

DISCipleship Golf:

Growing Our Faith, One Throw at a Time

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This study explores the parallels between the game of disc golf and the journey of Christian discipleship. By examining the mechanics of the game—targets, wind, boundaries, and the thrower—this guide outlines how to grow in spiritual maturity and trust in God’s grace.

1. Know the Target: The Goal of Christlikeness

In disc golf, every hole has a specific target. In the Christian life, having a clear goal is essential for growth. While many assume the "end" of faith is simply going to heaven, the true target is being formed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

The Course Layout: The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5 provides the "course layout" for the Christian faith. It outlines nine specific targets, known as the "fruit of the Spirit," which reflect the character of a person living in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

The Nine Targets (Fruit of the Spirit)	Description
Love	The foundational motivation for Christian action.
Joy	A deep-seated sense of well-being in God.
Peace	Internal and external tranquility.
Patience	Endurance and long-suffering.
Kindness	Consideration and helpfulness toward others.
Goodness	Moral excellence and integrity.
Faithfulness	Loyalty and reliability to God and others.
Gentleness	Humility and a soft approach to others.
Self-Control	Mastery over one's own desires and impulses.

Youth Discussion Questions

1. If "going to heaven" isn't the only goal of faith, how does aiming for "Christlikeness" change the way you live on a Tuesday afternoon?
2. Which of the nine fruits of the Spirit do you find most difficult to "aim for" in your current season of life?
3. In disc golf, you can't hit the target without looking at it. What are some practical ways to keep these nine "targets" in sight every day?

2. Wind Matters: Discerning the Spirit

In disc golf, wind gusts deeply affect the flight of a disc. Similarly, in the spiritual life, there are various "winds" or influences that can either push a person toward the target or blow them off course.

Spiritual Maturity and the Breath of God

The Greek word for "Spirit" also means "wind." The Apostle Paul expresses concern in Ephesians 4:13-15 that believers should not remain "spiritual infants," tossed around by "every wind of teaching" or the "deceitful scheming" of others. Instead, the goal is to grow into the full measure of Christ.

- The Holy Spirit: The wind that blows us toward the target of Christlikeness.
- False Winds: Cultural lies, popularity, wealth-seeking, personal whims, or the unhealthy influence of peers and influencers.

Galatians 5:25 instructs: "Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

Youth Discussion Questions

1. What are some specific "winds" (social media trends, peer pressure, etc.) that try to blow your life off course?
2. How can you tell the difference between the "wind of the Spirit" and a "wind of teaching" that is actually a deceitful scheme?
3. What does it look like to "catch the wind of the Spirit" in a practical, daily sense?

3. Narrow Path & Out of Bounds: Boundaries for Flourishing

Going "out of bounds" (OB) in disc golf results in landing in thorns, mud, or thick branches, and can even lead to losing a disc entirely. In life, God provides boundaries not to limit fun, but to ensure safety and growth.

The Purpose of God's Law

The Bible describes God's laws as gifts. According to Deuteronomy 6:24, God commanded obedience to His decrees so that His people "might always prosper and be kept alive." Jesus expands on this in Matthew 7, describing a "narrow path" that leads to abundant life, while a "wide path" leads to destruction.

- The Narrow Way: This is God's blueprint for optimal human existence. It is the best way to be human while avoiding the "thorns and thistles" of living out of bounds.
- A Gift, Not a Killjoy: Jesus did not provide rules to be a "killjoy," but to show the ultimate way to flourish as a human being.

Youth Discussion Questions

1. Why do people often view God's "rules" as restrictive rather than as a way to flourish?
2. Describe a time you went "out of bounds" in life. What were the "thorns and mud" you experienced?
3. How does viewing the "narrow path" as a "blueprint for being human" change your perspective on following Jesus?

4. Wisdom vs. Folly: Playing the Fairway

Disc golf often presents "dogleg" holes where the player must choose between the long, safe route down the fairway or "cutting the corner" over a hazard like a pond or a grove of trees. Life presents the same choices between wisdom and folly.

Avoiding the "Hard Way"

Many people choose the path of folly, hoping to get lucky while cutting corners, only to end up in a hazard. Learning "the hard way" is often the result of ignoring the wisdom of those who have gone before us.

- Wisdom Embodied: Christianity is not just about knowing the Bible or following rules; it is about imitating the Way of Jesus, who is "wisdom embodied."
- The Promise of Wisdom: Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages believers to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Youth Discussion Questions

1. Where are you currently tempted to "cut corners" in your life (school, honesty, faith)? What is the "pond" or "grove of trees" you might end up in?
2. Why is it so hard to trust the wisdom of "elders" (parents, mentors, pastors) instead of learning through our own mistakes?
3. What does it mean to "lean not on your own understanding" when you are facing a difficult decision?

5. A Disc in God's Hand: Grace and Surrender

Faith is not just about how well we throw our own disc. It is a "long game" that requires a heavy dose of grace for ourselves and others. While we must take responsibility for our actions, we must also recognize that we are ultimately in God's hands.

The Dance of Cooperation

Philippians 2:12-13 highlights a partnership: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." Growth is a dance of taking responsibility while surrendering to the power of God working within us.

Trusting the Thrower

Ultimately, we cannot control every wind or unexpected path. True liberation comes from placing our "disc" (our life and faith) into the capable hands of Christ. He is the one who guides the flight and direction toward the right targets.

The Disc Golfer's Psalm 23

The following is an adaptation of Psalm 23, illustrating life as a disc in the hands of the Great Thrower:

*The Lord is my disc thrower; I need not worry.
He makes my disc land softly in green pastures;
he tosses me beside the still waters, not in them.
He restores and cleans off my disc when dirty;
he throws my disc in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though a round takes me through the dark woods and thorny thicket,
I will fear no evil: for He carries my discs on his hip;
his accuracy and strength comfort me.
He prepares a picnic for me in the middle of the trees;
he anoints my disc by writing his name on it with marker;
my par and birdie opportunities run over.
Surely beautiful throws and fresh starts shall follow me
on all the courses of my life: and I will enjoy refreshing drink
in the clubhouse of the Lord forever.*

Youth Discussion Questions

1. Are you a perfectionist? How do you feel when you "miss the mark" in sports, grades, or your faith?
2. According to Philippians 2:12-13, who is doing the work in our lives—us or God? How do both work together?
3. What makes it so difficult to "surrender" and let God be the Thrower of your life? How would your stress levels change if you truly trusted His "accuracy and strength"?