

# Disciple Maker's HANDBOOK



Just as you have  
freely received,  
freely give.

Matthew 10:8



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Just as you have freely received, freely give.

Matthew 10:8







## INTRODUCTION

Welcome aboard!

We're so glad that you are walking with Antioch Community Church. It is our desire to see Christ exalted and His kingdom advanced not only here in Waco, Texas, but also throughout this nation and the nations of the world. Our desire is that you would grow in your journey of pursuing Jesus and in your desire to see His kingdom established by seeing people who don't know Him saved and grounded in His love. We believe that you being a part of Antioch and involved in making disciples means that you're involved in bringing glory to God through the local church.

We believe that God's kingdom and His glory are being manifest through the Church – the local church – and because of that, we believe that it's so right for us to give ourselves to the people of God and to the work of God. Our desire is to see you released and fulfill all the dreams that God has for your life. We don't see discipleship as merely a task, we see it as a blessing from God to literally be Christ's hands and feet. And through serving, we believe that God is going to give each one of you a greater inheritance in heaven.

Again, let me say from the depth of my heart that I am so honored to have you with us. We're so blessed to have the gifting's that God has put in your life be spread abroad among us, and we are so thankful to God for the ways that He is going to richly bless your life as you give yourself wholly and completely to Him and to His purposes.

May He be glorified as you seek out a passion for Him and for His purposes in the earth.

With all of our love and gratitude,

Jimmy Seibert

Senior Leader, Antioch Community Church





## Chapter 1: Discipleship Vision

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Team Hoyt is a well-known triathlon racing duo consisting of Dick Hoyt, a retired military officer, and his son Rick, who was born with cerebral palsy, leaving him unable to use his arms or legs. Their interest in racing began when Rick became inspired by an article on racing he saw in a magazine. After their first race Rick said, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped." The Hoyts have competed in more than 1,000 endurance events, including 69 marathons and six Ironman triathlons. They have run the Boston Marathon 29 times. Also adding to their list of achievements, Dick and Rick biked and ran across the United States in 1992, completing the full 3,735 miles in 45 days. Rick turned 50 in 2012 and Dick turned 72. They speak and travel more and race less, but still say they don't see an end to racing in sight yet. Stories like these inspire us. They cause us to confront our own passions. What are you living for? Is it a worthy passion? Is it a God-given mission?

### What's your Passion?

The biggest threat to our God-given passion is a worldly replacement. People live for a lot of things. Some live for making money so they can do whatever and get whatever they want. Some live for fame and success, thinking those things will make them feel better about themselves. Others seek adventure, others comfort and safety. Some people want to make the world a better place. Some live for their kids. Some live for their jobs. Most people just want to be happy and loved.

Why do you do what you do? What motivates you to get out of bed? To work? What are you willing to do anything to get? The answer to these questions can be called your passion. A passion is an object of intense desire. Your passion is the thing of greatest worth in your life. Your passion motivates you and gives focus to your life. If you are passionate about something you won't mind suffering, even dying to get it.

The mission of God starts with realigned passion. Often our calendar and budget reveal what ultimately drives us. In order to fulfill the call of God on your life, you must start by aligning *your passions* with *His passions*. This can be expressed in different ways. At Antioch Community Church, we have developed a simple mantra: "*A passion for Jesus and His purposes in the earth.*" This is what drives us, why we sacrifice, and the core of all that we do.

A passion for Jesus and His purposes begins with His passion for us. God loves us with a passionate love. God sees our sin and the countless ways we have rejected Him. Yet He loves us still. Jesus came to earth to destroy the power of sin, death and hell that controls our lives. He came to rescue us from the kingdom of darkness and establish His kingdom that would last forever. This mission was his passion. It brought focus to His life. He suffered and died for it. Now when we come to believe in Jesus and know Him for who He really is and what He has done, we find eternal and abundant life. And not only this, but we will also discover a purpose in life and a passion worth dying for.

#### **Exercise:**

***List some things you are passionate about.***

***What would it take to become passionate about Jesus and His purposes on the earth?***

## A Godly Passion: *The King and His Kingdom*

On February 23, 1945, Joe Rosenthal made history. In the midst of one of the fiercest battles of World War II, this journalist symbolized the war in a single picture. His photograph of six soldiers hoisting an American flag over the island Iwo Jima quickly became a battle cry for the nation. More than a mere image, it represented freedom emerging victorious over tyranny.

The image still evokes something in us. You can probably picture it now. This picture resonates with us because deep inside we long to see good triumph, we long for justice to reign. God has placed in our hearts a passion for a Kingdom: a Kingdom where all is right, all is as it should be. A Kingdom untainted by sin, suffering and death. Until we see it, we are dissatisfied. Jesus came to proclaim this Kingdom. He came to assert His rule, to lift up His flag over the nations. The Kingdom of God was His passion and it must become ours.

Of all the things Jesus could teach, the Kingdom of God was one of His main topics. This should speak to us of its importance. One day Jesus gathered together with some of his closest friends and followers in a home and told them two short stories illustrating what passion for Jesus and His purposes looks like. He said, *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”* (Matthew 13:44-46)

**Exercise:**

***What do you think Jesus is trying to say about the Kingdom of God?***

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is more valuable than anything else you can possess in life. One man stumbled upon this treasure, another sought it out. Both gave up everything *with joy* to get it. This treasure was their passion.

The word Kingdom comes from two words, king and dominion. The Kingdom is the dominion of the king; where the king exercises his authority, where the king reigns. Everywhere Jesus went He exercised his authority over nature, over sickness, over demonic forces and ultimately over sin, death and hell. When He ascended to heaven He promised that one day He would return to uproot every other kingdom of this world and establish His reign forever. In the meantime, Jesus is still extending His kingdom today through the church. He has given us a message of hope and good news to share. In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, *“And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* This is our mission.

**Exercise:**

***What would it look like if the Kingdom reign of God was established in our lives as it is in Heaven?  
In our families? Our workplaces? Our cities?***



## Aligning Our Passion: *Values Exercise*

Our values are the things we treasure most, those things we are most passionate about. Fully examining our core values—whether they are true or false—is essential to understand both who we are and why we do things. When we gain this understanding, a door is opened for God to change us and set us free. But changing our core values is not easy. It requires much more than simply changing a poor attitude or kicking a bad habit. It begins with discovering what our core values are now and holding them up to the light of biblical truth. Take a moment to reflect on and list the world's and God's values.

World's Values	God's Values

### ***The Greatest Commandment***

Towards the end of Jesus' life on earth, He laid out the core values of the Kingdom. When asked what mattered most, what is the single greatest commandment, Jesus replied *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37-39)*

**Exercise:**

***What does this teach us about what Jesus valued most?***

### ***The Great Commission***

After Jesus had been raised from the dead, He gave His followers this final command. These are some of the last words of Jesus. This is a key moment, this is Jesus "handing the baton" to the disciples. He is giving them the mission and telling them what to do. This is the mission statement of the church: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20).

**Exercise:**

***What does the Great Commission tell us about what Jesus valued?***



## Antioch Core Values

In the great commandment and the great commission, we find both the values and mission of the church. Times and culture will undoubtedly change, but these values reflect the unchanging heart and purpose of God. He wants us to love Him, love people, and play an active role of partnership in reaching those who don't know Him. True, we are given many other commandments, but they all lead back to these basic commands. At Antioch Community Church, we communicate these "core values" as loving God, loving each other and loving the world. Everything we do centers around living out these three simple values. We endeavor to live out these values practically in the following ways:

### ***Loving God***

Loving God is something we do both individually and corporately. Our foundational desire for every member in our church is that they walk with God. We want to know Him and enjoy Him. Our greatest longing is for the presence of God. We believe that a crucial part of our walk with God is to spend time alone with Him everyday and seek to abide in His presence through the day in faith and obedience. Though broken and in need of His power and grace, we seek to live holy lives. We gladly surrender all that we have, including our money and possessions, for His glory. In our corporate gatherings, whether it be our Sunday morning celebration service, an hour in our prayer center, or a Lifegroup meeting, our hope is that every person would meet with God. Passionate worship is central both individually and corporately.

### ***Loving Each Other***

Loving each other involves the building up of one another in the church. We believe that Lifegroups meeting house to house provide the best forum to foster intimate community. Through accountability and encouragement, Lifegroups provide the best life-on-life help to live out these values. As we seek to serve, honor and submit to one another, we believe God will draw out spiritual gifts as well. We seek to build up healthy families. Ultimately we desire to live in unified, Acts 2 communities so that the world will see our love for one another.

### ***Loving the World***

We love the world because God so loved the world that He gave His Son. That's exactly what we want to do... give away His Son to those who don't know Him. Whether in Waco or at the ends of the earth, we desire to be a people who boldly share the good news of Jesus Christ through personal relationships in our sphere of influence and to others we meet as we go. We especially choose to remember the poor and oppressed and seek to minister to practical needs whenever we can. We value short-term mission trips and long-term church planting so that the unreached people of the earth may hear and know God's great love for them.



## Discipleship Defined

When we get a taste of Christ and His kingdom, we will want more. We will want to know how we can be where He is and do what He is doing. We will want to know the ways of His kingdom. Christ's passion was to seek and save the lost, usher in the Kingdom of God and thus bring glory to the Father. But what was His plan? What was His strategy to fulfill that purpose? The answer is what we call discipleship.

***Discipleship is the process of one person helping others become lifelong, obedient followers of Jesus, who in turn help others become the same.***

Discipleship is the process where the reign of the King expands in your life and into the lives of others. You are becoming a disciple of Jesus. You start to look and act like Him as He drives out the remnants of the fall through His Spirit. Then He begins to work through you to help jumpstart this process in others. Disciple means learner or follower. When Jesus lived, rabbis would gather disciples who would live with them, learn from them and follow their example. A disciple is someone who follows Jesus and becomes like Him. According to Jesus, all of His followers are called to "go, make disciples, baptize them and teach them to obey all he commanded."

*2 Timothy 2:2 says, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."*

**Exercise:**

***What do these verses say about the discipleship process?***

***How many generations of disciples are represented here?***

Paul instructs Timothy to take the things he had learned and entrust them to faithful men who would do the same. That's four generations: Paul, Timothy, reliable men and others. Discipleship reproduces the life of Christ in another person. It's the process of initiating with another person and transferring Biblical values, attitudes, skills, motivations and desires to them and then translating those values into their life practically.

## The Master's Plan

Luke 17:20-21 describes the nature of the Kingdom. *“Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed,<sup>21</sup> nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”* The Kingdom of God does not advance through political action, struggle or conflict. The rule of God expands across the world as it expands within the hearts of men and women. This is entirely different than how we often see the Kingdom.

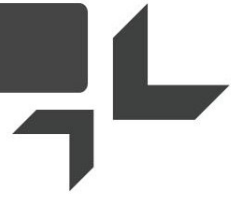
Have you ever considered the ministry methods of Jesus? Too often we so over-familiarize ourselves with stories from the Bible that we lose sight of His radical life and message. Jesus had every option available to Him in ministry. He could have gone to the political seat of power in Rome or the spiritual seat of power in Jerusalem. Yet His ministry began in a barn.

When Jesus preached, thousands listened; yet rather than start a mega-synagogue, He instead ran off to the next village. At one point, the people tried to make Him king by force, and far from embracing this new power, Jesus responded by hiding Himself. All the powerful ways of men He rejected. Why? What was His better plan? It was to disciple twelve uneducated men. That’s it. To our minds that seems ridiculous. Surely a tent revival where the dead were raised would have been more effective. Or launching a political action group to subvert Rome and replace it with a Christian government. Or perhaps inventing the internet to broadcast His message to the world. He had every option available, yet with all His power He chose to disciple a few men. From a finite human perspective, anything seems more effective than what He did.

This approach is radical; you or I would have done things very differently. Yet despite being unconventional, Jesus had a clear plan. It is hard to recognize the significance of something in its early stages. Often it takes years before you can fully appreciate the scope of impact. This is especially true of the discipleship process. Jesus put His ministry in the hands of twelve men. No liturgical process, no universities, no institutions – just twelve men who carried His values. And this small group went on to impact the world unlike any others in human history.

Values are reproduced naturally. As we live out these values, even when no one is looking, they will be reproduced in our people. When Peter and John were before the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees saw the way they responded with courage and took note that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13 says, *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”* Because Jesus lived out Kingdom values, His disciples learned to live them as well, so much so that unbelievers even recognized the correlation. If we will live as Jesus commanded, those we lead will catch these values and live them out as well.

The small discipleship process Jesus initiated continues today, 2000 years later. This Kingdom is still advancing. Today nearly one billion people have put their faith in Christ. The church is growing and spreading across the world while the contemporary power structures of Jesus’ day long ago faded away. The Roman Empire is just a history lesson. The Temple is an archeology site. But the church is still changing the world.



## The Great Commission

When He was preparing to ascend to Heaven, He gave the church a last charge. This was to be our mission statement, the mission of the church: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* Matthew 28:18-20

### **Exercise:**

***What are the 2 things Jesus says about Himself? Why is that important in discipleship?***

***In your own words, what four things does Jesus command us to do in these verses?***

### **All Authority Given**

The Great Commission teaches the mission strategy for the church. In order to understand the commands of Jesus, we first must soak in the promise attached. Jesus said that He has all authority and that He is with us. If we don't get this then we do ministry thinking that it is all up to us rather than relying on Him. When He says, “Therefore...,” He is saying that we are sent out as a direct result of His authority. We should also expect Him to lead us while we are on mission because He is with us. Discipleship is depressing if you try to do it on your own but when you learn to rely on the nearness of God it becomes a joy.

### **Go**

First, we are commanded to **go**. What is the opposite of **go**? Stay? Stop? Come? Most churches operate under a strategy of telling people to “Come to us” rather than “go to them”. This is a huge principle! What if the church viewed its responsibility of taking the church into each sphere of society? What if, rather than seek only to bring people into our services, groups and relationships, we sought trained people to take church into their sphere of influence? Inviting people to church is a good thing, but Jesus' commands means going to them!

## ***Make Disciples***

We are then told to ***make disciples***. Notice what this is NOT. Making disciples is not the same as making converts. You need to accept Jesus to become a disciple so clearly this is important. But receiving Jesus is step 1, not the end goal. To fulfill the Great Commission, we need to go a lot further. Making disciples is not the same as making church members. Again, we want people in the church, but that is not the ultimate goal. Making disciples is empowering people to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives. How on earth do we do this? Jesus gave a powerful example in His ministry to the Twelve. It is more than a classroom or Sunday service. Discipleship is life-on-life involvement.

## ***Baptize***

To make disciples we need to ***baptize people*** with water. Why is baptism important? It's a symbol of the covenant you have entered into with God. It's the first step of obedience for a new believer and a bold witness of who Christ is and what he has done. A wedding is a symbol of the marriage covenant. How many people cannot remember their wedding? The power of the event is symbolized through the ceremony; we boldly declare our vows in front of our family and friends which solidifies the covenant in our heart. There is a marked difference when people are baptized versus when they are not. Baptism is the public confession of faith when we draw a line in the sand and declare to the world, "I am a follower of Christ!" Baptism powerfully illustrates the reality of a new life in Christ.

## ***Teach them to Obey***

Finally, we are told to ***teach them to obey*** all that Jesus commanded us. We cannot be content to merely impart knowledge. True discipleship leads to transformation. That requires obedience. What are the commands disciples should obey? The primary commands are love God, love others and go make disciples.





## Four Seasons of Discipleship

Generally there are four phases to the discipleship process that we see in Matthew 28:18-20:

### 1. Calling Disciples:

Jesus said “make disciples and baptize them.” When we call disciples, we love people who don’t know Jesus and lead them to faith in Christ that culminates in baptism. Evangelism is a season of discipleship. Discipleship in this phase includes serving unbelievers, sharing the gospel and your testimony, and helping them get connected to the church.

### 2. Training Disciples:

Jesus said “teach them to obey.” We train disciples when we transfer biblical values to someone who doesn’t know them and equip them to obey Jesus’ commands. When people accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they want to start walking out the Christian life. But they usually don’t know how. Obedience training is central here. They are not obeying us, but they are learning to hear and obey Christ. As they begin a relationship with Jesus, they need to learn to obey all that He commanded, and this is accomplished best through a life-on-life relationship with another follower of Jesus. Disciples who are trained as disciple makers teach and model the commands of Jesus.

### 3. Restoring Disciples:

Jesus said “I will be with you.” How encouraging this must have been to hear for these disheartened disciples who had abandoned Jesus when He was arrested. Yet Jesus appeared to them and restored their hope. We restore disciples when we help them walk in the truth of their new life of Christ and in freedom from the lies of the enemy. This is the reality that we truly are clean; the old has gone and the new has come.

### 4. Coaching Disciples:

But did you catch the last word? He said he would “be with us *always*”. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to continue to teach and remind them of everything he said. We coach disciples when we partner with the Holy Spirit to help provide ongoing encouragement to mature believers. We may not be transferring values to them, but we may help translate values into a new life stage. Disciples reach maturity as they begin making disciples themselves and walking in their unique gifts and calling. Yet even mature believers need someone in their life encouraging them on in their walk with God. We encourage everyone to be both a lifelong disciple and a disciple maker. This phase of discipleship includes ongoing accountability, mentoring in a new life stage, or training in a specific vocational calling or spiritual gift.

#### **Exercise:**

***Consider people in your life today that need help from you.***

***Which of these four seasons best describes the way God wants you to help them?***

## The X Factor

Investing time in discipleship is investing in God's eternal plan to reach the world. There is an old saying that you can count the number of seeds in an apple, but you cannot count the number of apples in a seed. Giving time and energy to others could result in the eternal transformation of another person, a church or even a nation.

**Consider this: If one person invests in three people and those three people invest in three people, and so on, in 21 generations over 10 billion people can be reached!**

Several years ago, about 40 pastors and ministry leaders at Antioch gathered together to evaluate our church vision. We broke into 6 small groups to discuss this question, *"What is our x factor?"* In other words, *"What single measurable factor, if increased, would have the greatest impact on us fulfilling our mission as a church?"* Most groups considered the presence and power of God. We agreed this was absolutely number one. Yet not only is it difficult to measure, the presence of God is also difficult to predict. We decided to focus on a factor that required our response and to trust God to do His part. So we considered more prayer, more evangelism, more small groups and other important things. In the end, every group came back and reported their answer to the question. It was a God moment when we realized that every group had come to the same conclusion: Disciple makers. If we had more disciples of Jesus who were making more disciples of Jesus, then our mission would dramatically take off.

At Antioch, we believe small groups called Lifegroups are the best vehicle for facilitating a discipleship process. Our goal is the Kingdom of God advancing through discipleship. This is why we decided to develop a discipleship training resource instead of a workbook on facilitating a Lifegroup meeting. This workbook is primarily a series of exercises. Our goal is training, not just teaching. We believe that by getting into the Word and by thinking through practical applications, you will be better prepared than any teaching we can give to start this process of partnering with the Spirit in advancing His rule.

So there it is. We believe discipleship is not one of many programs in the church. It's not some workbook. And it's not just for the gifted few. And it's not rocket science. But neither is it an ability that people come by naturally. Discipleship is a learned skill. Discipleship is not a project, but a heart to heart relationship (see Phil. 1:3-8). It's not about things we do but people we love. It's the central mission of the church until Christ returns. It's God's plan to distribute His love. It's the way God's kingdom extends and how His glory fills the earth. You can do this. You were made for it.







## Chapter 2: Prayer

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### Why do We Pray?

*Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." Luke 11:5-10*

#### **Exercise:**

***What does this story teach us about prayer when we are seeking to help someone else?***

*"We must pray when we can feel the presence of God, and we must pray when the gates of Heaven seem to be locked against us. Like the needy widow in Jesus' parable, we must knock relentlessly on the door of heaven, until God hears and answers. We must pray when it is convenient, and we must pray when great sacrifice is required. We must pray when we are strong, and we must pray when we feel that we have no strength left to pray. We must pray when we have time to pray; and we must pray when the demands on our schedules seem more than we can bear." --Del Fehsenfeld, Jr.*

One could liken discipleship to sailing a large ship. The seaworthiness of the ship, the size of the sail and the strength of the components all are huge factors in how far the ship will go. However, there is one factor that cannot be controlled or worked on...the wind. Without the wind, the sailing ship is not going anywhere, no matter how good a sail it has.

In the same way, discipleship, no matter how good the structure, will not grow and be full of "life" without prayer. As much time as you dedicate to improving your plan, dedicate time to improving the "wind" through prayer. Fervent prayer from the saints accomplishes much.



## Reasons We Pray

1. **To bring the presence of God into what we are doing.** We want to bring the ministry of Jesus to us and to others, and this is accomplished through prayer.
2. **To bring God's power.** We need the power of Jesus to do the works of Jesus (and the "greater works"), to demolish the power of the enemy's defenses and strongholds, and to be changed from the inside out. Prayer is often our only weapon to set people free from bondages.
3. **To protect others.** Prayer is a divine source of protection from sin, sickness, and satanic oppression and attack.

Example: In the spring of 1995, a bus carrying college students home from a mission trip to Mexico was in a severe, early-morning accident. No one was seriously injured, though, because of the Lord's miraculous intervention. Several people from their home church had been awakened in the night—before the accident—to pray for safety and for the bus. And the night before the accident, a missionary in Siberia had dreamed that several people from that group were killed in an accident, and he awoke praying against the enemy's attacks.

4. **Because God ordained that His Kingdom would advance through prayer.** Prayer is a weak activity in the eyes of the world, and God ordained that weak things would shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27). The holy, humble, believing, persevering prayer of one person righteous in the sight of God will accomplish much (James 5:16). Jesus said, "*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you*" (John 15:17).

### ***Ask Greg Whether Prayer Works...***

There was a man named Gregory the Illuminator. He was imprisoned in the bottom of a well in Armenia for 13 years, so all he really could do was pray. Gregory is credited with the prayers that saved Armenia from idolatry and delivered them into the loving arms of Jesus. For years, an Armenian woman brought him food and prayer requests, and many of the people he prayed for were healed. When Armenia's king was struck with a fatal illness, he called Gregory from the well to pray over him. The king was healed, and he declared Armenia a Christian nation! After having prayed for Armenia for 13 years, Gregory baptized the entire Armenian army by immersion.



## Getting God's Heart of Love

Strategy and effective ministry without love is nothing (1 Cor. 13). Jesus ministered from compassion. As we speak with God about people, He begins to share His heart of love for us, giving us supernatural love that drives us to bold action. Here is a look at what fueled the movement of Paul:

**Exercise: Read Philippians 1:3-8**

***Paul wrote Philippians from prison. How does his attitude in verses three and four contrast with his circumstances? What does this show about Paul's attitude towards prayer?***

***How can we describe Paul's prayer life for those he led?***

***How did Paul feel about those he led? Where did those feelings come from, and how did he get them?***

## Getting God's Wisdom and Direction

People of prayer are people full of expectation and faith. Why? Like Jesus, they have their eyes constantly on the Father who is *always* at work (John 5:17, 19). History is filled with world changers whose eyes were more focused on God (whom they could not see) than what they could see, and they lived with great expectation because of it. It is in that place, we gain the mind, wisdom, and direction of God regarding a situation (1 Cor. 2:10-13, 16). Let's take a look at how this played into Paul's mission:

**Exercise: Read Acts 16:6-10.**

***Read the rest of the chapter. How did the Holy Spirit cause Paul to partner with what God was already doing? What do you think Paul's prayer life looked like while travelling?***

***How can we utilize our prayer life for a source of faith and strategy for the mission God has called us to?***

## Getting Things in Motion

### **Supernatural fruitfulness: *Prayer Moves God to Action***

Wait. I thought God was always at work? Isaiah 64:4 says that God acts on behalf of those who earnestly wait for Him. That is why those who abide with Jesus will see “much fruit” (John 15:5). To help motivate our prayer life, we must recognize two truths:

The work God has called us to is impossible apart from Him; if it isn't, then your vision is too small. If our faith is in Him, we can speak to impossibilities in prayer and they will move (Matthew 21:21) because of God's movement.

### **Supernatural Power: *Prayer Moves Us to Action***

Scripture says that faith without works is dead (James 2:26). It is not saying to try harder with your faith, but it is saying that when true faith is apprehended by prayer, we *will* act. On the days I pray for the lost and my neighbors, I am way more likely to intentionally love them from the heart throughout the day. It is in prayer that we surrender to God's leadership in our life, and God will lead us to the lost (Romans 12:1, Matthew 4:19). However, a prayerless life inevitably becomes a selfish life.



## Abiding in Jesus

Did you know that your brain is in constant communication with the rest of your body? I bet you didn't think about blinking your eyes in the last ten minutes (although you have been), or worrying how you are going to communicate to your hand about it doing something. In the same way, Jesus is the head of the church (Col 1:18) and is constantly communicating with His body, the church. Like a body without a head, there is no life or direction apart from our Head, Jesus.

God's intention is that His body be fully alive and directed through a continual life of communion with the Head through prayer. As Paul simply states, "Pray continually" (1 Thes. 5:17). Prayer, in its most basic form, is an awareness of God's presence with us. Through this life of communion with God, we not only find abundant life and purpose, but the life of Christ spills through us into fruitful ministry (Gal. 2:20). Thus, as Charles Spurgeon wrote of prayer and the fruitfulness of the church, "Without prayer what are the church's agencies, but the stretching out of a dead man's arm, or the lifting up of the lid of a blind man's eye?"

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5*

### **Exercise:**

***What does Jesus mean by the relationship between the vine and branches?***

***Since scripture is the truth, what expectations can we form from this scripture?***

This relationship between the vine and the branches is a beautiful picture of who Jesus is for us. The branches are completely dependent upon the vine. The branch, instead of focusing its efforts on bearing fruit, rests with its efforts focused on connection with the vine. In the same way, we must understand that fruit is born through a living and vibrant connection with Jesus, rather than perfecting forms and methods. We must understand the order of this relationship, unless we put our focus alone on methods and passion and become like a body without a head! When we understand the order of this relationship, we will understand Jesus' statement, "My yoke is easy and my burden light" and become fruitful, restful people (Mt. 11:30). Abiding is simply a lifestyle of prayer.

## Developing a Personal Prayer Life

As you read Philippians 1:3-9, you probably took note that Paul's ministry, faith and love for people was rooted in a deep personal life of prayer for people. Whether you were encouraged by Paul's prayer life or discouraged, wondering where to start, prayer is best learned by *just doing it!* Here are some practical helps to move forward in your prayer life:

### ***Schedule Daily Time for Focused Prayer***

While the Bible says to pray constantly (1 Thes. 5:17), it is crucial to have regular, set aside time to pray. We recommend doing it at the start of your day (Psalm 5:3). It is important to put it in the schedule because the needs of the day can quickly push focused prayer aside.

### ***Keep It Simple***

Prayer, in its essence, is a relationship with God. We should never move beyond that simplicity. Faith-filled and childlike prayers born out of relationship are often simple (Matthew 6:7). Prayer is agreeing with God in partnership in what He is doing in the earth.

### ***Make a Basic Prayer List or Schedule***

To make sure we are praying for the lost and those in our Lifegroup, it helps to make a basic prayer schedule. You can pray for different people or issues on different days, allowing God to speak and lead in the context of that schedule. We are not bound to the schedule either, as God may lead you to pray for something unexpectedly. Some things to pray for:

- Pray for the lost daily. Surrender to God daily and ask Him to lead you throughout the day. Ask Him to lead you to open people (Psalm 37:23). Choose a handful of lost friends to pray for by name on different days.
- Pray for those who lead you (1 Timothy 2:1-3).
- Pray for those you are investing in (1 Samuel 12:23, Romans 1:9-10).

### ***Praying in the Spirit***

Praying in the Spirit is a key to enjoyable, sustainable, and fruitful intercession. Paul instructs us to pray in the Spirit at all times (Ephesians 6:18). Praying in the Spirit is praying with God, not to God. It is praying with sensitivity to the Spirit's leadership, presence and power. As you pray in the Spirit, God will bring thoughts to your mind to pray with audible words.

### ***Listen to God***

A conversation is a two-way thing that requires listening. Listening to God is to have a sensitive heart to His whisper and leading (1 Kings 19:3). It is as we ask and listen, God will give us His heart for the lost and disciples we are praying for (John 6:63). God will lead us in how to pray effectively as we follow our first urges and senses with childlike faith. Write down scriptures and impressions He brings to mind. Then pray them out!





***Ripple Prayer Pattern***  
**By David Yonggi Cho**

**Basic design:** Like the ripples created by a stone thrown into water, begin your prayer time with personal issues and move outward in concentric circles until you “cover the world”.

**1. Pray for yourself.**

Your own personal walk with Jesus. Your passion for the Lord. The barriers that exist between you and the Lord. Your personal priorities and needs. Your desire for the presence and power of the Lord in your life.

**2. Pray for those closest to you.**

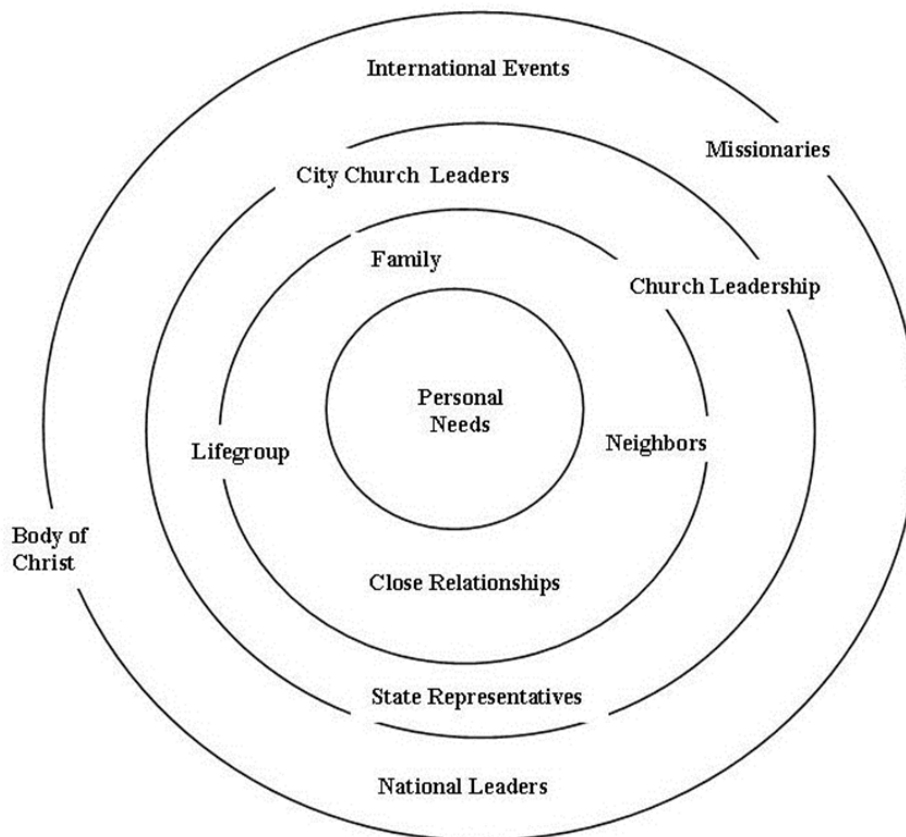
Your spouse, parents, grandparents, children, siblings, extended family, your friends, work associates, church friends, neighbors.

**3. Pray for your city, county, state and country.**

Leaders, needs, spiritual issues (including strongholds).

**4. Pray for neighboring nations.**

Begin with Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Proceed around the globe! Pray for harvest in the nations and life for the Body of Christ worldwide.



## Praying with Others

*“These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer...” – Acts 1:14*

Most people do not know how to pray. Corporate prayer meetings are key for developing personal prayer lives in group members because they serve as a discipleship time for prayer. Jesus repeatedly modeled prayer to His disciples (Luke 11:1).

Additionally, prayer is the most effective thing a leader can do. Whether for pastoral situations or for the overall help or direction of the group, leaders need to be disciplined to first seek the Lord in prayer. It is easy to get overwhelmed by the next crisis, but God is not intimidated. Prayer connects us to the real power source.

Praying together as a Lifegroup can turn a regular group of people into a focused, fruit-bearing, love-filled, unified team. When done as a consistent rhythm of community like the early church, it will create an atmosphere for God to move powerfully in and through your group.

Here are a few steps you can take to develop this type of prayer culture:

### **Stoking the fire:**

- Envision your Lifegroup for the power of prayer
- Study prayer scriptures together
- Share testimonies of answered prayer

### **Group prayer strategy ideas**

- Create Prayer board. List names of the lost VIPs you are believing for as a group.
- Target one specific group/neighborhood you are trying to reach as a Lifegroup – pray until you see the breakthrough!
- Pray for the lost for 3 minutes at the end of every meeting.
- Build in regular group nights solely devoted to worship and prayer.
- Record all the words and promises God is speaking – post them up.
- Praying for each other's sphere of influence.

### **Tips for Leading a Prayer Meeting**

**Begin with a song or two.** Singing helps people focus on Jesus, but do not spend more than five minutes singing because the goal is to move quickly to prayer.

**Keep prayer focused.** Let each person share prayer needs or burdens. No more than three minutes so that each person has the opportunity to share.

**Be aware of people drifting or not engaging.** Continue to exhort the people to pray throughout the hour. A corporate prayer meeting is a time for people to pray together, not for one or two to have their morning time with God while others listen.

**Keep prayer journals.** Have one person in each small group write down things prayed. Have one person in the group be responsible for compiling these into one big journal. Be sure to write down the answers to the prayers.



## Prayer Walking

One very effective way of praying with others is “praying on-site with insight,” known as *prayer walking*.

Divide into small groups and go into the neighborhood surrounding the home where the Lifegroup is meeting. If you meet neighborhood people while you are out prayer walking, stop and talk to them. Let them know that you are Christians who believe that God answers prayer and ask if there is anything you can pray for them. This helps to establish your presence in the neighborhood, as well as giving your group an opportunity to pray for someone. It also helps to create more community in your group as you minister together.

Following are some specifics to help you get started.

## What to do on a Prayer Walk

Pray Ephesians 6:10-18 over yourselves.

Ask God for His mind (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Talk with one another about where and how long you want to walk and pray. Start walking!

Open your eyes and pray aloud (Ephesians 1:18).

When you sense or see something (noticeable or by revelation), pray for the kingdom of God and against the darkness.

Stop if you sense something strong, talk and pray about it.

Pray together (Matthew 18:19).

Pray with scripture.

Pray with relevance - leave your own prayer list at home and pray for the needs you see.

End by meeting back together for a time of thanksgiving and sharing of hearts.

## Observations to be Made on a Prayer Walk

What is the average income and class of people?

Are there schools, hospitals or day cares? What types of people come and go daily?

What percentage of people do you think do not know the Lord or have a church experience?

What problems would you say the people in your neighborhood have?

What strongholds do you feel are over your neighborhood?

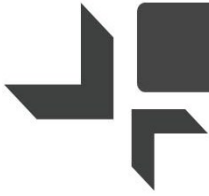
Who are you committed to pray for consistently in your neighborhood?

What scriptures did the Lord give you?

Do you feel like you have more of a heart for your neighborhood?

*“What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use —men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.”*

-- E.M. Bounds



## Chapter 3: Calling Disciples



Jesus' purpose was clear: "Seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). His followers, expectant for a Savior who would come to be their king, were dumbfounded as they watched their Savior die on a cross. Little did they know, through His death on a cross, Jesus Christ was about to redeem billions of people and birth a missional community that would soon become the greatest force on earth. This missional community would carry Jesus' resurrection power with them, setting prisoners free, healing the sick, raising the dead, restoring whole communities and proclaiming salvation through Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

This powerful missional community is the church. Today, the church is viewed by many as an irrelevant, quirky group of people who gather to sing songs in buildings. What happened? I believe the church of Jesus Christ has largely disconnected itself with the mission of Jesus Christ. We have, unfortunately, made joining Jesus and His mission an option. I believe Jesus was alluding to today's times when He stated, "He who does not gather with me scatters" (Luke 11:23).

Jesus' mission is still the same, and the authority He has given to His church is as powerful as it ever was. Let's lay aside our preconceived ideas of the church and take a fresh look at what the Bible says about our mission as the church.

### Ambassadors

*"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: <sup>[a]</sup> The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made Him who had no sin to be sin <sup>[b]</sup> for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:16-21*

**Exercise: How do these verses describe our role and mission in the Kingdom?**

***Describe the job of an ambassador.***

Ambassadors go to foreign places. Ambassadors represent another kingdom. Ambassadors carry and deliver a message. Jesus isn't looking for people in the church to be ambassadors; we *are* His ambassadors, whether we like it or not. The good news is He has given us everything we need, filling us with His indwelling presence and power. Therefore, we engage the world both in the authority and power of the resurrected Jesus.

## Seeing the Harvest

*"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." <sup>10</sup> When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.... <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? <sup>14</sup> The farmer sows the word. <sup>15</sup> Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. <sup>16</sup> Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>18</sup> Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; <sup>19</sup> but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>20</sup> Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown." Mark 4:1-20*

### **Exercise:**

***What is this parable saying?***

***If this is true, what can we expect as we sow the Gospel?***

***What is the role of the sower? What is not the role of the sower?***

***How does this affect the way we reach the lost? How should we be sowing the Gospel?***



God is the God of the harvest! Jesus made it clear that the fields are *ready* for harvest (John 4:35-36)! However, we often miss the harvest because of one of four mistakes:

1. We assume that a field has one type of soil and stop there.
2. We don't sow enough seed to find the good soil.
3. We pre-judge a soil, and don't sow the seed.
4. We play the role of God; trying to change the soil instead of moving to the good soil next to it.

As we do it God's way, we discover these liberating truths:

- Every field has soil ready for harvest! (John 4:35-36, 16:8).
- Sow broadly!! If you keep sowing the Gospel, you *will* find the harvest!
- You can never know what the harvest will look like; you can only sow the Gospel!
- Let Jesus do the saving, you do the sowing. The Holy Spirit is a big boy and doesn't need your help convicting of sin when He is already convicting someone else (John 5:19, 16:8). If they aren't ready, just move on (Luke 10:10-11).

The Holy Spirit is already preparing a harvest in every harvest field. Keep sowing, let the Spirit lead, and when you run into that harvest, stay where the Spirit of God is moving! (Luke 10:6-7). God will fulfill this promise in any harvest field, anytime, anywhere, be it in your neighborhood or overseas!

Is the grass greener on the other side... or where you water it?

Think about that.



## Your Sphere of Influence

*“Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah? ‘ They came out of the town and made their way toward him....Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s*

*testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.’ John 4:28-30, 39-42.*

*“ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ‘Return home and tell how much God has done for you.’ So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him”” Luke 8:38-39.*

### **Exercise:**

***What do we learn about reaching our sphere of influence from these stories?***

When people think of evangelism, they often think of evangelism as sharing the gospel with a stranger in a confrontational manner. It may evoke images of door to door ministry, cross-cultural ministry, handing out bottles of water or even a bullhorn.

While some of these methods of evangelism have proven effective and sharing with strangers is needed, these people would be reached even more effectively by those believers with whom they already have a relationship. Did you know that God has already strategically positioned you in places to be most effective in evangelism? He has put you in a neighborhood, an extended family, and a workplace; these will be your most effective harvest fields!

Your sphere of influence is that natural network of relationships you have with people in the everyday flow of life. It could be a friend, a neighbor, co-worker, extended family member, doctor, or gym buddy. Your sphere of influence could also be that sector of society in which you have a deep desire to see the kingdom advance. It could be business, government, sports teams, a certain ethnic group, etc.. Stop and think about it: who would be most effective reaching your unbelieving co-worker: would it be you, or me?



*List reasons why you reaching your sphere of influence will be more effective than someone else reaching your sphere.*

### ***Alan reaches his sphere...***

Alan was working at a local coffee shop. While beginning his job, God gave him a vision of the Kingdom of God invading his workplace. He began to consistently pray for his co-workers. The first nine months he was intentional to get to know his co-workers and share his testimony while making coffee, but didn't yet see much fruit. Then, the dominoes began to fall. It started with a sick co-worker who was healed after he prayed for her. Over the course of the next year, about half the unbelieving staff and manager were saved, the sick were healed, and they became the number one licensed coffee shop in the region as love and honor filled their work environment.

We believe when someone genuinely radiates the love and presence of Jesus, people around them cannot help but be drawn to Him. We are set up not only to demonstrate Jesus and a lifestyle of integrity, but also to build relationships of trust that make people feel safe in coming to church. People are looking for the real deal, and if they find somebody that has something better than they have, we believe they will want it!

## Identifying your Sphere Exercise

The first step is to identify your unique sphere of influence. ***Circle the groups of people you see on a regular basis and/or groups of people with whom you have a natural “connection” or influence.***

Immediate family

Extended family

Neighbors

Un-churched friends

Co-workers

Clients / patients

Kids

Teenagers

College students

Single adults (under 35)

Single adults (35+)

Married couples

Mothers of preschoolers

Mothers of grade school children

Families of preschoolers

Families of grade school children

Adults (55+)

Poor

Wealthy

Leaders

Sunday church guest

People in business community

People in higher education

People in primary/secondary education

People in health care community

People in government community

People in media community

People in the arts community

People in sports community

People in social services

People in law enforcement

Fitness center

Sports team(s)

Social media network

Spanish speakers

Certain ethnicity

Social organization(s)

Other places you go weekly

\*This is not an exhaustive list of potential groups of relationship you may have.

**Ask God to which of these spheres He has called you to intentionally serve, make disciples, and impact. List 3 that are priority for you in this season of life.**

1.

2.

3



## Sphere Strategy Exercise

**Who are your people? Who do you see on a consistent basis?**

**What are their needs? How can you serve them practically?**

**What are their heart needs?** The heart is the inroad for the gospel.  
*Ask questions, share stories, etc.*

*How will you introduce Jesus and apply the gospel to their place of need?*

**How can you connect them?**

*Invite to your Lifegroup OR*  
*Connect to a Lifegroup OR*  
*Start a new group with them*

**Other questions to help you be aware of opportunities:**

- Does anyone around me seem open to the gospel and I just need to share it?
- Is anyone around me going through a difficult situation? Depression?
- Wait on God to see if there is anybody you are missing/need to focus on.
- Is anyone around me a believer who would be a good gateway to reach others?
- Is there anyone around me who is alone or isolated?
- Is there anyone around me who has been marginalized by society?

## Creative Ideas for Reaching your Sphere

### Neighbors

*Create opportunities: Get around them to reach them*

- Invite them over for a barbeque.
- Host a neighborhood block party.
- Get involved in the neighborhood association. Be intentional with people.
- Look for a way to help your neighbor with a project.
- Be the first to personally welcome new neighbors into the community. Bake some cookies!
- Organize something with your kids and the neighborhood kids.

*Bridge the gap*

- Ask your neighbors how you can pray for them.
- Ask your neighbors if they are interested in studying the Bible.
- Pray for the sick. Hear God for encouragement for them.
- Be present during any difficult situation. Pray for them. Share your hope.
- Invite them to church.
- Invite them to an evangelistic event.
- Invite them to Lifegroup.
- Go door to door meeting neighbors and offering prayer.

### Co-workers

*Create opportunities: Get around them to reach them*

- See yourself as a pastor of your workplace! (as a place of service)
- Ask as many questions of co-workers as possible. Get to know them.
- Be there for a co-worker going through a hard time.
- Consistently encourage your co-workers and boss.
- Ask your boss how you can serve their vision better.
- Host or propose a get together of co-workers, where you can get to know them better.
- Be intentional with your lunch hour/break.
- Go Frisbee golfing with some co-workers over the weekend.

*Bridge the gap: Set yourself up to share the Gospel*

- Start a workplace devotional and post it in the break room (with manager's permission).
- Start a workplace Bible study.
- Pray for the sick, hear God for people, etc.
- Start a workplace prayer request list.
- Coordinate with other co-workers who are believers. Pray and strategize together.
- Invite a co-worker to a social gathering of your church community.
- Invite a co-worker to church.
- Invite a co-worker to Lifegroup.
- Invite a co-worker to an evangelistic event.



## Reaching People Outside your Sphere

Sometimes the power of the Gospel supersedes relationship. Scriptures are filled with Jesus and His disciples ministering to people they just met. If we are going to “make disciples of all nations,” we are going to have to cross relational and likely cultural lines and break into new spheres of relationships. It comes down to loving the person in front of us, friend or stranger. Let’s take a look at the strategy Jesus gives His disciples:

*“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go. <sup>2</sup> He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup> Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. <sup>5</sup> “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ <sup>6</sup> If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. <sup>8</sup> “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. <sup>9</sup> Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ <sup>10</sup> But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’ <sup>12</sup> I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.” Luke 10:1-12*

### **Exercise:**

***What did Jesus instruct His disciples to do when they went into a new place?***

***What were the two elements that signified people of peace (v. 14)? What were they to do with people of peace? What were they to do if they were not people of peace?***

***If you only had these verses to go by, what would you do when you met a stranger?***



## Stranger Strategy

Jesus' instruction for His disciples to reach Israelite Jews leaves a great template for us to reach those who we don't know. Here are some lessons we can take from this passage:

- Followers of Jesus have been given authority (v. 1) (see also Mark 16:17-20, John 14:12)
- Target a specific group when possible (v. 5-6)
- Preach the Gospel of the kingdom (v. 7)
- Love people with God's power and authority – heal the sick, cast out demons, etc. (v. 8)
- Don't get distracted (v. 9-10)
- Go with the attitude to bless that person or city (v. 12-13)
- A person of peace is someone that accepts both you *and* your message (v. 14)
- Stay and invest in a person of peace. Move on from those that do not receive you and the message, and keep going until you find one (v. 14)

Based on this scripture, here are a few other practical's that will help you live a consistent lifestyle impacting with the Gospel those you meet along the way:

- Pray for the lost consistently. Ask God to give you His heart for them.
- Before the day starts, or before you go into a store, take a moment and wait on God's voice or leadership.
- Throughout the day, see people through Jesus' eyes.
- Consistently feed yourself with scriptures about God's power and salvation/healing testimonies.
- Learn from someone else who is fruitful in this area. Go with them to share.
- 90% of people need to err on the side of boldness. You can be as bold as you are loving.
- Be yourself, be genuine, and have fun. Ask people questions about their lives, etc.



## **When you Meet a Stranger**

### ***Peace***

Be a blessing. Consider their needs. Serve them if you can. Speak words of peace to them and their families. See if they receive your “peace”.

### ***Power***

Ask them if they are sick, injured or know of another need. Ask if you can pray for them. Believe for God's presence and power to manifest.

### ***Proclaim***

Refer to God in your conversations. See how they respond. Look for any opportunity to apply the Gospel to them or their needs.

### ***Paul reaches outside his sphere...***

Paul was a college graduate attempting to reach college students. The problem was that he didn't have many relationships on campus. Because of that, he decided he would just start meeting people through eating at the student dining halls. One Tuesday, he sat down with a group of three college freshman. He asked them about their lives, how they were enjoying their freshman year, and what they wanted to major in. They were a little curious why Paul was an older guy meeting college students, but Paul began to share how Jesus had transformed his life and about God's passion for college students. As he did, two of the freshman became very disinterested, but one freshman, John, listened more attentively. By the end of the conversation, John had communicated his desire to follow Jesus, and the two struck up a relationship. They began to meet together consistently. John grew in his relationship with God, experienced personal freedom, and soon began to impact his friendship group. Within four years of discipleship, John was overseeing numerous small groups, leading people to Jesus, and conducting trainings in other nations on how to start church planting movements. Through this process, Paul was not only able to impact the college campus in a way he couldn't himself, but has seen a dynamic leader emerge and gained a life-long friendship.



## Creative Ideas for Getting Around People who Don't know Jesus

### ***As you go:***

- Talk to people everywhere you go. Initiate conversations with people in line, cashiers, at the pump, etc. Be an outgoing, happy person!
- Pray for your cashiers. Ask them if they have a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Wait on God's direction before you go into a store.

### ***Do what you love (try to grab a buddy for support and impact)***

- Coach a kid's team.
- Do a hobby that gets you around people – gym, Zumba, etc.
- Join a sports league.
- Frequent a coffee shop or pub and get involved with people.
- Get involved in a committee or group in the city
- Host a dance class and share the Gospel. Start a group with those interested.
- Start a group for businessmen.
- Start a group for stay-at-home mothers.

### ***Do an outreach (try to grab a buddy for support and impact)***

- Treasure hunt – Get together with a few friends, and ask God for direction to find His “treasure,” those whom He has prepared for you to meet! “Direction” may include name, physical description, location, etc.
- Go serve somewhere with the poor or marginalized. Be intentional to engage not only with meeting physical needs, but engage them relationally and spiritually.
- Pick a neighborhood and go door to door praying for people (sick, needs, etc.) and sharing the Gospel.
- Street evangelism.
- Follow the next thing the Holy Spirit says to do.
- Open air preaching – make it short, clear, Gospel-centered, and follow up by engaging people in personal conversations. Make a call for physical healings.
- Go on a mission trip or local outreach sponsored by your church.



## Lifegroup and Evangelism

*“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”*

John 20:21

Have you ever been a part of a great team? My childhood summers are filled with baseball memories. As the baseball years progressed, there were less sandcastles being built along the baseline; more focus was being put on how we were going to stack up in the championship brackets. Many of the memories were of the great victories we had, but we had just as many memories of the fun we had along the way to our goal. There is no questioning that we gained deep relationship and appreciation of one another because we were a group of friends bonded around a joint purpose.

In the same way, whether we like it or not, we have been born again into a community of people who have been commissioned to continue the work and ministry of Jesus. In God’s wisdom, he created the church to be a group of people who experience the joy of fellowship around the Gospel (Philemon 1:6) in a context of mission (Matthew 28:18-20). Instead of sending us on our own, He gave us the gift of one another (Luke 10:1). On the contrary, He knew that if we were only saved to belong to the church, we would risk growing inwardly selfish. The health of our groups is dependent upon obedience to the mission of Jesus; I find those groups who lay aside the mission of God end up becoming bored, dissatisfied, and have shallow relationships.

Living missionally together may be done in countless ways, from doing something fun as a group among the lost to launching local focused outreaches. Probably the most important question a group needs to ask is, “God, who are You calling us to reach, and where are they?”

### **Implementing Missional Lifegroup:**

1. *Who do we want to reach?* Take time to pray and discuss who you want to reach as a group. If you want to reach a general age group, take time to brainstorm where that type of people gathers (volleyball court, park, etc.).
2. *Consistently pray for them as a Lifegroup.* One way to do this is by posting a list of the names of the lost you consistently see. Continue to pray for them, and as they get saved, move them over to the other side of the board.
3. *Get around them and go for it!* If you are doing something recreational like volleyball, be intentional to meet people, have fun with them, share stories, pray for them, and at the right time introduce them to Jesus. If you are doing an outreach, be bold and go for it!
4. *Follow up.* Either invite them into your group or somebody start a new group with them!

## Creative Ideas for Evangelism as a Lifegroup

### Invite them to your group or start a new one with them!

- Have a barbeque in a park and be intentional to meet people.
- Join a sports league and form a team with your Lifegroup.
- Have a worship time in a park and invite people to join/pray for people/the sick etc.
- Play volleyball once a week where others gather to play.
- Have an evangelistic Lifegroup once a month. For example, have a big barbeque and invite all your lost friends. Be praying for that night every gathering that month.
- Serve somewhere with the poor and marginalized as a Lifegroup.
- Do a treasure hunt once a month as a group.
- Target a specific neighborhood and:
  - ◊ Do a door to door weekend outreach in the neighborhood.
  - ◊ Spend consistent time around wherever people gather in the neighborhood.
  - ◊ Host a summer VBS for the neighborhood. Flyer ahead of time.
  - ◊ Consistently have Lifegroup wherever people gather in the neighborhood.
- Every time you meet as a Lifegroup, “tithe” two or three people to go share the gospel during Lifegroup hours.
- Visit a nursing home as a Lifegroup.
- Do a drama outreach in a park.

### Empowering your Lifegroup to reach their spheres:

- ◊ Give your group consistent vision.
- ◊ Consistently pray for your spheres as a group.
- ◊ Consistently share testimonies of what God is doing in your spheres.
- ◊ Hold group members accountable to reaching out, especially to the Spirit's leading.
- ◊ Allow the group to help each other brainstorm.
- ◊ Help your group members look for opportunities to start new groups.



## How to Share the Gospel

If people won't hear the Gospel, they won't get saved. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16). The power doesn't lie in wise words, but the Gospel itself! We need to be clear that seeing someone healed doesn't save them, praying for someone doesn't save them, serving someone doesn't save them... the Gospel of Jesus Christ saves them. All of our intentional relationships with the lost should lead us into sharing the actual Gospel with someone.

Although there are many ways to share the essential parts of the Gospel message, we encourage people to familiarize themselves with Billy Graham's "Steps to Peace with God" because of its clear format. You can get it as an app for your iPhone, or get them in tract form online. I prefer to carry a Steps to Peace tract in my pocket to remind me to share, and so I can leave it with somebody with my number on it. Below I will unpack its four points of the Gospel and the illustration that goes along with it.

### **Steps to Peace in four clear points**

**1. Plan:** God loves you and has a plan for your life

*"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."* – Jeremiah 29:11

**2. Problem:** Sin separates us from God

*"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."* – Romans 3:23

**3. God's Solution:** the cross

*"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."*  
– 1 Peter 3:18

**4. Your Response:** Do you want to receive this?

*"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* – Romans 10:9

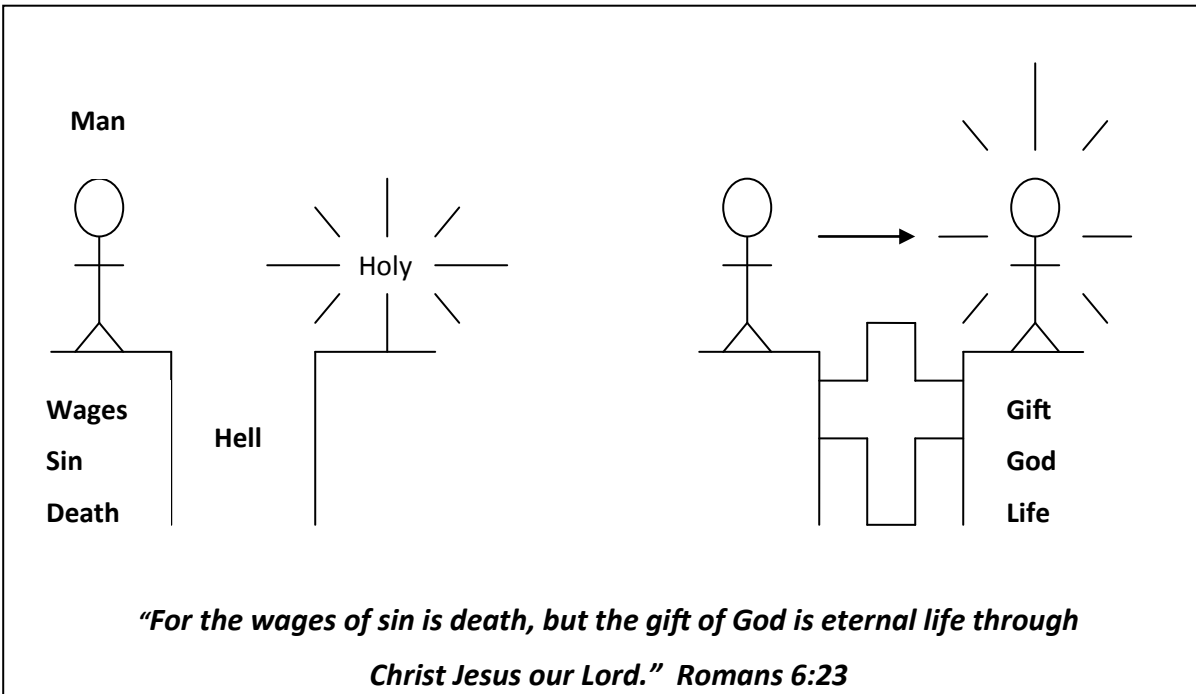
### **Helpful Gospel analogies:**

*Courtroom* – Good judge upholding the law, someone else taking the punishment.

*Drowning* – We can't swim forever; Jesus needs to reach down and save us.

*White shirt* – More white shirts (good works) won't make one clean; it needs to be washed.

## Bridge Diagram



### **Practical's for sharing the Gospel:**

- Present the gospel as a fact, not opinion.
- Speak to their heart, not their head.
- Ask them if they believe point number one (God loves you and has a plan). If you establish that they believe that, you have a clear ground to present the gospel.
- Don't skip over sin. If we don't address sin, there is no need for the cross, and there will be no power for genuine repentance. Be clear about the power and effect of sin.
- Don't call them to "change." Point them to Jesus.
- Be bold – you can be as bold as you are loving.
- Look for the Holy Spirit convicting them. If you see it, ask them what is going on in their heart. Follow the work of the Holy Spirit.



## How to Share your Testimony

People are looking for something authentic. They are not looking for a religious theology, but they are looking for a life transformed by a loving God. Nobody can deny the testimony of what God has done in your life. Paul shares his testimony numerous times in the book of Acts (Acts 22 and 26). Here is a basic format to help you effectively share your testimony:

1. Before Jesus
2. How you met Jesus
3. After Jesus

### ***Practical's for sharing your testimony:***

- It's okay if you don't have the same story as someone else. They can relate to the power and devastation of sin in your life.
- Make it juicy! People are *lost* and they relate to sinners, not polished people. They need to hear about your sin and how it affected you.
- Focus on sin and grace (the cross).
- If you were saved at a young age, you can share how Jesus has set you free from sin since you were a Christian.

***Describe your life in the following boxes:***

**My life before Jesus**

**When I encountered Jesus**

**Since I met Jesus**

## “Power” Evangelism

Jesus didn't do His miracles as God; He did them as a man with God's Spirit in Him (He was fully God and man, but was limited to doing what the Father was doing – John 5:30). Jesus gave us a clear model of ministry, then He put His Spirit in us to do ministry as He did (John 14:12; 1 John 2:6; Isaiah 61:1-3).  
 \*Always look to partner God's power with an introduction to the Person of Jesus through the Gospel.

### **Healing**

Isaiah 53 says Jesus bore our sins and our sicknesses on the cross (see Matthew 8:17), and commanded his disciples in Matthew 10 to heal the sick. Mark 16 says that it is one of the signs that will follow *anyone* who believes in Christ. Jesus was moved by compassion (Mark 6:34); He healed because He loved. Jesus healed then, and He still heals today – it is just what He does.

**How do I begin?** Make a decision to step out and love someone *today*:

1. **Ask** – Their *name first*, what happened, see if it hurts now, etc.
2. **Share** why – Jesus loves people and loves to heal like He did in the Bible
3. **Kommand** – Command healing over them (It is the work of the Spirit – Focus on faith, not yelling, or shaking/quaking to get God to move)
4. **See** how they are – Look for what God *is* doing, not what He is not doing. Pray again if something is happening but they aren't healed.

### **What if they don't get healed?**

1. No matter what happens, the person should walk away feeling loved. Love covers a lot of concerns. You don't need to explain why something didn't happen. *Don't* tell them they didn't have enough faith.
2. Focus on what God is doing, not what He is not doing. That is how the fish and loaves were multiplied (Jesus asked for what they did have, celebrated it and gave thanks, gave it to God, and it multiplied).

### **How do I keep up faith?**

1. Meditate on the written word – Rom. 10:17
2. Faith is a gift from God and doesn't have to do with your effort – Mark 11:22
3. Feed on testimonies and focus on what God *is* doing.
4. Surround yourself with others seeing fruit.



## **Prophecy**

As Jesus was led by the Spirit, Paul wrote that the sons of God would also be led of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14). *"...because whatever the Father does the Son also does."* – John 5:19

1. **The Highlight** – God "highlighting" who to talk to through a simple sense or impulse. Jesus seemed to pay special attention to Nathanael when He saw him (John 1:48), or He would enter a crowd of people and would be led to touch one (John 5:3-5).

### **Walking it out:**

- Someone may "stick out to you"
  - Your heart may go out towards someone in a crowd
  - God might say "go over here..." (Philip in Acts 8:26, 29)
2. **Prophecy and words of knowledge** – God speaks to those who are His own (John 8:27, 10:3-4), and He will often give us words of encouragement or facts about others (1 Cor. 12:8, 10; 1 Cor. 14:3). God speaks to us not only regarding believers, but also for unbelievers, as clearly seen in the ministry of Jesus (John 4:16-18). God will often speak either 1) a "now" encouraging word for someone or 2) specific insight into something in someone's life. Here are some ways that He speaks:
    - ◇ A thought that pops into your head (1 Cor. 2:16).
    - ◇ A sense from within (Eph. 1:13-14) or a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-12).
    - ◇ A picture in your mind/imagination – (Eph. 1:17-18; 1 Cor. 2:16).
    - ◇ "Body check" – God sometimes speaks through putting heat or pain (that isn't your own) on a body part to tell you that someone else has pain there.

3. **Sharing the testimony after it happens** – It is important to share our testimony to glorify God and keep faith in our hearts and the hearts of others! (Deut. 4:9; Acts 4:20). Here are some practical helps when sharing with others.

- ◇ Don't exaggerate – Be of integrity, and share to glorify God—not to impress man
- ◇ Don't focus on what didn't happen – Be truthful, but optimistic
- ◇ Don't use "language" that others don't understand

### **4. Growing in the power of God**

- ◇ Understand your authority in Christ – Seek scriptural revelation on what happened on the cross, and that the veil has been torn, and that God's resurrection Spirit lives in you (Romans 8:13).
- ◇ Go for it! – Faith is spelled R-I-S-K. There is no way to learn other than by going for it.
- ◇ Seek to love people – Jesus first had compassion, and then ministered in power (Matthew 14).

5. **Abide in Christ and do what you see the Father doing** – Jesus did what He saw the Father doing. The Father is always at work. John 5:20 says the Father would show Jesus (and then us through Him) greater things so that the people will marvel at God and come to know Him.

6. **Ask for more** – God gives the Holy Spirit generously (Luke 11:13) and without limit (John 3:34).  
Ask, believe, and receive.



## Evangelism FAQs

### **How do I start a conversation with a stranger?**

- Start conversations with people by asking questions. Be yourself while you do it!
- Look for inroads – Praying for the sick, complimenting, etc.

### **I am okay talking with someone until I get to the Gospel. How do I do that?**

- The more familiar you are with the Gospel, the more comfortable you will be sharing it.
- Is there anything you need prayer for?
- Have you ever heard about a relationship with God?
- This is an important question that changed my life: If today were your last day, do you think you would go to heaven?
- What do you think God thinks about you?

### **How do you share the Gospel story in a relationship? I don't want to ruin the relationship.**

- Clearly demonstrate that you are genuinely after their best interest in attitude/action.
- Contextualize the gospel – Nobody can escape the effects of sin. Contextualize the gospel to address their sin or pain and what God's redemption and grace means for them.

### **I want to share the Gospel, but I don't think I am gifted at it. How can I grow?**

Most people are in your shoes. The only way to learn is by just going for it, but here are a few others to help: Going with those who are gifted, going on an outreach, or practicing the tools.

### **I am too busy for evangelism; I am overwhelmed focusing on my kids alone! How can I make an impact?**

Turn responsibilities that bring you around the lost into opportunities (kids' sports games, parent/teacher meetings, workplace, neighborhood moms, grocery store, etc.).

### **Talking about sin is awkward and feels condemning. Do I have to?**

Yes. Without it, the cross is unnecessary. Ask them if they have sinned, be loving and clear about the Biblical implications of sin, and you will be set up to share about God's redemption!

### **What if the person says they are a Christian or has a relationship with God?**

Give them the benefit of the doubt, but you can keep moving forward by asking them questions about their relationship with God. If it is clear that they don't have one, share the Gospel.







## Chapter 4: Training Disciples

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Right before the birth of our second daughter, my wife and I were watching a typical Disney movie. In the movie a princess is born and they immediately show her clean with a full head of brushed hair, interacting and laughing with her happy, well-rested parents. This was very different from our childbirth experience. In reality, babies are born unable to communicate, at least apart from crying. They typically take months to start smiling, laughing and interacting. The reality of birth is that you start off messy. Babies take a while to develop into the reality of what they possess in this new life. Babies are fully alive, just immature.

However, if a child is healthy, they immediately start maturing; they begin to grow into the fullness of what it means to be alive. Week-to-week, an infant will show dramatic growth. Our spiritual lives are the same. New believers are messy; they don't know how to live their new lives. This is exactly where they should start when they accept Christ, but it is not where they should stay. This is the essence of the discipleship process.

God has given us a part to play in this maturity process. We are training disciples to mature in the Lord. The maturity process of any living thing progresses from an initial state of helplessness to then being able to care for self to then learning to care for others. Spiritual maturity is no different. Mature disciples reproduce more disciples. That is the nature of the Kingdom. This chapter will discuss the process of training disciples to mature in the Lord.

### Obedience-Based Discipleship

By looking at Jesus' command in Matthew 28:18-20 and Jesus' lifestyle, we get a powerful picture of making disciples. Take a minute to forget all of your discipleship experiences, both good and bad. What if these passages were all we had as instruction? Would discipleship look different?

Earlier we reviewed the four commands of Matthew 28:18-20. We are called to go, to take the church to the lost rather than expect them to come to us. God instructs us to make disciples, to see people's lives transformed in a process that starts with salvation and continues throughout their life. Next, Jesus commands us to baptize people. Their salvation is symbolized through this powerful act of obedience. And finally, we are told to teach people to obey. We are reminded that Jesus has all authority, and throughout our journey on this earth He is with us.

Whenever I've taught this passage, people always seem to miss a key element. When discovering the commands, almost every group I've instructed will always get this one wrong. They read the last command as "teach them everything I've commanded." Some of you might have made the same mistake. Two omitted words have a profound effect on a Biblical discipleship process. The unfortunate reality is that we usually just scan over these words in our reading. Too often, these words are also left out of our methods.

Think about it for a moment. How different would the church look if we “taught them to obey” rather than simply taught them? We might know a little less, but imagine a church that obeyed what it knew! This is the power that allows uneducated men to transform the world. But proceed with caution: it is much easier to teach, to be content imparting knowledge instead of values.

**Exercise: List out methods for teaching in the left column and teaching to obey in the right.**

Teach	Teach to Obey

***Which of these methods do you currently use in Lifegroup? As a result, do you teach, teach to obey, or none of the above?***

***What are the different commands of Jesus? Get specific in thinking through ways to help “teach people to obey” these instructions?***



## Biblical Patterns

Many of you cringed when you read the word “pattern.” Too often, we associate a spiritual pattern with something birthed in legalism, and many times for good reason. But patterns themselves are not the problem; in fact, they are a wonderful tool. The problem occurs when we confuse a pattern with a Biblical command.

The Bible actually encourages the use of patterns. In Matthew 9:17, Jesus said, *“neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins and both are preserved.”* Structural patterns in our lives are like wineskins; they get old and may need to be changed. The word of God will never change. But with new wine (revelation), then new wineskins (patterns) become necessary. Patterns are never the goal. But patterns are necessary. Wine without a wineskin makes a big mess!

We respond by taking the values and convictions God has given us and prayerfully applying them to a structure. We then must be careful to check our hearts along the way to stay focused on the person of Jesus, not the structure of church.

Discipleship takes place within Lifegroup, but it will often take place outside of it as well. *Where* and *when* is not nearly as important as *how*. There are three primary venues for discipleship at Antioch. Lifegroups are Acts 2 communities where people are discipled. More than ever, we want to see Lifegroup as a place for discipleship. In addition to Lifegroup, small discipleship groups or one-on-one meetings also provide discipleship. Typically, these allow for people to go even deeper in accountability and vulnerability. Finally, our Sunday Services do provide a place for discipleship. A corporate gathering alone will not make disciples, but when everyone is gathering together in small groups, these services can provide a powerful place for teaching and encountering God.

The basic pattern for discipleship is the same as the basic values of the Kingdom:

- We **Look Up** because we want to love God.
- We **Look In** because we want to love people and grow in Christ-likeness.
- We **Look Out** because we want to love those that don't know Jesus.

How you facilitate these Kingdom values will look different based on the setting. These can be implemented in a variety of ways and adjusted for the season of life, but if any one is neglected for too long, chances are that we will miss out of the fullness of what it means to make disciples.

## Discipleship outside Lifegroup

Jesus modeled “life-on-life” discipleship. He never used a program or class; instead, He intentionally lived life with a few hungry believers. A lot of discipleship takes place in Lifegroup, but often people need a place to connect in a small group outside the actual Lifegroup meetings. These groups provide a natural venue for deeper vulnerability and accountability as well as a place for practicing the basic commands of Scripture.

Remember to Look Up, Look In and Look Out in these meetings. That can be as simple as accountability for time with God, holiness, relationships, and reaching out. Or you might have specific meetings focused on one particular aspect. These groups are a great place to model Kingdom living. Consider spending time with God together, sharing Jesus, serving the poor, praying for the nations, fasting, prophesying over one another, or even going to the nations. Learning to live the Kingdom is a powerful and fun way to build deep friendship.

## Discipleship in Lifegroup

Lifegroups are one of the best vehicles for discipleship. How you lead the group will affect whether or not you have a simple Bible study that teaches people or a discipleship meeting that teaches people to obey. As we discussed earlier, to truly make disciples we will need to do things differently from typical church patterns. To do this well, we've identified seven core functions:

### Look Up

- Vision - Communicating why we meet
- Worship - Connecting with the person of God

### Look In

- Fellowship - Sharing with one another
- Accountability - Holding one another accountable to the Word
- Word - Discussing basic Biblical passages

### Look Out

- Practice - Living the Kingdom together
- Goal-setting - Committing to obey and to reach out to others

On the surface, these look similar to a standard group format. But when you keep the vision of obedient, reproducing disciples of Jesus as the goal, you realize there are some important distinctions. Accountability, practice and goal-setting are the difference between a group that teaches and a group that teaches to obey. If we are not careful, these three elements are often the first to go when pressed for time and the easiest to neglect. How you lead the group will affect the depth of discipleship.



The pattern is a wineskin, a structure designed to facilitate a reproducing process of teaching people to obey Jesus' commands to love God, love others, and love those who don't know Jesus. Let's focus now on how to incorporate these commands during Lifegroup.

## **Fellowship**

The purpose of this time is to genuinely find out how people are doing. This is the time to care for one another's personal needs. During this time, personal challenges in relationships, in work, in ministry and in your heart can come to the surface.

When individuals share, it is an opportunity to pray and hear God for their needs and minister to the person's heart. This does not need to be a time for a thorough explanation of the problem or for in-depth counseling. This is the time for people to be known and loved. Further ministry can happen before, after or outside of the meeting. If your group is large, then you can break into small groups of 2-3. Major needs will want to be brought to the whole group. Some may consider moving this time to the end to have more time. However, if people are coming in carrying a burden, wouldn't you want to know about it as soon as possible?

## **Worship**

“But an hour is coming, and now is here, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)

Corporate worship is amazing, no matter where it happens, but there's nothing like the raw, intimate vulnerability of a small group worship time. When we lead people to the throne of God in even simplest of ways, it can be a beautiful, life-transforming thing.

When you are meeting with someone or with a group, you want to provide the best environment possible for the people to be able to bring their focus and attention to God. This can be done through music, prayer, reading a Psalm or another scripture, or something else creative.

One of the biggest challenges of leading in this setting is that it feels so “exposed.” There is no band or sound system to hide behind. It's important that we sing out confidently – this creates an environment where other people are likely to feel free to sing their hearts out, too. Singing loudly enough so that people can hear you to follow, but not so loudly that you become a distraction, is essential. You may need to build up a library of songs on your phone or even sing a capella. Start with a list of all the songs sung on a Sunday morning in the congregation.

Keep worship simple and reproducible. Leading a worship time need not be the exclusive role of the vocally and musically gifted. The Psalms were written for worship. Playing instrumental music while you wait on God or draw or sit in silence can be equally effective in drawing our attention to God and engaging His presence. Talented musicians are icing on the cake, if they are a part of your group. Yet everyone can lead others to worship God.



## Accountability (Mark 1:16-17)

We want to help people become followers and fishers. Followers are obedient to the Word of God. They grow in Christ-likeness and are quick to confess sin. They regularly seek help in their spiritual walk. Fishers are obedient to the calling of God. They reach out to those around them, share Jesus, and care for the hurting.

We are called to be both followers and fishers. Accountability should cover these areas. Spend time sharing what God has called you to do in response to His word, and then hold one another accountable to these areas.

## Vision Casting

“Without vision, the people will perish”. One of the main roles of a leader is to cast vision for those they lead. When most people initially come to a Lifegroup, they are coming simply because a friend invited them. This is great for a first visit, but, if after a year of attendance, they still only come because of a friend, then they have missed the purpose of Lifegroup. People need to be called to something greater than themselves. If they are not given vision, people will not take ownership of the group and they will not play an active role in the body of Christ.

Good vision paints the big picture, but also shows how people can be involved today. Most people only view church as a religious requirement or, at best, a segmented part of their life. This is not because they are necessarily in rebellion, but simply because no one has ever called them to something higher. Leaders help take people places they would otherwise never go and do things they would normally never do.

In a Lifegroup vision, there are three essential elements you want to cover every week:

1. **Look up** – Lifegroup is a place for encountering God; as a group we want to spend time in worship, prayer, and study of the Word each week. The power in Lifegroup is people encountering the presence of God.
2. **Look in** – Lifegroup also is about Christian community. All of the admonitions in the Bible speaks of “when two or more are gathered,” or about people being sent out in small groups. Even from the very beginning, God said, “It is not good for man to be alone.” At Lifegroup, we want to have Godly relationships, accountability, discipleship, and people who genuinely love, serve and care for one another.
3. **Look out** – Lifegroup should always be outward focused. We need to reach out to those who don't know Jesus and to the hurting and poor. Jesus gave very clear commands to the church to take the Gospel to all people. It is an easy trap to have great worship and community, but never reach out beyond the borders of your group.

It is wisely said that vision leaks. If the leader has vision for the group, others will catch it. But if the leader is not full of vision, then the members will follow his/her example. Leaders need to regularly spend time in prayer and get specific vision for their group. Taking a personal retreat twice a year is one way to facilitate this. Seek God for goals for the next season and for creative new ways to do Lifegroup. Vision should simply be communicating the values that are already inside you as a leader.



## A few other tips on giving vision:

- Practice what you are going to say, especially if vision-casting does not come naturally to you.
- Give the same basic vision every week. Repetition is your friend! Though people might seem bored, they will be able to quickly repeat back the vision for the group.
- Use scripture. For example, share the “look up, look in, and look out” concept using the Great Commandment and Great Commission or Acts 2:42-47.
- Incorporate testimonies as part of the vision time.
- Explain how the different aspects of Lifegroup (worship, discussion, etc.) relate back to vision.
- Make sure that your Lifegroup is reflecting the vision you are casting.
- Let people who have been really impacted through the group give vision.

One final word on vision: The power of discipleship comes as it is reproduced from one person to the next. Include in your vision-casting the consistent charge to go make disciples. This is where we see true transformation.

## Word

The goal is teaching people to obey the word of God. In order to do this, people need to learn to read the Bible. Spend time in discussion around Biblical text. There are around 20 basic discipleship guides that can be used for Lifegroup that each highlight a specific passage of Scripture. Consider going through these and then continue by studying books of the Bible one chapter at a time and asking the following questions:

S – What does this **Say**?

O – What do I need to **Obey**?

S – What do I need to **Share** with others?

Avoid teaching or talking too much when leading. People will remember something when they discover it themselves in a far greater way than when you tell them. Don't be discouraged during “awkward silences.” Normally it means people are thinking about the question.

## Practice and Modeling

People will generally not reproduce something they don't understand. Spend time discussing the vision and you will pass it along to others. Modeling what is being taught is also a critical training element. Share how you will implement what was taught. This will empower people to be more bold the next day in their workplaces/spheres of influence. Model true intercession. Practice exercising the spiritual gifts.

Most people need to see something modeled and try it themselves before they can pass it along to someone else. Small groups that meet in addition to Lifegroup are an ideal place to follow up with practice.

## Goal-Setting and Commitment to Obey

We set goals for the things we value. Most people have health goals and financial goals as a result. As we study the Bible together, it is appropriate to wait on the Lord for goals regarding our response. Spend time at the end of Lifegroup sharing these to one another. Be sure to be specific. This will then form the basis for accountability the following week. Before you leave, take time to pray over each other in these areas.

### Exercise:

*Earlier we discussed the importance of reproducing discipleship. Which of the above (fellowship, worship, accountability, vision, word, practice, goal-setting) are the most important for people to obey and reproduce in others?*

*Which of these most often gets dropped?*

*What happens to a group that consistently leaves these out?*

If we fail to obey the Word and reproduce the Word, then we are like the Dead Sea. Rivers flow in, but nothing flows out, resulting in a lifeless lake. God designed us to be a free flowing channel. We receive life from God and pass it along to others.

### Keep in mind

- You can change up the order as needed.
- Vision casting, accountability, practice and goal-setting are the most important parts of leading people to obey and reproduce it in others.
- Pastoral care can extend in other meetings outside of Lifegroup as needed.
- Longer worship times can be provided in larger services and the prayer room

This discipleship model can be adapted in a variety of ways based on your group. What works for some might be impossible for others.

### Exercise:

*Write out three adjustments you need to make to your group.*



## Sample Meeting Patterns

Each season of life brings with it unique blessings and unique challenges. Lifegroups must adapt to each season if we want to disciple people well. What works for a group of single young adults probably won't work for a group with young kids. Review these sample patterns and think through what will work best in your context.

### **Sample Lifegroup:**

#### *Fellowship (15 minutes)*

Share how you are doing in groups of three; pray for one another; have a meal together.

#### *Worship (10 minutes)*

Worship using an iPod or guitar; read the Psalms; minister in the gifts of the Spirit .

#### *Accountability (5 minutes)*

Sample questions: Did you do what you said you would do last week? What has God been speaking lately? Are you responding?

#### *Vision (15 minutes)*

Read Matt 28:18-20 and highlight the core elements; Read Acts 2:42-47 and share the values of the early church; have someone share a testimony.

#### *Word (30 minutes)*

SOS model of studying Scripture; go through a discipleship lesson as a group.

#### *Practice (10 minutes)*

Tell the story to one another and give a summary thought.

#### *Goal-Setting and Prayer (5 minutes)*

Share with someone next to you the one thing you need to do this week and pray for each other.

## **Sample family Lifegroup with kids:**

### *Fellowship*

Free time for kids to play; parents catch up with how they are doing over snacks.

### *Vision*

Bring kids together and share why we have Lifegroup.

### *Worship*

Sing 2-3 kids' songs. Use some hand motions. This will not be the "sit and soak in the presence of God" time for the adults. But the presence of God will be there as we model and train the kids to worship from the heart; be creative – like having them draw a picture to God as you play 2-3 songs; have them share prayer requests and pray; teach them to wait on God.

### *Accountability*

Review the last lesson and follow up on anything you asked them to do.

### *Word*

Do a 15 minute lesson with an activity.

### *Goal-Setting and Prayer*

Make sure kids know how to respond this week.

## **During a one hour lunch discipleship meeting**

### *Fellowship*

Ask questions about how they are doing while waiting in line or for a waiter.

### *Worship*

Read a short Psalm and pray for your meal.

### *Vision*

Briefly share why you are meeting and why it's important.

### *Accountability*

Ask follow up questions related to what you talked about last time; ask about some other area God highlights (devotional life, sharing the gospel, marriage, etc.)

### *Word*

SOS bible study, (See Foundations Discipleship Guide)

### *Goal-Setting and Prayer*

Review what each of you will do; pray together for each other and what you have discussed.



## Discipleship Guides

We have repeatedly emphasized the discipleship process of teaching people to obey, but that does not invalidate Biblical content. There is a lot of important material in the Bible. Try writing up a list of things people need to know in order to walk with God. You'll end up with 66 books. In order to make disciples, we need to prioritize and start somewhere.

At Antioch, we've developed core discipleship topics. These are passages of Scripture that highlight what we consider key themes for loving God, loving others, and loving those who don't know Jesus.

These can be used as a Lifegroup discussion guide or in a one-on-one setting as needed. Some are more foundational than others. When beginning to train a new believer, we recommend beginning with the following lessons:

1. The Word of God
2. The Father Heart of God
3. The Son of God
4. The Good News of God
5. The Great Commission
6. Obedience
7. Water Baptism
8. The Spirit of God
9. Time with Jesus
10. The Church

## Conclusion

We want to see disciples who actually live what they claim. We want to see movements of people who truly obey the commands of Jesus and in turn train others to do the same. This is simple but difficult at the same time. We are convinced that if we can teach people to actually obey the commands of Jesus through the work of the Spirit in their lives, then we will see the world transformed through discipleship, just like we were commissioned.





## Chapter 5: Restoring Disciples

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### Restoration

We live in a world polluted with sin, worldly wisdom, and an enemy who opposes the kingdom of God. For those seeking to follow Jesus, Satan would like nothing more than to bombard us with lies, wounds, and destructive options to separate us from the love and nearness of the Father. The result is a broken world and broken people. Marriages and relationships are broken. Our understanding of a perfect Father is distorted. Finances are in disarray. Abuse and addiction are rampant. Not to mention the deception, comparison, performance, self-hatred and impurity that seem to spread like wild fire among believers.

People have problems. But there is hope. When Jesus was arrested, His disciples abandoned Him. None more so than the apostle Peter. Three times he publically denied he even knew Jesus. After Jesus died, Peter returned to his old ways as a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. But Jesus sought Him out and began to restore Peter's broken world.

#### **Exercise:**

*John 21:15* <sup>15</sup> When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."<sup>17</sup> The third time He said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."<sup>18</sup> Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."<sup>19</sup> Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, "Follow me!"<sup>20</sup> Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?")<sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."<sup>23</sup> Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

#### **What does this story teach us about God's heart to restore His disciples?**

Restoration is the return of something to an earlier or better condition. Peter was brought back in to alignment with Jesus, and he experienced a new level of the grace of God. When God restores us He is realigning us with the truth of who He is and who we are in His image. Our part is as disciple makers; we don't need to be trained counselors (although we need them!). Our role is to bring people to the Wonderful Counselor and let Him do what only He can do. This chapter is devoted to tools, skills and resources that can assist any disciple maker in leading people to the Healer of wounded hearts and Restorer of broken walls.



## Identifying People's Problems

People with different problems need help in different ways. As you read the following verse, identify three types of problems people have and three different ways to help them in your own words.

1 Thessalonians 5: 14 *“And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

Type of Problem	Our Response
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

And with all people be \_\_\_\_\_! That's good value for all of us to embrace when people come to us with problems. Helping people takes time and it takes patience. Just consider how patient Jesus had to be with His disciples!

Destructive Behavior	Possible Root Issue
1. <i>Ex. depression</i>	1. <i>Ex. Shattered dream or unfulfilled goal</i>
2. Financial debt	2.
3. Anger with children	3.
4. Pornography	4.
5. Comparison	5.

When people come to you, we must first begin by identifying the problem and then we can know how to help them. We won't get anywhere if we are trying to encourage the rebellious, and rebuking the timid could be devastating.

When people come to you, look for root issues beneath the surface behaviors. Consider what could be root issues behind these destructive behaviors.



## HELPing People with Problems

So what can we do? What does it look like to disciple people through brokenness in their lives?

### Have Patience

*<sup>18</sup> While He was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before Him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." <sup>19</sup> Jesus got up and went with him, and so did His disciples. <sup>20</sup> Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. <sup>21</sup> She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." <sup>22</sup> Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," He said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment. <sup>23</sup> When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, <sup>24</sup> He said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at Him. <sup>25</sup> After the crowd had been put outside, He went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up." Matthew 9:18-25*

**What challenges did Jesus face in trying to help these people? What can we learn from Him?**

### Equip with the Word of God

*"They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" <sup>4</sup> "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." <sup>7</sup> "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" <sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. <sup>9</sup> I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." Matthew 19:1-9*

**How did Jesus help these people with the question of divorce?**

### Lead them to the Presence of God

*<sup>17</sup> One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. <sup>18</sup> Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. <sup>19</sup> When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus." Luke 5:17-19*

**What does this story teach us about helping people with their problems?**

### Point them to other Restoration Counselors and Ministries as Needed

*"When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. <sup>2</sup> A man with leprosy<sup>a</sup> came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."<sup>3</sup> Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." Matthew 8:1-4*

**Why do you think Jesus sent this man to the temple after He healed him of leprosy?**

Jesus restored people's lives. He always took time to stop and help people. Some of his greatest miracles came when he was interrupted! He used the scripture to guide people to truth when they were facing a question or a lie. As Jesus' followers, the best thing we can do is help lead people to communicate with Jesus directly by helping to remove any walls (or roofs!) between Him and them. Finally, we need to point people to the variety of resources available to us. Here is a list of Restoration ministries we offer at Antioch.

- Financial Building Blocks
- Love and Respect Marriage Equipping Class
- Grace House and Mercy House for substance abuse
- Listening Prayer Ministry and/or Seven Steps to Freedom
- For professional counseling, contact Vicki Smyer at [Vicki-smyer@aminternational.org](mailto:Vicki-smyer@aminternational.org) or Lynette Wilson at [Lynette-Wilson@aminternational.org](mailto:Lynette-Wilson@aminternational.org).

*Important Note: Restoration counseling or ministries should always have a definable duration, so people do not become co-dependent on counselors. The goal is to restore them to Jesus and healthy community life and ministry.*



# ENCOUNTERING GOD

## TENDING YOUR HEART

- 1) The Nature of God's Voice – The Litmus Test
- 2) Tending Your Heart – Overview
- 3) Tending Your Heart – As a *Proactive* Lifestyle
- 4) Process Diagram
- 5) Listening Journal
- 6) The Essence of Discipleship

## 1) THE NATURE OF GOD'S VOICE – The Litmus Test

- The nature of God's thoughts will be spontaneous and positive, usually in the first person.
- It will affirm the character of the Holy Spirit - Encourager, Comforter, Teacher, Guide, Healer, Counselor, Revealer of Truth.
- It will reflect the fruit of the Spirit - loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, gentle (Galatians 5).
- His words will not violate scripture but easily align with scripture.

### FURTHER INDICATORS:

- When received, His words bring healing, freedom and life-transformation with strength and joy to walk them out.
- God's voice within you will not eradicate your personality or manner of speech
- (1 Corinthians 6:17). It may sound like you – your flavor.
- His words are light, gentle and easily cut off by any exertion of our own thoughts and will, so we must honor the flow (John 7:38) over and above self-effort.
- His words may address sin or be a gentle rebuke that will produce a longing for restoration.



## 2) TENDING YOUR HEART - Overview

### INTIMACY WITH GOD – OUR ABSOLUTE PRIORITY

- Jesus died so we could enjoy intimacy with Him – dialogue, sharing hearts (Matthew 27:50-51; Exodus 25:22).
- We are to live listening to Him (Deuteronomy 8:3).
- Jesus modeled this for us (John 5:19; 8:26 and 28).
- It is the one thing necessary (Luke 10:39).
- We can all hear Him speak (John 10:27).
- By cultivating a lifestyle of *proactively* listening to and receiving from God, we are able to enjoy increasing intimacy with Him and deny the enemy opportunity to rob us.

### THE BATTLE

- The enemy's strategy is to kill our intimacy with the Lord – he speaks lies against the character of God or our value/identity in Christ (Matthew 27:43).
- We believe in our hearts (Romans 10:10) – but are often desensitized to lies.
- God knows our hearts – we can ask the Wonderful Counselor to reveal the lies (Isaiah 9:6).
- Lies are sown in wounds – forgive the offender to break the power of the lie.

### OVERCOMING HINDRANCES TO RECEIVE FROM GOD

- Renounce lies about God or ourselves.
- Repent for partnering with the enemy and for giving lies authority.
- Receive from God the truth that will ignite our hearts to replace the lies.
- To receive, we must intentionally make room in our hearts to embrace what God is saying.
- Unpack with Him what He says – declaring and rejoicing in it until your heart is full.
- Then our minds are renewed and our hearts strengthened so we can recognize and resist lies, temptations and hindrances to enjoying intimacy. We are then able to thrive in Him.

### 3) TENDING YOUR HEART – As a Proactive Lifestyle!

“Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

#### DEVELOPING A PROACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Don't wait until you are triggered. Intentionally invite Jesus into your moments throughout your day. Share your day with Him and open your heart to receive from Him. You may ask:

- Jesus, what are You teaching me right now?
- How do You want me to respond to this?
- Father, what do You want to tell me about Yourself that will help me trust You more?
- Father, how do You want me to see you today?
- What does my heart need to hear from You right now?
- What identity do You want to speak over me today?

#### RESPOND QUICKLY WHEN TRIGGERED

To grow in intimacy with God, be attentive to your heart and take note of anything that moves you away from peace and rest throughout the day (Romans 13:14b; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Mark 4:19). Examples: Disappointment, discouragement, fear, loneliness, worry, anxiety, lust, anger, etc.

**1) CHOOSE TO TURN TO JESUS:** If we do not turn to Jesus and let Him meet our need, we will fill our hearts with something else. Jesus said, “Do not let your heart be troubled” [‘agitated’] (John 14:1). We can choose! (Psalm 27:3).

**2) ASK:** When moved away from security and rest, turn your mind and heart to God. Ask aloud if possible:

- Father, what is this really about? (Psalm 139:23-24)
- Listen and don't discount what you receive.
- He may reveal sin you need to repent of, a lie you believe, someone you need to forgive, a spirit you have given access to, etc.

*If there is a heavy or persistent burden, pain or grief then see note below \*\*\**



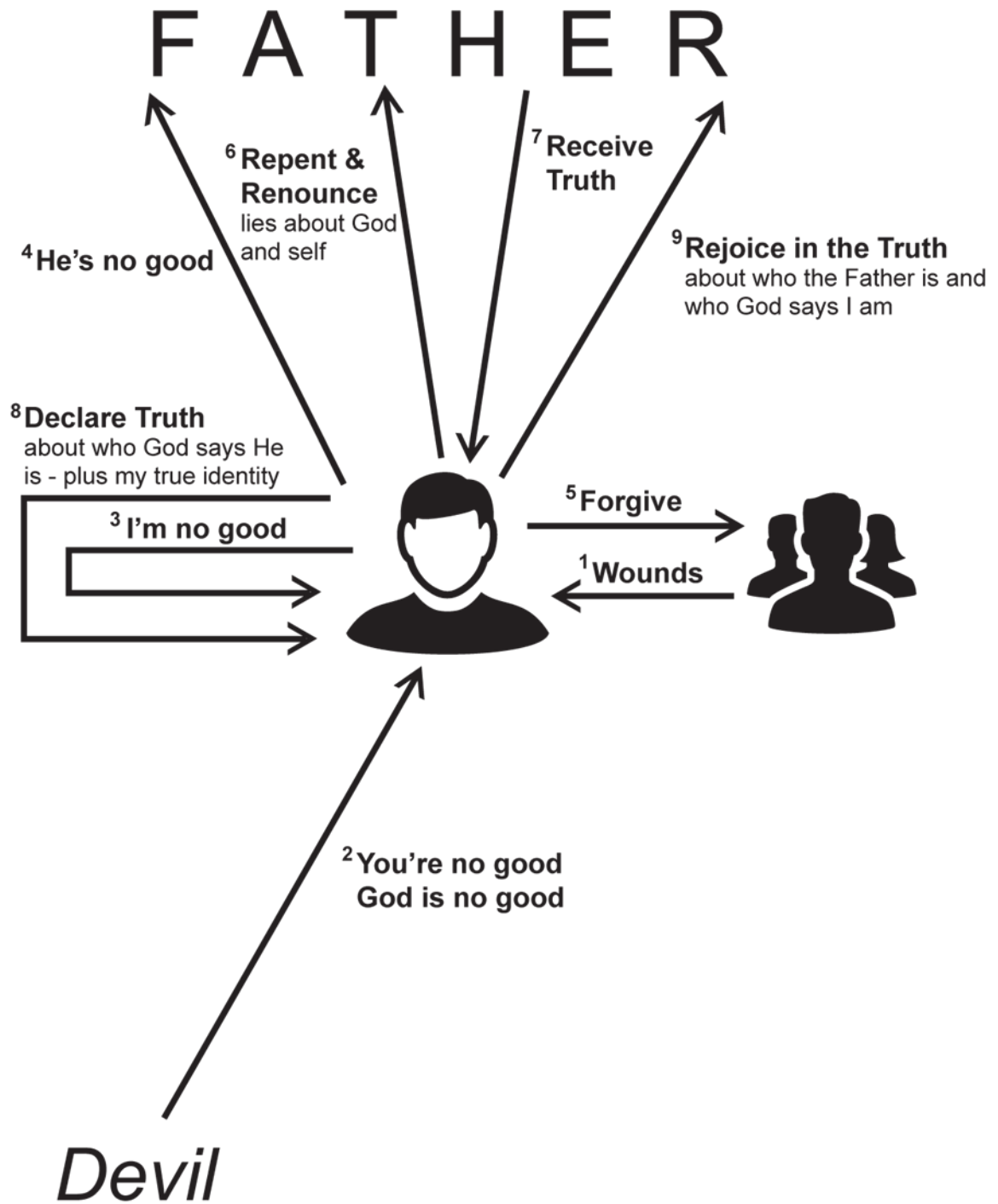
- 3) **RECOGNIZE:** Honestly and humbly admit any lie or action you need to take and follow His lead. Forgive and bless others when necessary.
- 4) **RENOUNCE:** Break of any partnership with the enemy and renounce any lie (aloud if possible).
- 5) **REPENT:** Repent for partnering with the enemy and giving the lie authority. Ask for forgiveness for any sin God reveals or any sinful reaction to your wound by self-protection, denial, self-comfort, etc.
- 6) **RECEIVE AN EXCHANGE!:** “An empty heart invites attack” (Matthew 12:43-45). Fill it with *living* truth (Romans 10:17; John 17:8)! Ask what truths the Father has for your heart in exchange for the lies (Isaiah 61:3, 7a; Proverbs 2:1-10 NASB). If possible, journal them. Let them sink into and fill your heart (Psalm 51:6; 119:11).
- 7) **REJOICE:** Rejoice in what He has given you in exchange for the lie (aloud if possible)! Declare it over your life! Thank Him and worship! Ask for more! Unpack it with Him!

\*\*\* Pour out your heart to Him (Psalm 62:8). Cast your care onto Him (1Peter 5:7). Place it on His body on the Cross (Isaiah 53:4a). Let Him comfort you (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). Receive His exchange (Isaiah 61:1-3).

## 4) FREEDOM FROM WOUNDS AND LIES

- Break partnership with lies through forgiveness and renunciation.
- Receive and rejoice in the truth from the Father.







## 5) LISTENING JOURNAL

*You can address the Father, Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Get ready to record first impressions:*

- Do I believe that You want to speak to me?
- Why do You want to speak to me?
- What do You want me to believe about hearing You?

*If you are having trouble receiving, make these pronouncements in faith:*

- In the name of Jesus, I renounce the lie I cannot hear You.
- I renounce the lie that You don't want to speak with me.
- I renounce the lie that You want to speak to others more than me.
- I renounce the lie that it is not safe for me to hear from You.
- I give myself permission to hear from You.
- Father, I give You permission to speak to me now.
- What do You give me in exchange for the lie I cannot hear You?
- *Write it down. Receive it. Rejoice in it.*

*Go to the next step:*

- Ask the Father: What kind of relationship do I want to have with You?

*Write down what comes, recording the spontaneous flow of your thoughts. Don't think about it at this point - just write what comes.*

- Ask Him: What kind of relationship do You want to have with me?

***Receive anything that is encouraging and life-giving by thanking Him and rejoicing in the truth. Worship.***

## THE ESSENCE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is making disciples of Jesus. Okay, that's obvious when we think about it, but helping people really connect with Jesus tends to be overshadowed by a list of tasks to be fulfilled - reading scripture, praying to Jesus, pursuing fellowship and accountability, sharing our faith and so on.

Jesus Himself modeled discipleship for us. He was disciplined by His Father.

"He awakens Me morning by morning. He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple" (Isaiah 50:4, 5).

"I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me" (John 14:28).

If we are to be disciplined by Jesus, then our primary goal is to learn how to hear and respond to Him. Whether we are reading Scripture, walking with other believers or sharing our faith, we need to be open to the instruction of the Holy Spirit who has been given as our Helper to lead us into all truth. Dependence on Him is necessary if we are to even pray effectively (Romans 8:26). And, of course, praying itself is severely limited and soon becomes robbed of enjoyment if we are not listening to Him and entering into dialogue with Him so He can guide and encourage us.

Disciplers often find they are weighed down and drained by trying to give the disciples the answers and help they need. Now of course, patience and endurance are often required in coming alongside someone and helping them grow in Christ. The problem is that disciplers often cultivate, maybe unwittingly, a dependence on themselves as source – instead of dependence on Jesus. What a relief it is for disciplers to recognize the radical difference!

From the outset, a disciple should learn they can turn to Jesus, ask Him about anything and receive what He has for them. They should know they can bring Him any burden, difficulty, problem or pain, and get help and encouragement directly from the One who knows and understands them like no other.

***Disciplers are only effective to the degree that they point others to Jesus and help them engage with Him!***

Sadly, it is very common for disciples to become so dependent on the discipler, mentor, elder, pastor or close friend that they are at a loss when they find themselves in a situation where they no longer have access to their help and encouragement. They have not experienced the reality of deep friendship with Jesus. They have not cultivated a lifestyle of enjoyable intimacy with Him that meets the deepest needs of their hearts.



Modeling and leading disciples to enter into a simple two-way conversation with God builds confidence in turning to Him as their Father, Comforter, Shepherd, Teacher, Guide, Healer, Deliverer and closest Friend. Impediments to our growth in Christ will be revealed and overcome as we come to the “Wonderful Counselor.”

The disciple is not limited to the strengths or weaknesses of the disciple, but is able to access the unlimited counsel of God!

Every discipler should learn how to facilitate the disciple's connection with the Father.

Cultivating a lifestyle of “tending your heart” is a simple and very effective way to facilitate dialogue with Jesus - enjoying His companionship, processing heart issues with Him and learning from Him.

Confidence in coming to the Father and immediately receiving from Him what our hearts need is the gift offered to every believer.

# ENCOUNTERING GOD

## RESOURCES

- 1) Hearing God and Expectancy
- 2) Suggested Questions for Lifegroups
- 3) Journal Tending Your Heart
- 4) Journaling Steps to Forgiveness
- 5) Guidelines and Pitfalls in Journaling



## 1) HEARING GOD AND EXPECTANCY

Matthew 27:51 - Access to Holy of Holies.

Exodus 25:21 - 22 - I will meet with you...speak to you.

Deuteronomy 8:3 - Continuously speaking. We truly live by what He speaks.

Romans 1:17; 10:17 – We live by hearing.

Isaiah 55:3 - Listen that you may live.

John 8:26, 28 - Jesus is our role model.

Luke 10:39, 42 - The one thing necessary.

Psalms 27:4 - One thing I do...behold...and enquire.

Matthew 13:14-15 - Hearing, seeing but heart has become dull.

Proverbs 4:23 - Tend/guard your heart.

Psalms 95:7 - 8 - Today if you want to hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.

Hebrews 3:7 - 8 - Do not discount His voice.

Hebrews 4:2 – Believe His heart as we listen.

Galatians 3:2 - Hearing with faith.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 - 2 - Draw near to listen....do not be hasty in word or hurry your heart.

Isaiah 30:19 – He hears your cry and He will answer you.

Jeremiah 33:3 - Call to Me and I will answer you and I will tell you great...things which you do not know.

Isaiah 58:9, 11 - You will cry and He will say, “Here I am.” The Lord will guide you continually.

Isaiah 30:21 - You will hear a word from your Teacher ...whenever you turn.

Proverbs 1:33 - Live secure.

Isaiah 1:18 - Come now, and let us reason together.

John 10:27 - My sheep hear Me.

John 10:3 - He calls His own sheep by name.

Isaiah 9:6 - Counselor. John 20:1 - Father. John 15:14 – Friend. Requires a two-way conversation.

Isaiah 50:4-5 - He awakens my ear to listen.

Psalms 143:8 - Let me hear Your loving-kindness.

Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29 and 3:6, 13, 22 - Let him hear what the Spirit says.

Revelation 3:20 - If anyone hears My voice...opens the door I will come in... dine with him and he with Me.

Luke 8:15 - Treasure what you hear.

Job 23:12 – Treasure His commands.

Psalms 119:11 – Hide His words in your heart that you may not sin.

Proverbs 8:32 - Happy are those who listen and respond.

Psalms 1:13 - The enemy is quickly subdued.

1 John 5:14 - 15 - Immediate expectancy.



## 2) SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR LIFEGROUP

### To cultivate dialogue with God:

1) Father, what kind of relationship do I want to have with You? (Let *Him* tell you.)

Father, what kind of relationship do You want to have with me?

Receive it by declaring and rejoicing in it.

Then share and pray for each other.

2) Father, in what areas do I find it hard to trust You?

What do You want to tell me about Yourself that will help me trust You more?

Receive it by declaring and rejoicing in it.

Then share and pray for each other.

3) Father, how do You want to encourage me right now?

What do I need to know about who I am to You?

What do You want to tell me about myself that I need to know right now?

Receive it by declaring and rejoicing in it.

Then share and pray for each other.

4) Father, what are You teaching me in these circumstances?

How do You want me to respond in a way that will bring You glory?

Then share and pray for each other

5) Holy Spirit, in what area do You want me to be more fully released in my life?

How do You want me to cooperate with You there?

Jesus, is there anything You want to tell me about Yourself?

Receive it by declaring and rejoicing in it.

Then share and pray for each other.

6) Burdens to yield:

- Father, what burden do You want me to yield to You?

- How can I yield my burden to You?

- Is there anything keeping me from releasing it to You?

- How do You want to help me here? How can I cooperate with You?

Then share and pray for each other.

7) If someone shares a burden or problem:

- Each person listens and journals

If encouraging, uplifting, comforting then share with that person and pray it over them.

Remember to always submit any 'words' and not impose.

Example: "This is the impression I received," or "This is what I feel God is saying."

Verses: "God is telling you this!"



## 3) JOURNAL – TENDING YOUR HEART

“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

*Father, what area in my life right now do I need to ask You about?*

Reaction to circumstances, family pressures, etc. – “Do not let your heart be troubled” (John 14:1 and 27). Relationship with God, others?

What keeps me from listening to You about this?

How do You want me to cooperate with You in this?

*Father, in what area of my life am I most prone to think negatively or be discouraged?*

What lie do I believe that causes this?

What do You have to say about that?

How do You want me to tend my heart more effectively in this area?

*Father, what does my heart need to hear from You right now?*

*Father, how do You want to encourage me today?*

### CHALLENGE! Cultivating ‘Tending Your Heart’ as a lifestyle

Take one day this week:

Set your alarm on your phone for every two hours over a 12- hour period. What are you thinking about?

If it’s negative, ask Him: Father, what do You have to say to help me move over in my heart here?

If it is positive, thank Him and rejoice!

**Unpack** it with Him until your heart is met!



## 4) JOURNALING STEPS TO FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

*He knows you better than you know yourself – don't decide or try to figure it out – ask Him and He will tell you.*

Father, what are the lies I have believed about You? *List them.*

Father, what are the lies I have believed about myself? *List them.*

### **FORGIVE, RELEASE AND BLESS**

Father, who do I need to forgive that caused me to believe this lie?

Am I willing to forgive \_\_\_\_\_?

IF NOT: If I don't forgive \_\_\_ what will my life be like?

If I do forgive \_\_\_ what will my life be like?

What do I need to them forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for? [We need to forgive for more than the act, but what it did in our heart.]

Father, I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. [Speak out all we need to forgive for as many times as needed.]

Father, is there anything else I need to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for in this area?

Father I take their sins against me and the wounds I received and lay them upon the body of Jesus on the cross. I thank You that You bore all my pains and sorrows (Isaiah 53:4-5) so I don't need to carry them any more.

I repent for my sinful reactions, any bitterness, resentment or anger I have had toward my offender. Father, do You forgive me? (Yes.) Then I forgive myself.

Father, I release \_\_\_\_\_ from all their offenses & wounds against me. I bless them in Jesus' name.

### **RENOUNCE** *(The lies He revealed to you at the beginning.)*

Father, I renounce the lie that You \_\_\_\_\_ [corresponding lies about God].

Father, I renounce the lie that I am \_\_\_\_\_ [negative identity, or lies about my value to God].

### **REPENT**

Father, forgive me for partnering with the enemy and believing these lies (be explicit) about You (Or about myself).

Father, do you forgive me? (Yes) Then I forgive myself.

### **RECEIVE!!** *(ESSENTIAL - SPEND TIME HERE)*

Father, what do you have for my heart in exchange for these lies?

Unpack what He says!

### **REJOICE!!** *(ESSENTIAL)*

Thank Him for what He has given, declaring and receiving His truth in your heart.

## 5) GUIDELINES AND PITFALLS IN JOURNALING

In the early stages of learning to listen to God you should bring your journaling to a mentor whenever there is any question about the content being scriptural or being in line with God's character.

**Avoid predictive journaling!** In asking the deeper questions we can make the mistake of moving to predictive questions about the future. Moving from, "Should I ask this person to marry me?" to, "Will I marry this person?" He may say, "Yes, go ahead and ask," but the person has free will and can refuse. Or the big one, "Will this person be healed?" We cannot try and use God like a fortune teller. Witchcraft seeks knowledge of the future for our own personal ends and benefit.

God may at times choose to tell us something of our future regarding His promises to us or His plans for us. But when we press for more detail we will often get, "Trust Me." **If we keep pressing Him** we can open the door to the enemy and become deceived by a lying spirit or invent an answer according to our own fleshly desires. We must release our preferences to His care and let Him give them back to us if He chooses.

In this life we are always in process as God seeks to shape us into the image of Christ. To journal about what He wants to do in our hearts **in the midst of struggles and challenges can be some of the deepest places of meeting God!** With God, what He gains in us in the process is often the goal. We grow in intimacy with Him by coming back again and again to receive from Him what He desires to give to our hearts as the process unfolds - reassurance, direction, comfort, pure motives and confidence in His character.



## STEPS TO FREEDOM IN CHRIST

*Galatians 5:1 says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." If you have received Christ as your Savior, He has already set you free through His victory over sin and death on the cross. The question is: Are you living victoriously in Christ's freedom, or are you still living in slavery?*

How can you tell if you are living free in Christ? Freedom in Christ is having the desire and power to know, love, worship and obey God. It is the joyful liberty of knowing God's truth in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not a *perfect* life, for that is impossible this side of heaven. But it is a growing, *abundant* life in Christ (see John 10:10)!

If you are not experiencing that kind of freedom, it may be because you have not stood firm in the faith or lived according to who you are *in Christ*. Somehow you have allowed a yoke of slavery to put you back into bondage.

It is your responsibility, however, to do whatever is needed to walk in your freedom in Christ. If you are a Christian already, your eternal life is not at stake; you are safe and secure in Christ. But your daily victory is at stake if you choose not to walk according to the truth.

No matter how tough things might be for you spiritually right now, we've got great news for you! You are not a helpless victim caught in a tug-of-war match between two nearly equal but opposite heavenly superpowers—God and Satan. Only God is all-powerful, always present and all-knowing. Satan was defeated by Christ the Victor at the cross, so don't believe the lie that your situation is hopeless or that you are helpless against the devil's attacks.

Satan knows you have authority over him in Christ, but he doesn't want you to know it. He is a liar and the only way he can have power over you is if you believe his lies.

The battle is for your mind. During this session, you may experience nagging thoughts such as, *This isn't going to work* or *God doesn't love me*, etc. Don't believe the devil's lies. If you believe Satan's deceptions, you will really struggle with making it through the Steps to Freedom in Christ.

If you are working through the Steps by yourself, don't pay any attention to accusing or threatening thoughts. If you are working through this with a trusted friend, pastor or counselor (which we heartily encourage), then tell him/her any thoughts you are having that are in opposition to what you are trying to do.

Remember, the only power Satan has over you is the power of the lie. Expose the lie by getting it out in the open; then choose the truth and the power of that lie is broken. In that way you will be able to maintain control during this session.

*You must cooperate with the person who is trying to help you by sharing what is going on inside your mind.* Also, if you experience any physical discomfort such as headache, nausea, tightness in the throat, etc. don't be alarmed. Just tell the person you are with so that he/she can pray for you. Don't let the devil set the agenda during this time; let the Holy Spirit call the shots.

As believers in Christ, we can pray with authority to stop any interference by Satan. Here is a prayer and declaration to get you going. Read these and all the prayers and declarations aloud.

## Opening Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

We know that you are right here in this room with us and that you are present in our lives right now. You are the only all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present God. We are completely dependent upon You because without Jesus Christ we can do nothing. We choose to stand in the truth of Your Word and we refuse to believe the devil's lies. We thank You that the risen Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. Father, thank You that because we are in Christ we share His authority in order to make disciples and set captives free. We ask You to protect our minds and bodies during this time. Please fill us with the Holy Spirit so that He can guide us into all truth. We choose to submit to His guidance alone during this time. Please reveal to our minds everything that You want us to deal with today. We ask for and trust in Your wisdom. We pray all this in faith, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## Declaration

In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ we command Satan and all evil spirits to release their hold on \_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ in order that \_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ can be free to know and choose to do the will of God. As children of God, raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly places, we agree that every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ be bound. We say to Satan and all his evil workers that you cannot inflict any pain or in any way prevent God's will from being done today in \_\_\_\_\_(name's)\_\_\_\_\_ life.

Now you are ready to start going through the Steps to Freedom in Christ. The following seven steps will help you experience freedom from your past. You will address the areas in which Satan commonly takes advantage of believers and where strongholds are often built.

Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ has already purchased your freedom over sin and Satan on the cross. Experiencing that freedom will be the result of what *you* choose to believe, confess, renounce and forgive. No one can do that for you, not even God. The battle for your mind will only be won as you personally choose the truth.

During each Step, it is very important that you submit to God inwardly while resisting the devil outwardly. Do this by prayer and making each declaration *aloud*. The prayers and declarations are all in bold type to remind you to do that.

You will be taking a very thorough inventory of your life in order to make a rock-solid commitment to the truth. If your problems stem from another source not covered in these steps, you will have lost nothing by going through them. If you are open and honest during this time, you will greatly benefit by becoming right with God and close to Him once again.

May the Lord greatly touch your life during this time. He alone can and will give you the grace to make it through. Lean on His strength and wisdom, not on your own. It is crucial that you work through all seven Steps during this session. Take short breaks, as you need them, but don't allow yourself to become discouraged and give up. Remember, the freedom that Christ purchased for all believers on the cross is meant for you!



## Step 1 Counterfeit v. Real

The first Step toward experiencing your freedom in Christ is to renounce – verbally reject – all past or present involvement with occult practices, cult teachings and rituals, as well as non-Christian religions. Any group that requires dark, secret initiations, ceremonial promises or pacts should also be renounced. Begin this step by praying aloud:

**Dear Heavenly Father:**

**I ask You to bring to my mind anything and everything I have done knowingly or unknowingly that involves occult, cult or non-Christian teachings or practices. I want to experience Your freedom by renouncing these things right now. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.**

### Non-Christian Spiritual Checklist

Ouija Board	Astrology/horoscopes	Christian Science
Out-of-body experience	Hypnosis	Mind Science cults
Bloody Mary	Seances	The Way International
Light-as-a-feather	Black or white magic	Unification Church (Moonies)
Table lifting	Dungeons & Dragons ( or Magic)	The Forum (EST)
Magic Eight Ball	Blood pacts or cutting yourself on purpose	Church of the Living Word
Spells or curses	Objects of worship/crystals/good luck charms	Children of God/Love
Mental telepathy	Sexual spirits	Church of Scientology
Automatic writing	Martial arts (mysticism/devotion to sensei)	Unitarianism/Universalism
Trances	Superstitions	Roy Masters
Spirit guides	New Age	Silva Mind Control
Fortune-telling/divination	Mormonism (Latter Day Saints)	Transcendental Meditation
Tarot cards	Jehovah's Witnesses	Yoga
Levitation	Masons	Hare Krishna
Witchcraft/sorcery	Secret vow or pacts	Bahaim
Satanism	Satanic ritual/concert	Native American spirit
Palm reading	Movies, TV shows, music, books, Or magazines that the Lord is bringing to your mind (that glorify Satan). List them:	Islam
Spiritist/Medium/Channeler		Hinduism
Occult or violent video/ computer games. List them:		Buddhism (Zen)
		Black Muslim
		Rosicrucianism
		Other non-Christian religions

**Lord, I confess that I have participated in \_\_\_\_\_ . I know that it was evil and offensive in Your sight. Thank You for Your forgiveness. I renounce any and all involvement with \_\_\_\_\_ , and I cancel out any and all ground that the enemy gained in my life through this activity. In Jesus' name, amen.**

1. Have you ever seen, heard or felt a spiritual being in your room/house?
2. Do you have recurring nightmares? Specifically renounce any accompanying fear.
3. Do you now have, or have you ever had, an imaginary friend, spirit guide, "alien" or "angel" offering you guidance or companionship? (If it has a name, renounce it by name.)

4. Have you ever heard voices in your head or had repeating, nagging thoughts such as *I'm dumb, I'm ugly. Nobody loves me. I can't do anything right,* etc. as if there were a conversation going on inside your head? List any specific nagging thoughts.
  
5. What other spiritual experiences have you had that would be considered out of the ordinary?

## **IDOLOTRY**

We were created to worship the true and living God. Though we may not bow down to statues, it is easy for people and things of this world to subtly become more important to us than the Lord Himself. The following prayer expresses the commitment of a heart that chooses to “worship the Lord (our) God and serve him only.” (Matthew 4:10)

**Dear Lord God,**

**I confess to You that I have not loved You with all my heart and soul and mind (see Matthew 22:37) and as a result I have sinned against You, violating the first and greatest commandment. I repent of and turn away from this idolatry and now choose to return to You, Lord Jesus, as my first love, once again (see Revelation 2:4). Please reveal to my mind now any and all idols in my life. I want to renounce each of them and in so doing cancel out any and all ground Satan may have gained in my life through any idolatry.**

**In the name of Jesus, the true God, amen.**

Notice that most, if not all, of the areas listed below are not evil in themselves; they become idols when they usurp God's rightful place as Lord of our lives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Ambition</li> <li>o Food or any substance</li> <li>o Money/possessions</li> <li>o Computers/games/software</li> <li>o Financial security</li> <li>o Rock stars/media celebrities/thieves</li> <li>o Church activities</li> <li>o Hobbies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o TV/movies/music/other media</li> <li>o Sports or physical fitness</li> <li>o Fun/pleasure</li> <li>o Ministry</li> <li>o Appearance/image</li> <li>o Work</li> <li>o Busyness/activity</li> <li>o Parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Friends</li> <li>o Power/control</li> <li>o Boyfriend/girlfriend</li> <li>o Popularity/opinion of others</li> <li>o Spouse</li> <li>o Knowledge/being right</li> <li>o Children</li> </ul>
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**In the name of the true and living God, Jesus Christ, I renounce my worship of the false god of \_\_\_\_\_ . I choose to worship only You, Lord, and ask You, Father, to enable me to keep this area of \_\_\_\_\_ in its proper place in my life.**



## Step 2 DECEPTION VS. TRUTH

God's Word is true and we need to accept His truth in the innermost part of our being (see Psalm 51:6). Whether or not we *feel* it is true, we need to believe it is true! Satan is the father of lies (see John 8:44), and he seeks to keep people in bondage through deception (see Revelation 12:9; 2 Timothy 2:26), but it is the truth in Jesus that sets us free (see John 8:32-36).

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**I know that You want me to know the truth, believe the truth, speak the truth and live in accordance with the truth. Thank You that it is the truth that will set me free. In many ways I have been deceived by Satan, the father of lies, and I have deceived myself as well.**

**Father, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of His shed blood and resurrection, asking You to rebuke all of Satan's demons that are deceiving me.**

**I have trusted in Jesus alone to save me, and so I am Your forgiven child. Therefore, since You accept me just as I am in Christ, I can be free to face my sin and not try to hide. I ask the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth. I ask You to "search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23, 24) In the name of Jesus, Who is the Truth, I pray. Amen.**

### WAYS YOU CAN BE DECEIVED BY THE WORLD

- o Believing that acquiring money and things will bring lasting happiness (see Matthew 13:22; I Timothy 5:10)
- o Believing that consuming food and alcohol excessively will make you happy (see Proverbs 20:1; 23:19-21).
- o Believing that a great body and personality will get you what you want (see Proverbs 31:10; I Peter 3:3, 4)
- o Believing that gratifying sexual lust will bring lasting satisfaction (see Ephesians 4:22-24; I Peter 2:11).
- o Believing that you can sin and get away with it and not have it affect your heart (see Hebrews 3:12, 13).
- o Believing that you need more than what God has given you in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 13-15).
- o Believing that you can do whatever you want and no one can touch you (see Proverbs 16:18, Obadiah 3; 1 Peter 5:5).
- o Believing that people can live a life of sin and still go to heaven (see I Corinthians 6:9-11).
- o Believing that you can hang around bad company and not become corrupted (see I Corinthians 15:33, 34).
- o Believing that there are no consequences on earth for your sin (see Galatians 6:7, 8).
- o Believing that you must gain the approval of certain people in order to be happy (see Galatians 1:10).
- o Believing that you must measure up to certain standards in order to feel good about yourself (see Galatians 3:2, 3; 3:1).

**Lord, I confess that I have been deceived by \_\_\_\_\_ . I thank You for Your forgiveness and I commit myself to believing only Your truth. In Jesus' name, amen.**

### WAYS YOU CAN DECEIVE YOURSELF

- o Hearing God's Word but not doing what it says (see James 1:22).
- o Saying you have no sin (see I John 1:8).
- o Thinking you are something you're really not (see Galatians 6:3).
- o Thinking you are wise in this world age (see I Corinthians 3:18, 19).
- o Thinking you can be truly religious but not bridle your tongue (see James 1:26).



## **WAYS YOU CAN DECEIVE YOURSELF**

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- o Thinking you are wise in this world age (see I Corinthians 3:18, 19).
- o Thinking you can be truly religious but not bridle your tongue (see James 1:26).

**Lord, I confess that I have deceived myself by \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank You for Your forgiveness. I commit myself to believing only Your truth. In Jesus' name, amen.**

## **WAYS YOU CAN WRONGLY DEFEND YOURSELF**

- o Denial of reality (conscious or unconscious)
- o Fantasy (escaping reality through daydreaming, TV, movies, music, computer or video games, etc.)
- o Emotional insulation (withdrawing from people or keeping people at a distance to avoid rejection)
- o Regression (reverting back to a less threatening time)
- o Displaced anger (taking out your frustrations on innocent people)
- o Projection (blaming others for your problems)
- o Rationalization (making excuses for your own poor behavior)

**Lord, I confess that I have defended myself wrongly by \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank You for Your forgiveness. I now commit myself to trusting in You to defend and protect me. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Sometimes we are greatly hindered from walking by faith in our Father God because of lies we have believed about Him. We are to have a healthy fear of God – awe of His holiness, power and presence – but we are not to be afraid of Him. Romans 8:15 says, "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" The following exercise will help break the chains of those lies and enable you to begin to experience that intimate Abba Father relationship with Him.

Work your way down the following lists, one by one, left to right. Begin each one with the statement in bold print at the top of that list. Read through the list *aloud*.



<b><u>I renounce the lie that my Father God is....</u></b>	<b><u>I joyfully accept the truth that my Father God is...</u></b>
Distant and disinterested.	Intimate and involved (see Psalm 139:18).
Insensitive and uncaring.	Kind and compassionate (see Psalm 103:8-14)
Stern and demanding.	Accepting and filled with joy and love (see Romans 15:7; Zephaniah 3:17).
Passive and cold.	Warm and affectionate (see Isaiah 40:11; Hosea 11:3, 4).
Absent or too busy for me.	Always with me and eager to be with me (see Hebrews 13:5; Jeremiah 31:20; Ezekiel 34:11-16).
Never satisfied with what I do, impatient or angry.	Patient and slow to anger (see Exodus 34:6; 2 Peter 3:9).
Mean, cruel or abusive.	Loving, gentle and protective of me (see Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 42:3; Psalm 18:2).
Trying to take all the fun out of life.	Trustworthy and wants to give me a full life; His will is good, perfect and acceptable for me (see Lamentations 3:22, 23; John 10:10; Romans 12:1, 2).
Controlling or manipulative.	Full of grace and mercy and He gives me freedom to fail (see Hebrews 4:15, 16; Luke 15:11-16).
Condemning or unforgiving.	Tenderhearted and forgiving; His heart and arms are always open to me (see Psalm 130:1-4; Luke 15:17-24).
Nitpicking, exacting or perfectionistic.	Committed to my growth and proud of me as His growing child (see Romans 8:28, 29; Hebrews 12:5-11; 2 Corinthians 7:4).

Fear weakens us, causes us to be self-centered, and clouds our minds so that all we can think about is the thing that frightens us. But fear can only control us if we let it. Pray the following prayer from your heart:

**Dear Heavenly Father, I confess to You that I have listened to the devil's roar and have allowed fear to master me. I have not always walked by faith in You but instead have focused on my feelings and circumstances (see 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:7). Thank You for forgiving me for my unbelief! Right now I renounce the spirit of fear and affirm the truth that You have not given me a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind (see 2 Timothy 1:7). Lord, please reveal to my mind now all the fears that have been controlling me so I can renounce them and be free to walk by faith in You.**

**I thank You for the freedom You give me to walk by faith and not by fear. In Jesus' powerful name, I pray. Amen.**

The following list may help you recognize some of the fears the devil has used to keep you from walking by faith.

- o Fear of death
- o Fear of Satan
- o Fear of failure
- o Fear of rejection by people
- o Fear of disapproval
- o Fear of becoming/being homosexual
- o Fear of financial problems
- o Fear of never getting married
- o Fear of the death of a loved one
- o Fear of being a hopeless case
- o Fear of losing my salvation
- o Fear of having committed the unpardonable sin
- o Fear of not being loved by God
- o Fear of never loving or being loved by others
- o Fear of embarrassment
- o Fear of being victimized by crime
- o Fear of marriage
- o Fear of divorce
- o Fear of going crazy
- o Fear of pain/illness
- o Fear of the future
- o Fear of confrontation
- o Fear of special individuals. List them:
- o Other specific fears that come to mind now:

**I renounce the \_\_\_\_\_(name of fear)\_\_\_\_\_ because God has not given me a spirit of fear (see 2 Timothy 1:7). I choose to live by faith in the God who has promised to protect me and meet all my needs as I walk by faith in Him (see Psalm 27:1; Matthew 6:33, 34).**

After you have finished renouncing all the specific fears you have allowed to control you, pray the following prayer:

**Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You that You are trustworthy. I choose to believe You, even when my feelings and circumstances tell me to be fearful. You have told me not to fear, for You are with me; to not anxiously look about me, for You are my God. You will strengthen me, help me and surely uphold me with Your righteous right hand (see Isaiah 41:10). I pray with faith in the name of Jesus my Master. Amen.**



For generations, Christians have known the importance of publicly declaring what they believe. Read aloud the following Statements of Truth, thinking about what you are saying. You may find it very helpful to read it daily for several weeks to renew your mind with the truth, and replace any lies you might be believing.

## STATEMENTS OF TRUTH

- I recognize that there is only one true and living God (see Exodus 20:2, 3) who exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is worthy of all honor, praise and glory as the One who made all things and holds all things together (see Colossians 1:16, 17).
- I recognize that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:1, 14). I believe that He came to destroy the works of the devil (see I John 3:8), and that He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them (see Colossians 2:15).
- I believe that God has proven His own love for me because when I was still a sinner, Christ died for me (see Romans 5:8). I believe that He has delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me to His kingdom, and in Him I have redemption – the forgiveness of sins (see Colossians 1:13, 14).
- I believe that I am now a child of God (see I John 3:1-3) and that I am seated with Christ in the heavenlies (see Ephesians 2:6). I believe that I was saved by the grace of God through faith, and that it was a gift and not a result of any works on my part (see Ephesians 2:8, 9).
- I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (see Ephesians 6:10). I put no confidence in the flesh (see Philippians 3:3), for the weapons of warfare are not of the flesh but are divinely powerful to the destruction of strongholds (see 2 Corinthians 10:4). I put on the full armor of God (see Ephesians 6:10-20). I resolve to stand firm in my faith and resist the evil one.
- I believe that apart from Christ I can do nothing (see John 15:5), so I declare my complete dependence on Him. I choose to abide in Christ in order to bear much fruit and glorify my Father (see John 15:8). I announce to Satan that Jesus is my Lord (see I Corinthians 12:3), and I reject any and all counterfeit gifts or works of Satan in my life.
- I believe that the truth will set me free (see John 8:32) and that Jesus is the truth (see John 14:6). If He sets me free, I will be free indeed (see John 8:36). I recognize that walking in the light is the only path of true fellowship with God and man (see I John 1:3-7). Therefore, I stand against all of Satan's deceptions by taking every thought captive in obedience to Christ (see 2 Corinthians 10:5). I declare that the Bible is the only authoritative standard for truth and life (see 2 Timothy 3:15-17).

## Statements Of Truth Continued...

I choose to present my body to God as a living and holy sacrifice (see Romans 12:1) and the members of my body as instruments of righteousness to God (see Romans 6:13). I choose to renew my mind by the living Word of God in order that I may prove that the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect (see Romans 12:2). I put off the old self with its evil practices and put on the new self (see Colossians 3:9, 10). I declare myself to be a new creation in Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

By faith, I choose to be filled with the Spirit (see Ephesians 5:18) so that I can be guided into all truth (see John 16:13). I choose to walk by the Spirit so that I will not carry out the desires of the flesh (see Galatians 5:16).

I renounce all selfish goals and choose the ultimate goal of love (see 1 Timothy 1:5). I choose to obey the two greatest commandments to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love my neighbor as myself (see Matthew 22:37-39).

I believe that the Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (see Matthew 28:18) and that He is the head over all rule and authority. I am complete in Him (see Colossians 2:10). I believe that Satan and his demons are subject to me in Christ since I am a member of Christ's Body (see Ephesians 1:19-23). Therefore, I obey the command to submit to God and resist the devil (see James 4:7), and I command Satan in the name of Jesus Christ to leave my presence.



## Step 3 BITTERNESS V. FORGIVENESS

We need to forgive others so Satan cannot take advantage of us (see 2 Corinthians 2:10, 11). We are commanded to get rid of all bitterness in our lives and forgive others as we have been forgiven (see Ephesians 4:31, 32). Ask God to bring to your mind the people you need to forgive by praying the following prayer aloud:

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**I thank You for the riches of Your kindness, forbearance and patience toward me, knowing that Your kindness has led me to repentance (see Romans 2:4). I confess that I have not shown that same kindness and patience toward those who have hurt me. Instead, I have held on to my anger, bitterness and resentment toward them. Please bring to my mind all the people I need to forgive in order that I may do so now. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

On a separate sheet of paper, list the names of people who come to your mind.

Often we hold things against ourselves as well, punishing ourselves for wrong choices we've made in the past. Write "myself" at the bottom of your list so you can forgive yourself. Forgiving yourself is accepting the truth that God has already forgiven you in Christ. If God forgives you, you can forgive yourself!

Also write "thoughts against God" at the bottom of your list. Obviously God has never done anything wrong so we don't have to forgive Him. Sometimes, however, we harbor angry thoughts against Him because He did not do what we wanted Him to do. Those feelings of anger or resentment against God can become a wall between us and Him so we must let them go.

Before you begin working through the process of forgiving those on your list, take a few minutes to review what forgiveness is and what it is not.

**Forgiveness is not forgetting.**

**Forgiveness is a choice, a decision of your will.**

**Forgiveness is letting the other person off your hook, but they are not off God's hook.**

**Forgiveness is mainly a matter of obedience to God.**

**Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin.**

**Forgiveness is choosing not to hold someone's sin against him or her anymore.**

Now, you are ready to begin. Starting with the first person on your list, make the choice to forgive him or her for every painful memory that comes to your mind. Focus on that individual until you are sure you have dealt with all the remembered pain. Then work your way down the list in the same way.

For every painful memory you have for each person on your list, pray aloud:

**“Lord, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_ (name the person) \_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (say what they did to hurt you) \_ even though it made me feel \_\_\_\_ (share the painful feelings) \_\_\_\_\_.**

After you have forgiven each person for all the offenses that come to your mind and after you have honestly expressed how you felt, conclude your forgiveness of that person by praying aloud:

**Lord, I choose not to hold any of these things against \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ any longer. I thank You for setting me free from the bondage of my bitterness toward \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_. I now ask You to bless \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.**

## Step 4 REBELLION V. SUBMISSION

We live in a rebellious age. Many people only obey laws and authorities when it is convenient for them. There is a general lack of respect for those in government, and Christians are often as guilty as the rest of society in fostering a critical, rebellious spirit. Certainly we are not expected to agree with our leaders' policies that are a violation of Scripture, but we are to “honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king” (1 Peter 2:17, NASB).

The Bible makes it clear that we have two main responsibilities toward those in authority over us: to pray for them (see 1 Timothy 2:1, 2) and to submit to them (see Romans 13:1-7). To commit yourself to that godly lifestyle, pray the following prayer aloud from your heart:

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**You have said in the Bible that rebellion is the same thing as witchcraft and as bad as idolatry (see 1 Samuel 14:23). I know I have not obeyed You in this area and have rebelled in my heart against You and against those You have placed in authority over me. Thank You for Your forgiveness of my rebellion. By the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that all ground gained by evil spirits in my life due to my rebellion would be canceled. I pray that You would show me all the ways I have been rebellious. I choose now to adopt a submissive spirit and a servant's heart. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.**

Being under authority is clearly an act of faith! By submitting, you are trusting God to work through His established lines of authority, even when they are harsh or unkind or when they tell you to do something you don't want to do.



If authorities abuse their position by requiring you to break God's law or compromise your commitment to Him, then you need to obey God rather than man (see Acts 4:19, 20). Be careful though. Don't assume that an authority is violating God's Word just because they are telling you to do something you don't like!

As you prayerfully look over the following list, allow the Lord to show you any *specific* ways in which you have been rebellious to authority. Then, using the prayer of confession that follows the list, specifically confess whatever the Lord brings to your mind.

- o Civil government, including traffic laws, tax laws; attitude toward government officials (see Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-4; I Peter 2:13-17).
- o Parents, stepparents or legal guardians (see Ephesians 6:1-3).
- o Teachers, coaches, school officials (see Romans 13:1-4).
- o Employer – past or presents (see I Peter 2:18-23).
- o Husband (see I Peter 3:1-5) or wife (see Ephesians 5:21; I Peter 3:7). *Note to husbands:* take a moment and ask the Lord if your lack of love for your wife could be fostering a rebellious spirit within her. If so, confess that now as a violation of Ephesians 5:22.
- o Church leaders (see Hebrews 13:17).
- o God (see Daniel 9:5, 9).

For each way in which the Spirit of God brings to your mind that you have been rebellious, use the following prayer to specifically confess that sin:

**Lord,**

**I confess that I have been rebellious toward \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (say what you did specifically) \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for forgiving my rebellion. I choose now to be submissive and obedient to Your Word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.**



## Step 5 Pride v. Humility

Pride kills. Pride says, "I don't need God or anyone else's help. I can handle it by myself." Oh no you can't! We absolutely need God and we desperately need each other. The apostle Paul wisely wrote, "For it is we... who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put *no confidence in the flesh*" (Philippians 3:3, emphasis mine).

That is a good definition of humility: putting no confidence in the flesh, that is, in ourselves; but, rather, being "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10). Humility, therefore, is confidence properly placed in God.

Use the following prayer to express your commitment to living humbly before God:

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**You have said that pride goes before destruction and an arrogant spirit before a fall (see Proverbs 16:18). I confess that I have been thinking mainly of myself and not of others. I have not denied myself, picked up my cross daily and followed You (See Matthew 16:24). As a result, I have given ground to the devil in my life. I have sinned by believing I could be happy and successful on my own. I confess that I have placed my will before Yours and have centered my life around myself instead of You.**

**I repent of my pride and selfishness and pray that all ground gained in my members by the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ would be canceled. I choose to rely on the Holy Spirit's power and guidance as I will do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind I will regard others as more important than myself (see Philippians 2:5). And I choose to make You, Lord, the most important of all in my life (see Matthew 6:33).**

**Please show me now all the specific ways in which I have lived my life in pride. Enable me through love to serve others and in honor to prefer others (see Romans 12:10). I ask all of this in the gentle and humble name of Jesus, my Lord. Amen.**

As the Lord brings to your mind areas of pride, use the prayer following the list to guide in your confession.

- o Having a stronger desire to do my will than God's will
- o Leaning too much on my own understanding and experience rather than seeking God's guidance through prayer and His Word
- o Relying on my own strengths and abilities rather than depending on the power of the Holy Spirit
- o Being more concerned about controlling others than in developing self-control
- o Often being too busy doing "important" things to take time to do little things for others
- o Having a tendency to think that I have no needs



- o Finding it hard to admit when I am wrong
  - o Being more concerned about pleasing people than pleasing God
  - o Being concerned about getting the credit I feel I deserve
  - o Thinking I am more humble, spiritual, religious, or devoted than others
  - o Being driven to obtain recognition by attaining degrees, titles or positions
  - o Often feeling that my needs are more important than another's needs
  - o Considering myself better than others because of my academic, artistic, or athletic abilities or accomplishments
  - o Other ways I have thought more highly of myself than I should: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Lord, I agree I have been proud in \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank You for forgiving me for my pride. I choose to humble myself before You and others. I choose to place all my confidence in You and none in my flesh. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Pride is the original sin of Lucifer. It sets one person or group against another and divides. Satan's strategy is always to divide and conquer, but God has given us a ministry of reconciliation (see 2 Corinthians 5:19).

Many times we deny that there is prejudice or bigotry in our hearts, yet "nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Hebrews 4:13). The following is a prayer, asking God to shine His light upon your heart and reveal any areas of prideful prejudice.

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**I know that You love all people equally and that You do not show favoritism but You accept men from every nation who fear You and do what is right (see Acts 10:34, 35). You do not judge people based on skin color, race, ethnic background, gender, denominational preference or any other worldly matter (see 2 Corinthians 5:16). I confess that I have too often prejudged others or regarded myself as superior because of these things. I have not always been a minister of reconciliation but have been a proud agent of division through my attitudes, words and deeds. I repent of all hateful bigotry and prideful prejudice and I ask You, Lord, to now reveal to my mind all the specific ways in which this form of pride has corrupted my heart and mind. In Jesus' name, amen.**

For each area of racial or ethnic prejudice, gender superiority or denominational bigotry that the Lord brings to mind, pray the following prayer aloud from your heart:

**I confess and renounce the prideful sin of prejudice against \_\_\_(name of group)\_\_\_\_. I thank You for Your forgiveness, Lord, and ask now that You would change my heart and make me a loving agent of reconciliation with \_\_\_\_\_(name of group)\_\_\_\_\_. In Jesus' name, amen.**

## Step 6 BONDAGE V. FREEDOM

Many times we feel trapped in a vicious cycle of sin-confess-sin-confess that never seems to end. To find freedom we must follow James 4:7, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." We submit to God by confession of sin and repentance (turning away from the sin). We resist the devil by rejecting his lies and walking in the truth.

Sin that has become a habit often requires help from a trusted brother or sister in Christ. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Sometimes the assurance of I John 1:9 is enough: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Remember, confession is not saying "I'm sorry," it is openly admitting, "I did it. Pray the following prayer aloud:

**Dear Heavenly Father,  
You have told me to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and not to think about how to gratify my sinful desires (see Romans 13:14). I confess that I have given in to sinful desires which wage war against my soul (see I Peter 2:11). I thank You that in Christ my sins are already forgiven, but I have broken Your holy law and given the devil a chance to wage war in my body (see Romans 6:12, 13; James 4:1; I Peter 5:8). I come to You now to confess and renounce these sins of the flesh (see Proverbs 28:13; 2 Corinthians 4:2) so that I might be cleansed and set free from the bondage of sin. Please reveal to my mind now all the sins of the flesh I have committed and the ways I have grieved the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' holy name, I pray. Amen.**

There are many sins that can control us. The following list contains many of them, but a prayerful examination of Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:25-31; and Mark 7:20-23 will help you to be even more thorough. After reading these three passages, look over the following list and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind the ones you need to confess. He may reveal to you others as well.

*Note: Sexual sins, divorce, eating disorders, substance abuse, abortions, suicidal tendencies and perfectionism will be dealt with later in this Step.*

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing              | <input type="checkbox"/> Quarreling/fighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy/envy    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complaining/criticism | <input type="checkbox"/> Lustful actions     | <input type="checkbox"/> Gossip/slander   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swearing              | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy/laziness     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lying            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hatred                | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger               | <input type="checkbox"/> Lustful thoughts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drunkenness           | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheating            | <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greed/materialism     | <input type="checkbox"/> Others -----        |   |



**Lord,**

**I confess that I have committed the sin of \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for Your forgiveness and cleansing. I now turn away from this sin and turn to You, Lord. Strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit to obey You. In Jesus' name, amen.**

It is our responsibility not to allow sin to have control over our bodies. We must not use our bodies or another persons' body as an instrument of unrighteousness (see Romans 6:12, 13). Sexual immorality is sin against your body, the temple of the Holy Spirit (See I Corinthians 6:18, 9). To find freedom from sexual bondage, begin by praying the following prayer:

**Lord, I ask You to bring to my mind every sexual use of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness, so I can renounce these sins right now. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.**

As the Lord brings to your mind every wrong sexual use of your body, whether it was done to you – rape, incest, sexual molestation – or willingly by you (including pornography, masturbation, sexual immorality), *renounce every occasion:*

**Lord, I renounce \_\_\_\_\_ (name the specific use of your body)\_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ (name any other person involved)\_\_\_\_\_ and I ask You to break that sinful bond with \_\_\_\_\_ (name)\_\_\_\_\_.**

After you are finished, commit your body to the Lord by praying:

**Lord,**

**I renounce all these uses of my body as an instrument of unrighteousness and I admit to my willful participation. I choose now to present my eyes, mouth, mind, heart, hands, feet and sexual organs to You as instruments of righteousness. I present my whole body to You as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, and I choose to reserve the sexual use of my body for marriage only (see Hebrews 13:4).**

**I reject the devil's lie that my body is not clean or that it is dirty or in any way unacceptable to You as a result of my past sexual experiences. Lord, thank You that You have totally cleansed and forgiven me and that You love and accept me just the way I am. Therefore, I choose now to accept myself and my body as clean in Your eyes. Amen.**

**\*For special prayers for special needs, see Appendix A**

## Step 7 CURSES V. BLESSINGS

The next Step to Freedom is to renounce the sins of your ancestors, as well as any curses that they may have been placed on you by deceived and evil people or groups.

In giving the Ten Commandments, God said, "...for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:4-6).

Demonic or familiar spirits can be passed on from one generation to the next if you don't renounce the sin of your ancestors and claim your new spiritual heritage in Christ. You are not guilty for the sin of any ancestor, but because of their sin, Satan may have gained access to your family.

Ask the Lord to show you specifically what sins are characteristic of your family by praying the following prayer.

**Dear Heavenly Father, I ask You to reveal to my mind now all the sins of my fathers that are being passed down through family lines. I want to be free from those influences and walk in my new identity as a child of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

As the Lord brings those areas of family sin to your mind, list them. You will be specifically renouncing them later in this Step.

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

In order to walk free from the sins of your ancestors and any curses and assignments targeted against you, read the following declaration and pray the following prayer aloud. Remember, you have all authority and protection you need in Christ to take your stand against such activity.

### DECLARATION

**I here and now reject and disown all of the sins of my ancestors. I specifically renounce the sins of \_\_\_\_ (list here the areas of family sin the Lord revealed to you) \_\_\_\_. As one who has now been delivered from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed down to me from my family. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce all satanic assignments that are directed toward me and my ministry. I cancel out every curse that Satan and his workers have put on me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me when He died for my sins on the cross (See Galatians 3:13). I reject any and every way to which Satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all blood sacrifices whereby Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be fully and eternally signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority I have in Christ, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus that is influencing me to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father to do His will from this day forward.**



## PRAYER

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**I come to You as Your child, bought out of slavery to sin by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are the Lord of the universe and the Lord of my life. I submit my body to You as an instrument of righteousness, a living and holy sacrifice that I may glorify You in my body. I now ask You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I commit myself to the renewing of my mind in order to prove that Your will is good, acceptable and perfect for me. All this I pray in the name and authority of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Even after finding freedom in Christ by going through these seven steps, you may still be attacked by demonic influences trying to regain control of your mind hours, days or even weeks later. But you don't have to let them. As you continue to walk in humble submission to God, you can resist the devil and he will flee from you (see James 4:7).

The Devil is attracted to sin like flies are attracted to garbage. Get rid of the garbage and the flies will depart for smellier places. In the same way, walk in the truth, confessing all sin and forgiving those who hurt you, and the devil will have no place in your life to set up shop.

Realize that one victory does not mean the battles are over. Freedom must be maintained. After completing these Steps to Freedom, one happy lady said, "Will I always be like this?" I told her she would stay free as long as she remained in right relationship with God. "Even if you slip and fall," I encouraged, "you know how to get right with God again."

## Appendix A SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

### **Divorce**

Lord, I confess to You any part that I played in my divorce (ask the Lord to show you specifics). Thank You for Your forgiveness, and I choose to forgive myself as well. I renounce the lie that my destiny is now in being divorced. I am a child of God, and I reject the lie that says I am a second-class Christian because of the divorce. I reject the lie that says I am worthless, unlovable, and that my life is empty and meaningless. I am complete in Christ, who loves me, just as I am. Lord, I commit the healing of all hurts in my life to You as I have chosen to forgive those who have hurt me. I also place my future into Your hands and trust You to provide the human companionship You created me to need through Your Church and, if it be Your will, through another spouse. I pray all this in the healing name of Jesus, my Savior and Lord and closest friend. Amen.

### **Homosexuality**

Lord, I renounce the lie that You have created me or anyone else to be homosexual and I agree that in Your Word You clearly forbid homosexual behavior. I choose to accept myself as a child of God and I thank You that You created me as a man (woman). I renounce all homosexual thoughts, urges, drives and acts, and cancel out all ways that Satan has used these things to pervert my relationships. I announce that I am free in Christ to relate to the opposite sex and my own sex in the way that You intended. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Abortion**

Lord, I confess that I was not a proper guardian and keeper of the life You entrusted to me and I admit that as sin. Thank You that because of Your forgiveness I can forgive myself. I recognize the child is in Your caring hands for all eternity. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Suicidal Tendencies**

Lord, I renounce all suicidal thoughts and any attempts I've made to take my own life or in any way injure myself. I renounce the lie that life is hopeless and that I can find peace and freedom by taking my own life. Satan is a thief and comes to steal, kill and destroy. I choose life in Christ, who said He came to give me life and give it abundantly (see John 10:10). Thank You for Your forgiveness which allows me to forgive myself. I choose to believe that there is always hope in Christ. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

### **Driveness and Perfectionism**

Lord, I renounce the lie that my self-worth is dependent upon my ability to perform. I announce the truth that my identity and sense of worth is found in who I am as Your child. I renounce seeking the approval and acceptance of other people, and I choose to believe that I am already approved and accepted in Christ because of His death and resurrection for me. I choose to believe the truth that I have been saved, not by deeds done in righteousness, but according to Your mercy. I choose to believe that I am no longer under the curse of the law because Christ became a curse for me. I receive the free gift of life in Christ and choose to abide in Him. I renounce striving for perfection by living under the law. By Your grace, Heavenly Father, I choose from this day forward to walk by faith in the power of Your Holy Spirit according to what You have said is true. In Jesus' name, Amen.



## **Eating Disorders or Self-Mutilation**

Lord, I renounce the lie that my value as a person is dependent upon my appearance or performance. I renounce cutting or abusing myself, vomiting, using laxatives or starving myself as a means of being in control, altering my appearance or cleansing myself of evil. I announce that only the blood of the Lord Jesus cleanses me from sin. I realize I have been bought with a price and my body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, belongs to God. Therefore, I choose to glorify God in my body. I renounce the lie that I am evil or that any part of my body is evil. Thank You that You accept me just the way I am in Christ, in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## **Substance Abuse**

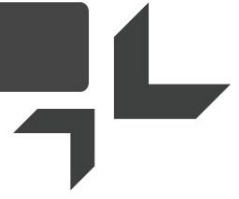
Lord, I confess that I have misused substances –alcohol, tobacco, food, prescription or street drugs— for the purpose of pleasure, to escape reality or to cope with difficult problems. I confess that I have abused my body and programmed my mind in a harmful way. I have quenched the Holy Spirit as well. Thank You for forgiving me. I renounce any satanic connection or influence in my life through any misuse of food or chemicals. I cast my anxieties onto Christ who loves me. I commit myself to yield no longer to substance abuse, but instead I choose to allow the Holy Spirit to direct and empower me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

After you have confessed all known sin, pray:

**Lord, I now confess these sins to You and claim through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ my forgiveness and cleansing. I cancel out all ground that evil spirits have gained through my willful involvement in sin. I pray this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**







## Chapter 6: Coaching Discipleship

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### Introduction to Coaching

Jesus told His disciples before He ascended to heaven that He would “be with us *always*”. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to continue to teach and remind them of everything He said. We coach disciples when we partner with the Holy Spirit to help provide ongoing encouragement to mature believers. This is not the transference of values to them, but rather the translation of values. Disciples reach maturity as they begin making disciples themselves and walking in their unique gifts and calling. Yet even mature believers need someone in their lives encouraging them in their walks with God. We encourage everyone to be both a lifelong disciple and a disciple maker. This phase of discipleship includes ongoing accountability, mentoring in a new life stage, or training in a specific vocational calling or spiritual gift.

A parenting example highlights the transition into the coaching stage that we often miss. When children are younger there is a high need for training. Parents teach obedience and discipline disobedience. Skills are introduced and values are laid. As children grow they will naturally become more independent. Wise parents, who have done their job in the early years, will begin to extend more freedom in the teenage years. Between the ages of 18 and 22, the nature of the parenting relationship must be redefined. The parent should still be honored, but the child is now an adult, free to make his own choice. The parents are no longer primarily trainers; they have now become advisors. Often self-aware parents and their grown children will sit down and redefine their relationship at this transitional time. I hope you see the parallel here between parenting and discipleship. It is so critical to have clear communication on the nature of your relationship. If you do this you will avoid miscommunication and unmet expectation. In return you will have clear vision on how you can help the person.

When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, Timothy was a grown man. He had been trained by Paul as his companion on various missionary journeys. He had his issues but was a faithful and whole man. And Timothy was a leader. At the time of this letter, Timothy was the overseer of a large church that was an epicenter for all of Asia. Timothy was a mature disciple, but he still needed Paul in life.

*“... I constantly remember you in my prayers. <sup>4</sup> Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup> I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline....<sup>13</sup> What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.... You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” 2 Timothy 1:1-7,13-14; 2:1-2*

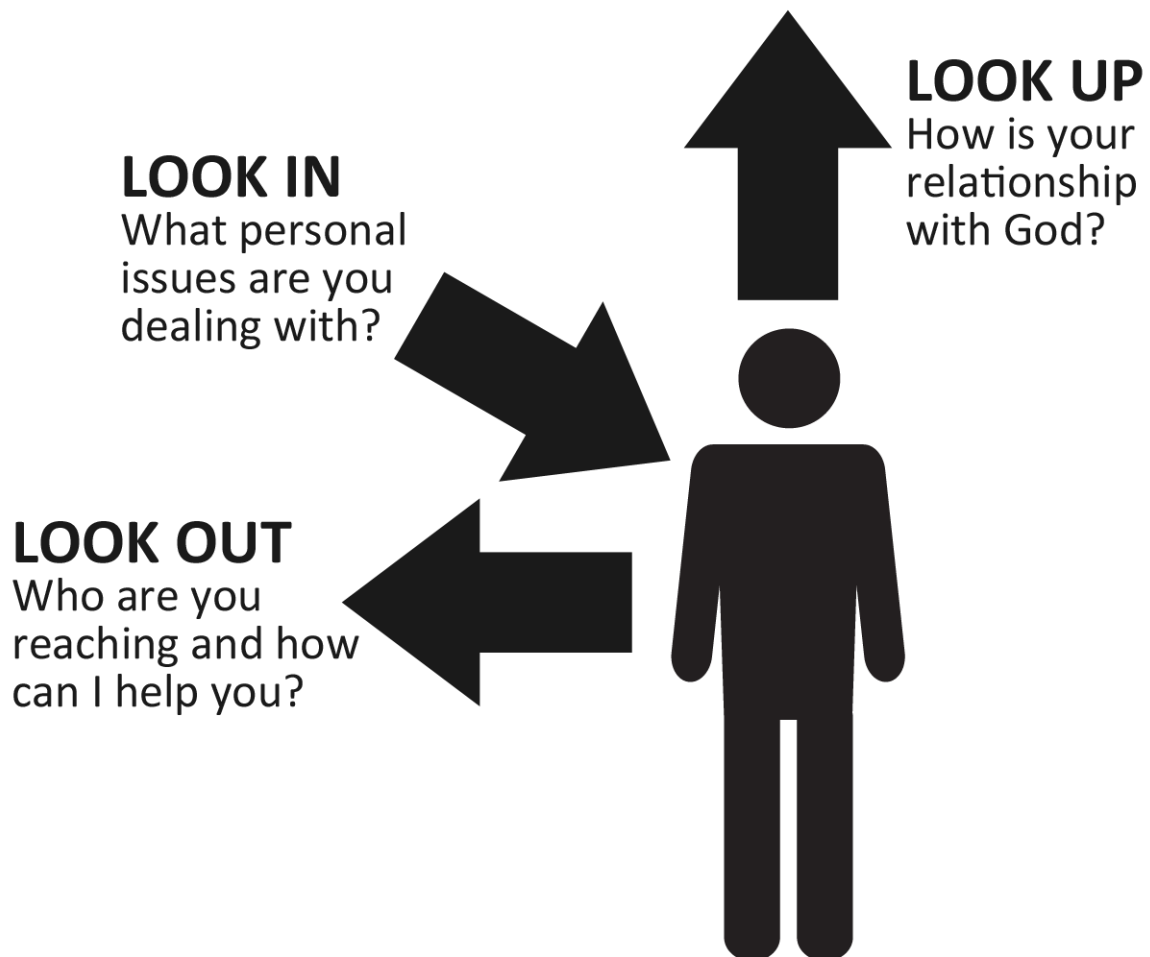
**What can we learn about coaching from what Paul said to Timothy?**

## Look up, Look in, Look out

Christians have different ideas about discipleship. Some rely exclusively on materials that focus on basic faith issues, which is a “self-taught” approach. Others ignore materials and base discipleship solely on relationship and modeling. A middle ground that draws on the strength of both methods will be the best route.

After you complete discipleship materials like the *Foundations and Core Values Discipleship Guides* or the *Seven Steps to Freedom* you still may be asking, “What do I do when I meet with someone for discipleship?” or “How I can provide ongoing accountability?” Ongoing discipleship doesn’t need to be rocket science. One simple way to approach discipleship is keeping in mind the simple principle, “Look up, Look in, Look out”.

- *Look Up* means focusing on one’s walk with God and seeking to experience God together through prayer, worship and Bible study.
- *Look In* means asking questions about one’s personal life and issues of the heart.
- *Look Out* means serving/ministering together and giving attention to the relationships in their lives.





## Probing Questions to Ask

### **Look Up - Relationship with God**

1. How is your time alone with God going? When and where do you get alone? How often? Are you connecting with God?
2. What has God been speaking to you? What are you reading in the Word?
3. What are you believing for right now in prayer? Personally? Intercession?
4. How do you feel about the direction God is leading your life? How do you feel about your mission statement? Do you feel inspired and purposeful?

### **Look In - Holiness**

1. How is your heart?
2. Are you making the most of your time? How is your time management? On what are you spending your spare time? What changes if any need to be made in your schedule/life?
3. How is your thought life? What are you spending most of your time thinking about?
4. How are you doing in the area of sexual purity? Have you looked at or meditated on any sensual image in the last week?
5. How is work going? Are you being faithful and diligent? What has God been saying about work?
6. What is God speaking to you about finances? Giving? Are you operating within a budget? What are your financial priorities right now? How are you approaching your debt?

### **Look Out - Relationships**

1. How are your relationships? (spouse, roommates, family, friends)? How is your social life? What is God saying to you about your marriage? Family?
2. Is there any hurt or bitterness in your heart from any relationship?
3. Whom are you discipling? When and how often do you meet? What do you talk about? What are you praying and believing for? Is he or she meeting with someone else?
4. What are the top three needs that, in your opinion, the person you meet with has?
5. Have you shared the gospel this week? Who are the unbelievers you are building relationships with and praying for?
6. What do you see God doing in your Lifegroup?

## Keys for a Coaching Relationship

- Define the relationship
- Start by focusing on his or her “felt” needs
- Point to what the scripture says about that issue
- Share observations from your experience
- Recommend books, messages, etc. on the topic
- Review core values and whether or not the person owns them
- Help translate what these core values look like in his or her season, vocation or calling
- Give the person hope!

## Discipleship with Peers

<sup>15</sup> While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that<sup>[a]</sup> Saul had come out to take his life.

<sup>16</sup> And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. <sup>17</sup> "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." <sup>18</sup> The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh." 1Samuel 23:15-18

**What can we learn from this story about helping our peers?**

The idea of "discipling" someone whom you consider a peer can be awkward. You can fear coming across as "more mature". It could feel disrespectful or even unnecessary. You may even think, "They should be discipling me!" The truth is, regardless of how mature or fruitful a person is we all need someone else to initiate with us to spur us on in following Jesus.

Think about this: Can you see your own face? How about your backside? No we all have blind spots. The best peripheral vision can see only 180 degrees. We all need people in our lives to act as mirrors. People who see our blind spots and have the courage to point them out.

### Keys to Peer Discipleship Relationship

**Define the relationship.** Be clear that you regard the person as a respected peer, but that you are offering to take initiative to spur him on in his walk with God.

**Be humble.** Make it known that this relationship is a two-way street. Plan to open up your own life and needs and invite input into your life.

**Plan to fill in gaps.** He or she may have someone else as an older mentor, accountability partner, etc. Ask him how you can be a help and support in this season.

**Be a great listener and encourager.** These will win you respect and a place to speak.

**Don't be afraid to offer counsel.** You can help. You can often see what is not seen. And even though the person knows the "right answer" being reminded will help.

**Press in when there is a trial.** Don't assume someone else is calling, encouraging and helping. This may be when you are most needed.

**Provide resources.** If you see that help is needed which you can't provide OR if your counsel is not being received don't be offended! Meet the person where he or she is and help make the right connection with someone who can help.



## Mission Statement Worksheet

*By following the suggested 6 steps in "Process One" below, you will be able to begin writing a personal mission statement that will inspire you and will provide direction and guidance for your life. Remember that a personal mission statement is as much discovery as it is creation. Don't rush it or set rigid timetables for yourself; rather, go slowly through the process, ask yourself the right questions, and think deeply about your values and aspirations.*

### PROCESS ONE: The Creation of a Personal Mission Statement

A meaningful personal mission statement contains two basic elements. The first is what you want to do – what you want to accomplish, what contributions you want to make. The second is what you want to be – what character strengths you want to have, what qualities you want to develop.

**Step One – Define what you want to be and do** (using the "I Care About" and the "I Like To" sections on the last page of this document can be helpful).

*Some of the elements I would like to have in my mission statement are:*

**What I'd like to do:**

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**What I'd like to be:**

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**What I value:**

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### Step Two – Identify an influential person

An effective tool is to focus on what you want to be and to identify a highly influential individual in your life and to think about how this individual has contributed to your life. This person may be a parent, work associate, friend, family member, or neighbor. Answer the following questions, keeping in mind your personal goals on what you want to be and do.

***Who has been one of the most influential people in my life?***

***Which qualities do I most admire in that person?***

***What qualities have I gained (or desire to gain) from that person?***

## Step Three – Define your Life Roles

You live your life in terms of roles – not in the sense of role-playing, but in the sense of authentic parts you have chosen to fill. You may have roles in work, in the family, in the community, and in other areas of your life. These roles become a natural framework to give order to what you want to do and to be.

You may define your family role as simply “family member.” Or you may choose to divide your family role into smaller pieces, such as “wife’ and “mother” or “husband’ and “father”. Some areas of your life, such as your profession, may also involve several roles. For example, you may have one role in administration, one in marketing, one in personnel and one in long-range planning.

*Examples:*

Wife/mother, manager-new products, manager-research, manager-staff development, United Way chairperson, friend

Husband/father, salesman-prospects, salesman-financing/administration, March of Dimes regional director, friend

Define up to seven life roles and then write these roles in the places provided. Next, project yourself forward in time and write a brief statement of how you would most like to be described in that particular role.

By identifying your life roles you will gain perspective and balance. By writing these descriptive statements you will begin to visualize where you are headed. You will also identify the core values you desire to live by.

***Roles***

***Statement***

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## Step Four – Write a draft of your personal Mission Statement

Now that you have identified your life roles, and have defined what you want to be and do, you are prepared to begin working on your personal mission statement.

In the space provided below, create a rough draft of your mission statement. Draw heavily upon the thinking you have done in the previous three steps. Carry this draft with you and make notes, additions, and deletions before you attempt another draft.

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## Step Five – Evaluate

It is important that you do not let your mission statement become outdated. Periodic review and evaluation can help you keep in touch with your own development and keep your statement in harmony with your deepest self. Continually ask yourself these questions:

\*Is my mission based on timeless, proven principles? Which ones?

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\*Do I feel this represents the best that is within me?

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\*During my best moments, do I feel good about what this represents?

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\*Do I feel direction, purpose, challenge, and motivation when I review this statement?

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\*Am I aware of the strategies and skills that will help me accomplish what I have written?

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\*What do I need to start doing now to be where I want to be tomorrow?

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The final test of the value and effectiveness of a mission statement is: *Does this statement inspire me?*

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## Step Six -- Write a Permanent Draft

We recommend that you keep a rough draft of your mission statement for a while to revise and evaluate. Be sure that it inspires the best within you.

When you do have a permanent copy, review it frequently. We strongly recommend that you commit it to memory so that you keep your vision and your values clearly in mind.



## PROCESS TWO

### The Implementation of your Personal Mission Statement

Now that you have a rough draft of your personal mission statement, this second process will enable you to implement it into your life on an on-going basis so that your vision and values become part of your habits.

#### Step One – Sharpen activities

Define and schedule personal time for your physical, mental, spiritual, and social/emotional activities which will keep your life in balance.

#### Step Two – Transfer your roles

Having defined your life roles in Step Three of the previous process, now transfer these roles to the arrowed boxes on the weekly worksheet.

#### Step Three – Define key goals

For each role listed, write one, two or three key goals you wish to work on or accomplish for that week period in the rectangular boxes.

#### Step Four – Allot time

Now, actually schedule and allot (block-out) the appropriate amount of time you anticipate these key activities to take in the commitments section.

#### Step Five – Schedule prior appointments

Finally, consult your calendar. Evaluate prior appointments and commitments in relation to your own defined key roles and goals. Seek to distinguish between “urgent” and “important.” Then schedule or reschedule your time based on these principles.

#### Step Six – “Live” the program!

Now that you have scheduled your priorities for the week, the final step is to execute the plan. As the week progresses you should spend a few minutes each day going over that part of the day's activities and make appropriate daily adjustments to the plans as needed. Having flexibility is important since your focus should be on effectiveness and results rather than efficiency or methods.

The key to implementing your mission is through weekly planning based upon your roles and upon the specific goals you have for each role. Weekly planning, as opposed to daily planning, allows you to see a broader context and empowers you to schedule your priorities rather than to merely prioritize what is on your schedule. It also enables you to lead your life instead of simply managing your time. You will find that this weekly planning process will reduce the number of crises in your life and will lead to increased productivity, effectiveness, and satisfaction.



## ***Examples of a Family Mission Statement***

*The mission of our family is to create a nurturing place of order, truth, love, happiness, and relaxation, and to provide opportunities for each person to become responsibly independent and effectively inter-dependent, in order to achieve worthwhile purposes.*

*Our Family Mission*

*To love each other...*

*To help each other...*

*To believe in each other...*

*To use wisely our time, talents and resources to bless others...*

*To worship together...*

*Forever.*

*My home will be a place where my family, friends and guests find joy, comfort, peace, and happiness. I will seek to create a clean and orderly environment that is livable and comfortable. I will exercise wisdom in what we choose to eat, read, see, and do at home. I especially want to teach my children to love, to learn, and to laugh – and to work and develop their unique talents.*

## Goals Template for \_\_\_\_\_

*Words of the Lord for 2014*

Spiritually (personal, devotional life, disciplines, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Mentally (books, mind sets, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Family (time and focus, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*Financially (Budgeting, giving, working, etc.)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Relationships (discipleship, evangelism, friendships, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Physically (exercise, eating, sleeping, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Daily Schedule



## Summer Personal / Family Growth Plan

*Ephesians 5:15-17 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Short vision statement for the summer:

What I feel like God is calling me to study in the Bible \_\_\_\_\_

What I feel like God is calling me to pray for \_\_\_\_\_

How much time a day God is calling me to spend with him? \_\_\_\_\_

What body of believers is God calling me to invest in this summer? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is God calling me to disciple this summer? \_\_\_\_\_

What lost friends or family members is God calling me to invest in and share with?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who am I called to serve? \_\_\_\_\_

What can I do practically to be a servant this summer? \_\_\_\_\_

How can I honor God with my body this summer? \_\_\_\_\_

- In eating? \_\_\_\_\_

- In exercising? \_\_\_\_\_

In sleeping? How much is too much and How much is too little? \_\_\_\_\_

What books am I going to read? \_\_\_\_\_

What are other goals God is calling me to? \_\_\_\_\_

With whom am I going to be accountable? \_\_\_\_\_ How often will I talk with him?

## ***For Families***

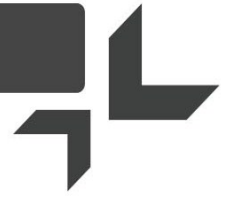
1. Mission Statement for each child.
2. Family vacation – time alone
3. What will they learn? Swimming, biking, running, reading club
4. Who will you spend time with?
5. Family devotions
6. Work vs. time off. Couples discuss
7. What time will everyone get up and when will family time happen?
8. Books to read.

Every summer across America children are out of school and families usually have a little more flex time. What you do with that time I believe will determine the destiny of your children. Kids do not naturally decide to discipline themselves or decide to do the things that are best for them, though they might as they get older, but they need shaping and help and encouragement.

I think of two famous baseball players, Ken Griffey, Jr. and Barry Bonds. Both of them had fathers who played professional baseball. Both Barry Bonds and Ken Griffey, Jr. are thought to have the best swings in baseball. The reason their swings are so great is not because they just woke up and picked up a baseball bat one day but because they were around the best. They were around their dads. Their dads were able to be very successful but their kids would be even more successful. They were taught how to do things right. If they had not had fathers like Ken Griffey and Bobby Bonds, who knows what these two boys would be doing today? They are great because their fathers intentionally invested in their lives.

So it is with all of our kids and their needs and desires. We are the shapers of their future and the summer is a great time to be shaping that. So I wanted to give a quick outline of things that would be helpful in letting your kids have a fruitful and happy summer.

1. We want to talk about your personal goals for the summer, both natural and spiritual, as an individual. Remember the old adage, "If the oxygen drops in the airplane, parents first put the mask on yourself and then on your children". There is a need for us to order our summers rightly in order to help our children order theirs. So individually what are your spiritual and natural goals for the summer.
2. What are your goals as a couple? Maybe an example would be having one personal day where it is just a prayer retreat for you and your spouse. Maybe it's a weekend away where you go to a marriage conference or take a book on marriage that you want to read and move ahead. It is a great time to do that during the summer. I want to encourage you to do that.



3. What has God called us to do as a family? When will we have family vacation? This does not have to be an expensive venture but just a venture of being together. Most kids memories are not necessarily of going to the greatest museums or amusement parks as much as it is being together as a family, swimming, talking, and hiking. Just simple things create family memories.

- a. When will we have family vacation together?
- b. Where will we have family vacation together?
- c. When will family devotions happen? What is the theme and the goal for the summer?
- d. What time will we go to bed and what time will we get up in order to get our day started right before the Lord and to do the things that are in God's heart and things that will move us ahead as a family—closer and not farther apart.
- e. With whom will we spend time? What families, what relationships has God called us to and what will that look like this summer?

4. What are my goals for each of my children, both naturally and spiritually? An example might be, kids don't just learn how to swim unless they go to swimming lessons or their parents take intentional time to teach them how to swim. Kids don't know how to ride bikes unless somebody helps them.

- a. What are the natural things they need to work on?
- b. What are maybe some things they need to work on for improvement? For instance, if they have a speech problem this is a great time to work on that or on a social characteristic that needs to change—these kinds of things.
- c. Reading—reading clubs will reward the kids for reading.
- d. What will chores and summer jobs look like?

What are the things you want to instill in your kids this summer? When and how will this happen? Each kid should have a mission, with two or three clear goals that he would like to accomplish during the summer. This is key for them.

In the end, our desire is to develop our children to be intimate followers of God, life-giving contributors to the community and society around them. But it doesn't just happen. It is instilled in them and we want to encourage you to take this process seriously as parents, as friends and especially for the children that God has given you.

## Know Your Giftings, Strengths, and Passions

Scripture states that every believer is to be “equipped...for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:12, 13)

Following is a tool that we have developed to help you assess your strengths and giftings, more fully understand the passions or dreams that God has given you, and effectively utilize them in the Body of Christ.

### DIRECTIONS

1. Respond to each statement on the *Giftings Assessment* pages which follow, according to the following scale:

**3** = Consistently, definitely true

**2** = Most of the time, usually true

**1** = Some of the time, once in a while

**0** = Not at all, never

2. Remove the response sheet (page 9) and write your answer to each statement in the corresponding block.

3. **Important: Answer according to who you are, not who you would like to be or think you ought to be.** How true are these statements of you? What has been your experience? To what degree do these statements reflect your usual tendencies?

### Part One – Giftings Assessment

1. I like to organize people, tasks, and events.
2. I would like to start churches in places where they do not presently exist.
3. I enjoy working creatively with wood, cloth, paint, metal, glass, or other materials.
4. I enjoy challenging people's perspective of God by using various forms of art.
5. I can readily distinguish between spiritual truth and error, good and evil.
6. I tend to see the potential in people.
7. I communicate the gospel to others with clarity and effectiveness.
8. I find it natural and easy to trust God to answer my prayers.
9. I give liberally and joyfully to people in financial need or to projects requiring support.
10. I enjoy working behind the scenes to support the work of others.
11. I view my home as a place to minister to people in need.
12. I take prayer requests from others and consistently pray for them.



**3** = Consistently, definitely true  
**2** = Most of the time, usually true  
**1** = Some of the time, once in a while  
**0** = Not at all, never

13. I am approached by people who want to know my perspective on a particular passage or biblical truth.
14. I am able to motivate others to accomplish a goal.
15. I empathize with hurting people and desire to help in their healing process.
16. I can speak in a way that results in conviction and change in the lives of others.
17. I enjoy spending time nurturing and caring for others.
18. I am able to communicate God's word effectively.
19. I am often sought out by others for advice about spiritual or personal matters.
20. Others can point to specific instances where my prayers have resulted in visible miracles.
21. In the name of the Lord, I have been used in curing illnesses instantaneously.
22. I have spoken in tongues.
23. Sometimes when a person speaks in tongues, I get an idea about what God is saying.
24. I am careful, thorough, and skilled at managing details.
25. I am attracted to the idea of serving in another country or ethnic community.
26. I am skilled in working with different kinds of tools.
27. I enjoy developing and using my artistic skills (art, drama, music, photography, etc.).
28. I frequently am able to judge a person's character based upon first impressions.
29. I enjoy reassuring and strengthening those who are discouraged.
30. I consistently look for opportunities to build relationships with non-Christians.
31. I have confidence in God's continuing provision and help, even in difficult times.
32. I give more than a tithe so that kingdom work can be accomplished.
33. I enjoy doing routine tasks that support the ministry.
34. I enjoy meeting new people and helping them feel welcomed.
35. I enjoy praying for long periods of time and receive leadings as to what God wants me to pray.
36. I receive information from the Spirit that I did not acquire through natural means.
37. I am able to influence others in order to achieve a vision/vision.
38. I can patiently support those going through painful experiences as they try to stabilize their lives.
39. I feel responsible to confront others with the truth.



**3** = Consistently, definitely true  
**2** = Most of the time, usually true  
**1** = Some of the time, once in a while  
**0** = Not at all, never

40. I have compassion for wandering believers and want to protect them.
41. I can spend time in study knowing that presenting truth will make a difference in the lives of people.
42. I can often find simple, practical solutions in the midst of conflict or confusion.
43. God has used me to perform supernatural signs and wonders.
44. I enjoy praying for sick people because I know that many of them will be healed as a result.
45. I have spoken an immediate message of God to His people in a language I have never learned.
46. I have interpreted tongues with the result that the Body of Christ was edified, exhorted or comforted.
47. I can clarify goals and develop strategies or plans to accomplish them.
48. I am willing to take an active part in starting a new church.
49. I enjoy making things for use in ministry.
50. I help people understand themselves, their relationships, and God better through artistic expressions.
51. I can see through insincerity or deceit before it is evident to others.
52. I give hope to others by directing them to the promises of God.
53. I am effective at adapting the gospel message so that it connects with an individual's felt need.
54. I can move forward in spite of opposition or lack of support when I sense God's blessing on an undertaking.
55. I manage my money well in order to free more of it for giving.
56. I willingly take on a variety of odd jobs around the church to meet the needs of others.
57. I genuinely believe the Lord directs strangers to me who need to get connected to others.
58. I often see specific results in direct response to my prayers.
59. I am committed, and schedule blocks of time for reading and studying scripture, to understand biblical truth fully and accurately.
60. I can adjust my leadership style to bring out the best in others.
61. I enjoy helping people sometimes regarded as undeserving or beyond help.
62. I boldly expose cultural trends, teachings, or events which contradict biblical principles.
63. I like to provide guidance for the whole person – relationally, emotionally, spiritually, etc.
64. I pay close attention to the words, phrases, and intent of those who teach.
65. I can easily select the most effective course of action from among several alternatives.

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**1** = Some of the time, once in a while  
**0** = Not at all, never

66. God regularly seems to do impossible things in my life.
67. Others have told me that God healed them of emotional problems when I ministered to them.
68. I can speak to God in a language I have never learned.
69. I have prayed that I may interpret if someone begins speaking in tongues.
70. I can identify and effectively use the resources needed to accomplish tasks.
71. I can adapt well to different cultures and surroundings.
72. I can visualize how something should be designed before I create it.
73. I like finding new and fresh ways of communicating God's truth.
74. I can sense when demonic forces are at work in a person or situation.
75. I reassure those who need to take courageous action in their faith, family, or life.
76. I invite unbelievers to accept Christ as their Savior.
77. I trust God in circumstances where success cannot be guaranteed by human effort alone.
78. I am challenged to limit my lifestyle in order to give away a higher percentage of my income.
79. I see spiritual significance in doing practical tasks.
80. I like to create a place where people do not feel that they are alone.
81. I pray with confidence because I know that God works in response to prayer.
82. I confidently share my knowledge and insights with others.
83. I set goals and manage people and resources effectively to accomplish them.
84. I have great compassion for hurting people.
85. I see most actions as right or wrong, and feel the need to correct the wrong.
86. I enjoy patiently but firmly nurturing others in their development as believers.
87. I like to take a systematic approach to my study of the Bible.
88. I can anticipate the likely consequences of an individual's or a group's action.
89. People have told me that I was God's instrument which brought supernatural change in lives or circumstances.
90. I have prayed for others and physical healing has actually occurred.
91. When I give a public message in tongues, I expect it to be interpreted.

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**0** = Not at all, never

92. I have interpreted tongues in a way that seemed to bless others.
93. I like to help organizations or groups become more efficient.
94. I am able to orchestrate or oversee several church ministries.
95. I honor God with my handcrafted gifts.
96. I apply various artistic expressions to communicate God's truth.
97. I receive affirmation from others concerning the reliability of my insights or perceptions.
98. I am able to challenge or rebuke others in order to foster spiritual growth.
99. I openly tell people that I am a Christian and want them to ask me about my faith.
100. I am convinced of God's daily presence and action in my life.
101. I like knowing that my financial support makes a real difference in the lives and ministries of God's people.
102. I like to find small things that need to be done and often do them without being asked.
103. I enjoy entertaining people and opening my home to others.
104. When I hear about needy situations, I feel burdened to pray.
105. I have suddenly known some things about others, but did not know how I knew them.
106. I influence others to perform to the best of their capability.
107. I can look beyond a person's handicaps or problems to see a life that matters to God.
108. I like people who are honest and will speak the truth.
109. I enjoy giving guidance and practical support to a small group of people.
110. I can communicate scripture in ways that motivate others to study and want to learn more.
111. I give practical advice to help others through complicated situations.
112. In the name of the Lord, I have been able to recover sight to the blind.
113. When I pray for the sick, either I or they feel sensations of tingling or warmth.
114. When I speak in tongues, I believe it is edifying to the Lord's body.
115. I have interpreted tongues in such a way that the message appeared to be directly from God.
116. I can visualize a coming event, anticipate potential problems, and develop back-up plans.
117. I enjoy pioneering new undertakings.
118. I am good at and enjoy working with my hands.

**3** = Consistently, definitely true  
**2** = Most of the time, usually true  
**1** = Some of the time, once in a while  
**0** = Not at all, never

119. I regularly need to get alone to reflect and develop my imagination.
120. I can identify preaching, teaching, or communication which is not true to the Bible.
121. I like motivating others to take steps for spiritual growth.
122. I openly and confidently tell others what Christ has done for me.
123. I am regularly challenging others to trust God.
124. I believe I have been given an abundance of resources so that I may give more to the Lord's work.
125. I feel comfortable being a helper, assisting others to do their job more effectively.
126. I can make people feel at ease even in unfamiliar surroundings.
127. I am honored when someone asks me to pray for them.
128. I discover important biblical truths when reading or studying scripture which benefit others in the body of Christ.
129. I am able to cast a vision in which others want to be a part.
130. I enjoy doing practical things for others who are in need.
131. I will speak God's truth, even in places where it is unpopular or difficult for others to accept.
132. I can gently restore wandering believers to faith and fellowship.
133. I can present information and skills to others in a way that makes it easy for them to grasp and apply to their lives.
134. I can apply scriptural truth that others regard as practical and helpful.
135. I often pray that God would do greater works through me.
136. Many times I have sensed someone needed healing even before they mentioned it.
137. Sometimes I sense greater anticipation or energy prior to delivering a message in tongues.
138. I believe that a tongue will always be interpreted.



*Write your responses in the numbered boxes, total the points for each column. Place the total in the lettered box at the bottom of each column.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46
	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92
	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115
	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138
A																							
B																							
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W																							

## List 3 highest letter totals

## & Corresponding Gift

1) \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

4) (if 3<sup>rd</sup> place tie) \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

### Giftings Key

A = Administration

B = Apostleship/  
Missionary

C = Craftsmanship

D = Creative  
Communication

E = Discernment

F = Encouragement

G = Evangelism

H = Faith

I = Giving

J = Helps/service

K = Hospitality

L = Intercession

M = Knowledge

N = Leadership

O = Mercy

P = Prophecy

Q = Shepherding

R = Teaching

S = Wisdom

T = Miracles

U = Healing

V = Tongues

W = Interpretation



## Part Two --What I am Passionate About

We all have areas, people, or ideas that we are passionate about – things that we care deeply about and where we hope to make a difference in the world. One person has defined passion as, “the God-given desire of the heart to make a difference somewhere.”

Your passion may be about people (people groups such as children, youth, senior citizens, etc.); about roles and/or functions (discipling, solving problems, being an instructor, etc.); or for a cause (fighting for the poor, financial stewardship, world hunger, etc.).

You could be called “passionate” about something if:

- \*Talking about it, or being involved in it, could keep you up late at night.
- \*The idea of it would cause you to jump out of bed in the morning.
- \*It is something that you dream or reflect about.
- \*It is the topic you would choose if someone told you that you were going to have to make a speech on a topic of your choosing.
- \*It energizes you – involvement in it makes you become more alive emotionally, and even thoughts about it will actually give you energy.
- \*You lose track of time when involved in the topic.
- \*You have an inner confidence that you are involved with what God wants you to do in the way He wants you to do it.

You can help determine if something is a Godly passion of yours if it passes the two-fold test: Does it glorify God? Does it edify others?

With these thoughts in mind, read the list below and circle the top three areas that you would say you are passionate about. Write these in the space provided on the next page of this packet.

Environment	Politics	Substance Abusers	Computer Tech.
Family Issues	Government	Nutrition	Administration
Education	Youth	Law	Management
Media	Business	Performing Arts	Construction
Health Care	Non-profit Agencies	Broadcasting	Travel



Elderly	Churches	Literacy	Finance
Children	Veterans	Sports	Counseling
The Poor	The Ill & Disabled	Civil Rights Issues	Race relations
The Homeless	Gardening	Sexuality Issues	Religions
Immigration	Infants	Graphic Design	Reproductive Issues
Cross-culturalism	Child Protection	Art	Research
Movies	Child Care	Books	Cooking
Home Health Care	Justice	Music	Women's Issues
Spiritual Growth of Others	Leadership	Teaching	International Affairs
Evangelism	Hospitality	Fitness	History
	Engineering	Parties/Games	Craft

### Part Three -- Style

The third part is simple. Please circle one answer for each of the questions below. When you have completed this, write the results in the space provided below.

a.) Do you consider yourself more:

people-oriented    or    task-oriented

b.) Do you consider yourself more:

spontaneous    or    structured

*My top three giftings are:*

*I'm passionate about:*

*My style is:*

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After you have recorded your answers in the space provided above,  
turn the page for the final step in the process!

### The texts concerning Biblical giftings.

I Corinthians 12:1-3	Romans 12:1-8	Ephesians 4:11-16	I Peter 4:7-11
Administration	Exhortation	Evangelism	Hospitality
Apostle/Missionary	Giving	Shepherding	
Discernment	Leadership		
Faith	Mercy	I Timothy 2:1-2	Psalms 150:3-5
Healing	Service	Intercession	Creative Communication
Helps/Service			
Interpretation	<b>Exodus 31:3 (NAS)</b>	<b>I Corinthians 12:1</b>	
Knowledge	Craftsmanship	Do not be ignorant	
Miracles		about spiritual gifts.	
Prophecy	<b>Galatians 5:13</b>		
Teaching	You, my brothers, were called to be free.		
Tongues	But do not use your freedom to indulge the		
Wisdom	sinful nature; rather serve one another in love.		

### Part Four -- What Now?

The challenge now is to find a meaningful place of service that allows you to flourish in your giftings, passion, and style. This may be best accomplished by dialoguing with your Lifegroup Leader to discover what area of service is a good match for you. However, here are a few suggestions to get you started.

- Remember that your giftings will be refined over time to be more effective at serving God and others. However, you must use them though before the refining can begin. So, the most important thing is to “do something” while you are still looking for the perfect fit.
- Look for someone with similar giftings/passion/style as you in order to learn from their maturity. They could be a mentor to you, whether directly or indirectly.
- Look for other resources to learn more about your giftings. For example, if your gifting is prophecy, you may want to attend prophetic workshops or read books on prophecy. First of all, however, get to know the Bible.

4. Consider these opportunities (not all giftings are listed):

*Administration*—assist LG leader with administrative details for LG and special events; volunteer at the church office; assist church staff with conferences & events

*Apostleship/Missionary*—look for ways to pioneer outreach for your LG; take Short Term mission trips; help start a new LG in an area of need; help your LG adopt a church plant for prayer and communication

*Craftsmanship*—assist LG members with household/automotive needs; volunteer to craft drama props or sets at church; serve with Habitat for Humanity

*Creative Communication* —assist with visual arts needs at church; creatively share the “vision” at LG; participate in dance or drama teams

*Discernment* – consistently ask God for discernment in LG or in other ministry times; write down what you feel God is saying and submit to leadership; practice spiritual warfare

*Encouragement* – write encouraging notes to people in your LG or church leadership; speak encouraging words/scriptures during LG ministry time; hospital visitation

*Evangelism*—show others how to lead someone to Christ; bring unbelievers to your LG; spend time with lots of unbelievers; train others in evangelism; lead an outreach with your LG

*Faith* —pray for the “impossible” things; visit and care for those that are lacking in faith; get behind the “big” needs of your LG members

*Giving*—look for ways to bless those in need; coordinate other contributors for large projects; give hilariously; budget more than just tithes to give away

*Helps/service*—clean up; stack chairs; find others to help; get busy behind the scenes; volunteer to help with events/needs at church

*Hospitality* — host LG; volunteer to host guest speakers/missionaries; prepare meals for families; host outreach parties

*Intercession* —attend intercessory prayer meetings; give more time for personal intercession; gather prayer requests from LG members

*Knowledge* — ask the Lord for ministry opportunities in LG; continue to intercede for people when God gives you knowledge about them

*Leadership* — serve in LG; become an intern and prepare to be a LG leader; take initiative to welcome guests at LG or church; rally people when LG needs arise

*Mercy* — spend time with people that are hurting and need someone to listen to them; get involved in mercy ministries to the poor and needy; look for practical ways to love on people

*Prophecy* — write down prophetic dreams and submit them to leadership when appropriate; practice sharing what you think God is saying in LG; get involved in intercession/ministry times

*Shepherding* — equip younger believers (disciple); visit those in the hospital, etc; work with Children's or Youth Lifegroups and discipleship

*Teaching* — share with LG leader about this gift and opportunities for a 5-10 minute teaching in LG on a current topic; help prepare materials for a class; assist in development of equipping materials; serve in the nursery or Harambee

## 4 things to REMEMBER about GIFTS

Each person is given at least one spiritual gift. Not all have the same gift; there are a variety of gifts. (I Cor 12:8, Rom 12:6)

All gifts are important and necessary.

Gifts are given for the common good (I Cor. 12:7) to

- a.) serve one another. (I Pet 4:10)
- b.) glorify God. (I Pet 4:11)

Gifts are given by God to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and to build up the Body of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-16)

## 6 KEY WORDS in putting your gifts to use.

### **Patience**

Ask God to release His gifts in you. (Mt. 7:33) Take time to discover your passion.

### **Love**

Exercising giftings without love does not reflect who God is and, thus, does not have a Kingdom impact.

### **Fruit of the Spirit**

The Fruit of the Spirit enhances the effectiveness when coupled with giftings.

### **Courage**

Do not fear. Your Lifegroup leader will help pastor and guide you as you practice your gifts in the Lifegroup context. Giftings will develop in a climate of risk taking. It takes practice to perfect anything.

### **Servant hood**

Serving others allows giftings to surface. (Pr. 18:16) Discuss opportunities for your giftings with your Lifegroup leader.

### **Beware**

- a.) Projection: expecting others to serve as effectively in an area as you do.
- b.) Pride: wanting special treatment for your gifts; thinking of yourself/gifts as better than others.





## Chapter 7: Lifegroups

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### What is the Church?

When Jesus ascended into heaven, it was the church He left to continue on His mission. He also said the gates of hell cannot destroy it. Later in scripture the church is described as the pillar and support of truth and it's through the church where God is making His wisdom known. So what exactly is the church?

This question should be easy to answer but it's not. The problem is that we each have past experiences and perceptions that can distort God's intention in our minds. Our tendency is to define church according to our *cultural context* and not the Bible. Let's deconstruct church for a moment.

### Deconstruction of Church Exercise:

#### **Exercise:**

***What are your earliest memories of church? What were your first impressions of what church is?***

***Which of these qualities are unbiblical?***

***Are any of the qualities mandated in scripture?***

***What are some of the biblical values underneath some of religious practices you remember?***

Take away the pews and PowerPoint's, VBS's and choir robes and you may find a bare bones description of Church. Culture is a wonderful thing. To be the church requires that you translate our faith and practice in any culture. You will need to use culturally reproducible tools to facilitate Kingdom values. The problem begins when we cling to cultural practices and forget the Biblical values that inspired them. Let's get back to see what scripture says about who the church is and what the church does.

## Church Identity Exercise:

Read the following passages and describe what it says about the identity of the Church:

**1 Peter 2:9-10** <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

**Hebrews 10:24-25** <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13** <sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free ..."

**Matthew 18:19-20** <sup>19</sup> "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

**Construct a one sentence definition of what the church is based on the scriptures above.**

The Greek word church actually means "the called out ones." The church is not a building nor program nor even a doctrinal statement. The church is people; people who have been called out by God to follow Christ. Based on the passages above, church can be defined as : **"A few baptized believers chosen and called out by God who are committed to gather together regularly to spur one another on toward love, good deeds and to declare God's praise to the world ."**



## Acts 2 Values Exercise

The best description of church life in the New Testament, however, is more of a series of snapshots than a definition. There are numerous passages that help us see what Jesus intended for His Body. The following exercises will allow us to examine Acts 2:41-47 and other New Testament passages to draw out the values God intends for his church to embody today.

### Acts 2:41-47

### Values Expressed

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v. 41—*So then, those who had received His word were baptized; and there were added that day about 3,000 souls.*

v. 42—*And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

v. 43—*And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.*

v. 44—*And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;*

v. 45—*and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.*

v. 46—*And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,*

v. 47—*praising God and having favor with all the people.*

V. 47—*And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*



## NT Church “Together” Exercise

The early Christian church consistently met together. Most likely, these were not formal meetings, but a community of families that spent time together and lived out the commands of Jesus.

*Circle the activity and/or value that characterized the early church in each verse. Ask God to give you creative vision and ideas for how that value can be lived out in your Lifegroup today.*

Ac 1:14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Ac 2:44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Ac 2:46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

Ac 4:24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.

Ac 5:12 The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.

Ac 6:2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Ac 14:27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Ac 15:30 The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter.

Ac 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, ... kept on talking until midnight.

1Co 11:33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

1Co 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

Eph 4:16 From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

***What did you learn about the New Testament Church from these scriptures?***



## The Temple AND House to House

The Bible also shows us that the early church met in these two different settings: in small groups in their homes and in large group celebrations in the temple.

Acts 2:46 *“Every day they continue to meet together **in the temple courts**. They broke bread **in their homes** and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”*

Acts 5:42 *“Day after day, **in the temple courts and from house to house**, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.”*

Acts 20:20 (to the Ephesian elders) *“You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you **publicly and from house to house**.”*

Philemon 2 *“...to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the **church that meets in your home**.”*

We are not suggesting that church buildings are wrong or that everyone should meet in homes only. The early church model includes both public and home meetings. In the large group gathering, pastors can build up all the people of God for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). They are a time for celebration, worship, prayer and equipping. Yet it is through small groups that close, personal relationships are formed.

Our desire at Antioch Community Church is to embody the New Testament church that met regularly in the temple *AND* house to house. Both are needed – large assemblies and celebrations *AND* intimate house to house community. Many tendencies among modern churches necessitate that we return to a balanced view of corporate gatherings and small groups. Here the New Testament church is compared to some of these modern trends.

	New Testament Church	Tendencies in Modern Churches
<b>Location</b>	Moved from house to house	Meets in a church building
<b>Size of Groups</b>	Small, intimate groups	Large, impersonal groups
<b>Activities</b>	Daily fellowship	Weekly services
<b>Support System</b>	Building up one another	Problem? See the pastor or counselor
<b>Relationship/ Discipline</b>	Intimate; helping one another; modeling; personal values shaped	Remote; little transparency; classes, notebooks; little modeling; values not shaped
<b>Primary Task of Leaders</b>	Every believer equipped to do the work of the ministry	Directing the programs and services
<b>Prayer Life</b>	Hours daily; heavy emphasis	Individual choice; limited
<b>Pastor's Duty</b>	Model the life of a believer	Preach good sermons
<b>Expectations of Members</b>	Ministering to others; total servanthood and stewardship; go	Attendance; tithing; work in the “programs”
<b>Perspective</b>	Relationships are the focal point	Services / programs are the focal point
<b>Key Words</b>	“Go and make disciples”	“Come grow with us”

*Note: A detailed explanation of the New Testament Church is provided in the book Where Do We Go from Here?*

## Lifegroups are Church

The early church model of ministry was not institutionalized in structure but instead consisted of churches meeting in homes of believers and under the authority of the apostolic church leaders. While church structures have changed significantly over the last 2000 years, the basic principles defining a biblical model of church have not. Today in the modern era, Christians around the world, particularly in Asia, South America, and Africa, are again going back to the early church model of ministry by meeting in homes and are rapidly expanding. There are many names to describe this type of ministry (cell groups, house church, etc.), but the foundation is believers living out the values of the Kingdom in small groups. At Antioch Community Church we call these small groups, Lifegroups.

Lifegroups at Antioch are the core of who we are. We believe these small groups ARE the church. They are the place where Acts 2 community takes place by passionately seeking Jesus, growing and reproducing as disciples, providing community and pastoral care, and reaching out to those around us with the love of Christ.

## Lifegroups Empower Everyone

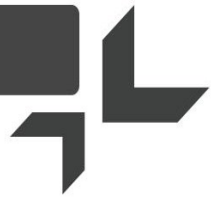
Ephesians 4:11-13 says,

*“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ..”*

A Lifegroup is built on the principle that all Christians are ministers and that every Christian should perform the work of the ministry. According to Paul, the job description of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (vocational ministers) is to build up the rest of God’s people to do works of service. In many churches, the vocational ministers are viewed as the only ministers to a congregation, while the people go about their lives. This type of “ministry” falls far short of the ideal set forth by Paul.

In Lifegroups, everyone is a minister. Paul exhorted the Corinthians that each one of them should have something for the edification of the Body (1 Corinthians 14:26) whenever they gathered. This is impossible in large group services, but each person can choose to be involved in ministry in a smaller group setting. Through Lifegroups, everyone can do the work of the ministry without leaving their school or vocation.

Future leaders receive their first stages of training in Lifegroups. Those who are seeking God, investing in others, serving and sharing the gospel become leaders. And because there are many “ministers” in Lifegroups, there is less emphasis on one person trying to meet the needs of many people. Lifegroups teach each person how to love others and lay down their lives for them. This is the essence of true ministry.



## Lifegroups as a Discipleship Community

A healthy holistic Lifegroup serves a variety of purposes and functions, but there is one central mission that keeps a group moving forward. That is discipleship. Helping one another become life long, obedient followers of Christ who help others do the same.

Lifegroups are the way we facilitate and encourage discipleship. The ministry model of Jesus was life-on-life discipleship. He selected 12 disciples to be with him, to watch and learn from him, and to serve. This kind of true discipleship can be modeled and reproduced in others in Lifegroups. Paul instructed Timothy to take the things that he had learned from Paul and teach them to faithful men who would pass them on (2 Timothy 2:2). Lifegroups follow this ministry model. A person builds a relationship with another person and helps them as they follow Christ and eventually begin to help someone else. This process continues to be repeated. Our goal is that every member in our church would be in some sort of discipleship relationship, both as a disciple and disciple maker.

We need to be careful to not see Lifegroup and discipleship as distinct from one another. Lifegroup is a place where people are discipled and challenged to go make disciples. The group itself should disciple people. This raises the bar for Lifegroup, but hopefully this is also very freeing. If people are being discipled in the group, then the members, especially the more mature, are free to minister to one another in a variety of ways according to their gifting.

Pastoral care, counseling, friendship, and gifting development can all take place throughout the week. There might even be times to lead a separate discipleship group to help take people deeper. If discipleship is happening in Lifegroup, there is space and freedom for a variety of ministry outside of it.

Sometimes discipleship groups outside of Lifegroup are necessary. Separate discipleship groups are helpful for new believers (or better yet, start a new Lifegroup all together!) or for developing upcoming leaders. You might also consider a group focused on unchurched people in your sphere that can eventually be launched out to plant a new Lifegroup.

Meeting one-on-one is another idea. We generally recommend discipleship groups but occasionally one-on-one discipleship is needed, especially for a specific counseling need. Consider setting an end date on one-on-one discipleship relationships—enough time to help the person without it going on indefinitely.

The reason we focus so much on Lifegroups is that we believe Lifegroup is church. We want to reach people, we want to make disciples, but we believe that will happen best in the context of baptized believers committed to gather together regularly to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. In other words, we believe discipleship works best in church.

### Lifegroup Definition Exercise:

*In one sentence write the purpose of Lifegroup in your own words.*

*Do you feel your Lifegroup is discipling people in the group? Is your Lifegroup equipping people to disciple others? Why or why not?*

## The Community/Outreach Tension

Now we need to stop a moment and acknowledge a common tension in the vision we cast for Life-groups. Building community and making disciples often feel at odds with each other. We desire and work for deep friendship and community. This leads to growth as people are drawn to healthy groups. Over time, more people are added and it feels as if the power of the community is diluted. We want close community and relationships with people with whom we have history. And we want to reach out to new people. Our tendency is to feel the tension and choose our preference to the neglect of the other. We stop reaching out because we want deeper community and lose capacity for more relationships. Or we have dynamic growth, but shallow relationships. Which is a higher priority to you? Having relationships or having mission to reach out?

***Make an X on this spectrum according to which best describes you. Place an arrow on the spot that best describes your Lifegroup.***

**Relational**-----**Missional**

Fortunately, these two Kingdom values are not at odd with each other! This is a tension we may not be able to eliminate. In fact we need this tension for any healthy *Lifegroup*. Our physical body moves because there is tension between our muscles as they contract and relax. The same principle is at work in the body of church. This tension between community with and discipleship without creates healthy movement and growth for people in *Lifegroup*.

Most groups highly value community. If they didn't they probably wouldn't keep meeting. However, it is easy for *Lifegroups* to lose sight of the discipleship mission of their group. These groups slip into more of a country club mindset where we come in pay our spiritual dues so we can just hang out and have fun. Valuing *Lifegroup* for social reasons actually has the opposite effect. Without a purpose outside itself, people lose a sense of commitment with one another, and community is weakened.

***What was the best team with which you have ever been associated?***

***What made it great?***

Great teams bond because of a common purpose. Great *Lifegroups* have great community because they have a vision bigger than themselves. Look at Jesus' vision for his community.

*Mark 3:13-15 "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve **that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.**"*



## Lifegroup Strategies for Discipleship

There are a variety of ways we can reach out and make disciples but we are focusing on two specifically: cell groups and core Lifegroups.

### Cell Lifegroups

A cell group describes a strategy to reach out to make disciples. The concept is to reach out to people and then, as people respond, to incorporate them into your existing Lifegroup. As the Lifegroup grows, leaders seek to raise up new leaders and then multiply into two or three groups.

This works especially well if the members of the Lifegroup are all in the same community. For example, a Lifegroup composed of health-care professionals will be an easy place to invite a co-worker from a clinic. The Lifegroup as a whole is targeting a sphere of influence within the city. Cell groups also thrive among college students and young adults because of their desire to continually meet new people.

### Core Lifegroups

Core groups have virtually the same meeting format, but one key difference is growth. Rather than first seeking to invite visitors to their existing group, a core group attempts to plant new Lifegroups.

The original Lifegroup will mostly stay the same but it will be involved in planting many new groups within the spheres of influence of its members. We need to be careful that these groups do not become “closed groups.” There still is a time and place to invite a new member, always remembering that our ultimate goal is to make disciples. But our goal is not a bigger group; rather, we are believing for more groups.

This approach requires a more hands-on approach with the members. The leader should be aware of when new groups are starting and provide extra coaching and accountability. Core groups work well when the members of a Lifegroup all have different spheres of influence that might not necessarily blend together easily.

As new groups are started it might become necessary for some members to leave the core group or only attend every other week. Let these transitions happen naturally and based on each person's needs and growth. Core groups that stall and are unsuccessful should consider opening their group to invite visitors.

### Hybrid Lifegroups

Some Lifegroups might choose to incorporate both models. These groups still actively reach new people and add members for a season. Then they seek to empower members to start new groups if possible within their sphere of influence. The goal of this type of group is to cast a broad vision for reaching out and then determine the best fit starting a new groups on a person-by-person, season-by-season basis.

***Which strategy will work best for your Lifegroup this season?***

## Multiplying a Cell Lifegroup

### *Vision for Multiplication*

A healthy cell in the human body will grow to a certain point and then multiply into two cells. Without biological cell multiplication we would die. But with the healthy multiplication of trillions of cells in the average human body, our lives are sustained. Like the cell in a body, when a Lifegroup reaches a certain size, it will begin to lose the ability to fully function if it does not multiply. The group will be too large to be covered pastorally; discipleship will be overwhelming; and people will not have the opportunity to serve in their different giftings. Within our cell Lifegroups we promote and build toward multiplication for a number of reasons:

- We are called to multiply the life of God (Gen 1:26-27).
- Multiplication makes room for new people.
- Multiplication creates smaller groups and more opportunity for deeper relationships.
- Smaller groups mean more effective pastoral care.
- Smaller groups mean less formal cell night meetings.

### Seasons of the Cell

**1. STARTING UP**  
(new or stagnant group)

- Review core values
- Shape a unified vision bigger than just your group
- Build community
- Develop a discipleship plan
- Identify the people to whom you will be reaching out

**2. BUILDING UP**  
(healthy growing group)

- Cast vision for growth
- Keep an outward focus
- Follow up on guests from Sunday services
- Develop an evangelism strategy

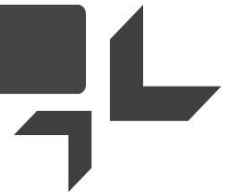
**3. GEARING UP**  
(group ready to multiply)

- Identify and meet with emerging leaders
- Set multiplication date / goal with your section leaders
- Cast clear vision for a multiplication plan
- Discuss the “why’s” of multiplication
- Train new leaders

### Exercise:

*In what season is your cell group currently?*





## ***When to Multiply a Cell Lifegroup***

There are three main considerations when planning for multiplication:

**Do we have enough leaders?** Time and time again, we have seen Lifegroups that raised up people who were not ready or willing to lead. Developing new leaders should be a priority for Lifegroup leaders. New leaders should be empowered to lead Lifegroup meetings as you approach multiplication.

**Do we have enough people?** There is no magic number that means it is time to multiply. The best thing to do is wait on the Lord and to consider your group. Typically, if each new group would have at least 8 new members, it is strong enough to multiply. Family Lifegroups should consider multiplying when they are more than 10 kids among the families in the Lifegroup.

**What is God saying?** Sometimes the Lord will lead us to make decisions that don't immediately make sense. We always want to leave room for direction from the Lord.

## ***How to Multiply a Lifegroup***

1. Before anything else, **talk it through** with your section leader (pastoral covering).
2. **Cast vision** in your Lifegroup. If people do not have vision for multiplication, the process will be very difficult, but if they own the process and are envisioned with the opportunity to reach out to more people, they will become actively involved and excited by multiplication.
3. **Set a specific date**, and announce it to your group at least five weeks in advance.
4. **Announce the new leadership teams** to the group 2 weeks in advance and ask everyone to pray about which group they will join.
5. The week before multiplication, spend a significant amount of time casting vision and describe the process. You may have members write down which group they plan to attend. Review what they turn in to ensure that the new Lifegroups will be balanced.
6. **Have a party for the multiplication night!!** We want this to be celebrated, as it is a sign of healthy life. Reflect on and celebrate what God has done in your group. Give BIG vision for Lifegroups and multiplication. Multiply! New groups can gather separately to pray and prophesy over each other.
7. **Communicate** with your zone pastor the new leaders, contact info, and meeting times.

## ***Multiplication Exercise:***

***Which stage of cell life is my group currently in? What are three things we can do this year to move to the next stage?***

***Who are the emerging leaders in my group in whom I need to intentionally invest?***

***When do I expect our group to multiply?***



## Starting New Groups through Core Lifegroups

Zach was a teacher at a small country high school 25 miles outside of town. Realistically, his current Lifegroup would not be an effective way to reach out. Instead, he started a new group that met before school. He saw several seniors come to Christ and partner with other faculty.

This is what we want to see in core groups. Imagine if you had a group of 10 and each one of them started a new group in their workplace. Suddenly the prospect of touching an entire city seems possible.

### ***Starting discipleship groups***

You don't need to start a new, fully functioning Lifegroup from day one. In fact, this intimidates most people. Instead, encourage people to start a discipleship group or a seeker group for non-believers within their sphere of influence. You don't need to call it Lifegroup or church, just call it lunch. The point is that you are in the beginning process so helping people gather groups of hungry people within their sphere of influence. This will not happen on its own. Many people want to do this but don't know where or how to start.

Begin the process by helping people identify their sphere of influence (see Calling Disciples section in this handbook). Once this is identified, challenge them to start consistently praying for and serving people in this environment. Then you will need to help them think through an action plan. It probably wouldn't work to invite unbelieving business partners to a church Lifegroup, but they might be more willing to join a businessmen's lunch that discusses life and spirituality.

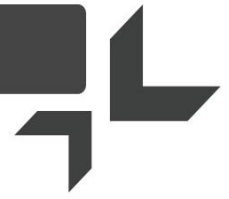
If you find it difficult to relate to their specific situation, find a way to refer them to someone in the church who can help coach them on how to engage spiritual conversations. There are a variety of sources for content. You can work through a book, a spiritual book that discusses business, or some other relevant material. However, you should consider still incorporating the 7 aspects of a group meeting so that they can more easily transition to a Lifegroup over time.

### ***Developing discipleship groups into a Lifegroup***

Once you have a consistent group meeting, develop a transition timeline. For example, take 5 weeks to discuss spirituality and then use this as a bridge to share Jesus. At the end of 5 weeks, thank everyone for coming and then cast vision for an ongoing meeting for anyone interested. You might get everyone or you might not get anyone. The point is that we are presenting the opportunity. Once people commit, this is a wonderful time to start going through the ***Foundations Discipleship Guides*** as a group.

### ***Handing off leadership of new groups***

We should celebrate when a new group starts, but we should not stop. This is just the beginning. Transformation comes through *reproducing* discipleship. As soon as the group is starting, you should immediately encourage people to reach out to their own sphere of influence. Coach them on the same things that worked for you. From the beginning, plan to empower someone else to lead. Over time beginning to shift your attention from the needs of everyone in the group to the primary leader. In time you can pull out of the group while continuing to support and coach the leader.



## “Circles” Exercise:

### **Vision**

The “circles” exercise is a tool to help you regularly evaluate the overall health of your Lifegroup. It can envision you and others in your group for how you can continue become an Acts 2 community. Let’s review the values from Acts 2:42-47 as a descriptive example of Kingdom values in the church.

1. Devoted to apostles teaching
2. Devoted to fellowship
3. Devoted to breaking bread (Lord’s supper)
4. Devoted to prayer
5. Sense of Awe (presence, power and gifts of God)
6. Lived daily life together
7. Gave to those in need
8. Connected in the temple and house to house
9. Praised God
10. Witnessed to others

As you read the list above, consider your Lifegroup or the last small group you were in. Does it reflect these characteristics? We must remember that churches (Lifegroups) always go through a maturing process. When a baby is born, they lack a lot of the distinctly human functions but they are still considered completely human. Over time, as they mature, they develop what was originally lacking. Church grows in the same way. You might start with a small group of new believers just learning to worship and pray. That is wonderful; it is new birth. Hopefully as people obey the word and respond to the Lord, they will in time develop other church functions.

### **Exercise:**

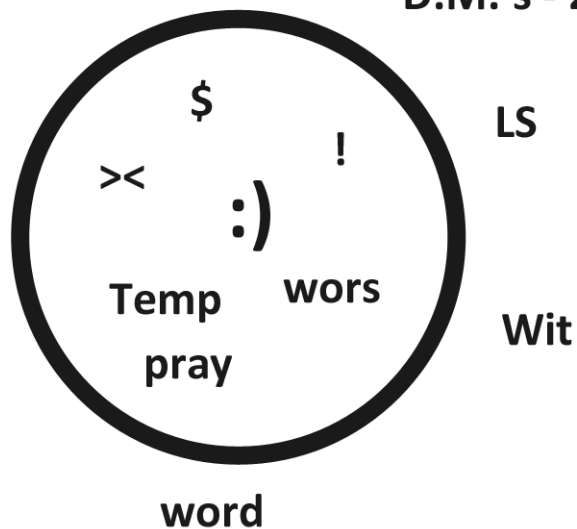
*On a separate piece of paper write the number of people, including kids, who regularly attend your Lifegroup (Att). Next indicate how many of these regular attenders have been baptized (Bapt). If you don’t know then you know what your next Lifegroup discussion needs to be! Lastly, write the number of people in your group that you know are disciple makers - intentionally discipling someone else (D.M.’s)*

*Then, if your group is committed to meeting regularly draw a solid circle. If you have formed a group of seekers without an agreed commitment to each other, then draw a circle but with dashed lines. This will give you an idea if your group is a covenant community. A covenant community is one that has pledged a personal and corporate commitment to one another for life or definable period of time.*

*Look at the 10 church functions above and make a corresponding symbol or abbreviation. Place each symbol either inside or outside of your circle based on whether or not this value is being consistently expressed. For the functions more strongly expressed, put towards the center. For those that are inconsistent, put on the edge of the circle. For those completely unexpressed, put far away from the circle.*

1. Word (word)
2. Fellowship (><)
3. Lord's Supper (LS)
4. Prayer (pray)
5. Presence of God (!)
6. Giving (\$)
7. Sharing Life (:))
8. Connected (Temp)
9. Worship (Wors)
10. Witness (Wit)

Att - 10  
Bapt - 9  
D.M.'s - 2



***Build a plan to address a few of the functions most lacking in your group. What are top 3 area you need to develop as a group to become holistic church God wants you to be?***

***Example:***

1. Be more outward focused through testimonies and prayer for lost friends
2. Focus on obeying the scriptures, not just getting more knowledge
3. Take the Lord's supper together once / month to focus on Christ and his sacrifice

***Areas to develop:***

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## Experiencing God in Lifegroup

In Acts 2:43, the early church continually experienced “a sense of awe” when they gathered together. This “sense of awe” was and is the tangible presence of God. Lifegroups are a place to encounter the presence of God. Our hope is that any person leaving Lifegroup night will have experienced God in some way. There are many ways people may encounter God at Lifegroup including:

- Vulnerable, honest sharing of needs
- Genuine confession and repentance
- People visibly encountering God (crying, joyful, etc.)
- Hearing and responding to the voice of God together
- Unashamed worship
- A genuine delight in and celebration of the “small things” God is doing, like children praying or someone sharing who hasn’t shared before
- A love offering taken for someone
- Praying and prophesying for one another
- Sharing testimonies of God at work

Meeting together in a small group setting allows us a more intimate worship environment where we are free to minister to one another by exercising spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 14:26). Corporate worship is amazing no matter where it happens, but there’s nothing like the raw vulnerability of the Lifegroup worship time. There’s just something dynamically unique about singing to God in someone’s living room. When we lead people to the throne of God in this intimate setting, it can be a beautiful, life-transforming thing.

## Building Community through Lifegroup

One of the greatest needs of the human heart is relationships and to feel a part of a group. People are longing to fit in and be accepted! If this need is not met in the context of loving Christian community, people will turn to the world to try to find fulfillment. God created us to need one another. The church should be the place that people can come to be accepted and find friendship.

Lifegroups want to see Acts 2:42-47 communities raised up. They seek to be a safe place for whole families to grow and for people to find a place of connection. Lifegroup is more than just a weekly meeting; in fact, it is what goes on outside of the actual night that constitutes authentic community.

### **A few tips for building community:**

- Have a Lifegroup lunch or dinner once a week.
- Have hangout nights outside of Lifegroup night to go out to eat, play games, watch movies (keep 'em clean!) or just talk.
- Celebrate events in people's lives within the group (birthdays, births, etc.), and when people are going through challenging circumstances, rally behind them in encouragement, support, and prayer.
- Use technology to have quick points of connection throughout a given week.
- Eat lunch together after church, or dinner together before night services.







## Chapter 8: Leaders

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### The Need for Leaders

***“The Local Church is the Hope of the World and its Future Rests in the Hands of its Leaders” —Bill Hybels***

***“Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.” 1 Timothy 3:1***

One of the most crucial needs in a church is strong, spiritual leaders. Jesus spent most of His earthly ministry developing a small group of common fishermen into world-changing apostles. At the time of His death, there was no structure or organization and the huge crowds characterizing His meetings were all but gone. To the outsider, it would seem His ministry had failed, but Jesus knew that long-term fruit depended on a few key leaders who knew His ways and carried the values of the Kingdom.

Leaders keep the vision alive, model values, provide primary discipleship and pastoral covering, facilitate ministry and keep a church moving in the right direction. Without Godly leaders, people will quickly turn introspective and lose vision. Proverbs 29:18 states, “where there is no vision, the people perish” (NKJV). Leadership is vital because it keeps the church focused on the vision and purpose entrusted to the people of God. When there is no leadership, the church will crumble, lose focus, and the many functions of the body will be lost. True leadership enables all of the different functions of the body to be released and keeps the church true to its mission.

Disciple-makers become leaders when those they are discipling become a Lifegroup seeking to embody Acts 2 community. Some discipleship groups never become this. But when they do, leaders need to be trained and empowered. At Antioch, Lifegroup leaders are the backbone of our church. Lifegroup leaders provide the hands-on pastoral care and covering to the rest of the body.



## Devotional Life of a Leader

John 15:5 states "...if a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Any leader overseeing part of the church must have a strong and growing personal relationship with the Lord. Jesus Himself would seek out the solitary places to be with the Father as a part of His earthly ministry. Ultimately, as cell leaders, our primary purpose is to help people encounter God and grow in their relationship with Him. If we are not doing that as leaders, we cannot expect to lead people into the presence of God.

Joel Comiskey, a missionary and pastor, conducted a survey of over 700 small group leaders to determine what factors are common among leaders who successfully made disciples and started new groups. Below are listed some of the findings of his survey.

### Factors which don't affect successful small group leaders:

Age	Marital status
Gender	Personality of leaders
Social status	Spiritual giftings of leaders

### Factors which do affect successful small group leaders:

- Clear-cut goals
- Good contact with new people
- Raising up new interns
- Amount of time leaders spent with Jesus on a daily basis
- Amount of time leaders spent in prayer daily for cell members

### Devotional Patterns of Fruitful Leaders

<b>0-15 minutes per day</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
<b>15-30 minutes</b>	<b>33.2%</b>
<b>30-60 minutes</b>	<b>33.8%</b>
<b>60-90 minutes</b>	<b>7.6%</b>

In summary, the factor seen as most essential to the multiplication of healthy groups is the devotional life of the leaders. Consistent, daily time with Jesus will transform the life of the leader, in turn enabling him/her to be involved in transforming the lives of his/her cell members. In the same way that spending daily time with Jesus strengthens the bond between the leader and Jesus, spending daily time praying for group members will strengthen the bond between the leader and members. One leader who has consistently multiplied and started new groups, when asked the secret to his "success", replied, "Prayer, prayer, prayer."

**Leaders spend time with the Lord every day.** Because we believe that everything flows out of our life in God, this is our highest value. We encourage leaders to get at least 30 minutes a day for personal time with God. Please note, we encourage you to get much more time with God each day!! This is simply the lowest amount of time we feel is necessary to appropriately build yourself up in the Lord and cover your people.

***When do you spend time with the Lord every day? How long typically?***

***What are you doing in your time with the Lord?***

***How and what do you pray for those you lead?***



## The Character of a Leader

More important than *what you do* in leadership is *who you are*. Two times in the New Testament we find the apostle Paul, giving instruction on the character of leaders to be appointed in churches.

Overseer Qualifications	NEW CHURCH in Crete Titus 1:5-9 <i>"Appoint" elders</i>	MATURE CHURCH in Ephesus - 1 Tim 3:1-7 <i>"Aspire" to be elders</i>
CHARACTER	Above reproach	Above reproach
	True to one wife	True to one wife
	Not wild living	Respectable
	Not rebellious	Not contentious
	Not self-willed	
	Not quick-tempered	Gentle
	Not addicted to wine	Not addicted to wine
	Not violent	Not violent
	Not greedy	Free from love of money
	Hospitable	Hospitable
	Love what is good	Good reputation with outsiders
	Sensible	Prudent
	Just	
	Devout/devoted	NOT a new convert (so not become conceited)
	Self-controlled	Temperate
SKILL	HOLD FAST the Word in order to exhort	Able to TEACH the Word
	Children who believe	Manage household / Children under control
	<i>(True to one wife?)</i>	<i>(True to one wife?)</i>

*How are these two lists different and why?*

*Circle 2-3 areas in your own life in which you need to grow.*

No leader is perfect. We all look at this list and find areas in which we need to grow. The goal for a leader in regard to their character is direction, not perfection. Yet how a leader lives his or her life and the character by which they conduct themselves will make a far greater impact than anything that is ever said. Overwhelmingly, the biblical standard for a leader is NOT experience or training, but character. If you will commit to cultivating a Godly character and living the values of the Kingdom, people's lives will be changed. In addition to these list found in 1 Timothy and Titus, let's examine a few more biblical character qualities to which leaders ought to aspire.

### **Brokenness and Humility**

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 "Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

***What do these verses say about brokenness and humility in leaders?***

### **Accountable**

James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

John 3:20-21 "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God."

***What do these verses say about accountability for leaders?***



## **Heart of a Servant**

Matthew 20:25 "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave."

***What do these verses teach about being servant-hearted as a leader?***

## **Surrendering your Freedoms**

Galatians 5:13 "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

2 Corinthians 10:23-24 <sup>23</sup> "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. <sup>24</sup> Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Romans 14:20-21 "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall."

***What do these verses teach us about surrendering our rights as leaders?***

## Shepherding

As a Lifegroup leader you are not only a disciple-maker; you are being invited to be a shepherd. 1 Peter 2:23-25 describes Jesus as our Chief Shepherd. We know how to lead others because we know how to be led. There is no perfect outline on how to shepherd in every situation. Wisdom in shepherding others springs from our relationship with THE Shepherd. Jesus teaches us that shepherding is caring for and leading the people over whom God has given you responsibility. Shepherding happens on Lifegroup night and throughout the week in Lifegroup relationships. As the shepherd of your Lifegroup, you are essentially the direct overseer of that group of people. In other words, we are asking you to take responsibility for those people as a shepherd would his sheep. Yes, everyone must take individual responsibility for their own walk with God, but you are taking responsibility for the direction, care and health of the group. Our investment in the lives of people under our care will directly translate into reward in heaven that will never fade away!

### Psalm 23 Exercise:

As you read through each verse from Psalm 23 make notes on the right side as you reflect on what a shepherd does and how He views those under His care.

Psalm 23

Lessons on shepherding

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside quiet waters,

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.  
He guides me in paths of righteousness  
for His name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk  
through the valley of the shadow of death,<sup>l</sup>  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.



## Pastoral Covering through Lifegroup Leaders

Exodus 18:13-24 <sup>13</sup> The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. <sup>14</sup> When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” <sup>15</sup> Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. <sup>16</sup> Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and laws.” <sup>17</sup> Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. <sup>18</sup> You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. <sup>19</sup> Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to Him. <sup>20</sup> Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. <sup>21</sup> But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain —and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. <sup>22</sup> Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” <sup>24</sup> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.”

### **What leadership lessons can we learn from this story?**

When Moses was breaking under the strain of single-handedly ministering to all of the Israelites, his father-in-law, Jethro, gave him a plan that divided the Israelites into groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. At Antioch we use this “Jethro Principle” to ensure that everyone is shepherded effectively.

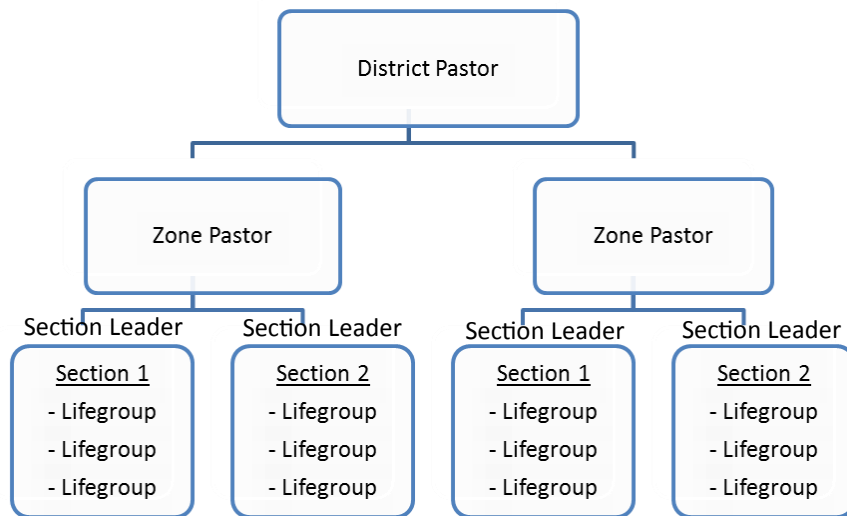
Lifegroup leaders are part of the pastoral team of Antioch Community Church. The pastoral care of the church, the “feeding the sheep,” is being released through the members of the congregation. Lifegroup leaders provide direct pastoral covering to the part of the Body (the Lifegroup) that they are serving.

We do not want leaders to feel isolated or alone in this responsibility. Therefore, we provide a pastoral covering for Lifegroup leaders for encouragement and ministry support. Every Lifegroup has a Section Leader. Section leaders are the pastoral covering and support for Lifegroup leaders. The Section leaders are covered by a Zone Pastor as a practical and spiritual resource to them and to Lifegroup leaders. If a Lifegroup leader has a question about ministry with their Lifegroup, they go to their section leader. If further help is needed, the section leader and the Lifegroup leader should go together to the zone pastor. If still more counsel is desired, they can go to the District Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

## Summary:

- A *Lifegroup leader* is responsible to facilitate the Lifegroup, pastor the people, and train an intern.
- A *section leader* is over 3-7 cells. He/she is responsible to consistently visit the Lifegroups and to be available for communication with the Lifegroup leaders in his/her section. He/she is the most direct pastoral contact for those leaders and should ideally meet with them on a weekly basis.
- A *zone pastor* oversees 2-7 sections. He/she is pastorally responsible for the section leaders.

A *district pastor* oversees two or more zones. He/she is pastorally responsible for the zone pastors.



### Issues to discuss with Section Leader

- Selecting new leaders
- Creative ideas for Lifegroup night and meeting rhythm
- Any teaching content
- Counseling needs
- Group leadership questions
- Multiplication or the starting of new groups
- Dissolving of a group

### Issues to discuss with a Zone Pastor

- Dismissal of a leader
- Dealing with areas of sin in which a Lifegroup member is not repentant after individual confrontation and confrontation with one other person (Matt. 18:15 at the 3rd level)
- Problems/conflicts with other authorities in leaders' lives
- Questions about church-wide vision or processes
- Benevolence issues



## Section Leaders

You become a section leader by starting or multiplying out a new Lifegroup. You oversee what you birth. Section leaders are coaches for Lifegroups and leaders. Use this acronym as a guide to redefine your role once you empower leaders to lead.

### Cultivate contagious passion for Jesus and His kingdom

- Listen to God and do whatever he says!
- Encourage, exhort and model a Kingdom of God lifestyle. Be value carriers. (Includes 1 Timothy 3 Character, ACC Core Values, Lifegroup Leader Expectations)

### Oversee 1-5 Lifegroups

- Pray for your Lifegroup leaders and needs in their group.
- Actively seek to build your Lifegroup into Act2:42-47 communities.
- Give strategic oversight and accountability for each Lifegroup leader.
- Facilitate section gatherings as God leads. This could include:
  - Section equipping nights
  - Section prayer meetings
  - Section social gatherings

### Advance Antioch's Discipleship vision

- Cast vision and equip people to impact their spheres of influence.
- Train Lifegroup leaders to make disciple makers.
- Train and empower new section leaders

### Connect regularly with leaders in your section

- Encourage your Lifegroup leaders.
- Provide pastoral care and accountability for leaders in your section. (Have consistent touch points with Lifegroup leaders)
- Maintain regular communication with your direct section leader or zone pastors.

### Help Lifegroup leaders pastor their group

- Assist Lifegroup leaders with the care of counseling needs, conflict resolution and discipline situations as needed.
- Be aware and involved in pastoral needs that arise in your section (birth of a child, death in a family, serious sickness, job loss, etc.)



## Developing New Leaders

Leaders always need to be focused on raising up the next generation of leaders in a Lifegroup. If a cell group is growing and healthy, soon there will be too many people for one leader to disciple and pastor. If core Lifegroup leaders are empowering other members well then they will begin leading or overseeing their own groups. Your group will thrive when there are more leaders who have character, vision, and are value-carriers. The goal of leading a Lifegroup is not to do all the work, but rather to raise up and empower others to partner with you in doing the work of ministry.

## Identifying new Leaders

Not everyone can lead everybody, but everybody can lead somebody. A 10-year-old can lead a few 7-year-olds, but that same 10-year-old is likely not ready to lead a teenager! For this reason we say everyone can be a disciple-maker who is empowered to help someone else follow Jesus. A brand-new believer knows people who are lost to whom they can and ought to immediately begin to witness. Look back on the lists of qualifications of leaders from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

***Why did Paul say in 1 Timothy 3:6 that “He [elder] must not be a recent convert” but he did not say that in Titus 1?***

In 1 Timothy, Paul was writing to a mature church in Ephesus in which he had lead for 3+ years. In Titus, Paul was writing to Cretans who were new believers. In other words, not everyone can lead everybody (like mature believers in Ephesus), but everyone can lead someone (like new believers in Crete)!

So when identifying new leaders the key is you must consider who they will be leading!

## Discipleship leads to Leadership

Leadership development in your Lifegroup is as strong as your discipleship! Focus on discipling a few and challenge them to disciple someone else. Lifegroup leading is a role in the church, not a certain spiritual gift. As people you disciple reach out to disciple others, their leadership influence will naturally develop.

## Key Leadership Development Questions

- In which character qualities from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 do you need to grow?
- Are you living out what you are encouraging others to do?
- Who are you discipling? How is that going?
- Is the person you are discipling, investing in someone else?







## Chapter 9: Families

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### Vision for Kids in Lifegroups

#### A Mandate

God values children. Not just because they are cute, or say fun things or because one day they will grow up. He values them because they have been created in His image and thus they are image bearers of the King to a lost and dying world. Jesus said, “let the little children come to me and do not hinder them because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these,” and a key strategic way that children come to Him is when one generation passes down the things of God to the next generation. Look through these 3 examples of God’s mandate to pass on the things of God to the young.

**Psalm 78:1-7**, "O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old—what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. **Then** they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep his commands."

**Joshua 2:7-8;10-13**, The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. <sup>11</sup>Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup>They forsook the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the LORD’s anger <sup>13</sup>because they forsook Him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. <sup>14</sup>In His anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

#### Genesis 18:18-19

Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>19</sup>For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

**Exercise:**

***What do these verses tell us to do with our children?***

***What happened when the generation after Joshua failed to pass on the things of God?***

***According to the Genesis passage what was the desire of God for Abraham in relation to the promise that was laid out for Him?***

Children matter to God. They are not an after thought. They deserve our best. They are strategic because they come behind us, but the time to instill in them the truths of God are now. **By the time a child is 9 years old their core values are set for the rest of their lives. Children's brains are 90 percent formed before they reach the age of 3, and most of our adult personality is formed by the time we reach 6 years of age. A child's environment in the first 5 years of life is critical in their personal development. 83% of people who receive Jesus do it between the ages of 4-14.** Children matter to God. They matter to God's plan, and they have inherent value now at their age and inherent value as they grow into adults. It matters what we do with them today. **It matters what we do with them in Lifegroup!**



## Parents are Primary

Parents are the main influencers in their children's lives. They are the shapers of their children. We wholeheartedly believe the training of children to follow God is best done by their mom and dad. God has commanded this throughout His word:

**Deuteronomy 6:6-9** *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

**Proverbs 22:6** *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

**Ephesians 6:4** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

As parents we know and believe that we will take all the help that we can get. We believe Lifegroup is a great tool for parents to equip their kids to follow God. Lifegroup is a community of believers coming together to learn more about Jesus, share their lives in community and connect with one another as they connect to Jesus. Lifegroup provides that "second voice" to our kids. Kids have heard from their mom and dad about following Jesus. Lifegroup provides another environment and many times another person who is saying the same things that their mom and dad are saying. This "second voice" is powerful because it validates mom and dad, gives our kids another type of environment to learn about God, and gives them comrades who are their age that they can walk with in following God together.

## Lifegroup—A Chance to Put Value on Kids

1. Priesthood of all believers
  - a. Value = Every person can share the gospel and minister in church.
  - b. Sunday celebrations = Not much opportunity for children to minister.  
Lifegroup = Provides an opportunity for kids to minister and pray for other kids and adults.
2. A people who worship God
  - a. Value = Jesus loves everyone's worship and praise of Him.
  - b. Sunday celebrations = Adults and kids separated for worship and teaching.  
Lifegroup = Provides an opportunity for kids to see adults worship, model it, and do it alongside parents.
3. Church encourages family
  - a. Value = Church is a place where families can grow together in their love for Jesus and each other.
  - b. Sunday celebration = Adults/kids go their own ways on Sundays.
  - c. Lifegroup = Provides an opportunity to truly worship and learn together about Jesus.

## So how do kids “fit” in Lifegroup?

Since kids are an essential part in Lifegroup, our structures and strategies need to fit so that everyone is blessed and all are served in this Acts 2:42-47 community model. Many questions arise of how do we break bread, share our hearts, worship, discuss the word and other things when we have young ones around who might not have the same attention spans. One thing we have learned is that a successful Lifegroup where adults and kids thrive takes intentionality, prayer, and resolve to make it work. Here are a few things we have learned:

1. **Have a Children's Coordinator** – assign someone in the group who will be intentional to gather the children's teaching or create a lesson for the kids, assign people to teach and champion the children. (This is a significant role in Lifegroup – much like worship leader or Lifegroup leaders) If you have kids you absolutely need this person.
2. **The number of kids in a Lifegroup needs to help determine when it should multiply.** On average, after 12 kids in one Lifegroup it is time to multiply, and often depending on age this number can even be smaller. Once the numbers go above 12, many feel that they can't handle being with the kids because they simply feel overwhelmed!
3. **There are certain key elements with kids** in any Lifegroup – There are certain elements that kids need at every Lifegroup for the most part. These are in no particular order but they are vital:
  - a. **They need to be a part of the group.** You can choose worship or discussion but make sure kids are involved in a significant part of Lifegroup. If they are just in for the snack then they won't have vision for Lifegroup beyond babysitting.
  - b. **Fun and Play** – this is the love language of kids so give them time to do this. Do not make this the only part of Lifegroup or you will miss a divine moment to minister.
  - c. **Teach them** – Kids don't need a 30-minute lesson but they do need time to hear the word of God and respond to it in some way. This doesn't take long but it is vital that they leave Lifegroup with the truths of God resonating in their minds.
  - d. **Respond Time** – Give kids time to apply or experience in some way what they have learned. Giving them a craft or a challenge or something to apply during the week makes the kids see that what they are learning from Jesus matters in their daily lives!



- 4. Have adults interact with kids** – Have adults pray with kids and pray for kids. Have different adults lead the kid portion. Have kids pray over the adults and minister to them. One particular idea is to have a kid each week come into the adult time at some point and adults pray and prophecy over that child. This has always been effective and life-changing for everyone!
- 5. State the rule each time.** Kids need boundaries and they need to know what is expected of them. Adopt a Lifegroup rule and have every adult and child know what it is. Adults can hold children to it and kids can respond rightly when they know they haven't followed the rule. For kids and adults to thrive together order and expectations need to be set and everyone thrives as they are upheld and honored!
- Ex. 1: We will respect others with our words, actions, and attitude!
- Ex. 2: We will obey quickly, cheerfully, and completely.
- Ex. 3: We will love others with our actions, listen when someone is speaking and honor each other with our words!
- 6. Tell them stories.** Jesus taught by telling stories. People love stories and kids listen to stories. Have them re-enact Bible stories, tell them personal stories of when you were young...when in doubt pull out stories and teach them using your life and your stories. Kids will respond!



## Models of Lifegroup

One thing we have learned about Lifegroup is that all Lifegroups are different and cannot fit into one model. For years we tried having one model that worked for everyone and found it constricting and beneficial for some and very challenging for others. Each group needs to and will find the rhythm and structure that works for them. Below are a few different options. This is not an exhaustive list but ones that have worked in the past for family Lifegroups!

### Dinner Group Model

Size of Lifegroup: consists of 3-4 families that meet every other week!  
(try to keep kids numbers below 10-12. If you can do that and still have another family, then 5 families could work.)

#### *Progression of Lifegroup*

**6:00:** Meet together at different home every other week. (have a snack and food of some sort)

**6:15-6:45:** Kid/family teaching and worship time

- One member of host home family leads lesson that week
- Very kid-friendly teaching on a topic of their choice (could be something wanting to work on with kids – respect, sharing, loving others, etc...)
- All kids, all adults in circle together sharing, learning, praying

**6:45 – 7:30:** Kids play in room close by while parents share and spend time together.

- Possible parent Interactions:
- Accountability
- “How are you” time
- Prayer for each other
- Extended worship
- Studying the Word/new teaching
- Discipleship
- Communion
- Vision
- Goal setting

The idea is to make sure and do some of these each week but not squeeze all in each week!



## Partner Lifegroup Model

Size of Lifegroup: Consists of only 3-5 families that meet each week or every other week!

Family Lifegroup connects with 1 college LG and 1 young Adult LG. Mutual Service between Lifegroups. (try to keep kids numbers below 10-12. If you can do that and still have another family, then 5 families could work.)

### **Family Group connected to College LG and Young Adult LG**

College Lifegroup – Agrees to provide 3-4 members once every 6 weeks to serve family Lifegroup. They will come to the home and family LG childcare coordinator will give them supplies, teaching, and review kid time elements as they have planned. College students will run the kid time.

Adult Lifegroup - Agrees to provide 3-4 members once every 6 weeks to serve Lifegroup. They will come to the home and family Lifegroup childcare coordinator will give them supplies, teaching, and review kid time elements as they have planned. College students will run the kid time.

Family Lifegroup – Agrees to bless workers in some way through gift cards, invitation to a meal, discipleship of some sort, (once again certain members of Lifegroup can take on the blessing the workers, but rotation needs to happen so that every Lifegroup member eventually owns the blessing of workers.

### **6 Week Progression of Lifegroup**

Week 1: Teaching/Traditional Lifegroup (Young adults lead kids)

Week 2: Outreach - together

Week 3: Family Mealtime – together – hang-loose type night

Week 4: Worship, prayer, communion night (college leads kids)

Week 5: Family Fun Night - together

Week 6: Service project – together

This can be modified but the idea is 4 weeks with kids, 2 weeks adults connecting/learning all together, and kids connecting and learning all together.

## How Does Connection Happen

The goal is to quickly connect the 3 Lifegroups together. If this model looks appealing the steps are as follows:

- Initial contact will be made to Becca Lemons in Children's Ministry Dept.
- Becca connects to college and Young Adult leaders
- All 3 groups will be given other LG leaders' email, and communication will then happen between 3 Lifegroups with Family LG leader leading out.
- Families must give 2 weeks' notice to college and Young Adult Lifegroups. No exceptions!
- Wednesday Lifegroups may not use college or ask college to take care lead kids on a Wednesday because of Dwelling Place.
- Please do not ask LG members in college or young adults to miss their own LG. We want to make sure that this enhances Lifegroup experiences across the board, not hinders them!

## Adult Rotation Model (Men or Women take kid time)

Size of Lifegroup: Consisting of only 3-5 families that meet each week or every other week!

(try to keep kids numbers below 10-12. If you can do that and still have another family, then 5 families could work.)

## 5 Week Progression of Lifegroup

Week 1: Traditional Lifegroup (different adults lead kid times)

Week 2: Girls meet whole time together/ dads and kids together

Week 3: Traditional Lifegroup (different adults lead kid times)

Week 4: Boys meet whole time together/ moms and kids together

Week 5: Outreach







# ***Chapter 10***

## ***Foundations Discipleship Guides***

## Chapter 10: Discipleship Guides

### Foundations discipleship guides

1. Father Heart of God
2. Son of God
3. Salvation
4. Water Baptism
5. Spirit of God
6. Baptism of the Holy Spirit
7. Word of God
8. Prayer
9. The Church
10. Great Commission

### Core Values Discipleship Guides

#### Loving God

1. Time with Jesus
2. Abiding in Christ
3. Obedience
4. Living by faith
5. Passionate worship
6. Brokenness / Confession of sin
7. Holy Living
8. Fasting
9. Money and Possessions

#### Loving One Another

1. Community
2. Honor One Another
3. Forgive One Another
4. Serve One Another
5. Spiritual Gifts
6. Spiritual Authority
7. Healthy Family

### Loving those that don't know Jesus

1. Sharing the gospel
2. Sharing your testimony
3. Making disciple-makers
4. Reaching your sphere of influence
5. Reaching outside your sphere of influence
6. Loving the poor and needy
7. Healing the sick
8. Reaching unreached people

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** What do you suppose God is really like? What does He think of you? Most people develop a sort of inner picture of what God looks like, what His voice sounds like, and maybe even what His REAL motivation is in interacting with people. The fact of the matter is, God is our FATHER. Did your dad influence what you think of God? Maybe you were influenced well. Maybe not. But we can all be sure of this; God is more full of love for you than you've ever imagined. And He wants to be KNOWN by His children. Through the Word, through daily time with Jesus, and through loving, Christian community, God wants us to see and experience His Father's heart.

**Worship:** Read together Zephaniah 3:17, John 1:12-13. Sing or read the words of "How Deep the Father's Love For Us."

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Luke 15:11-31

**Background:** Jesus is telling a story here...perhaps the most famous story (parable) in the whole Bible. Usually known as the story of the Prodigal Son, Jesus describes God's Father Heart for His children in an unforgettable way.

**What does this passage SAY about God's father heart?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** *Have the person make a list of attributes that describe their earthly father. Have them make a list of attributes that describe the father in this story. Lead them in a prayer exercise to renounce ways their earthly father did not reflect God the Father. Pray, "I renounce the lie Father God is.... And I receive the truth that my Father God is....."*

**Commitment:** *Who else needs to know God's Father heart? Will you share this with them this week?*

## Teaching guide

- There are two ways to leave the Father: being bad (younger son) and being good (older son).
- Repentance is "coming to our senses" and returning to God.
- God will always receive us when we leave him.
- God doesn't want us to live with false ideas of his character and his nature as Father. He is generous, sacrificial, affectionate, present and gracious.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Who did you share with about God's Father heart this week?

**Digging Deeper:** 1 John 3:1; Romans 8:15; *The Father Heart of God* by Floyd McClung; *Prodigal God* by Timothy Keller



**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Who is Jesus? It is the most important question every human being must face. What makes Jesus more than a “great moral teacher?” What separates Him from the founders of any other global religion? What makes Jesus unique? Do you know who Jesus is? Do the people in your life know?

**Worship:** Meditate on Isaiah 53. Listen to or sing “None but Jesus” by Hillsong

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Matthew 16:13-28

**Background:** Jesus’ disciples have just returned from sharing about the coming Kingdom of God in neighboring villages. There are many ideas of who Jesus is. The time has come to share with His disciples who He is and what He has come to do.

**What does this passage SAY about who Jesus is?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** *What are misconceptions people have about Jesus today? How will you respond to people with those ideas?*

**Commitment:** *Ask someone else this week who they believe Jesus is. Look for an opportunity to share who He said He was. Memorize one verse where Jesus claims to be God (list below).*

### Teaching guide

- Jesus claimed to be God (see also John 1:1-3; John 5:17,18; John 8:58; John 10:33; John 14:9; John 17:21-22).
- As Jesus prophesied, He was crucified and then He rose from the dead.
- C.S. Lewis said, “A man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Which person/nation/people group did you cover in prayer? How might you stay involved with them?

**Digging Deeper:** John 1; Colossians 1:15-20; Philippians 2:5-11; *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis; *More than just a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell; *God Came Near* by Max Lucado; *Passion for Jesus* by Mike Bickle

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** This is the core of what it means to follow Jesus. It is the foundation of our faith and essential for new believers to understand. But meditating on salvation is not limited to those who are new followers of Jesus. For the rest of our lives, we should seek to grow in our understanding of what Christ did for us on the cross. It's too easy to move on to other aspects of our faith and miss the deep power found in the simplicity of the Gospel message.

**Worship:** Consider reading Romans 8:31-38 and singing songs about the love of God.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Romans 3:23-25

**Background:** This passage is a clarification of the Gospel message. Paul is saying we cannot be right with God based on observing the law (being good enough).

**What does this passage SAY about salvation from sin?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** Take time to practice sharing the simplicity of this message with another person in the group. Consider going out as a Lifegroup to share this message with others.

**Commitment:** Have you received this free gift of salvation? If not, would you like to now? List out people in your life who you know need to hear this message. Will you commit to share with them this week?

### Teaching guide

- The salvation message has FOUR PRIMARY POINTS (taken from the Steps to Peace with God track):
  1. God's Plan: He loves us and has a plan for our lives (Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16)
  2. Problem: We all have sinned. In other words, no one is innocent. We all deserve death and hell as the penalty for sin. No matter how many good deeds we do in life, we are still guilty in the eyes of God. (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:2)
  3. God's Solution: God sent Jesus to die for our sins. (Romans 5:8; John 14:6; 1 Peter 2:5)
  4. Our Response: we must trust Jesus as our Savior and receive Him into our life by grace. (Romans 10:9; Eph. 2:8; John 1:12)
- Justified is a courtroom term, which means to declare innocent.
- Redemption means to be brought with a price.
- Atonement means to appease God's wrath.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Who did you share the salvation message with since we last met?

**Digging Deeper:** Study Romans 1-8, John 3:14-20, and the book of Galatians.

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Baptism is an important aspect of our walk with Christ, so much so that when the apostle Peter shared the Gospel in Acts 2:38, he concluded by saying, “repent and be baptized, every one of you.” Baptism is a symbol of our new covenant with Christ, much like a wedding ceremony symbolizes the covenant of marriage. When we are baptized, the reality that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ comes alive in us in a fresh way.

**Worship:** Sing songs focused on the work of the cross. Consider meditating on Isaiah 53.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Matthew 3:1-12

**Background:** John the Baptist is calling large crowds to repent of their sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

**What does this passage SAY about water baptism?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** Take time in the following week or two as a Lifegroup to celebrate baptism for any members who are seeking to make this commitment.

**Commitment:** Is there anyone here who has never been baptized? Are you willing to make this commitment? Do you know others who say they are Christians and have not been baptized? How can you encourage them this week?

## Teaching guide

- Baptism is a picture/reminder of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It is a symbolic act through immersion in water. When we go down under the water, it reminds us that our old self (our sin) has been buried with Jesus. When we come up out of the water, it reminds us that we have been raised with Jesus to a new life. Baptism is also a special sign to God and others that we love Jesus and want to follow Him. Baptism is not optional but the first command Jesus has given new believers (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38).
- The New Testament word baptism means to be dipped or immersed.
- It pictures death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4).
- John the Baptist used “much water” (John 3:23).
- It should be done as soon as possible after believing.
- All commands to be baptized are immediate. (Acts 8:35-38; Acts 10:44-48).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** How have you responded to the command of Jesus to be baptized? Are you encouraging those you disciple to be baptized?

**Digging Deeper:** *T4T A Discipleship Revolution* by Steve Smith with Ying Kai

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Jesus did not leave us alone on the earth when He ascended into Heaven, He left us His Holy Spirit. In fact, He even told us that it was *better* for Him to leave so the Spirit could be with us. This is a shocking statement! Do we really believe it? Do we actually live this way? The Holy Spirit is not an “it” or “thing”. The Spirit is a person; God’s presence in our midst. Too many Christians do not experience the fullness of what it means to truly know the Spirit and miss out on this incredible gift of the person of God.

**Worship:** Sing several songs focused on the presence of God. Consider meditating on Psalm 139:7-12. Wait on the Lord and corporately share what you heard.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): John 16:5-16

**Background:** Jesus was teaching the disciples to prepare them for life once He departed the earth.

**What does this passage SAY about the Holy Spirit?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** Take time either during Lifegroup or at a later point to sit quietly and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to the group. Have people write out whatever came to mind. It is okay to not be sure, just write what you sense. Share with someone in the group what you felt. Often it is a simple encouragement or a Scripture that comes to mind. More mature believers can help others discern what is God speaking to them.

**Commitment:** Will you set aside time during your personal devotions to listen for the voice of the Spirit and write out whatever He says every morning this week?

### Teaching guide

- The Holy Spirit is a person, not an “it”.
- The Holy Spirit comes to reside in us when we receive Christ (John 3:3-8; Ephesians 1:13-14).
- The Holy Spirit will teach us and remind us of all truth (John 14:26).
- The Holy Spirit teaches and convicts us.
- The Holy Spirit speaks to us. This does not replace the authority of the Bible, but it does represent His leadership in our life. Every believer has access to the Spirit so every believer is capable of hearing God.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you take time to listen for the voice of the Spirit this week? If so, what did you feel that He was speaking?

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Have you ever felt powerless? Maybe you were trying to do something and got too tired to finish. Or maybe you have taken on a task that was just too big for you. Well, God has called us to live a life that is entirely impossible for us to live. We are powerless on our own to make the blind see, heal the sick, and be fruitful witnesses throughout the world. We also struggle to live with sustained joy and boldness. Yet God doesn't leave us without a supernatural power source. He has given us the Holy Spirit. The scripture describes an ongoing experience of being filled with His power as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit and encourage others to do the same.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Acts 2:1-41

**Background:**

**What does this passage SAY about the baptism of the Holy Spirit?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** *There is no one method for being baptized with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Neither is there only one manifestation of the Spirit. The following are common, biblical characteristics of those who experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit: A hunger for more of God (Matthew 5:8), desire for spiritual gifts and God's power (1 Corinthians 14:1), confession of all known sins (Acts 19:18), coming to Jesus and believing His promise (John 7:37-38), asking to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), and expecting manifestations like prophecy or tongues or joy or boldness (Acts 19:6 – See also Acts 4:31-35; 13:53). Put on some worship music. Focus on Jesus. Repent of any known sins. Read a few of the scripture promises about the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-38; Luke 11:13; Acts 1:8). Lay hands on one another asking the Father to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Believe and receive Him in faith.*

**Commitment:** *Ask God every morning this week to be filled with the Holy Spirit.*

## Teaching guide

- The Holy Spirit came into your life when you received Christ. (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is unique experience from salvation but they can happen at the same time.
- Jesus was “born of the Spirit” at conception (Luke 2:26-38), yet He was “baptized in the Holy Spirit” (filled or anointed) when the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove at His baptism (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1, 14, 18-19). The same is true for us. We are “born of the Spirit” when we receive Christ (John 3:5-6; John 20:22; Ephesians 1:13-14) but are baptized in the Spirit (Acts 1:8, Acts 2; Acts 19:1-7) when the Spirit “comes upon” us in power.
- The baptism of the Spirit is not just a one-time experience but we are encouraged to “be continually filled” with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; John 20:22; Acts 2:4, 4:31).
- We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit so that we can do the works that Jesus did – even greater ones (John 14:12-13).
- The Holy Spirit gives us gifts to serve the church and extend the Kingdom of God. These gifts are abilities that are supernaturally empowered by God. (1 Corinthians 12:1-8).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you ask every day to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Did you notice anything different?

**Digging Deeper:** Review Scripture references in the Teaching Guide and Practice sections; *Surprised by the Power of the Holy Spirit* by Jack Deere

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** There is no other book in the world like the Bible. The Bible was written over a 1500-year span by over forty authors in three languages. It records over 1000 references to fulfilled prophecies and an eyewitness account of a supernatural miracle of God in most of its 66 books. The Bible is regarded as the most reliable text of any piece of literature ever. It has been translated into other languages more than any other book. And for 2000 years, countless lives have been transformed by its message. The Bible is God's Word to us. He speaks to us through His Word today. Let's consider today what the Bible says about itself and what we and others need to know.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 119:1-16

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5

**Background:** Paul is in prison giving one last charge to his son in the faith, Timothy.

**What does this passage SAY about the Scriptures?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message(s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Teach them the SOS Bible study method. Have them explain it back to you .

**Commitment:** Encourage them to read one chapter in the gospel of John everyday for 21 days. Have them do the SOS Bible in a journal according to the following pattern.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the Scripture.
- Read one chapter.
- Write one verse or phrase that God highlighted as you read.
- Write in your own words what God is SAYING.
- Write "I will...". Then state one thing God wants you to OBEY from his word.
- Write the name of one person with whom you can SHARE this with.

### Teaching guide

- God spoke through imperfect men perfectly what He wanted us to know (2 Peter 1:19-21).
- All of the scripture is God-breathed. This means that God is the author of the bible and the author is with us each time we read it! (John 5:39-40).
- The Bible has authority over our thoughts (Hebrews 4:12).
- The Bible has authority over our emotions (Psalm 199:81).
- The Bible has authority over other people (Acts 17:11).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** What has God been speaking to you through the Bible this week? have you used the SOS Bible study method?

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Have you ever had a relationship with someone you never talk to? Not likely. Having a relationship with someone implies that you communicate with them. Prayer is “talking” with God. We can communicate with God in the same way we can with any other person. Prayer should be natural conversation with God. When you pray you should be honest and sincere. We don’t have to pray perfectly. Jesus will teach you just as he did His disciples. And in turn, He will help us teach others to do the same.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 86 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to calling out to God.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Luke 11: 1-13

**Background:** Some of Jesus’ disciples have overheard him praying. They are so stirred by how and what he prayed that they asked Him to teach them.

**What does this passage SAY about prayer?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** Spend time praying through each type of prayer (Praise, Thanksgiving, Confession, Petition, Intercession). Model the type of prayer first then have them do it. Have them explain back to you each type of prayer.

**Commitment:** Make list of things to pray for this week. Take five minutes every day to thank God for something He has done, confess any known sins and make requests for the things on the list.

### Teaching guide

- Prayer is communicating with God, both talking and listening
- There are different ways we pray to God
  - Praise “Hallowed by your name” – honoring God for who He is.
  - Thanksgiving – gratitude for what God has done.
  - Petition “Give me this day...” – making requests of God.
  - Confession “Forgive us...” – admitting sin.
  - Intercession “As we forgive those...” – asking God to help others.
- Prayer requires perseverance at times.
- Prayer is an indicator that we need God and trust Him as our good Father.
- We pray to the Father in Jesus’ name.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Were you able to pray every day this week?

**Digging Deeper:** Luke 18:1-4; *With Christ in the School of Prayer* by Andrew Murray; *Prayer* by Richard Foster

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Have you ever felt alone? When God created the first man, Adam, He declared, “It is not good for man to be alone.” (Genesis 2:18). Then He created Eve. People were made to live in community. Just look around our culture and you’ll see people looking for authentic community someplace – clubs, bars, online. God’s intention from the very beginning was to form families that would give Him glory and multiply out all over the world. God’s community is called the church. The church is not a building, program or the keeper of rules. The church is people; people called out by God for the purposes of God.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 100.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 1 Peter 2:9-12

**Background:** Peter is writing to encourage suffering believers.

**What does this passage SAY about the church?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** Memorize 1 Peter 2:9. Say it out loud together.

**Commitment:** Commit to attend a Sunday service together and join or start a Lifegroup.

### Teaching guide

- The word church, actually means “the called-out ones.” The church is not a building or program or even a doctrinal statement. The church is people, people who have been called out by God to follow Christ.
- The church is called the body of Christ because it does His work on earth (Ephesians 2:22; 3:10-11).
- The mission of the church is to declare the good news of who God is and what He has done to the world.
- God encourages us to gather consistently with other believers for encouragement (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- You cannot love Christ and not love the church as imperfect as we are. (Acts 9:1-6).
- The local church is the hope of the world! (Ephesians 3:20-21).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Have you committed to gather regularly with a group of believers?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Ephesians; 1 and 2 Timothy; *The Church Can Change the World* by Jimmy Seibert; *The Body* by Charles Colson



**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Men are often remembered by their last words. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He used His last words to charge His disciples with the mission of changing the world. The disciples were probably shocked as they realized God didn't have a backup plan for world transformation, but rather, discipleship through the everyday Christian was His only plan. These words deserve special attention and action from us as His disciples, as He lays out strategic elements and the promise of His Power and Presence to complete what Jesus came to do. If we are going follow Jesus, we are to join Him by working with Him to complete what He came to do: make disciples of all nations!

**Worship:** Read Psalm 67 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to God's sovereign power and love for people.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Matthew 28:18-20

**Background:** Jesus is speaking the last words He will speak to His disciples in person before ascension.

**What does this passage SAY our mission in life?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message with this week?**

**Practice:** *If you are already discipling, write down how these verses will change the way you disciple. If not, write a list of a those who don't know Jesus yet and ask Holy Spirit how you can serve them or initiate spiritual conversations with them.*

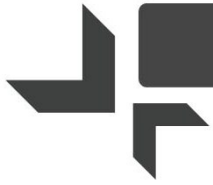
**Commitment:** *Follow through with your obedience/practice plan in the next two weeks.*

## Teaching guide

- Jesus is speaking to all believers, not just those in vocational ministry, and we should have the same sense of purpose.
- Jesus challenged His disciples to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and start where you are to impact the world (Acts 1:8).
- Take time to ask Jesus to fill you with more of His Spirit and power (Luke 3:16).
- If the Holy Spirit has not directed you elsewhere, ask the Spirit of God to give you vision and direction to start making disciples where you are: your workplace, your family, your neighborhood, etc.
- Note the difference between *teaching* them the words of Jesus and teaching them to *obey* the words of Jesus. Discipleship is teaching people obedience to Jesus' Word.
- Look to disciple those who are spiritually hungry. You will know these people because they obey what Jesus says.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** How did you implement discipleship based off Matthew 28:18-20 since we met last? How did it go?







***Core Values***  
***Discipleship Guides***

***LOVING GOD***

**Pastoral Care:** *How are you doing today?*

**Accountability:** *How did you do with what we talked about last week?*

**Vision:** Have you ever had a deep, personal friendship with someone you never spent any time with? Of course not! In order to build a relationship with God, we need to spend time with him. Throughout Jesus' life, He continually "set apart time" to be alone with his Father. Just like us, Jesus depended on the Father for encouragement, direction, and help in life. If you want to have a close relationship with God, He invites you to set daily time with Him where you give Him your burdens, hear Him speaking to you, pray for your needs and the needs of others and simply enjoy Him. We call this set-apart time for seeking God, our time with Jesus. Spending time with God will not make God love you more, but if you seek God every day, you will grow in your love for, and obedience to, Him.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 27 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to seeking God and enjoying his presence.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Matthew 6:5-15

**Background** – Jesus is teaching a crowd of followers about what our lives look like in the Kingdom of God. This portion of Jesus' teaching is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount.

**What does this passage SAY spending time alone with God?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Spend time with Jesus together using the look up, look in, look out pattern. Modeling is important here. When the disciples saw Jesus praying they then asked him, "Teach us to pray." You can do this as a separate lesson, individually or altogether.

**Commitment:** *Complete this sentence, "In response to what God is saying, I will..."*

*Practical suggestion: 30/30 challenge - Encourage them to decide when and where you will set aside time alone to spend time with God for 30 minutes daily over the next 30 days!*

## Teaching guide

- The focus in our time with Jesus is our relationship with Him, not just religious behaviors.
- Look up, look in, look out pattern
  - ◇ Look Up - acknowledge God's presence; worship, praise and thank Him through songs or Psalms
  - ◇ Look In – share personal needs with God; read the Bible using SOS, journal and listen to Him
  - ◇ Look Out – pray for the needs of other people
- Make spending time with God a part of your daily routine. It is your decision to meet with God. Find a time where you can consistently meet with God. Choose a place where you can meet with God without being disturbed. Collect items you may need for your time with God: a Bible, journal, pen, and music.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** What has God spoken to you in your time alone with Him this week?

**Digging Deeper:** Mark 1:29-38; Luke 18:1-4; *With Christ in the School of Prayer* by Andrew Murray; *Secrets of the Secret Place* by Bob Sorge

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Throughout Jesus' ministry on earth He invited people to "come to Him". This gracious invitation allows us to approach God anytime and anywhere, no matter what we have done. Yet His welcome did not stop there. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He encouraged His disciples to "abide in me." The word "abide" means to remain. God invites you and others in your life to enjoy a personal and interactive relationship with Him every day.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 23 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to God's presence.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): John 15:1-17

**Background** – Jesus is sharing the Passover meal with His closest disciples the night before He is crucified.

**What does this passage SAY about abiding in Christ?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice :** *Go on a walk with Jesus. (If someone in your group needs help, do it with them.) Encourage them to focus on God's presence. They can thank Him or share with Him burdens they are carrying. Encourage them to talk with God about what they see as they walk.*

**Commitment: ATL Challenge** – Set your watch or phone alarm to go off every hour during the day the next week. When the alarm goes off, if possible do three things:

1. Acknowledge His presence.
2. Thank him for His goodness.
3. Listen to anything He wants to say.

## Teaching guides

- Abiding in Christ is a description of our union with God. We are connected to God as a branch is connected to a vine. This is our permanent relationship with God.
- Abiding in Christ is also a description of our communion, or fellowship, with God.
- God invites us into an ongoing awareness of his presence where we remain in increasing 1) conversation with him and 2) obedience to him in our everyday life.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Were you more aware of God's presence this week? What made the difference?

**Digging Deeper:** Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5-6; *Practicing the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence; *Abide in Christ* by Andrew Murray

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Read Psalm 119:1-16 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to trusting and following God.

**Vision:** Has there ever been a time you didn't want to be told what to do? Most of us can think of a time if not a season of our lives when we rebelled against an authority. We don't trust the person telling us what to do because we believe we know what is best. That spells trouble when we take that independent attitude toward God. God is perfect in wisdom, goodness and love. Why would we not trust what He says to do? God desires that we obey Him because He loves us and wants what is best for us. We can't earn God's love through our obedience because no one is perfect. Rather, obedience is an expression of love and trust of Him who has already loved us so unconditionally.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Luke 6:46-49

**Background** – Jesus is teaching a crowd of followers about what our lives look like in the Kingdom of God. This portion of Jesus' teaching is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount

**What does this passage SAY about obeying God's word?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice :** Share one thing you know God has asked you to do that you have not done. How can you do that in the next 24 hours?

**Commitment :** Read through Matthew 5-7 over the course of two weeks. Every time you read a command, stop and ask God what he wants you to do that day to obey that command.

### Teaching guides

- Obedience flows naturally out of our love for God (John 14:23).
- Obeying God is hearing His voice and following Him (John 10:27).
- The spirit of God lives in us and empowers us to obey when we cannot on our own (Romans 8:11-14).
- God desires that we obey quickly, cheerfully and completely.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you obey what God told you to do the last time we met? Did you obey what Jesus commanded in Matthew?

### Digging Deeper:

Matthew 21:28-32; 1 Samuel 15; Hebrews 11:8-10; *Intimacy with God through the Fear of the Lord* by Joy Dawson

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Read Psalm 20 and/or sing a song or two confessing your trust in God.

**Vision:** Have you ever struggled to trust someone? Maybe they let you down or didn't keep their word. It is difficult to trust people we can see, and it can also be difficult to trust God, who we can't see, especially when circumstances in our life go bad. Yet God is supremely trustworthy like no one else. We don't always understand what He is doing or why. But our faith pleases Him. As followers of God we live by faith and not by sight.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 20 and/or sing a song or two confessing your trust in God.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Hebrews 10:35-11:19

**Background** – The writer is encouraging young believers to trust God and not shrink back by doubting Him.

**What does this passage SAY about living by faith?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** What is one thing today that seems impossible in your life? Ask God together what He thinks about that. Give scripture promises to encourage faith. Lead them to pray for that thing in faith. Write a faith statement about that thing ("I believe God will..."). Read it out loud together.

**Commitment:** Encourage them to read their faith statement (s) out loud every morning until you meet again.

### Teaching guides

- Notice the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1, 5-6.
- What would your life look like if you lived by faith and not by fear?
- Our faith in God must precede our understanding of events (Hebrews 11:3; Proverbs 3:5-6).
- Faith without action is not faith. (Hebrews 11:8; James 2:14).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** How is your faith in God concerning that thing we talked about last week? Did you declare your faith statement (s) every day?

**Digging Deeper:** Hebrews 11:20-39; Galatians 3:1-9; James 2:14-26; *Heavenly Man* by Brother Yun



**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Passionate worship begins with realizing the truth: I DESERVE DEATH, BUT JESUS GAVE ME LIFE! When I hear this truth, and the reality of it erupts in my soul, I respond with overwhelming thanksgiving, which expresses itself in passionate worship! Passion for Jesus isn't led by emotion...it is a result of faith. For many, emotion is inevitable when the reality of and relationship with Jesus really sets in.

**Worship:** If possible, sing together, "I Will Exalt You", and/or read together Psalm 63:1-8.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): John 12:1-19

**Background** – Jesus is near the end of His earthly ministry here. He has spent the last 3 years or so preaching the truth of God's love. In this passage we find Jesus being worshiped, both privately and publically, by people who had been touched and changed by Him and by those who had only been observers. There were those who deeply loved Jesus, but there were also those around who hated Him and never really saw who He was.

**What does this passage SAY about passionate worship?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice/Worship:** Have an extended worship time together. Worship long enough to grow weary and press through.

**Commitment:** Find a time to get completely alone with God this week. Sing a few songs out loud.

### Teaching guides

- Worship is our response to God because of who he is and what he has done for us.
- We worship through music and praise (Psalm 149-150).
- We worship through the surrender of our will to his (Romans 12:1-2).
- Passionate worship is costly worship.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Were you able to get alone with God to worship out loud this week? How was your corporate worship experience this week?

**Digging Deeper:** *The Air I Breathe* by Louie Giglio; *The Unquenchable Worshipper* by Matt Redman; *Extravagant Worship* by Darlene Zschech.

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** One common knock against Christians is that they are hypocrites. They don't practice what they preach. In some ways this is true. Christians can still sin. Coming to Christ doesn't mean that we are automatically perfect in all our thoughts and actions. We will need the grace of God throughout our lives until we are made finally perfect in heaven when we see Jesus face to face (1 John 3:2-3). On earth God has given us a command that leads us to His grace and shatters hypocrisy in our lives – confession of our sins. Confession means agreeing with the truth about who you are and what you have done (John 3:19-21). We bring our sins into the light before both God and people.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 51 or sing a song about God's forgiveness. This is also a good lesson in which to take the Lord's Supper.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 1 Samuel 15:13-35 (or Psalm 51)

**Background** – Samuel has given King Saul a command from God to completely destroy all of the Amalekites. Saul did not obey.

**What does this passage SAY about brokenness and confession of sins?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Read through the attached handout entitled "broken and unbroken people." In a small group of 2-3 share where you see a proud, unbroken heart in your life.

**Commitment:** Commit to live a lifestyle of confession and repentance of your sins. Determine who will be your accountability partner (s). Set up a regular meeting with them to confess sins and encourage one another.

### Teaching guides

- A broken and contrite heart is one that is humble and repentant.
- A broken person knows their weakness but finds wholeness and strength in God. (2 Corinthians 12:4-7)
- Confession means agreeing with the truth and bringing sins into the light before God and people. (John 3:19-21)
- Confession of our sins to another person, though painful, brings healing in our lives. (James 5:16)
- Confession of our sins is a decision of your will and a matter of obedience to God.
- God is always quick to forgive and cleanse us from our sin when we confess. (1 John 1:9)
- Confession of sin is both a discipline and grace from God.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Is there something you have done this week that you need to confess?

**Digging Deeper (on their own or together another time):** 2 Corinthians 12:4-7; *Celebration of Discipline* (Chapter 10) by Richard Foster; *Bondage Breaker* (7 steps of freedom) by Neil Anderson; *Tale of Three Kings* by Gene Edwards

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Read Psalm 16. Listen to (or sing) “One Pure and Holy Passion”.

**Vision:** Christians are hypocrites. Have you ever heard that? Ever thought that yourself? There is a breakdown. Many Christians say that they follow Jesus yet live like the world. God calls us to be holy.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

**Background** – The Apostle Paul is writing to young believers.

**What does this passage SAY about holiness?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Confess one area of your life that needs to be set apart from the world. What is one thing in your life that would embarrass you if Jesus asked you about it?

**Commitment:** The pursuit of Holiness is a journey and we are all at different points along the path. Decide with His help to go the other direction for the next 7 days.

### Teaching guides

- Holy means to be “set apart”. Christians should behave in a way that is set apart from the world.
- When we live holy lives we will win the respect of outsiders. It is holiness not necessarily “relevance “ alone that will draw unbelievers to Christ through us.
- Sexual temptation is rampant in our society. Yet ,there is grace to walk in purity! (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- The scripture is black and white on many issues yet gray on others. Decisions in regard to “gray areas” should be governed by love, not a preservation of our rights. (I Corinthians 10:23)

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Were you able to keep your commitment? If so, what has been the resulting experience/emotion? If not, why?

**Digging Deeper:** 1 Peter 1:13-25. Philippians 4:4-8; 1 Corinthians 8-10; *Holiness* by Henry Blackaby.

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Meditate on John 6:35 or listen to (sing) the worship song “This is the Air I Breathe”.

**Vision:** Denying oneself of anything, especially food, has to be one of the most counter-cultural things a human being can do. After all, the right kinds of foods are good for us and without eating we would eventually die! Fasting is primarily the act of willingly abstaining from some or all food, drink, or both, for a period of time. Why in the world would Jesus talk about fasting and why would Christians 2000 years later still undertake this ancient discipline? The answer is painfully simple. Either our appetites will control us, or we will control them. This is true not only of our appetite for food, but for power, sex, love, acceptance, money, etc. as well. Jesus understood that by exercising control over our appetites and trusting God to meet our every need, we would find a “fullness” that never diminishes.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Isaiah 58:1-12

**Background** – Isaiah is correcting the Israelite nation on their misuse of fasting.

**What does this passage SAY about fasting?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Talk through the practical's of fasting from food, i.e. drink plenty of fluids, use your normal meal times to spend extra time with God. Determine your reason and focus for the fast.

**Commitment:** Fast one day this week from dinner to dinner (24 hours).

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## Teaching guides

- Jesus fasted before beginning His public ministry. He is our example.
- Jesus said His followers would fast after He departed.
- We see numerous occasions for fasting in the Bible. (the following is not an exhaustive list)
  - ◇ Pursuing humility, Psalm 69:10.
  - ◇ Seeking the will of God, Ezra 8:21-23.
  - ◇ Asking for deliverance, Mark 9:29.
- Fasting is most always coupled with prayer.
- There are different types and different lengths of fasts in the Bible (Moses, Daniel, Jesus, Disciples).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** What did you find most difficult about fasting? What did you find most rewarding?

**Digging Deeper:** Matthew 6:16-18; Mark 2:18-22; Acts 13:1-5; *God’s Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Read Psalm 112 or a worship a song or 2 .

**Vision:** Have you ever worried about money? Likely, all of us have at one time or another. Money is a big part of our lives. Yet, the scripture says that God created everything in the world, so He owns everything (Psalm 24:1). He desires that we seek Him and trust Him in how we use the money and possessions He has entrusted to us. Did you know Jesus talked more about money than He did about faith and prayer combined? Let's see what He has to say about our money.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Luke 12:13-34

**Background** – Jesus is teaching to a large crowd.

**What does this passage SAY our money and possessions?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Share with one another any current debt you are paying off. Pray for and support one another in paying it off.

**Commitment:** Develop (or update) a personal budget in the next 2 weeks into order to track where your money is going.

## Teaching guides

- God will provide for all we need (Philippians 4:19).
- Our hope is in God, not in our money and possessions as our source of life, security and joy.
- Everything (all wealth and possessions) is the Lord's. He entrusts His possessions to us as His stewards. There are rewards for good stewardship and loss of rewards for poor stewardship (Psalm 24:1; Matthew 25:14-30).
- A tithe is 10% of your gross income. God requires a tithe to be offered to God in the Old Testament (Malachi 3:6-12). In the New Testament, Jesus raises the bar and asks his followers to be willing to give up everything (Luke 14:33; Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-37). Thus, we encourage giving a tithe of our money as the starting point for giving in the kingdom of God. We encourage believers to give a tithe of their income to a local congregation and to freely and prayerfully give to missionaries and the poor as God leads.
- God desires that we give cheerfully, not reluctantly or out of guilt (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Have you developed / updated your personal budget in the last 2 weeks?

**Digging Deeper:** Matthew 6:19-35; Acts 4:32-37; 2 Corinthians 8-9; *Money, Possessions and Eternity* by Randy Alcorn; *Financial Peace University* by Dave Ramsey



***LOVING  
ONE ANOTHER***

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Read Psalm 133 and/or sing a song.

**Vision:** Have you ever felt alone? When God created the first man, Adam He declared, “It is not good for man to be alone.” (Genesis 2:18). Then He created Eve. People were made to live in community. Just look around our culture and you’ll see people looking for authentic community someplace – clubs, bars, online. God’s intention from the very beginning was to form families that would give Him glory and multiply out all over the world. God’s community is called the church. The church is not a building, program or the keeper of rules. The church is people; people called out by God for the purposes of God.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Acts 2:42-47

**Background** – Jesus has ascended to be with the Father in heaven. The disciples have received the Holy Spirit with power at Pentecost and over 3000 people put their faith in Christ. These verses are a snapshot of early church life in its purest form.

**What does this passage SAY community?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Do the “circles exercise” together. Draw a dotted circle that represents your Lifegroup. Would you consider this group a covenant community? If so fill in the dotted line. Then place a symbol or abbreviation for the following characteristics from Acts 2:42-47 listed above. Those characteristics inside the circle are those you see present in your small group. Those characteristics outside the circle are those in which your small groups need to mature.

**Commitment:** Take the Lord’s supper together and pledge your commitment as a covenant community for the next season of life.

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### Teaching guides

- We were created to live in community (Genesis 2:15-25).
- God commands us to meet regularly together for our good (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- What are the characteristics of an Acts 2 church? Devotion to the scripture, fellowship (sharing of time and hearts), breaking bread (Lord’s supper), prayer, spiritual gifts, sense of awe (the presence of God), giving to those in need, praise, and witness to those outside the group.
- The early church met together both in the temple for worship, prayer and teaching AND in homes for encouragement in their daily lives.
- A covenant community is one that has pledged a commitment to one another for definable period of time.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Do you think or speak well of the church? Why or why not?

**Digging Deeper:** Ephesians; *The Church Can Change the World* by Jimmy Seibert; *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** The granting of honor to others is an essential experience in the believer's life. Christians are to bestow honor on those for whom honor is due. The believer is to honor God, for he is the sovereign head of the universe and his character is unsurpassed. The believer is to honor those in positions of earthly authority, such as governing authorities (Rom 13:1-7), masters (1 Tim 6:1) and parents (Exodus 20:12). As a participant in the church, the believer is also called to honor Jesus Christ, the head of the church (John 5:23), fellow believers (Rom 12:10), and widows (1 Tim 5:3).

**Worship:** Sing two worship songs and/or spend time honoring God through thankfulness for Him.

## SOS Discovery Bible Study: Romans 12:9-21

**Background**—Paul, writing to the Romans, tells us once we have surrendered ourselves to Christ, we should begin to serve others. Our service should be done by the employment of spiritual gifts for the benefit of the whole body (12:3-8), and with an attitude of sincere love—both for believers and unbelievers (12:9-21).

**What does this passage SAY about honoring one another?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Spend time verbally honoring the people you are responsible to (boss, teacher, parent), with (friends, coworkers) and for (employees, children, disciples). Have each person honor someone in each of those groups.

**Commitment:** Intentionally honor at least one person every day with your words, actions or attitude.

## Teaching guides

- Honoring one another means giving respect and recognition to the people around us through our words, actions and attitudes.
- Honor is something given unconditionally. It is not something earned.
- Honor requires that we see people as Christ sees them.
- We are to honor our authorities, our peers and those we lead.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Were you able to honor one person every day this week? In what way has honoring God, others and yourself helped you understand the importance of honor?

**Digging Deeper:** John 5:22-23; Luke 14:7-8; *Culture of Honor* by Danny Silk



**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Has anyone ever hurt you? Of course they have. We live in fallen world. People have hurt you and you have likely hurt someone else. However, the good news is our sin has been forgiven through Christ. Jesus was perfect. He endured the pain and punishment we deserved so that whoever believes in Him would find forgiveness and healing. (Psalm 103:8-12; Isaiah 53). Amazing! Because God has so freely forgiven us, He commands that we get rid of all bitterness and forgive others ourselves (Ephesians 4:31-32). It has been said that bitterness (unforgiveness) is like drinking poison and hoping someone else dies. Unforgiveness blocks our fellowship with God and prohibits us from receiving His blessings. The world desperately needs forgiveness and in Christ we have it to give.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 5 or a song about forgiveness of sins. This is also a good lesson in which to take the Lord's Supper .

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Matthew 18:15-35

**Background** – Jesus is speaking privately with his disciples.

**What does this passage SAY about forgiveness?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** On a sheet of paper, list out the names of people who come to your mind that have wronged you. Starting with the first person on the list, make the choice to forgive them for every painful memory that comes to mind. Pray this prayer for each memory: “Lord I choose to forgive (name the person) for (say what they did to hurt you) even though it made me feel (share the painful feeling)\_\_\_\_\_ . Repeat for each person and memory.

**Commitment:** Commit to live a lifestyle of forgiveness. This week you will be more sensitive to moments when you feel wronged. Memorize this prayer and use quickly when someone hurts you.

## Teaching guides

- The servant was unable to forgive because he had not himself received the forgiveness the master had given.
- Forgiveness is a daily decision of your will and matter of obedience to God.
- Forgiveness is agreeing to live with consequences of another person's sin.
- Forgiveness is not necessarily forgetting, but choosing not to hold someone's sin against them.
- The power to forgive comes from the forgiveness you have received from Christ.
- The power to forgive also comes from trusting that God is that person's ultimate judge so you don't have to be.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Have you been quick to forgive this week? Share an example

**Digging Deeper:** *Bondage Breaker* by Dr. Neil Anderson

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Observe people long enough and you will learn that there are givers and there are takers. Have you ever met someone who was selfless, and seemed only to think of what others needed? As you read through the gospels, you quickly see that Jesus was a giver, in every story serving the needs of others. Let's see how Jesus redefined leadership and set the standard of what it is to be servant-hearted.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 8.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Mark 10:35-52

**Background** – Jesus's public ministry is coming to a close. He is on his way to Jerusalem where he will be tried and crucified. His disciples still do not yet understand what Jesus came to do in dying on the cross. They still expected him to be setting up His earthly kingdom any day. Here we pick them up arguing over who will be the greatest in His kingdom.

**What does this passage SAY about serving others ?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** As you end your Lifegroup or discipleship meeting ask "What needs to be done?" to clean and straighten up the place you are meeting. This could be picking up trash, straightening chairs, encouraging someone, etc.

**Commitment:** Implementation idea: At each meal this week ask the Lord, "What needs to be done?" Consider the needs of family, friends or co-workers. You are asking God to open your eyes to what you can do, big or small things, to help people.

### Teaching guides

- The revelation of a problem is an invitation from God to serve (John 5:17).
- There is no job too low for a servant (John 13).
- Just like Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do"?, a servant always asks "What needs to be done?"

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** What did you see this week that "needed to be done"? (opportunities to serve) What did you do?

**Digging Deeper:** John 13; *Celebration of Discipline* (chapter 9) by Richard Foster

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** Read Psalm 8 or sing a song or two exalting God

**Vision:** Have you ever wondered what, if any, talents you had? In an age of talent competitions and comparison, many base their self-identity on their abilities. God made us and places value on us because of his great love, not because of our performance. God gives spiritual gifts not to make us feel better about ourselves, but rather to empower us to love people in a unique way.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 1 Corinthians 12-13:4

**Background** – Paul is answering questions about the use of spiritual gifts.

**What does this passage SAY about spiritual gifts?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Encourage the gifts you see in each other. “I see Christ in your life when you...” Refer to the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 28-30.

**Commitment:** Complete a spiritual gifts inventory and reflect on the results.

### Teaching guides

- Spiritual gifts are more than talents
- Spiritual gifts are abilities God gives us by which God makes known his presence.
- The purpose of spiritual gifts is to bring glory to God and help to people.
- Everyone is given a spiritual gift by God.
- We need each other.
- We discover our spiritual gifts through serving, self-reflection and the encouragements of others.

### Accountability question (next time you meet):

**Digging Deeper:** Ephesians 4; Romans 12; *When Heaven Invades Earth* by Bill Johnson; *Strengths Finder 2.0* by Tom Rath

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Worship:** If possible, sing together “Jesus Is the Lord”. Or reflect on Philippians 2:5-11.

**Vision:** Few things go against the grain of many Americans more than the idea of being under someone else’s authority. We take pride in our independent spirit, and often equate “freedom” and “liberty” to being our own boss. We admire those who say things like “NOBODY tells ME what to do!” Well, things like freedom and liberty ARE precious commodities, and it’s right to be grateful for them and to protect them. However, the fact of the matter is that ultimately everybody is under somebody’s authority. And that’s actually GOD’s idea...for the world AND for the church. God raises up men and women to be servant leaders, and we are to trust God to lead us through them. Then one day EVERY knee will bow before Jesus and every tongue will declare that HE is Lord...the authority over all authorities!

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 1 Samuel 24

**Background** – When this story takes place, David had already been anointed a few years before by Samuel to be the King of Israel. He could have taken advantage of opportunities to kill King Saul so that he could take the throne. But because he honored God too much to kill God’s anointed, he and his men were on the run for years to avoid the swords of King Saul and his army.

**What does this passage SAY about spiritual authority?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Make two lists: one showing all the people in authority over you, and one showing all the people over whom YOU are an authority. Ask God to help you to find ways to serve and bless the people on both lists.

**Commitment:** Every day this week pray for all of the people on either list 1 or list 2 (alternating days).

### Teaching guides

- In many cases in life, we don’t get to choose who will be in authority over us
- In the church, God desires those in authority to be servant-hearted, always wanting what’s best for those whom they serve, and always seeking God’s will.
- It’s OK to disagree with leaders, but if we do, we are to appeal to them respectfully.
- Bottom line, it is a faith issue...God wants us to trust Him, our ultimate authority, to work through our authorities. We are to entrust into God’s hands those in authority over us, praying diligently for them.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you make your 2 lists and pray for the folks on those lists daily? Did God give you any insight on how to pray for them?

**Digging Deeper:** Matthew 8:5-10; *The Tale of Three Kings* by Gene Edwards

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** A healthy body is one in which all of the organs, skin, nerves, bones and muscles are functioning as intended, in sync with one another. So it is with a healthy family...each person growing personally, and in relationship with the other family members. Having a healthy family is not just a random thing, as in “some just have it and some just don’t.” God actually has a plan, which if pursued wholeheartedly will result in a spiritually strong, relationally connected, fruit-producing clan of people who are happy to belong together.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 133 and/ or sing a song.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Ephesians 5:21-6:11

**Background** – Paul was trying to show the folks in the church at Ephesus that Jesus wants to use FAMILIES to reveal himself to the world. Here, he describes God’s “family way” as consisting more of loving and serving each other and less of maneuvering and dominating to get his/her own way.

**What does this passage SAY about healthy families?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Encourage spouses to discuss with each other how husbands are loving their wives or how the wives are respecting their husbands.

**Commitment:** Have 20 minute “couch time” at least 5 days this week in which each spouse encourages and prays for the other.

## Teaching guides

- God calls husbands to love their wives sacrificially
- God calls wives to respect their husbands unconditionally
- God calls children to obey their parents cheerfully, quickly and completely.
- God intends that family relationships reflect his character

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you do your “couch time”? Did it make a difference?

**Digging Deeper:** *Love and Respect* by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs; *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* by Tedd Tripp



***LOVING  
THOSE WHO DON'T  
KNOW JESUS***

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** What is our responsibility with the Gospel message? There are a lot of perspectives out there. We have in our minds people with harsh repentance messages standing on the side of the road and then hear others say that we share merely with our actions but not our words. It is easy to get caught up in these different camps - in fact, many of us have probably swung to both extremes – but what does the Bible say? Today, we are going to study 2 Corinthians 5:11-19 in order to learn our true calling.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 103 and/or sing songs focused on the cross.

## SOS Discovery Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 5:11-19

**Background—** Paul is explaining his ministry to the Corinthian church and giving vision for the churches mission.

*What does this passage SAY about sharing the gospel?*

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

*What do you need to OBEY?*

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

*Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?*

**Practice:** Practice writing out the bridge illustration and sharing the Steps to Peace with God with a partner.

**Commitment:** List out 3 people you know who need to hear the gospel. Will you commit to pray for them every day this week and seek to share the gospel with at least one?

## Teaching guides

- Motivation to share the gospel comes from the love of God. Don't pre-judge people.
- The bridge illustration is a simple way to illustrate the gospel.
- Steps to Peace with God (Four points).
  1. God's Plan: He loves us and has a plan for our lives. (Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16)
  2. Problem: We all have sinned. In other words, no one is innocent; we all deserve death and hell as the penalty for sin. No matter how many good deeds we do in life, we are still guilty in the eyes of God. (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:2)
  3. God's Solution: God sent Jesus to die for our sins. (Romans 5:8; John 14:6; 1 Peter 2:5)
  4. Our Response: we must trust Jesus as our Savior and receive him into our life by grace. (Rom 10:9; Eph. 2:8; John 1:12)

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you pray for those that don't know Jesus this week? Did you share the gospel with someone? How did it go? Did something prohibit you?

**Digging Deeper:** Steps to Peace with God track

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Before Jesus was taken up to heaven, He said, "... and you will be my *witnesses...*" (Acts 1:8). What are we witnesses to? We are witnesses to the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives! People often do not know how to relate to God until they can see him practically at work in your life! Our lives have become walking testimonies of the grace and transforming power of God, and we don't need special words but just need to tell people about God in our lives!

**Worship:** Read Psalm 147 or, take time and recount all the sin and destruction that Jesus saved you from, and spend time thanking Him.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Acts 22:1-21)

**Background** – Paul has just been arrested amidst a large crowd. He has asked and has been granted permission to address the crowd.

**What does this passage SAY about sharing your testimony?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Practice sharing your testimony in the 3-part format in one minute with someone. Ask them for feedback and try it again. Share your plan of obedience to scripture with the other person.

**Commitment:** Follow through with your obedience/practice plan before the next meeting.

## Teaching guides

- An easy format to share your testimony is in these three simple parts:
  - *Before Jesus* – What was your life like before you knew God personally?
  - *Meeting Jesus* – How did you meet Jesus? What was that like?
  - *Since meeting Jesus* - how have you been changed? How does God's grace continue to empower your imperfect life?
- Look for ways to relate to the person. You may not have the same story as the person you are sharing with, but you can relate to anybody because you have sinned and had evil desires. You can also relate to them in what the effects of sin feel like: everybody has felt the loneliness, emptiness, and destruction sin causes.
- Be juicy – don't pretend like you "perfectly have it together." People don't want to see plastic Christians, they want to meet people like them who sincerely met a God who gives forgiveness and grace through Jesus Christ.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you share your testimony with the people you felt God leading to share with? What did you share? How did it go?

**Digging Deeper:** Ask some seasoned believers to share their testimony with you.



**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** God's method for transforming the world is different than how we often try to do things. When Jesus came to earth, He didn't have a political office or set up a large institution. He never lived in any of the major cities or had a religious title. Instead, He simply disciplined 12 men. That's it, pretty simple. But those men disciplined more, who disciplined more, who disciplined more, so much so that now there are almost 1 billion believers. If we want to reach the world we need to recapture this powerful principle of discipling people who will in turn disciple others.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): 2 Timothy 2:2

**Background** – Paul was giving Timothy instructions on leading a large church and gave the following plan.

**What does this passage SAY making disciple makers?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Get in groups and discuss *who* you are seeking to disciple and *what* you are doing with them. Give input and explain the discipleship guides as a tool for them to use.

**Commitment:** List out someone you feel led to initiate with for discipleship (they can be an unbeliever!). If you are already discipling someone, set a time to challenge them to start discipling someone else and hold them accountable.

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## Teaching guides

- People should be taught to obey (Matt 28:19); we need faithful people.
- Discipleship should be reproduced – it is not just for one person, but must be passed on.
- There are four generations of discipleship represented (Paul, Timothy, faithful men, other faithful men).
- Keep in mind that Timothy was young. These were not necessarily people younger than him; actually, most might have been older.
- The emphasis was not on how many people are initially disciplined but instead on whether or not it was being reproduced.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you initiate with the person you feel led to disciple? Or, did you talk to those you invest in about starting to disciple someone themselves? Are you holding them accountable?

**Digging Deeper:** Read *Master Plan of Evangelism* and *Master Plan of Discipleship* both by Robert Coleman. Read the *Disciple-makers Handbook* published by Antioch. Read *Changing the World through Discipleship* by Robert Herber.

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** The book of Acts is an incredible story of the church spreading the Gospel like wildfire throughout the world. In this story and throughout church history, the Gospel has spread both through relationship circles and from stranger to stranger. The heart of the early church was to “talk about God all the time, everywhere!” Most salvation accounts in the Bible were through a relational network. 95% of people in church today were brought by a friend. Relationship networks are unredeemed setups for Lifegroups and churches to form! God has strategically placed you in your sphere, and you are best positioned to reach them over any other person. Since the book of Acts, loving and sharing with the person in front of you, whether friend or stranger, has caused the worldwide spread of the gospel.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 96. If you are able, sing a song or two related to God’s sovereign power and love for people.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): John 4:26-42

**Background** – Jesus has been speaking with a Samaritan woman. He knew all about her past. She knew He must be from God.

**What does this passage SAY?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice:** Ask Jesus what spheres you are in. Determine what the next step is (initiate, care, or share) and make a plan.

**Commitment:** Obey what God says are the next steps to love people in your sphere of influence.

### Teaching guides

- Your sphere of influence is your natural network of relationships.
- You will be the most effective person in reaching the people in your sphere. Make your sphere your first priority.
- Here is a simple process:
  - ◇ **Initiate:** Initiate conversation and relationship with them. Be authentic. Be yourself. Ask questions.
  - ◇ **Care:** Love them. Share stories. Pray for them. Serve them. Heal the sick. Share words from God.
  - ◇ **Share:** Learn their story and apply the *gospel* of grace to their story. Invite them to receive Jesus in the place they need grace the most.
- Be authentic – it’s attractive. Unless you have *close proximity* to them, they will not be able to see your authenticity. You need to be okay with narrowing your relationships in the church so you can have relationships with people who don’t know Jesus.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you take the next steps (initiate, share, and/or care) in your sphere? How did it go? What is next?

**Digging Deeper:** *Becoming a Contagious Christian* by Bill Hybels

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today? 2) What is something God did this week? 3) What was something difficult this week?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** The book of Acts is an incredible story of the church spreading the Gospel like wildfire throughout the world. In this story and throughout church history, the Gospel has spread both through relationship circles and from stranger to stranger. The heart of the early church was to “talk about God all the time, everywhere!” On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 strangers gave their lives to Christ. From that time, “cold contact” evangelism has been the instrument for the spread of the Gospel into new people groups, nations, or friendship circles. In any group of people, there is often one person or a group who are “doorway people” into that group. Since the book of Acts, loving and sharing with the person in front of you, whether friend or stranger, has caused the worldwide spread of the Gospel.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 96. If you are able, sing a song or two related to God’s sovereign power and love for people.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Luke 10:1-24

**Background** – Jesus was sending out His disciples to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom in other cities

**What does this passage SAY?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice :** *Go and share with some strangers. Take time beforehand to ask God where to go and if He has any other direction (a word for someone, look for a person in certain clothing, a person with a certain need, etc.).*

**Commitment:** *Share the gospel with two strangers on your own this week.*

### Teaching guides

- Look for the person of peace (v. 6). You will recognize them because they will receive *both you and your message*.
- To find the people of peace, share frequently and with everyone. Love everybody regardless of how they respond, but keep moving until you find the person of peace.
- Be confident in the authority you have in Christ. You have been commissioned to preach and heal the sick.
- Your job isn’t to grow fruit; it’s to throw the seed. The power for growth and salvation is the gospel, not your words.
- Immediately begin discipleship with the person of peace, and equip them to reach their relational sphere.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you share with two strangers last week? How did it go?

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Have you ever needed someone to help you? If we were honest we would have to say yes. All around the world people are in need of help. As God opens our eyes, we'll see they are all around us. God cares about those that are in need. He cares about orphans and widows. He cares about the sick and the impoverished. He cares for those enslaved and those rejected by the world. He wants to take action. He wants to take action through you and me.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 82.

### Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Luke 10:25-37

**Background** – Jesus is being questioned about who and how we should love.

**What does this passage SAY?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice :** What needs do you see in the world or in the people around that causes you to say to yourself, "That's not right!" How would God want you to be a part of helping those people in need?

**Commitment:** Make a list of the types of people in Matthew 25:31-40. Take this month to be on the lookout for people described on this list. Help them in whatever way you can. See how many of the people of this list you can help in a month.

### Teaching guides

- Loving others requires stopping and being present with people.
- Loving others requires time and resources .
- Loving others requires accepting and caring for people different from you.
- The ultimate test of love is to love your enemies as Christ has loved us. (Luke 6:27-36)
- God asks to remember the poor and give generously to help them.
- Giving people "the power" to help themselves is better in the long run than a quick handout. "Give a man a fish and you'll feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and your will feed him for a lifetime. Teach him to teach others to fish and you'll be on your way to eradicating hunger. "

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Were you able to help someone who fits one of the descriptions from Matthew 25? What happened?

**Digging Deeper:** Matthew 25: 31-46; Luke 6:27-36; *The Good News About Injustice* by Gary Haugen. *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert.

**Pastoral Care :** How are you doing today?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Healing was a consistent part of the ministry of Jesus and the early church. Jesus was moved to minister to the sick out of compassion (Matthew 9:35-38). Now, Jesus has taken up His ministry and authority in us believers (Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:11, Matthew 10:1), and has charged His church to bring forth the Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). When heaven invades sickness, healing happens, and it is a confirmation of the Gospel to unbelievers.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 103 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to God's love and power.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Mark 2:1-11 (Matthew 10:5-10)

**Background** – Jesus is in a home healing and teaching many people.

**What does this passage SAY?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice :** Go out and find some sick people and pray for them! Practice the steps together.

**Commitment:** Pray for the next three sick people or people in pain that you run across.

## Teaching guides

- Walking in healing is all about God's authority and love at work through you.
- Healing has nothing to do with us and everything to do with Jesus' authority. Our goal is to get out of Jesus' way!
- Know the authority you have as a believer, and let the Holy Spirit lead.
- Expect healing to happen, and trust God with the results.

Here is a simple format to go about it:

- ◇ **Ask** – Ask the person what is wrong, and if they are in any pain right now, and where it is.
- ◇ **Heal** – By faith in Jesus, speak to the sickness to leave and release healing power of Jesus inside of you. Let the Holy Spirit lead any way during the process.
- ◇ **Ask** – Ask the person what they are experiencing (heat, coolness, tingling, etc.), or if anything has changed. Don't focus on what God isn't doing, focus on what He is doing. If something is happening, pray again.
- The only way to see the sick healed and learn is to actually find sick people and *do it!* If you don't see it, don't give up on it, keep finding people and praying for people. Celebrate small victories!
- The goal is love. If someone doesn't get healed, they can still feel loved!

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** Did you pray for the sick that you met? What did you do, and what happened? Celebrate if they stepped out and did it!

**Digging Deeper:** John 14:11-14; *When Heaven Invades Earth* by Bill Johnson

**Pastoral Care:** How are you doing today? What is something God did this week? What was something difficult this week?

**Accountability:** How did you do with what we talked about last week?

**Vision:** Living in America, it is easy to think that everybody has heard about Jesus, and there isn't much work to do. We can begin to feel like we are all fishing in the same fishbowl. However, did you know that over 42% of ethnic groups in the world are unreached? That means that there are 2.83 *billion* people in the world who are unreached! In America alone, 19% of the 357 people groups are unreached! (Joshuaproject.net) More importantly, as if these statistics are not enough, Jesus gives clear messages throughout the gospels of the urgency of the message getting to these people. We as believers, whether through going or sending, all need to heed the urgency of the state of the lost and take part, be it through going or sending.

**Worship:** Read Psalm 67 or, if you are able, sing a song or two related to God's sovereign power and love for people.

## Discovery Bible Study (SOS): Matthew 24:14

**Background** – Jesus is talking about the things that will, and need to happen, before Jesus comes back.

**What does this passage SAY?**

- What verse is God highlighting to you? What is He saying?
- What is the main point of this passage?
- What does it say about God? About you?

**What do you need to OBEY?**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you to do this week?
- What needs to change this week for you to obey?

**Who is one person who you need to SHARE this message (s) with this week?**

**Practice :** Take some time looking at statistics of unreached people groups, then take some time to pray through them. Take the next two weeks and ask God to give you His heart for these unreached people groups.

**Commitment:** Take a week and ask God what role you need to be playing in reaching unreached people. Research unreached people groups on the computer. Pray for those you find.

## Teaching Guides

- We as believers are not just saved to be free, but we have been recruited into the mission of Jesus Christ, for every people group to hear of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If Jesus is our Lord, it isn't an option to play a part of this mission or not; the purpose Jesus came was to seek and save the lost (Matthew 18:11).
- God will call some of us to go to different nations, and we all ought to be willing to go wherever whenever (Romans 12:1). For those of us called to stay, we ought to live with an awareness of the international need, to hear the Gospel message.
- God may call you to stay locally, but be aware of different ways you can participate: 1) Praying regularly for other nations of the earth 2) Going on a short term trip [ask your leaders about upcoming opportunities] 3) Engaging the Great Commission locally and sending others 4) Giving financially.

**Accountability question (next time you meet):** What did God speak about your role, and what is the plan you created? Can I follow up with you to help you live it out?

**Digging Deeper:** *Operation World* by Patrick Johnston and Jason Mandryk 2) *Church Planting Movements* by David Garrison



