

Learning to Live the Jesus Way*

by John Milgate

During four years of living among college students and recent graduates in and around Seattle, God used us to help many learn to “enjoy intimacy with God” in an approach to “discipleship” I now call “Learning to Live the Jesus Way.”

The approach is highly relational, but definitely includes strong elements of prayer, Bible study, and meditation. The premise is that the Spirit within those who believe in Jesus can *and will* grow us in love for God and one another as we look to Jesus as *an example* of how to live. The initial focus is on relationship with God and one another, with each participant sharing his “story” and others praying for him. As those relationships grow we add scripture, beginning (usually) with the question of Jesus in John 13:12 (*Do you understand what I have done to you?*) and on Isaiah 50:4 (*The Lord God has given Me the tongue of a disciple, that I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple.*). Through sharing, conversation, and prayer we grow in our appreciation for Jesus *as a fully-human disciple of Abba-Father*. Meeting week-by-week with each other, we share whatever “real life” struggles we are facing, pray for each other (including “listening prayer”), share scripture relevant to that struggle, and (as time allows) move to other passages where Jesus speaks of His *total dependence* upon Father—as His *example* to us of our life in Him (see, e.g., Jn. 15:4, 5, & 12). Throughout this experience we seek to hear and respond to the Spirit in our everyday, mindful that Jesus promised: *As the Father sent me, so send I you.*

Seeking to live the way Jesus lived (not as a carpenter or itinerant preacher/prophet, but as a *disciple*, *dependent* upon *Abba*-God Himself in everything, living in “conversation” with Him; *abiding*) encourages each participant to become a true *follower of Jesus*. As we grow together as His disciples, we also allow Him to reproduce the same intimacy with *Abba (Papa)* in others, over and over. This is *Learning to Live the Jesus Way*.

I determined to personally pursue *living the Jesus way* and to invite others to join with me in the experience. I looked to Jesus as the example and *asked Jesus* who (*by name*) I should invite to spend added time with me. I did this three times in three years, each time I invited between six and eight young men, each time several declined while four or more made the commitment and joined together in the journey. I found this approach to “discipleship” both challenging and rewarding. For many weeks in each group one or more of the young men struggled—sometimes with “identity” as a *beloved* son of *Papa* or as a *saint*, others with “hearing” God, others with “baggage” from their past or current sins. Yet, every young man who decided to participate continued through the end; several remain in regular contact with me and one another; all remain on their journey with Jesus; some are seeking to share this way of life with others.

This is the kind of “discipleship” I would like to encourage in others—an approach which pursues relational intimacy with God in daily experience, not primarily information or knowledge. It need not match precisely the approach I pursued in Seattle—God will “contextualize” the approach if we *listen to what He is saying* and *do what He says*. Indeed, helping others learn to put those two statements into their moment by moment experience might be an alternative description of *Learning to Live the Jesus Way*.

*This is a synopsis of a longer description; if you are interested in a discipleship consultation or a copy of the full article, with attachments, please contact John Milgate at johnmichael@liveingrace.org