

Forming Intentional Disciples – Session 4

Making a Commitment to Change

Openness is the hardest threshold to cross because it entails a declaration of being open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change. Curiosity says, “tell me a little more”. Openness says “if this turns out to be true, my life is forever changed. And I’d have to follow through on that.” Some struggle at this threshold for years, even decades. Others experience the first thresholds of conversion in a single retreat experience. Ways to foster openness include honest sharing of our own relationship with God and asking and answering questions in a non-judgmental manner. This is an appropriate time to invite someone to spend time in prayer, including Eucharistic adoration, and to speak directly to God. Consider praying together with God for your friend to become open to Him. Follow through is necessary when someone reaches the threshold of openness. When the Church is unable to intentionally disciple those who are growing spiritually, a loss results. Numerous Catholics are experiencing spiritual longings but may not understand what they are seeking. This is one of the most common stages where people leave the Church, which is why community support is so important.

When a person has reached the seeking stage, a thirst for catechesis will flow from a deeper relationship with Jesus. Many people are comfortable with the idea of being open, as long as there is no expectation that they must reach a conclusion. Seekers realize that following Christ has personal implications: demands on time, priorities, money, relationships, and every aspect of life. The seeking phase is where catechesis is best explored at greater depth than before. One way to help people who are seeking is to invite them to participate in the spiritual and corporeal works of mercy, introduce them to prayer, and invite them to be with other disciples. A person cannot seek forever. The next threshold is intentional discipleship, where a person makes a decision to commit and to follow Jesus and His Church. If someone chooses not to commit, ask them why and help identify blocks and work through them with that person. Spiritual warfare becomes very intense when a person is on the verge of becoming an intentional disciple, and throughout this process. Sustained intercessory prayer for those on the journey is crucial. We must always be mindful of and open to supporting people who are making these decisions. We must also model what it is to be a disciple and share what is going on in our own relationship with God. Seekers need to see what life is like for an authentic disciple of Jesus whose struggles are real, and whose victories are therefore believable. It is far more important that your relationship with Jesus exist and is real than it conform to some imaginary template of Catholic perfection.

Reflection Questions:

- 1) What threshold of conversion applies to your journey? Is there anything blocking you from making a deeper commitment to Christ and His Church?
- 2) What changes can you apply to your life to better model the life of a disciple?

Reading Assignments: Forming Intentional Disciples: Chapters 7 and 8

Scripture	Catechism
Acts 22:6-11	CCC 1102
Acts 2:37-42	CCC 2442
1 Cor 16:13-14	CCC 1814
1 Thessalonians 2:4	CCC 33
Hebrews 13:16	CCC 35
Isaiah 12:4	CCC 299
Luke 9:60	CCC 2105
Matthew 10:27	CCC 2447