



A New Men's Ministry

for the men in your congregation

by

Greg Alexander
Director of Disciples Men

and

Alex Ruth
Associate Director of Disciples Men



Welcome to The Jesus Way!

The Jesus Way equips men to live life in a way that reflects the principles and priorities Jesus himself lived by.

Each man is uniquely gifted by God. God established life principles and priorities foundational to realizing our giftedness. Jesus shows us the way. This ministry takes men on that journey, *the Jesus way*.

This journey will enrich each man's life and the lives of those around him. Each man will rediscover God's unique purpose for his life and what active citizenship in the realm of God can mean for his life.

In 2020, *The Jesus Way* will launch six new studies for men. One-day training opportunities will be offered throughout the US and Canada on how best to establish *The Jesus Way* ministry in congregations. These resources are designed to establish/enhance a congregation's ministry to and with men.

Web-based resources will also be available to assist congregational and middle-judicatory leaders implement this ministry.

The major developers of *The Jesus Way* are Greg Alexander and Alex Ruth, respectively the Director and Associate Director of Disciples Men.

Disciples Men is a ministry of Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada.

These are important and exciting times in Men's ministry! We pray you will join us as we journey on *The Jesus Way!*

Content

The Jesus Way study materials are divided into six sections of four sessions each.

There are twenty-four sessions in all. The sections are:

Section I	- Know Yourself
Section II	- Know Your God
Section III	- Know Your Family
Section IV	- Know Your Tradition
Section V	- Know Your Community/Neighbor
Section VI	- Know Your Way

Best Practices for Implementing *The Jesus Way*

1. This resource works best in groups of seven to ten men.
2. There is no “teacher.” This is a shared leadership approach. A different man in the group should be invited to lead each session.
3. While there is no “teacher” each group should have a convener responsible for:
 - making sure each man has the necessary materials;
 - notifying each group member of gathering/activity date, times, and places; and,
 - making sure the covenanted amount of time for each session is honored or renegotiated.
4. It is recommended that each man have a personal journey for recording pertinent ideas, insights, etc. throughout The Jesus Way journey. The kind of notebook or journal used is up to each man.
5. The group convener will lead **the first session**. At the very first session he will spend time at the beginning doing introductions, an exercise for getting better acquainted, and setting the ground rules for the gatherings. Be creative with this time.
6. Each week, when gathered, it is recommended that the leader for the session spend a few minutes for prayer concerns, sharing any pertinent news of those gathered, and offering an opening prayer. Keep this time appropriately brief!
7. The leader for the week will begin the study with **“Making Ready”** at the agreed upon start time. Please be respectful of each man by starting and stopping on time.
8. Follow the session as presented, sharing reading responsibilities among the men in the group. If a group chooses to read the materials silently, that is fine, just allow for different reading speeds among those present.
9. Take the necessary time to talk through each exercise or topic. Do not be locked into finishing each session in the allotted time. It makes for a great experience if the group chooses to stop at the appointed time and pick up the discussion where left off the next gathering. Do not place artificial time constraints in completing the materials. The richness of this experience is in the dialogue. Allow the conversations and discussions to conclude naturally.
10. The sections are divided in such a way as to allow any man to exit at the end of a section should the man feel led to do so. We pray no man will leave the group but sometimes the need arises. Honor each man’s decision.
11. Make it your own! Enjoy the journey!



Know Yourself

Session 1.1 - My Behavioral Roadmap

Making Ready

Read the scripture.

On the navigational chart below, mark several of the key events in your life, by date:



Share with your fellow cojourners several of these events and briefly tell how each event changed your life. As you and others share, make a personal note about any insight that comes to you through the sharing.

Checking Our Behavioral Roadmap

The experiences you have had in your life shape the way you live today. Your politics, your church involvement, the way you raise your children, the relationship you have with your wife or significant other, and even your vocation are in large measure determined by the influences and experiences that have shaped your life. They have helped to mold and make you into what and who you are today.

When you pause and ponder how you got to be the person you are right here and right now it can be kind of scary? As you begin this journey to "know yourself" it is vital that you begin with an inventory of your personal history. It is the path that has led you to live in the bodily house that is you.

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Look again at your personal navigation chart. What one national or global event has had the largest impact on your life? Can you identify any effects has had on the other events you have noted?

So, imagine that you live in a small, three-bedroom house that your family is beginning to outgrow. It is clear that something must be done to overcome the cramped conditions you and your family are experiencing. Finding an appropriate solution requires that you and members of your family ask a this question: "What are our options in dealing with the problem of our house getting too small for our family?"

There are three obvious answers: 1) move into a larger house; 2) Stay where we are and add on or remodel our present house; or 3) Do nothing and continue to live with the problem. Choosing one of the first two answers generates a whole new set of questions concerning how would we remodel and expand, where would we live if we decide to move, what can we afford, what is the best long-term investment, when is the best time to carry out the decision, and how will this decision impact our social and emotional well-being as a family?

Even choosing to ignore the problem also raises a set of questions but not by you. You have chosen to ignore the problem. Others aware of your cramped housing arrangement will wonder if you are too poor to act, too lazy to take the initiative to solve the problem, to cheap to spend the money or have other priorities that trump the needs of your family? Making the choice to do nothing is a choice influenced by the experiences of your past, too.

Scripture Reading

"If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." Philippians 3:4b-6 NRSV

The apostle Paul well understood that we need to change with changing life circumstances an experience. Some in his day thought that Gentiles had to become Jews and be circumcised in order to become Christian. In response, he recited his own story, tracing his journey through who he was as a faithful Jew to who he had become as a faithful Christian. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, Paul was able to ask a new set of questions about his life consistent with the Jesus way he was called to live his life. As his story unfolded, one can see that Paul outgrew the historic Jewish house in which his faith had been pleased to dwell up to his encounter with Jesus.

When he encountered Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul did not change houses; that is, he did not seek to move away from that which had housed his faith. Instead, he remodeled and added on to that which already existed to make room for the increase of knowledge and wisdom that Jesus Christ brought to his solid foundation of faith. He did not tear it down and start over. He knew his personal history and how it had shaped and molded him so he remodeled and expanded, making more room for the new experiences he was having as a follower of Jesus. This was not a fresh coat of paint. Once sacred spaces to Paul, now a stumbling block in his relationship of Jesus, became re-purposed to facilitate living life the Jesus way.

By doing so, Paul could lay claim to the foundation of his past and still allow for his new experiences in the risen Christ to guide and direct his life.

Paul's journey is a model for the work of men called to live life the Jesus way. A man needs to know the importance, the rationale, the plan and the costs behind remodeling and expanding his house before he tackles such a project. The Jesus journey is designed to help men answer these questions.

As you prepare to walk with your fellow cojourners, you will begin to discover what experiences and influences have helped "build" you into the man you are today. Such a discovery will lead you to claim that understanding as the foundation upon which to remodel your life the Jesus way. The end result is a man of purpose, a man of vision, a man at peace, and a man experiencing the true joy and fulfillment God intended for life.

As you begin, it may be important to think about why you are doing this. What do you believe to be the rewards or motivational factors for being "a man of purpose, a man of principle, a man of God," and so forth, as stated above?

Connecting with Jesus

Close your session with prayer. Thank God for the life of each man in the group and for bringing you together in this way.

Living the Jesus Way

Find some quiet time between now and the next session to develop your personal navigation chart even further. Draw a symbol such as a smiley face above those events that brought you joy and a sad face above those that brought you suffering or pain. Review the insights you gained in your sharing time. As you feel so led, thank God for each experience. It is part of you now, good or bad, so claim it. Claim it and begin to move beyond its claim and hold on you. Celebrate who you are by simply celebrating the life of another with a card or a call or a visit that thanks that person for being who God has made him or her.

Field Notes:

... a man of purpose, a man of vision, a man of peace ...