



Being Grown as Leaders
from God's Seed of Faith

A Bible Study with Joyce J. Millikan

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Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. John 13:14-17 (NKJ)

About the Author

Joyce Millikan is married to Greg Millikan who practices law in Pasadena, California, and who leads the CLS chapter there. Greg and Joyce have two adult sons and they attend Lake Avenue Church. Joyce is a recent graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. The MA she earned in Intercultural Studies was focused on conciliation counseling across cultures. Her current interest lies in systems and the significant part the individual Christian leader can play within them as responsibility is taken up by the individual in relation to Jesus Christ. Joyce expresses her thanks to Greg for his counsel and support in the writing of this study; however, she takes sole responsibility for its content.



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Introduction

BEING PERSONALLY LED, from the inside out by Christ and God's authentic love is the focus of this Bible study series. Since Jesus Christ was given to us by God we can benefit in learning His way of leading. Jesus' leadership displays profound trust in God, His Loving Father. Dedicating ourselves to the process of learning the ways Jesus led and loved is what will create in us a truly effective leader. Christ's lovingly responsive obedience to His Father is the bedrock of character. Jesus Christ *is able to grow* in us. As we respond in kind to God in faith, we will be transformed. Transformative change in our lives is what makes visible the glory of God in us! May God be glorified as we become more like Him through our study together in His Spirit!

All quoted Scripture is from the New King James Version, unless otherwise indicated.

Study 1

Learning To Lead In Christ

Read Hebrews 1:1-3 as a group and answer the following questions:

- How did God speak to people in times past (the Old Testament)?
- How does God speak to people today?
- Who is the heir of everything?
- Who made the Universe?
- Who is the exact representation of God?
- Who sustains all things by His powerful Word?
- Who provided purification of sin in Himself?

Leader, please read aloud:

These verses remind us that Jesus is the *personal fulfillment* of God's promise of an eternally life-giving relationship. Jesus came in the flesh in order that each of us might gain His love relationship with God. This personal relationship with God is the true source of life.

1. Is this Jesus someone I can count on, someone who cares and is totally trustworthy?

Read John 14:26

This proclaims we can always be together with God in His Name (Jesus), and through His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our personal teacher today.

Consider privately and then discuss with the group your reasons for prayer with God:

- I pray when I'm in a crisis or when I need wisdom
- I pray only formalized prayers at meals and at children's bedtimes
- I pray only when led by others to pray at church meetings
- I pray when I remember to have my "devotion times "
- I pray in order to fellowship with God because I know He cares for me
- Other

Leader, please read the following aloud:

There are many reasons why people pray. What we believe about God seems to influence our attitude toward prayer in dialogue with Him. It seems *if we only knew* what God wanted us to *do*, everything would be fine. Right? "Lord, if You would tell me exactly what to do and where to go, then I could set my course and go!"

None of us knows future events, yet God knows every and all things! God says we don't have to know the details of future events, we just need to *know and listen to Him!* God creates the future out of the present moment. If we abide in Him (Christ) now, we will *already know* the best way to a future with God! Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." **John 14:6** Is it really true that Jesus is the Way to Life?

2. How would my life and leadership be different if I *acted* like this were true? Discuss your answers together.

3. If you were to do everything that Jesus tells you, one day at a time, do you think that you would be abiding in the center of where God wants you to be? Check your response:

- No, Jesus does not really know God's will for my life
- No, Jesus might mislead me and take me the wrong way
- Jesus wants me to wait until He tells me all the details before I start to follow Him.
- Yes If I follow Jesus one day at a time I will be in the center of God's will

4. Are you ready to follow God's will that way? Check your response:

- No I don't think God would ever ask me to go anywhere or do anything that He didn't show me the details of His plan ahead of time.
- I'm not sure.
- Yes, I am willing to follow Him by faith and not by sight. I can trust God
- Other

Read Matthew 6:33-34 below, silently, praying and listening to God together in the quietness of your own heart:

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (NIV)

Take the remaining time to discuss together the thoughts, questions or reflections raised in your personal prayer and study time. Before you depart, thank God together openly for His love.

For personal reflection before Study Two, consider what is true about God:

Do you believe:

- God is absolutely trustworthy?
- God really cares about you?
- That He sent Jesus for you?
- That He has chosen you?
- Jesus is your Way, your Truth and your Life?

If you do not believe these right now, openly confess your struggle to God. Ask Him to help you want to do His will in His Way. "It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil 2:13) Matthew 4:18-20, Acts 9:1-20 and John 21:17-22 reflect events where persons were called by God and not much information was given to them about their futures.

Study 2

Looking at Jesus as He Serves His Father

Leader, please read aloud:

Jesus knows we live in a complex world filled with confusion and hopeless situations. How is it possible then, for me to *actually lead others* in making wise life choices while I have my own complex life to live? As a Christian seeking to serve God, *where* shall I begin to make a difference, and *with whom*?

Read John 1:14-18, together

Jesus left Heaven in order to join fallen humanity here on Earth

1. Why do you think Jesus would do such a thing?

2. Does this passage give us any clues?

Read John 13:1-17 aloud (Leader. Read questions 2-4 aloud, one at a time, with pauses between them. After that, take some time to reflect silently together on questions 2-4. Then proceed to question 5 for discussion and brainstorming.)

1. Why is Peter so upset in verse 8?

2. Could Peter's attitude toward his dirty feet compare to my attitude toward the "dirty" (sinful) part in my life?

3. Do I *resist* honestly presenting my sin and willfulness to God? Why is it so difficult?

4. Am I willing to trust Jesus in washing my feet *or* will I fight being cleansed and purified?

5. Why does Jesus say to Peter in verse 8, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me?"

What new insights have you gained about Jesus' perspective on "washing?"

6. *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.* John 13:14-17

- Does the picture of servanthood that Jesus displays in John 13:14-17 (listed above (NIV)), fit the image we usually apply to our own cultural usage of the words "servant" and "master?"
- Can you imagine God being such "a servant" to your dirty feet?

- Does this help us better understand Peter's attitude in verse 8? How difficult it is to show God our sin! Yet how can we be "washed" if we don't? Discuss your thoughts about this with the group.
- How is my ability *to give* God's grace to others affected by my ability *to receive it* from God?
- Is it possible to receive God's grace from others? Will I allow others to wash my feet?
- What are some specific ways people in your group have received God's grace?

Leader: *Please facilitate closing this study in prayer, giving thanks to God for His grace.*

For further reflection before Study Three: What do I work to hide from God? Is there anything unclean about me which I believe God cannot cleanse? Is God my friend? (Compare James 2:23 with John 15:15).

Study 3

Obedience (Even in Weakness) as the Way of Leadership

Leader please read aloud:

Because Jesus was all man and all God, His life gives every person the opportunity to gain a unified and harmonious center to both their spiritual and physical dimensions. Every person needs to receive God's help in order to resist the natural, physical and emotional temptations to break relationship with God. As we learn to present each personal weakness and situational limitation honestly to God as it occurs, He is able then to employ His supernatural power in the situation. As we co-operate with God in this way, we will be participating *with Him* in leading others toward God's community of social justice.

Read aloud **Matthew 14:15-21**. Here we find a situational limitation, presented as a problem to Jesus. What steps does Jesus take in the midst of the problem? How does He lead his disciples through it?

Now read **Matthew 19:16-22**, where Jesus leads a rich, young ruler toward eternal life. Compare the ruler's attitude toward God in verses 16 and 20 of Matthew 19, with how Jesus responded to difficulty in Matthew 14:16, 18 and 19. What makes the difference in Jesus' faithful response to life's limitations and problems?

Is the amount of possessions actually the defining factor of faith? Why or why not?

Jesus knows our hearts follow "treasure." Compare **Matthew 6:19-21** with **Matthew 19:21**. What is Jesus telling us as leaders about our personal standards and actions toward what we hold as treasure?

In **2 Corinthians 12:9**, the Lord says to Paul, *My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness*. If someone is willing, share how God helped you with a specific leadership problem you thought was impossible — where you had no power in and of yourself to make a difference.

What did God do in the situation that you couldn't do?

How does having "treasure in heaven" provide us means to suffer and recover from a seeming defeat or a disillusionment in our faith?

Where does power to lead come from? Is this power effective in leadership? Take turns reading the following verses aloud and discuss the ones you find inspiring or challenging to your idea of leadership.

Psalm 62:11: *Power belongs to God*

Zechariah 4:6: *Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.*

Acts 1:8: *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*

Romans 1:16: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

2 Timothy 1:7: *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV): *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.*

Leader: For the final question, please allow time for personal reflection, followed by closing prayer

What specific changes can I bring to my leadership behavior which will establish treasure in Heaven as well as give me time to reflect, trust and praise God for all the good He has brought into my life thus far?

At home:

In my neighborhood and/or church:

On the job:

As our personal faith and trust in God grows, we will allow *His power* to lead us and work in us (especially in our weakness!). God will constantly reveal to us real treasure and, in the process, grow us into mature, strong and faithful leaders. God's faithful leadership will powerfully affect my behavior (as well as others) in the midst of my present leadership opportunities. As I follow Jesus in faith, others (yet not all others) will follow Him as well. Thanks be to God for His wonderful gift!

Leader: In closing prayers, bless one another's future leadership, in Christ, as we go forth in the power of His joyful leadership, given for all people!

For a closing benediction read **Psalm 67:1-4** (TLB) below:

O God, in mercy bless us; let your face beam with joy as you look down at us. Send us around the world with the news of your saving power and your eternal plan for all mankind

Study Notes

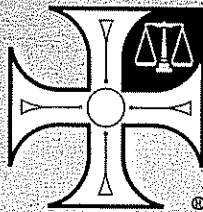
Study Notes

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes."

— **Romans 1:16**

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