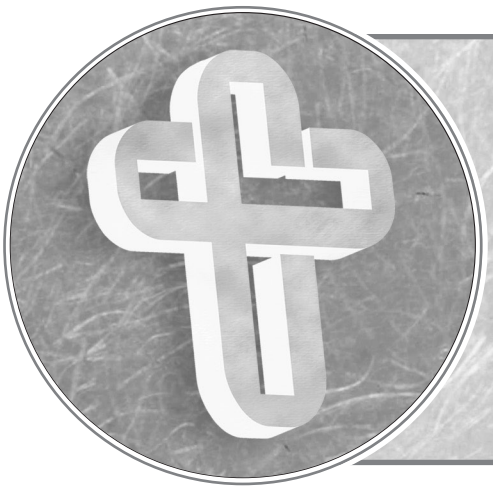


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JULY 19 2025

days of discipleship

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.
Key Text: Mark 6:30, 31.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

God must have anticipated our high-speed, technologically driven culture and all the problems it would produce. This week's lesson provides the prescription for living stress-free in a stressed-out world. We are told in this week's *Key Text* that Jesus called the disciples aside following one of their most successful evangelistic campaigns.

When the disciples returned from their journey they were elated about what God had done through them, but Jesus saw through their momentary euphoria. What did He see? He saw that His disciples were in danger of attributing to themselves the very works of God (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 360). He saw that they were physically weary and spiritually empty. Having been in hand-to-hand combat with the devil since birth, Jesus knew when He needed to get away to gain strength and direction for battles ahead.

This week's lesson teaches several lessons. It places special emphasis on the need for rest, even when that rest means taking a break from God-sanctioned activities. Notice that Jesus did not tell the disciples to do something that He Himself was not doing. After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus sent the disciples away so that He could pray and commune with His Father. Jesus modeled the spiritual disciplines for His followers.

Another important highlight of the lesson is this: "The rest which Christ and His disciples took was not self-indulgent rest. The time they spent in retirement was not devoted to pleasure seeking. They talked together regarding the work of God, and the possibility of bringing greater efficiency to the work" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 361). Our teens need to know that they must glorify God even in times of leisure.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that the life of a Christ follower requires periods of rest, prayer, study, and one-to-one communion with God. *(Know)*
- Experience the peace that comes from the quiet assurance of God's presence. *(Feel)*
- Be challenged to ask God to help them order their priorities to live a disciplined life in Christ. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Growing in Christ, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 11: "By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers,

ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the church. We are also called to follow Christ's example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matt. 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Rom. 8:38, 39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil. 3:7-14; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18, 23; Heb. 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

The key to this week's activity is to get the students thinking about how they spend their leisure time. Note that there may be activities they engage in that were not mentioned on the list. Ask them to share some of those, if time permits.

Once the students have been given time to share their responses, ask them whether or not they believe one should pray before engaging in leisure or entertainment activities. Many teens do not see the need to bring God into their leisure activities, but we are admonished in Scripture: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV). Jesus understood and lived this principle long before Paul ever wrote it, and so should we.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

One man challenged another to an all-day wood-chopping contest. The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had.

"I don't get it," he said.

"Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did."

"But you didn't notice," said the winning woodsman, "that I was sharpening my ax when I sat down to rest."

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Think for a moment about the awesome work that Jesus was preparing His disciples to do. Following His sacrifice on the cross, the disciples were to be endowed with the Holy Spirit so that they might build the foundation of a faith that would reach across centuries to the time when Jesus would return again. It was a job that would cause them to face fearful persecution and death.

There was absolutely no way that Jesus' disciples would be able to do the work they were called to do without becoming disciplined followers of God. The spiritual disciplines were essential preparation for ministry!

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- A day in the life of Jesus' disciples was filled with unpredictability. For instance, notice how the crowds continued to follow the disciples and Jesus—eventually breaking into their recreation time. The life of a Christ follower is equally unpredictable, hence our need to know God's voice and leading.
- In addition to dealing with multitudes of people in need of physical and spiritual food, not to mention challenges of mentoring disciples in need of direction, Jesus was also suffering from the loss of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-11). What does Jesus' ability to minister through all these challenges tell you about His relationship with His Father?

- John's account of the feeding of the 5,000 found in John 6 is the most complete of all the Gospels. He notes carefully how the disciples responded to Jesus' directive to give the people something to eat. Note that Jesus spent no time on their doubt and sarcasm, because He knew what He was going to do (John 6:6). Emphasize the point that Jesus was never faced with a ministry dilemma for which He was unprepared. Can we have this same experience? If so, how?
- The episode on the Lake of Galilee also gives us insight into the power Jesus derived from a life of prayer and communion with His Father. After feeding the multitude and sending the disciples away, Jesus heard the call to prayer (Matthew 14:23). Jesus didn't just decide to have some fun on the lake that night. He knew that that awesome miracle would serve to build up the kingdom of God, because His Father told Him so.

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Revelation 21:1-4; Psalm 37:1-7; Luke 12:16-20.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

The Finer Point

This week's lesson study provides numerous points of emphasis. You might decide to teach from the perspective of what it was like to be a disciple of Jesus from day to day. You may choose instead to focus on the theme of rest, and lightly cover the other themes. There are more angles to explore in this lesson, to be sure, but you would probably do well to pick one and develop that one.

For instance, studies are beginning to show that today's hyperconnected teens are suffering from sleeplessness, exhaustion, depression, extreme narcissism, and other maladies due to what some are calling technology overload. Emphasizing the need for rest, balance, and discipline is extremely important.

Try to get across one important point and the scriptures that support that point.

RABBI 101

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Take a Sail. The place where Jesus and His disciples assembled to rest from their ministry labors was at the northeastern end of the Lake of Galilee. The area around the lake was lush and verdant. Jesus understood the rejuvenating powers of nature—after all, He created it. Sitting among the trees away from the crowds that buffeted them from day to day, Jesus could drop the hidden language of the parables and speak directly to His loved ones. We hear God differently when we are alone with Him than when we are engaged in the hustle and bustle of life. When our minds and hearts are quiet, God's voice can become very

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

clear with time and practice.

Ellen White notes that Jesus was constantly dogged by the machinations of the scribes and Pharisees. This getaway was as much a break for Jesus as it was for His disciples (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 361).

Go Sailing. After feeding the 5,000 Jesus sent the disciples out for a sail while He dismissed the people. Ellen White notes that this miracle aroused within the multitude a desire to make Jesus king. They saw in the One who had fed them the Deliverer who would free them from Roman occupation. Even the disciples were swept up in the moment. They began to lead the uprising. This was not the way that Jesus planned to establish His kingdom, so He squashed the uprising by sending its leaders out on the lake (see *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 378, 379).

It bears noting that the disciples had just come from a period of rest and relaxation with Jesus when they got swept up in the excitement of the moment. This fact demonstrates just how much they needed the discipline that Christ longed to give them.

Prayer Power. After Jesus sent the crowd away, He went up into the nearby hills overlooking the Lake of Galilee to pray. From this place, Jesus could see the disciples boating on the lake. As night fell, Jesus entered into a prolonged conversation with His Father. Prayer was an integral part of Jesus' life. "Upon this occasion His prayer was twofold in purpose, first, for Himself, that He might know how to make the true purpose of His mission clear to men, and second, for His disciples in their hour of disappointment and testing" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 415).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Find a day planner and make copies of one day's entry to distribute to the class (or you can ask those with smart phones to access a day planner app). Ask class members to reflect on a day during the past week. Then ask the students to fill in the day planner sheet, detailing everything they did that day.

After a few minutes, ask a few class members to share their activity log with the class. The objective of this activity is to see whether or not the teens had set aside time with God at any point in their day. Before praying for the class, make the point that all other activities in life must be built around time spent with God. This is our first priority.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The call that Jesus made to His disciples to come aside and rest is the same call that He makes to us today. The disciples didn't have the Internet, cell phones, laptops, and iPods, but they did have their share of distractions. In every age Satan plies humanity with an endless stream of things to occupy our time.

The enemy's plan is to prevent us from ever spending deep, prolonged periods of time in the presence of God. He knows that God will expose his schemes, while simultaneously empowering us for greater devotion and service. This is how Jesus was able to take five loaves of bread and two fishes and feed the multitude. Time spent in solitude, contemplation of the Scriptures, and prayer was the secret to His unbelievable capacity to minister at all times and in all circumstances.

God yearns to give us victory over the cares of this life and power to do His will, but unfortunately He has to do it on the "fly," because His people just cannot stop running. We need to stop while there's time, and consider God.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapters 38-40.

*A special adaptation, *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.

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JULY 19 2025

STUDENT LESSON

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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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)

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).

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?

_____
_____
_____
_____

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

_____
_____
_____
_____

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

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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?

_____

_____

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.

_____

_____

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.

_____

_____

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?

_____

_____

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.

_____

_____

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?

_____

_____

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.