

Study Guide

J. Heinrich Arnold

# Discipleship



**Living for Christ in the Daily Grind**

Foreword by Henri J. M. Nouwen

*Study Guide for*

# Discipleship

*by J. Heinrich Arnold*

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## Reading *Discipleship*

*Discipleship* is not a book to be read in one sitting or even in a week or two for that matter. This is not because the book is difficult to read. Rather, it is because *Discipleship* is meant to be read attentively, meditatively, and reflectively. In other words, as you read Arnold's words you need to do so with a listening and open heart. This book does not contain a lot of information about following Jesus. Instead, the chapters are purposefully short with the aim towards transformation, not information. The book's sole aim is to instill a greater determination to follow Jesus.

In reading *Discipleship*, remember that many of the selections are from Arnold's letters which were written to different brothers and sisters in his church-community. They are personal in nature. Wherever you can, personalize what Arnold is saying. Imagine him writing or speaking to *you* or to the group you are a part of.

Each study is divided into a number of sections. **Getting Started** is aimed at preparing you before you read the selection. It is meant to help get your mental juices flowing. As you read *Discipleship*, however, always pay special attention to those passages that hit or strike you. In light of what you have read, how do you feel cut to the heart? Are you resisting being changed in any way? How can you make a new surrender to Christ? When a particular thought moves you, ask God to show you what it is you are supposed to learn or do in response.

**Digging In** consists of a series of reflective questions. Some of them focus on what Arnold says. Others seek to glean what he means. Still others aim to help you apply Arnold's words to your own life. These questions are meant to guide you in your reading. Perhaps they will stimulate you to think about what Arnold says in a new way, or help you see things you didn't notice before. However they help, they should not be answered mechanically. For this reason, it is not so important that you answer them all. What is important is that you grapple with them from your heart and in so doing let God change you.

In **Making it Count** you have an opportunity to make what you read relevant for your life. This section challenges you to seek ways to translate what you've read into daily life. Discipleship is a matter of following, not just learning about Jesus. The words in this book are meant to be applied to the daily grind. To grow deeper in the faith means becoming more faithful in life.

Remember, discipleship—following Jesus—is not a solitary venture. To be a disciple is a shared experience. Jesus called together a family of disciples. Ideally, *Discipleship* is best read and studied in a group context. \* If, however, you do not have that opportunity right now, try and find one or two others you can share with about what you are learning. It is one thing to read a book, it's another thing to be held accountable with what you have come to know. Hearing God speak is only the beginning. It is doing what God says that counts.

Pray that *Discipleship* becomes a vehicle of God's transforming love. Read it thoughtfully. Read it openly. But most of all, read it expectantly. "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

## Study 1

# Foreword and Introduction

## Getting Ready

Before you read the Foreword and Introduction, reflect for a moment on the book's title: *Discipleship: Living for Christ in the Daily Grind*. What does this title suggest to you?

## Digging In

1. What are some of the adjectives or images Nouwen uses to describe this book?
2. Nouwen shares how in first reading *Discipleship* he discovered resistance in himself. Why? Has this ever happened to you when reading a book? When?
3. Is it possible for people to speak “unpopular but truly healing words”? Can you cite any examples in your own life when this has happened? Did Jesus ever do this?

4. How, exactly, does the Gospel ask for a “radical choice, a choice that is not always praised, supported, and celebrated?” How, in today’s culture or in your life, is this true?
  
5. At the beginning of the book, Arnold is quoted as saying: “Discipleship is not a question of our own doing; it is a matter of making room for God so that he can live in us. ” What does this say to you?
  
6. Nouwen emphasizes that it is in community where discipleship is to be lived. Why do you think he says this?
  - Briefly describe how you understand “community” and “discipleship. ”
  
  - How might community and discipleship belong together?
  
7. On a spectrum between independence (being a lone ranger) and dependence (having to always be around others), where might your walk with Christ lie? How much of your life is a shared life with others? Are you guilty of a lone ranger Christianity?

8. The editors write how Arnold “could not tolerate indifference to the demands of the Gospel.” Where might you see such tolerance to indifference today? How might you be guilty of it?

### **Making it Count**

Arnold writes: “We are tired of words; they are cheap and can be heard almost anywhere.” Where in your life has your talk been greater than your walk? Ask God to show you one specific, concrete way you can bridge the gap between what you confess and how you live.

## Study 2

# The Inner Life

## Getting Started

Before you read this chapter (pp. 1–10), think about the expression, “the inner life.” Why do you think Arnold’s book begins with the inner life?

## Digging In

1. What are some of the key topics or ideas that Arnold addresses in this chapter? Do you see any connection between them?
2. How would you describe Arnold’s understanding of prayer? How important is it? What can it accomplish? What are we to pray for?
3. Arnold writes: “We should always believe that our prayers will be answered, even if they are not answered straight away” (p. 9). How has this been true in your life?

4. Arnold says that once the inner person really changes, everything else, including the practical and economic areas of our lives, will change. Can you think of some examples from Scripture of how this is true (e. g. Acts 2:37–47)? How might this be true in your own life, or anyone else you may personally know?
  
5. Arnold asserts: “If you try to fight your emotions with other emotions, you will only become more confused” (p. 6). Have you ever experienced this? How so?
  
6. Arnold quotes Eph. 3:16–19 and says: “If we were to grasp this one passage, we would understand the whole Gospel” (p. 4). How is this scripture filled with good news?
  
7. Are you finding a quiet space every day to pray? If not, why? Why is quietness important? What place could you set aside as your “closet” to pray?
  
8. What would it take for you to gain “a heart that listens to God alone” (p. 5)? What voices in your life crowd out the voice of God? Contrast the voice of God with these other voices, noting where they lead and what results.

When God Speaks

Competing Voices

**Making it Count**

An attachment is anything other than God that drives you or defines who you are. It is something you would find terribly difficult to live without even though you don't really need it. Do you have any attachments? Ask God to show you where you may be overly attached. What is one specific thing you can do to let go of it?

## Repentance and Conversion

### Getting Started

Before you read these two chapters (pp. 11–20), write down your thoughts about what “repentance” means. Are they positive or negative? What feelings come to you as you reflect on repentance? Can you determine why you feel as you do?

### Digging In

1. Arnold says, “The Gospel begins with a call to repentance” (p. 11). How does Arnold understand repentance?

<u>What Repentance Means</u>	<u>What Repentance does not Mean</u>

2. How is repentance brought about? How does a person really change? Is self-determination enough?



7. How radical a change is there when a sinner repents (see 2 Cor. 5:17)? Why is repentance and conversion more than a mere attitude adjustment?
  
8. In terms of bearing good fruit, why is a *personal relationship* with Jesus, instead of the moral Law or a worthy Ideal, essential?
  
9. Arnold says: “Many Christians are attracted by Jesus’ promise of salvation, but they do not want to repent fully” (p. 11). How might this be true in your life?
  
10. Arnold writes: “At first, the closer you come to God the more you will feel judged by your sin, but in the end you will find deep joy and peace” (p. 14). Recall how this has been true in your life. Is there anything hindering you from experiencing this again?

### Making it Count

Arnold claims that, “Halfhearted Christianity is worse than no Christianity” (p. 19). Why is this? Read Rev. 3: 14–16. In what ways are you halfhearted in your faith? Perhaps you’re only going through the motions. Maybe you’re religious on the outside but dead on the in-

side. Or maybe you're holding back in some way, playing it safe. Ask God to show you one way you can become more wholehearted.

## Study 4

# Faith and Dogmatism

## Getting Started

Before you begin reading (pp. 21–33), reflect for a moment on how living by faith is different from simply assenting to the truth of certain doctrines or principles. What do you learn about faith from Hebrews 11?

## Digging In

1. From these two chapters, how would you describe faith? Find as many adjectives as you can that Arnold uses to describe faith. Is faith a work of God only, a mere matter of “receiving” on our part?
2. How is faith to be guarded? What hinders it from growing?
3. Arnold writes: “Faith and a good conscience are completely interwoven with one another” (p. 22). Why is this? Read Titus 1:15–

16 and Romans 14. How do faith and a good conscience belong together?

4. Why do so many people today find it difficult to have faith (see pp. 25–26)? Can you think of other reasons why people have a hard time believing?
5. How is a true believer different from a dogmatist? How would you describe a dogmatist or a dogmatic spirit?
6. Why is dogmatism an enemy of faith? How can a “right principle” become deadly to one’s soul? Have you ever experienced this to be true in your own life?
7. Arnold says: “We must become ‘narrow’ in the right way” (p. 30). What does he mean by this? Can one be narrow and still have a broad heart? How so?
8. Are “forms” or traditions the real enemy of faith, or is there something else at issue? Why is a “formless” Christianity anti-Christian? (*Think about all the ways Christianity is “earthly.”*)



## Commitment and Trust

### Getting Started

Before you read these two chapters (pp. 34–37; 68–72), think about the relationship between commitment and trust. Can you have one without the other? Why not?

### Digging In

1. What is Arnold's understanding of commitment? What is a dedicated person like? What is the opposite of commitment?
2. Describe the person who trusts in Christ. Where does faith reside? What might the opposite of faith be? Does commitment and trust preclude failure (see Mt. 14:22–33)?
3. Arnold writes: "Unless we find singleness of heart and mind, our dividedness will tear us to pieces" (p. 34). Why is this? Do you ever feel torn apart by inner dividedness? Why?

4. If commitment to Christ is real, what kind of sacrifices might you have to be ready to make? (See Heb. 10:32–39; 2 Tim. 3:12; and Philip. 3:7–11.) Where have you avoided sacrifice and hardship for Jesus?
  
5. What is the key to overcoming fear (see p. 72)? Why is love the key to overcoming fear (1 Jn. 4:16–18)?
  
6. When you are confronted with a problem or a worry, what is the first thing you do? Do you go immediately to Jesus, or do you do something else?
  
7. Why might trust be the answer to life's perplexities? Instead of trusting, how have you been guilty of "puzzling too long about the difficult questions of faith" (p. 70)? What fruit is borne when such puzzling occurs?

### Making it Count

Christ wants us to give him our *entire* selves. Augustine once said: "If Christ is not Lord of all, he is not Lord at all." Read Luke 9:18–27, 57–62. Jesus speaks of different people who live a divided, uncommitted life. Do you fall into any of these categories? How so? Do

you have your hand on the plough, but still look back? How might you be holding back? Where in your heart are you undecided or divided?

- those who are not willing to suffer for Christ (v. 24)
- those who want religion but also worldly success (v. 25)
- those who are afraid to stand publicly for Christ (v. 26)
- those who follow Christ so long as their physical needs are met (vv. 57–58)
- those who follow Christ as long as family obligations are met (vv. 59–60)
- those who profess Christ but are still emotionally bound to loved ones (vv. 61–62)

Jesus could have added to this list. Perhaps you struggle with something else. Whatever tempts you to turn your gaze back, remember

that committing everything to Jesus means trusting him with all that we leave behind. How will you show Jesus that your eyes are now turned toward his kingdom?

## Study 6

# The Lower Nature

## Part I

### Getting Started

Before you read this section (pp. 38–53), reflect on the ways in which you give in to your lower, fleshly nature. Where do you find it difficult to overcome sin in your life? Be honest.

### Digging In

1. What is the lower nature? Is it restricted to bodily appetites (i. e. the physical level)? Or is it something more? How might the following verses help us to understand “the flesh”? Summarize what you learn. See Gal. 6:16–21; Rom. 8:5–8; 1 Jn. 2:15–17; Eph. 2:1–3.
2. Is temptation itself wrong or sinful? Why not? Arnold asks, “Where does temptation end and sin begin?” (p. 38) How does he answer this? What does James 1:13–15 say about this?

3. According to Arnold, what is the most essential thing in battling against sin and temptation? Why does the experience of Christ *himself* make all the difference?
  
4. Arnold emphasizes the fact that “Jesus was tempted just like any other human being” (p. 38). Why is this so important? Read Hebrews 2:14–18; 4:14–16. What difference does this passage make?
  
5. Arnold claims that most people today live with a burdened conscience. What do you think about that? What is a burdened conscience like and why is the conscience so important?
  
6. Why is admitting our sinful nature, acknowledging it for what it is, an important step in becoming liberated from it?
  
7. According to Arnold, what is or is not “of the world” is not always easy to determine. There is no simple formula to discern spirits. We cannot simply identify a list of outward things and then call them “worldly.” However, in your “world” what is it that betrays a worldly spirit?

8. For Arnold, when it comes to sin there is no room for self-pity or excuses. Why? In what ways have you been wallowing in self-pity or excusing your sin?
  
9. Arnold claims that if we are ruled by *anything* but Christ we are living by the flesh (p. 48). Take an honest look at yourself and ask: Is there any thing, thought, activity, ability, person, goal, or pursuit that, if taken away, would throw you into despair or deep unhappiness?
  
10. Arnold writes that if we tempt another person or bring another into temptation we sin. Are there some ways you could be guilty of this? (Consider gossiping, flirting, vanity, boasting, foul language, selfish spending, boasting, watching lustful images, competitiveness, complaining, being too physical, idle talk, cliquishness, etc. )

### Making it Count

Arnold asks: “Which of us takes our struggle with sin so seriously that we fight with loud cries and tears” (p. 43)? In what area of temptation in your life do you need to have a sharper attitude? What will help make this different? Will you go to someone you trust to share your struggle and be held accountable?

## Study 7

# The Lower Nature

## Part II

### Getting Started

Before you read this section (pp. 53–63) ask God to help you see where you might be vulnerable to the sins of spiritual pride and false piety. Does anything strike you?

### Digging In

1. Describe the sin of false piety. What other “self-sins” usually tag along with false piety? How might you be trying to project an “image” or parade your “goodness” and “strengths” in front of others? Why is this? Can you see how this is a form of seeking power over others?
2. Why is pride the worst form of the flesh? What are the marks of pride?

3. There's a kind of paradox in what Arnold says: We are to take our personal sin seriously but not be overly preoccupied with it. What kind of self-judgment leads to God and what kind doesn't? How can one know the difference (see 2 Cor. 7:8–13)?
  
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following: "As long as you seek to be loved, you will never find peace. You will always find reasons for envy, but its real root is self-love" (p. 63). What kind of self-love is Arnold talking about?
  
5. How is true love of self different from "self-love"?
  
6. In what ways are you trying to get others to love you? to recognize you? to pay attention to you? to admire you?
  
7. Arnold writes: "Let us honor no one but God, and let us never accept honor for ourselves" (p. 60). Where have you given honor to another, or when have you taken honor for yourself?

8. Arnold writes: “Your way of judging people to be either great or insignificant, weak or strong, is completely unchristian” (p. 58). What else could you add to this list? How is this kind of judging marked by pride?
  
9. How might you be guilty of “looking at your brothers and sisters as if through a microscope” (p. 57)? What does Jesus have to say about this (see Mt. 7:1–5)? What does a judgmental attitude really stem from?
  
10. How can one’s gifts, talents, and strengths be a greater hindrance to God than one’s weaknesses? Can you cite any examples of how this might be true, especially in your own life? What does 2 Cor. 12:7–10 have to say about this?

### **Making it Count**

Pride and touchiness go hand in hand. Responding defensively or impatiently to criticism or correction is a sure sign of pride. Go to someone you trust and who knows you well. Ask them to share with you what ways they perceive pride and touchiness in your life. Let God humble you in this.

## Reverence and Surrender

### Getting Started

These two chapters (pp. 73–81) can be difficult to grasp. In many respects, reverence and surrender are utterly foreign to our culture. We live in an increasingly “dirty” and anti-authoritarian society. Before reading, can you think of any ways our crass, self-assertive culture has adversely affected you?

### Digging In

1. Read and reflect upon Isaiah 6:1–13. How is Isaiah’s encounter with God related to these two chapters? How were reverence and surrender brought about in Isaiah’s life?
2. How does Arnold understand “reverence”? How is it related to but different from fear? From what Arnold writes, describe the person who properly fears God.

3. Proverbs speaks a great deal about the fear of God. Look at some of the following verses and think about what this fear looks like. What does a person gain when he fears God? (See Prov. 1:7; 8:13; 14:27; 15:16; 16:5–6; 23:17–18. )
  
4. How does the fear of others negate or undermine the fear of God? Why do we tend to fear others more than God? Are there any ways you are living in the fear of others?
  
5. How might a reverence for God affect the way you worship or the way you relate to others? to creation? to children? to the way you work? to your possessions?
  
6. Arnold speaks of misusing the name of God (p. 74). Besides the obvious, how might God's name get misused today? How can overusing God's name express a lack of reverence? Is your talk overly religious?
  
7. Arnold addresses our inclination to forget God (p. 74). Why? How does this relate to the question of reverence? (See Deut. 8. )

8. What does surrender entail? Describe the person who has surrendered himself totally to God. What is necessary before a person can really surrender to God?
  
9. Where have you resisted accepting the place Jesus has put you? Are there any ways you might be compliant on the outside but resistive on the inside (i. e. obedient but not surrendered)? (See Phil. 4:11–13. )

### Making it Count

Arnold writes: “When a person has surrendered to God with heart and soul, he will then seek others in whom the same love is clearly expressed and surrender to them also” (p. 77; see Eph. 5:21). Is this true in your life? Is there anything preventing you from surrendering to your brothers and sisters in Christ? What? Name one way you have been unwilling to submit to another out of reverence for Christ. Go to that person to ask their forgiveness.

## Purity and Sincerity

### Getting Started

Purity and sincerity are all about the quality of our relationships—with God and each other. The lack of purity and genuineness between the sexes today has caused untold harm and anguish. Before you read these two chapters (pp. 64–67, 82–85) think about how your relationships and the relationships around you would be different if these two virtues were practiced. What would change?

### Digging In

1. Keeping the content of these two chapters in mind, compare and contrast purity and sincerity. Do the same for impurity and insincerity. How are they different? How are they related?

Purity	Impurity
Sincerity	Insincerity

2. For Arnold, is sexual impurity a matter of the flesh only? What else is involved? Is purity simply abstinence? (Mt. 5:27–30; Tit. 1:15–16)
  
3. Thinking about this honestly, and nondefensively: what kind of fruit is borne from masturbation? Is masturbation a harmless act? If you struggle in this area, does it ever bring you closer to others? Does it inspire love? What really motivates masturbation?
  
4. Are there other ways you specifically “play with impurity”? In your thought-life? Sexually? What you read and watch? How you dress? In your relationships? How are you going to assure that things will be different?
  
5. Arnold says that “it will be necessary to have a strong character and say ‘No’ to things which the general public approves of” (p. 67). How do you let the public spirit of our age pressure you and cause you to compromise in your conscience? What do *you* need to say “No” to?
  
6. Arnold says that purity is a great blessing. Can you think of why that might be? What gifts accompany a pure life?

7. Arnold argues that it is not sinners but those who use Christian words insincerely that are the worst enemies of God. What, exactly, does he mean by this? Why might this be so? (See Mt. 6:5–8; 7:15–23; 21:28–32; 1 Jn. 3:18. )
  
8. In what areas of your life do you use the right words without meaning them, or come across differently from the way you really are? Where are you not being straightforward in your relationships, or where are you two-faced about your true feelings? Why?
  
9. Arnold warns against “parrot-like religion. ” What does he mean by this? Do you see any of this in your own fellowship circles? What about in your own life?
  
10. What are some of today’s social conventions (in and outside the church) that mask façades, hypocrisy, or an ungentle spirit? How do you participate in these?

### **Making it Count**

Read Philippians 4:8–9. Then, in a time of prayer, speak to God those things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Thank him for these things. Then ask God

to show you a specific area of your life where one of these virtues is seriously lacking. Think about your relationships, thought-life, behavior, lifestyle, habits, leisure activities, and so forth.

# The Church

## Getting Started

Most people have pretty strong feelings about the church. Before reading this chapter (pp. 89–95), examine your own feelings. What do you feel about the church in general and your church in particular?

## Digging In

1. From what Arnold writes, describe his understanding of “the world.” What are some adjectives he uses? How is the church different? What are some of its characteristics?
2. To whom does the heavenly church come? What happens when the Spirit of the Church comes to a group of people?
3. Why do you think Arnold is so adamant when he says, “We cannot say that the church is here or there” (p. 89)? In what ways might you or your church be too smug toward others—or have the attitude, “We are the church”?

4. Arnold says, “The fact that the church exists is the most important reality on earth” (p. 89). What do you think he means? Do you agree? (See Mt. 5:13–16; Jn. 13:34–35; 17:21; Eph. 1:22; 2:19–22; 1 Pet. 2:9–12. )
  
5. What is Arnold trying to get at with the metaphor of the lantern and the light (p. 91)? Why is this metaphor important? How is it helpful?
  
6. According to Arnold, what really holds a living church community together? Is this true of today’s churches? How about your own fellowship?
  
7. Read 1 Cor. 12:12–27. Arnold refers to believers as being so united that they are like one body. Taking this metaphor of a body, think of various meanings it might have and how, if taken seriously, they would affect your church or fellowship.
  
8. Arnold addresses the problem of “attachment to the culture” (p. 94). He refers to the Bruderhof—his own church community—and the influences of European and German culture along with the Youth Movement. Why might this be a problem? Is a

given cultural background necessarily bad? In what ways might today's church, and your church in particular, be too attached to the culture?

9. The spirit of the world is a spirit of division. Is there any divisiveness in the fellowship of which you are a part? Any barriers? cliquishness? class distinctions?

### Making it Count

Stanley Hauerwas, a contemporary Christian author, asks: "Can we so order our life in the church that the world might look at us and know that God is busy?" In a similar vein, Arnold writes: "Our time needs the tangible demonstration that God is stronger than all hate, all need, all sin, and all disunity" (p. 91). Dream a bit about how your church community can give a greater witness to this "tangible demonstration." Seek the Spirit's leading and choose one thing you can do to help your fellowship show forth God's power over the world.

# Community

## Getting Started

The word “community” can mean different things to different people. Think about its many meanings and the way the word is used. Make a list. As you read this chapter (pp. 96–105), keep in mind how Arnold uses the word “community.”

## Digging In

1. Arnold seems to have a fairly specific idea of what community involves. Describe his understanding of community. How are Christian community and the Gospel related?
2. What needs to happen before one can have true community with others? What is the basis for Christian community?
3. Is “community,” as sharing all things in common, an ethical ideal for Arnold, or is it something else?

4. Arnold cites several scripture passages that provide the rationale for “sharing all things in common” (p. 97). Look these up and study them carefully. Also read Mk. 12:41–44; Mk. 10:28–31; Jn. 12:4–6; Acts 2:42ff; 4:32ff; 6:1–4; Rom. 15:25–28; 2 Thess. 3:11–13; Eph. 4:28.
  
5. As important as sharing is, what is the most decisive thing according to Arnold?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How important is commitment for building community with others? How might being committed to a specific group of people be important? Besides commitment, what else is needed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Can you think of any forces today that hinder the Spirit from gathering believers together like at Pentecost?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Like the Psalmist (see Ps. 133), Arnold writes: “It is a great gift to live with brothers and sisters” (p. 101). In our society, most would balk at this. How would community with fellow believers be a blessing?

9. Arnold quotes Mt 6:21: “Where your treasure is, there is your heart. ” Where does your treasure lie? Be honest! Take inventory of your treasure chest. How are your energies, thoughts, time, and money spent? Do they build up God’s kingdom—a shared life with others—or do they secure a little kingdom of your own?
  
10. Arnold writes in a letter that he understands how disappointing community can be. How have you experienced disappointment—especially being let down by others? How have you let others down?

### **Making it Count**

If someone were to look at your life from the “outside,” what would indicate that your treasures lie in heaven and not on earth? Would your life be described as a “shared life”? Despite the obstacles to community, what is one concrete thing you can do to live a more gathered, a more shared life with others?

## Leadership and Gifts

### Getting Started

Before you read these two chapters (pp. 106–120), reflect a bit on what the world deems as good, effective leadership. What kind of qualities do most people admire in a strong leader?

### Digging In

1. In contrast to the world, how does Arnold describe a leader? What are the qualities of a true leader?
2. Arnold emphasizes love as the greatest gift. Find various passages in the book where he does this. What does leadership have to do with love?
3. Why, according to Arnold, is it such a terrible thing to use leadership as a position of power over others? Can you think of additional reasons? Where might you be guilty of trying to exercise

power over others? How have you been too pushy, or done too much correcting (p. 117)?

4. Arnold says that there is no privilege in a servant of the Word's (pastor's) task. Why does he say this (see 1 Tim. 4:11–16; Jas. 3:1)? How might a position of spiritual leadership be an extra burden to carry?
  
5. Arnold exclaims: “We denounce the honoring of men” (p. 112). In what sense does he mean this? Does he mean we ought never to honor others? (See Rom. 10:12; 13:7; 1 Cor. 12:23–24; Eph. 6:2. )
  
6. Why does Jesus give different gifts to his followers? (See 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:12,26; Eph. 4:7–13. )
  
7. Arnold says, “We must be willing to sacrifice our natural talents for the sake of the whole Body” (p. 116). Why? Can you think of any examples of how this has been true in your life?

8. What is the gift of discernment? How is it to be exercised? How might it relate to Arnold's thoughts on the authority of leaders? (See Acts 8:9–25. )
  
9. Arnold argues that, "A true Christian church cannot be a living organism unless there is clear leadership" (p. 106). If this is the case, are there any ways you are resisting (or failing to support) the leadership of those over you (see Heb. 13:7,17)? How?
  
10. Arnold warns against being bound by a leader and likewise of trying to bind others to oneself (e. g. 1 Cor. 3:1–9). Have you been (or are you now) guilty of this?

### Making it Count

1. Envy is very destructive. Arnold especially mentions how terrible it is "to feel we have not been given our fair share; to feel that others have received more from God" (p. 115). In what ways might you struggle with envy? How have you envied, instead of supporting, those in leadership? Of whom do you need to ask forgiveness because you have compared yourself to them and felt God had been unfair?

2. Spend time praying for those who have been given the task to lead the church. Read the following verses: Eph. 6:19–20; Col. 4:3–4; 2 Thess. 3:1–2. In light of these verses, how can you pray for your ministers?

# Forgiveness and Baptism

## Getting Started

Forgiveness and baptism belong together. Before reading these two chapters (pp. 121–127, 141–146), consider the relationship between them. How might they be related?

## Digging In

1. Arnold writes, “We must experience what it means to be burdened with sin *and then freed*” (p. 124). Has this ever happened in your life? How so?
2. What other conditions must be met before true forgiveness from God can be had? Can you list some of them?
3. What does Arnold mean by baptism? What is its purpose? Make a list of what baptism includes. Is baptism simply a personal, private act or is it something more?

4. Arnold says that “the only way to find inner peace in Christ is through peace with one’s brothers” (p. 121). Read Mt. 5:23–24; 6:14–15; 18:21–35. How important is forgiving others in experiencing God’s forgiveness?
  
5. How is baptism a fitting symbol of God’s forgiveness?
  
6. Why does Arnold say that “it is better to remain unbaptized than to take the step half-heartedly...” (p. 143)? How serious is the step of baptism? What makes it so serious?
  
7. What do you think Arnold means when he says, “Baptism is the declaration of a good conscience before God” (p. 140)? How does one obtain a clear conscience (see 1 Jn. 1:9; Jas. 5:16)?
  
8. Baptism symbolizes a new beginning. Does this mean the end of sin and temptation? Read Romans 6. What does it mean that we are no longer slaves to sin?

9. Baptism is a covenant with God *and* with others. What kind of church does a fellowship of Christians need to be to take baptism seriously? Does your fellowship have the kind of covenant with each other to make baptism a reality for everyday life?
  
10. Arnold encourages us to “look at one another with new eyes and see each other as a gift from God” (p. 125). What kinds of things would help this to happen in your life? Whom do you need to look at with new eyes?

### Making it Count

1. Read and reflect on Colossians 2:9–15. What do you learn about forgiveness and baptism?
  
2. If God has canceled the written code against us are you willing to do the same toward others? Against whom have you been keeping a “score sheet”? Will you nail this to the cross? Arnold claims that “God hears only those who forgive” (p. 126). Are you by chance harboring any unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness, or anything else against another person? Are you willing to forgive? Will you go to them and ask their forgiveness?

## Unity and The Lord's Supper

### Getting Started

Before reading these two chapters (pp. 128–133, 147–150) think about your various relationships. With whom do you feel especially united? From your experience, what factors help create or foster unity with others?

### Digging In

1. According to Arnold, on what basis is true unity possible? What has to happen before a group becomes united in heart, soul, and mind?
2. What does real unity involve? How does Arnold describe a united fellowship of believers? Can you think of other ways to describe unity?
3. Why is unity so important? (See Mt. 12:30; Jn. 17:21ff; Eph. 1:9–10; 4:3–16; Phil. 2:1–5.)

4. Do you agree with Arnold that God “says the same thing to all, also in practical matters” (p. 129)? If this is so, then is majority opinion a valid way for God’s people to make decisions? (See Acts 15. )
  
5. Arnold describes the Lord’s Supper as “a meal of unity” (p. 147). Aside from its religious significance, how does a meal symbolize unity? Reflect on Arnold’s reference to the grain of wheat and the grapes. What does this metaphor suggest?
  
6. In addition to symbolizing unity, what else is the Lord’s Supper a symbol of?
  
7. What kinds of things undermine unity in a group (see pp. 132–133)? Can you add to this list? What forces in our society, in the church, and in each person prevent us from forming a united brotherhood?
  
8. What should we do before we come to the Lord’s Table? As we come to it, what should our posture be? What happens when the Lord’s Supper is taken wrongly? (See 1 Cor. 11:17ff. )

9. In what ways have you tried to shake hands over fences and barriers that still remain, to resolve differences by making concessions? Be honest!
  
10. Arnold says: "Standing for God always has a unifying power" (p. 128). Is this true in your life? Are you a gatherer or a scatterer? Are your relationships founded on the kind of expectation that is necessary to draw you closer together? Are they growing in unity or are they helter-skelter?
  
11. In partaking of the Meal, Arnold says we should be ready to sacrifice our life—in fact *should* sacrifice our life—like Jesus (p. 148). Is your life in Christ a sacrifice? Is there anything you can change to express your readiness to sacrifice or die for Jesus?

### Making it Count

Arnold writes: "Let us pray that we may be gathered together with all those who live in expectation of him" (p. 128). Christ's body (his church) is sadly very splintered today. Ask God to show you one thing you can do to help tear down the walls that divide Christians. Think creatively.

# Church Discipline

## Getting Started

Church discipline is virtually unheard of, much less discussed, in today's contemporary church. Before you read this chapter (pp. 134–140) be aware of any biases or misgivings you may have on this subject. Write these down. What kinds of questions might you have about church discipline, and would like to have answered?

## Digging In

1. A number of scripture passages are referred to in the footnote on page 134 regarding the basis of church discipline. Look them up in your Bible and read them. What common themes emerge?
2. What, exactly, is the purpose of church discipline and in what spirit should it be administered?
3. Referring to Mt. 16:19, Arnold writes: “the forgiveness of sin is connected with the church...Forgiveness is not a private matter”

(pp. 139–140). What does he mean? Why is the church, in particular, important in matters of discipline?

4. Is every sin to be disciplined or treated in the same way? Why not?
  
5. If properly administered and rightly received, how is church discipline a blessing?
  
6. Arnold says, “We cannot excuse evil by saying that where there is wheat there is always chaff” (p. 137). What are some other typical excuses we use today for not confronting sin seriously in the church? What have some of your excuses been?
  
7. Arnold warns against falling into extremes (pp. 138–139). How have you failed to exercise the balance between love and truth? Where have you been either “too polite” or “too harsh” with someone?
  
8. “If someone speaks plainly to us,” Arnold says, “we must not be touchy” (p. 139). Do you listen when someone approaches you about a problem, or do you immediately try to argue your side?

9. Arnold says that “we must have deep respect and reverence for those who are disciplined” (p. 136). Why? Why shouldn’t they just be shunned?
  
10. Arnold emphasizes (when undergoing church discipline) the importance of “giving ourselves completely to Jesus” (p. 138). Why do you think this should be the focus? What dangers are there in focusing too heavily on one’s own sin?

### Making it Count

Read Mt. 18:15–20. Note that the emphasis is upon going straight to one’s brother and sister. Arnold warns against making “general accusations.” Instead, specifics should be brought to a person’s attention (p. 139). How have you failed in this? Where have you dropped comments or said things in a general way instead of going directly to the person or addressing the specific problem at hand?

## Love and Marriage

### Getting Started

The institution of marriage and the commitment to love are fast disappearing in our culture. Reflect on our cultural values a bit. Before you read this section (pp. 151–168), what factors in our culture undermine faithful, committed love and pull couples apart?

### Digging In

1. What are some adjectives you would use to describe Arnold's view of sex?
2. Why is sex so sacred, belonging only in marriage? What are some of the reasons why one should wait until marriage before engaging in sexual intimacy. (See Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:6–9; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:15–20; Mt. 5:27–30; Eph. 5:1–6.)
3. What should be the determining factor in a serious relationship leading toward marriage? Why is physical and emotional attraction an insufficient basis for a relationship?

4. Arnold writes that we should not let our feelings of affection move casually from one person to another (p. 152). Why? What's wrong with having feelings? In what ways have you been struggling with this?
  
5. Arnold emphasizes that a serious relationship should lead two people closer to Jesus (p. 157). What indicates that a relationship is centered in Christ?
  
6. How might you be clinging too much to marriage? What is Arnold's answer to the unfulfilled longing to get married? How can singleness be a gift?
  
7. How might marriage, as wonderful as it is, absorb one's love in the wrong way (p. 167)?
  
8. Arnold takes Jesus' words about divorce and remarriage very seriously (see Mt. 5:27–32; 19:6). Without going into great detail, what are some of the reasons you can think of why life-long faithfulness is God's ideal?

### For Married Couples to Discuss Privately

9. Arnold says that God's blessing is on any couple where unity is experienced in the right order (p. 155). Are there any ways you have gone against this order? Where in your marriage is God's order being ignored?
  
10. Arnold refers to the man's task as representing Christ as the Head and the woman's task to represent Jesus as the Body (pp. 155–156). How is this an apt metaphor between husband and wife? How might this affect your marriage relationship?
  
11. Arnold describes sex under God's order as being “an awe-inspiring, mysterious, noble, chaste, and peaceful act” (p. 164). Is this true in your marriage? Why not?
  
12. Arnold says: “Having a marriage certificate does not give one the freedom to live for the body and its appetites” (p. 157). What motivates the sexual love between you and your spouse?

### Making it Count

Are you willing to make a covenant of sexual purity—outside and within marriage? Spell that covenant out a bit. Who will help hold

you accountable to it? Can you find others who will commit to the same covenant? Who would that be?

## Family Life

### Getting Started

Before you read this chapter (pp. 169–187) take time to reflect on the different qualities that characterize a childlike spirit (the qualities of being a child). What characteristics or experiences come more naturally to children? List them. Add to this list as you read along.

### Digging In

1. What kind of discipline does a child need most and respond to best? What happens when parents are too soft on their children?
  
2. Arnold says that a “certain sharpness toward children is healthy, but *impatience* is not” (p. 174). What does he mean by this? How does one know when a spirit of impatience begins to creep in? Are there any ways you can become more patient with the children in your care?

3. Do your children, or the ones in your care, doubt what you say (p. 175)? Why? Do you follow through with your word, especially in matters of discipline?
  
4. Arnold speaks about being wary of extremes (p. 173). What do you think he means by this? Can you think of other extremes than the ones he mentions?
  
5. When children sin or commit indecencies, what does Arnold suggest we do? What mustn't we do?
  
6. Arnold speaks of having reverence for children and leading them to have reverence for their parents. What does he mean by this? Where have you failed to show reverence, either to your parents or to the children in your care?
  
7. What is the best way to lead a child to God? What should a parent or teacher avoid in this endeavor? Are there any ways that you have put religious pressure on your children?

8. Why isn't it good to over explain the important mysteries of life to children? What *is* most important for them to know?
  
9. Arnold writes: "We fail our children when our emotional feelings and ties push us around" (p. 174). How so? What might Arnold mean when he refers to "emotionalism" (p. 185) and "emotional ties that bind" (p. 186)? What indications are there, if any, that you are too emotionally tied to your parents or that your children are too emotionally tied to you? Can you be specific?
  
10. Why is it important to recognize that "children differ in how they learn" (p. 178). In what ways does our society put undo emphasis upon academics? Do you do this?
  
11. Arnold writes: "We must love our children so much that we are ready to fight for their souls" (p. 173)? How have you failed to engage in this fight or given up the fight altogether?
  
12. How can you become more childlike? What forces in our culture make it difficult for you to have a childlike spirit?

### Making it Count

Pick one child with whom you can build a deeper relationship of trust. What is one concrete, consistent thing you can do to deepen that trust?

## Illness and Death

### Getting Started

No one likes to think about death—especially their own. Yet each one of us is fully aware of our own mortality. Before you read this chapter (pp. 188–196), ask God to show you the ways in which you avoid questions of death and suffering. Write down some of those ways.

### Digging In

1. How would you describe Arnold's attitude toward illness and death?
2. When we are sick or faced with the prospect of dying, what should we do? When is Christ most able to do his work?
3. Arnold speaks of the following paradox: "All sickness is a form of evil, yet we must accept it as from God's hand" (p. 188). Notice what he does not say. He does not say that all sickness *is* evil, nor that sickness is willed by God. What do you think he means?

4. There are other paradoxes in this chapter? What are they and what meaning might they have?
  
5. What does true healing entail? Though God often wills to heal the body, what is his ultimate will when it comes to physical suffering? (See Jn. 9:1–12; Rom. 8:28–29; Lk. 17:11–19; James 5:14–16; 2 Cor. 4:16–18. )
  
6. Arnold writes: “Pain deepens something in one’s heart and life” (p. 191). How so? Can you think of any examples?
  
7. Arnold says that “the suffering of an innocent child always has great significance for the church” (p. 196). How could this possibly be?
  
8. Think about the meaning of Jesus’ promise in John 14:2: “I am going to prepare a place for you. ” Why is the metaphor of a house with many rooms such a comfort? Imagine the mystery of this place.

9. Death is more than cessation according to Arnold. What else is it? (See Rom. 3:20–23; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13.) Why is this important to recognize?
  
10. Arnold speaks of “the fulfillment of a dedicated life” (p. 189) and how vital this is in preparing for eternity. What is a dedicated life like? (See Phil. 1:19–26; 1 Cor. 15:55–58; 1 Jn. 4:16–18; 1 Tim. 6:11–12.)

### Making it Count

Arnold writes: “All of us should live life so as to be able to face eternity at any time” (p. 188). He also says that “this earth is not yet fully our home” (p. 193). Is your life plowing ground for eternity, or is it being lived only for what is temporary? What kinds of things can you do now to demonstrate that you have a greater, nobler destiny? In other words, what are your priorities? Are you investing in what lasts or is your energy being spent on what will fade away? Are you ready to meet your Maker now? If not, why not?

## Evil, Darkness, and The Fight

### Getting Started

These two chapters (pp. 197–216) address a very serious subject. Arnold begins this chapter claiming that “many people either belittle evil or don’t believe it exists at all.” Before you read what he says, how is this so? List the ways our society belittles or ignores evil’s existence.

Evil Belittled	Evil Ignored

### Digging In

1. What are some of Arnold’s reasons for taking the power of evil so seriously?
2. From what Arnold writes, describe the nature and influence of evil and of the demonic sphere. Is evil a spiritual, invisible force only or is there something more to it? Where does Satan center his attack most? What does the cross tell you about the nature of evil?

3. Arnold claims that “a true Christian should be a child toward evil and have no experience in its secrets” (p. 197). What do you think he means by this? Why is this? (See Rom. 12:9; 16:19–20; 2 Cor. 6:14. )
  
4. In rejecting any form of contact with the demonic, Arnold rejects even the most “harmless” forms of spiritualism (p. 199). How do people dabble in the demonic today? How have (or do) you?
  
5. When we deliberately commit a sinful act, what happens? Why is willful sin so serious?
  
6. Why do you think Arnold emphasizes the fact that Jesus didn’t bring a new philosophy or a new religion? What did Jesus bring?
  
7. As frightening as evil is, Arnold reminds us that in Jesus there is a greater power (p. 202). What are some scripture passages that testify to Jesus’ authority, power, and victory over evil? (See Mk. 14:62; Mt. 16:18; Jn. 14:30; Lk. 12:4–5; Jn. 16:11; Eph. 1:19–23; Col. 2:15; 1 Jn. 4:4. )

8. Arnold writes to a person whose fearful thoughts have gained too much power. Do you have any such thoughts? Can you share these thoughts with someone you trust?
  
9. Arnold writes how Nazi Germany was ruled by evil spiritual powers or demons (p. 198). He also speaks of “the demonic net” that covers the earth. How might our own country be ruled by evil powers? Name those powers and forces that seem to have a collective stronghold over our culture. How would you describe the portion of Satan’s net that covers our nation?
  
10. Are there any evil strongholds that are peculiar to or especially strong in your city or town?
  
11. To get more specific, what strongholds do you personally have to battle against? Think about the dominant atmosphere(s) in which you live and function (e. g. family, work, school, neighborhood, living space, places of leisure and recreation, etc. ) What forces seek to bind people and alienate them from God and from each other?

### Making it Count

Arnold protests against the idea that it is wrong to react when God's will is attacked. Read the Covenant of the Lord's Supper (pp. 214–216). Ask God to show you how you can more faithfully take up the fight against sin and evil. Take one of the covenants and *do* something with it. That is, make that covenant living both in your heart and in your life.

## World Suffering

### Getting Started

Suffering is everywhere. Before you read this chapter (pp. 217–225), reflect on all the ways the world suffers. Write some of these down. What kind of suffering moves your heart most?

### Digging In

1. Arnold differentiates between sin and suffering (pp. 217–218). How are they different? How do they belong together? What sins lead to specific kinds of suffering and how does suffering tempt people to sin?
2. What do you think about the saying that if one were to put the evil of the world on one side of a scale and its suffering on the other, the scale would balance (p. 218)? If this were so, how might this affect the way one responds to the need of the world? (See Mt. 4:17, 23–25; 9:35–38.)

3. Describe Arnold's view of political involvement and social protest. What place do these have in overcoming suffering in the world? How important are they in his mind? How is becoming too political on the one hand and being too complacent on the other in tension?
  
4. Even if the poor are no more spiritually alert than the rich, does this mean we shouldn't try to help them? Why not? (See Deut. 15:1–11; 24:17–22; Prov. 14:31; 17:5; Isa. 58:6–10; James 1:26–27; 2: 14–16; 1John 3:16–18. )
  
5. Arnold warns against coldheartedness, especially towards those who seem most hopeless. Is there any way you have become coldhearted? How so?
  
6. What are some of the reasons Arnold cites to reach out to those who are in special need? Can you think of any others?
  
7. Arnold writes that if we are filled with God's love, we will experience the world's pain ourselves (p. 217). Do you experience such pain? If not, why not? What are some things you could do differently to become more sensitive to or aware of the suffering of others?

8. Arnold tells about how his parents didn't worry about exposing him and his brothers and sisters to needy people (as long as there was no sexual impurity). How might this witness speak to your situation?
  
9. Arnold says that "to be complacent in the face of injustice is a terrible sin" (p. 223). What injustices or evils—especially in those closest to you—have you failed to confront or speak out against? What is one thing you can do to move from silence to protest?
  
10. Arnold urges us to do more in the way of addressing the practical needs of others. Yet in reaching out, what is the most important thing? (Read 1 Cor. 13:1–3 and think about why love, not just good works, is the most important thing. )

### Making it Count

Reflect on the suffering and need that are close to your home. How could you reach out in compassion? Notice that Arnold's emphasis is upon the personal. How can you become more personally involved with the suffering closest to you?

# Mission

## Getting Started

Before you read this chapter (pp. 226–233) write down what comes to your mind when you think of mission. What images emerge? What are your feelings?

## Digging In

1. Arnold refers to “apostolic mission” several times. What do you think he means by this? What are the marks of apostolic mission? When you think of the Apostle Paul, for example, what kind of mission did he embark on? (See Rom. 1:1–6. )
2. When one seeks to reach out to others with the gospel, what should one guard against?
3. Arnold speaks of two “forms of mission” (p. 231). What are these? How do they relate to one another? Need they be in conflict?

4. In our twofold mission, what should be our primary concern?  
What exactly is our goal? Is it simply the conversion of individuals? (See Acts 26:18. )
  
5. Arnold writes: “The cross is deeply implanted into the earth. It points to heaven, but its outstretched arms express the hunger and thirst of Jesus for all men” (p. 228). What do you think he is trying to get across in this image? What else does this image suggest to you?
  
6. What do you think Arnold means by the “sharpness” of the gospel (p. 232)? How is this a part of the good news?
  
7. Why is unity among believers so important in the missionary task? Arnold asks a very penetrating question: “Does the world really recognize through today’s church that the Father sent Jesus into the world” (p. 227)? How might Jesus’ prayer become a greater reality in your life?
  
8. How would you contrast Arnold’s understanding of mission with many of today’s evangelistic emphases?

9. Arnold is clear that mission should “never be a human undertaking” and that it is important that we “are sent by God” when we do mission (p. 233). How have you been guilty of human striving in trying to be a witness for Christ? What happens when the Holy Spirit is absent in our effort to share the gospel?
  
10. Arnold shares about an instance where his father, Eberhard, refused to speak about the Bruderhof (p. 226). Why? Have you ever been focused too much on the church or fellowship to which you belong?
  
11. The urge to reach out to as many people as possible with the gospel is a very legitimate one. However, Arnold warns that in doing this we risk losing the “salt of our witness” (p. 229). How so? Has this ever happened in your life? In your church?

### Making it Count

Arnold begins this chapter expressing the deep longing to reach out to other *seeking people* (p. 226). Pray that God would bring to mind those you know who are seeking something different in their lives. What is one thing you can do differently to express the love and truth of Christ to them? If you do not know any seeking people, ask God to lead you to them. Ask God to give you “the right word at the right time for the right person” (p. 226).

# Jesus

## Getting Started

This is a very deep chapter. In many ways it is the centerpiece of Arnold's book. Before you read these pages (pp. 237–253), complete the following sentence with as many descriptions that come to your mind. "When I think of Jesus, I think of\_\_\_\_\_."

## Digging In

1. What do you learn *about* Jesus in this chapter? His birth? life? ministry? death? resurrection? Is there anything *new* that hit you?
2. What kind of heart does Jesus come into? Is having Jesus in the heart enough?
3. Arnold refers to John 15 where he believes Jesus speaks from the depths of his heart (pp. 239–240). What does it reveal about the kind of relationship Jesus wants with us as his disciples?

4. If it's not much help to grasp Jesus just with our brains (p. 243), and if we can't base our Christianity on feelings (p. 242), then what are we Christians to base our faith on?
  
5. How would you explain Arnold's view of the Bible? Is the Bible sufficient in and of itself to reveal Jesus? What else do we need?
  
6. What does Arnold mean when he speaks of the "living Word"? Arnold says that "the Word is not rigid" (p. 251). Does this mean Arnold is a relativist, or does he mean something else? (See Heb. 4:12–13.)
  
7. Consider your view of and approach to the Bible. In taking the Scriptures seriously there is the temptation to get entangled in the letter and neglect the living Word. Is there any way you have done this? How can bible knowledge become an obstacle to a living, transforming knowledge of Jesus (see 1 Cor. 8:1–2)?
  
8. Arnold says, "We must pray that the knife may cut deeply into our hearts..." (p. 240). When hard times come your way, do you receive them as one who is being pruned or do you resent them? Are you willing to let Jesus' knife cut deeply in your life?

9. How is your heart full of too many other things besides Jesus? Are you hiding any corners of your heart for yourself?
  
10. Jesus' life was a journey from Bethlehem to Golgotha. How does your life-journey compare to Jesus'? Are you on the same kind of path as he? Are you willing to go the way of Jesus?
  
11. What does dying with Christ mean and how would that affect your life now?
  
12. Arnold consistently refers to the importance of having "the whole Christ." What does he mean by this? Why is this significant?

### Making it Count

Arnold stresses that "Jesus wants us to love *everything* in him" (p. 244). We all have the tendency to ignore or repress certain aspects of Jesus and his teachings. What parts of Jesus or his teachings do you find especially difficult to accept? Name them. Spend some time in prayer about this asking God to help you change. Ask him to show you one way you can concretely express your willingness to change.

## The Cross and Salvation

### Getting Started

Before you read these chapters (pp. 254–268) get a concordance. Look up the word “cross” in the New Testament. What do you learn about the cross from these passages of scripture?

### Digging In

1. How important is the cross in Arnold’s mind? Pinpoint those passages where he highlights the significance of the cross.
2. What kinds of things did Jesus accomplish on the cross? What kind of salvation does he bring? (Think also of the previous chapter.)
3. Describe the “mystery of the cross.” What makes it such a deep mystery?

4. There is also a deep mystery contained in salvation. It is related to the mystery of the cross. What is it? (See Ezek. 18:23; 2 Pet. 3:9—Mt. 7:13-14; 2 Thess. 1:5-10.)
  
5. Arnold writes: “The cross is the center of the universe” (p. 255). (See Rev. 5:6; Col. 1:17.) What could this possibly mean? How should you live differently from those who do not have the cross in the center of their hearts? (See 2 Cor. 5:13-21; Phil. 2:3-8; 1 Pet. 2:21-23.)
  
6. Read Mt. 26:47-27:56. The trial and death of Jesus reveal two spirits. Contrast them.
  
7. What does Arnold mean when he writes: “If we come before God with only our inner burdens, we do him an injustice” (p. 256)?
  
8. Arnold reminds us that on the cross, “Christ experienced god-forsakenness” (p. 257). But if Jesus was a faithful, obedient son to the Father, why did God turn his back on him? (See 2 Cor. 5:21).

9. What was Jesus' response to God when he felt abandoned on the cross? Have you ever felt a sense of godforsakenness? How did (and do) you respond?
  
10. "There is an hour of God for everything," writes Arnold (p. 258). Have there ever been times in your life when you have either missed God's hour or preempted it by not patiently waiting for his time?
  
11. Arnold reminds us that because of the cross we "cannot serve Jesus out of fear" (p. 261). Has your obedience to Jesus been motivated out of fear, or from love?
  
12. Arnold writes: "Whenever I fail, I keenly feel the words: 'The Lord turned and looked'" (p. 266). How is it with you? Is Jesus so present in your life that when you fail him you see his look?

### Making it Count

Throughout *Discipleship* Arnold lays great emphasis upon two portions of Scripture: (1) the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5–7) and, (2) the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1–13). Read and reflect on these two portions of scripture. Use them as mir-

rors to hold up your life against. Where are you not *experiencing* the “greater righteousness” Jesus speaks about? How has your lamp gone dry?

# The Kingdom of God

## Getting Started

Before you read this final chapter (pp. 269–279), imagine for a moment that a month from now something wonderful was going to happen in your life. If that something could be anything you wanted what would that be? How would your life change as you waited?

## Digging In

1. How does Arnold contrast the kingdom of God with the kingdoms of this world? Describe the differences (see Mt. 6:28–34; Rom. 14:17).
2. What kind of king is Jesus? How is he different from other rulers (see Mk. 10:35–45)?
3. Arnold argues that Jesus “would rather lose his disciples than build his kingdom on a false foundation” (p. 271). What kind

of foundation is Arnold referring to? In what ways might today's church be building on a false foundation?

4. Arnold believes that if God's light enters and moves the hearts of even just two or three people on earth, it has tremendous effects (p. 274). How might this be? Why is even a little crack of light significant? (See Eph. 5:8–16; Mt. 5:14–16; Rom. 13:11–14.)
  
5. Arnold refers to what Karl Barth once said about the kingdom of God: that it is something completely different and totally other (p. 275). Does this mean there is nothing we can do to prepare for or hasten on God's coming kingdom?
  
6. If the kingdom of God is built on an entirely different foundation, what kind of foundation would this be? Think radically! Is your life being built on a foundation that is different from the world?
  
7. Arnold suggests that when we look at today's world, we see that judgment is already being carried out (p. 278). What does he mean by this? Can you think of some examples of how this is so?

8. How have you tried to make Jesus king but only after he has given you some “bread”? Is your devotion to him conditioned in any way? Are you making bargains with God?
  
9. Arnold boldly asserts: “He who does not wait for the Lord in *every aspect* of his life does not wait at all” (p. 275). This is quite an assertion. Assessing your life and church honestly, what could people see that indicated that indeed you were preparing and expecting God’s kingdom?
  
10. Arnold writes: “We do not know how near or far we are from the [final] kingdom of God in terms of time. But we know we can be very near or very far from it in spirit, and that is the decisive question” (p. 276). Are you near or are you far?

### Making it Count

If Jesus’ kingdom is on the way, how might your life need to change so as to be ready for it? In what ways could your life be more like Noah’s—a real living preparation? What is one way you can live differently to show that you are expecting the coming future of God?