

Seeking Understanding

THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY: FOUR EXAMPLES OF GROWING WITH JESUS · ACTS 8:26-40 · SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked. 'How can I,' he said, 'unless someone explains it to me?'"

(Acts 8:30-31)

The Journey of Discipleship

Discipleship takes place somewhere

Discipleship takes place in everyday life

Discipleship is like a journey or a road

Discipleship with the Ethiopian Eunuch: Seeking Understanding

The Ethiopian eunuch's situation

The Ethiopian eunuch's hunger to know

The Ethiopian eunuch's encounter with Jesus

The Ethiopian eunuch's response to the truth

Discipleship with Philip: Saying "Yes" to God

God speaks to Philip...and Philip says "yes"

God leads Philip to a person...and Philip engages that person

God prompts Philip to listen...and Philip asks questions and listens

God leads Philip to speak...and Philip speaks about Jesus

Making It Real

Seeking understanding

Saying "yes" to God

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How have you gained better understanding of God over your life? What has helped most?
2. This week we continue our series "The Discipleship Journey: Four Examples of Growing with Jesus" by looking at events in Acts 8:26-40. Whether you are on your own or with

others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you as you study His word, and then read that passage aloud.

3. Background: Philip was one of seven people selected by the apostles in Jerusalem to equitably serve those in need in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:1-7). When persecution falls upon the Jerusalem church after Stephen's martyrdom, Philip travels various places sharing the message of Jesus (8:1-40). Later in life, Philip appears with four daughters who have prophetic gifts (21:8-9).
4. What stands out to you about God's instructions to Philip and Philip's response in 8:26-27?
5. Have you ever experienced a leading from God similar to this?
6. What do you notice about the Ethiopian eunuch as described in 8:27-28?
7. The eunuch occupies a unique cross-tension of significant position and human limitation. Eunuchs were at one point excluded from the Temple (Deuteronomy 23:1). But prophecies in Isaiah point toward a time when this will change (Isaiah 56:3-6). How does this episode relate to this cross-tension?
8. What does Philip do in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit in 8:29-35?
9. After Philip explains the Scripture and the message of Jesus to this Ethiopian eunuch, how does the eunuch respond?
10. What is one specific thing that God is speaking to you through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then take extended time to pray about what you share. If you are studying on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone during the next few days.

DIG DEEPER:

- Draw, paint, or journal about Acts 16:16-40. As you do that, prayerfully talk with God about your own journey of discipleship.
- Read about the Philip the deacon and evangelist's life and ministry in Acts 6:1-7; 8:1-40; and 21:8-9.
- Compare Luke 24:13-35 with Acts 16:16-40. As you do that, ask Jesus to reveal Himself more fully to you.
- Consider reading a resource on seeking to understand and know Jesus, such as:
 - J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*
 - Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* or *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*