

Paradigm Discipleship

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The purpose of this resource is to provide some guidance for you as you encourage your disciple to embrace his or her role as God's representative.

The following resource is a guide that provides some basic structure to developing a study on the concept of the "Priesthood of a Believer".

We encourage you to do your own study, using this resource as a guide, to develop a learning experience for you and your disciple that will help you both move deeper in your understanding and experience of being a "priest" of God.

PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

Opening question: What do you think people mean when they refer to the priesthood of the believer?

*If they have no idea, ask them to describe what they think the role of a priest was.

*There are specific jobs of priests that may come up; help them to understand (**trying not to answer the question for them**) that the role of a priest was to represent God to people and people to God.

*What this study will establish is that now, as followers of Jesus, we are all called to be God's representatives.

It began with the calling of Abram. (Read Genesis 12:1-3 together)

Study Question: What was the purpose of God's blessing?

*Let your disciple try to answer this question from the text. Here is how you would like them to see the passage:

*God loves His people; He desires to richly bless those who follow Him. Some refer to this as a top-line blessing: God's love for His people and the gifts that He gives.

*There is a responsibility that comes with this top-line blessing. We are to share that blessing with others. The blessings we receive from God are meant to draw others into a relationship with Him through us. This could be referred to as a bottom-line blessing.

*Abram (later to be renamed Abraham) and his descendents, the nation of Israel, were called to receive God's blessing and as a result become God's representatives - a kingdom of priests.

A great example is the story of the Queen of Sheba and why she came to visit King Solomon. (Read 1 Kings 10:1-9 together)

*Lesson to draw out:

*The Queen praised the God of Israel for His love for His people to give such leadership and wisdom through King Solomon.

*So, the blessing of wisdom and the resulting success of Israel that God gave Solomon resulted in another people group seeing the majesty of God and praising God.

Follow up Question: Did Israel fulfill its calling?

*This requires some familiarity with the history of Israel. But basically, the answer is no. Judging from Jesus' wrath at the moneychangers in the temple, in the very place that was supposed to be a gathering spot for the nations to come to pray to God, Israel had missed it. (Compare Jesus' words in Matthew 21:12-13 to Solomon's prayer of dedication for that area of the temple in 1 Kings 8:41-43). They had become ethnocentric – they missed their calling as priests to the world.

Ask your disciple if they can think of any New Testament verses that indicate that we are to be God's representatives on earth.

*Be sure to affirm any answers that show they have a concept of their role as a priest of God. You may also discover verses from your own study to use here. 1 Peter 2:9-10 is a great passage that clearly declares our calling as priests.

*If you use 1 Peter 2:9-10, ask this question:

Study Question from 1 Peter: What is the purpose of our being called to be royal priests, a holy nation, and God's own possession?

*In answering this question, help them think through the role of a priest. Ultimately, the answer is given in the text: **Declare the excellencies of God!**

Implications

Ask your disciple: If we truly understood and lived this out, what would our lives look like?

*Three main areas of ministry that we are ALL called to – look for each of these three areas in their answer, and as you develop this study, be sure to stress each of these areas strongly:

#1-Sharing the gospel;

#2-Involvement in what we call Missions – doesn't necessarily mean that everybody goes overseas, but we are all interested and involved in God's heart for the nations;

#3-Training disciples.

*We are to be Witnesses

*We have a **personal responsibility** to testify to our hope in God to anybody we have the opportunity to talk to (1 Peter 3:15).

*Acts 1:8: if you use this verse, ask your disciple:

*Study Question from Acts 1:8: What is the purpose of the giving of the Holy Spirit according to Jesus?

*To be witnesses

*Read the "Great Commission" together. (Matt 28:18-20)

*Study Question: What does Jesus expect us to be doing?

*Two parts to this commission to be stressed:

*We have the call to be involved in seeing all the different nations (people groups) coming to Christ.

*We see the results of this emphasis on the nations in Revelation 5:9 & 7:9.

*We have the call to teach and train disciples.

*You could also use Colossians 2:6-7 & 2 Timothy 2:2

Conclusion: Brainstorm together ways to further live out your role as a representative of God on the earth. Make sure to emphasize that this is our identity! Everything else in this world is a shadow, a means to **THIS** end.

*Possibilities: Training in sharing your faith; praying for a heart for the lost; praying for opportunities every day to share the gospel; researching Unreached People Groups; giving to missions; making yourself available to disciple others; praying for God to use you to train others, etc.

A suggestion: memorize 1 Peter 2:9-10 together.