

Apprentices of Jesus: sermon notes

discussion guide

based on **John 8:31-42** (Linked to sermon of 12/09/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks



This was part of a series: Being an apprentice

Intro: This is the first in our series on being Jesus' apprentices. Traditionally we talk about being disciples but the image of being Jesus' apprentices offers us a fresh perspective on how we learn to follow Jesus. We will look at how we can learn from and practice being apprentices to Jesus. What does that look like in our day to day lives?

We will use three new headings for the sermon notes: head (looking at the Scripture and beginning to understand what it means), heart (allowing God's word to go deeper), hands (what are the practical out workings of these Scriptures?) Feel free to begin each session with a time of worship. For each set of sermon notes I will suggest a psalm, Scripture or song you can use.

Worship: Use Psalm 1 or <https://youtu.be/iRb769P50IQ> I have decided to follow Jesus to begin your time together.

Head:

Start by thinking about the words apprentice and disciple. How would you define them? Which word do you find more helpful/less helpful and why?

Now read together John 8:31-42:

- 1. Who is Jesus talking to in this passage?*
- 2. What, according to verse 31, marks out a true disciple? (The Greek verb used here suggests "remaining" or "abiding")*
- 3. How do you understand Jesus' statement "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free"? (look at verse 2 and 36 as well as Galatians 5:1,13 and 1 Peter 2:16)*
- 4. What does verse 33 suggest about these Jewish believers are relying on for their salvation? (For a Jew, their descendency from Abraham would be enough to believe they were "guaranteed" salvation)*
- 5. How does Jesus challenge these Jewish believers dependency on being descendants of Abraham (verse 37, 39)?*

6. *Why does Jesus use the image of son and slave in verse 35? What is he contrasting here? Elsewhere in Scripture we are described as both children of God and slaves, how helpful do you find the images?*
7. *Jesus contrasts his following of his own Father (v.38) with the Jews, who say Abraham is their father (v.39)? What is the difference?*
8. *What do you make of verse 41? Who do you think Jesus is suggesting their father is? (read on to verse 44 for help!) How do you think the Jews would have reacted to this challenge?*

Heart:

Now read the passage again individually and prayerfully. Give some time for individual reflection and then share with one another, as you feel comfortable.

What particular verses or images resonate or leap out at you?

What might God be trying to say to you through these verses?

Does any of the passage make you uncomfortable? If so, begin to ask God why and what he may be saying to you through this.

Hands:

Jesus challenge to the Jewish believers is that belief alone is not enough, to be true disciples our lives need to reflect that. Here is where I think the apprenticeship image is helpful. As apprentices/disciples, we are "learning on the job", we aren't perfect but making a choice to follow the expert, the Master craftsman.

In small groups:

Choose one thing that you feel God was challenging you on (it may be an attitude, a habit or a lifestyle choice). Offer it to God and ask Him to begin to transform you and help you to choose His way. If you feel comfortable, share this with the group for prayer. If not (and that is fine!), spend some time praying for one another that God will strengthen you and give you all the resources you need to follow Him.

Come back together and pray the Grace:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever. Amen.