

FACES

FACES AND PLACES
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AGES





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WEEK 1: WHERE ARE YOU? START THERE.

Connect

Each week there will be a Faces and Places assignment which will be an opportunity to be agents of change in the world, pointing everyone we encounter to more and more life in Jesus.

- ◆ **What prompted you to join a Faces and Places group?**
- ◆ **Relationships often change over time. Think about your relationships and describe one that has morphed over time. It might have changed from bad to good, from friend to spouse, from casual acquaintance to truly “like family.” Why did that relationship change over time?**

Discover

The disciples’ relationship with Jesus changed over time. Here is John’s account of Jesus’ first meeting with the two of them.

35 The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!” 37 When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them. They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” 39 “Come and see,” he said. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. –John 1:35-39 NLT

- ◆ **Jesus’ first followers responded to a very simple invitation. What can you learn about Jesus’ first invitation to follow Him? What did it cost them?**
- ◆ **Think back. How would you compare your initial response to Jesus’ invitation to that of these early followers?**

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Perhaps as long as 18 months later, another familiar invitation occurred. Note the difference in the invitation:

16 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 17 Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" 18 And they left their nets at once and followed him.

19 A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. 20 He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.

—Mark 1:16-20 NLT

◆ **What changed in terms of the invitation?**

◆ **Would you say you've moved from "come and see" to "follow me"? Why do you think that?**

"Matthew records the words we call the Great Commission at the very end of his gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). They were probably among Jesus's very last words to His disciples. Last words tend to be very important words" Dann Spader.

Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: 'God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age'

—Matthew 28:18-20 MSG

◆ **How would you put the commission Jesus gave to His disciples in your own words?**

◆ **What would change about your daily life if you followed Jesus' commission?**

Author Steve Carter has said that, "*Discipleship progresses through three stages. It begins with the simple stage and then moves into struggle and then becomes sacred.*"

Simple: "You consider a life with Jesus as a beautiful idea. It sounds good on paper, but hasn't been tested yet."

Struggle: "It's the invitation to go deeper with Jesus as you wrestle with doubts, emotions and pressing questions. It's here you discover what God is made of and what faith in Him looks like when it's tested."

Sacred: "The place where faith has been tested and proved authentic."

◆ **Where would you say you are today in your faith journey?**

Respond

During our time together, what we are learning should be accompanied by an active response to what God is doing in our hearts. How we respond to God shows our willingness to let God direct our daily lives.

- ◆ What places do you go that God might have prepared for you to bring a friend closer to Jesus?
- ◆ Which faces come to mind as you think about relationships that could be deepened, inviting good connections one step closer to Jesus?

Pray Together

Praying for one another is an essential part of following Jesus. How can we pray for you as you follow Jesus?