

Discipleship Student Guide

By

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<http://web.mac.com/smpuckster/Site/Blog/Blog.html>

Resources

Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ by Greg Ogden

The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ by Bill Hull

Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship by Alan Hirsch & Debra Hirsch

New Revised Standard Version

Lesson 1 - Share the Word: Making Disciples

Over my years of ministry, I have discovered, mostly the hard way, that three ingredients are indispensable for healthy spiritual growth as a Christ follower: vulnerability, truth, and accountability.

Vulnerability happens when you open your life in a self-revealing way to other believers, giving permission for the Spirit to work in you. The more honest and transparent you are with others, the more you are entrusting your life to the Lord.

The truth of Scripture serves as the cutting edge for growth. During our discipleship journey over the next several months, I pray that you will enjoy seeing the truth take shape in your life.

Accountability involves entering into a mutual covenant with others in which you are giving each other authority to hold one another to your commitments.

The combination of these three elements, vulnerability, truth, and accountability, serves as the mold that God uses to give his shape to your life.

(Note: In the student guides I will use the terms "disciple" and "Christ follower" interchangeably. I believe the phrase Christ follower is more understandable in today's world than the term "disciple".)

Memory Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "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."

Core Truth: What is discipling?

Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.

1. Restate the memory verse in your own words.
2. Identify key words or phrases in the question and answer above, and state their meanings in your own words.
3. What questions or issues does the core truth raise for you?
4. Putting it in context: Read Matthew 28. What key events precede Jesus' giving of the Great Commission, and how would this have affected the disciples?
5. What does Matthew 28:18-20 teach us about Jesus?
6. Why does Jesus stress his authority as a backdrop to his command to "make disciples"?

7. How is disciple making to be carried out?

8. When is a disciple made?

9. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study on your own, read Luke 6:12-16 and 9:1-6, 10. These verses focus on the training and transfer of ministry to Jesus' selected disciples.

Lesson 2 - Share the Word: Being a Disciple

Following Jesus is difficult. Following Jesus is costly. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made it very clear that living with him meant following a road less traveled—the narrow road. The road most traveled is the road of moaning and grumbling about life’s difficulties. The road less traveled is the road of accepting life’s difficulties and meeting them head on.

Today’s lesson makes clear that Jesus never enticed someone to be a disciple under false pretenses or promises. He clearly laid out the conditions and benefits of being one of his followers.

Memory Verse: Luke 9:23-24

Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

Core Truth: Who is a disciple?

A disciple is one who responds in faith and obedience to the gracious call to follow Christ Jesus. Being a disciple is a lifelong process of dying to self while allowing Jesus Christ to come alive in us.

1. Let’s put the memory verse in context. Read Luke 9:18-27. What is the setting for Jesus’ call to be his follower?
2. In the space below, copy the memory verse verbatim.
3. What does it mean to deny self?

4. Illustrate ways from your experience that you attempt to save your life.

5. Why does losing your life for Jesus actually save it?

6. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study on your own, read Luke 5:1-11. This incident focuses on a dramatic catch of fish and shows the compelling draw as well as the frightening impact of Christ on Peter's life.

Lesson 3 - Share the Word: Quiet Time

A daily quiet time is a private meeting between a disciple and the Father. It should not be unplanned. You can commune with the Lord on a spur-of-the-moment basis many times each day, but a quiet time is a period of time you set aside in advance for the sole purpose of a personal meeting with the Father.

A daily quiet time consists of at least three parts. (1) Reading the Bible with the intent, not just to study, but to meet God through the written Word. (2) Meditating on what you have read so that biblical truth begins to saturate your mind, emotions, and will. Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. (Psalm 119:97). (3) Praying to (communing with) God: praising, thanking, and adoring him as well as confessing your sins. Also, asking him to supply your needs and interceding for others.

See: "Reading: If Quiet Time is New to You" at the end of the study guide for more information.

Memory Verse: Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Core Truth: How does a disciple grow in Christ on a daily basis?

Just as Jesus went to a "solitary place" to meet with his Father (Mark 1:35), so a disciple should daily pull away from the busyness of life for a quiet time, a personal rendezvous with the Father.

1. Read Psalm 1. In what ways are the wicked contrasted with the righteous?

2. Copy the memory verses, Psalm 1:1-3, verbatim in the space below.

3. The blessed man (person) is first defined by what he does not do. What is the blessed man to avoid?

4. What does it mean to delight in the law of the Lord?
See Psalm 37, especially verses 3-4.

5. What comparison is made in verse 3?

What does this image teach us about how fruit grows and is nurtured in our lives?

6. How would you define "prosper" in verse 3?

7. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study on your own, read John 15:1-11. Jesus selects an image of a vine to describe the kind of relationship that you are to have with him if you are to bear fruit.

Lesson 4 - Share the Word: Bible Study

See attachment to this study guide for more information.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Core Truth: What place should the Bible have in a disciple's daily quiet time?

Because the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the revelation of God and the standard of truth in all matters of faith and practice, a portion of each day should be set aside to read, study, and meditate on God's word. The Bible is to the spirit what food is to the body.

1. Read 2 Timothy 3. How is Paul's instruction about the nature of Scripture a contrast to the non-believing world that Paul describes?
2. Copy the memory verses, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, verbatim in the space below.
3. Paul says that "all Scripture is God-breathed," or inspired?. How is the inspiration of Scripture different from an "inspired" speech or writing?

See Hebrews 4:12-13 and Psalm 119:105.

4. How is Scripture useful in these ways?

Teaching

Rebuking

Correcting

Training

5. How does Scripture equip us for every good work?

6. Studying Scripture can simply increase our information. How do we move from information to transformation?

7. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study on your own, read Psalm 119:1-16. Psalm 119 is the longest of the Psalms and is a celebration of God's law. The value of God's law is found in verse 105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." By reading the first sixteen verses, you will see what your attitude should be toward God's Word and its place in your life.

Lesson 5 - Share the Word: Prayer

See attachment for additional information on prayer.

Theme Verse: **Matthew 28:18-20**

Memory Verse: **Matthew 6:9-13**

“This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Core Truth: **What is prayer and how can a disciple pray effectively?**

Prayer is transparent dialogue. It is a conversation with God in which we address him and, in quiet, are addressed by him. There are four types of prayer which are summarized by the acronym ACTS.

Adoration: appreciating God for who he is apart from what he has done for us.

Confession: acknowledging to God our specific sin and seeking his forgiveness.

Thanksgiving: appreciating God for his benefit to us.

Supplication: interceding for ourselves or others according to God’s will.

1. The Lord’s Prayer is set in Matthew 6, where Jesus contrasts true and false ways of showing devotion to God. How is the Lord’s Prayer an expression of true love for God?

7. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study on your own, read Luke 11:5-13 and 18:1-8. These two passages help to interpret one another. Luke 11 helps explain Jesus' unusual comparison of God to an unrighteous judge in Luke 18. You might also want to watch the modern-day version of the Widow and the Judge from Luke 18 at www.moderndayparables.com.

Lesson 6 - Share the Word: Worship

See attachment, "The Discipline of Worship" by Richard Foster from his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, pages 138-149. I particularly like this quote: "We can use all the right techniques and methods, we can have the best possible liturgy, but we have not worshiped the Lord until Spirit touches spirit."

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verse: Revelation 4:11

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Core Truth: What activity describes the primary activity of the church family?

The functions of the church family have been variously defined as teaching, fellowship, outreach, and worship (see Acts 2:42-47). Of these important functions, honoring God through worship is the church family's primary purpose, because it is our eternal vocation.

1. Read Revelation 4:1–5:14. Describe your impressions of the heavenly scene around the throne of God.
2. Copy the memory verse, Revelation 4:11, verbatim in the space below.
3. What characteristics are ascribed to God in Revelation 4:1-11?

4. Why is God declared worthy?

5. What does it mean for God to receive glory and honor and power?

6. What images are used in chapter 5 to describe Jesus?

7. What do you think are the benefits to us when we worship God?

8. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study on your own, read Revelation 4–5. These verses open a window on the continuous activity around the throne of God. Through this window we get a glimpse of our timeless vocation.

Lesson 7 - Teach the Word: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Deuteronomy 6:4 and 2 Corinthians 13:14

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Core Truth: Who is the God that a disciple worships and serves?

Although we cannot fully comprehend the nature of God, there is only one eternal God who is completely one in mind and heart with Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

1. Read Deuteronomy 6:1-19 and list the commands in these verses.
2. Copy the memory verses, Deuteronomy 6:4 and 2 Corinthians 13:14, verbatim in the space below.
3. Why do you think it was necessary to be so adamant that there is one God?

Why is it important for us to be adamant that there is one God today?

4. What characteristics are associated with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?

What message do these characteristics communicate about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?

5. Based on what you know about Paul and his letters to Corinth, what does Paul want the Christ followers of Corinth to understand about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians 13:14?
6. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

Texts for further study: Exodus 20:1-7, Exodus 3:13-14, John 8:58-59, and Acts 5:1-4.

Lesson 8 - Teach the Word: Made in God's Image

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Genesis 1:26-27 (New Living Translation)

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Core Truth: What is humanity?

God, the self-existent creator, called the world into being through his infinite creativity and power. The peak of God's creative work was humankind, male and female, made exclusively in his image.

1. Read Genesis 1-2. The creation formula for the six days follows a consistent pattern. How does the formula change when it comes to the creation of people?
2. Copy the memory verses, Genesis 1:26-27, verbatim in the space below.
3. In Genesis 1:26, God refers to himself in the plural ("us" and "our"). What could be the reason for this?

4. Genesis 1:27 says that human beings were created as “male and female” in his image. Why is this fact significant?

5. What authority are human beings given and what responsibility does this imply?

See 1:28-30 and 2:15-17

6. Read Genesis 2:18-25. What was the original man/woman relationship like?

Where in the Bible are these verses repeated and why?

7. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

Lesson 9 - Teach the Word: Sin

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Romans 3:23; 6:23

. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Core Truth: **What severed the relationship between God and human beings and what were the consequences?**

Though we were created in the image of God and therefore in perfect harmony with him, we willfully disobeyed God's authority and distrusted his goodness. As a consequence our relationship with God was broken, resulting in spiritual death, which in turn tarnished our relationship with ourselves, others, and creation.

1. Read Romans 3:9-23. Put in your own words Paul's indictment of humanity.
2. Copy the memory verses, Romans 3:23 & 6:23, verbatim in the space below.
3. According to Romans 3, what is the extent of our sin?

4. How is sin defined?

5. Read Romans 6:15-23. Note Paul's argument. He contrasts being slaves to sin with being slaves to righteousness. How does verse 23 summarize Paul's line of reasoning?

6. How have these verses spoken to you this week?

For additional study, read the story of the fall of humanity in Genesis 3. In this text, the nature of sin—its ability to deceive and confuse us and distort our knowledge of right and wrong—is exemplified in the serpent's beguiling persuasion of Eve to taste the forbidden fruit and then in Adam and Eve's hiding in shame from God.

Lesson 10 - Teach the Word: Grace

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Romans 5:8 and Ephesians 2:8-9

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Core Truth: What is God's response to our distrust and disobedience?

The Bible is the love story of God's revelation of himself in pursuit of wayward humanity. This pursuit reaches its climax in the cross with the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

1. Read Romans 5:6-11. What amazes Paul about God's action at the cross?
2. Copy the memory verses, Romans 5:8 and Ephesians 2:8-9, verbatim in the space below.

3. What condition were we in when Christ demonstrated his love for us?

What makes this demonstration so astounding?

4. This verse teaches us that God took into account everything there was to know about us and still decided to lay down his life for us. How is this liberating for you?

5. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. In the space below, rewrite these verses in your own words.

6. How have the verses from Romans 5 and Ephesians 2 spoken to you this week?

For additional study, see Luke 15:11-32. The story of Jesus takes us to the heart of the gospel and the heart of God is revealed in the story of the two sons in this text. The story is really not so much about a rebellious son and a judgmental son as it is about the loving, grace-filled heart of a waiting father.

Lesson 11 - Teach the Word: Redemption

There are numerous biblical passages that attest to the substitutionary nature of Christ's sacrificial death. But when the New Testament writers wanted us to understand the significance of Christ's death, they found in Isaiah's prophecy the truth that the Messiah would be a sacrificial servant before he became the reigning king (see Matthew 8:17, Acts 8:32-33, and 1 Peter 2:22-25).

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Core Truth: How did Christ reconcile the severed relationship between God and humanity?

Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to be the one mediator between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5). Through Christ's substitutionary death on the cross, the penalty of sin has been paid and by his bodily resurrection death has been defeated.

1. Read Isaiah 52:13–53:12. What characteristics of the Messiah do you notice?
2. Copy the memory verses, Isaiah 53:4-6, verbatim in the space below.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

3. What did Isaiah prophesy that Jesus would take upon himself?

4. What did Jesus accomplish for us?

5. What was our condition while Jesus was doing what he did for us?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 15. Use these verses as a prayer meditation. While reading and praying through the verses, concentrate on what the resurrection of Jesus means to you personally.

7. How have the verses from Isaiah 52:13–53:12 spoken to you this week?

Lesson 12 - Teach the Word: Justification

In Romans 1-2, Paul lays out a devastating argument against humanity. We are all under a death sentence, deserving the wrath of God, but God sent Jesus Christ to do for us what we could not do for ourselves—make us right with God. Our response to this saving act of grace is faith.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Romans 4:23-25

The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Core Truth: **How are the benefits of the cross transferred into our lives?**

It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we are made right (justified) before God. God’s gift of faith is the recognition of our utter moral bankruptcy and our inability to earn God’s favor and that we must receive and rest on Jesus Christ who has done it all.

1. Copy the memory verses, Romans 4:23-25, verbatim in the space below.
2. Read Romans 3:1-26. How does this text describe the human situation? See 3:9-18
3. What awareness do we receive from the law?

4. How are we made right (justified) with God?

5. Read Romans 4:1-25. What example of justification does this text offer and how was he made right with God?

6. What is the significance of this person being made right with God before he was circumcised?

7. How does God's promise of being an heir come and why does it come in this way?

8. How have the verses from Romans spoken to you this week?

Lesson 13 - Teach the Word: Adoption

In Romans 8:12-17, Paul discusses what it means to be sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit testifies to our adoption, and through becoming part of God's family we are also entitled to an eternal inheritance.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Romans 8:15-16

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. (New Living Translation)

Core Truth: **What is the greatest benefit we receive from our new standing with God?**

The highest privilege of the Christian life is our adoption as children into God's eternal family, through God's Son, Jesus Christ.

1. Read Romans 8:12-17. Notice the word "sonship" in verse 15. That word should be translated "adoption."

How did God adopt you?

How do you know that God has adopted you?

2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim in the space below.

3. How does being a child of God negate our former slavery to fear?

4. What does it mean to cry, "Abba, Father"?

5. Read Galatians 3:26–4:7.
On what basis are we all equal in Christ?

6. Why was Jesus sent?

7. What is the evidence that we are adopted children of God?

8. How have the verses from Romans and Galatians spoken to you this week?

Lesson 14 - Show the Word: Filled with the Holy Spirit

In simple terms, the Holy Spirit is someone who stands by every believer. He is like Jesus was with the disciples: teacher, mentor, guide, provider, counselor, and protector. He also stands beside every believer to make sure God hears our hearts when our words aren't adequate. Clearly, we could not follow Jesus without the Spirit as our guide.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Ephesians 5:18-20

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery*. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Debauchery means excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures. Immorality and depravity are words with similar meanings.

Core Truth: **How are we empowered by God to want to follow Jesus?**

Jesus promised that he would not leave us alone, but would send the Counselor, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers us to defeat the acts of our sinful nature (Galatians 5:16-21) and to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26). The Spirit makes God's truth clear to us and gives boldness to share that truth with the world (John 15:26-16:15).

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-20. Make a list of the actions that Paul urges us to take or to avoid.

Lesson 15 - Show the Word: Fruit of the Holy Spirit

The teaching on the fruit of the Spirit is set within the context of the battle raging inside of us between our old and new natures. We will examine Galatians 5:16-26 and related texts this week to help you with growing the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Core Truth: **What is the role of the Holy Spirit in transforming us into the image of Christ?**

The Holy Spirit is holy, for he produces the character of Christ in those in whom he dwells. These character qualities are known as fruit of the Spirit.

1. Read Galatians 5:16-21. What is the force that works in opposition to the fruit of the Spirit?

Read Romans 7:14-25. How does Paul describe the forces at work within him?

2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim in the space below.
3. Read Galatians 5:16, 22-26. How does one who is sinful and condemned by the law overcome the sinful nature?

Read Romans 8:1-17. What is Paul's answer to the wretched situation he described in Romans 7:14-25?

4. Which fruit of the Spirit do you need most in your life and why?

5. Read Jude 1:17-25. How does this text help you with fruit production?

6. How have these verses from Galatians 5:16-26 spoken to you this week?

A must read on the Fruit of the Spirit is **Life on the Vine: Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit** by Philip D. Kenneson

Lesson 16 - Show the Word: Trust

Faith, trust, and belief are a family of ideas that express the personal relationship that each Christ follower has with God as their Father. In the New Testament this group of words is derived from one basic word. These words describe the faithful relationship of partners in an agreement and the trustworthiness of their promises to each other. In New Testament Greek, this word family gains a special importance and specific content through their application to the relationship with God in Christ and believers' trusting acceptance and recognition of what God has done and promised in Christ. (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* edited by Colin Brown, Volume 1, pages 587-88)

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Core Truth: What is faith or trust?

Trust is belief in the reliability, truth, ability and strength of God. Hebrews 11:1, Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see (New Living Translation).

1. Read Proverbs 3:1-10. What key ideas are covered in these verses?

2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim in the space below.

3. In order to trust in the Lord with all your heart, what must be true about the Lord?

4. You are told to "lean not on your own understanding" (verse 5). What does that mean?

5. What is the promised outcome for verse 5?

What does it mean?

6. Read Hebrews 11. Rewrite in your own words the definition of faith in verse 1.

7. What are the common elements in the list of the faithful in Hebrews 11?

8. How have these verses from Proverbs and Hebrews spoken to you this week?

Lesson 17 - Show the Word: Love

What is the mark of a Christ follower? A fish on the back of a car? A cross worn around the neck? The right theology? How easy it is to look in the wrong places for signs of authenticity! Jesus told us plainly about the distinguishing mark of a Christ follower. He raises one quality above all others: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." The defense to the world of the authenticity of our faith is not right belief, but right behavior. (*Discipleship Essentials*, pages 149-150)

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: John 13:34-35

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (New Revised Standard Version)

Core Truth: **What is the authenticating mark to the unbelieving world that we are followers of Jesus Christ?**

Sacrificial love as exemplified in Jesus' voluntary death on the cross is to be reflected in the way Christians relate to each other. This kind of love is so out of step with the world's way that unbelievers will take notice.

1. Read John 13:1-35. How do the foot washing and prediction of betrayal provide the context for Jesus' command to us to love one another?
2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim in the space below.

3. In Jesus' command, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another," how does the word *as* affect the meaning of the phrase?
4. Why is love the authenticating sign to the world that we are followers of Jesus?
5. What would others observe when watching you interact with your Christian friends?
6. Read John 17:20-26. What does Jesus pray about for us?
7. What attitudes and values do you think characterize oneness?
8. How have these verses from John spoken to you this week?

Lesson 18 - Show the Word: Justice

There is a healthy tension in Scripture between deeds done for salvation and deeds done as evidence of salvation. We cannot earn a righteous standing before a holy God, yet we are called to show evidence of changed hearts through our deeds of compassion. Expressing just attitudes through compassionate hearts reveals that God is living in us.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Isaiah 58:6-7

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

Core Truth: **How is sacrificial love expressed among those broken by the world?**

When love intersects broken lives, Christ’s disciples are called to stand for justice. Biblical justice means lifting the bonds of oppression, identifying with the cause of the poor and meeting the needs of the downtrodden.

1. Read Isaiah 58:1-12. According to verses 1-5, how have the people corrupted the practice of fasting?

What are the promised results of a true fast, according to verses 8-12?

2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim in the space below.

3. What is the evidence of a true fast?
4. What do these verses from Isaiah 58 tell us about the heart of God?
5. Now that you have read Isaiah 58:1-12, read Matthew 25:31-46. What connection is there between these two passages?
6. Think and pray over the people with whom Jesus identifies: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoners. Where do you see each of these in your community?
7. What is Jesus' relationship with these people groups?

See Luke 4:16-22

How did Jesus deal with these kinds of people in his ministry on earth?
8. How have these verses from Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25 spoken to you this week?

Lesson 19 - Show the Word: Witness

You cannot be a disciple without being a witness. For too long, discipleship has been limited to issues relating to our personal morality and limited to the four walls of our church buildings. We have severely neglected our call from Jesus to be his witnesses all over the world and to make disciples of all people groups. As with Jesus, so it is with us. He had a mission, to serve and to seek and save what was lost. We have that same mission. As you answer these questions and read these verses, ask God to open your heart to your part of his mission for you.

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verse: Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Core Truth: **How does the world come to know the love and justice of Jesus Christ?**

Jesus Christ has entrusted to his followers the message of the gospel, which contains the power of God unto salvation. The authority to share the good news comes through the Holy Spirit, who makes us witnesses. A witness is one who declares, on the basis of personal experience, what he or she knows to be true about Christ.

1. Read Acts 1:1-14. How does Jesus redirect the focus of the disciples to their task ahead?

2. Copy the memory verse, verbatim, in the space below.
3. How is being a witness connected to receiving the power of the Holy Spirit?

4. Put in your own words what it means to be a witness.

Where does Jesus intend for us to go with our witness?

See Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20.

5. Read John 4:1-30. How did Jesus draw this woman into conversation?
6. What can we learn about witnessing from observing Jesus in this passage?
7. How have these verses from Acts 1 and John 4 spoken to you this week?

Lesson 20 - Serve Christ in the World: The Body of Christ

Today we begin the last section of our Discipleship study, serving Christ in the world. This section stresses that an individual cannot follow Christ apart from the family of God. The Holy Spirit lives in the church family and in turn lives in every individual. God is not only about re-creating individuals in his image, but also about forming a new family that the Bible calls "Christ's body."

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Core Truth: **How does Jesus continue to make himself known?**

Jesus continues to live out his life on earth through his body, the family of God. The "body of Christ" is not just a figure of speech, but conveys the reality that Christ lives through his people. As God's family, we are Jesus to people in the world.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. What is the subject matter that serves as the backdrop to Paul's discussion of the body of Christ?

Why is this topic an appropriate introduction to the body of Christ?

2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim, in the space below.

3. How does Paul describe the body's diversity?

4. What two harmful attitudes undermine the body's proper functioning (see 1 Corinthians 12:15, 16, and 21)?

How do you see these attitudes in yourself? In the church family?

5. Read Romans 12:3-21. What is similar and what is different from Paul's description of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12?

6. Which practical piece of advice from Romans 12 do you need the most?

7. How have these verses from 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 spoken to you this week?

Lesson 21 - Serve Christ in the World: Ministry Gifts

The body of Christ is designed in such a way that each of us has a valued role particularly suited for us, but the problem is that we don't always know what it is. It's no wonder that Paul begins his teaching on spiritual gifts in this manner, "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1). Today we examine ministry gifts to help each of us discover and use our ministry gifts.

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:7

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

Core Truth: **How can we know what our part is in the body of Christ?**

The Holy Spirit graciously gives ministry abilities, "spiritual gifts," so that every Christian can make a valuable contribution to the health of the family of God. The family of God actually operates as the body of Christ when each person seeks to know and function in accord with his/her role assigned by God.

1. To help you think about your specific ministry gifts, complete the following statements:

In my work or ministry, I find myself most fulfilled when . . .

Others have told me I am most helpful when . . .

I am often asked to . . .

As a Christ follower, I most often picture myself as . . .

I believe God has given me the responsibility of _____
 _____ in my church family.

My biggest concern for this church family is . . .

If I could be assured of not failing in ministry, I would . . .

After reviewing my answers, I think I have the gift(s) of . . .
 (list as many as you like):

2. Copy the memory verse, verbatim, in the space below.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31; Romans 12:2-8; Ephesians 4:11-13; and 1 Peter 4:10-11. Write down your definitions of these words.

Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4)

Service (1 Corinthians 12:5)

Working (1 Corinthians 12:6)

Function (Romans 12:4)

Lesson 22 - Serve Christ in the World: Spiritual Warfare

Christ followers are to put on the armor of faith when they go and do battle with the forces of the enemy, Satan. Paul makes it clear that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Ephesians 6:14-18

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Core Truth: **What opposition can a Christ follower expect and what resources are available to combat this opposition?**

Christ followers have an enemy, Satan, who will oppose every step of growth into the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Christ followers must arm themselves for spiritual battle against the plots of the evil one by putting on the whole armor of God.

1. There are four specific strategies that Satan uses against Christ followers. Describe each in your own words.

Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11, Genesis 3:1-7, and James 1:13-15):

5. Ephesians 6:12 portrays a struggle that is beyond flesh and blood. How would you describe this struggle in your own words?

6. What specific pieces of "armor" and strategies does God give us to fight this spiritual battle?

See Ephesians 6:14-18

7. How have these verses in our study spoken to you this week?

Lesson 23 - Serve Christ in the World: Walking in Obedience

Paul uses a number of images to describe the process of transformation. He speaks of being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29), the fruit of the Spirit versus the deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-26), and not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the renewal of our minds (Romans 12:2). In our memory verses this week, this transformed life is pictured as taking off old, tattered clothes and being dressed with clothing that honors God.

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Ephesians 4:22-24

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Core Truth: **How is a Christ follower transformed into the likeness of Christ?**

Sinful behavior is the product of practiced patterns that become habits that sink their roots deep in us. Growing to Christlikeness involves a process of replacing old habits with God-pleasing ones.

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-24. How does Paul describe the change from the old self of sin to the new self of right living and holiness?
2. Copy the memory verses, verbatim, in the space below.

3. Read Ephesians 4:17-19. Describe how each of the ideas below contributes to a sinful, corrupted life.

Wrong-headedness (4:17-18)

Hard-heartedness (4:18)

Permissiveness (4:19)

4. Read Ephesians 4:25-32. How are we to live to avoid falling back into our old, sinful habits?
5. Another way to understand Ephesians 4:17-32 is to list what you are to "put off" and "put on." Complete the list.

Put On

Put Off

6. How much is God responsible to change us, and how much are we responsible for our transformation?
7. How have these verses in our study spoken to you this week?

Lesson 24 - Serve Christ in the World: God and Money

Materialism strikes amnesia in the minds of everything it touches. We have forgotten God's principle of giving the first and the best of what we have to him (the truth is it belongs to him anyway—1 Chronicles 29:11-14). You reap what you sow and we have been sowing materialism and greed for decades. To break this destructive cycle, God calls us to give him our best and first and to share our material blessings with others.

(Note: this study guide will be used for two weeks.)

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verses: Matthew 6:24 and Luke 12:15 (NRSV)

"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

Core Truth: What attitude and practice should disciples have regarding money?

Christ followers live with a healthy fear of the power of money. Money has the power to command devotion. A way to put limits on our greed and to laugh in the face of money's power is to begin the practice of giving/sharing what you have to benefit others. God commanded Israel to give the first and best of everything they possessed. Christ followers can do no less, although our "giving attitude" is also extremely important (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-19. What warnings does Paul offer about money?

6. How is each of these ideas important to giving and financial freedom?

Give Cheerfully

Give regularly, not haphazardly

Give your first fruits

Give when it's tight

Give sacrificially

Give a percentage

Give in faith

7. How have these verses in our study spoken to you this week?

Lesson 25 - Serve Christ in the World: Making Disciples

This study completes our study of discipleship, but it is only the beginning of what needs to happen within the family of God and within our own church family. Discipleship is a lifetime endeavor. Leading others to Christ and helping them mature as Christ followers is the primary work that Jesus has called us to. I pray that you will review this study and begin, today, to pray how you might introduce someone to Christ and help that person mature as a Christ follower. Every one of us has the ability to imitate the simple act of Andrew in John 1, who, when he learned about Jesus, went and got his brother, Peter, and introduced him to Jesus. Peter's life was never the same and he became a key leader in God's family. God wants you, beginning today, to introduce others to Jesus. They will never be the same.

Theme Verses: Matthew 28:18-20

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 2:2

And what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. (NRSV)

Core Truth: What is our role in discipling others?

Discipling is the process of allowing God to use us to be a part of helping another disciple to grow. A sign of our maturity is the desire to pass on the "wealth" to the next generation.

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. What is discipling?

What are the two primary parts to making disciples?

How can individual Christ followers be involved in the disciple-making process?

2. Copy the memory verse, verbatim, in the space below.

3. Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7. How does Paul suggest that the gospel be shared fully to the next generation?

Describe how you think this process should work.

4. How have these verses in our study spoken to you this week?