

Seeking God as a Leader

By John Babler

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments related to John 13:3 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What are some ways you can know God and His will for your life?

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to John 13:2, 10–11 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What are two ways Jesus' example of loving and serving Judas impacts how we relate to those in our lives who are hard to love?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to John 13:34–35 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What are specific ways you can love family members, friends and neighbors by serving them?

Scripture to Memorize

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand the connection between loving others by serving and seeking God as leader.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Think about a serious, challenging situation you have dealt with in your life. What was your focus on in the midst of the situation? Do you wish your focus had been on something else? If so, what?

Read John 13:1–15 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 1. Jesus knew that His hour had come. As Jesus was preparing to celebrate Passover with His disciples, He knew He was facing imminent death on the cross. **He loved them to the end.** Even though He knew the cross was imminent, His focus was not on Himself but on loving others. Jesus loved even when facing death. This is in stark contrast to our natural desire and tendency to focus on ourselves. As a leader, Jesus focused on others.

Verse 2. Judas. Judas was at the supper. He had already been tempted and planned to betray Jesus. We all have people in our lives who are hard to love, but none of them are preparing to betray us to death on a cross. We, too, must learn to love those in our lives who are hard to love.

On Your Own

In the space below, write your answers to these questions:

In your town or immediate area, who dislikes you more than any other person?

What needs, crises or hardships are present in that person's life?

If Christ were on earth in the flesh, how would He likely go about meeting those needs?

Knowing the Holy Spirit will give you the strength and courage, are you willing to meet those same needs in the name of Jesus Christ?

Studying the Passage

Verse 3. Jesus, knowing that the Father . . . , and that He had come from God and was going back to God. Jesus also knew and trusted the Father. His relationship with God the Father was foundational to His being able to persevere in the midst of crisis. Jesus knew His Father's will. As a leader, Jesus focused on God. As we think about seeking God as leader, Jesus provides the perfect example as He kept His attention on God and loved others despite being in personal crisis.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed Assignment One during the week can now share answers to the following question: What are some ways you can know God and His will for your life?

Studying the Passage

Verses 4-5. Rose from supper . . . taking a towel, tied it around His waist. The washing of feet was a cultural necessity. It showed hospitality and was done by the most menial of servants. Showing His love for His disciples, Jesus humbled Himself and began to wash their feet.

Discussion Questions

Why was foot washing important during Jesus' time on earth? Why do you think none of the disciples had volunteered to wash the others' feet? Read Luke 22:24 for insight into the second question.

Studying the Passage

Verses 6-8. Lord, do You wash my feet? . . . You shall never wash my feet! Earlier, Peter had correctly identified Jesus as the Messiah (see Matthew 19:16; Mark 8:29). Now, when Jesus came to Peter, Peter was offended that Jesus was humbling Himself and was going to wash his feet. After addressing Him as "Lord," Peter initially refused Jesus. When Jesus explained that those He doesn't wash have no part with Him, Peter said, "Not my feet only but also my hands and my head."

In these verses, Jesus was not emphasizing the cleaning that comes from the physical act of foot washing but the spiritual cleansing that comes to those who are born again (see John 3:1-15).

Verses 10-11. Jesus said to him, . . . "Not every one of you." Jesus knew Judas was going to betray Him. Jesus loved Judas and washed his feet – even knowing that Judas would shortly betray him. Jesus set a powerful example for disciples today.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share answers to the following question: What are two ways Jesus' example of loving and serving Judas impacts how we relate to those in our life that are hard to love?

Studying the Passage

Verses 13-15. You call Me Teacher and Lord . . . should do just as I have done to you. Jesus gave an example of loving through service even while knowing He would soon face the mocking, hatred and injustice leading to His sacrifice for our sins. Even though He is Teacher and Lord, He provided this example and says we should do as He did. We should love others (v. 1) by humbling ourselves and serving them.

Read John 13:34-35 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 34. as I have loved you. The clearest example in the Bible concerning how Jesus loved His disciples is found in the passage we have been studying. Again, the emphasis is on Jesus' love through serving.

Verse 35. will know that you are My disciples. We know as disciples we are to be good witnesses. Verse 35 presents a way we can be powerful witnesses as we love one another in the same way He loved His disciples.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share answers to the following question: What are specific ways we can love family members, friends and neighbors by serving them?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

John 13:1–14 reveals two things Jesus knew:

1. He knew that His hour had come and He would soon depart from the world (see John 13:1).
2. He knew “the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back to God” (see John 13:3).

As a leader, Jesus sought God. He knew His Father and His Father’s will for Him. He trusted His Father. Jesus’ life on earth provides the ultimate example of seeking God as leader.

In addition, Jesus demonstrates that when we follow His example, we too can show love by humbling ourselves and serving others. As we love others by serving them, people know we are Christ’s disciples (see John 13:34–35).

Jesus provided an example of loving someone hard to love as He loved Judas by serving him. As we seek God as leader, we will be empowered to love those in our lives who are difficult to love.

Follow up Question

As we seek God as leader, how should we treat those in our lives who are hard to love?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.