WEEK#7: THE FOUR DISCIPLESHIP ATTITUDES

Big Idea: Jesus forms us into His likeness as we continually remain teachable, trust His leadership, own our responses, and release what competes with following Him.

Primary Scriptures: Philippians 2:5–13 and 2 Corinthians 3:18

Philippians 2 begins with the mindset of Jesus. He humbled Himself, took the position of a servant, and obeyed the Father even to death on a cross. Paul calls believers to let this mindset shape their life together. Christian formation therefore reaches beyond what we know; into how we love, serve, and respond.

Verses 12–13 hold together our active obedience and God's work within us. We participate in formation because God is already at work in our desires and actions. We do not manufacture Christlikeness or earn His acceptance. We respond to His grace by bringing our actual lives under His leadership.

2 Corinthians 3:18 describes believers being transformed into the Lord's likeness by the Spirit. Jesus is both the One we follow and the pattern of the life being formed in us. The goal is growing resemblance to Him, not simply greater religious knowledge or a busier church schedule.

The journey of Christian formation requires more than simply knowing the right things or doing the right things. It requires us to develop a posture toward Jesus that allows Him to continually form us into His likeness. Knowledge and faithful actions matter; our posture shapes whether we receive truth, accept correction, and obey when following Him becomes costly.

Four attitudes are especially important: humility, surrender, responsibility, and sacrifice. These are not isolated steps that we complete and leave behind. They are interconnected attitudes that continually shape the way we follow Jesus, respond to His leadership, and participate in our own formation.

We may understand forgiveness and still resist forgiving. | We may value community and still withdraw when challenged. | We may agree that Jesus is Lord and still insist on controlling an outcome.

These moments reveal the posture we bring to Him—and become opportunities for growth.

Breakdown
Humility asks: *What might I need to see differently?*
Surrender asks: *What am I giving to Jesus?*
Responsibility asks: *What is mine to own?*
Sacrifice asks: *What am I willing to give up?*

1. HUMILITY

What might I need to see differently?

In **James 4:6–10**. God opposes pride and gives grace to the humble. In a passage addressing conflict and misplaced desires, James calls his readers to submit to God and turn toward Him. Humility involves a willingness to be corrected by God rather than defend every desire or interpretation.

Formation requires the humility to admit that I may not see myself, others, my circumstances, or even Jesus clearly. Pride protects the person we already are. Humility opens us to the transformation God desires to work in us.

Humility allows us to listen, confess, receive truth, learn from others, and admit when we are wrong. It also recognizes our continual dependence on Jesus. Being humble does not mean assuming everyone else is right or treating ourselves as worthless. It means bringing our understanding honestly before Him and remaining open to correction.

In the Promised Land diagram, humility appears near worldview. Before we change a response, we may need to question the belief behind it. "If someone corrects me, they must reject me" can become "I can be loved and still have something to learn."

The humble disciple asks: What am I not seeing? Where might I be wrong? What is Jesus trying to teach me?

Practice: In a difficult conversation, ask one sincere question and listen to the answer before explaining your position. Humility keeps us teachable—and a disciple who remains teachable remains open to formation.

2. SURRENDER

What am I giving to Jesus?

In **Luke 22:39–46**, especially verse 42. In Gethsemane, Jesus honestly expresses His desire to the Father and submits to the Father's will. His anguish shows that surrender can include painful emotion. Trust does not require pretending that obedience is easy.

Surrender is the willingness to place our desires, fears, plans, relationships, circumstances, and future into Jesus' hands—and trust His leadership over our own. It moves us from "What do I want?" toward "Jesus, what do You want?" We can name what we want while allowing His will to govern our response.

Sacrifice releases our grip; surrender yields control to Jesus. The distinction is useful, though the attitudes overlap. We may give something up while still insisting on a particular outcome. Surrender entrusts that outcome to Him as well.

Surrender is not passivity. It is an active decision to trust and obey Jesus when His way is difficult, uncertain, or different from our own. In the diagram, the upward arrow portrays this growing willingness to follow His leadership.

Practice: Name one outcome you are trying to control. Pray honestly about it, identify the obedience that is yours today, and entrust what you cannot control to Jesus.

The disciple asks: What am I still trying to control? Where am I insisting on my own way or a particular outcome? What desire, fear, plan, or relationship do I need to entrust to Jesus? What would trusting His leadership and obeying Him look like today—even if the outcome remains uncertain?

3. RESPONSIBILITY

What is mine to own?

In **Galatians 6:1–5**. Paul calls believers to restore others gently, carry one another's burdens, and examine their own actions. Personal responsibility belongs within a caring community. We can receive help while honestly owning our response.

Responsibility means recognizing what belongs in our hands before attempting to place it into Jesus' hands. We cannot faithfully surrender what we refuse to acknowledge. Naming a pattern allows us to bring our actual life to Him rather than an explanation that keeps us from facing it.

Responsibility resists blame, avoidance, and excuses. It examines our choices, attitudes, reactions, habits, and relationships, asking what part is ours. We may need to acknowledge a wound and seek support without assuming we caused the wound. Other people remain responsible for their actions; we are responsible for the choices available to us.

The disciple asks: What is mine to own? How have I contributed to this, if at all? What is Jesus asking me to do about it?

At the Promised Land diagram's Borderland, responsibility becomes concrete. Instead of waiting for everyone else to change, we consider a faithful response: an apology, an honest conversation, a boundary, a request for help, or a habit that needs attention.

Practice: Complete this sentence without adding an excuse: "My part in this is…" Then identify one action. Responsibility does not mean carrying everything ourselves. It means owning what is ours so we can faithfully bring it to Jesus.

4. SACRIFICE

What am I willing to give up?

In **Luke 9:23–24**. Jesus calls those who follow Him to deny themselves and take up their cross daily. In the context of His coming suffering, the cross signals costly allegiance. Discipleship involves more than tolerating inconvenience; it places loyalty to Jesus above our claim to direct life entirely on our own terms.

Sacrifice is the willingness to release whatever competes with the life Jesus is calling us into: comfort, preferences, habits, ambitions, possessions, time, or a carefully constructed sense of self. Even good things may need to be reordered when they prevent us from responding faithfully.

The disciple continually asks: What am I holding onto? What is this costing me spiritually? What might Jesus be asking me to lay down?

Sacrifice creates room for faithful obedience. We may give up the last word so we can listen, make time to serve someone, or release an ambition that has become more important than integrity. The cost is real, but it serves love and faithfulness rather than proving our worth.

Practice: Identify one specific thing to release this week and the faithful action that will take its place. Taking up our cross does not require remaining in abuse or neglecting legitimate needs. Seeking safety and support can itself be an act of faithful responsibility.

THE RHYTHM OF FORMATION

These attitudes work together throughout the journey. Humility helps me see; responsibility helps me own my response; sacrifice helps me release what competes with obedience; surrender places my life and its outcomes into Jesus' hands. We may begin with any of them and return to the others as Jesus brings something into view.

I see it. | I own it. | I release it. | I give it to Jesus. | I follow Him.

This is a reflection rhythm, not a rigid order. Surrender may come before we fully understand what needs to change. Taking responsibility may reveal a deeper need for humility. We then trust Him, obey Him, and follow Him again.

An everyday example

A friend tells us our words were hurtful. Humility listens rather than assuming we were misunderstood. Responsibility acknowledges what we said and its impact. Sacrifice releases the urge to win the argument. Surrender trusts Jesus with how the friend responds. We apologize and practice speaking differently. When a similar moment returns, we practice again, perhaps recognizing our reaction sooner.

Christian formation is the repeated practice of bringing more of ourselves under the loving leadership of Jesus. Returning to a familiar struggle does not erase growth. Over time, the Spirit forms greater honesty, love, patience, and faithfulness in the way we respond.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Philippians 2:5–13. What do you notice about Jesus' posture? How do our obedience and God's work within us belong together?
2. Where does the diagram connect with an area in which you are currently growing? What might revisiting that area with greater maturity look like?
3. Humility: What assumption about yourself, another person, or Jesus might need examination? What helps you receive correction?
4. Surrender: What outcome are you trying to control? What would active trust and obedience look like without controlling that outcome?
5. Responsibility: What part of a current situation belongs to you, and what belongs to someone else? How could you receive support while owning your part?
6. Sacrifice: What might you need to release so you can respond faithfully? What loving action would take its place?
7. How could practicing one of these attitudes expose a need for another? Use an ordinary example from family, work, or church life.
8. What one response will you practice this week, and who can encourage you and check in with you?

Personal response

Jesus, help me see _____ and own _____.
Help me release _____ and entrust _____ to You.
My next faithful action is _____.