

Gender and Discipleship



Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Mark 5:24–34; Luke 1:26–38; John 4:4–30.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Discover that gender is not a prerequisite for or hindrance to becoming a disciple of Jesus.

► Learn about the roles that faith, courage, and commitment play in being a dis-

ciple of Jesus.

► Investigate examples of how God ministered to and used women to further His kingdom.

Preparing to Lead

Jesus had 12 disciples who lived and worked with Him for three years. They came from various backgrounds, bringing different skills to His ministry. But they did have one thing in common—they were all men. Few people these days would say that women shouldn't be a

crucial part of Jesus' ministry to this world. Discipleship is about following and believing in Jesus, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, and any other criteria you can think of. This lesson helps us understand that God can use any willing person for His purpose.

Getting Started

A. Separate the class into men and women. Give the men a small jigsaw puzzle to complete. If any of the women ask what they should be doing, tell them that this activity is for the men only. When the men have completed the puzzle, reward each with a small chocolate or similar reward. Bring the class together and ask: •Men, did you notice the women didn't have an activity? Why/Why not? •Women, how did it feel to be excluded? How did it feel when the men were rewarded? •Group, was it fair that

the only criteria that determined involvement was gender?

B. Have each class member share about one woman they admire who is making or who has made a positive contribution to humanity. If some students are having difficulty thinking of someone, ask: •Why is it difficult to think of notable women? •Does our society value women easily and well? Why or why not? •Are there limits to the contribution women can make in society? If so, what are those limits?

Materials

small jigsaw puzzle; chocolates or other small rewards

Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one reading from the *Logos* texts, so that each group is studying a different story. Distribute the following questions for each group to dis-

cuss in the context of their reading:

- What is the gender of each person in these stories?
- What are their names? Is it significant that they are/aren't named?
- What did God/Jesus do in relation to

them? •What was each one’s response? •How did others respond to them? •What does this reveal about each person? •Identify the verses that show God knew their past. •Would you consider each woman a disciple? •What does each woman’s story reveal about discipleship?

Allow time for all the groups to come back together to discuss their findings. Have a volunteer from each of the three groups share their responses with the larger group.

Ask students for feedback, comments, and insight into what the other groups have shared. After all the groups have shared their responses, ask the class as a whole what they learned about discipleship from combining these stories. Be prepared to share your own insights to prompt their responses.

B. Have the class read Mark 5:24–34. Discuss the following: •Verse 32—When Jesus looked right at her, He knew her entire story. How do you think she felt at that moment? •Verse 33—In re-

sponding, she also told the crowd the truth. What does this reveal about the type of courage needed to follow Jesus?

Have the class read Luke 1:26–38. Discuss the following: •Verse 29—Why was Mary perplexed? Is it possible that she struggled with seeing herself as worthy of God’s attention? •Verse 38—In this statement, what did Mary actually agree to? What impact would this have on her life? What does this reveal about the type of commitment needed to follow Jesus?

Have the class read John 4:4–30. Discuss the following: •Verse 26—Jesus chose a woman (difference in gender) and a Samaritan (difference in ethnicity) to reveal Himself as Messiah. What does this reveal about His attitude toward the importance of gender and ethnicity in being His follower? •Verses 28, 29—This woman showed courage and commitment when she shared what she had learned with townspeople who had judged her. What impact did her faithfulness have (verse 39)?

Discussing the Ideas

1. Can gender predispose people to certain types of ministry? Give examples. What about ethnicity, age, etc.?
2. Are there certain roles that only men or women should perform within the church? Give examples and reasons.
3. What is your opinion on the church’s position about ordaining women? Discuss the difference between “ordination” (for men) and “commission” (for women).
4. The genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1) names five women. What are their sto-

ries, and why are they significant?

5. What circumstance led to a division between genders (Gen. 3:16)? What is your response to God’s decision?

6. Consider the Proverbs 31 woman (verses 10–31). Discuss her characteristics and what she might look like today.

7. Investigate the context of verses such as 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15 and discuss a modern-day response to these comments.

Closing the Activity

Throughout the class, note students’ comments that confirm the concept that anyone can follow Jesus—regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, etc. To conclude, repeat these comments to the group, affirming those who said them. Remind the group that discipleship is about having a personal relationship with Jesus and be-

ing willing to allow Him to work in and through us. Have each student complete their own Disciple Commitment Prayer (p. 35), listing their name, strengths, and weaknesses. Suggest they keep this prayer somewhere where they can see it everyday, to remind them of what God desires in a disciple. Close with prayer.

Candice Jaques, Seven Hills, New South Wales, Australia

Disciple Commitment Prayer

Dear God,

I, _____, want to be Your disciple—to follow You and to share You with others.

Here are my strengths:

Here are my weaknesses:

that I surrender to You. Even when life is difficult, I know You can use me to do amazing things.

I know that my gender, age, and ethnicity are not hindrances to Your ability to work in and through me to Your glory. Mould me into the person You want me to be. Lead me into the work You want me to do.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Lesson 5

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