

Jesus People

a Paseo Pathway study in John



PASEO PATHWAY

HEART, SOUL, MIND, STRENGTH, NEIGHBOR

28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked Him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31** The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:28-31

PASEOPATHWAY

Simply put, if Jesus says loving Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbor as ourselves are the two most important things to God, then those are the things we need to focus on. The Paseo Pathway, our method of discipleship, has two major focuses, growing in our love of God in every aspect of our life and loving our neighbors in genuine, selfless, relational ways. The Pathway, like everything God does, is not meant to be walked alone; it's meant to be shared and experienced with a group of friends.

The word for disciple in the New Testament comes from the Greek word, *mathetes*, which means, "one who engages in learning through instruction from another." In other words, a disciple is a student. However, we need to be clear about the differences between the Biblical world's understanding of a student and ours. Disciples of teachers were common in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Philosophers and religious teachers would gain disciples, but the disciples didn't seek to just learn from the teacher's lectures. This wasn't a classroom teacher-to-student style learning from today. Instead, the disciples would follow the teacher throughout their everyday life. They sought to learn not just their teachings, but their character and lifestyle as well. In other words, disciples followed teachers in order to become like their teachers.

This puts a new twist on our understanding of what being a disciple of Christ means. We aren't just believers and we are not just invited to come and learn from his teachings. We are invited to come and know Him, live everyday life with Him, and in so doing become like Him. But unlike earthly teachers, when you grow to know and have a relationship with Jesus to this level, you will find that not only will your knowledge of Him grow, but your love for Him will grow as well. In fact, this is God's ultimate aim in our discipleship! To see Him, learn about Him, grow to know Him, and fall in love with Him more and more.

Therefore, the Paseo Pathway is far more like developing a relationship than it is like a class or process. At least, that is our hope for all of us involved. But in order for it to maintain that focus, you must commit to not treat scripture reading like homework and group times like classrooms. Instead, every bit of scripture reading is an opportunity to meet with God and grow in your love for Him. Every time you gather with friends or serve is an opportunity to love others as yourself.

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Everything about the Pathway hinges on you making a commitment to what we call REALationships. Yes I know that is misspelled. We spelled it that way to make a point. Be REAL and Be Relational. Be this with God and be this with others. Bring your whole, messy, un-put-together, unperfected self and be honest about who you are and what you are struggling with. And in the Grace of Jesus you will experience life and growth.

Each week on the pathway you will be asked to meet with God on your own through scripture reading and journaling. This may be a completely new practice for you, so be patient. Picture it like a daily time to sit down and chat with God. He will speak to you through scripture and His Spirit, and you will speak to Him through your prayers and response. At the end of each week you'll gather with your friends and have meaningful conversations about what your time in scripture and what God has impressed upon you. Your group's leader will have questions to help guide these conversations, but this is not meant to be used like a teacher and a classroom. Remember, this is all about relationships. So if you don't like the questions, ditch them. The main point is to focus on what God is saying through scripture and how He wants to use that to affect change in your life. In particular, *how can what you've been reading deepen your love for God and others?*

ALLABOUTJESUS

If you had to describe the Gospel in one word, what would you say? The Gospel is the heartbeat of Christianity, the central message that informs and guides all that we say and do. *Gospel* literally means “good news,” but alas, that is two words and you have to boil the entire message of Christianity into one word; so what is it? What is the one word Gospel of Christianity? It's simple: JESUS. That one name contains the totality of our entire hope, our entire religion, our entire message, our entire life, our entire purpose, our entire future. The good news is not words on a page, it's a person, it's “the word made flesh,” it's Jesus.

A.W. Tozer stated it perfectly when he said simply, “*We are committed to Jesus Christ, our Lord, alone. Our relationship to Christ is all that matters, really. I believe that a true Christian’s faith is an attachment to the person of Christ in total commitment to Him*” (*Delighting In God*, A.W. Tozer). Christians are people fully committed to Jesus Christ, attached to Him in every sense of that word, which is no small thing. Listen to Paul in Colossians 1

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:15-20)

All of Creation is about Jesus. That is the profession of our faith. And that is the substance of what the true believer holds on to. He or she is infatuated with, committed to, attached to, obedient to, and hoping in Jesus.

His Life = Our Example

His Spirit = Our Power

His Teaching = Our Truth

His Presence = Our Comfort

His Death = Our Forgiveness

His Lordship = Our Rest

His Resurrection = Our Victory

His Providence = Our Supply

His Love = Our Comfort

His Kingdom = Our Treasure

His Church = Our Family

His Friendship = Our Joy

His Likeness = Our Goal

His Return = Our Hope

JESUSPEOPLE

Christians are madly and profoundly *Jesus People*. People enthralled with, in love with, and committed to Jesus. He is our everything. Or at least He should be. An alarming question to ask yourself is simply, “Would my friends, neighbors, coworkers, family describe me as being enthralled with Jesus?” If they are close to you they most likely know your favorite food or hobbies or sports team or TV Show. But do they know your source of life itself? An even more alarming and honest question to ask yourself is, “Am I actually enthralled with and in love with Jesus or am I just hoping He blesses me for saying that I am?” Now cut yourself some slack. The enemy is doing everything he can in your life to keep you from seeing how amazing Jesus really is because he knows the moment you become a Jesus Person, he’s lost. His hope is that he can keep us so preoccupied with ourselves that we never truly glance up to see what all of creation is testifying to: Jesus is the amazing creator and sustainer and savior of the Universe!

John 6 captures a sad story. It begins with crowds pressing in all around Jesus. They have heard He is amazing, and they believe it enough to come and see. And sure enough, He does something amazing for them, He takes a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish and He feeds the five thousand people gathered around Him. The people are so amazed, and so thankful that they want to make Jesus King. They are ready to grab Him and crown Him, because surely someone so amazing can fulfill all of their political and personal dreams. There was just one problem. Jesus didn’t come to fulfill their personal desires, He came to fulfill His Father’s. So He escapes. He sneaks away to the mountainside.

The next morning when the crowds find Him again (after He walked on water in the middle of the night to the other side of the lake) Jesus confronts them for their self-focused, worldly desires of Christ. He tells them they are only coming to Him because He fed them the day before. They get into an argument about Moses and God, and then Jesus says something amazing:

35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those He has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son

and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Here is the interesting thing, the people are all there that day because they think Jesus is amazing. But their awe of Him is not because they see Him as God personified, but rather that He can be extremely useful for their life and goals. So Jesus lets them in on God’s great plan: He is not here to merely give bread to fill temporary hunger, He is here to *be the bread* of life and fulfill people’s deepest hunger and thirst for eternity.

So what happens after Jesus reveals this amazing truth? The crowds leave. They aren’t interested in becoming *Jesus People*, they are just interested in Jesus fitting into their plans. The creator of the universe is standing in front of them, has performed miracle after miracle and they are upset because He won’t give them more bread. They aren’t enthralled with Jesus, they are enthralled with self and merely hoping Jesus could join in with their self-enthralled goals. And when He refuses to join in with their self-worship, they leave. But not all of them. No, the disciples stay. The ones who had left their jobs and their previous ways of life just to follow Jesus and become *Jesus People* stay while everyone else leaves. Why?

68 Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

And that is the major distinction between *Self People* who want to use Jesus to meet their goals, and *Jesus People* who have come to realize there are no goals worth having outside of Jesus’, because He is the source of life itself. To become a *Jesus Person* is to see Jesus for who He is, commit to Him, and to never “hunger and thirst again.”

JOHN

The book of John was written with one expressed purpose:

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

The book is divided into two distinct sections: *The Book of Signs* (ch. 1-12) and *The Book of Glory* (ch. 13-21). The *Book of Signs* captures seven of the miracles of Christ

that show He is no ordinary man or Rabbi. The final of these signs is the biggest, He raises Lazarus from the dead. The *Book of Glory* captures the Passion story of Jesus' last night, arrest, trial, death, and resurrection. The combination of the two books are meant to help the reader stand in awe of, fall madly in love with, and place their faith in Jesus. In other words, John was written to help more people become *Jesus People*.

As you read the book do not allow each story about Jesus to pass you by without pausing and allowing your heart to be amazed. Picture yourself there in the crowd watching the miracle take place and listening to His amazing words. Reread the story if necessary, and spend time pondering the supremacy of Christ. Each day you'll be encouraged to do four things:

1. **LEARN** - What does the section of reading teach you about Jesus? Far too often we read scripture with us in mind. But not so here. Here you must read the story with Jesus in mind. Allow the book of John to shape your view of Christ. What did the section of reading teach you about Jesus' Lordships, about His will, about the way He approaches life, about the way He approaches God. Analyze Jesus, dig deep into the text and write down all that you are learning about Him. A great free resource to use in helping you study the book of John is the Enduring Word Commentary: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-1/>
2. **ADORE** - Studying the life of Jesus is not like reading a biography of some dead person long ago. No, we serve a living Savior with whom we can have a relationship here and now. This is far more like reading a bio of a friend. Except this friend is the Creator and Sustainer and Savior of the world! This friend loved you so much He not only created you, He is not only sustaining and providing for you, He died to save you. Become enthralled with Him. Withdraw from people to some isolated place and turn your heart's affections towards Christ. Adore Him. Worship Him. Bless Him with your words and emotions. Humble yourself before Him. Personal worship is a vital part of a Jesus Person's life. It's what fuels each obedient step.
3. **BE TRANSFORMED** - "God loves you just the way you are, but He has no intention on leaving you that way." (Max Lucado). Make no doubt about it. God loves you despite your sin, despite your past, despite your struggles. And because He loves you He is at work within you through His Spirit and His word to transform you more and more into the image of the most beautiful thing in all of the universe - Christ. This is something called Sanctification. Know this, you are saved by grace and grace alone. Not by what you do. BUT, part of grace's work in your life is transforming you from the inside out. And as God transforms you to be more like Christ, you'll

discover more and more of His peace and joy in your life. Take time each day to pray the simple, yet powerful, prayer, “God what needs to change in me today to be more like Jesus?”

4. **OBEY** - Which leads to our fourth step each day. As you study Jesus and adore Him, learn to listen to Him, ask Him this simple question, “How can I follow you better today?” Allow Him through His Spirit and word to teach you and guide you. In John 14 He teaches that love will lead to obedience, and that those that love Him will be given the Spirit to be reminded of all that Jesus taught so that they might obey more. This is a key factor. We do not obey out of a religious sense of duty or out of self-focused sense of earning; we obey out of a deep adoration and trust of Jesus. He has the Words of Life, where else would we go? He is our everything.

READING PLAN

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
WK 1	PASEO PATHWAY	JOHN 1:1-18	JOHN 1:19-34	JOHN 1:35-51	JOHN 2:1-25
WK2	JOHN 3:1-36	JOHN 4:1-26	JOHN 4:27-42	JOHN 4:43-53	JOHN 5:1-47
WK3	JOHN 6:1-24	JOHN 6:25-71	JOHN 7:1-24	JOHN 7:25-52	JOHN 8:1-20
WK4	JOHN 8:21-59	JOHN 9:1-34	JOHN 9:35-10:21	JOHN 10:22-42	JOHN 11:1-44
WK5	JOHN 11:45-12:11	JOHN 12:12-50	JOHN 13:1-17	JOHN 13:18-38	JOHN 14:1-31
WK6	JOHN 15:1-25	JOHN 16:1-33	JOHN 17:1-26	JOHN 18:1-27	JOHN 18:28-40
WK7	JOHN 19:1-16	JOHN 19:17-41	JOHN 20:1-31	JOHN 21:1-25	COL 1:13-23

GROUP QUESTIONS

Here are some suggested questions for discussion each week. They are based on that week's readings and should help spark deeper reflection on what God is teaching us through John. Feel free to use these questions and to develop your own. As you read, write down any discussion questions that you'd like to ask the entire group. In answering these questions, seek to be REAL and not just surface level. True discipleship happens in REALationships!

1. What did you learn about Jesus this week? What in the text revealed His Lordship? What revealed His goodness? What did it teach about His Kingdom?
2. How did you adore Jesus this week? Tell the group about meaningful times of personal worship that you had.
3. What did God reveal to you this week that He is transforming within you?
4. What did Jesus call you to obey this week? What convictions did you feel? How can you better live out His Kingdom here and now?