



Core Value: Discipleship

"Tending the Orchard"

Fall 2016 Sermon Series

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Orchard has claimed discipleship as one of its core values. We value discipleship. But can we actually define it? According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a disciple is "one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another." This definition seems a bit tepid—more suited to describing, perhaps, a disciple of Sir Isaac Newton. It lacks the passion that we find in the scripture above!

Perhaps, when we think about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, this definition works better: One who learns and embraces the teachings of Christ, is committed to following the example and ethic of his life and message, and who seeks opportunity to encourage others to do the same.

Why is it important for us to define what it means to be a disciple? Because if we want to be one, we need to understand the job description. And if Orchard claims discipleship as a core value, then we want to be sure that we are doing everything in our power to engage in and model passionate discipleship!

The scripture above demands exuberant passion—that we love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, and might, and put it on display for all to see! In other words, nothing tepid here! Go all out and let your love for God in Jesus Christ be all-consuming. Of course, in order to love with all your heart and soul, you first have to get acquainted and come to *know*. So the first question we have to ask ourselves, is *Are we doing everything in our power to know this God who first loved us?* Do we study God's word? Do we spend regular time in conversation with God? Have we entered into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ? Do we understand his teachings? Have we allowed our souls to be so filled with his love and grace that it shows on our faces, falls from our lips, and is evident in the way we interact with every person we meet?

This week, as we consider Orchard's core value of discipleship, let us be filled with all-consuming passion for the God who creates us, the Christ who loves us, and the Spirit who sends us forth to serve.

Questions for Reflection:

- In what ways are you actively seeking to move closer to God?
- How have you embraced your call to live as a disciple of Christ?
- In what ways does Orchard equip and encourage people to grow as disciples?

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Prayer

Loving God, ignite in me a passion to know you more, and to seek your presence constantly. Stir up in me an overwhelming desire to embrace your ways and to follow the teachings of Jesus so that the daily living of my life reflects your endless love and grace. Amen.