

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ accept God's offer to help.

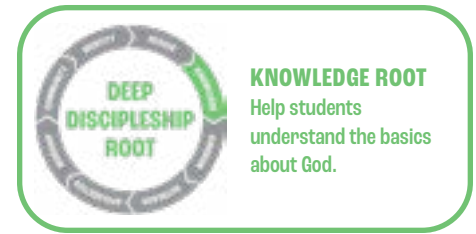
### SCRIPTURE

JOHN 5:2-9

### BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The pool of Bethesda translates to *house of grace or house of mercy*. You'll notice in this passage that your Bible probably skips over verse four. The verse is included in some early manuscripts of John but not the earliest, so it is typically omitted today. Many sick people gathered around this pool (v. 3) because they believed that whoever got into the pool first after an angel stirred the water would be healed. Because verse four is omitted, we can't know for sure if miraculous healing really happened at this pool. Still, it's safe to assume something happened. If nothing mysterious or miraculous ever happened, the man's comments in verse 7 wouldn't have made any sense in the conversation. Plus, why would this man (or anyone else) sit by the pool for over 30 years if he never saw anyone change?

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/815133648>



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

## OPENING

### PRAYER

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.  
*OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.*

1-2 minutes

### OPENING QUESTIONS

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- What is the most obvious question you have ever heard or asked?

3-5 minutes



## EXPLORE

### EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

Today we will study a passage in God's Word where Jesus asked a very sick man if he wanted to get well. This probably sounds like a pretty obvious question. But, spiritually speaking, some people don't want to get well. They don't want to change the lifestyle they live. In these cases, their spiritual health continues to decline, but *disciples of Christ accept God's offer to help* because they want to be healed from the disease of sin.

3-5 minutes

### Read John 5:2–6 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- How has God initiated a relationship or conversation with you?

Answers will vary but try to help students see that throughout the Bible, we see God take the first steps toward healing, rescuing, and loving his people (Eph. 2:13, Rom. 5:8–10).

- What are some things you know make you spiritually sick but you do anyway?

Answers will vary, but some possible responses are: watching or listening to ungodly things, gossiping, disrespecting parents/teachers/coaches, intentionally hurting other people's feelings, etc.



*Say something like:* God's faithfulness and love for his people move him to offer us healing. He loves us too much to leave us in a broken state.

### Read John 5:6–7 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- What are some ways you have tried to "fix" yourself?

Possible answers: self-punishment after doing something wrong, self-reward after not doing something wrong, or asking others to correct your behavior.

- Do you think you've ever rejected God's offering of healing? Why or why not?

Answers will vary, but help your students understand that every time we choose our way over God's way, we are saying we don't need his help.

- How often do you think God asks us, "Do you want to get well?"

Because our faith is a journey and we learn as we go, it will consist of victories and failures. We are in constant need of God's intervention..



*Say something like:* Our sinful condition makes it impossible for us to save ourselves. Like the guy in this passage, we must receive the healing touch of Jesus. God's strength overcomes our weakness.

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

### Read John 5:8–9 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- What do you think the rest of the sick people around the pool of Bethesda thought when they saw Jesus heal this guy?

Answers will vary. Some might have been happy for the guy, while others might have been jealous. Explain to your students that we should be excited about the work God does in the people we know.

- How could receiving God's healing in some areas of your life lead to surrendering other areas to Christ?

Answers will vary but try to help students see that when we experience God's transformational deliverance in one area of our life, we will want it to spread. Once we have tasted God's goodness, we will want more (Ps. 34:8).

- How do you think saying yes to all God's invitations would change your life?

If we followed and obeyed God's every calling perfectly, we would look like Jesus. But this is a goal we probably won't reach on this side of eternity. Thankfully, God is faithful to us even when we aren't faithful to him (2 Tim. 2:13).



*Say something like:* The Lord can renew even the most broken parts of us. Trusting him to care for us in ways we are unable to care for ourselves is a blessing we can't pass up.



## CONNECT & APPLY

### CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of a time you refused help when you really needed it.

*Example:* After an accident on the field, it was clear that Kya's leg was broken. The athletic trainers ran onto the field with a temporary cast and stretcher. Kya refused their help. "My leg's fine," she said. The two trainers looked at each other, then back at Kya. One of them said, "Your leg is bent in the opposite direction. You won't be able to walk." "That's okay," Kya said. "But we can help you," the other trainer said. "I'd hate to be an inconvenience," Kya responded. "Save the cast and stretcher for someone else who needs it." The two trainers walked off the field shaking their heads.



- Why do we sometimes refuse help even when we know we need it?

Answers will vary, but some possible reasons are: pride, we may not recognize how badly we need help, or we may not want to depend on anyone but ourselves.

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ accept God's offer to help.

Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

### APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

Ask God to show you areas in your life that still need his healing touch. Because we can have blind spots to our own weaknesses, it might be good to ask a parent, trusted friend, or mentor to help you through this process.



**Be specific:**

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



## CLOSING

### PRAYER

2-3 minutes

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks.  
*Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

### MEMORY VERSE

*Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.*

"When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be healed?'"

John 5:6 (ESV)

### NOTES

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