IN THE
DUST OF THE RABBI

Learning to Live as Jesus Lived
Discipleship was at the heart of Jesus’ ministry, so it’s not surprising that the word *disciple* is used more than 250 times in the New Testament. In fact, the New Testament is the story of disciples written by disciples who wanted to make disciples. And those disciples dramatically changed their world!

But is the disciple-making mission of Jesus and his followers as clear, compelling, and effective nearly two thousand years later? Not really. Discipleship as Jesus and his followers knew it is not part of Western Christian culture today. Contemporary Christianity does not always make discipleship central to the faith. Many who call themselves Christians don’t even know what a disciple is. While we readily agree that it is essential to believe in Jesus as our Savior, we tend to treat his lordship in our lives as a desirable option, like the color we choose when we buy a new car—nice, but not essential. If we recognize the importance of discipleship, we tend to think that obeying God’s commands is a worthwhile goal but is less important than “being saved.” We view discipleship as a goal that only a few “all-star” believers can attain.

Jesus and his disciples had a very different view of discipleship. They made no distinction between “being saved” and living in obedience to God. To be saved was to be totally committed to a life of obedience — to walk as the Rabbi walked, to become like him. They did not do this in order to *be* saved, but rather because they *were* saved. Thus the goal of the community of Jesus is not to make *converts* but to make *disciples*. Salvation, of course, is essential, but it is...
the entrance to the path of discipleship rather than the final destination. That is why the apostle James wrote, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17).

In this session, we will consider what Jesus means by his call, “Come, follow me.” His is a call to radical discipleship, a concept Dallas Willard captures well:

> When Jesus walked among humankind, there was a certain simplicity to being a disciple. Primarily it meant to go with him, in an attitude of study, obedience, and imitation. There were no correspondence courses. One knew what to do and what it would cost. . . . Family and friends were deserted for long periods to go with Jesus as he walked from place to place announcing, showing, and explaining the governance of God. Disciples had to be with him to learn what he did. (The Spirit of the Disciplines, Harper San Francisco, 1990, 259–260)

Just as God miraculously blessed the early disciples’ desire and commitment to become more like Jesus the Rabbi, God desires the same of us. He calls us to reclaim the ancient practice of discipleship that was central to Jesus’ life and message. So let’s walk in the footsteps of ancient disciples for a while. Let’s explore the communities and culture in which they lived. Let’s examine the practices of first-century rabbis and their disciples — their love for and knowledge of Scripture and their passionate desire to give up everything in order to obey God as their rabbi did. As we discover the world in which discipleship was born and practiced, we will better understand Jesus’ call to be his disciples.
Opening Thoughts (4 minutes)

The Very Words of God

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 2:3–6

Think About it

When it came time to choose his disciples and launch his ministry, Jesus did not go to Jerusalem—the first place we might have gone—but to the sparsely populated hills surrounding the Sea of Galilee. Why? What was it about Galilee that captured his attention above all other places in Israel?

DVD Teaching notes (28 minutes)

Scythopolis and Bethsaida: cities in contrast

Galilee, where discipleship flourished
The building blocks of discipleship

Becoming a disciple

DVD Discussion (4 minutes)

1. What was unique about the Jews who lived in Galilee?

   In what ways did the things they were passionate about differ from the driving passions of people who lived in Scythopolis (Beth Shean)?

2. What impact do you think the Galileans' understanding of community had on the ways they practiced their faith in everyday life?
3. What was the central focus of worship in the synagogues of Galilee in Jesus’ day?

What effect did their love for the words of God have on daily life in Galilee?
Small Group Bible Discovery and Discussion (14 minutes)

The Building Blocks of Discipleship

When Christians today talk about being a disciple, we don’t mean exactly the same thing as the Galileans of Jesus’ day. Discipleship was a core value in Galilean society. In fact, Galilee was where the world came to become disciples of the great rabbis. So let’s open our Bibles and open our eyes to discover what discipleship meant in the world of Jesus.

1. What is a disciple? (See Matthew 4:18 - 22; 10:24 - 25; John 8:31; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 John 2:3 - 6.)

   THINK ABOUT IT

   Discipleship begins with belief, but that is only the beginning. A disciple obeys the Rabbi’s teaching. A Christian disciple not only believes Jesus is the Messiah but also is passionately devoted to doing what the Rabbi (Jesus) commands.

   Ray Vander Laan

2. What do the following verses reveal about the three building blocks of discipleship — obedience, community, the Word of God? (See Deuteronomy 6:4 - 7; Matthew 5:17 - 19; 9:35 - 36; Acts 16:15; Ephesians 2:19 - 22.)
3. When large crowds began following Jesus, he spoke to them about what it meant to be his disciple. How did he describe discipleship, and why do you think he said these things? (See Luke 14:27–33.)

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF DISCIPLESHIP

If we are to understand what discipleship meant to Jesus and his disciples, we need insight into the biblical meaning and usage of several words:

Talmid (Talmidim, pl.) is the Hebrew word for disciple. The talmid willingly left home, family, and occupation to be with the rabbi because he wanted more than anything else in the world to be like the rabbi (teacher) in his walk with God. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture, his talmid listened to him, watched him, followed him, memorized his words, and imitated his walk with God. Eventually the talmid became a teacher who had his own disciples who wanted to learn from him how to walk with God.

Haver (Haverim, pl.) is the Hebrew root word that refers to deep social bonds between people. It is translated as "friend" but means much more. It denotes a relationship that is stronger than death itself. It can be used in reference to a close-knit group of people, or to disciples and their rabbi who are deeply committed to each other and to their common goals (as in John 15:12–16).

Mathetes, the Greek word translated "disciple," refers to a talmid as well as to an individual who is interested but who has not renounced everything to follow the rabbi.
4. Why do you think Jesus chose disciples from small, rural, seemingly unimportant villages to take his message to the sophisticated culture of the Roman world? What did they have to offer people in a world of success, personal comfort, beautiful temples, exciting arenas, vast libraries, magnificent theaters, and stimulating gymnasia?

5. In what ways do our lifestyle choices and our culture undermine a total commitment to discipleship? What do you think we can do to reclaim our passion for God? A faith community? Obedience? The Scriptures?

SHOCKING CONTRASTS
Startling contrasts existed between the extravagant buildings of the sprawling Greek and Roman cities and the plain, utilitarian communities of Galilee.

Galilee was largely rural and agricultural. The only public buildings in Galilee — synagogues — were used as community centers, schools, and places

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of worship. Village streets were usually unpaved, and people carried water to their homes from nearby springs and wells. Most Galileans worked hard, but they were not poor. They knew the Scriptures well, were very religious, and avoided pagan practices.

Inhabitants of nearby Roman cities, on the other hand, could enjoy every known luxury and pleasure. Those who could afford it lived in elaborate villas with running water. Streets were paved with stones and equipped with sewers. Goods from every corner of the empire could be bought in the agoras (markets), and an array of gods could be worshiped in pagan temples. The people could train their bodies and minds in gymnasiums and libraries and could amuse themselves in the baths, brothels, theaters, and arenas.

Yet by 200 AD, the huge area of Asia Minor had a significant Christian population because God used ordinary Galileans to share the good news of the kingdom of heaven!
faith Lesson (4 minutes)

When talking about the people of Bethsaida, Ray said, “We tend to think of ourselves as individuals. In their world, they . . . understood that community is more important than the individual.”

1. What role does community play in your walk with Jesus?

2. In what way(s) might your individualism affect your view of discipleship — and your commitment to be a disciple of Jesus?

3. Which aspects of spiritual community in Chorazin might you want to incorporate into your life?

closing (1 minute)

Read 1 John 2:6 aloud: “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”

Then ask God to use this session and your time of personal study to help you see discipleship as Jesus sees it. Ask him to give you a heart that desires above all else to walk in the dust of the Rabbi.

Memorize

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 2:6
Walking with the Rabbi Day by Day

In-Depth Personal Study Sessions

Day One | Galilee: The Heart of Jesus’ Ministry

The Very Words of God

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 4:23

Bible Discovery

Why Galilee?

Although Jesus traveled through much of Israel from Phoenicia to Jerusalem, he focused his ministry in the small area of Galilee. Here, within about a four-by-six-mile area on the north and northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee, he lived and taught in places named Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Magdala, and Gennesareth.

1. Why did Jesus choose Galilee as the focal point of his ministry, and what was his message? (See Matthew 4:12 – 17.)

2. Who was the audience Jesus wanted to reach with his message, and how serious was he about delivering it? (See Matthew 10:5 – 7; 15:21 – 28.)
3. Like any rabbi, Jesus taught using metaphors and images familiar to his audience. (See Matthew 7:15 – 20; 13:47 – 52; Luke 20:9 – 19.) What do these passages reveal about the life and people of Galilee? How do you know the people understood what Jesus said?

4. How did Jesus respond when his message of repentance and preparation for the kingdom of heaven moved people to action? How did he respond when it did not seem to have an impact? (See Matthew 11:20 – 24; 15:21 – 28; Mark 2:1 – 12.)

WORTH OBSERVING …
For the first fifty to seventy-five years after Jesus ascended to heaven, the Christian community was stronger in Galilee than anywhere else in the world. Perhaps the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum took Jesus’ rebuke to heart (Matthew 11:20 – 24).
Session One: When the Rabbi Says “Come”

Reflection

No matter where he went, people paid attention to Jesus. Whether they wanted to or not, it seems they recognized in him the authority and presence of the kingdom of God.

What have you learned about Jesus and his message through his ministry in Galilee?

What about his message has caught your attention? What is your response?

Day Two | What Is a Rabbi?

The Very Words of God

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God.”

John 3:1 – 2

Bible Discovery

The Role of the Rabbi

In Jesus’ day, becoming like the rabbi was the driving motivation of a disciple’s life! For years a disciple wanted to hear everything the rabbi said, know everything the rabbi knew, and do everything the rabbi did. Today, however, the idea of respecting someone so much that we would dedicate great effort to following him so closely is foreign to us. What was so special about a rabbi?
In Jesus’ day, a rabbi was not the formal head of a religious community or synagogue as we think of a rabbi today. Instead, rabbi was an honored term of respect given to one who interpreted and taught the Hebrew Bible. Rabbi meant “my superior” or “my master” and came from a Hebrew root meaning “great” or “many.” Disciples and others used this term to refer to great scholars and teachers of the Scriptures who were also known as “sages.” After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD, rabbi became a formal title for sage.

Rabbis played an important role in the Jewish spiritual culture because there were no formal seminaries at the time of Jesus. Each rabbi taught his disciples how the Torah should be interpreted and obeyed, and his disciples willingly submitted to that interpretation. A rabbi, then, was an honored teacher who was well versed in the text of the Hebrew Bible. He was highly respected for his knowledge, interpretation, and teaching of Scripture as well as for his personal righteousness. Following a rabbi required a deep commitment on the part of the disciple who would live with and follow the rabbi day in and day out for years in order to learn to be like him and live in obedience to God as the rabbi did.

For the Galileans, walking with God took priority over everything. So a rabbi and his disciples typically were highly respected by others in the community. A family or extended family group usually provided housing and food for a rabbi and his disciples. Because of the high respect for study of the Torah, and the fact that the rabbi was leading other people to the kingdom of heaven and the life to come, each disciple was expected to honor the rabbi even more than his own father. It is difficult for Christians today to imagine such love and commitment to a human teacher, but that was the norm in Galilee.
1. A first-century rabbi had a unique lifestyle, and the Scriptures give us insight into what his daily life was like.
   b. Where did a rabbi teach, and who listened to him? (See Matthew 5:1–2; Mark 6:6; Luke 4:14–16; 7:36, 40–43.)

2. What teaching technique common to the Galilean rabbis did Jesus use? How did the way Jesus taught his disciples differ from how he taught the crowds? (See Mark 4:33–34.)

All teaching by the early rabbis attempted to explain, interpret, and apply some portion of the Hebrew Bible. To the audience, the validity of the teaching depended on the rabbi’s ability to use a variety of passages in new and creative ways, to illustrate the teaching with parable or metaphor, and to ground the teaching in the text. Whether they wanted to or not, people who heard Jesus teach recognized that he taught with authority. (See Matthew 7:28–29; 21:23–27; Mark 1:27–28.)

In fact, Jesus best fit the type of rabbi believed to have s’mikhah, the authority to make new interpretations of the Torah. Most teachers of the law could only teach accepted interpretations. Teachers with authority, however, could make new interpretations and pass legal judgments.

Reflection

In Matthew 10:1–14, we read the instructions Jesus gave to his disciples when he sent them out. This passage gives us a picture of what everyday life was like for his disciples. It shows us how Jesus expected them to live and what he expected them to do. Read this passage and consider how committed you are to Jesus, your Rabbi.

Fact File

Educated as a Rabbi

The Mishnah, rabbinic interpretations of Scripture written in the second century AD, describes the educational process for a young Jewish boy during the first century BC to the first century AD, which would include Jesus’ time:

At five years old [one is fit] for the Scripture, at ten years the Mishnah [oral Torah interpretations], at thirteen for [the fulfilling of] the commandments, at fifteen the Talmud [making rabbinic interpretations], at eighteen the bride-chamber, at twenty pursuing a vocation, at thirty for authority [able to teach others].

This passage clearly describes the education of an exceptional student, because few students became teachers. It also indicates the centrality of
the Hebrew text in the education of Jews in Galilee. A comparison of this description to Jesus’ life shows that he closely followed the customs of his time and place:

- Jesus “grew in wisdom” as a boy (Luke 2:52).
- Jesus reached the “fulfilling of the commandments” indicated by his first Passover at age twelve (Luke 2:41–47). His excellent questions for teachers in the temple during that Passover indicate the study he had done.
- Jesus learned a trade with his father (Matthew 13:55).
- Jesus spent time with John the Baptist, a rabbi (John 3:22–26; 4:1–3). The fact that Jesus and his disciples were baptizing might suggest that Jesus and John may have studied together or with the same teacher. No teacher is mentioned in Scripture, although Jesus did say he “learned” (John 15:15).
- Jesus became a rabbi at “about thirty” (Luke 3:23).

Day Three | Know, Love, and Obey the Text

The Very Words of God

_Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it._

_Luke 11:28_

Bible Discovery

_Living by the Word_

Jesus came to people who knew the Scriptures. They expended great effort to study and memorize the text, to debate its meaning, to teach it to other people, and — above all else — to obey it. As you take a closer look at Jesus’ ministry, consider how essential the text was to all that he did and said.

1. Read the following passages and note Jesus’ love for the Scriptures, his desire to learn and understand them, his
faithfulness in obeying them, and his commitment to teaching them to others. How badly do you want to follow his example?

a. Matthew 4:1 – 11


c. John 15:14 – 15

DID YOU KNOW?

For the Jews in Galilee, knowing and obeying the Scriptures was as essential to life as food and water. They memorized significant portions of Scripture in synagogue schools. They heard it read aloud during synagogue prayers and when the rabbis read and discussed it. After all, how could one rightly interpret and obey God’s commands without knowing the text? How could one walk with God without knowing what he said? Not to know the text was unthinkable.

2. When he taught, Jesus continually referred to the Hebrew Bible that was so familiar to his audience. In the book of Matthew alone, he quoted the Hebrew text at least thirty-eight times! As you read the following passages, notice how easily the text flowed from his lips as he spoke. Why did he base so much of his teaching on the Hebrew Scriptures? Could
Jesus have shared the Scriptures effectively if he had not memorized them? Why or why not? (See Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43; 9:10 - 13; 12:1 - 8.)

3. What do the following passages show you about Jesus’ knowledge of Scripture and his commitment to obey it? (See Matthew 4:13 - 17; 8:16 - 17; 21:1 - 6; 26:52 - 56.)

**FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING …**

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” In this statement, Jesus used technical rabbinic terminology. *Abolish* meant to interpret Scripture so that it would not be obeyed as God desired. *Fulfill* meant to interpret Scripture so it would be obeyed as God intended. So when Jesus used these terms, his audience would have heard him say, “I did not come to misinterpret the Scripture so you would not keep it correctly. I came to interpret it so that you will know how to keep it correctly.”

4. In what way did Jesus use his knowledge of the Scriptures in Luke 24:13 - 32? Which Scripture did Jesus use? What do you think his teaching must have meant to the two men when they realized who he was?
Reflection

Jesus came from a community that knew the Scriptures, and he expected his disciples to follow his example and become like him. He expects no less from his followers today. Yet many of us do not know much about the text he knew and loved, and we have memorized even less of it.

How can we do what Jesus commands if we do not know his Word?

Is it time to dedicate yourself to knowing your Bible and using it as the foundation for your life and witness? How will you begin?

How would memorizing Scripture reinforce your desire to live by its truth in your daily life?

If you are serious about being a disciple, ask God to fill you with his Spirit and give you a desire to become more like Jesus who knew and loved the Word of God.

Memorize

The prophet Jeremiah memorized so much Scripture that he literally could not stop mentioning God or speaking in his name. How passionately do you want God’s Word to burn within you? A good place to start might be to memorize the following:

*But if I say, “I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,”
his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.*

_Jeremiah 20:9_

Pray for the same love for the Word as Jeremiah had.
Day four | Synagogue: Practicing Faith in Community

The Very Words of God

*They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.*

*Mark 1:21–22*

Bible Discovery

*Discovering the Synagogue*

The synagogue was central to the life of religious Jews in Galilee. It was where the faithful learned the Scriptures, how to interpret them, and how to obey God. So, how did Jesus and his disciples relate with the synagogue communities in Galilee? The Scriptures give us some surprising insights.


   a. When Jesus taught, how was his message received? What impact did his message have on the religious community? What do you think Jesus wanted to accomplish in the synagogues?

   b. What else did Jesus do in the synagogues besides teach? What was his purpose in doing these things?
PROFILE OF THE SYNAGOGUE

Originally, the synagogue was not a specific building but a place where God’s people gathered in his presence around his living Word. It was sometimes called a place of prayer, because in the Jewish mind the verb translated *pray* means worship as well as prayer. Synagogue began before Solomon’s temple was destroyed, but the practice became essential to the Jewish faith during the exile.

As exiled Jews returned to the land of Israel, they brought synagogue—the practice of coming together as a community to study and worship in God’s presence—with them. By the first century in Israel, larger community buildings were built to serve as meeting places for synagogue. Soon the name *synagogue* was applied to the buildings where community study and worship of the Scriptures took place. So during Jesus’ time, the synagogue was both a *place* and a *group* of people engaged in seeking God through the study of Scripture and prayer.

Synagogues played an important role in the lives of religious Jews who lived along the north and northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee. Although the Jews traveled to the temple in Jerusalem to worship three times a year, they worshiped regularly with family, friends, and neighbors in the local synagogue. The Torah scrolls were kept in the synagogue, so people went there...
to read and study the Scriptures and listen to the rabbis proclaim their interpretations of the text. Their children attended synagogue schools where they learned to read, write, and memorize the text. Thus the community worship, expressed in a handful of small synagogues in Galilee, contributed greatly to the disciples’ preparation to follow Jesus, their Rabbi, and become like him in every way.

2. Who was Jairus, and what does his relationship with Jesus tell us about Jesus’ relationship with the local synagogue? (See Luke 8:40 – 56.)

3. According to Acts 16:13 – 15; 17:1 – 4, what did Paul and Silas do on the Sabbath as they traveled through Macedonia? What do these (and many other passages) reveal about their involvement in the synagogue community? (Remember, a house of prayer is another way of saying synagogue.)

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER

Christians today tend to think that the theology and teaching of the Pharisees was all wrong, but it was not. The Pharisees were faithful Jews who worked hard to obey God in all they did. That’s why they had so many applications of Bible texts: they were trying to obey God! Jesus called some of the Pharisees hypocrites because they didn’t practice their own teaching (and some of their own writings criticize this as well). Some other Pharisees were so set in their interpretations of the Scriptures that they refused to consider the interpretations of others — including the interpretations of Jesus. Despite their imperfections, the Pharisees made knowledge of the Scriptures and obedience to God top priorities in life.
Reflection

Although many Christians today think that Jesus called his disciples away from the Jewish faith and community, that is not the case. Jesus and his disciples continued to participate in community life, including synagogue worship, throughout his ministry. Even when his disciples went out into the world beyond Israel, they sought out and continued to be a part of the faith community of the synagogue. This is not to suggest that you must join a synagogue in order to follow Jesus, but active involvement in a faith community is necessary.

How essential is your faith community in your walk with God? How does it help you focus on obeying God in all things at all times?

Do you have a community of people with whom you share a mutual love for and delight in the Scriptures — people who encourage you to learn and study the Word of God? Remember, the reading of the Torah in the synagogue made the people dance with joy!

If a spiritual community is lacking in your life, ask God to lead you to such a community so that you can become more like Jesus.

Day five The Rabbi as Shepherd

The Very Words of God

*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

*John 10:14–15*
Bible Discovery

Following the Good Shepherd

The image of the shepherd and his sheep is frequently used in Scripture as a metaphor for the relationship between God and his people. Not only that, God often chose shepherds to lead his people. Abram (Genesis 13:1 – 5), Moses (Exodus 3:1), and David (1 Samuel 17:14 – 15), for example, all were experienced shepherds. This image sent a powerful message to the people of Israel because even to this day a flock of sheep in Israel is dependent on the shepherd for survival. Israel is not a land of knee-high grass and abundant water. The shepherd must lead the sheep daily to graze on short tufts of grass on hillsides and to drink from widely scattered sources of water. Without the shepherd’s leading, the flock would die.

The shepherd/sheep image describes the intimacy, dependence, obedience, and faithfulness that characterize the rabbi/disciple relationship as well. The rabbi walks ahead and leads his disciples by his voice. Just as sheep follow their shepherd without understanding why the shepherd leads where he leads, disciples follow the rabbi by faith, trusting him to lead them in the right way to the right place. Following the rabbi is just as much a matter of life and death for the disciple as it is for the sheep that follow the shepherd.

1. What do the following passages reveal about what a shepherd does for the sheep? What do these images say to a disciple who is following the Rabbi, the Good Shepherd? (See Psalm 78:52 – 55; Isaiah 40:10 – 11.)

2. Although the previous passages give us positive images of what the shepherd does for the flock, we can also learn much about the Good Shepherd by knowing how bad shepherds offend him. Ezekiel 34:1 – 16 paints this picture vividly. As you read this passage, ask yourself how much and in what
ways the Good Shepherd loves his sheep. What difference would it make to a disciple (to you as a disciple) to be led by such a Rabbi?

3. In John 10:1–16, Jesus portrays himself as the Good Shepherd. What is he saying to his *talmidim* that will instruct and help them as they follow him and seek to be like him?

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In contrast to sheep who follow their shepherd, goats often wander on their own, away from the shepherd’s chosen path, the “path of righteousness.” Goats require extra attention from the shepherd because they think they know a better path.
In light of this, consider what Jesus taught in Matthew 25:31–46, particularly verses 32–34, 41: “He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’ . . . Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire.’ ” The key difference between the sheep and the goats is that the sheep obeyed the shepherd; they did what he would do. The goats, on the other hand, had no interest in what concerned the shepherd.

**Reflection**

Psalm 23:1–4 is a very familiar Scripture passage, but take a fresh look at it. Read it slowly and thoughtfully. Meditate on what it means in terms of Jesus being your Rabbi (Shepherd) and you being his disciple (sheep).

- As you live life, how carefully are you listening for the Good Shepherd’s voice?
- How passionate is your desire to follow his every step, to be like him in every way?
- How much do you long to walk obediently in his paths of righteousness?
- How fully do you trust him to lead you when you do not know the way?
- Who will be with you when danger threatens?

If the Good Shepherd is your Rabbi, what qualities do you need to cultivate in your life to be a true disciple? When he says, “Come,” will you follow?
Memorize

*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

*John 10:14–15*