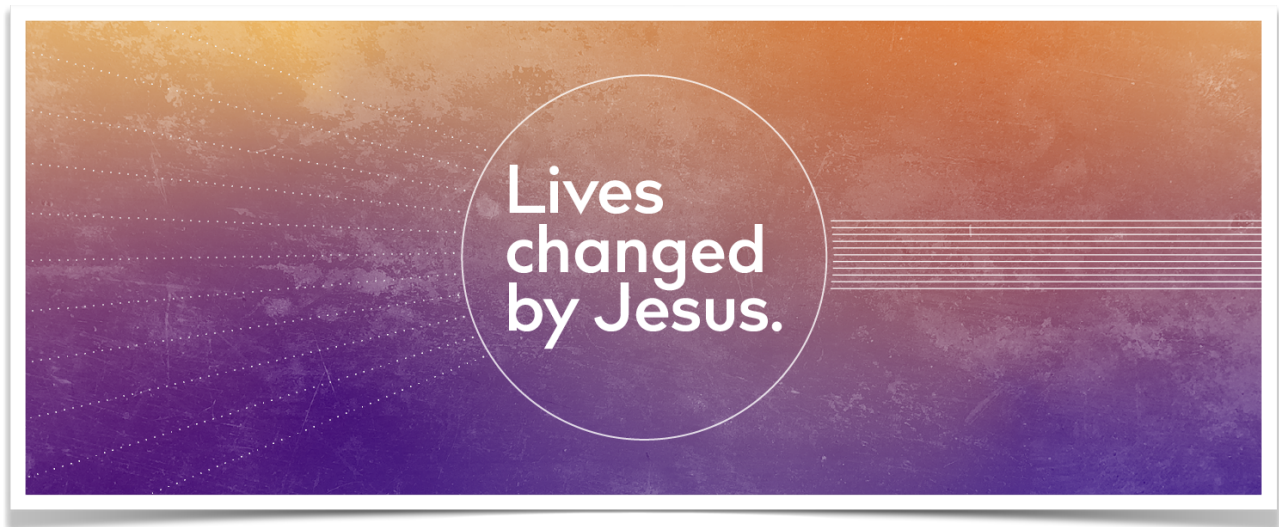


## GBC Discipleship RESOURCE



# Lives changed by Jesus.

## Week Three | The Ethiopian Eunuch – Understanding, Faith, and Inclusion (Acts 8:26-40)

*For a brief overview of why (and how) to engage in each of these practices, you can read the Guideline For Growing on our website.*

<https://www.gymeabaptist.org.au/growing/pages/guideline-for-growing>

## OVERVIEW

In this series we will be exploring several New Testament characters whose lives were changed by an encounter with Jesus. Over the course of the series we will dive into the transformation they experienced, the focus of their encounter, the required response, any friends who were involved, and the invitation into mission. The importance of these five aspects will vary but will be a consistent part of the discipleship menus.

As in previous “menus” there will be a variety of activities to take up. These can be done by yourself (God and You), with a couple of friends (You and a Few), or in a Life Group (You and a Crew). As with any menu, choose what resonates with you. In other words, there is no need to do all of the menu!

Just one more reminder that you can listen to the sermon that accompanies the discipleship menu - it can be found on our website or wherever you listen to podcasts. You may also want to listen to The Big Ill podcast; a mid-week podcast that explores three big questions raised by the sermon.

## PASSAGES TO READ

Make Acts 8:26-40 the central reading this week. Read it aloud multiple times. As you do you may want to picture the scene in your mind and picture where you are in the scene. Who do you associate with? How close are you to the “action”? This kind of imaginative reading is a very helpful way to read narrative texts.

Additional texts that you may want to read and reflect on include: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; 56:3-7; Genesis 12:1-3; Revelation 7:9-10.

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

In the sermon (which you can listen to again on the GBC Sermon Podcast) Philip’s availability, the Ethiopian official’s faithful curiosity, and the activity of Jesus were drawn out. Use the following questions to reflect further on these responses.

1. We learn in Acts 21:8-9 that Philip lived in Caesarea and had four adult children. It would have been natural for Philip to wish to return after being forced to leave Jerusalem. And yet, he was willing to immediately head south (the opposite direction of home) in response to the invitation of Jesus. What things keep you from being available to the invitation of Jesus?
2. “The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”” (Acts 8:29). Have you ever heard the voice of the Holy Spirit? How do you think we would recognise the voice of the Spirit?
3. The Ethiopian official was faithfully curious; he acted on his curiosity. What aspects of faith are you curious about and how can you be faithful in that?
4. Is there someone in your life who is faithfully curious? How can you be more available to participate in what Jesus may be doing in their life?

## LISTENING PRAYER

This is another new activity (new for these menus, that is!). Listening prayer is one that “allows God to set the agenda for prayer and responds to the word that is given.” (Calhoun, 266) Passages that can be used to reflect on this include: 1 Samuel 3:10; Isaiah 55:3; Matthew 11:15; John 10:27; and Revelation 3:20.

The practice includes:

- Reading a passage of Scripture and listening to what grabs your attention; allowing that to become the focus of prayer.
- Noticing when a song or reading grabs your attention and, instead of moving on, listening to what God may be saying in that moment.

The heart of this practice is to learn to listen rather than interrupt. Calhoun says, “Don’t worry about constant inattention in listening prayer. The mind is designed to make connections and wander. That’s why we can zone out when someone is speaking or even while we are reading. Rather than judging ourselves as a miserable failure on the basis of inner detours, humbly return to listening to Jesus.” (268).

## **A THEME TO PRAY ABOUT**

Commit to pray that your awareness of Jesus’ invitation might be increased and that your heart might be more available to participate.