

What must happen before someone can believe? What must happen before someone can hear? What role does the person who shares the message play?

According to verse 17, how does faith come? What does this passage teach about why Christians must be willing to talk about Jesus?

5. Read Colossians 4:2–6 and 1 Peter 3:15–16.

List every instruction these passages give believers about interacting with people who do not yet believe.

What role does prayer play? What does Paul mean by making the most of every opportunity?

How should our conversations be described? According to Peter, what should believers always be prepared to do?

What two qualities should characterize the way we answer? Based on these passages, describe what sharing Jesus well should look like.

Personal Reflection

Move from “**What does the Bible say?**” to “**What does this mean for me?**”

1. Who Is Already Around Me?

Think about the people God has already placed in your life. Who do you regularly interact with who may not know Jesus or may be disconnected from Him?

Write down the names of two or three people.

What could you begin doing intentionally to build a relationship, encourage them, pray for them, or create an opportunity for a spiritual conversation?

2. What Does My Life Communicate?

If your coworkers, family members, neighbors, friends, or classmates knew you were a Christian, would the way you live make following Jesus more attractive or more confusing?

Where does your life represent Jesus well? Where might your actions weaken your witness?

3. Can I Tell My Story?

If someone asked you today: **“Why do you follow Jesus?”** Could you answer clearly?

Write a short version of your testimony:

Before Jesus: What was true about my life or heart?

Meeting Jesus: How did I come to trust Him?

Since Jesus: What difference has He made in my life?

4. What Keeps Me from Sharing Jesus?

What makes you hesitant to talk about your faith? Fear of rejection? Not knowing what to say? Fear of offending someone? Feeling unqualified? Concern about being asked a question you cannot answer? Something else?

How might trusting the Holy Spirit change the way you approach that fear?

5. My Personal Mission Field

Complete these statements honestly:

The people God has placed closest to me are

_____.

One person I believe God wants me to become more intentional about is

_____.

One way I can represent Jesus more clearly around them is

_____.

One step I will take this week is _____.

WEEK 6: Finishing Well

The Christian life is not simply about how we begin. It is about continuing to follow Jesus throughout our lives.

There will be seasons when following Jesus feels exciting and seasons when it requires endurance. We will experience growth, disappointment, change, temptation, loss, victories, setbacks, and unexpected challenges. Through all of it, Jesus calls us to remain faithful.

Finishing well does not mean living a perfect life. It means continuing to trust Jesus, allowing Him to correct and grow us, getting back up when we fall, and staying committed to Him until the end.

The goal is not simply to **start with Jesus**. The goal is to **stay with Jesus**.

Teaching Points

1. The Christian Life Is a Race That Requires Endurance. Hebrews 12:1–3

The writer of Hebrews compares the Christian life to a race. We are told to **“run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”**

Every race requires endurance. There are moments when a runner feels strong and moments when continuing requires determination. The same is true spiritually.

Following Jesus for a lifetime means continuing when life becomes difficult, prayers seem unanswered, circumstances change, or our emotions do not match our faith.

Scripture tells us where to keep our attention: **“Fixing our eyes on Jesus.”**

We do not finish well by focusing only on ourselves. **We finish by keeping our eyes on Jesus.**

2. Some Things Must Be Laid Aside. Hebrews 12:1

Hebrews tells believers to throw off **“everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.”**

Notice the passage identifies both **sin** and **weights**. Not everything that slows our spiritual growth is necessarily sinful.

Some relationships, habits, distractions, commitments, attitudes, priorities, or pursuits may simply be making it harder for us to run the race God has given us.

Maturity requires regularly asking: **“Is this helping me follow Jesus or making it harder?”**

Finishing well sometimes requires letting go.

3. Spiritual Growth Requires Continued Pursuit. Philippians 3:12–14

Paul had followed Jesus for years, planted churches, preached the Gospel, suffered for Christ, and experienced God in extraordinary ways.

Yet Paul said: **“Not that I have already obtained all this or have already been made perfect.”**

Paul never believed he had spiritually arrived. He continued pressing forward. One of the dangers of following Jesus for a long time is becoming comfortable with where we are.

Past growth cannot replace present pursuit. **There is always more room to grow.**

4. Finishing Well Requires Spiritual Discipline. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Paul again uses the picture of an athlete. Athletes do not prepare for competition accidentally. They train.

In the same way, spiritual maturity requires intentional practices that strengthen our relationship with God.

Prayer matters. Scripture matters. Worship matters. Christian community matters. Serving matters. Obedience matters. Rest matters. Accountability matters.

These practices do not earn God's love. They help position us to continue growing in our relationship with Him.

You cannot live a disciplined Christian life accidentally.

5. We Must Remain Connected to Jesus. John 15:1–11

Jesus told His disciples repeatedly: **“Remain in me.”**

We began this study talking about following Jesus, and we end by remembering that we cannot live the Christian life apart from Him.

Our strength does not come from how long we have been saved, how much Scripture we know, what position we hold, or how much ministry we have done. Our strength comes from remaining connected to Christ.

The goal is not simply to visit Jesus when we need Him. **The goal is to build our lives around remaining with Him.**

6. God Is Still Working on Us. Philippians 1:6

Finishing well is not dependent on our strength alone. Paul reminds believers that **“he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.”**

God is committed to our growth. There will be moments when we recognize areas where we still need change. Those moments should not discourage us. They remind us that God is still working.

Spiritual maturity means becoming willing participants in the work God is already doing in us.

God is not finished with us, so we should not stop growing.

7. Faithfulness Matters More Than a Strong Start. 2 Timothy 4:6–8

Near the end of his life, Paul looked back and said: **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

Paul did not say his journey had been easy. He had experienced rejection, persecution, imprisonment, opposition, disappointment, and suffering.

But he remained faithful. Finishing well means being able to look back over our lives and know that through every season, we kept returning to Jesus.

The goal is not popularity, achievement, recognition, possessions, or even ministry success. The goal is faithfulness.

A successful Christian life is a faithful Christian life.

Week #6 Takeaway

The Christian life is not simply about making a decision to follow Jesus. It is about **continuing to follow Him for a lifetime.**

We will not do everything perfectly. We will have seasons of strength and seasons when we struggle. But through every season, we keep returning to Jesus, growing, obeying, and moving forward.

At the end of our lives, the greatest accomplishment will not be what we accumulated, achieved, built, or received. It will be knowing that we **kept the faith and finished the race.**

The question for us is: **If I continue living the way I am living today, am I building a life that will finish well?**

Searching the Scriptures

1. Read Hebrews 12:1–3.

Identify every instruction given to the believer in these verses. What two things are we told to throw off? How is the Christian life described?

Where are we told to focus our attention? What did Jesus endure?

According to verse 3, why should believers consider what Jesus endured?

Based on this passage, what is necessary to keep running when following Jesus becomes difficult?

2. Read Philippians 3:12–14.

What does Paul admit about his own spiritual maturity? What does he say he is doing with what is behind him? What is he reaching toward?

What words in the passage communicate effort, movement, or intentionality?

What does Paul's attitude teach you about becoming spiritually comfortable?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24–27.

What comparison does Paul make between athletes and Christians? What does an athlete do to compete?

Why does Paul say he disciplines himself? What is different about the prize believers are pursuing? What does this passage teach about the role of discipline in the Christian life?

4. Read John 15:1–11 and Philippians 1:6.

How many times does Jesus use the idea of **remaining** or **abiding** in John 15?

What happens when a believer remains connected to Christ? What happens apart from Him? What does Jesus connect with remaining in His love?

According to Philippians 1:6, who began the work in us? Who will complete it?

What do these passages teach about **our responsibility and God's work** in our continued spiritual growth?

5. Read 2 Timothy 4:6–8 and Revelation 2:8–11.

What three statements does Paul make about his life?

I have _____.

I have _____.

I have _____.

What does Paul say awaits him?

In Revelation 2, what difficulties were the believers facing?

What did Jesus tell them to do?

What promise did He give those who remained faithful?

What do both passages teach about faithfulness until the end?

Personal Reflection

Move from “**What does the Bible say?**” to “**What does this mean for me?**”

1. What Could Slow Me Down?

Hebrews talks about both sin and things that hinder us. What is currently taking your attention, energy, time, or affection away from your relationship with Jesus?

Is there anything in your life that may not be sinful but is making it harder for you to grow spiritually?

What needs to change?

2. Am I Still Growing?

Think about your relationship with Jesus today compared with one year ago. Where have you grown?

Where have you become comfortable? Is there an area where you once had greater spiritual discipline, hunger, or consistency than you do now?

What would renewed pursuit look like?

3. What Keeps Me Grounded?

What spiritual practices have helped you remain connected to Jesus during difficult seasons? Which practices have become inconsistent?

What two practices do you need to make a regular part of your life going forward?

1. _____

2. _____

4. What Do I Want My Life to Say?

Imagine someone describing your walk with Jesus at the end of your life.

What would you want them to say about:

Your faith:

Your character:

The way you loved people:

The way you served God:

What choices do you need to make now for that description to eventually be true?

5. Am I Building a Life That Will Finish Well?

Complete these statements honestly:

One thing I need to leave behind is _____.

One area where I need to keep growing is _____.

One spiritual discipline I will strengthen is _____.

One person I will intentionally help follow Jesus is _____.

One thing I want to be able to say at the end of my life is

_____.

WEEK 7: The Journey Continues: Putting It All Together

The goal of this Deep Dive was never simply to complete seven weeks of Bible study. The goal was to understand more clearly what it means to be a Christian and to live as a disciple of Jesus.

Throughout this journey, we have returned to the truth that Christianity is not merely a label, church attendance, religious activity, or behavior modification. Following Jesus begins with new life in Christ and continues as we learn to know Him, surrender to Him, become like Him, represent Him, and remain faithful.

Week 7 gives us an opportunity to look back, examine where God has been working, and decide how we will continue moving forward. The study may be ending, but discipleship does not end.

The journey continues.

Teaching Points

1. Remember Who You Are. Acts 11:19–26; 2 Corinthians 5:17

The believers at Antioch were disciples before they were called Christians. Their lives identified them as people who belonged to Jesus. Through Christ, we have also been made new. Our identity is no longer rooted primarily in our past, accomplishments, failures, titles, or other people's opinions. We belong to Christ.

As this study closes, return to the question from Week 1: What does my life say about who I follow?

A Christian is not simply someone who carries the name. A Christian is someone whose life is increasingly being shaped by Jesus.

2. Keep Knowing Jesus. Matthew 16:13–17; John 10:27–30

Discipleship begins and continues with Jesus. We cannot follow Him well if we do not know who He truly is. He is not simply a teacher, helper, or religious figure. He is the Son of God, Savior, and Lord.

Knowing Jesus is not a one-time lesson. It is an ongoing relationship. His sheep listen to His voice, He knows them, and they follow Him.

The question is not only: What do I know about Jesus? It is: Am I continuing to know Him more deeply and follow Him more closely?

3. Keep Surrendering. Luke 9:23–24; Romans 12:1–2

Jesus calls His disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Surrender is not a lesson we graduate from. As God grows us, He will continue revealing areas that need to come under His authority.

Our plans, relationships, habits, ambitions, emotions, finances, time, comfort, and desires must continually be placed before Him.

The question is not whether we surrendered once. The question is: What is Jesus asking me to surrender now?

4. Keep Becoming Like Jesus. Romans 8:28–29; Galatians 5:22–23

God's purpose is not simply to make our lives easier. He is forming us into the image of His Son. The evidence of spiritual growth should increasingly appear in our character.

Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control.

We will never reach a point where there is nothing left for God to develop in us. Mature disciples remain teachable, correctable, and willing to grow.

The question is: Where is Jesus becoming more visible in me?

5. Keep Living on Mission. Matthew 28:18–20; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

Following Jesus was never intended to stop with us. Disciples make disciples. God has placed people around us who need to hear about Jesus, see Jesus represented through our lives, and be helped in learning how to follow Him.

We are Christ's ambassadors wherever He places us - in our homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, churches, friendships, and communities.

The question is: Who am I helping move one step closer to Jesus?

6. Keep Growing. Philippians 3:12–14; Philippians 1:6

Paul refused to believe he had spiritually arrived. He continued pressing forward. At the same time, he trusted that the God who began the work would continue it.

Spiritual growth requires both dependence and participation. God is working in us, and we continue responding through prayer, Scripture, worship, obedience, community, service, accountability, and surrender.

Past growth cannot replace present pursuit.

The question is: What is my next step?

7. Keep Following Until the End. Hebrews 12:1–3; 2 Timothy 4:6–8

The Christian life is a lifelong journey. There will be seasons of strength and seasons of struggle, but through every season we keep returning to Jesus.

We lay aside what hinders us. We keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. We keep running the race. We keep the faith.

The goal is not simply to say, "I started following Jesus." The goal is to one day say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

A successful Christian life is a faithful Christian life.

Week #7 Takeaway

Being a Christian is more than making a decision, carrying a label, or completing a Bible study. It is a lifelong journey of following Jesus.

We know Him.

We surrender to Him.

We become like Him.

We represent Him.

We help others follow Him.

We remain faithful to Him.

The seven weeks may be complete, but the work of discipleship continues.

The question for us is: What will I do with what God has shown me?

Searching the Scriptures

1. Read Acts 11:19–26 and 2 Corinthians 5:17.

What do these passages remind you about the identity of a Christian? What was true of the believers at Antioch before they were called Christians? According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, what becomes true of a person who is in Christ?

After seven weeks of study, how would you now explain what it means to be a Christian?

2. Read Luke 9:23–24 and Romans 12:1–2.

List the words or phrases that describe surrender in these passages. What does Jesus say must happen daily? What does Paul tell believers to present to God?

What area of your life is God asking you to place more fully under His authority?

3. Read Galatians 5:22–23 and Colossians 3:12–17.

Make a list of the qualities that should increasingly characterize a follower of Jesus. Which qualities appear in both passages?

Which quality has God developed most in you during this season? Which one still needs intentional growth?

4. Read Matthew 28:18–20 and 2 Corinthians 5:17–21.

What assignment has Jesus given His followers? What ministry and message has God entrusted to believers?

Who is one person God has placed in your life whom you can encourage, mentor, disciple, or help move closer to Jesus?

5. Read Philippians 3:12–14; Hebrews 12:1–3; and 2 Timothy 4:6–8.

Identify the words that communicate movement, endurance, focus, and faithfulness. What must be left behind? Where should our attention remain? What did Paul ultimately want to be able to say about his life?

What do these passages teach you about continuing to follow Jesus after this study ends?

Deep Dive Final Reflection

Move from “What have I learned?” to “How will I live?”

1. What Has Changed?

What has changed in your understanding of what it means to be a Christian? What did you believe or assume before this study that you now see differently?

2. What Has God Shown Me?

What has God revealed to you about yourself during these seven weeks? Where have you experienced the greatest conviction, encouragement, healing, clarity, or growth?

3. What Has Already Changed?

What is one change you have already made because of something God showed you during this study? What difference has that change made?

4. Where Do I Need to Keep Growing?

What area of your life still needs greater surrender, discipline, obedience, healing, or transformation? What would continued growth look like practically?

5. Who Will I Help Follow Jesus?

Disciples make disciples. Who will you intentionally encourage, mentor, walk with, or disciple as you continue following Jesus? What is one way you can begin?

6. What Is My Next Step?

What is one specific spiritual practice, act of obedience, relationship, ministry opportunity, or change God is calling you to pursue next?

My Commitment

Complete this statement prayerfully and honestly:

Because of what God has shown me during this Deep Dive, I am committing to

The Journey Continues

Seven weeks may complete this Deep Dive, but it does not complete the work of discipleship.

Following Jesus is a lifelong journey of knowing Him, surrendering to Him, becoming like Him, representing Him, helping others follow Him, and remaining faithful.

The goal was never simply to finish a Bible study. The goal is to continue becoming the people God has called us to be.

At Antioch, our assignment is to teach people how to live after they get saved - to Build People whose lives increasingly look like Jesus.

That work continues in each of us.

Keep growing.

Keep following.

Keep becoming.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

And finish well.