



**Discipleship**

## **Ideas for the Iowa District West**

### **Introduction**

The following “Discipleship Ideas” from the readings are not intended for any other purpose than to provide ideas of application from each reading that may be included in the taught and preached Word for this particular Sunday to help teach a life of discipleship. L.C.M.S. pastors are gifted at preaching Law and Gospel, but often lack in the matter of personal applications to the Word. This tool is for no other reason than to offer some seeds of thought to do that.

### **TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - SERIES B**

October 11, 2015

**From C.P.H. About the Cover:** The rich young man was certainly in earnest when he insisted he’d kept the commandments from his youth. Jesus loved him and exposed his idolatry by telling him to give away all he had to the poor, “and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (Mark 10:21). In sadness, the young man turned away from the true Treasure, our Lord Jesus, in whom alone we find forgiveness and eternal life.

#### **First Reading: Amos 5:6–7, 10–15**

<sup>6</sup>Seek the LORD and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel, <sup>7</sup>O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!

<sup>10</sup>They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.

<sup>12</sup>For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time. <sup>14</sup>Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said. <sup>15</sup>Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Discipleship Notes: Amos was a shepherd by profession, but was called by God to be a prophet. He himself said that he was neither a prophet, nor a prophet's son (or pupil) but none the less he had a job to do and it was not pleasant. He had to preach and proclaim judgement on the people of God because of their unrighteous choices in life. People were living in affluence and wasting the good things God had given them only on themselves. Here is an application that is prudent even in our own day and age. God gives us gracious and plenteous gifts. By the grace of God it is important that we realize Him as the giver and we are the receivers so that we manage these gracious gifts for His glory and not for selfish want. This is a great text for a financial stewardship message.

**Epistle Reading                      Hebrews 3:12–19**

<sup>12</sup>Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup>As it is said,

"Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

<sup>16</sup>For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: The writer of Hebrews focuses in this reading on the evil and unbelieving heart. Such a heart leads people away from God and to rebellion against God. In this text the reader is reminded of the rebellious nature of even the people of God as was the case in the wilderness after Moses led the people out of Egypt. None of those engaged in rebellion against God were allowed to enter the land of promise. So what application can we glean from this reading? How about the application of the writer in verse 14 where he says, "For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end"? Sharing in Christ is to receive His gracious goodness in spiritual and material gifts, and maintaining confidence in God's spiritual and material providence. This is a continuous encouragement that the people of God need to hear. And because of God's grace we certainly can maintain such confidence with thanksgiving.

**Gospel Reading:                      Mark 10:17–22**

<sup>17</sup> As [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>19</sup>You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear

false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.”<sup>20</sup> And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”<sup>21</sup> And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”<sup>22</sup> Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Gospel Discipleship Notes: In this Gospel reading we see where someone’s heart was to be found. It was not found in Christ, but in “great possessions”. The man was not unreligious. He certainly attempted to follow the Law of God, but that is not what true religion is. James tells us that true religion is found in faith that is put into action, not merely action. Attempting to fulfill the whole will of God and accomplish all the Laws is a lofty goal, but the loftiest goal is not in what we do, but in where our heart it found. If it is found in the Lord, our wealth or pursuit of it will not be overridden with sinful greed or our treasures found in the wrong place. By the grace of God, we can count all things loss in order to celebrate the great gain (or “great possessions”) of faith and salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

### Read                    **Amos 5:6–7, 10–15**

<sup>6</sup>Seek the LORD and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel, <sup>7</sup>O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!

<sup>10</sup>They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.

<sup>12</sup>For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore he who is prudent will keep silent in such a time, for it is an evil time. <sup>14</sup>Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said. <sup>15</sup>Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

1. What is meant by turning justice to wormwood?
2. Why was one “who reproves in the gate” hated so much?
3. In what ways do we see the kinds of issues taking place in the ancient world also taking place in our world today?
4. Why is it prudent to “keep silent in such a time”? Shouldn’t we speak out against injustice?
5. How does Amos suggest we address the issues appropriately?
6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

### Read                    **Hebrews 3:12–19**

<sup>12</sup>Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup>As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

<sup>16</sup>For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

7. Can an evil and unbelieving heart develop in the life of one who claims to be Christian?
8. What does it mean to “exhort one another” and how should this be done?
9. How is it that the writer says we “share in Christ”?
10. What was the “temporal” punishment for the rebellious people of Israel at the time of the exodus?
11. What was their rebellion in essence which is also what our rebellion is as well?
12. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

**READ:**

**Mark 10:17–22**

<sup>17</sup> As [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” <sup>20</sup> And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” <sup>21</sup> And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” <sup>22</sup> Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

13. What was behind the man’s address to Jesus calling him, “Good Teacher”?
14. What was meant in our Savior’s response that “no one is good except God alone”?
15. In spite of the arrogance of the man regarding his keeping of the Law, how did Jesus feel about him and how should that resonate in our association with Jesus?
16. Do we find ourselves disheartened because we lack something spiritually and if so, how is it ultimately overcome?
17. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

## Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline (Leader's Guide)

### Read Amos 5:6–7, 10–15

<sup>6</sup>Seek the LORD and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, with none to quench it for Bethel, <sup>7</sup>O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!

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1. What is meant by turning justice to wormwood?

*Wormwood was actually a bitter plant. It was detestable and the people were turning something good into something bad. They were abusing justice for the people in exchanging it for personal gain.*

2. Why was one “who reproves in the gate” hated so much?

*This would be an individual who would speak up for what is right and if the majority of people stood in opposition, he would be despised and hated.*

3. In what ways do we see the kinds of issues taking place in the ancient world also taking place in our world today?

*Answers will vary.*

4. Why is it prudent to “keep silent in such a time”? Shouldn’t we speak out against injustice?

*At times when people won’t listen to words, actions speak louder. In making a witness of righteous behavior, some may take greater heed. St. Augustine once said, “Preach the gospel always. If necessary use words.” That is similar to what is implied in this reading*

5. How does Amos suggest we address the issues appropriately?

*“Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, as you have said.”*

6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

**Read: Hebrews 3:12–19**

<sup>12</sup>Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup>As it is said,

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7. Can an evil and unbelieving heart develop in the life of one who claims to be Christian?

*Yes, one can fall into the sin of hypocrisy.*

8. What does it mean to “exhort one another” and how should this be done?

*It literally means to encourage one another but many would interpret this in a more negative manner as if to scold someone into submission to believe. The Word of the Lord encourages us to speak the truth in love. This is how we are to exhort one another.*

9. How is it that the writer says we “share in Christ”?

*We share in Christ ... “if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.” That simply means that we remain faithful to the teachings of the Gospel and don’t fall prey to the deceitful lies of the devil regarding how we view God. That is what the Israelites did and they were punished for it.*

10. What was the “temporal” punishment for the rebellious people of Israel at the time of the exodus?

*They did not live long enough to see the promised land or enter into it.*

11. What was their rebellion in essence which is also what our rebellion is as well?

*Unbelief*

12. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

**READ: Mark 10:17-22**

<sup>17</sup> As [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

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13. What was behind the man's address to Jesus calling him, "Good Teacher"?

*The man was obviously a religious person who loved the law of God and listened to the religious leaders. He may have even been one whom the religious leaders pandered to because of his great wealth. He was obviously also aware of the ability that Jesus had to teach the people and the god message he carried. Thus he could naturally call him "Good Teacher."*

14. What was meant in our Savior's response that "no one is good except God alone"?

*Man is sinful and unclean and thus not good. Only God is good and thus Jesus was pointing to two things: 1. The sinful condition of mankind 2. The Sinlessness (holiness) of God. Connoting the matter of His divinity that if He is Good then He is God.*

15. In spite of the arrogance of the man regarding his keeping of the Law, how did Jesus feel about him and how should that resonate in our association with Jesus?

*The text says Jesus "looking at him, loved him" recognizing the weakness this man had in his love of his wealth. Likewise Jesus looks at us and loves us in spite of our sinful weakness.*

16. Do we find ourselves disheartened because we lack something spiritually and if so, how is it ultimately overcome?

*The man went away disheartened. We don't know if he returned to the Lord or not. But when we are spiritually disheartened, we can return to the Lord in repentance and faith, trusting in God's mercy to forgive and strengthen us in our spiritual weakness.*

17. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?



## Discipleship Bulletin Blub

What relationship do you have with your money? Amos saw how many people were more tied to it than to the Lord. The writer of Hebrews saw rebellion against God which can manifest itself in the love of money. Jesus saw it in a rich man who came to him as well. By the grace of God, modern day disciples can find freedom in the Gospel to view material wealth properly and use the wealth God gives for blessed purposes.

## Discipleship Prayer Thought

Heavenly Father, grant us Your grace to keep a proper perspective on the material wealth You have given us. Keep us from desiring it so much that we actually rebel against You. Help us, but the power of the Holy Spirit, to be faithful managers of the gifts You so abundantly provide and grant us the blessing of holding fast in forgiveness and faith that You grant in Jesus' powerful and precious name. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**