CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JULY192025

Scripture Story: Matthew 14:1, 2, 13-33; Mark 6:30-52; Luke 9:7-17; John 6:1-21.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 38-40.

days of discipleship



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flashlight

"In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Psalm 46:10. Here alone can true rest be found" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 363).

keytext

"The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'"

(Mark 6:30, 31, NIV)

what do you think?

Imagine that you are getting ready for school one day when you receive the news that school is canceled for the day. That's right! There is no school, and you are free to do whatever you like. Rank the following activities on a scale of 10 (have to do it) to 1 (not interested) to see what you will do with your day off.

____ Call a friend to go shopping
____ Pick up trash around your neighborhood
____ Text-message some friends
____ Sleep
____ Check out your social media pages or surf the Internet
____ Turn off all media (chill)
____ Do a sport or recreational activity
____ Do nothing
____ Read

did you know?

Much of this week's Sabbath School lesson takes place around a small Galilean seaside village called Bethsaida. Bethsaida literally means "House of the Fisherman," and it had that name before Jesus, the Fisher of men, showed up. It was the birthplace of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, three of Jesus' disciples, all of whom were fishermen. It was near Bethsaida that Jesus and the disciples rested, where Jesus fed the 5,000, and where the disciples saw Jesus walk on water. Bethsaida was quite a place.

INTO THE STORY

"When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

"As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.'

"Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'

"'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered.

"'Bring them here to me,' he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

"Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

"Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear.

"But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'

"'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.'

"'Come,' he said.

"Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'

"Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'

"And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying,

'Truly you are the Son of God.'"
(Matthew 14:13-33, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

These two stories are famous vignettes from the life of Jesus. Did you notice anything new in either story? Put an *X* by something new to you.

Notice the issue of time and place in these stories. Place a *checkmark* by parts of the story where you see shifts in time and place.

Focus on the attitudes of the characters in each story. What is the attitude of Jesus? the disciples? the crowds that follow them?

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Underline the parts of each story where Jesus demonstrates His power. What can you learn from how Jesus uses His gifts?

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Did Jesus take any breaks during these two episodes? If so, why?

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punch lines

"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" **(Isaiah 32:18, NIV).**

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" **(Proverbs 3:5, 6, NIV).**

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" **(Matthew 11:28-30, NIV).**

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" **(Jeremiah 33:3, NIV).**

further insight

"No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer!"

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 362

"Through continual communion [Jesus] received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 363

Sabbath

Read Matthew 14:18-23.

What activities were at the top of your list in the *What Do You Think?* activity? Take your Bible and turn to Matthew 14:18-23. After the feeding of the 5,000, what did Jesus tell the disciples to do? Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to leave Him, get on a boat, and travel across the Lake of Galilee?

What did Jesus do after the multitudes were gone and the crowds were dispersed?

Prayer is the most intimate way to connect with God. That is why disciples are encouraged to make it a part of their daily spiritual regimen. Prayer, Bible study, solitude, and other activities that help us to grow in our relationship with God are called spiritual disciplines.

Sunday

Read John 6:1-13.

Read the account of the feeding of the 5,000 in today's Bible reading. John gives much more detail about the conversation that took place between Jesus and the disciples as they prepared to minister.

Besides the obvious, what spiritual lesson did the people take away from the celebration that happened that day?

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Through the spiritual discipline of fellowship, believers help to shelter each other from life's stormy weather. That was one of the truths that Jesus modeled during the feeding of the 5,000.

Monday

Read Mark 6:31.

This Sabbath's *Key Text* is part of the backstory to the *Into the Story* passage. The disciples had just returned from a very successful evangelistic campaign. God used them to exorcise demons, heal the sick, return sight to the blind, help the lame walk, and much more. It was an awesome display of God's power.

But then Jesus said: "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31, NIV). Why do you think Jesus called His disciples aside for some rest and relaxation? Did they need only physical rest?

Look up the meaning of the word "discipline" in a dictionary. One definition is the ability to behave in a controlled or calm way even in a stressful situation. Is it possible to be calm in a stressful situation if one never takes any time to be quiet? Explain.

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When was the last time you abstained from all media so that you could hear from God?

Tuesday

Read Romans 12:2.

This week's *Flashlight* is extremely powerful. Let's examine one aspect of the statement. The opening line says: "In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices." In your own words, write what you think it means to have a life that is out of harmony with the rest of the world.

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Based on what you've learned about Jesus so far this week, how was His life out of harmony with the norms of His day?

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Wednesday

Read Jeremiah 33:3.

This week's *Punch Lines* are filled with scriptures that you should commit to memory. Which one of them stands out to you?

God has promised to direct you and to show you "unsearchable things" (Jeremiah 33:3), mysteries that confound people who are disconnected from God. To find out the deep things of God, you have to submit yourself to Him.

Explain the connection between Matthew 11:28 and the spiritual discipline of submission.

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Thursday

Read John 17:17.

Based on what you've learned this week about our need for rest and rejuvenation, what changes would you make to your weekly schedule? How much quiet time do you spend with God?

Why not take your daily planner and plan some time for you and God to hang out? Remember, spiritual disciplines don't save us; they simply put us in the presence of God, where He can transform us into His image.

Friday

Read Psalm 119:105.

Jesus lived a disciplined spiritual life, and prayer was at the top of His daily list of "to-dos." He made time to commune with His Father, and that communion gave Him power and purpose. If you want to know what your purpose in life is and have the power to live it out, emulate Jesus. How can God help you live the disciplined life as one of His disciples?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 38-40.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.