

Generational Discipleship

Creating a process of equipping disciple-makers for Jesus
to the 4th Generation and beyond.

Discipleship isn't meant to be a class; it's meant to be a lifestyle. Our concern is that you may treat this like another discipleship book sharing helpful content. There are better books out there sharing discipleship content. This book isn't meant to just be read; it's meant to be experienced. The tools found in this book are intended to fill your toolbox to become a faithful disciple-maker for Jesus. Remember that no tool will be fruitful for Christ unless we yield to Him and are led by the Holy Spirit.

Never go further than the Holy Spirit wants you to go.

And never stop short of where He wants you to go either.

If you are holding this book and have never been discipled by someone else through it, you may find that it appears simplistic, lacks depth, and you may even doubt how this content could ever lead to building disciple-makers. The process of discipleship is more important than the content. You will gain some knowledge, but what transforms a believer's life is the obedient steps of faith, led by the Holy Spirit that this process asks of you.

The best way to experience this content is to be discipled through it by someone you trust who can model it for you.

Our goal is to honor Jesus by helping to provide Holy Spirit-filled steps to those willing to make disciples to the 4th generation and beyond.

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also." 2nd Timothy 2:2

Sphere of Influence List

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Introduction

A well-known Christian leader was asked, “If you were a pastor of a large church in a principal city, what would be your plan of action?” I will hold off on sharing the leader’s name with you until I share their answer.

The leader said, “I think one of the first things I would do would be to get a small group of 8 or 10 or 12 people around me to meet a few hours a week and pay the price! It would cost them something in time and effort. I would share with them everything I have learned over a period of years. Then I would have 12 ministers among the laypeople who could take 8 to 10 or 12 more and teach them. I know one or two churches that are doing that, and it is revolutionizing the church. Christ, I think, set the pattern. He spent most of His time with 12 men. He didn’t spend it with a great crowd. In fact, every time He had a great crowd, it seemed to me that there weren’t too many results. The great results, it seems, came in this personal interview and in the time He spent with His 12.”

Do you want to guess who that leader was?

That leader was Billy Graham.

If you were curious about how many people it was estimated that Billy Graham preached the Gospel of Jesus to, it was over 215 million people in his lifetime. It’s documented that over 3.2 million people accepted Christ following Billy’s preaching. Yet Billy Graham said if he were leading a local church, he wouldn’t pursue the crowds he was so gifted at reaching. He would pursue a few. And equip them to reach others to multiply and do the same.

We are convinced that discipleship was Jesus’ heart and His plan to reach the world, so this is where our heart is as well. Many churches and ministries do a terrific job of making disciples for Jesus. Praise God! That is something worth celebrating. The struggle we’ve seen and experienced is not in making disciples but in building disciples who give their lives to make disciples for Jesus themselves. That is the aim of this content.

If you are wondering if you have what it takes to go on this discipleship journey, there are two questions you need to answer.

1. *Have you put your faith in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life?*
2. *Are you willing to say yes to the Holy Spirit when He asks you to step out of your comfort zone for Christ?*

If you can answer yes to both questions, God is ready to use you powerfully on your discipleship journey with Him.

There is no separate guide for trainers and participants. That’s on purpose. Because the goal is for those you disciple to disciple others themselves. As you walk through the content together, they will see you discipling them with the same set of tools that they will have available for them to disciple others.

Every discipleship relationship will be unique from one another. The Holy Spirit will shape each relationship profoundly and differently. Let Him do that. The process of surrendering to the Holy Spirit in discipleship is always more important than any content.

The goal isn't to create a disciple-making factory that manufactures changed lives for God's Kingdom. Our strength can never manufacture fruit for Him. But we've found that creating clear tracks to run on in discipleship will give confidence to those being discipled to think, *"That was so simple. I could do this!"*

If your goal is 4th generation discipleship and beyond, giving your disciples clear next steps that are simple, transferable, and easily reproducible is crucial to seeing multiplication happen in the process of disciple-making.

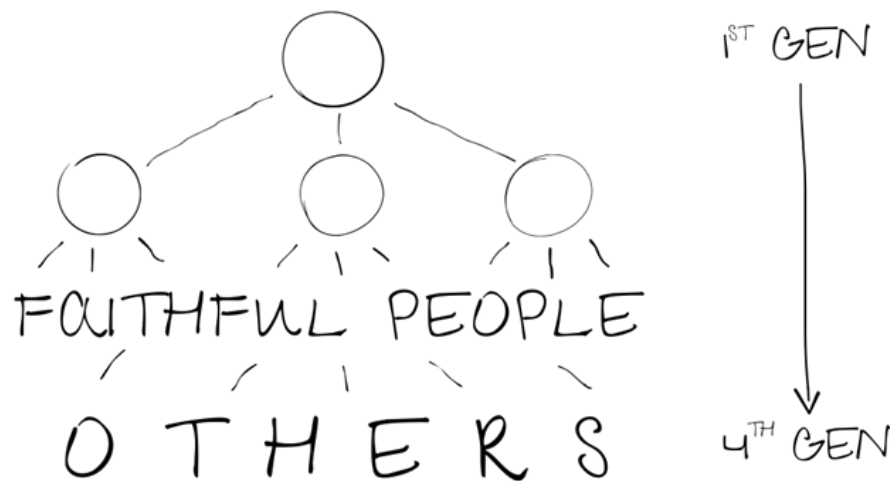
Our vision is that after a few generations of discipleship, no one will know your name, but many will know the name of Jesus.

Discipleship Goals and Purpose

*The following sections before Lesson 1 are meant to be read by your disciples *ahead* of your first training time together. These principles are important and will help provide clarity of the vision of discipleship, create helpful tracks to run on for you and your disciples, and will begin to create a lasting culture of disciple-making throughout your time together. Encourage your disciples to be prepared so that you'll be ready to hit the ground running when you gather together for the first time.

The intention of this content is to create a transferable, reproducible model for discipleship that will go to the 4th generation and beyond.

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also." 2nd Timothy 2:2 (NASB)



What that means simply is that if Paul discipled Timothy, Timothy discipled another leader and that leader discipled someone else, the fourth person in the discipleship chain is the 4th generation.

If you currently are discipling others, first off, let us say, praise God! Keep up the great work for our King. If you aren't discipling anyone else for Jesus, don't beat yourself up. Our relationship with Jesus is a journey that lasts a lifetime and no matter what you've "accomplished" for Him, He views you as pure and righteous before God because of your faith in Him. Your standing in Christ is set, praise the Lord!

If you are still reading, and you still have breath in your lungs, we are convinced that Jesus wants every one of His disciples on Earth to become a disciple-maker in the lives of others for Him.

We've found that a great way to evaluate the discipleship process you have in place is to ask yourself this question, *"How confident am I that the 3rd generation disciple could effectively disciple the 4th generation to become a mature disciple-maker for Jesus?"* If you aren't confident that your discipleship process is reproducible without you involved, it may be time to simplify your approach.

A major barrier to multiplication for many spiritually mature believers is that they infuse their education, experience, and intuition into everything they say. While the person they are discipling may enjoy the experience of learning from them, the problem is that when it comes time to reproduce and disciple others, the disciple will often sheepishly think, *“I don’t know what you know, I haven’t done what you’ve done, and I don’t think how you think.”* This leads to the unintended result of the new disciple thinking, *“I can’t do what you do.”*

As difficult as it is for a mature believer to do, try to think through everything you say and do and answer this question, *“For a new disciple that has a willing heart, is this process reproducible for them to lead others?”*



For this reason, during our disciple-making process, we ask our disciples to read each line of the content together in a group setting.

As painful as it may be for some, aim to bite your tongue and not interject with personal stories or antidotes that are outside the scope of what each disciple holds in their hands. The reason for this is that your disciples will gain great confidence in seeing that they possess the very same words and tools that you’ve led them through. The hope is that even if you ceased to be in their life, they could lead another new disciple through the same process to build up their faith in Jesus.



The process is more important than the content.

That doesn’t mean the content is unimportant. Also, when we say content, we don’t mean Scripture. God’s Word and Truth are timeless for every generation. When we say content, we mean discipleship materials. For 2,000 years, Jesus’ Church has pursued different philosophies and strategies to obey the Great Commission and make disciples for Him. There are many great discipleship resources out there that will help build people into mature disciples for Christ.

Our point is that the process of giving disciples of Christ opportunities to live out an active, obedient faith is *more important* than any solid discipleship materials that you could choose from.

Sphere of Influence List

There is a reason that the **Sphere of Influence List** is on the first few pages of this book before anything else. That's because you cannot become a disciple-maker without thinking selflessly. The very first thing we'll do is explain the **Sphere of Influence List** and get your disciples to start thinking selflessly about others immediately. Think about where you live, work, shop, study, and play. Think of the rhythms of your life and the people you naturally come into close proximity with.

Who are the people in your life you regularly cross paths with who don't know Christ?

The first step in this discipleship journey is to take a few minutes and write down the names of people that the Lord is putting on your mind. Write them on the first few lines of your **Sphere of Influence List**. This will begin your list that you'll add to throughout discipleship. If you aren't sure if a person has a personal relationship with Jesus, put their name down anyway. If you can't think of even one person that your life intersects with regularly who doesn't love Jesus, that's okay! This is a starting point to build from.

Each week, at the beginning of your training time, you'll break up into groups of two to three disciples and pray together for your **Sphere of Influence Lists**.

- Some weeks you'll pray over the people specifically on your list with others.
- Some weeks you'll pray over the people on each other's lists together. Rotate how you handle this prayer time to keep it fresh.
- Each week ask each other, *"Did you meet anyone this week that God is encouraging you to add to your **Sphere of Influence List**?"*

The goal is not to add names for the sake of adding names. The goal is to practice listening to the Holy Spirit daily and to think selflessly about the people He has uniquely placed in your life. If you have a list of people that God has put on your heart, begin praying for them by name today.

Pray that God would bless them and that the Holy Spirit would soften their hearts toward Jesus. Pray that God would put people in their lives that would represent Christ to them.

Note the difference between these two prayers:

- *"Jesus, I pray that the lost would get saved."*
- *"Jesus, I pray that my friends, John and Sarah would get saved."*

Praying for people in your life by name makes it more personal and will breed selflessness and love in your heart for each of them.

If you don't have anyone that comes to mind, pray for God to allow you to meet new people and make new friends. Pray for the people you haven't met yet that God would bless them and soften their hearts towards Christ. As the Lord answers these prayers and places people in your life, write down their name on your **Sphere of Influence List** and begin praying for them by name. For many, this will be the first step of faith on this new discipleship journey.



The sooner you can get your disciples intentionally praying for people in their lives, the better.

This will train them to think selflessly and to be aware of what God is doing in and around them. By the time we learn some great tools to help us share Christ with others, they will have already prayed for a good season for the people that God placed in their lives.

If you want to know what to expect from spiritual soil saturated in prayer, we believe the answer is simple. Expect fruit.

I Will Statements

An **“I Will” Statement** is something that God specifically puts on your heart to do that week. Here are a few examples:

- *“I will pray each day this week for my **Sphere of Influence List**.”*
- *“I will spend time in God’s Word and read 1 chapter of Ephesians each day this week.”*
- *“I will learn the name of one of my neighbors this week.”*
- *“I will invite a coworker to grab lunch and share my story of how I came to Christ with them this week.”*

Your **I Will Statement** is between you and God. We don’t set it for you. We encourage you to listen to the Holy Spirit’s leading in your life and say yes to Him! As the Lord leads, aim for three areas of focus with your **I Will Statements**:

- **Specific** – Always aim for more clarity with your **I Will Statement**.

For example, look at the difference between these two **I Will Statements**:

- *“I will do something kind for my neighbor.”*
- *“I will bake cookies and walk them over to the Smith’s and their kids this week.”*

- **Measurable** – Ask the Lord to help give you intentional goals for your **I Will Statements**.

For example, instead of an **I Will Statement** that reads:

- *“I will read the Bible more this week.”*
- Try writing down something more measurable like, *“I will read two chapters of Scripture each day this week.”*

- **Stretching** – As the Lord grows you, your **I Will Statements** should grow too.

For example, if early on in discipleship, your **I Will Statement** was:

- *“I will pray for the people on my **Sphere of Influence List** each day this week.”*
- Later on in the discipleship process, follow the Spirit’s leading to take courageous steps of faith. Your **I Will Statement** could sound something like this, *“I will ask one person from my list if we can get together for breakfast. At breakfast, I’ll ask them if there is anything I can pray for them for.”*

It’s been said, *“A comfort zone is a beautiful place to be, but nothing ever grows there.”* When you walk with Jesus, He will take you places in life that you never thought you’d go. But walking with Him is the best possible place any believer could be. View your **I Will Statements** as individual steps of faith on the journey of discipleship with Christ.

Each week, we'll start our training time by asking the question:

- *"What was your **I Will Statement**? And how did it go?"*

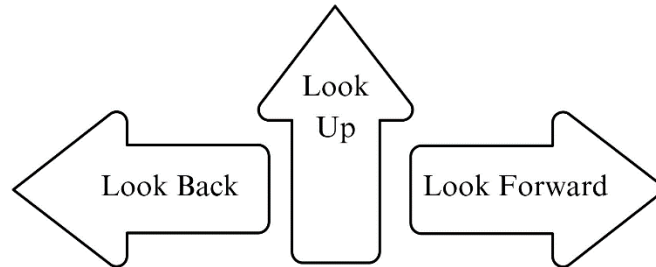
If there is something to celebrate, we'll celebrate together. Don't be discouraged if it didn't go well or didn't happen at all. We'll encourage each other and ask for input from the group if they've been through a similar situation. We'll ask questions like:

- *"Has anyone had a similar experience like this?"*
- *"What have you done in the past that has worked well?"*
- *"What didn't work so well?"*

As the leader, do your best to give others opportunities to share first. This is a terrific teaching opportunity for them in each other's lives as they continue the journey of becoming disciple-makers.

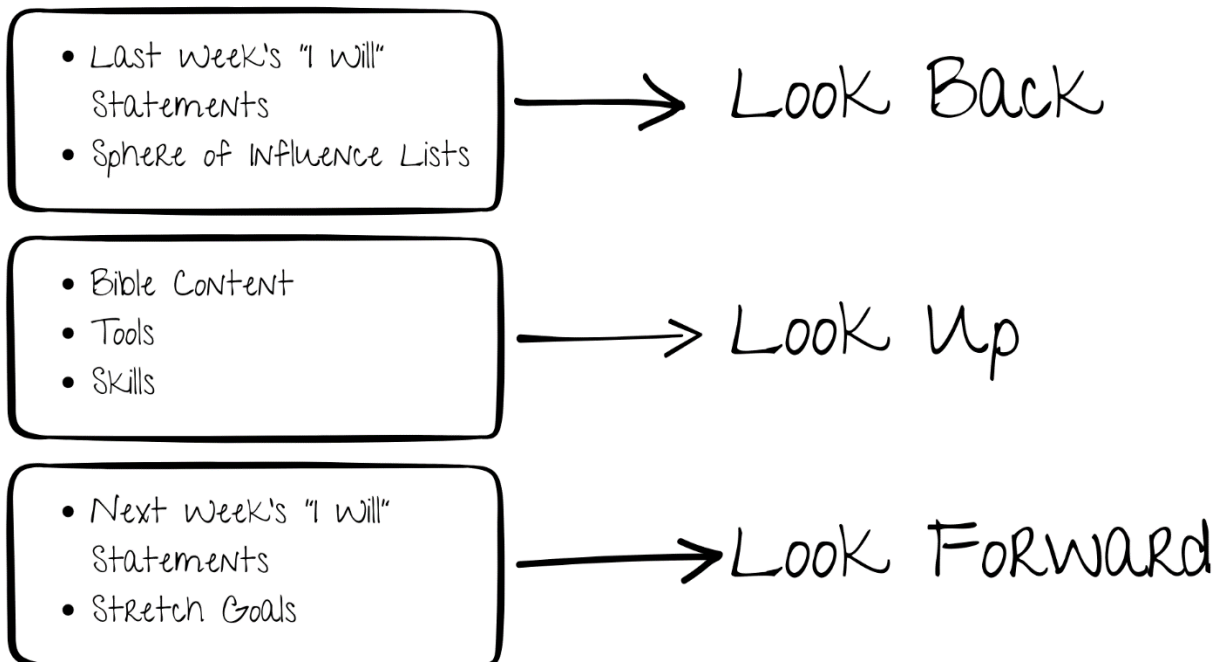
Discipleship Training Model

Look Back, Look Up, Look Forward



This model of discipleship has been used effectively all over the world to make disciples for Jesus. The goal of this model is to carve out intentional time during discipleship for what God has done recently in the lives of the people (**Look Back**), what truth, tools, and skills God is teaching us about discipleship from His Word (**Look Up**), and what God is stirring in our hearts to do for Him in the coming week (**Look Forward**).

The next few sections will dive deeper into each of this disciple-making model's three areas. Before you get there, here is a sample of how the different elements of a training time will fit together.



Look Back

Look back is the time during discipleship when we look back at what God has done in the lives of the people each week.

PLEASE DO NOT MISS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS POINT.



Without loving accountability in place, both your time and your disciples' time will not bear the fruit for Jesus that anyone had hoped for in discipleship.

If we believe that the Holy Spirit is stirring in our hearts to write our **I Will Statement** the week before, then there is nothing more loving we can do for each other than to ask, *"How did it go?"* This one question will greatly encourage each other in our faithfulness towards Christ.

Also, if you are intimidated about entering into discipleship, if you are willing to let people who care about your walk with Jesus ask you the question each week, *"What was your I Will Statement? And how did it go?"* Then you are ready to do this.

The Intention of Your Heart as a Leader is Everything

If you come across as harsh, then this experience will be one of guilt and shame for your disciples when their **I Will Statements** don't work out. On the other hand, if you err on the side of no accountability, the result will often be a lack of spiritual fruit and growth, leading to discouragement and complacency.

The main goal of disciple-making is to help others grow in their faithfulness to Jesus.



Fruitfulness is in God's hands. Faithfulness to Him is in ours.

Loving accountability spurs on faithfulness to Jesus. We are convinced that loving accountability is possible because that is what Jesus did for those in His life. Jesus is fully loving and fully truthful. That is who He is.

A Rough Rundown for Looking Back

This portion of your discipleship time should take roughly 40-45% of your time available. This is where transformational life change happens. Make sure you give ample time for the stories to unfold.

- Ask someone to pray over the entire group to open your time together.
- Next, break into smaller groups if needed. If you are in a larger discipleship group, break into groups no larger than ten people each. Based on the time you have available with those you're discipling; you may want to consider even smaller groups which will save

time. (See below in *Look Back – Helpful Tips for the Pros and Cons of Smaller or Larger Groups*)

- Go around to each person and ask them to share what their **I Will Statement** was. Then ask them, *“How did it go?”*
- Give them a few minutes to unpack their experiences following God that week. Ask probing questions that may create teachable moments. For example, *“What was challenging about that?” “What surprised you?” “Would you do anything differently next time?”*
- Once they’ve had a chance to share, open it up to the others in your **Look Back** group to ask for their insight. If it didn’t go well, ask questions like, *“Has anyone ever been in a similar situation before?” “How did it go for you?” “What worked and what didn’t work?”*
- If their **I Will Statement** went well, celebrate it together! Ask the group questions like this, *“What stood out about how they handled that?” “Where did you see the Lord moving in their act of faithfulness to Him?” “Are there any takeaways that could be helpful for one of you in a future situation?”*
- Give the others ample opportunities under your leadership to offer advice and wisdom to each other themselves. This is a great training opportunity for them to grow as disciple-makers.
- Once everyone has had a chance to share their **I Will Statement** and speak into each other’s lives, break up into groups of two to three people and spend a few minutes praying for your **Sphere of Influence Lists** together.
- Come back together as a larger group. If you had to break into smaller groups to save time, this could be a good opportunity to ask for one or two volunteers to share their stories of what God did that week. This way, the entire group celebrates together.

Look Back – Helpful Tips

Humor is a Tool... Use It!

Use humor to communicate loving accountability whenever it’s appropriate. God gave you a sense of humor. Use it as a tool for Him!

For example, if someone’s **I Will Statement** was, *“I will pray each day this week for my **Sphere of Influence List**.”* And they prayed 3 days, but weren’t able to follow through completely, you could say, *“How many times did you pray for these people the week before we started discipleship?”*

If they respond, *“I didn’t at all.”*

You could reply, *“Well, from my point of view, praying three times for those that God put on your mind is a lot better than zero! Praise God! Good job with what you’ve accomplished. I think we’ve all been there at times in our lives. Does anyone else have any tools that have helped them in remembering what God asks us to do daily?”*

When you move people to any emotion (laughter, tears, etc.), you capture their attention, their hearts soften, and now you can plant seeds of truth, encouragement, and even loving correction in a way that they will receive, and it will lead to life change within them.

Expectations are Easier to Set Up Front

Setting the expectations early on will help keep a larger discipleship group focused on that week's main goal. Depending on the group size, encourage the people to be considerate of each other in the time they use to participate. For example, you could suggest that each person aim to keep their questions, comments, and thoughts to 60 seconds or less to give each person a chance to contribute to the conversation. It is always less painful to set these expectations upfront than it is to correct someone later.

Lead with Compassion while Protecting the Vision

The goal of your time together is to equip disciples of Jesus to become disciple-makers. In this process, you'll ask those you're discipling to open up their lives. Life is messy and painful at times. At some point during your discipleship training time, it will come to light that someone is going through something difficult. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in what He may want you to do at that moment. If you discover that your disciples could use more time and attention, acknowledge what they are walking through, and pray over them as a group.

To protect the vision and goal of your discipleship training time, invite them to stay with you after the training time ends to talk more. Offer them as much of your time as you can give them. This carves out an opportunity to let them know you care for them while still protecting the vision of discipleship. Being intentional and productive with your training time as a group will keep the momentum going in the disciple-making process. But never forget that discipleship is sharing your life with someone as well.



People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Lead with compassion and empathy with the people God entrusted to you. If appropriate, encourage others to stick around with you after the training time ends that day to watch, listen, and pray with you for that person. Real-life situations are the best classrooms for teaching. Let them see how you care for someone else and allow them to participate in it.



In discipleship, much more is caught than taught.

The best thing you can do for your disciples is to give them more opportunities throughout this process by your side to see ministry unfold with their own eyes.

Pros and Cons of Smaller or Larger Groups

If you have many people who would like to be discipled, but you don't have many people ready to disciple them, don't wait! We've seen large groups of men and women discipled together that has been effective and fruitful for Jesus. The most important part is that your disciples have willingness in their hearts. Whether it's one-on-one, a group of 3 or 4, or a larger group for discipleship, without willingness in the hearts of your disciples, discipleship of any size won't work.

If you have a larger group, the key is to make sure each person has a few people in addition to you to connect with to go deeper. After a few weeks of meeting in a larger group setting, prayerfully consider pairing people in groups of two to three within discipleship to provide encouragement, accountability, and a deeper level of friendship. Take a look in **Ideas to Add Value in Discipleship** for some helpful tips on *Discipleship Pairings*.

With a larger group for discipleship, for the sake of time, you still may want to consider breaking into smaller groups for **Look Back** and **Look Forward**. Here are some pros and cons of smaller or larger groups for **Look Back** and **Look Forward**.

	Small Groups	Large Group
Pros	• Maximizes your time and allows people more time to share • Shares leadership opportunities for disciples to lead • Relationships build quicker as people tend to be more willing to open up	• Everyone hears each others stories • Builds group unity • Allows leaders to be involved with everyone
Cons	• Not everyone will hear each other's stories • Less oversight as the leader is not involved in each group	• Takes more time • Some people will be less likely to be vulnerable in a larger group setting

Look Up

Look Up is the time in discipleship when we look up to God and His Word to help us grow as disciples of Jesus. This time will equip us with practical tools, skills, and knowledge to help us live out our lives as disciple-makers for Christ.

A Rough Rundown for Looking Up

This portion of your discipleship time should take roughly 40% of your time available. There will be a temptation to move quickly through the content to complete one lesson per week. Don't rush it!



Let the disciples' obedience and understanding of the lessons lead the pace of discipleship, not the content.

- Begin your **Look Up** time by reading through the goal of the lesson.
- Stick to the content line by line and rotate among the disciples so everyone gets a chance to read.
- **Questions in the Content** - When there's an open-ended question in the content, stop, and ask the group for input. Discuss it together.
- **Scripture in the Content** - When a Scripture reference comes up in the content, have everyone stop, and go to the passage together. Ask someone to read it. Then ask them the question, *"In your own words, how would you simply explain what God is saying in this passage to someone else?"* This process helps your disciples learn to interpret and apply the Bible in a simple way that will change lives.
- **Illustrations in the Content** - When there's an illustration in the content, model it up front for everyone. Then break into groups of two to three people and have each disciple practice drawing the illustration with each other and explaining it themselves. (Use the blank pages at the back of this book for practicing illustrations)
- When you come back together after a few minutes, ask for a volunteer to draw the illustration up front for the group.

Look Up – Helpful Tips

Discovery is Greater than Display

Imagine you go to a museum, and you see a priceless buried treasure chest displayed behind the glass that was discovered by someone else long ago. As you read the plaque below, you read about the story of the people who took part in this great adventure and lived through this incredible experience first-hand.

What is your typical engagement level with that buried treasure? Most times, we acknowledge it. We may even say, *"Wow! That's awesome."* Then 30 seconds later, we move on to the next display. But instead, if you partook in this great adventure and incredible experience yourself and *you were the one that discovered that treasure*, that experience will stay with you for the rest of your life.

Instead of putting every truth of God and His Word on display for your disciples, encourage them to discover the hidden treasures of God and His Word for themselves.



Don't spoon-feed your disciples to satisfy the tension of what they don't know. Let them discover some things on their own.

Whether that's letting them sit in an awkward silence for a minute thinking about a question you asked, or even letting them struggle through a conversation with someone else. When they experience the tension, then they'll be eager to learn how to satisfy it. When they discover the truth or tool that satisfies that tension they experienced, they will never forget it.

Scripture Reading During Look Up

The reality for many believers of all different maturity levels is that spending time in the Word of God is often an area that could improve in their relationship with Christ. Acknowledge this and encourage your disciples that if this describes them, they are certainly not alone. Discipleship is a wonderful opportunity to open the Word of God together. No matter how small or large your discipleship group is, practice this principle:



Each time a Scripture comes up in the content, encourage everyone to stop, open their Bibles, and turn to the passage together.

This will take longer, but be patient, the fruit will come. The best meals are never made in a microwave. For new disciples, learning to understand Scripture simply will be deeply formative for their spiritual journey.

Each time a Scripture is read aloud, ask a question to the reader like this, *"In your own words, how would you explain this passage simply to someone else?"*

As you get to know those you are discipling better, think through grace-filled steps to uniquely challenge them as individuals. For example, if reading Scripture aloud stretches someone, challenge them to read an easy passage out loud in front of others. For another disciple with more experience, after they read a passage, ask them if they could explain it as simply as they can in their own words.

The goal is that as discipleship progresses, each disciple will grow and have many opportunities to explain Scripture in their own words in front of others. This is a great tool to help your disciples interpret and understand the Bible for themselves under your guidance. It will help them learn how to feed themselves the Word of God on their own and feed others as well.

Obedience is More Important than Knowledge

Discipleship is meant to be more than an education. What we learn is meant to be applied in our lives through an active, obedient faith in Christ. This may seem counterintuitive, but if you are running short on training time, the area you should cut back on to save time is **Look Up**. **Look Back** and **Look Forward** are the parts of the discipleship process where life change happens most.

Look Up provides the time for learning content which is meant to equip your disciples with helpful knowledge and tools. Don't think for a moment that this part of training isn't incredibly valuable to the discipleship process as well. The wisdom here is that if the transfer of knowledge goes a bit slower to accommodate genuine life transformation in the other areas, that will always be worth it in the end.

Look Forward

Look Forward is where we spend time before God and ask Him what steps of faithfulness He wants for each of us. This is the time in discipleship when we'll ask the Holy Spirit to stir our hearts to identify our **I Will Statements** for the week ahead. **Look Forward** is often where the stories of changed lives are born. Make sure you give enough time in **Look Forward** for people to lean into the Holy Spirit and let Him work.

A Rough Rundown for Looking Forward

This portion of your discipleship time should take roughly 15-20% of your time available.

- Begin your **Look Forward** time by reminding your disciples to lean into the Holy Spirit and listen for His voice.
- Give your disciples a few minutes alone with the Lord to discern what He wants them to commit to for their **I Will Statement** that week.
- As God reveals that to them, encourage them to write it down on the **I Will Statement** pages at the front of the book to reference back to throughout the week.
- Gather back together as a group and share your **I Will Statements** with each other. Take time to ask good questions and help sharpen your disciples' statements as they prepare for the week ahead.
- Have someone pray over the group to close your training time.

Look Forward – Helpful Tips

Hearing His Still Small Voice

Expect your disciples to struggle in the beginning with discerning the Holy Spirit's voice in their lives. This is something we hope to grow in through discipleship together. For someone who isn't sure what to write for their **I Will Statement**, use this opportunity as a teaching moment. Ask the group, *"Has anyone here ever struggled to identify what God was calling them to do in their life? How did that go? What was helpful for you?"*

It's important to remind them that while God can speak to us through great signs and wonders, much more often, He speaks to us through the still, small voice of His Holy Spirit and through His Word.

If your disciple is struggling to discern an **I Will Statement** from the Lord, ask them, *"What are some areas of your life you feel God would like you to grow in?"* They may respond, *"I really want to do a better job of praying with my spouse."* You could reply, *"That sounds like a pretty great **I Will Statement** to me!"* Remember that even when we struggle to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit, we still have tremendous clarity from the Lord of what His will is for us.

God has already revealed His will for our lives through His Word.

For example, the Bible tells us to, *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18

If your disciples are unsure of what God's unique will may be for them that week, God's Word just told them exactly what they can do to know they are walking in His will for their lives! Encourage them to make 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18 their **I Will Statement** that week.

The beautiful thing about an **I Will Statement** is that since each person is going before God and asking Him what He wants for them, when you ask them, "*How did it go?*" you aren't asking them if they are following through for you. What you're asking them is how they are doing being faithful to God. When asked in love, any believer in Jesus should welcome that question.

Encourage your disciples to begin thinking of their next **I Will Statement** all week long. Many times, the Lord will impress something on your disciple's heart well before their time before Him in **Look Forward**.

Lead by Example... It's Contagious

When discipling others, let your **I Will Statements** set an example for them. Very rarely will disciples rise above the spiritual maturity of their leaders. Let the Holy Spirit continue to grow you spiritually as you lead others. Let your **I Will Statements** be specific, measurable, and stretching, and you'll see those you're discipling follow your example. If you're leading others faithfully, you should have the freshest stories of life change within your **Sphere of Influence List**. Be courageous to say yes to Him. It's contagious.

Help Sharpen their Statements

The more specific, measurable, and stretching your disciples' **I Will Statements** are, the more you will see rapid spiritual growth in their lives. You play a key role in helping them get there.

Remember, you aren't setting their **I Will Statements** for them, that is the Holy Spirit's job. And their job is to listen to Him. Your job is simple. Help them *learn* to listen to Him!

As you gather back together with your group to share your **I Will Statements** with each other, ask questions to help them sharpen their statements as much as possible. For example, if they say, "*I will pray for others this week.*" You could ask statement sharpening questions like these:

- "*Could you make that more specific?*"
- "*Who will you pray for? When will you do that?*"
- "*Do you feel that is stretching for you?*"

These questions may feel awkward on the front end but don't shy away from this piece. Your faithfulness to ask challenging questions will help them grow in Christ. The more you do this, the more they will expect it. Before long, all on their own, you'll see your disciples blossom and let the Lord stretch them through specific, measurable **I Will Statements** all while you get to take a front-row seat cheering them on. The goal here is not to accomplish spiritual tasks, the goal is to help them tune into the Holy Spirit's voice in their lives and obey Him.

Loving Accountability is Essential

Throughout discipleship, it's essential that every disciple has someone in their corner cheering them on, challenging them not to give up on the call of Christ in their lives, and supporting them when things don't go as planned. Find creative ways to check in throughout the week with your disciples. Pray

for them regularly and let them know it. Ask them how their **I Will Statements** and **Sphere of Influence Lists** are going. Share the highs and lows of your journey of discipleship that week with them as well.

In a smaller group setting for your disciples, it makes sense for this person to be you. If you have a larger group, you may need to split the group into more manageable sizes to accomplish this.

Whatever your group size, as discipleship goes on, you'll identify some people who are really running after Jesus. Share leadership with others early and often. The more you can share leadership with others, the more you'll see people growing as disciples for Christ.

This loving accountability can be done through text, calls, emails, or any other way. The means of connecting isn't as important as the fact that you intentionally pursue staying connected. Discipleship isn't a sprint, it's a marathon. Walk the road together one week and one day at a time.

* If you are leading in discipleship, prior to Lesson 1, take some time to review the **Wisdom for Discipleship** section towards the end of the book.

Walk by Faith - Lesson 1

Assurance of Salvation & Identity in Christ

THE GOAL OF LESSON 1

- The goal of Lesson 1 is to lay the foundation and get your disciples to begin seeing that discipleship is about two main things - honoring Jesus and having a heart for others.
- We want our disciples to be able to understand clearly how a new believer can have confidence that they have Eternal salvation, as well as truly embracing their identity in Christ.

* If possible, prior to coming together for Lesson 1, have your disciples read the previous sections about **Sphere of Influence Lists**, **I Will Statements**, and the **Discipleship Training Model (Look Back, Look Up, and Look Forward)**.

Look Back

The very first thing we'll do together in discipleship is think of others. Once you understand the heart behind a **Sphere of Influence List**, take a few minutes alone with the Lord to write down names that God is putting on your mind. After a few minutes, break up into groups of two to three people and pray for the names on your lists together.

This early in discipleship, you likely won't have **I Will Statements** to look back on yet. Encourage your disciples to begin thinking through what the Holy Spirit may be asking them to commit to now for their first **I Will Statement** at the end of this training time. At some moment during this training time together, if the Holy Spirit impresses something on their heart, give them the freedom to pause from the training and write it down on their **I Will Statement** pages in the front of the book.

This process will be intimidating for some, but remember, each disciple is setting their **I Will Statement** between themselves and the Lord. Discipleship is a journey, and many times the first step is the hardest. All they will need to be prepared for next week is that they'll be asked, *"How did it go?"*

Look Up

We'll begin our **Look Up** time in Lesson 1 with our first illustration of many. Throughout **Walk by Faith**, our first area of focus in discipleship, we will explain our relationship with God with a pipeline illustration.

Discipleship Pipeline Illustration – The Gospel

Model this illustration in front of your disciples and explain it to them.

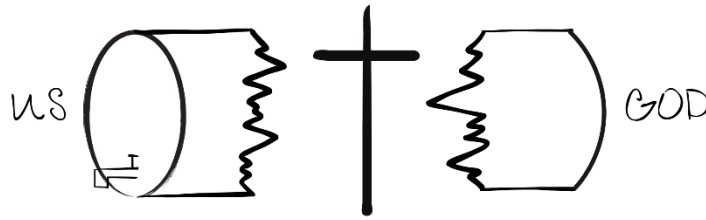


Illustration Explanation: God loves us and desires a relationship with us, but sin has broken our relationship with God. Much like a broken pipe, the flow of God into our lives has been severed due to our sin. Jesus lived a perfect life and died in our place to pay the price of our sins so that we could be restored in our relationship with God for all of Eternity.

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” – JESUS (John 7:37-38)

Once you’ve modeled this drawing for your disciples, have them break into groups of two to three and give them their first chance to practice drawing and explaining an illustration with each other. Encourage them to use the blank pages available at the back of this book.

After 4-5 minutes, bring the group back together and ask for a volunteer who would be willing to model the illustration by drawing and explaining it in front of everyone.

Assurance of Salvation

When you ask the question to someone, *“Are you a Christian?”* What might they say?

You might hear common answers like:

- *“Oh yes, I was confirmed in the church.”*
- *“Yes, I was baptized as a child.”*
- *“Yes, but my family only goes to church on Christmas and Easter.”*

The point is, if you want to understand the true motives of someone’s heart for Christ, asking, *“Are you a Christian?”* is not the right question to ask. We’ve found that the following three questions are very helpful in pulling back the layers of religious experience that often cover the true beliefs and intentions of someone’s heart.

While we’ve seen these questions bear fruit in sharing our faith with others who wouldn’t claim to believe in Christ, these questions are intended for those who claim to be Christians in a discipleship setting. The following questions are tools to quickly get to the heart of what a person really believes about the Gospel and their salvation through Jesus Christ. Don’t worry; we’ll share plenty of other tools later on for how to engage in conversations with those who don’t know Christ too!

A great way to lead into these questions with someone is by saying something like this:

"We believe that we're here for a purpose and that the most important questions in life are the ones we should give our attention to."

Question 1) *"If someone were to ask you, 'What happens after death?' How would you answer them?"*

If your disciple doesn't share about Heaven and Hell, or Eternal Life and Eternal Death, then ask thoughtful questions to try to uncover what they do believe. If they seem unsure, or they say something like, *"All roads lead to Heaven"*, or something else that's outside of the Gospel Message, then park it right here. It's very possible that they've never begun a relationship with Christ personally. Lovingly share the message of salvation through faith in Jesus alone with them. What better way to begin discipleship with someone than by leading them to Jesus?

They can't give away what they don't have. There is no discipleship without a genuine relationship with Jesus.

Question 2) If they answer according to the Word of God and speak of Eternal Life and Eternal Death, say something like, *"Good answer! The next question someone would probably want to know is, 'What does it take to get to Heaven?' What would you say to them?"*

If they say, *"Being a good person"*, *"Baptism and church attendance"*, or anything other than *"Faith in Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins"*, then again, park it right here! They may have answered the first question right that there is a Heaven and Hell, but if they don't communicate the Gospel of Jesus, they may not know Christ personally. Lovingly share the Gospel message with them.

Keep in mind that this is our first lesson. Be gracious if they are having trouble finding the words to share about faith in Christ alone with clarity. They may have genuinely trusted Christ as their Lord and Savior, *but this may be one of the first times the Gospel message has actually come out of their mouths!* Discipleship will help with this.

If you're confident in their understanding of the Gospel message intellectually, this next question will really help cut to the heart of what they believe Jesus did for them on the Cross.

Question 3) *"From 0-100%, how confident are you that you are going to Heaven? Why?"*

If they say anything less than 100%, then they may not have a full grasp on salvation being a gift from God that is completely dependent on our faith in Jesus alone. Do you see how these questions will give you much better clarity of what someone believes about Christ than asking the question, *"Are you a Christian?"*

Faith in Christ is much more than just head knowledge and correct biblical answers. Faith in Christ is best displayed by a life completely surrendered before Him. That is the call of discipleship from Jesus.

Once you've established that someone understands what Jesus did for them, the next most important truth to share with them is to help them have full assurance of their Eternal salvation.

Have everyone turn to **1 John 5:9-13**. Ask for a volunteer to read aloud. Remember that discovery is greater than display. Let your disciples discover the truths and share them.

- What gives you confidence in your salvation from this passage?

- What promises do you see from God in these verses?

Be willing to sit in silence as they process these questions. Don't satisfy the tension for them. Get used to having your disciples wrestle with the question and give an answer first before you continue on with the content.

What is Justification by Faith?

Justification by faith means that God views you as 100% just and righteous before Him because you've trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

- Read 2nd Corinthians 5:17,21 together. Ask, *"In your own words, how would you simply explain what God is saying in this passage to someone else?"*

What is Sanctification by Faith?

Sanctification by faith is a process of life change that transforms you into the person God created you to be. Because of the sacrifice of Christ, our faith in Him has given us righteousness before God. But that isn't the end of our time on Earth. God still wants to change us so that in every season, we are more like Jesus than we were the season before.

- Read Hebrews 10:14 together. Ask, *"In your own words, how would you simply explain what God is saying in this passage to someone else?"*

Justification vs. Sanctification Illustration

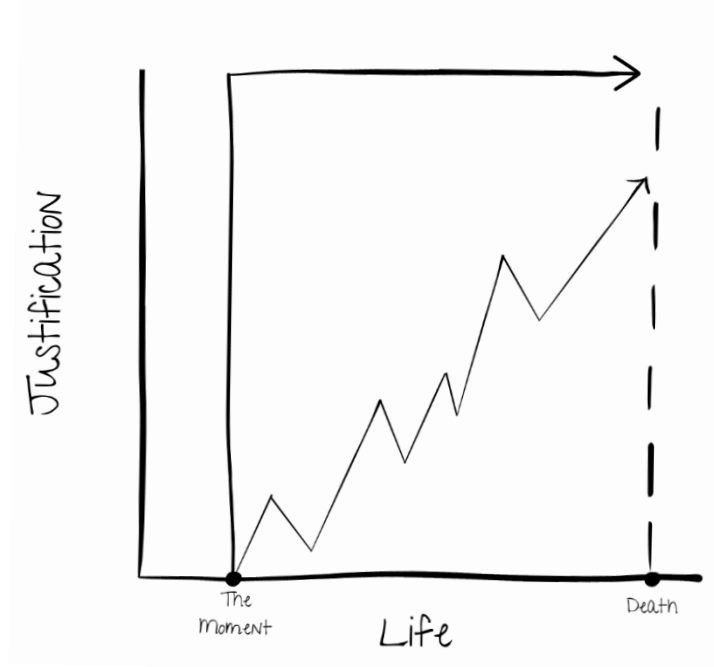


Illustration Explanation: The moment we put our trust in Christ, we are viewed by God as 100% righteous before Him. We're justified before God because Jesus took our sins and replaced them with His perfect righteousness. As time goes on, from the moment we begin our relationship with Christ, God

will continue to change us into who He wants us to be through the process of sanctification. Nearly all believers in Jesus struggle with seasons of life where they may dishonor God with their choices, attitudes, and sin, and they'll have other seasons of life where they are faithful to God and grow tremendously in their faith. None of these ups and downs ever impact our standing of righteousness before God, but they do impact our daily fellowship with Him.

Break out into groups of two to three and have your disciples practice drawing and explaining this illustration with each other.

After everyone has had a chance to practice, ask if there is a volunteer who is willing to try it upfront. Regardless of the outcome of the volunteer's performance drawing the illustration up front, all steps of faith for Jesus should be celebrated and encouraged!

Identity in Christ

Who are you? How do you view yourself? What are the most important things about you that define who you are?

In the world, people often answer these questions by sharing their nationality or race, their job title or standing in society, their relationship status, their sexual or gender identity, or something else. Whatever people view as the most important things in their lives is how they typically identify themselves.

- As a disciple of Jesus, how would you identify yourself to someone else?
- Which of these two words defines you best? Sinner or Saint?

Sinner – sinful, failure, broken, imperfect

Saint – sinless, holy, perfect, pure, righteous

- Where do you see yourself on this scale?

Sinner 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Saint

- Why?

Most Christians answer this by selecting a number on the scale closer to "Sinner". While humility is a good characteristic to encourage, it's important to remember what our identity is. The most important identity in our life is none of the things the world tells us are most important.



Our most important identity in life is as a child of God.

Read these verses with your disciples and let the words and titles that God has chosen wash over them. Encourage them not to rest in their feelings but instead to rest in these truths.

Remind them that if they've trusted Christ, these are true of them too. This is their identity as a child of God. As you begin reading each passage together, ask them, *"What are some identities and titles that God gives you in these passages?"*

- 2nd Corinthians 5:17,21
- Romans 8:14-17
- 1st John 1:9
- Philippians 1:1
- Hebrews 10:14

Look Forward

This will be our first experience writing **I Will Statements** in discipleship. With your **I Will Statements**, remember to be specific, measurable, and stretching. As we gather week after week, you'll see your **I Will Statements** grow line by line, and it will be clear evidence that the Holy Spirit has been working in your life.

Take a few minutes quietly before the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit what He would like you to commit to this week. As He leads, write down your **I Will Statement** on the opening pages of the book and refer back to it often throughout the week. Once your disciples have had time alone before the Lord, gather the group back together to share your **Statements** with each other.

As their leader, share your **Statement** first and lead by example. As they share, graciously lead them to sharpen their **I Will Statements** while honoring what the Holy Spirit uniquely laid on their heart. Write down their **I Will Statements**, pray for them regularly, and follow up with them this week.

Next week, we'll gather together for **Look Back** and ask, *"How did it go?"*

Stretch Goals

- Memorize 1st John 5:12 this week and come prepared to share it next week.

Walk by Faith - Lesson 2

The Holy Spirit

THE GOAL OF LESSON 2

- The goal of Lesson 2 is to continue to help your disciple understand who the Holy Spirit is and how they can experience a Spirit-filled life.

Look Back

Begin your **Look Back** time with your **I Will Statements** from the previous week. Break up into smaller groups and ask two questions of each person:

- What was your **I Will Statement**?
- How did it go?

If there is something to celebrate, celebrate what God did together! If someone had a tough experience or they weren't able to follow through, have them share about it. Ask the group for input if they've been through a similar situation. Ask questions like:

- Has anyone else had a similar experience? How did that go for you?
- Is there any way this situation could have been handled better?

Once everyone has had a chance to share and speak into each other's **I Will Statements**, gather in groups of two to three to pray for your **Sphere of Influence Lists**. Have each group ask:

- Did God put anyone in your life that He's encouraging you to add to your **Sphere of Influence List**?

Pray intentionally for the names on your lists together.

Spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 1, Assurance of Salvation & Identity in Christ*. Dig into these questions together:

- Why is it important for a Believer in Christ to be sure of their Eternal salvation?
- Is there a volunteer who would like to draw the **Justification vs. Sanctification Illustration** up front?

Look Up

The Holy Spirit

As you begin **Look Up**, ask your disciples the bolded questions below, and give them time to answer in their own words.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

*As you come to a Scripture reference, have everyone stop and turn to the passage together. As your disciples read the passage, ask them, *"In your own words, how would you simply explain what God is saying in this passage to someone else?"*

- The Holy Spirit is God. **Genesis 1:2,26**
- He is also a Person with personal characteristics. He can be lied to. **Acts 5:3-4**
- The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity of God. The Trinity of God is One Being in three distinct Persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. **John 16:12-15**
- He is God's permanent presence with us and in us. **John 14:16-17**

How do you know you have the Holy Spirit?

- If you've received Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit is in you. **1 John 4:13**
- You will bear good fruit. **Matthew 7:17-20**
- When you feel God's correction for sin, you know that you're His child. **Hebrews 12:5-11**

Awareness of Sin Illustration

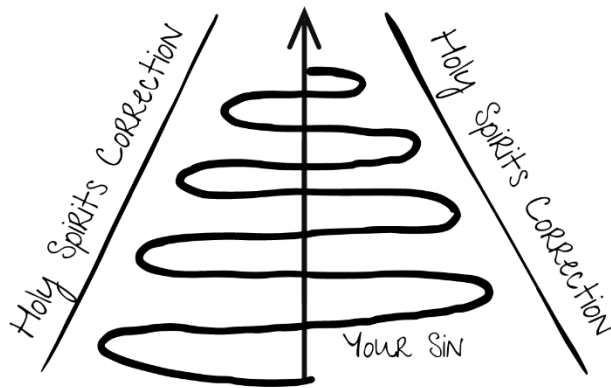


Illustration Explanation: As we mature in our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit's loving correction will guide us closer to the will of God for our lives.

Draw this illustration out for your disciples and explain it to them. Break out into groups of two to three and have your disciples practice drawing and explaining the illustration with each other.

- Is there a volunteer that would be willing to try it up front?

What can the Holy Spirit do in our lives?

- He helps us understand spiritual things. **1st Corinthians 2:10-16**
- Gives us spiritual gifts. **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**
- Comforts us and gives us joy. **1 Thessalonians 1:6**
- The Holy Spirit is the seal of your Eternal inheritance. **Ephesians 1:13-14**
- Produces His fruit in our lives. **Galatians 5:22-23**
- He gives us the right words to say. **Matthew 10:18-20**

What are things that prevent us from being empowered and filled by the Holy Spirit?

- We grieve the Holy Spirit through our sins and choices. Ephesians 4:30-32
- When we depend on our strength instead of His. Galatians 3:2-3
- When we are torn between the Spirit and our flesh. Galatians 5:16-17

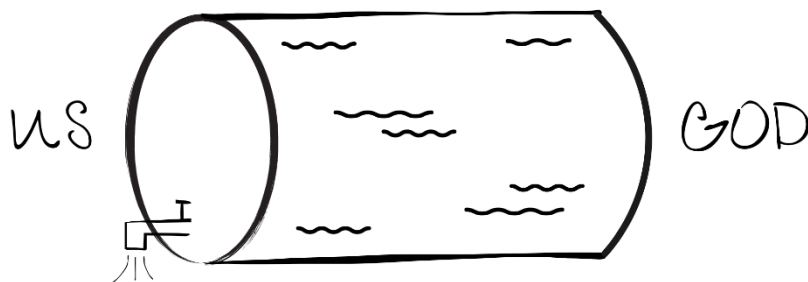
The Spirit-Filled Life

When you accept Jesus into your life, you receive all of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit doesn't receive all of you. Through the process of growing closer to Jesus, we yield our life to the Holy Spirit moment by moment. Over time, this will lead to surrendering all areas of your life to Him, and you'll experience a Spirit-filled life.

- How do we immerse ourselves in the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 5:18-21 tells us to immerse ourselves under the influence of the Holy Spirit. As we let Him into every part of our heart, mind, and soul, He begins to influence how we act, talk, and think. When we're filled with the Spirit, He will give us the power to change our lives to make us more like Jesus.

Discipleship Pipeline Illustration – The Holy Spirit



"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Romans 5:5

Illustration Explanation: The Holy Spirit is inside every believer. You don't get part of the Holy Spirit when you accept Christ. You receive all of Him. But that doesn't mean He'll gush out of you automatically. You need to willingly turn the faucet on moment by moment to walk in the Spirit. Through this process of obedience to the Lord, He will pour out of your life.

Break up into groups of two to three to practice with each other. After a few minutes, gather back together and ask for a volunteer to share the illustration up front.

How does the Holy Spirit speak to us?

The Holy Spirit is more than capable of speaking to us miraculously at any moment, but much more often, He will speak to believers every day in these ways:

- Through His Word. **John 14:23-26**
- Through His still, small voice. **1st Kings 19:11-12**
- Through other believers in Jesus. **Proverbs 15:22**



Listening to the Holy Spirit's still, small voice turns everyday moments into spiritual moments.

Saying Yes to Him

Our goal in discipleship is to learn how to discern what the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit is saying in our lives. Whether He asks you to pick up a piece of trash on the sidewalk, pray for someone, or share the Gospel, we want to learn to say yes to Him. No matter how insignificant the task may seem to be in our minds, if the Holy Spirit is tugging on your heart to do something, you can trust that you will see fruitfulness for Jesus if you're willing to say yes to Him.

One Foot Club

After you accept Christ, Jesus has won the war for your soul, but the spiritual battle within your life is just beginning. When you put your trust in Jesus, you receive the Holy Spirit. However, you will still carry your sinful desires in your flesh till the day you enter Eternal life. Your flesh and the Holy Spirit will be fighting for your heart and mind for the rest of your life.

Before a person trusts in Christ, they have two feet firmly in their flesh. Even if the happiness is fleeting, they enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin for the moment. When they put their trust in Jesus, they now receive the Holy Spirit. The things that used to bring them temporary pleasure in the flesh don't anymore. Even better, when they put two feet firmly in the Holy Spirit, He gives them peace that passes understanding, contentment, and fulfillment like they've never experienced before.

Problems arise when a believer allows temptation to grip their hearts and they dip their toe back into their flesh. Before long, a dipped toe becomes a planted foot, and now they have one foot in the Holy Spirit and one foot back in their flesh.

When you have one foot in both camps, now you can't experience the joy, peace, and power of the Holy Spirit because of your sin. And you also can't enjoy the fleeting happiness of your sin like you used to because of the Holy Spirit's loving conviction in your life. You are torn between your flesh and the Holy Spirit. This is a terrible place to be, and sadly, this is exactly the place where many believers live their entire lives following Christ. Jesus wants all of you. Don't stay in the *One Foot Club*.

"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:24-25

Helpful Tips

Pray for Eyes to See

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His eyes for what and who He wants you to see that day. This will help change your mindset from not paying attention to paying attention to what God is doing around you each day. Many times, it's not a lack of opportunity but our lack of awareness that causes us to miss what God wants to do through our lives.

Willingly Turn on the Faucet

Walking in the Spirit is a day-by-day, moment-by-moment choice for every believer. If you don't actively turn the faucet on, it will eventually shut off. The Holy Spirit's influence in our lives operates the same way. When apathy and idleness seep in, a disciple of Jesus will not experience the fullness of a Spirit-filled life.

The More You Hear Him, the Easier He is to Recognize

Ask the Lord to speak to you many times throughout the day and pause intentionally to listen to Him. Ask Him to settle your heart and mind before Him. When you sense Him tug on your heart, no matter how small of a task it seems to be, say yes to Him.

Doing this faithfully is the best way to learn how to hear His voice. Over time you will find that you'll have a much deeper, fulfilling relationship with Jesus. You'll also find that you'll end up right in the middle of God's will for your life.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27

Look Forward

Take a few minutes alone and ask God what He would like you to commit to for your **I Will Statement** this week. As the Lord impresses it on your heart, write it down in the **I Will Statement** section of this book.

Come back together as a group to share and sharpen your **I Will Statements** together. As the leader, write down your disciples' **I Will Statements** and reach out to them throughout the week to check in on them and encourage them as they honor Jesus.

Stretch Goals

- Pick one passage of Scripture from this lesson that the Lord illuminated to you and memorize it. Come prepared to share it next week.
- Slow down this week and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. When He does, no matter how big or small the moment is, write down a brief note about the experience. If you don't hear Him this week, don't be discouraged! Remember, discipleship is a marathon, not a sprint.

Walk by Faith - Lesson 3

The Word and Fellowship

THE GOAL OF LESSON 3

- The goal of this lesson is to help your disciple understand some of the core components of living out a Spirit-filled life. The ones we'll cover here are being devoted to spending time in the *Word of God* and spending time in *fellowship* with other believers in Jesus.
- This area of focus is aimed to train them in their ability to feed themselves spiritually for the rest of their lives.

Look Back

We'll begin our time together looking back on our **I Will Statements** from the previous week. This portion of discipleship provides loving accountability, and it's often going to be the platform for the most fruitful moments of spiritual molding for your disciples. Don't rush it! Give time for others to speak into each person's situation and offer advice and wisdom.

Once you've checked in on what God has been doing through the people's **I Will Statements**, get into smaller groups of two to three disciples to pray through your **Sphere of Influence Lists**.

Gather back together and ask for one or two people to share the passage they memorized from Lesson 2. Ask if anyone had a unique experience of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit leading them in a specific way that week. Encourage them to share it.

Spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 2, The Holy Spirit*.

- What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives?
- Is there a volunteer who would like to draw the **Discipleship Pipeline Illustration** from *The Holy Spirit Lesson* up front?

Look Up

If we want to bear fruit in our lives for Christ, how do we do it? Jesus tells us in John 15:5:

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing."

Jesus tells us that to bear genuine fruit for God's Kingdom, we need to abide in Him. So, the question for believers is, *how do we abide in Christ?* Open this question up for discussion with your disciples.

There are many ways that we can abide in Him. A few ways are reading God's Word, spending time in prayer, fellowship with other believers, serving people, and worshipping God. For Lesson 3, we'll focus on reading God's Word and fellowship with other believers.

God's Word

If you leave your disciples with a heart for the Word of God and a heart for the lost, you can trust that through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus will use them to make a great impact for Him in their lifetime.

Can you remember back to when you really started growing in your faith? What changed for you during that season of life? Open these questions up for discussion. For many believers, it was when they made God's Word a priority in their lives.

All 66 books in the Bible point to one main theme. Jesus' death on the Cross and His resurrection. When Jesus died and rose again, Jesus paid the price of our sins, which restored our relationship with God for Eternity.

God's Word is Complete and Powerful

- Jesus is the Word. **John 1:1-3, 14**
- God's Word always accomplishes His will. **Isaiah 55:11**
- His Word is pure. We shouldn't add to it or take away from it. **Proverbs 30:5-6**

Mail Carriers for God

Imagine that you wrote a letter to a friend. You put it in the mail, trusting that it would arrive in the hands of your friend exactly how you wrote it. When the letter arrived, you found out that the mail carrier opened the letter, edited it, took a few paragraphs out, put a few of their own paragraphs in, and delivered the letter to your friend, claiming it was from you.

The next day when you see the mail carrier, you ask, *"Why did you change my message?"* They reply, *"Well, I just thought the way you said it might offend them, and there was a message I thought was better that they should hear from you."*

How would you feel? Imagine how God feels when countless teachers do this to His message to us. When we add to it, take away from it, twist it, manipulate it, or change it from what God intended His Word to say, no matter how good our intentions may seem, we dishonor Him.

It's been said, *"If you torture the Scriptures enough, you can get them to confess anything."* Stay faithful to Jesus and His Word and deliver it in love exactly how He wrote it. Be faithful mail carriers for Him.

What are some of the things that the Bible does for us?

- Serves many purposes to build up the lives of believers. **2nd Timothy 3:14-17**
- Protects us from false teaching. **2nd Timothy 4:1-4**
- Sets us free. **John 8:31-32**
- Sanctifies and changes us. **John 17:17**
- Renews our minds. **Romans 12:2**
- Illuminates our heart motives and helps us discern our thoughts. **Hebrews 4:12**
- Provides truths that are timeless. **1st Peter 1:24-25**
- Gives us light and direction in our lives. **Psalms 119:105**
- Gives us peace and keeps us from falling. **Psalms 119:165**

Discipleship Pipeline Illustration – God’s Word

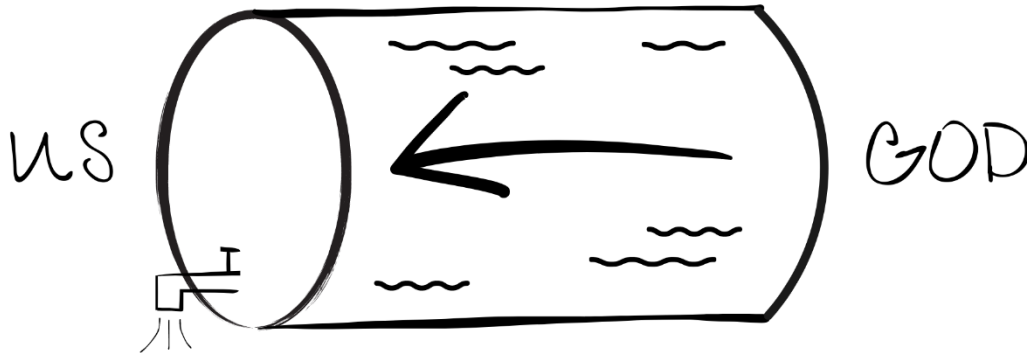


Illustration Explanation: God’s Word speaks into our lives and fills us. As we abide in Him and His Word, we’ll be filled to pour out into the lives of others and bear fruit for God’s Kingdom.

Break up into groups of two to three to practice with each other. After a few minutes, gather back together and ask for a volunteer to share the illustration up front.

Bible Study Tips

Pray Before, During, and After You Read the Word

Just like any important relationship in your life, a personal back-and-forth conversation is always best. So, as you read, ask Him questions, thank Him, and tell Him what you’re struggling with. Reading the Bible isn’t a box to check; it’s an investment into a relationship with the King.

Read Expectantly

If you were interviewing Jesus Christ, how would you prepare? Every time you open the Bible, you are truly interviewing the Creator of the Universe. Bring something to write down what He’s showing you and expect Him to speak. Don’t shy away from highlighting, underlining, and writing in the margins of your Bible. The saying goes, *“Show me a beat-up Bible, and I’ll show you a Christian whose not!”*

Learn to Savor

Have you ever taken a bite of food that’s so delicious you need to stop talking, stop thinking about anything else, and just close your eyes and chew on it slowly? Have a few moments every time you open the Bible where you do that with God’s Word. Close your eyes and let His truth sink down deep into your heart. Repeat the truth in your own words, savor it, and make it your own.

The Best Way to Spot a Counterfeit is to be an Expert in the Genuine

When something comes across your ears that just doesn’t sound right, if you know the Word, you will be able to filter out the lie from the truth. If you don’t know the genuine Word of God, a counterfeit can look awfully convincing.

No matter who the Bible teacher is, never take a teacher's word for it. Listen with an open heart, but always discern through what is being taught, and be a diligent student of the Word to confirm what's true and what may not be. Read **Acts 17:10-11** together.

- What stands out about what the Jews from Berea did?

Mining for Gold

Mining for gold takes time, patience, and attention to detail. Not every attempt to mine will produce golden nuggets. Reading God's Word is much the same. You may not experience a stunning moment every time you open His Word. However, when you take your time before God, when you're patient before His Holy Spirit, and you give your full attention to detail, before you know it, God will bless you with golden nuggets of truth from His Word that will deepen your faith and change your life forever. Read slowly, read clearly, and let the Word change your life.



It's important to get into the Word of God, but it's most important to let the Word get into you.

Think of Your Bible Like an Old Friend

Bring it with you on your journeys and adventures. Turn to it in the best moments of your life and also during the worst. Don't be afraid to make notes in it and mark it up.

You will find yourself reading a passage, and a note in the margin that you wrote long ago may remind you of a moment that changed your life. It may be a reminder from the Lord that you desperately need to hear again in this season.

Read Imaginatively

Each author of the Bible was inspired by God through the power of the Holy Spirit as they recorded the Word of God. Every passage of Scripture has one correct intended interpretation. With that said, there is no end to how the Lord may choose to use a passage to speak to you and apply His Word to your life. You may find yourself reading the same passage ten different times and while the interpretation is always the same, the application in your life may be distinct and unique each time you read it. You'll often find that the Lord gives you exactly what you need to hear in that season of your life.

One way that helps uncover new applications of a passage in your life is by reading imaginatively. For example, if you're reading the account of Jesus at the Cross, try putting yourself in the shoes of the Roman Soldiers who mocked Him, crucified Him, and cast lots for His clothes. How might they have felt when the sky went dark, the ground shook, and three days later, they heard that Jesus' tomb was empty?

We never want our imaginations to change the interpretation that God wanted us to understand from any passage. But reading through the Word of God imaginatively will do wonders in helping you personally connect with Scripture and discover new ways to apply it to change your life.

Modeling a Devotional Time

Throughout history, one thing that every great man or woman of God has had in common is that they spent a lot of time alone with Jesus. If you are too busy to spend time with Jesus, then you are too busy!

There are 168 hours in every week. The average working adult sleeps 8 hours per night and works 40 hours per week. That leaves 72 hours for cooking, eating, cleaning, chores, errands, recreation, entertainment, spending time with family and friends, and spending time with God. Where do you spend most of your time, money, and thought life? The answer to that question will identify what's most important to you.

If you say Jesus is the Lord of your life, is that reflected in your priorities? If you only have a few minutes to give God to start, then give Him a few minutes. Give Him everything you possibly can for those few minutes. Five genuine minutes before the throne of Jesus is far more impactful than five hours of theological study that never engages your heart.

You aren't just reading words on a page. You are interacting with a real Person.

You aren't just interacting with any person; *you're interacting with the Author who wrote the Book.* The Bible is the only Book ever written that no matter where you are when you read it, the Author is there with you.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." John 5:39-40

Here are some helpful steps to take during your time alone with Christ:

1. Pray for God to soften your heart and quiet your mind to hear His voice as you open His Word.
2. Read the Scripture and highlight or write down anything that stands out to you. Get used to being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading in this way.
3. Read the Scripture again aloud if possible. This will help the passage stick in your mind.
4. Now that you're familiar with the passage, pray through it slowly while internalizing it personally from the Lord.

For example, if you're reading Romans 8:5, *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."*

Internalize this Scripture personally in prayer to the Lord. *"Lord, when I set my mind on my flesh and sin, that is how I'll live. But when I set my mind on You, I'll live the way You want me to."*

5. Write out an **I Will Statement** that asks the Holy Spirit to help you change.

"Holy Spirit, with Your help, I will set my mind on You every day."

Encourage your disciples not just to hear the Word of God but instead to live it out and let it change their lives. If you can train your disciples to love God's Word and study it, the Lord will take them much deeper into His Word than you may ever have imagined.

Devotional Practice

Pick a passage to read with your disciples. Have each of them take 5-10 minutes alone with the Lord to practice this devotional model on their own. Come back together and have one or two people share what the Lord showed them.

Fellowship

Our God is a relational God. He created us in His image and desires relationships with us. He also desires us to have relationships with others. We are meant to walk in community with other believers in Christ.

What does the Bible have to say about fellowship?

- When we gather with other believers, God's presence is with us. **Matthew 18:19-20**
- We shouldn't give up on gathering with other believers. **Hebrews 10:24-25**
- The early church modeled healthy Christ-centered fellowship for us. **Acts 2:42-47**

As you read Acts 2:42-47 together, what are some of the elements you see in the 1st-century church's fellowship with each other?

The Good Shepherd

In John 10, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd. He describes us, believers in Him, as His sheep. In this passage, Jesus shares many life-changing truths about the impact of fellowship in the life of a disciple.

Read **John 10:1-16** with your disciples.

- What examples do you see of God's plan?
- How about Satan's plan?

The Shepherd and His Sheep Illustration

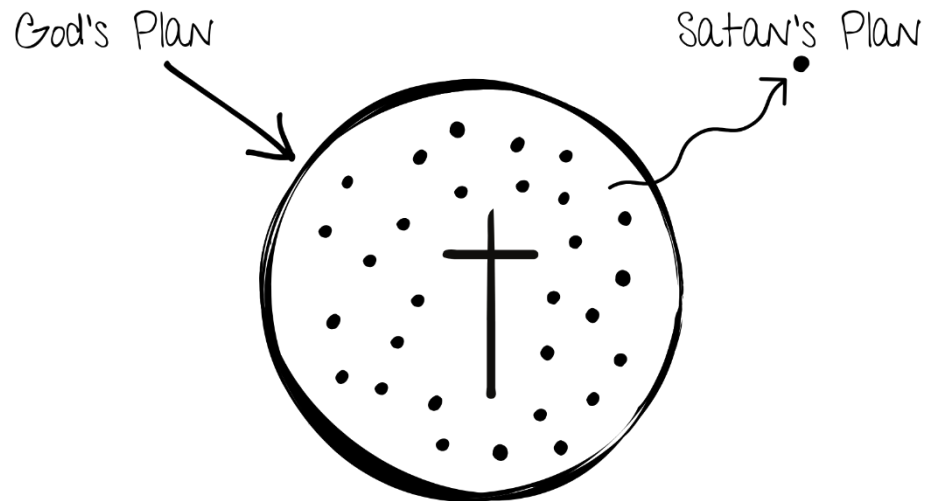


Illustration Explanation: The enemy looks to attack sheep that isolate themselves from the flock. The safest place for a sheep to be is closest to the shepherd. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and He wants to keep His sheep safely in His flock and close to Him.

God's Plan vs. The Enemy's Plan

It's important for us to know the difference between God's plan and the enemy's plan for our lives.

God's Plan

God wants you in a close relationship with Himself and others. He wants to keep you surrounded by His people, where He will care for you, protect you, feed you, and lead you. He won't let anything take you from His hands, and He'll protect your relationship with Him forever.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." John 10:27-28

Enemy's Plan

The enemy wants to come into your life to steal, kill, and destroy. That is easiest to do when you are far from the Shepherd. If the enemy can tempt you into sin and lead you astray from Jesus and other believers, you are most vulnerable to his attacks.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1st Peter 5:8



The safest place for a disciple to be is right in the middle of God's flock, closest to Jesus.

What are the benefits of fellowship with other believers in Christ?

- Helps us carry our burdens together. Galatians 6:2
- Eliminates isolation and pushes us closer to God. Proverbs 18:1
- Gives wisdom and safety in counsel from other believers. Proverbs 11:14
- Helps build each other up and sharpens us. Proverbs 27:17
- Provides mutual correction to turn back to the Lord. James 5:19-20
- Provides healing spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. James 5:16
- Allows us to practice selflessness in real-life situations. Philippians 2:1-4

Helpful Tips

Focus on Giving, not Getting

It's our sinful nature to think about ourselves. Human beings are terrific at justifying their actions to look good to others while at the same time having ulterior motives behind the scenes. Connecting with a local church fellowship is no different.

If the first questions we have are all about our comfort and preferences when finding a local church, it may be because we're focused on the wrong things.



When we focus on what we can give to others instead of what we can get out of them, we honor Jesus.

No church is perfect, and there are certainly Godly reasons to leave a church and go elsewhere. But as a general rule, if everyone in a church family focused on what they could give to serve each other above all else, there would be a sweet harmony and selflessness that would permeate through the people. This heart attitude glorifies Christ and is a beautiful example to those in the local community who don't know Him.

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." John 13:14-15

Church Traditions

There are many traditions held in the Church over the past 2,000 years. There is much debate over which ones are from the Lord for all believers, which ones are preferences in certain denominations and churches, and which ones are manmade. Every church fellowship is different and unique in their own way.

There are two church traditions that Jesus taught and modeled that nearly all Christians would agree are inspired by God and meant for all believers today. Those two traditions are baptism and communion.

Baptism

Baptism is an outward expression of what's already occurred inwardly in a believer's heart. Once a person has put their faith in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of their life, they have gone from death to life spiritually. Baptism is a symbolic act to tell the world that you stand with Jesus, that He is your Lord, and that He has taken you from Eternal death into Eternal life.

If there is someone in discipleship who has never been baptized, encourage them to pray about taking that step of faith to obey Jesus.

From Jesus' own lips, the Great Commission encourages baptism as a part of making disciples.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." Matthew 28:19

Communion

Jesus taught us to take the bread and drink the cup to remember the sacrifice He made on the Cross for us. As we remember how Jesus gave up His body and poured out His blood to pay for our sins, that moment should give us time to reflect, repent of our sins, and thank Jesus for all He has done for us.

Find a few times throughout discipleship to take communion together before the Lord.

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." 1st Corinthians 11:26

I Love You... but I Can't Stand Your Family

Imagine you have a new friend, and they tell you they love being around you. They pursue spending time with you and speak highly of you to everyone they meet. But when you invite them to spend time with your family, they tell you, *"I love you, but I just can't stand your spouse and kids. I know they're important to you, but I never want to be around them."* How would you feel?

Many believers in Christ have forsaken gathering with other believers because they've been hurt by them, or they just don't like them. How is that any different than telling Jesus, *"I can't stand your family!"*?

You may be thinking, *"But I don't have to go to church to be a Christian!"* You are 100% right. Becoming a disciple of Jesus is completely by grace through faith in Him alone. But are you thinking more about what you can get out of a church fellowship or about what you could give into it?

It's been said that hurt people hurt people. It's a true statement. But healed people heal people too. Don't let the pain that the Church has caused you in the past keep you away from God's family forever. If you never open up you may prevent yourself from being hurt again, but you also will miss out on the love that comes from real relationships centered on Christ.

Look Forward

Take a few minutes alone and ask God what He would like you to commit to this week for your **I Will Statement**. Remember to make your **I Will Statement** as specific, measurable, and stretching as you

can. By now, you should begin to see some growth in what the Holy Spirit has asked you to do each week. Don't lose sight that discipleship isn't a sprint; it's a marathon.

Share your **I Will Statements** with each other and write them down. Pray for your disciples and follow up with them to check in on them this week.

Stretch Goals

- Pick a passage that the Lord leads you to and have a devotional time in it. Write down anything unique that the Holy Spirit spoke to you, and come ready to share your experience next week.
- Are you actively connected to a local church? If not, take steps this week to find genuine fellowship and community with other believers in Christ. If you are having trouble getting connected, let's help each other out!

If you are discipling someone who doesn't have a home church, and for whatever reason, if your church isn't the right fit for them, be humble enough to help them find a solid home church for themselves. True spiritual revival happens when real humility and selflessness are overwhelmingly evident in a group of believers in Jesus. That means that denominational loyalties and preferences need to be secondary to the work of making disciples for Christ.

If another ministry is a better fit for your disciple's spiritual growth, be willing to help them connect there and put their roots down deep in that faith community to abide in Jesus.

Walk by Faith – Lesson 4

Prayer & Confessing Your Sin

THE GOAL OF LESSON 4

- The goal of this lesson is to understand the crucial role that prayer plays in the life of a believer.
- You also want to help your disciples understand how sin affects our relationship with God. This lesson is meant to teach them how to bring their sin before God and experience His forgiveness so that they can continue to live out a Spirit-filled life.

Look Back

Begin your **Look Back** time by sharing about what God did with your **I Will Statements** and your **Sphere of Influence Lists** this past week.

Gather back together and ask for one or two people to share their experiences of spending devotional time with the Lord. What did He show you?

Spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 3, The Word & Fellowship*.

- How does time in God's Word impact a believer's relationship with Jesus?
- What is God's plan for fellowship in your life? What about the enemy's plan?

Look Up

Prayer

Consider how David prayed to God throughout the Psalms. He shared his fears, his frustrations, and his anger. He also apologizes for his mistakes and sin. He offers God his praise, worship, and adoration as well. He was completely dependent on God in every area of his life. This is how we should pray!

Jesus shows His disciples that prayer doesn't have to be long, complicated, or done in a way where a Biblical dictionary is required to understand what you're saying. The most effective way to pray is to be honest, vulnerable, and speak from your heart. Do you love the Lord? Then speak to Him in the way you'd speak to someone you love.

"So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." Exodus 33:11

Discipleship Pipeline – Prayer

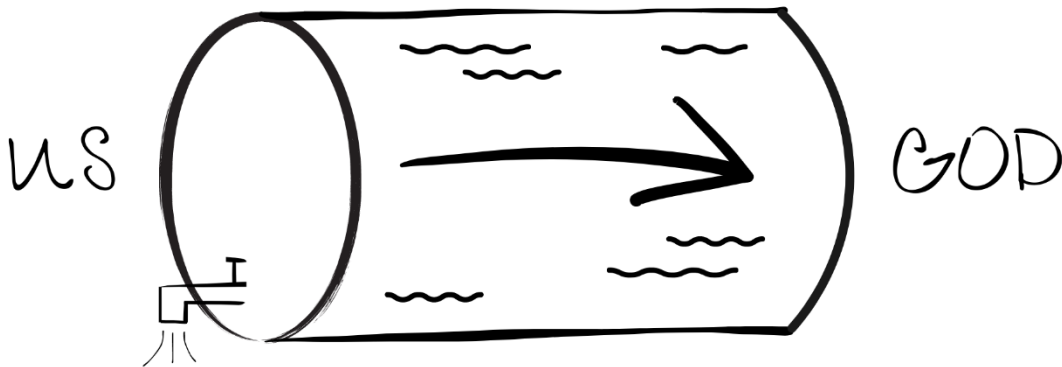


Illustration Explanation: Our connection to God through prayer keeps the Holy Spirit flowing freely through our lives.

Break up into groups of two to three to practice with each other. After a few minutes, gather back together and ask for a volunteer to share the illustration up front.

What are some motivations to pray?

- He cares for you. 1st Peter 5:6-7
- Prayer honors God's will for our lives. 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Prayer gets things done. James 5:16
- God guards our minds and protects our hearts. Philippians 4:6-7
- We have the privilege of access to the throne of Christ. Hebrews 4:16
- He answers our prayers. John 16:23-24

Why would God not answer our prayers?

- He protects us when a "No" from God is better for us than a "Yes". Proverbs 16:9
- God's promises always come true, just in His timing. Habakkuk 2:3
- When we ask with the wrong motives. James 4:2-3

How should we pray? What should we avoid during prayer?

Read Matthew 6:5-8 together.

- **V5-6** Come before God with a humble heart focused on Him. Don't pray to attract attention from others.
- **V7** Don't pray with repetitive words that aren't meaningful. If the words aren't meaningful to you, they won't be meaningful to Him, either. Speak in a normal way using your own words from the heart.
- **V8** God knows what you need before you pray. Pray in a way that you *believe* Him.

What should we pray about?

Now read **Matthew 6:9-13** together.

- **V9** We should praise and adore God.
- **V10** Ask for God's will to be done.
- **V11** Ask God for what we need.
- **V12** Confess our sin and brokenness to God and ask God to help us forgive others.
- **V13** Ask for God's help with the temptations in this world and close with glorifying Him.

Prayer Tips

Pray Expectantly

Write down your prayers and check back on them over time. Keep track as God answers your prayers. It will strengthen your faith and give you stories to share that glorify God.

Pray Like a Child

When a child and their parent have a loving relationship, the child feels completely safe, wholly trusting, and utterly dependent on them. Although a child's understanding of life may be simple, their love for their parents has unexplainable depth. They are naturally reliant on them. When we pray to God, we should have faith like a child and pray that same way to our Heavenly Father.

"Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:4

Initiate Prayer with People You Love

If you're married, initiate prayer with your spouse. If you have kids, pray with your kids. If you're single, who do you care deeply for in your life? Ask them if you can pray with them.

Pray Without Ceasing

There isn't a bad time of the day to pray to God. You could be driving, cooking, walking, or brushing your teeth. God is available and ready for you 24/7, and He really likes to talk with His children. By praying often and in many situations in your life, you will naturally develop a deep dependence on the Lord. When we abide, expect fruit.

Fasting Strengthens Your Prayer Life

If you struggle to remember to pray to God, or if your prayer time feels lifeless, fasting is a great tool from the Lord. Godly men and women have used fasting to settle their hearts and minds to focus on Jesus.

Fasting doesn't twist God's arm to cave into your demands. What it does is gives you a constant reminder to keep Jesus as the number one priority in your life. For instance, if you've given up food for an amount of time, every hunger pain is a reminder that it's time to go before the Holy Spirit in prayer

and ask Him to align your heart with His. How long you fast isn't the important part. Your heart attitude before God is.



When you come before the Holy Spirit in prayer or in His Word, expect Him to move.

Confessing Your Sin

Billy Graham once explained sin by saying,

"A sin is any thought or action that falls short of God's will. God is perfect, and anything we do that falls short of His perfection is sin."

Simply put, God desires a relationship with us, but sin separates us from God. As a disciple of Jesus, we will never be perfect on Earth. It is crucial for every believer to learn how to confess their sin before the Lord, to understand how to experience His forgiveness moment by moment, and to be able to get up quickly when you fall and continue walking closely with Him. This will lead to a Spirit-filled life.

Who does sin affect?

- All of us. **Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23**

What does sin affect?

- Before salvation, sin affects our Eternal destiny and relationship with God. **Romans 6:23**
- After salvation, sin affects our daily fellowship with God. **Romans 8:5-8**

How does sin enter our lives and grow?

- Sin enters when we give in to temptation. Sin grows when we compromise our faith and let it linger in our lives. **James 1:14-15**

What is the difference between our *relationship* with God and our *fellowship* with Him?

Our *relationship* with God is our Eternal standing with Him. Our *fellowship* with God is our day-to-day standing with Him on Earth. Once we have a relationship with Christ, God tells us that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and He is our guarantee of Eternal life.

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13-14

Ask for a volunteer to draw the *Justification vs. Sanctification Illustration* from Lesson 1.

Once we have a relationship with Christ, does sin break our Eternal relationship with Him?

- No, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Romans 8:38-39

Does sin break our daily fellowship with God?

- Yes, our sin separates God's Holy Spirit from working through our lives. Isaiah 59:2
- When we choose our sin, we block the Holy Spirit from moving freely in us. Galatians 5:16-17

Discipleship Pipeline – Sin

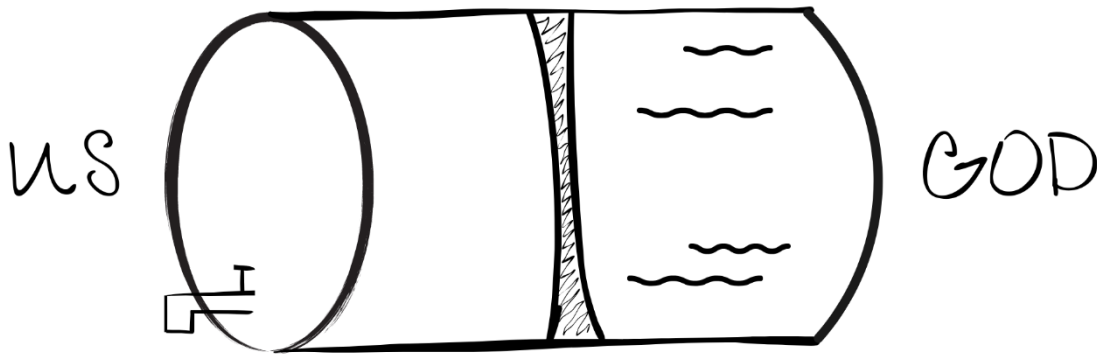


Illustration Explanation: When you allow sin in your life, it prevents the Holy Spirit from flowing freely through you.

Break up into groups of two to three to practice with each other. After a few minutes, gather back together and ask for a volunteer to share the illustration up front.

What does it feel like to be out of fellowship with God?

- Feelings of fear.
- Our hearts become numb to conviction from the Holy Spirit.
- Lack of confidence to step out to serve Jesus and speak about Him.
- Desire to avoid fellowship with God and other believers.

The Weight of Sin

Sin in our lives weighs us down from running after God. You will never grow into the person God wants you to be if you allow unrepentant sin to exist in your life.

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..." Hebrews 12:1

It's been said, *"Sin will take you farther than you ever wanted to go; it will keep you longer than you ever wanted to stay, and it will cost you more than you ever wanted to pay."*

The enemy isn't trying to trip you up; he's trying to kill you. He doesn't use sin for the purpose of inconveniencing your life or causing annoyance in your relationships or ministry. He uses sin to try to take you out. If you don't take sin in your life seriously, it will.

How do we get right with God when sin breaks our fellowship with Him?

- Go directly to Him and ask for His forgiveness. Remember that any sin in your life is against Him. **Psalm 51:1-4**
- Ask God to give you a clean heart to let His Spirit flow through your life. **Psalm 51:10-13**
- Come before God with a humble heart. **Psalm 51:17**

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1st John 1:9

Discipleship Pipeline – Repentance

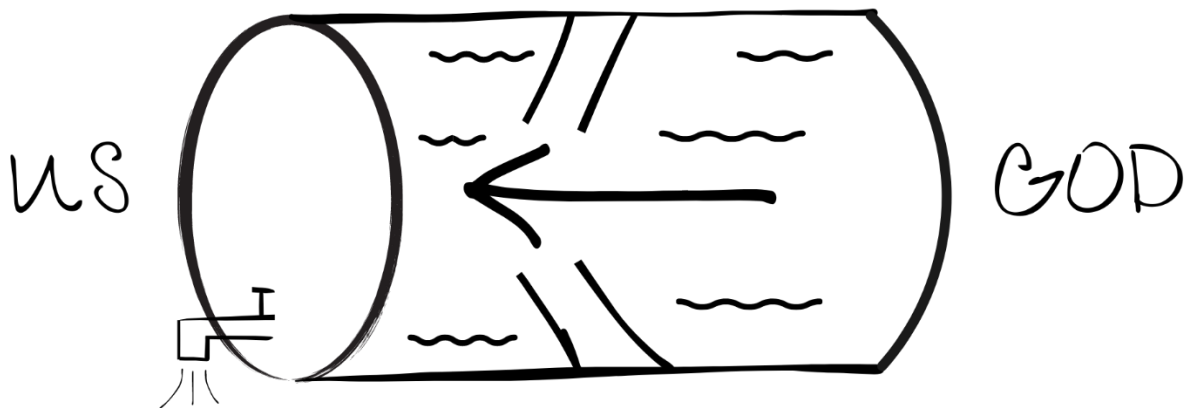


Illustration Explanation: Go to God regularly to repent of your sin and break the barrier of brokenness between you and Him. Let God clean your heart and mind so you can experience a Spirit-filled life.

Break up into groups of two to three to practice with each other. After a few minutes, gather back together and ask for a volunteer to share the illustration up front.

Only One Middle Man

One of the many beautiful things about the Gospel is that Jesus' sacrifice for our sins gave us direct access to God that people have not had since the Garden of Eden. Many traditions encourage confessing your sin to mankind to find forgiveness with the Lord. Jesus' death and resurrection gave us the undeserved gift of going *directly* to God ourselves.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus...” 1st
Timothy 2:5

Jesus has allowed us the ability to go right to our Heavenly Father, and He is always available to spend time with us. Why would we go to a representative of the King when the King Himself is inviting you into His throne room to be with Him?

There is wisdom in sharing our brokenness with other believers, but this should be by choice as the Lord leads, not made mandatory by mankind. We'll cover this point in more detail a few sections below in *Accountability Partners*.

Helpful Tips

Don't Walk Alone

Satan's goal is to isolate you because he knows there is strength in numbers.

“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire...” Proverbs 18:1

On the other hand, God's goal is for you to be in a close relationship with Him and others. Find other believers that you trust and encourage each other to confess your sin before God.



We weren't made to walk alone; we were made to walk in community.

No Use in Hiding

God already knows everything you've ever done. He even knows everything you've ever thought. Be willing to be vulnerable and transparent about your brokenness because He's already aware of it.

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:13

A Worthy Enemy

Sin is a worthy enemy in your life, don't underestimate it. Ask God to reveal areas of weakness in your life and be willing to cut out those areas that cause you to stumble. When we underestimate sin in our lives, we give it more power to hurt us.

Sin put our Savior on the Cross. If Jesus took sin so seriously that it cost Him His life, then we should approach sin seriously as well. You would rather lose a convenience in your life than suffer a massive loss.

"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." Matthew 5:29-30

Accountability Partners

The word "accountability" has many negative connotations attached to it. We often think of getting scolded by a teacher or a boss or getting punished for breaking the rules. Loving accountability in our faith is something entirely different.

It's been said, *"Accountability is the glue that ties commitment to the result."* If your desire is to grow as a disciple of Christ, then inviting someone in to help you in that endeavor isn't only wise, it's the way God made it to be.

"As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend." Proverbs 27:17



The one thing no person can do is put willingness in someone else's heart.

If a person is willing to be a disciple of Jesus, then there is nothing that Jesus could ask of them that they couldn't do. If they aren't willing to follow Jesus, then nothing will work.

If you are serious about growing in your relationship with Christ, you need someone in your life who you give permission to hold you accountable in your walk with Jesus. Be willing to ask each other tough questions that go much deeper than surface level.

A few examples of good questions could sound like these:

- *"How is your personal time with Christ going?"*
- *"How are your relationships going (Spouse, kids, friends, work)?"*
- *"Are you struggling with anything that's holding you back from God? (Drugs, alcohol, bitterness, unforgiveness, sexual sin, etc.)"*

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16

Look Forward

Spend time alone with God to craft your **I Will Statements** for the week ahead. Come back together to share them with each other. Write them down and follow up with each other this week to check in.

Stretch Goals

- Find someone in your discipleship group that you can mutually encourage. Ask if there is a willingness to become accountability partners. If you get stuck, ask your leader for help connecting with someone.
- Give permission to them to ask tough questions in your life.
 - Start slow. We'll never ask you to be more transparent and vulnerable with each other than you are willing to be. But keep in mind that for God to move powerfully in each of these relationships, the more open and honest we are willing to be, the more growth we'll see as we seek to help each other live out a Spirit-filled life.

* Once you have completed *Lesson 4 in Walk by Faith*, this is a good time to help think through *Discipleship Pairings* for your disciples. See more info about this idea in **Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship** at the end of the book.

Communicate Your Faith - Lesson 5

Sharing Your Story

THE GOAL OF LESSON 5

*Lesson 5 changes gears from our **Walk by Faith** to learning how to **Communicate our Faith**.

- The goal of this lesson is to have your disciples understand the power of sharing their Story of what Christ has done to change their life.
- This lesson is intended to help your disciples learn how to share their story in a simple, compelling, and impactful way that honors Jesus and helps them relate to others.

Look Back

Start Lesson 5 by sharing what God has done in your life this past week through your **I Will Statements** and **Sphere of Influence Lists**.

Gather back together and spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 4, Prayer & Confessing Our Sin*.

- What impact does a healthy prayer life have on a follower of Christ?
- How does sin impact our relationship and fellowship with God?
- How do we handle our sin and brokenness with the Lord?

Look Up

Sharing Your Story

People can argue with your doctrine, your views of the Bible, and your personal convictions, persuasions, and opinions.



The one thing people cannot argue with is your Story of how Jesus changed your life. Of all the tools you will learn in discipleship to honor Jesus, for many, learning how to share your Story is the most powerful one.

What are some of the strengths of sharing your Story to reach others for Christ?

- Sharing your brokenness displays a humble heart and breaks down barriers for others to open up themselves. **1st Corinthians 2:1-5**
- It reveals the power of the Cross, it's evidence that Jesus Christ is real today, and it glorifies God. **Matthew 5:16**

- Your Story helps you relate to others and find common ground. It builds trust, which softens hearts towards Jesus so that the Gospel message can take root in someone's life. **1st Corinthians 9:19-23**

"So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:18-20

The Apostle Paul's Story

Besides the Gospel message itself, the tool that Paul used most frequently when telling others about Jesus was his own Story of how Christ changed his life.

God valued Paul's story so much that He included it in three different chapters of the Book of Acts. Take time to read **Acts 22:1-21** together and answer the question below.

What stands out to you about the way that Paul shared his Story?

- He related to those listening in multiple ways.
- Spoke in a language they could understand.
- Found common ground with them. Connected with them about how similar they were.

What is your Story?

In discipleship, we want to help each other turn our Stories of how Christ changed our lives into something that can be a useful tool to reach others as the Holy Spirit leads.



Your Story is not about you. Your Story is about Jesus.

Sharing Your Story Illustration

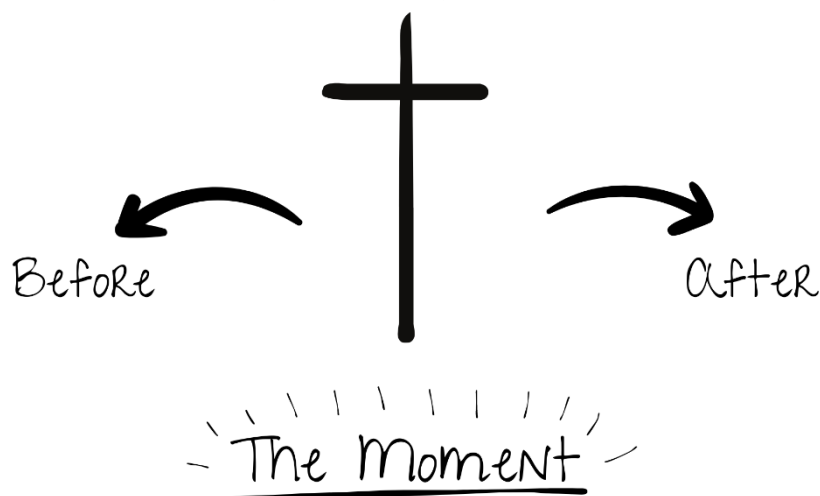


Illustration Explanation: Our Story of how Jesus changed our life is broken down into three areas. Who were you *before* you met Jesus, that *moment* you put your faith in Jesus, and how Jesus has changed your life *after* you've trusted in Him. Our entire Story is focused on what Jesus did on the Cross for us.

As you draw the Illustration for your disciples, model each area by sharing your Story briefly with them as you go.

Crafting Your Story

With anything, when we give our time and attention to something, it's evident in the finished product. For your Story, spend time together putting what God has done in your life down on paper and practice it. Take a few minutes alone right now in discipleship and do the following:

- Choose two words that best describe your life *before* you met Jesus.
- Choose two words that best describe your life now *after* you've met Jesus.

Use words of life change that could resonate with all people, no matter where they've come from. There are many great words that express our changed lives for Jesus. So be creative! None of our Stories are exactly the same, so they aren't meant to sound the same either. Here are a few words to help you think through shaping how you share your Story:

I was:

- Empty
- Broken
- Alone
- Struggling
- Hurting
- Lost

Now I am:

- Fulfilled
- Joyful
- Peaceful
- Content
- Hopeful

Ask for one to two volunteers to share their words with the group.

Next, give each disciple a few minutes alone to write 2-3 sentences in the following three areas:

1. What was your life like before you met Christ?
2. What was the moment or season like when you trusted Him?
3. What has your life been like since?

* Make sure to use the two words you chose in your Story to demonstrate your changed life for Christ!

Ask for one to two volunteers to share their Stories.

For many, this may be one of the first times they've shared their Story. It may be painful to relive what the Lord has brought them through. For others, it also may be challenging to put their Story into words. Be patient and help each other.

Build Out Your Story

Now that you have the framework in place, the next step is building out your Story. Work on putting some meat on the bones and turning those sentences into full paragraphs. Walk through some advice and wisdom on building out each area of focus.

3 Key Areas of Your Story

Describe your life before Christ

Discuss who you were before you began a personal relationship with Jesus. Be willing to share the painful parts of who you were in your brokenness and sin. Discern what's appropriate to share and what isn't, and always remember that the point of sharing your Story is to honor Jesus. Think through where your sin led you and how it left you feeling. Be as honest and genuine as you're willing to be without glorifying your sin.

“But what if I accepted Christ when I was young and stayed faithful my whole life? What if my Story isn't as powerful as what I've heard from other followers of Christ?”

A Story about a person who has been faithful to Christ their whole life is incredibly powerful! They should count themselves blessed not to carry the baggage that comes along with much of the sin and brokenness others have.

If this is your Story, here are some things to consider sharing. Has there ever been a season of your life where you've strayed from God and then came back to recommit your life to Christ? Instead of talking about your life before Christ, talk honestly about a time when you strayed from Him and He called you back. Part of the greatness of God's grace for us is that His grace is not only sufficient in the moment we receive salvation through faith in Christ, but His grace is also sufficient for our entire lives as well.

If you professed your faith in Christ as a child, what are some of the moments in your life that really strengthened your faith in Him? Instead of describing the circumstance that led you to Christ, you could share something that helped you grow closer to Jesus. Maybe it was some evidence of the Cross or God's Word that helped deepen your faith. Maybe it was another believer who poured into you in a season when you were broken, and God used them to help pull you out.

Any story of what God has done in your life is amazing and worthy to be shared!

Describe the circumstances that led to the moment you trusted Christ

Was there a person that God used to draw you towards Him? Was there a situation in your life that brought you to a place where you finally opened your eyes to Christ? Maybe it was your sin and brokenness that left you empty and desiring more. Maybe it was something else.

Whatever your Story, know that it's perfect. It's perfect because it's the story of how Christ saved you from Eternal death and gave you the gift of Eternal life. Own it and share it proudly to bring glory to Him.

We often hear people thank God in an interview or a speech. But there are many gods that people believe in all over the world. We believe in One God, Jesus Christ. And we believe that faith in Jesus alone is the only way back into a restored relationship with God.

Make sure you mention Jesus Christ by name in your Story. Say something like, *"That was the time I personally accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of my life."* There is no more important part of your Story for someone else to hear than this!

Describe what your life has been like since accepting Christ

Share details of how you have grown in your faith since coming to Christ. Share about the victories that Jesus has given you over your sins. Be real and honest that life is not perfect even after you've trusted Christ, but now you have an Eternal hope that has changed your perspective and outlook in this life.

Give your disciples a few minutes alone to build out their Stories

Once you gather back together, take the lead and share your Story with them in this way. Model sharing your Story for them and aim to keep it to two minutes or less. For many people, this will be hard to do, but the goal of this lesson is to turn their Story into a tool that the Holy Spirit can use in an everyday moment in their sphere of influence to tell others about Christ.

Break up into groups of two to three and have each disciple practice sharing their Story a few times with each other. Remind them that practice eliminates fear, builds confidence, and sharpens our performance. So, hang in there if this feels awkward. Awesome comes right after awkward.

Encourage them to be genuine, transparent, and concise. Most importantly, encourage them to always focus on using their Story to point others towards Christ and honor Him!

Helpful Tips

Your Story Isn't About You

Don't make yourself the hero in your Story. We have a Hero, and His name is Jesus. When we talk about how we received Eternal salvation, we often will say things like, *"Because I accepted Christ."* *"Because I have faith in Jesus."* It's true that we have a clear responsibility to respond to the Lord, but don't forget who the Hero is.

When answering the question, *"How did you receive Eternal salvation?"* Give the glory to Who it belongs to. *"Because He died for me!"* *"Because He took my place to forgive me of my sins!"*

Not, *"Because I..."* But *"Because He..."*

Craft Your Story to Fit Any Time Frame

Practice sharing your Story in a way that you'd be prepared for any amount of time. Not every opportunity to share that the Holy Spirit brings your way will look the same, so be flexible as He leads.

If you have 30 minutes with someone who wants to hear more about the Lord, be willing to share more details to open up your life for them. If you only have 30 seconds, be able to communicate your Story in that time frame in a way that honors Christ as well.

No matter the amount of time you have, always aim to hit on the three key areas of your Story. Who were you *before* meeting Christ, what did *the moment* you trusted in Him look like, and who have you been *after* trusting in Christ.

Share Your Story with a Purpose

Tell them this is what Christ did for you personally and that He wants to do the same in their life if they will let Him. When the Holy Spirit opens the door for you, it's always good to ask someone after you've shared your Story, *"Do you have a Story like that?"*

If they say no, as the Lord leads, you could ask, *"Would you want one?"*

Pitfalls to Avoid when Sharing Your Story

Talking Too Much

No one wants to be preached at for half an hour! Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and take social cues to sense where the conversation is leading. Very often, we find that less is more when it comes to planting seeds for the Gospel.



We only want to take the conversation as far as the Holy Spirit wants it to go.

Watch Out for Christianese

Do your best to use language that the hearer will understand. Many words or phrases that are common to Christians will be odd, unknown, or just plain weird to someone who doesn't know Christ. For example, saying something like, *"That was too much milk. They need to give us more meat from the Word."*

A Christian may understand that you are talking about teaching simple gospel truths vs. expounding on deeper Biblical concepts in the Bible. But someone who wouldn't identify as a Christian may be left scratching their head and trying to figure out how to escape the conversation!

The other example would be if a Christian says something with deep theological meaning to someone who wouldn't claim to be a follower of Jesus. For example, *"When I really got a handle on soteriology and Christ's propitiation for my sin, it changed my life forever."* Some well-studied believers will know that statement means that a person understood that Jesus paid for their sins to save them for Eternity. But most people will be left in the dust trying to change the subject.

If you use in-depth theological words that someone would need a master's degree to understand, what benefit is your Story to their own journey with Jesus? We want to use our words to break down barriers for them to meet Christ, not build up more.

Don't Play Golf, Play Tennis

Golf is an individual sport. A golfer hits their own ball, and they take every shot till the round is over. Don't make your time sharing your Story like a round of golf where you are taking every shot, and they are just watching. In other words, *don't make it all about you!*

Aim to make your conversation more like a tennis match where both of you are contributing to the action. If you really care about them, you won't want to be the one taking all the shots. You'll want to hear from them, too.



People won't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

If you care about them, you should care about their Story, too. Engage them in conversation and really listen.

Glorifying Your Sin

There is no need to give a list of all your sins prior to you coming to Christ as if it were something to be proud of. It is that sin that put your Savior on the Cross. Be honest, but also be humble and contrite about what Christ has brought you out of.

Use discernment with your audience. For example, if you have the chance to share your Story with a group of kids, there is no need to tell of your sexual brokenness in detail with a group of second graders!

My Story is Boring

The Story of how you were saved from Eternal death to Eternal life is not boring... it's a miracle! Treat your Story as what it truly is - The best thing that has ever happened to you in your life. If you're tempted to exaggerate your Story to make it appear more powerful, don't do it. Nothing can steal away the power of God from your Story quite like making details up and then getting caught red-handed in a lie. Any changed life for Jesus is a miracle. Tell the truth!

Your Witness Will Confirm or Deny Your Story

Remember that once they know you identify as a follower of Christ, that comes with a whole bunch of assumptions and perceptions in this world. From this point forward, your personal witness for Christ becomes that much more important because they will watch to see if how you *act* lines up with what you say you *believe!* Being a hypocrite is a great way to destroy all credibility from your Story of how Jesus changed your life.

We will never be perfect on Earth. So, give yourself some grace when you fall. When you do make mistakes, one of the most powerful examples to someone is when you are quick to apologize and ask for their forgiveness.

Look Forward

Take a few minutes alone with the Lord for your **I Will Statements**. Come back together and share with each other what the Lord laid on your hearts.

Stretch Goals

- Build out your Story this week and focus on the three areas surrounding the Cross of Christ.
- Aim to keep your Story to 150 words or less. Bring it with you next week and come ready to share.

* After you complete this lesson, this is a good time to help create *My Story Tracts* for your disciples. See more info about this idea in **Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship** at the end of the book.

Communicate Your Faith – Lesson 6

Sharing God's Story

THE GOAL OF LESSON 6

- The goal of this lesson is for your disciples to learn to share God's Story in a simple, relatable way that will help others understand the truth of God's plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

Look Back

Spend time together talking about how your **I Will Statements** went and praying for your **Sphere of Influence Lists**.

Gather back together and spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 5, Sharing Your Story*.

- What are some strengths of sharing our Story with others?

Spend a few minutes in groups of two to three people and practice sharing your Story with each other. Once you're back together, ask one to two people to share their Story in front of everyone. Throughout discipleship, everyone will get a chance to share in front of the group, so don't be shy!

Look Up

Sharing God's Story

Why are we here on Earth? Many different people would have many different answers to that question. As a disciple of Christ, we believe we are here on Earth to be in a relationship with Jesus Christ and bring glory to Him.

Once we receive Christ and begin a relationship with Him, we haven't reached the end of our purpose in this lifetime. Trusting in Jesus is the starting line, not the finish line. God has a unique plan for each of us and desires to use us to share His Story (the Gospel message) with those who don't know Him.

"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

What are our motivations to share God's Story?

- It honors and glorifies God. 2nd Corinthians 4:5-6
- Because Jesus tells us to! Matthew 28:19-20
- Urgency to see others live with us in Heaven. 2nd Peter 3:9
- God will reward us in Eternity for our faithful works done here. 1st Corinthians 3:12-15



The only thing we can bring with us from Earth into Eternity is other people.

What is God’s Story?

Ask your disciple, “How would you explain the Gospel message to a friend?”

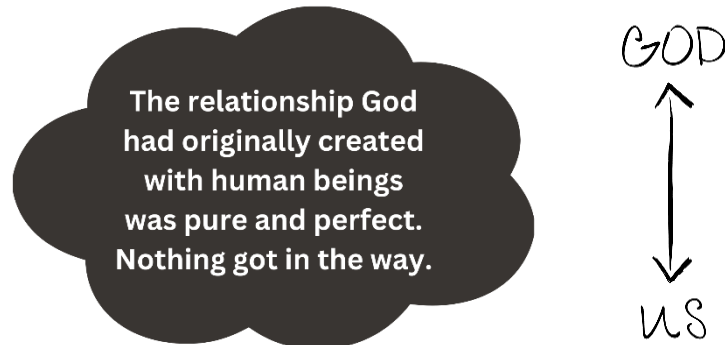
Let them try first in their own words. If someone is struggling, help each other out. Once they’ve had a chance to share, walk them through the simple method of sharing God’s Story called the Four Spiritual Laws.

There are many great ways to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. We’ve selected the Four Spiritual Laws as our training method to encourage a simple, reproducible model of discipleship. Our intention was to select a Gospel presentation method that would be easy to memorize and transferable for your disciples to share for generations to come.

What are the Four Spiritual Laws?

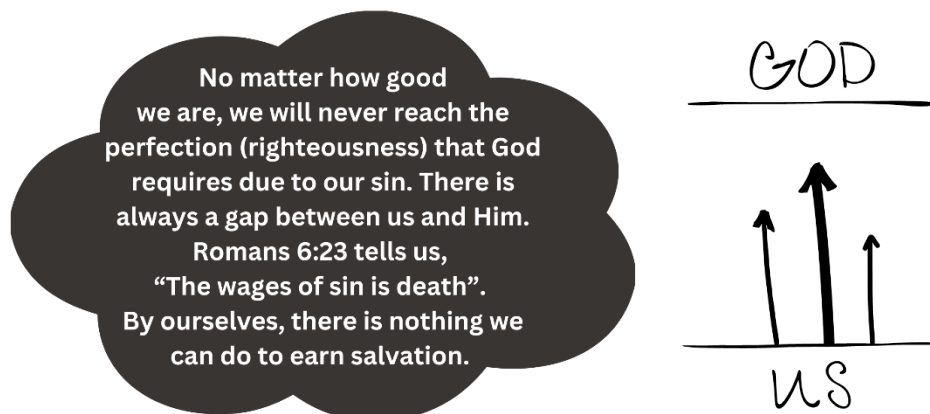
1. God loves you and desires a personal relationship with you. John 17:3

Illustration 1 - Our Relationship with God



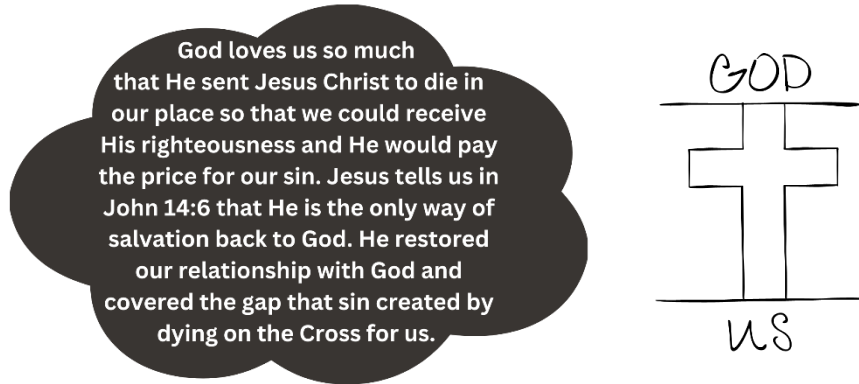
2. Sin separates us from God. Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23

Illustration 2 - The Gap from Sin



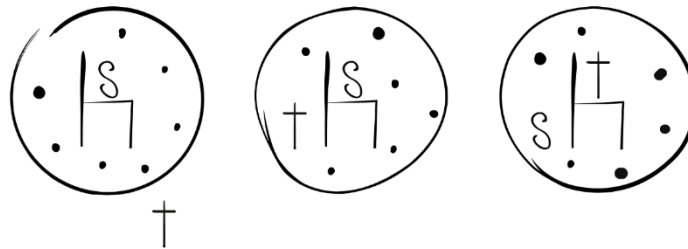
3. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the Cross to pay the penalty for our sin. When we repent of our sin and place our faith in Jesus' sacrifice for us, we receive forgiveness and Eternal life. **Romans 5:8**, **2nd Corinthians 5:21**

Illustration 3 - God's Answer for Sin is Jesus Christ



4. We have a choice to make. **John 1:12**, **Romans 10:9**

Illustration 4 - Our Choice



You have a choice to make. Each of these circles represents your life. The 1st circle shows a life that revolves around you. In this circle, Jesus has no place in your life. The 2nd circle represents that Christ has a place in your life, but Jesus isn't on the throne of your life. The last circle illustrates the life of someone who has surrendered their life to Jesus and put their faith in Him as Lord and Savior of their life. In this circle you have willingly put Jesus Christ on the throne of your life and all that you do revolves around Him.

- Which circle do you feel best represents where you are in your faith in Christ today?
- If you could choose, which circle would you like to be in?

Walk your disciples through the Four Spiritual Laws a second time together. Ask questions along the way, like, *"What separates us from God?"* Or *"What did God do in response to our sin?"*

Allow time for a good back-and-forth discussion with them. Dig in with your disciples to get a sense of their understanding of communicating God's Story simply.

Break up into groups of two to three people and have each person practice sharing God’s Story using the Four Spiritual Laws. Gather back together and ask someone to come forward to share God’s Story from the front.

“How Will They Respond?”

There is no message you could share with someone more important than the Gospel message. It’s a natural question that every believer wonders, *“How will they respond to this?”* Remember this important principle of discipleship:



Our job is faithfulness to God. His job is fruitfulness. Leave the results in His hands.

Fear of how others will respond often keeps followers of Christ from speaking up. Keep in mind that any response from people is ultimately between them and Jesus.

“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” John 12:42-43

*Ask your disciples the following open-ended questions first and let them wrestle with each.

What If They’re Not Ready?

If someone is not ready to put their faith in Jesus, that’s okay! Ask them a question like this, *“What might be holding you back from putting your trust in Christ?”*

How they answer this question may shed great light on what obstacles are keeping them from a relationship with God. It could be the hypocrisy they see in religion, theological doubts, moral issues, or something else. Maybe nothing is holding them back. You won’t know unless you ask.

If they share with you what’s holding them back from trusting in Christ, a great question to ask is, *“If you found a good answer to that question, would it really make a difference for you?”*

These types of questions cut through the smoke screens and help get right to the heart of where someone stands spiritually.

What if They Want Jesus?

If they selected the last circle with Jesus on the throne of their life, praise God! They could make that decision today, right where they are, between them and God.

All it takes is a humble heart before the Lord with a simple prayer of repentance of their sin and putting their faith in Jesus. There is nothing special about the words themselves. What these words represent is a genuine faith in Christ in a person’s heart.

Remember that faith isn’t just words; it’s a choice. If someone would like to put their faith in Jesus, have them try out these words as an example. Feel free to encourage them to change the words to make them their own:

*“Jesus,
Thank You for loving me and dying on the cross for me. I’m sorry for all the wrong things
I’ve done in my life. I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. Jesus, please come into
my life right now, change my heart, and show me how to live for You. I want You to be
my Lord and Savior. I commit my life to You, I love You, and I want to follow You. Amen.”*

Helpful Tips

We’ll cover many more tools that will help you enter into spiritual conversations during lessons 7 and 8 of **Communicate Your Faith**. In the meantime, Jesus may not want you to wait. If the Holy Spirit presents you with an opportunity to share, even today, be willing to say yes to Him and share what you know. Here are some helpful tips to help lead into spiritual conversations with others.

Don’t Invite Them to Church, Invite Them to Jesus

Many believers hear the Gospel every week from the pulpit and have a genuine desire to obey Jesus and share His Story with others. The problem is they’ve never been equipped personally to share Christ on their own. What tends to happen is that their desire to obey Jesus and reach others turns into them inviting people to their church to hear about Him.

The barrier this presents is that the only way people who don’t know Christ will hear about Him is if they step foot into your church. Many will never do that. When the Holy Spirit prompts you with an opportunity to share with someone, don’t invite them to church; invite them to Jesus.

Get Their Permission

Jesus invites all to come to Him. He never pressures, forces, or manipulates us. Aim to have the same heart when you speak to others about Him. Whenever possible, it’s always a good idea to get their permission to share with them. You could ask a question like this, *“I always like to share the best thing in my life with people I care about. May I share with you what I believe?”*

If they say yes, then they’ve just invited you to turn an everyday moment into a spiritual moment. If they say no, respond and say something like, *“I understand! I’ve found that my faith in Christ has given me more hope and peace than anything else I’ve experienced in life. If you ever have questions, it would be a privilege to chat with you about it sometime.”*

When people give you their permission to share about Jesus, it shows buy-in and a willingness on their side to engage in the Gospel.

“Check This Out!”

As people, we love to share the best and most impactful parts of our lives with people that we care about. Whether that’s a great movie, a meal that blew us away, a funny joke, or a story, the things that we love and care about come through naturally when we speak to others.

If your relationship with Jesus is the most important thing in your life, make sure people in your life know that! Always share the truth of God’s Story passionately with a heart of love.

Meet Them Where They’re At

Always communicate the truths of God’s Story with integrity. At the same time, always aim to share His Story in a way your audience will understand. You may find yourself talking with someone young or old, blind or deaf, a seminary graduate, or they may be illiterate. Every person matters greatly to God.

Sometimes, a situation will be served best by a conversation alone. Other times, drawing out Gospel illustrations will help them better understand God’s Story. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading and be creative in the moment.

For instance, if you are using illustrations to help explain God’s Story, something as simple as drawing them on a napkin or flipping over a paper placemat can be disarming and relatable with someone you’re sharing with. This small visual can make a huge difference in someone’s understanding of what Jesus did for them.

Leave a Seed Behind

There are lots of options for Gospel tracts out there, and there are even more opinions about using them. The most effective way we’ve seen them used is as something to leave behind with someone you’ve had the privilege to share Christ with personally.

Since we have chosen the Four Spiritual Laws from Cru as our simple method for sharing the Gospel, it can be helpful to have a Four Spiritual Laws Gospel tract on hand to leave with a person whom you’ve shared with. You can pass it to them at the end of your conversation and say something like, *“Everything that I shared with you today is put together in a simple, clear way in this booklet. It can help you remember some of the things we talked about in the coming days.”*

If appropriate, it’s always a nice touch to leave contact information on the front of the Gospel tract. Something like your first name, email, or cell phone number. It shows them that you care. It also provides a way for them to follow up if they have questions and they want to explore their faith in Jesus further.

A My Story tract is perfect for this situation because it includes your Story, the Four Spiritual Laws, and helpful follow-up information as well. (For more information, see *My Story Tracts* in **Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship**)

Look Forward

Spend time with God and ask Him for your **I Will Statements** for the week. Share them with each other.

Stretch Goals

- Practice sharing God’s Story with someone in your life this week. Even if they already believe in Christ, it will be helpful to practice having the words come out of your mouth.

*It could be a family member, someone in discipleship, or even someone else God brings into your sphere of influence from the community. Get used to sharing God’s Story in a clear, concise, and simple way. Take time to practice drawing the illustrations as well.

Communicate Your Faith – Lesson 7

Relationship Building

THE GOAL OF LESSON 7

- The goal of this lesson is to have your disciple learn simple, practical tools to build relationships with people in their lives that may not know Christ.
- This will help your disciples grow their **Sphere of Influence Lists** and make an impact for Jesus in the lives of others.

Look Back

Catch up on your **I Will Statements** and what God has done since last time. Carve out time to pray intentionally for your **Sphere of Influence Lists**.

Gather back together and ask for one or two people to share their Story of how Christ changed their life.

Next, spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 6, Sharing God's Story*.

- What are the Four Spiritual Laws?
- Is there a volunteer that would be willing to share God's Story up front?

Spend a few minutes in groups of two to three people and practice sharing God's Story with each other. Once you're back together, ask one to two people to share God's Story in front of everyone. The more you practice, the easier it gets!

Look Up

Relationship Building

The reality is that for most churches if people don't enter our buildings, they won't encounter our message of Jesus. It doesn't have to be that way. Churches are called to equip believers for the work of ministry. The most meaningful moments of a believer's spiritual life shouldn't happen inside the walls of a church building each week. They should be happening on ordinary days as everyday moments are turned into spiritual moments with the people God has uniquely placed in their lives.

Divine Appointments

A divine appointment is a spiritual moment that God schedules for you. We don't know where or when these appointments will pop up, but you can trust that the Lord has uniquely orchestrated that moment for you.

A divine appointment set by God could come in many shapes and forms. Whether that be an employee at the drive-through, a barista serving you your morning coffee, a co-worker, an old friend, a family member, or someone you sit next to on a plane.



It can happen with whomever, wherever, with whatever, however, whenever. The point is, always be ready for God to move.

If we listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and have eyes to see, some of these everyday moments will turn into spiritual moments as the Lord leads.

A spiritual moment may not only be you sharing your Story or God's Story with someone else. Even making a new connection and friendship could be a divine appointment, too. Many times, we won't be welcomed into those opportunities to share about Christ in a meaningful way until we've developed trust in a relationship with someone first.

A divine appointment could also be something you intentionally planned, like breakfast with a neighbor or hanging out with a friend.

Ask God to show you specifically which moments of your day are divine appointments that He has scheduled for you. If you have a chance to interact with another person, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in those moments and listen to His leading for what He may want you to do.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

It Begins with Your Perspective

Begin each day by asking God to give you His eyes for people that you'll cross paths with that day. Each person you meet is also someone that Jesus willingly died for. View them with the perspective that if they matter that much to your God, then they should matter that much to you.

Pray for God to give you selflessness and compassion towards those He has put in your sphere of influence. God has intentionally put you in the lives of certain people. There is no one better to reach your sphere of influence than you!

"We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you." 2nd Corinthians 10:13

What does the Bible have to say about building relationships with others?

- Always have your heart and mind ready for divine appointments. **Colossians 4:5-6**
- View other people with deep worth and value, just like God does. **Romans 12:9-18**
- Shared experiences build bridges in relationships. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone to step into theirs. **1st Corinthians 9:19-23**
- Salt and light drastically impact anything they encounter. **Matthew 5:13-16**
- Don't only give the Gospel to others. Give your life as well. **1st Thessalonians 2:8**

It's been said, *"If I see you as weak, I'll help you. If I see you as broken, I'll fix you. But if I see you as valuable, I'll serve you."*

View people with the full value and worth that God has given them. It will change the way you see them, and it will change you in the process too.

Acts of Kindness

Jesus was kind and generous in a radical way. Leading with love and compassion is a great way to build relationships and open doors for the Gospel. Any act of kindness, big or small, is always a win in building relationships. Through radical, unexpected kindness, you'll see hearts soften as God's love permeates people's lives in tangible ways.



When you care for emotional and physical needs, you often earn the privilege of caring for someone's spiritual needs, too.

"Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?" Romans 2:4 (NIV)

What are some tangible ways that we can show acts of kindness to others?

- Don't underestimate looking someone in the eye and smiling when you pass them.
- Give someone a genuine compliment.
- Offer to help someone in an unexpected way.
- As the Holy Spirit leads, give them a gift card or another small, meaningful gesture.
- Be creative and selfless. If there's something you'd appreciate someone doing for you, the chances are they'd appreciate you doing it for them as well.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Mark 12:31

What are some ways you could create spaces to build relationships with someone?

- Watch a game together.
- Invite them out to lunch or invite their family over for a cookout.
- Go to support their kids at a community/sporting event.
- Drop off a thoughtful gift for a holiday.
- Offer to help them with a project.
- Ask them to help you with a small project.

What should I do when I'm faced with confrontation because of my faith?

- Always aim to avoid arguments. Aim to be gentle and winsome in your interactions with others. **2nd Timothy 2:23-26**

- We've never seen a person argued into the Kingdom of God, we've rarely seen a person reasoned into the Kingdom of God, but we've seen many people loved into the Kingdom of God.

Find a Disarming Way to Humbly Acknowledge Your Differences

These may be some helpful phrases to consider:

- *"I know not all people believe the same as I do."*
- *"I respect people and their opinions because they truly matter to me. I always want to be open-minded."*

Even if you disagree with them, ask questions and try to see things from their perspective. Try something like this:

"I know we may have disagreements over very important things, but it's evident to me that we both care about people. Could you help me understand where you're coming from so I can put myself in your shoes?"

If they open the door and share their perspective, be quick to listen and slow to speak. Listen intently and let them know that you value them even if you disagree with their point of view. If appropriate, you may be able to respond by saying something like this:

"Thank you for sharing. I also want what's best for people. I'm convinced that someone giving their life to Christ will bring more joy and fulfillment now and in Eternity than anything else could in this life. If you put yourself in my shoes, could you see where I'm coming from?"

Keep in mind that we aren't trying to create Christian robots. We're building disciples that are led by the Holy Spirit. These tools and suggestions are intended to equip each disciple with wisdom that the Holy Spirit can utilize in His perfect timing with others. The most important part of connecting with others is to be genuine.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires." James 1:19-20 (NIV)

The Sun and the North Wind (Jesus Style by Gayle Erwin, Pg. 168)

"The Sun and the North Wind observed a man walking along wearing a heavy overcoat. They decided to see who could get the coat off of him. The North Wind elected to try first. He blew a howling gale around him, but the stronger the wind, the more tightly the man drew his coat around himself. Then the Sun said, 'Now it's my turn.' So he beamed warming rays down upon the man, and soon, of his own choice, the man removed the coat and walked happily in the sunshine."

The way we choose to speak to others and engage with them will greatly impact how they receive the message we share. Always speak the truth in love. Even the toughest truths can be covered with God's grace.

Role Play – Conversation with Conflict

As the leader, model what a conversation that involves conflict may look like upfront. Ask for a volunteer to come up and play the part of someone who disagrees with your faith.

It could be a disagreement about a cultural moral issue found in the Word, hypocrisy they see in the church, or something else. Let the whole group see the conversation play out in front of them. Have fun with it! Use some of the tools in the conversation that are shared above.

Break out into groups of two to three people and take a few minutes to role-play a conversation that involves conflict about your faith. Make sure each partner gets a turn to role-play the part of the believer. Encourage them to practice building bridges in their conversations that would strengthen relationships for the Gospel. Remind them that practice builds confidence, eliminates fear, and sharpens performance.

Helpful Tips

Love Without an Agenda

Don't look at people transactionally. When we do that, we are only thinking, *"What can I gain from this interaction?"* Be a friend with no other motive than caring for them.

View each person from the mindset that the Creator of the Universe made them and desires a personal relationship with them.

This will change your perspective greatly in how you view other people in your life.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Philippians 2:3-4

Love Without Prerequisites

Christ-like love is unconditional. That means loving someone who doesn't think how you think, doesn't act how you act, and doesn't treat you the way you may treat them. Loving someone without a list of prerequisites means you will love some people who don't agree with you about Jesus. That is healthy and the way it's supposed to be as a disciple of Christ.

When we start creating a list of prerequisites that people need to meet before we choose to love them, what you'll find is that you'll only end up surrounded by people who are exactly like you.

"Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard that, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.'" Matthew 9:10-12

Remember People's Names

How can we say we'll love our neighbor as ourselves if we don't even know their name? If you asked us about sports statistics, recipes, song lyrics, or the lives of celebrities, we could rattle off

specifics down to the smallest detail. The reason we're able to do that is because we make an effort to remember details about things that we care about.

When we say we are bad at remembering names, what is that really saying about the people God has put into our lives? Many times, remembering someone's name could be a pivotal moment to unlock a life-changing conversation. If you remembered their name from meeting them last week, that could be a meaningful step in building a relationship with them in the future.

A helpful suggestion would be to write down their names somewhere you could reference easily. This could be as easy as making a list on your cell phone. Jot down a detail or two of where you met someone and something unique that you learned about them.

Once you have a list, this is not only a great way to help remember people's names, but it's also a great starting place to make a list of people in your life to pray for regularly. As the Lord leads, He may ask you to add some of the people you've met onto your **Sphere of Influence List** as well.

Seek Pre-existing Communities That Share a Common Interest

It's not impossible to start something from scratch, but it's certainly much harder. If you can plug into places where people are already coming together, that's a terrific place to begin. Finding common ground with others is a great way to create environments to build strong relationships.

Think about what things in life you're already passionate about, whether that may be sports, movies, music, cooking, cars, being outdoors, or something else. These passions and hobbies are a platform to connect with others to build relationships.

It's always easier to swim with the current than against it. The same wisdom applies to building relationships. Find pre-existing communities that are already passionate about the hobbies, gifts, and talents that God has given you, and swim in that direction. You'll find that as you get more involved, you'll begin to build meaningful relationships naturally.

Create More Connection Points

Go to those that are farthest from Christ by connecting with those closest to you. It has become very easy to live your day-to-day life without ever leaving your home. Between online shopping, working from home, and social media, things that would have brought us outside of our front door in the past don't anymore.



Be intentional to do life outside your home.

Whenever it's appropriate, always aim for your interactions to be more personal. Some examples of this could be:

- If you could order something online, go to the store in person instead.
- If you need to walk the dog, choose a busier time of the day so you can see your neighbors on the way.
- Go out of your way to volunteer to help others.

Communicate Your Faith

- Invite others along for a meal or to get together.
- If it's appropriate to meet in person instead of calling, meet in person.
- If someone offers you something or invites you along somewhere, try to say yes. It's more difficult for many people to accept something from others. But people feel good when they help you. It helps cultivate trust in a relationship when the blessings go both ways.

Never aim to be a burden, but always be willing to go the extra mile to let others know that you care about them. What works for one disciple-maker may not work for another. Always be ready to be flexible to what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

"And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." Matthew 5:40-42

Look Forward

Spend time with the Lord to write out your **I Will Statements** for the week ahead.

Stretch Goals

- Ask God each morning to open your eyes to divine appointments He may be setting before you. Whether that is having a friendly interaction with someone new in your community and learning their name, doing an act of kindness, or even sharing your Story, be willing for the Holy Spirit to use you in whatever way He's leading this week.
- Sometime this week, go on a walk to intentionally pray for your community, whether that's in your neighborhood, workplace, school, or grocery store. As you prayer walk, keep your eyes up and say hello to people you pass, smile, and look for opportunities to be a blessing to your community.

* This is a good time in discipleship to try *The Talent Challenge*. See more info about this idea in **Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship** at the end of the book.

Communicate Your Faith – Lesson 8

Transitions to the Gospel & Handling Tough Questions

THE GOAL OF LESSON 8

- The goal of this lesson is to have your disciple learn how to naturally move from an everyday conversation into a spiritual conversation as the Holy Spirit leads.
- You also want to help your disciple learn the basics of how to handle tough questions about their faith. Our aim is to remove barriers for others to help them meet Jesus.

Look Back

Spend time digging into what God did with your **I Will Statements** since last time. Pray for your **Sphere of Influence Lists** in groups of two to three people.

Gather back together and ask for someone to share their Story. Ask for someone else to share God's Story.

Next, spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 7, Building Relationships*.

- What is a divine appointment?
- What are some practical pieces of wisdom to help build meaningful relationships?
- Did anyone have a divine appointment this week that they'd like to share about?

Look Up

Transitions to the Gospel

These days, conversations about the Gospel are rarely initiated by others. Much more often, the Holy Spirit will prod us to speak up and give others the opportunity to say yes to Jesus. The challenge for many believers in Christ is how to do that in a natural way.

When asked about the most intimidating part of sharing the Gospel message, many people would say transitioning from a surface-level conversation into a meaningful spiritual one.

Remember that one of the key goals of discipleship is to turn everyday moments into spiritual moments.

Jesus' Example – The Woman at the Well

Jesus gave us a great example of transitioning from an everyday conversation into a spiritual conversation with the woman at the well in John 4. Dig into this account together with your disciples.

John 4:5-30 - What wisdom can we pull from how Jesus handled this situation?

- He was willing to go where others wouldn't to reach people in need.
- He used an everyday moment like a drink of water to connect on common ground.
- Jesus took the conversation from less personal to more personal.
- Jesus engaged in a normal, everyday interaction with her and naturally led the conversation deeper spiritually.
- He engaged her about her spiritual experience first and then shared the truth with her.



We never want to go further than the Holy Spirit wants us to go in any given interaction. And we never want to stop short of where He wants us to go either.

Be an Explorer

In any conversation, there is some general wisdom that will help us identify pathways into the lives of others. We always want to ask good questions and be great listeners. There are four things to listen for that can serve as a launching pad for going deeper:

1. **Common Ground** - Are there any shared interests and experiences you've both had?
2. **Windows to the Soul** – Listen for statements that reveal matters of the heart.
3. **Unmet Needs** – Where is life challenging right now?
4. **Evidence of the Spirit** - How is God already at work in their life?

Once you uncover deeper experiences in their life, a great question to transition to a spiritual conversation is, *"Can I share with you something that's really made a difference in my life?"*

In the church today, we've put an emphasis on programs and events to reach others for Christ. Much time and energy go into planning events that will draw people in and give them an opportunity to hear the Gospel. Any efforts to reach others for Jesus is a good thing. But what a good event or program really does is create an environment where genuine life change can happen *within* it.



It's not events or programs that cause lives to change. It's moments that do.

These moments may happen at an outreach event, or they may happen at the grocery store. It is the moment within the conversation where the Gospel penetrates the heart. The better you get at being an explorer, the more you will uncover these moments that will lead to life change.

Close-Ended vs. Open-Ended Questions

Know the strengths and weaknesses between close-ended and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions can often be answered with a "yes" or "no" or another one-word answer. They can be helpful in getting to know someone, but typically, close-ended questions don't lead to deeper, meaningful conversations. A few examples of close-ended questions are:

- Where do you live?
- What do you do for work?
- Do you have any children?
- Does your family go to church?

On the other hand, open-ended questions tend to lead to more back-and-forth conversations. By asking open-ended questions, you will find that you may uncover more than you'd even hoped for. You will often discover what motivates someone and what they believe. A few examples of open-ended questions are:

- What's new with your family?
- What do you do around here for fun?
- How do you feel things are going at your job?
- What was your experience like growing up?
- Did you have any spiritual background? What was that like?

Remember, you are exploring to get to know them better. Listen closely for things you may have in common, windows to the soul, any unmet needs, or ways that God may already be working in their life.

From Meeting Someone to Sharing God's Story

Here are some helpful ideas to get you started with transitioning deeper into a conversation. Not all of these will make sense in every conversation, but there are some common steps that many conversations take as they go from an everyday conversation into a spiritual one. Make sure to personalize each question below and make them your own.

What are good ways to go from meeting someone to a surface-level conversation?

Be friendly and smile. Find common ground and a connection point. Let them know by your words, actions, and body language that you are genuinely interested in hearing what they have to say.

For instance, if they are wearing the logo of a sports team or a company you enjoy, say something like:

- *"I've been a big fan of that team for years! How do you think they'll do this year?"*
- *"I love shopping there! When did you get that?"*

What are some helpful ways to go from a surface-level conversation to a more personal one?

Just like we saw with Jesus and the woman at the well, He went from a conversation about a drink of water into a more personal conversation about her relationships. To acknowledge the elephant in the room, not all of us will have the same discernment Jesus did to know everything about someone before we ever met them, but the wisdom and principles He used still apply to us today. Here are some ideas of questions you could ask to take a conversation deeper personally:

- *“My spouse is a big fan of that team as well. Does it run in the family for you, too?”*
- *“Where do you work? How is it going there for you?”*
- *“My kids go to this school. Do you have any school-aged kids?”*
- *“My family and I have lived here for years. How long have you lived in this community? How have you enjoyed it?”*

What are good questions to help you go from a more personal conversation to a spiritual conversation?

This is often where believers experience the most fear of moving forward in a conversation. That is normal, and everyone has felt that way at one time or another. Remember this principle:



Awesome comes right after awkward.

If you never venture into the arena of a spiritual conversation, you won't give them a chance to meet the One who can save their life. If you never introduce them to Jesus because you are afraid of what they might say about Him, then you've already made their decision for them. As the Holy Spirit leads, be bold. There is nothing more loving than the truth.

A great way to break the ice is to share something about yourself spiritually that isn't necessarily a deep thought. Try something like:

- *“We just had a fun event at our church the other week. Are you plugged into a church anywhere?”*
- *“My family found a church that we've really enjoyed plugging into. Do you or your family have any spiritual background at all?”*

A great question to show someone you care about them is to ask them if you can pray for them. You could say something like:

- *“I like to ask this question to people that I care about. Is there anything I can pray for you for today?”*

What are some good questions to help you go from a spiritual conversation to sharing your Story and God's Story?

This is a great time to ask for their permission to share more. If they know you care about them, and they've given you permission to share more, you have a special opportunity to be used by God to impact their life for Eternity. Here are a few ideas for questions you could try:

- *“If someone were to ask you what's the most meaningful thing in your life right now, what would you say?”*

“I appreciate you telling me that. Can I share with you what has been most meaningful to me?”

- *“Can I ask you a deep question? In your life, what do you find hope in?”*

“Thank you for sharing! Would you mind if I share with you what I find hope in?”

- *“Can I ask you a heavy question? I’m curious what you think. What would you say to someone who asked you what happens after death?”*

“Thank you for being so honest with me. Would you mind if I share with you what I believe?”

Listen to the Holy Spirit and read social cues. If they tell you “No” or you can tell that they’re uncomfortable, try saying something like this:

“I respect where you’re coming from. I know these things can be tough to talk about. Jesus never forced anyone into a conversation about spiritual things. He only ever offered an invitation. I like to share the most important part of my life with people that I care about. If you ever want to talk more sometime, I’m always willing to listen!”

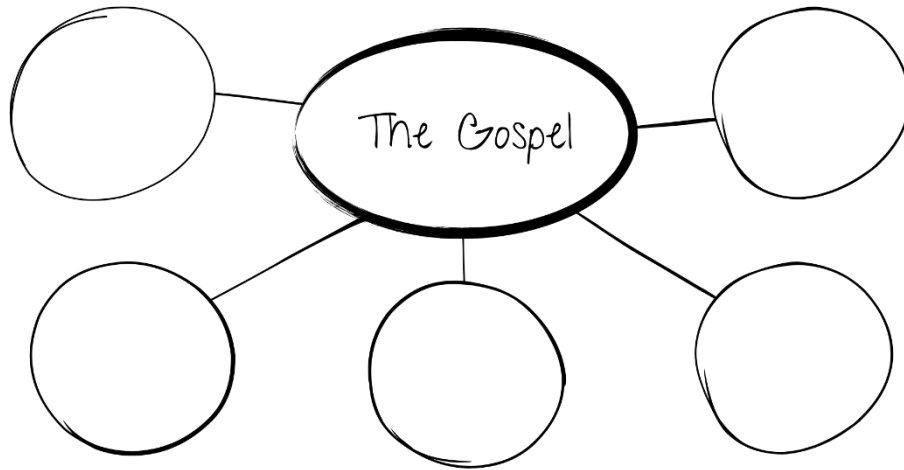
One Step Away from the Gospel

Have your disciples think through five conversation points that would be one step away from a natural transition to the Gospel. Some good examples could be:

- Purpose in life
- Fear
- Hope
- Hypocrisy
- A loved one passing away

Take a few minutes alone and fill in the illustration below. Be creative and think about things that may be unique to you and your Story of meeting Christ. Think back to the two words of life change you chose in Sharing Your Story. Those words may be a great place to start.

One Step Away from the Gospel Illustration



Helpful Tips

Walk in the Spirit, Practically

At times, Christians seem to view pushing people away due to their faith as a badge of honor. Yes, Jesus did say the world would hate us because of Him. But Jesus also spent time with everybody. And they actually *wanted* to be around Him! It's been said, *"A person can be so Heavenly-minded that they are no Earthly good."*

We never want to walk out of step with the Holy Spirit for the sake of relating to others, but there is a way to walk in the Spirit that actually helps us interact with a broken world. We know this because this is what Jesus did.

"Walking in the Spirit is an amazingly practical proposition. It doesn't mean that we float through life with a halo over our head and an angelic smile on our face. We can be spiritually minded and still relate to people about earthly things. Some believers react so strongly against the pervasive worldliness of our culture that they lose the ability to communicate with their friends, relatives, and neighbors. Walking in the Spirit doesn't take us out of reality; it allows us to function in reality with optimum effectiveness." (Grace Changes Everything, by Pastor Chuck Smith, Pg. 80)

All People Come with Spiritual Baggage

Many people have had interactions with the Church and Christians that have hurt them and pushed them away from Jesus. You will likely encounter many people who have wounds from the Church that have never healed.

How much trust can ever be built if we don't acknowledge our brokenness as the Church? Listen to them and their experience. Mourn with them when they've been hurt and be vulnerable enough to share a similar experience if you have one.

Even though Jesus is perfect, He has chosen to use broken men and women to represent Himself. Encourage others to realize the difference between the two. Jesus is perfect; mankind is not. As often as you can, point them to Jesus. He is the only One who can change their life.

What are some examples of what you could say that would be disarming spiritually?

Try something like this:

- *“People that claim to be Christians have not always represented Jesus very well.”*
- *“Jesus shared His harshest words with religious people who were hypocrites. I’m truly sorry for how you’ve been hurt by the Church. That isn’t who Jesus is.”*
- *“I’m not perfect; I’m just forgiven. I was broken, and this is what God has done in my life.”*

“Sometime”

Many people struggle with committing to things. Whether that be committing to get together with others, taking a volunteer leadership role, or even signing up for what to bring to a church picnic. This lack of commitment often creates roadblocks in finding purposeful time together with someone to talk about Jesus.

But if you were to ask someone, *“Would you like to get together sometime and talk more?”* You’re much more likely to get a positive response from them.

Using “sometime” as a tool can help set up plans informally. Even though a time and place aren’t set in stone, this small level of buy-in can help open an opportunity for a future conversation that can lead to meaningful life change for the Gospel.

Lord, What Do You Want Me to Say?

Life is full of times when we don’t know what to say next. Because of this, many believers choose to never open their mouths about Jesus. There is nothing wrong with silently praying this prayer to ask the Lord for guidance while you’re in the middle of a conversation:

“Jesus, I’m available and willing to take the step of courage into a spiritual conversation if You want me to. I need You to show me what to say and how to begin, and I’ll do it.”

Maybe the Lord will spark a thought while the other person is speaking, or maybe a clear question will come into your mind that wasn’t there a moment ago. If nothing comes to mind, it’s also possible that the Lord doesn’t want you to take the conversation any further spiritually at that time. In every case, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit moment by moment and follow His leading in a conversation.

Role Play – From Meeting Someone to God’s Story

As the leader upfront, model what a conversation may look like. Ask for a volunteer to come up front and play the part of someone you’re interacting with in the community. Make sure to walk through the different steps of a conversation, from an everyday conversation to a spiritual one.

Let the whole group see the conversation play out in front of them. Break out in groups of two to three and take a few minutes to role-play a conversation. Make sure each partner gets a turn to role-

play as the believer. Encourage them to practice shaping thoughtful questions that would naturally transition into a spiritual conversation.

Handling Tough Questions

The word for defending our faith in Christ is “apologetics.” This comes from the Greek word “apologia,” which means to make a well-reasoned defense. In the English language, we get the word “apology” from this Greek word. However, we are not apologizing for the Gospel; instead, we are helping people understand the *reasons why we believe what we believe!*

The goal of answering someone’s doubts and questions is to remove barriers for them to meet Jesus. Our aim with this content isn’t to have your disciples memorize answers to all of the toughest questions they might get asked. Men and women have devoted a lifetime to defending our faith and still don’t have answers to all of life’s toughest questions.

Our intention with this lesson is to give your disciples tools to help navigate inside a conversation to steer someone back towards Christ.

What does the Bible have to say about defending our faith?

- Always be ready to explain the reasons for the hope that you have in Christ. **1st Peter 3:15**
- There is nothing more important to stand up for than our faith in Jesus. **Jude 1:3**
- When we know our way around God’s Word, we honor Him. **2nd Timothy 2:14-15**
- God uses us to speak to others for Him. **Romans 10:14**
- God gives us answers for others out of His Word. **Psalms 119:42**

When we’re defending our faith, what should our heart posture and attitude be?

- Share the truth in love and grace. **Colossians 4:5-6**
- Avoid getting into an argument. Always speak with humility. **2nd Timothy 2:23-26**

Remember what we learned during our *Relationship Building Lesson*:

We’ve never seen a person argued into the Kingdom of God, we’ve rarely seen a person reasoned into the Kingdom of God, but we’ve seen many people loved into the Kingdom of God.

What should we do when the conversation isn’t going well?

If you encounter someone who is argumentative and seems set on proving you wrong, this can often be a frustrating and discouraging situation. If someone begins intentionally asking you questions that don’t seem genuine, or the goal of their question appears to be trapping you to score points in an argument, it may be time to change course.

More than likely, even the most thoughtful, logical, caring answer would not make a difference for them. This is a great time to ask this question:

- “If I were able to share that answer, would it really make a difference for you?”

How they respond to this will quickly determine where they stand. If they say yes, then you know it will be worth your time to continue. If they say no, then you can leave it be.

It's Okay to End the Conversation

Sometimes, when we're sharing our faith, we feel the need to continue in a conversation when it clearly isn't welcomed. Urgency is healthy in desiring to share Jesus with others, but we should never want to take a conversation any further than the Holy Spirit wants us to go.

Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces." Matthew 7:6

This may come off as harsh from Jesus, but His message is clear. We are called to share the Gospel, and when it's rejected, we are encouraged to move on. Remember that the results are in God's hands. Your job is only to be faithful to what He wants you to do.

What should we do with an honest question that we don't know the answer to?

Remember that humility is key in sharing our faith. If they genuinely have a question that's holding them back from trusting Jesus, then it is well worth putting in the time to find an answer for them. Don't be afraid to say these words in the moment; *"I don't know!"*

There is nothing more off-putting spiritually than when someone comes across pridefully, like a know-it-all. Being honest, humble, and vulnerable is endearing, and many times, will end up breaking down barriers in the relationship. If their motives are pure, they will respond positively to this question:

- *"That's a good question. I don't know the answer to that! Would you mind if I did some research and got back to you?"*

By putting in the effort to research and find a solid answer to their question, it shows them that you care. You've also opened another opportunity to have a follow-up spiritual conversation as well.

You will never be able to prepare your disciples for every question they may face. The goal is to help them think through some tangible tools to use in conversations so that they won't be fearful of a spiritual conversation going in a direction that they didn't expect.

Helpful Tips

What is Successful Evangelism?

As people, we love to measure success. We're no different when it comes to sharing our faith. Walk through these outcomes with your disciples to gauge how success is perceived.

- When we share our faith, is it successful if someone responds by putting their trust in Christ?
- How about if the spiritual conversation ends positively and they say they will really consider what you've shared?
- Is it successful if someone responds by telling you to take a hike and keep it to yourself?

The truth is that *all these results are successful in the eyes of God.*



We are successful when we are faithful to Him.

"Successful evangelism is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God." Bill Bright, Founder of Cru

We are successful in evangelism when we are obedient to Christ and willing to step out in faith to start a spiritual conversation. We are responsible for being faithful to share the Gospel message; we are not responsible for how people respond to it. Be courageous to step out for Jesus and leave the results to God.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase." 1st Corinthians 3:6-7

Teach Them to Fish

"If you give someone a fish, they can eat for a day. If you teach them how to fish, they can eat for a lifetime." The familiar saying rings true in discipleship. By showing them how to find answers on their own, you are doing more than just teaching them to memorize answers to a large list of questions that will always grow and change. You are teaching them skills that will apply to any context and question.

Lean on the wisdom of others. There are many good options out there to help answer the toughest questions about our faith in Christ. One of our favorite resources is **GotQuestions.org**. They provide solid Biblical answers to some of life's toughest questions. They have hundreds of thousands of tough questions asked and answered through the Word of God. It's very likely that any question someone may ask your disciple will have a simple, straightforward answer on **GotQuestions.org**.

No resource will be perfect, so encourage them to always read the answers with discernment and search the Scriptures to see if the answer is true. With that said, this tool should give your disciples great confidence to step into any spiritual conversation and know they have the support of Holy Spirit-filled believers behind them to help.

- Take a moment now, and let your disciples ask a tough spiritual question. With those who have the ability, look up the question on **GotQuestions.org** and read the answer together with them.

If the situation is right, this is something that they could put into practice on the spur of the moment with someone in their life who's asking tough questions about their faith.

Cut Through Smoke Screens

If someone is asking questions to distract and derail a spiritual conversation, always remember to bring the conversation back to the Cross. Do your best to lean into the Holy Spirit and ask Him when the time is right to take a detour into secondary spiritual issues. If He shows you that time spent on these other topics might help remove barriers to Christ for someone, then go there with them. But never forget the heart behind any spiritual conversation:



The goal of any spiritual conversation is to point others closer to Jesus.

Look Forward

Spend time with the Lord crafting your **I Will Statements** for the week ahead.

Stretch Goals

- Identify someone in your life that you can have an explorer conversation with.
- Find an opportunity this week to practice transitioning deeper in a conversation with someone in the community.

Make it your goal to take a conversation at least one step further with someone new this week. Those steps we typically see in the flow of conversation are:

1. From meeting someone to a surface-level conversation.
2. From a surface-level conversation to a more personal conversation.
3. From a more personal conversation to a spiritual conversation.
4. From a spiritual conversation to sharing your Story and God's Story.

* After you complete **Communicate Your Faith**, this would be a good time to find an *Outreach Onramp Event* in your community with your disciples. See more info about this idea in **Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship** at the end of the book.

* As you prepare to transition into the third area of discipleship, **Multiply Your Faith**, print *Discovery Bible Study Bookmarks* for each of your disciples for the next lesson. See more info about this idea in **Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship** at the end of the book.

Multiply Your Faith - Lesson 9

Leading a Discovery Bible Study

THE GOAL OF LESSON 9

*Lesson 9 takes us from discovering ways to **Communicate our Faith** to learning how to **Multiply our Faith**.

- The goal of this lesson is to help your disciples learn how to lead a Discovery Bible Study to engage their sphere of influence with God's Word.
- A Discovery Bible Study will provide a great next step for your disciples to help others learn to read God's Word, hear His voice, and follow Jesus.

Look Back

Take time for your **I Will Statements** and pray for your **Sphere of Influence Lists**. Gather back together and spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 8, Transitions to the Gospel & Handling Tough Questions*.

- How should we define successful evangelism?
- What are a few pieces of wisdom that will help us make natural transitions from an everyday conversation to a spiritual conversation?
- Does anyone have an example of transitioning deeper into a conversation with someone from this past week they'd like to share?

Have someone share their Story and transition into God's Story up front. If there's someone who hasn't had a chance to share yet, give them an opportunity. If they are struggling with confidence, encourage them and help them out!

Look Up

Leading a Discovery Bible Study

A Discovery Bible Study (or DBS) is a simple, easily reproducible Bible study method that will help those searching for truth about God begin to learn how to read God's Word, hear His voice, and follow Jesus. This method has been used all over the world in many different languages and cultures. It focuses on simply letting God's Word speak for itself.

Some of the benefits of a DBS are that no matter what level of understanding someone has about the Bible or Jesus, they can grow closer to Christ by coming before God's Word with an open heart and an open mind. A Discovery Bible Study is one of the best tools you will receive from

discipleship to reach others for Jesus. It will allow you to reach many people at one time and take them beyond a surface-level understanding of Christ.

A DBS will provide a great next step in your disciple's journey to multiply their faith. Once your disciple has shared their Story or God's Story with someone else, they may be wondering, "*What's next?*"

Whether the other person made a decision to put their faith in Christ or they are still searching, inviting them to a DBS is a great way for your disciple to follow up with them.

A DBS will also give you the opportunity to build relationships with new believers to see who God might want you to challenge to go deeper in discipleship.

Since a DBS is a smaller commitment than a discipleship relationship, it provides a great stepping stone to identify who is faithful, available, and teachable that God might want you to pour into as they grow in Christ.

What does a Discovery Bible Study look like?

Follow the process you have been learning during discipleship. *Look Back, Look Up, and Look Forward.* You'll see a helpful framework of a DBS laid out below. Walk through it with your disciples together.

The Look Back Portion of a DBS

Welcome everyone and ask each person to share two things that are unique for them in this season of life:

- Something they are thankful for.
- Something that's a challenge for them.

Give each person a chance to share. Many times, this portion of the DBS can be the most meaningful as you learn about people's lives. You may uncover a tangible need that you and the group can take care of for them or take care of for someone else they know. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit that He may want the study to look different than you had planned. Ask God to help keep your eyes open for divine appointments He may bring along the way!

If a tangible need pops up that your group can meet, this can go a long way in modeling what a changed life with Jesus looks like.

After your first week together, ask the group if anyone would like to share about what God did in their life that week.

- "*Did anyone have a story about their **I Will Statement** or something else that God did in their life since last time? How did it go?*"

In discipleship, we ask this question to each person each week. In a DBS, read the room and handle this appropriately with those that are present. We know that when people step out in faith, they grow in their relationship with Christ. We also want to make sure new guests feel welcome and that they know that we care about them. If it's between you or them being put on the spot, choose you!

Have someone pray over the people and the Discovery Bible Study as you transition into your **Look Up** time.

The Look Up Portion of a DBS

Before the DBS, select a passage of Scripture to read together. From our experience, it's best to pick a passage from the Word that has a natural starting and ending point, such as a parable, a Bible story, or a full passage from a letter to one of the churches.

Typically, this will be more than a verse or two, but it may be shorter than an entire chapter of Scripture. Let the Holy Spirit lead you to select the right passage.

- Have someone read the Scripture aloud while the others follow along in their Bibles.
- Ask someone to reread the passage a second time. If there's more than one Bible translation present, pick a second translation to reread from.
- Have someone else retell the passage in their own words. Ask the question, *"How would you explain this passage as simply as you can in your own words?"*
- Once they finish sharing, ask the group, *"Is there anything else anyone would like to add?"*

The process of reading the passage twice allows the Scripture to sink in and stick in their hearts and minds. The goal of having them retell the passage in their own words is so that they practice interpreting Scripture for themselves. The hope is that they will learn to understand God's Word in a simple way that will become easier to apply to their lives.

Bible Discovery Questions

Use open-ended questions that will allow people to discover the truths of God's Word for themselves. If every truth is put on display for them, it will make it easier for them to disengage and move on without experiencing any change in their life.

On the other hand, if you're patient enough to let them discover the truths of God's Word for themselves, those truths will be planted deep in their hearts and minds and change their lives. Here are some great questions to work through together:

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about people?
- Does this passage give an example to follow? Or something to avoid?
- How does this passage change the way I interact with others?
- What does this passage ask me to change in my life?
- How does this passage prompt me to pray?
- Who might God want me to share this passage with?

Discovery is Greater than Display

This is the meat of the Bible Study time together. Take your time and let the people lean into the Scriptures. If there are awkward silences, acknowledge them and use humor to diffuse the tension when appropriate. You could say something like, *"I love the sound of you thinking!"* or *"I'm happy to sit here in the awkward silence all day!"*

You'll be tempted to fill the silence with your own answers. While this can help provide clarity and truth for them, very often they will begin to learn to keep quiet and wait on your answers instead of

speaking up themselves. Do your best to hold back and let them wrestle with the Word a bit before hopping in with your own insight from the Lord.

If people ask good questions about the passage themselves, resist the urge to answer them immediately. Even if you know the answer, this could be a pivotal moment in the growth of another believer to work through answering their question in front of the group. Follow up and ask good open-ended questions and give people the time to share. A response to a good question could be, *“That’s a great question! Does anyone have an answer they’d like to share?”*

If no one speaks up, feel free to answer and move the Bible study forward.

“He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.”

Proverbs 17:27

The Look Forward Portion of a DBS

As you close your time together, give the group a couple of minutes to quietly go before God and ask Him what He wants them to commit to that week. Have each person complete this sentence on their own. *“This week, by the grace of God, I will...”*

This is meant to encourage each person to go beyond education about God’s Word and take them deeper into living out an obedient faith in Christ.



We don’t want someone to become what we want them to become. We want them to become what God wants them to become.

If someone is unwilling to participate, don’t push or pressure them. You are inviting them deeper into following Christ, and the response is between them and Him. After a few minutes, ask if there is anyone who would like to share their **I Will Statements** with the group. Having a few people share will encourage others and help give ideas for an **I Will Statement** to those who may not have known what to write down. Pray to close your Discovery Bible Study time together.

Helpful Tips

Discovery Bible Study Bookmarks

At the end of the book, you’ll find **Ideas to Add Value in Discipleship**. Look for the section titled *Discovery Bible Study Bookmark*. You’ll see information on the bookmark that will give helpful reminders of the steps of **Look Back**, **Look Up**, and **Look Forward**.

Visit GenerationalDiscipleshipBook.com to print your own free copy of a *Discovery Bible Study Bookmark* to stick in your Bible!

Who Should I Invite to a DBS?

Here are some great places to start:

- Have you made any special connections with people in your community?
- Invite people that you've shared your Story or God's Story with.
- Think through your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

The way a DBS is structured makes it a great environment for someone who doesn't believe in Jesus. It's meant to be non-threatening and allow people to experience God's Word for themselves while having someone there to guide them if they get stuck.

If you're not sure where someone stands with their faith, a great question to ask is, *"Have you ever read the Bible before? Would you like to give it a try?"*

Pray through your **Sphere of Influence List** and consider those people. This may be the first chance you've had to pursue a spiritual interaction with someone that you've been praying for faithfully for months. Maybe the Lord put them on your list just for this very moment. Our role is to be faithful to invite those that God puts on our hearts and minds, and we leave their response in His hands.

Less is More

It will be very tempting for mature believers who are more knowledgeable to share popular opinions, personal stories, or relatable content from outside the Bible that they feel may be helpful to the discussion. The problem with this is that while this may add value to the Bible study that one particular time, it will take away from the simplicity and reproducibility that we are striving for with a Discovery Bible Study.

If someone you're discipling couldn't easily reproduce the story or opinion that was shared, it may discourage them from stepping out in faith to lead others in a DBS in the future. Make sure that every mature believer that you invite understands that the goal of the DBS is to help those who are searching for truth and new believers experience Jesus and God's Word, possibly for the first time.

By setting this expectation on the front end, you'll better prepare them that this Bible study may move at a slower pace than they may be used to. That is intentional to help encourage others along in their own journeys towards Jesus. Do your best to keep the DBS focused on letting the Scriptures speak for themselves.

"...So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

Pair Up to Lead

Consider teaming up with someone else in discipleship to lead a Discover Bible Study together. When you link up with other like-minded people who desire to multiply their faith, you'll encourage each other and share in the leadership responsibilities of the group together. You'll have someone else to celebrate with when God moves powerfully in someone's life, and you'll also have someone else to lean on when you experience discouragement together.

The other benefit is that if the DBS grows, you have a natural pathway forward to split the group in half with each leader and continue to multiply.

Don't Make Assumptions

Don't make assumptions about what you'd expect someone to know. A quick way to discourage someone who is searching for Christ is to make them feel stupid or left out. Watch out for saying things like this:

- *"Like we all know..."*
- *"Let's turn to this familiar passage of Scripture..."*
- *"Any of us that grew up in church will remember this."*

If possible, it may be helpful to have the same version and copy of the Bible. This way, you could even share the page number as you turn to different passages of Scripture together. Very likely, your home church will have copies of the same Bible version which you could borrow. If they don't, you can purchase a set of the same Bibles online for a few dollars each.

Something as simple as explaining the difference between the Old and New Testament, as well as how the chapters and verses are laid out, can do wonders to help someone feel welcomed and more receptive to receiving God's Word into their lives.

What do I do if the Bible Study discussion heads off course?

Do your best to avoid letting the DBS head down rabbit trails. Always aim to steer the conversation back to the Scripture you are studying that day. If someone means well but shares something that isn't true about Christ and His Word, gently correct them and steer them back to the Scriptures. If they are sincere in their faith, they will likely respond well. This could greatly help them make an impact for Christ going forward.

If someone has real questions pertaining to something other than the passage you're studying, be willing to invite them into a time to discuss after the DBS ends. If they seem intent on arguing or creating division, say something like, *"Thank you for sharing your perspective. I'd love to talk more with you after Bible study about that. For the sake of time, we'll try to stay on track with our passage."*

Remember that as you open your ministry to reach people from all walks of life, expect to come across opinions and points of view that are contrary to your own. Lead with grace and always speak the truth in love.

The Best Teacher

The Holy Spirit is the best Teacher we have. Let Him teach.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." John 14:26

Role Play

Take 15-20 minutes to lead everyone through an example of a **Discovery Bible Study**. Briefly model the **Look Back**, **Look Up**, and **Look Forward** time.

Look Forward

Spend time with the Lord crafting your **I Will Statements** for the week ahead.

Stretch Goals

- Continue looking for opportunities to share your Story and God's Story.
- Pray intentionally for the right people God may want you to invite into a Discovery Bible Study.
- If you don't have one yet, print out a *Discovery Bible Study Bookmark*. See more info about this in **Ideas to Add Value in Discipleship** at the end of the book.

Next time you gather for discipleship, get together in smaller groups no larger than six people. You'll use the entire training time to walk through a Discovery Bible Study together. Handle the **Look Back**, **Look Up**, and **Look Forward** time with these smaller groups just like you have been during discipleship. The benefit will be you'll continue the momentum of what God has been doing through discipleship while still getting a hands-on experience of leading through a Discovery Bible Study together.

Remind each group to keep the Discovery Bible Study simple and easily reproducible. This will ensure that any person, regardless of where they stand in their faith in Christ, can take steps closer to Jesus as they learn to read His Word, hear His voice, and follow Him.

Multiply Your Faith – Lesson 10

What’s Next? Discerning God’s Will for Your Life

THE GOAL OF LESSON 10

- The goal of this lesson is to help your disciple discern what ways God may be guiding them to serve Him in their life.
- As your disciples have been poured into and equipped, help them navigate what’s next in how Jesus may want them to disciple and pour into others.

Look Back

Begin with your **I Will Statements** and your **Sphere of Influence Lists**. Spend a few minutes in groups of two to three people and practice sharing God’s Story with each other.

Next, spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 9, Leading a Discovery Bible Study*.

- What are some of the strengths of a Discovery Bible Study?
- Does anyone have a divine appointment from this week that they’d like to share?

Look Up

What’s Next? Discerning God’s Will for My Life

The destination is the same for every believer in Christ. On Earth, our end goal is a Spirit-filled life walking with Jesus. In Eternity, our end goal is life with God forever in Heaven. Even though our destination is the exact same, our journeys of faith through this life are all unique to us.

No journey with Jesus will be identical to someone else’s experience. Some people will take one path; others will take another. Even with the wide range of experiences as disciples of Jesus, there are universal steps that every believer goes through on their discipleship journey with Christ.

What do we know to be true of God’s will?

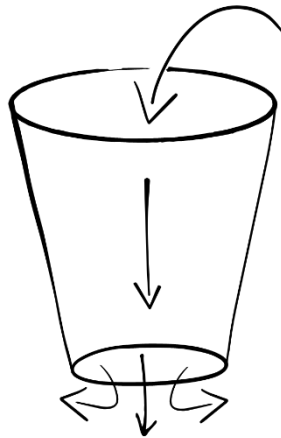
- The safest place for us to be is in the middle of God’s will for us. **Proverbs 1:33**
- Following God’s will always honor Him. **Colossians 3:17, 23-24**
- Where God guides, He provides. **Philippians 4:19**

What are the universal steps in a person’s spiritual life?

- *Trust in Christ* - When we trust in Christ, we’re born again spiritually. **John 1:12-13**
- *Built in Christ* - We’re built up in Christ for the works God has prepared for us. **Ephesians 2:10**

- *Sent for Christ* – We're sent out into the world to make disciples and multiply for Christ.
Matthew 28:19-20

Trust, Built, Sent for Christ Illustration



1) Trust in Christ

2) Built in Christ

3) Sent for Christ

Illustration Explanation: Our relationship with Jesus begins when we trust in Him. As we walk with Him, God builds us up in our faith so that He can send us out to make an impact for His Kingdom.

So, where does God want to send me?

Remember, for many of us, living “Sent for Christ” doesn’t mean we quit our jobs and move to a foreign country to live as a missionary. For most of us, our mission field is right where God has us in this season of life. Think about where you live, work, shop, study, and play. Think of the rhythms of your life. Who are the people in your life that you cross paths with regularly who don’t know Christ? This is your mission field.



Your mission field is right where you are standing.

If you haven’t caught on by now, your **Sphere of Influence List** is your mission field! The hope is as you’ve been growing in this season as a disciple of Christ, you are learning ways to “live sent” for Jesus within the life and relationships that He has given you.

Enter Their Sphere of Influence Instead of Pulling Them Out of It

Help your disciple think through the existing relationships in their lives. Where do they already see God at work? There’s a temptation to think of ministry and discipleship like a magnet that pulls people into the local church. Instead, what we see in the Word is the opposite. Believers are equipped by the Lord and sent out.

Get used to sending those you poured into out into their own Spheres of Influence. Instead of trying to have your disciples expend themselves building new relationships with the people you already know, spend your time exploring and encouraging the ongoing relationships in their lives. You may lose the benefit of them using their gifts and talents to help your personal ministry, but that is a small price to pay to see Jesus’ Kingdom built on Earth.

Here are some great questions to walk through with your disciples to identify how God may want to use them.

Where is the greatest need in your community?

Take a minute and identify a few needs in your community. It could be an after-school program, food bank, kids or youth ministry at church, a family you know in your neighborhood, or something else. If you’re having trouble meeting people, serving side by side with others in the community is a terrific way to accomplish a few things at once. You’re serving a tangible need as well as building relationships with other people that you are serving shoulder to shoulder with.

If you’re having trouble coming up with any community needs, that doesn’t mean there aren’t any! The needs of people will always be present. What you want to do is let the Holy Spirit lead you to the specific needs He wants you to fill.

If you are stuck, one of the best ways to identify needs is to ask someone else. Whether that’s a leader at work, church, or in your community, think of someone you know who is well-connected and may be able to point you in the right direction. Whether you serve in a Christ-centered ministry or even a secular organization, you are the one Jesus wants to use to build relationships and shine His light through.

What are your passions, talents, and giftings?

Take another moment to identify a few passions, talents, and giftings the Lord has uniquely given to you. Very often, the Lord will use you in an area that He has been preparing you for. Talk through what your disciple’s God-given passions, gifts, and talents are.

Spiritual Maturity Illustration

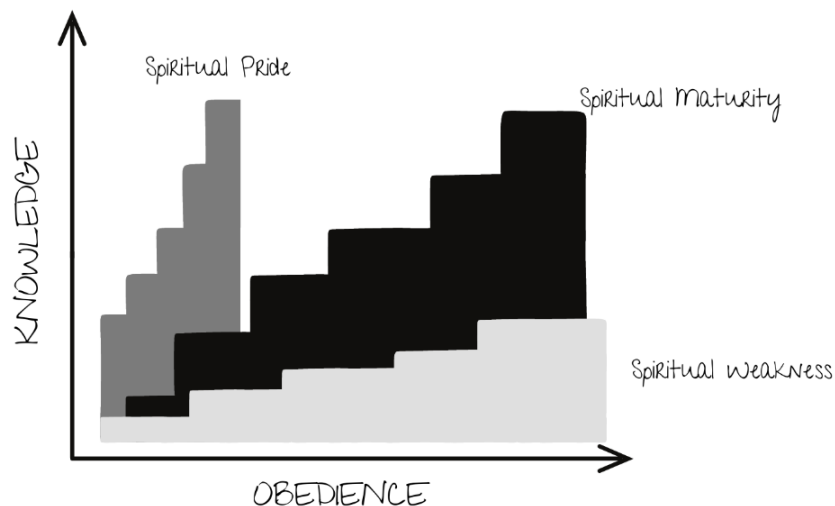


Illustration Explanation: When we learn more about Christ, our knowledge grows. When we serve God and others more, our obedience to Jesus grows. When we're walking in knowledge and obedience at the same time, our spiritual maturity grows.

Break up into groups of two to three to practice with each other. After a few minutes, gather back together and ask for a volunteer to share the illustration up front.

Next Steps in Spiritual Pursuit

Once you've had a spiritual conversation with someone, what are some next steps to pursue with them?

One option is to invite them into a Discovery Bible Study. A DBS has many benefits that work well as a follow-up to a spiritual conversation.

- A DBS can scale easily. Whether that's one-on-one or a group of twelve, a DBS can grow rapidly and still be effective for reaching others for Jesus. You can build meaningful relationships for Christ with multiple people at once.
- A DBS also has a lower commitment level. This is a benefit for both them and you. For them, it's an easier onramp to explore spiritual things about Jesus. There are no prerequisites they need to fulfill besides showing up with an open mind. For you, because of the simplicity of a DBS, you won't have to spend hours preparing in-depth lessons. Your job is just to help them understand the Word simply.
- You can set the length of the DBS to a time frame that feels most appropriate for that particular group, whether that is meeting every week for eight weeks, every other week for six meetings, or once a month for a season. Even one interaction with Jesus and His Word can make an impact on someone's life that could change them forever.

Another option for those who have displayed a genuine love for the Lord is to ask them to consider committing to a season of intentional discipleship, just like we're doing here. You'll journey together to help them grow in three areas: how to walk by faith, communicate their faith, and multiply their faith.

Helpful Tips

Greenhouse vs. Wild Fields

A greenhouse is a great place for fruit to grow. The climate is perfect; the vegetation is protected from wild animals and the elements. But the fruit will never naturally expand beyond the four walls that it's contained in.

Fruit also grows in wild fields. The fruit has more obstacles to overcome. The heat and cold, droughts and floods, wild animals, and weeds are all threats to growth in a wild field. But when fruit grows naturally outside of any walls, it can spread quickly in every direction to create a huge harvest.

Genuine fruit and life change for Christ can happen anywhere. But when all our ministry occurs inside the four walls of a church, the natural spiritual growth is stunted and contained. The only way people will experience our message of Christ is by coming to us.

Instead, when we turn our attention to reaching the wild fields of the world, we’ll meet people right where they’re at, and we’ll see spiritual fruit grow naturally. Stepping out of the greenhouse into the wild fields will make a huge impact for Jesus in our communities and beyond.

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Matthew 9:37-38

A Moving Ship

What do I do if it’s still not clear where God wants me to serve? A ship that’s not moving can’t be steered. When a ship is sitting still, no amount of turning and steering will cause it to change direction and move. Even if a ship is going in the wrong direction, a ship needs to be moving before it can be steered in the right direction. The same principle applies to us. When we are actively pursuing Jesus, the Holy Spirit will guide our course to get us going in the right direction toward His will for our lives.

If you or your disciple aren’t actively involved in ministry, this is a great opportunity to encourage them to use their gifts to honor God in a tangible way. Begin serving and meeting others and ask God for clarity along the way as He guides your steps.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Don’t Cling to the Method, Cling to the Maker

Be careful not to cling to the method God uses to bear fruit for His Kingdom. Our Maker is what changes lives, not the method. God’s Word and His truth endure forever, but individual ministries that God uses have a life span. A ministry has a date that it was born and also a date that it dies. Be willing to be flexible to the Holy Spirit in how He wants you to lead and serve in a ministry. Have a humble heart to let a ministry end, trusting God has something else better in store.

At times, God may be done with a ministry, but as long as a believer in Christ is still alive, He’s never done with them. Don’t judge your “success” in serving God by the results of your efforts and the longevity of your ministry. Your “success” is judged by your faithfulness to follow God and obey His will for your life.

“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.” 1st Corinthians 4:1-5

Look Forward

Spend time with the Lord working on your **I Will Statements** for the week ahead.

Stretch Goals

- Ask God to illuminate areas of need in your community. Write them down as He shows them to you.
- Be quiet before the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to help you build out a list of the passions, talents, and giftings He's given you.
- Continue sharing your Story and God's Story.

Multiply Your Faith – Lesson 11

Components of Discipleship & Who Should I Choose to Disciple?

THE GOAL OF LESSON 11

- The goal of this lesson is to help your disciple understand what components make up a healthy, balanced discipleship relationship.
- Another goal of this lesson is to help your disciples think through who they should choose to invest their time and energy in to build disciple-makers that will multiply for Jesus.

Look Back

Break into groups to recap your **I Will Statements**. Spend time praying for your **Sphere of Influence Lists**. Next, spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 10, What's Next? Discerning God's Will for Your Life*. Ask for a volunteer to come up front and draw:

- **Trust, Built, Sent for Christ Illustration**
- **Spiritual Maturity Illustration**

Look Up

Components of Discipleship

Materials don't make disciples... other disciples do. Disciples are made within the context of meaningful relationships, led by the Holy Spirit, and guided by God's Word. The best environment for equipping disciples is one marked by intentionally living like Jesus, setting clear Spirit-led goals, and loving accountability.

Read **Matthew 28:19-20** together. What elements of ministry can be seen in Jesus' command to His disciples?

- *"Go and make disciples"* – Spend time in ministry reaching others who don't know Christ.
- *"Teaching them to observe"* – Spend time teaching and modeling the truths of God to build them up and equip them.
- *"I am with you always"* – Spend time building real relationships with them.

What elements of discipleship should be included in a healthy, balanced discipleship relationship?

Components of Discipleship Illustration

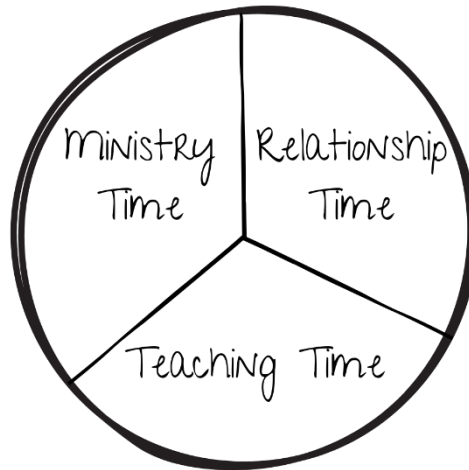


Illustration Explanation: A balanced discipleship relationship should include three main components. Teaching time, ministry time, and relationship time.

Teaching Time

What should your teaching time look like in discipleship?

Your teaching time should involve intentional time in God's Word and prayer together. Set a clear plan of what you'd like to accomplish in your teaching time and communicate that with your disciples. Always be flexible to the Holy Spirit's leading in your time together. That being said, if you have no plan in place going into your teaching time, you'll find that your time may slip away, and the fruitfulness you were hoping for in discipleship may not materialize.



Failing to plan is planning to fail.

During your teaching time, model practical ministry tools for them and set time aside to role-play the tools together. Practice is a crucial component of developing tools that will be helpful to serve them when the Holy Spirit calls on them to put the tools into action.

Ministry Time

What should your ministry time look like in discipleship?

Spend time tangibly serving in the community together and putting what you've learned in discipleship into practice. Live the life you desire to reproduce in others. Invite your disciples along into

it. Let them see how you live out your faith in the real world. Let there be no difference in your private life from your public life.

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” 1st Corinthians 11:1

Relationship Time

What should your relationship time look like in discipleship?

Spend time investing in the friendship relationship with those you’re discipling. Do something together that you both enjoy. Have no other agenda during this time besides building your friendship with each other. Ask them real questions about how they’re doing in their life. Ask questions that are just about them, like, *“How is your family doing?” “How is work going?” “What are you doing for fun these days?”*

Take a real interest in their life and make them a priority for you. If they’re interested in your personal life, be willing to open up and tell them. It will build trust and encourage you as well.

Whenever you’re with your disciple, be intentional to consider how you can add value to their life. Be willing to ask tough questions of loving accountability to encourage their personal walks with Jesus. Allow them to ask the same questions to you. Pray for them regularly. Check in with each other throughout the week.

Grace-Filled Steps

Set grace-filled steps for your disciples that will challenge them appropriately. For instance, if your disciple is struggling with fear of talking to others about Christ, a few suggestions for grace-filled steps could be:

- Find time to serve together in an environment where spiritual conversations may feel more natural, such as a food bank. Let them have a front-row seat to watch you engage with others.
- Go with your disciple to meet a new family at church and have your disciple ask if they can pray for them.
- Encourage your disciple to invite a friend out to lunch with both of you. Let them observe you engaging in a spiritual conversation with their friend.

In any of these settings, if you have an opportunity to tee them up to include them in the conversation, use it! If you’ve entered into a spiritual conversation, an easy transition to include your disciple could sound something like this:

“Have you ever heard John’s Story? It’s awesome what Jesus has done in his life. John, would you mind sharing your Story?” or, “Sarah, do you remember that illustration we were looking at the other week? I know that helped both of us. Why don’t you share that here?”



When you delegate authority along with responsibility, trust is built, and people grow.

When your disciple experiences firsthand how easy a spiritual conversation can be when the Lord is in it, it will help them overcome the fear of doing it on their own. Always look for ways to gracefully stretch your disciple's faith so they continue to grow into who God wants them to be.

Release Early, Connect Often

After Jesus sent the disciples out in ministry, He would spend time engaging with them about how it went. Each time your disciple gets a chance to have a spiritual conversation or serve in ministry, carve out time together afterward to debrief and see how it went.

Whether the experience was encouraging or discouraging for them, real-life situations provide the most impactful teaching opportunities to help your disciples grow. When they've experienced the tension of a real-life moment, they will be most receptive to learning spiritual tools that could help them satisfy that tension next time. The earlier you release them to serve Jesus, the better. Once you release them, make it a priority to connect often to continue to build them up.

"And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida." Luke 9:10

Out of Balance

What happens if your discipleship relationship falls out of balance?

1. If you lean too heavily on **teaching time**, you will see knowledge grow, but practical application in their life may become stagnant, and your personal relationship may not go deeper than the surface level. This may be a good time to carve out an opportunity to serve in the community or go out for dinner together. Model what you've been teaching them so that they can see a living faith in Jesus in action.
2. If you lean too heavily on **ministry time**, you may accomplish much work in ministry, but they may have an empty tank, lack the tools and training for ministry, and be missing out on the benefits of a deep Christ-centered friendship with you. This may be a good time to go out and do something together with no other agenda besides having fun. Or this could be a good time to schedule intentional time teaching through God's Word and praying with each other.
3. If you lean too heavily on **relationship time**, you may have a deep personal friendship, but they won't learn the spiritual tools or know how to use them to live out an impactful Spirit-filled life as a disciple of Jesus. This may be a good time to plan an intentional time together in the Word and Prayer and schedule a time to serve in ministry in your community together.

Come back to Matthew 28:19-20 as often as you need to. Regularly recalibrate to stay on track of accomplishing the goal of the Great Commission, which is to honor Jesus and make disciples.

Who Should I Choose to Disciple?

This may seem like a harsh question, but it is an important one that acknowledges the reality of our human limitations. God is everywhere at once, is outside of time, and has no limits. He didn't create us with those attributes. It is impossible for us to disciple everyone personally. But we can be part of God's wisdom of discipleship that will allow everyone who is willing to be discipled by someone.

Multitudes - Followers - Disciples

Jesus reached the multitudes. He invested in His followers. But Jesus was devoted to His disciples. Never forget that all people matter greatly to God. But also remember that the greatest resource you have is *time*.



Give your best time to those who are willing to give their best time to Jesus.

Jesus knew that by devoting His life to His disciples, they would invest in His followers, and eventually, that movement would reach the multitudes. Two thousand years later, we are living proof that Jesus' plan to reach the world was incredibly effective. He set the example of discipleship and asked us to do the same.

Sharing the Gospel message is something that we deeply desire to do with all people, but when it comes to whom we can commit to invest in through an intentional discipleship relationship, we have God-given limits of time, energy, and resources that we need to accept to walk in His will for our lives.

God wants Clay, Not a Finished Product

God is referred to as a potter throughout the Word. If you give a potter a hardened finished product, there is nothing they can do to change it or help make it better. It is what it is. But if you give a potter a soft clump of clay, there is no limit to the beauty and detail that the potter can turn the clay into.

When we come to God, and we think we already have everything we need and we tell Him, *"Thanks God, we'll take it from here!"* There is often nothing He can do to mold us into who He created us to be. Our best ability for God is our availability before Him. A humble heart full of willingness to serve God is all the Lord needs to do everything He desires to do through us.



God doesn't call the equipped. He equips the called.

Jesus didn't pick the most experienced or the most educated people to be His disciples. He chose to invest in those who would be humble and faithful to serve His Kingdom. When you pray about

who to consider discipling, faithfulness and commitment to God should always be regarded higher than education, experience, skills, or potential talent. God wants us to be like clay, not a finished product.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13

Invest in Faithful People

“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.” 2nd Timothy 2:2 (NASB)

God tells us to entrust spiritual truths to faithful people. Why? Because one of the best ways to prevent multiplying disciple-makers is to spend your time pouring into people who are unwilling to disciple others.

There is no perfect formula for determining who will be faithful to disciple others. With that said, it's wise to do your best to discern where your limited time, energy, and resources will make the biggest impact for God's Kingdom in your short time here on Earth.

“Like a broken tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in a time of trouble.” Proverbs 25:19

What traits should I look for in someone to disciple?

Look for someone who is F.A.T. *Faithful, available, and teachable*. Again, there is no way to know for sure what a discipleship relationship may look like down the road. The Lord may want you to take a risk on investing in someone who struggles in one of these areas. Pray and listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance on who you should pursue pouring into.

There is nothing more worthy to take risks on in life than people. God may use discipleship to help them grow in an area of their life that desperately needs it. If God gives you a peace about discipling someone, then obey Him.

As a general rule, try to pour your time and energy into someone who displays these three traits.

- **Faithful** – Someone who is willing to say yes and follow through with challenges that help them grow in their faith.
- **Available** – Someone who has the openness in their heart and their schedule to make discipleship a priority in this season of their life.
- **Teachable** – Someone who has a humble heart and is willing to try new things spiritually that may be different than what they've been taught in the past.

Set the Bar High

The clearer you can be at the beginning of discipleship, the better. For many, the biggest challenge of discipleship will be if they are willing to step out of their comfort zone to reach others for Jesus. If any believer is willing to do that for Him, then they can do this! Ask them to take some time and

pray about these three expectations. This step can go a long way to saving discouragement down the road for both of you.

- *“Do you feel God is calling you to this?”*
- *“Are you willing to take steps of faith to reach others in your life for Christ as God equips you to do so?”*
- *“In the unique way and timing that God leads you, are you willing to follow Him to multiply in discipleship?”*

Groups over One-on-One

If you can include a few people in discipleship with you at one time, it will always help to increase the likelihood of multiplying disciple-makers. Even Jesus lost one of His disciples along the way. Learning in groups takes us further, multiplies more rapidly, and provides protection against discouragement. A few of the benefits of investing in a few people in discipleship at one time are:

- It maximizes your time to pour into multiple people during the same season.
- It will provide the chance to share leadership opportunities among your disciples to catch each other up to speed when they miss a training time together.
- It lessens the risk of discouragement if a disciple has a change of heart and drops out of discipleship.

What do I do if the discipleship relationship isn't working out?

Discipling someone else for a season means opening up your life to them. This will require more time, energy, and effort than a typical relationship with another believer in Christ would. It is not an easy calling, but it's a worthy one. If you find that someone you're investing in isn't growing in their faith or following through with appropriate challenges that you place before them, be willing to have a real conversation.

It can be very painful, frustrating, and discouraging to pour your life into someone who is apathetic and uninterested in being faithful to the call of discipleship from Jesus. Come back to what the clear expectations were at the beginning of discipleship. Talk to them about beliefs, skills, and values.

Beliefs, Skills, and Values

In discipleship, you can help introduce *beliefs* through the Word of God, *skills* through equipping them with tools and building them up, and *values* from your example and witness for Christ in their life. But the one thing you cannot give them is a willingness in their heart.

If they have the *beliefs*, *skills*, and *values* instilled in them and they still won't follow through with the grace-filled steps you laid before them to help them grow, then it's most likely an issue of willingness for your disciple. The temptation for some leaders will be to lower the bar of expectation for discipleship to accommodate their level of willingness. Don't do it! It will end up watering down the discipleship process and prevent real fruit from growing.

If it's clear that you're facing an issue of willingness with your disciple, let them know that you care about them, lay out the expectations clearly, and walk in loving accountability with them. Explain

what you see and leave the ball in their court to pick up and run after Jesus if they choose to. Jesus did this many times with people in His earthly ministry.

“Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.” Luke 9:23-24

If you are concerned that pulling back from a discipleship relationship could lead to them being offended, most times, what we’ve seen is that it actually leads to relief. Some people will care more about letting you down than what Jesus asks of them. If they have a change of heart, they are always welcome to return. Let them know that the door is open in the future if they would like to pursue discipleship again.

* See **Wisdom for Discipleship** after Lesson 12 for more helpful advice about *Beliefs, Skills, and Values*.

Helpful Tips

Test of Faithfulness

Prior to investing in a discipleship relationship, give a small task that will reveal their willingness and commitment level. Some good ideas could be asking them to read a book on discipleship or asking them to dig into a passage of Scripture on their own and share their thoughts with you. If they take the initiative and follow through, that is a great tangible sign that they may be faithful, available, and teachable.

Content Doesn’t Make Disciples, Other Disciples Do

In the modern church, a common assumption is that passing along information will lead to making disciples. There are many Christ-centered, Biblical resources on the internet that have all the content you could ever hope to learn about making disciples. Yet, even with all that information available, the vast majority of Christians aren’t making disciples today.

The reason for that is the information you could learn from the content online will never replace having someone open their life to pour into you. In disciple-making, you aren’t just sharing knowledge; you are sharing your life with them. When knowledge is shared in the context of real relationships, life transformation happens.

“So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.” 1st Thessalonians 2:8

Short Season, Big Impact

Some discipleship relationships will last for a lifetime. Other discipleship relationships will only last for a season. Both are good and can make tremendous ripple effects for God’s Kingdom that will last forever.

The Apostle Paul spent less than 2 years and in some cases as little as a few months in certain towns and cities. Yet, the impact of his limited time with new believers for Jesus was tremendous. It

helped build a worldwide movement that has impacted us today. Don't underestimate what God can do through a short season of intentional discipleship in the life of faithful believers.

Look Forward

Get with God to ask Him for your **I Will Statements** for the upcoming week.

Stretch Goals

- Think through one takeaway you can celebrate of what God has done in you and through you over your time in discipleship. Come prepared to share it during our final training time together.
- Continue to pray intentionally about what the Lord may have in store for you next.
- Continue sharing your Story and God's Story this week.

Multiply Your Faith – Lesson 12

Simple Ways to Multiply

THE GOAL OF LESSON 12

- The goal of this lesson is to help your disciples discover simple ways to equip disciple-makers for Jesus and to send them well to make disciples for Him to the 4th generation and beyond.

Look Back

Begin with your **I Will Statements** and your **Sphere of Influence Lists**.

Next, spend a few minutes recapping *Lesson 11, Components of Discipleship & Who Should I Choose to Disciple?*

- What are the three components of a healthy discipleship relationship?
- What are three traits to look for in someone who's ready for discipleship?

Look Up

Simple Ways to Multiply

Why did God choose discipleship to reach the world?

Our God is a relational God. When discipleship is done well, it results in strong relationships. Much effort has been put into growing the Church, but a local church growing numerically is not the same as multiplying disciples. Also, when it comes to reaching the masses for Jesus over time, growing a church numerically isn't nearly as effective as making disciples. The wisdom of multiplication through discipleship is exponential.

Exponential Growth

If a follower of Jesus led 1,000 people to Christ every day of their life, how long would it take to reach the entire world for Jesus? Roughly 22,000 years.

On the other hand, if a follower of Jesus led one person to Christ a year and disciplined them to do the same, how long would it take to reach the entire world for Jesus? *Just 33 years*. Jesus impacted the world in one lifetime, and so could you.

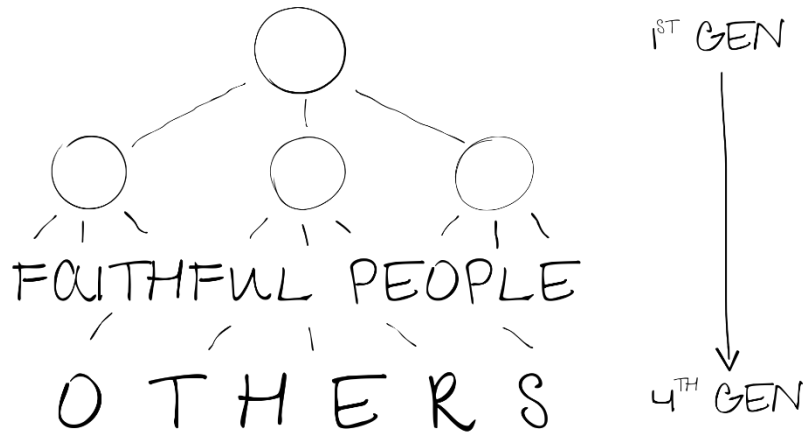
4th Generation Discipleship

What is 4th generation discipleship?

There's a reason we've come back to 2nd Timothy 2:2 so often. This Scripture is a real-life example of 4th generation discipleship.

*“The things which **you** have heard from **me** in the presence of **many witnesses**, entrust these to **faithful people** who will be able to teach **others** also.” 2nd Timothy 2:2 (NASB)*

4th Generation Discipleship Illustration



1st Generation - Paul wrote that he received the Gospel directly from Jesus. (Galatians 1:11-12)

2nd Generation - Paul disciplined Timothy among many witnesses.

3rd Generation - Timothy and many witnesses disciplined faithful people.

4th Generation - Faithful people disciplined others.

To put this into our context today:

1. If you're being disciplined, let's call you the 1st generation of discipleship.
2. If you begin to disciple someone else, that's the 2nd generation of discipleship.
3. If your disciple becomes a disciple-maker, that is the 3rd generation.
4. And if their disciple goes on to disciple someone else, you've arrived at the 4th generation of discipleship.

It's very likely that a person in the 4th generation of discipleship may not know who you are at all. To that we say, praise God! One goal of being a disciple-maker is that you make an impact for God's Kingdom that will outlast you.



Our desire is that you get to the point in a discipleship chain where no one knows your name, but many know the name of Jesus.

How do we make sure we keep the discipleship process simple?

Normally in life and ministry, we think the more, the better. It isn't about how many truths you can help your disciples understand. It's about how far the simple truths will spread and multiply to others.

In discipleship, start with the end goal in mind.

If you had six months to train a disciple for Jesus, what would you want their life to look like?
(Give time for your disciples to speak into this answer together)

Keeping this general formula in mind will be helpful as you multiply disciples:

Teach, Model, Show, Send, Follow Up

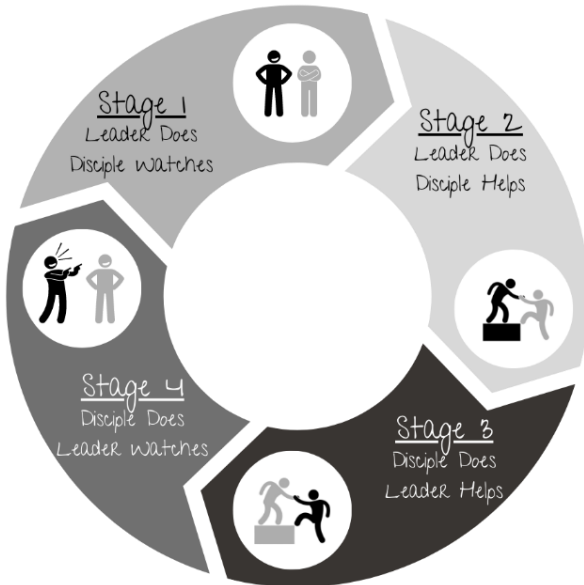
- *Teach* them the truths of the Word of God. Teach them practical, simple tools that will help them grow and reach others.
- *Model* those tools together in the classroom setting. Allow them to model them back to you.
- *Show* them those tools in action in the community together. The best training happens in ministry, not for ministry. Would you rather listen to the person who tells you what to do or watch the person show you how to do it?
 - The more opportunities throughout this process that you can have your disciples by your side to see ministry unfold, the better.
- *Send* them to try out these tools on their own. Think through grace-filled steps to lovingly challenge them. For instance:
 - The first time you *send* them, you might be standing right next to them and helping to lead the conversation while including them.
 - The next time you *send* them, try letting them lead the conversation.
 - The following time you *send* them, let them lead the conversation without you there.
- *Follow up* with your disciple to see, “How did it go?”



A movement of God starts with you personally. If you want to lead it, you have to live it. If you won't live it out in your own life, you shouldn't lead it either.

Each step of this process in discipleship is meant to be simple, transferable, and reproducible. Whenever possible, follow these four stages of sharing leadership with your disciples.

Four Stages Illustration



Stage 1 - Leader does, disciple watches.

Stage 2 - Leader does, disciple helps.

Stage 3 - Disciple does, leader helps.

Stage 4 - Disciple does, leader watches.

These four stages will help your disciples get real-life experience without carrying the full weight of consequences on their shoulders. As they are learning, you can help carry the weight with them. Jesus gave his disciples difficult assignments because learning began when they discovered how much they did not know. Jesus primarily taught his disciples in the middle of life, mission, and relationships. The disciples learned more in these settings than in a worship service or a classroom. He taught by using real-life situations and questions that encouraged them to discover truth on their own.

Whenever you can, give opportunities in ministry to empower and trust your disciples. Let them rest in the tension of what they may not know. When you do, they will internalize and hold onto the tools you've taught them to satisfy that tension.

Helpful Tips

If You Strive to Obtain, You'll Strive to Maintain

When we begin working for God with *our own strength*, we'll need to sustain that work with our own strength. This will lead to us growing weary, burning out, and getting discouraged. When we allow God to begin a work through us in *His own strength*, He will sustain that work with His own strength. Where God guides, He provides.

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit."

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Loyalty to Him

Our aim isn't to make disciples of us. Our aim is to make disciples of Jesus. Don't ask them to be loyal to you; challenge them to be loyal to Jesus and His Word.

Make Everything You Do Simple, Transferable, and Reproducible

If what you're teaching your disciple isn't easily transferable, you likely won't see the goal of disciples making disciples like you intended. Always ask yourself this question, *"Is what I'm sharing simple enough that it could be reproduced from the 3rd to 4th generation of discipleship without me being there?"* If you aren't sure the answer is yes, be willing to go back to the drawing board. Aiming to keep everything you do simple and transferable will lead to discipleship being reproducible for generations to come.

Humble Goals

Discipleship is not intended to produce seminary-level PhDs for Jesus. We just want to help people get enrolled in school. No doubt, the Holy Spirit will take some disciples much deeper in their depth of understanding and knowledge of the Word of God, but the goal of discipleship is to focus on helping people get equipped to begin growing in three main areas:

- Their personal walks with Christ.
- Their ability to communicate their faith.
- Their ability to multiply and make disciples.

There's a common fear that paralyzes many believers in Jesus. *"I don't know enough to disciple someone else."* Don't let that fear keep you from taking the first step of faithfulness.



All you have to do to help someone take the next step in their faith is be one step ahead of them.

If we all waited to feel like we've arrived before we stepped out to be used by God, we would never get started. Share what you know, be humble and eager to learn what you don't. Trust God to provide for you as you step out along the way.

Never Do Ministry Alone

Don't think of discipling someone else as adding appointments to your calendar. Think of discipleship as adding a person to your calendar. This will take discipleship off the To-Do List, and it will quickly become your lifestyle. Those opportunities when you bring someone along with you and they see you serving Jesus and loving others are often the most impactful, teachable moments for your disciple.

If you're living for Jesus already, invite them along into it. Never do ministry alone.

Stuck in the 1st Generation

Over the years, many who have had the best intentions to multiply for Christ get stuck in the 1st generation of discipleship. What this means is they have a believer in their life that is willing to be poured into, but that believer never gets to a place where they step out to pour into others. The result is that discipleship never makes it to the next generation. Some advice to help prevent this from happening would be:

- Set clear expectations before you begin discipleship. *The goal is for them to be equipped to disciple others themselves.* You can't make that goal clear enough throughout discipleship. Keep the idea of them becoming disciple-makers at the forefront of their mind from day one in discipleship.
- Once you've explained what the goals are, ask them, *"In your own words, what is your goal for our time in discipleship together?"* When you hear their personal response to this question, you'll find out quickly where they stand.
- Don't shy away from loving accountability. If you are clear on the front end, there should be no surprises when you ask real questions later to spur them on toward spiritual growth.
- If you teach people about discipleship tools but never model the tools for them in real-life situations with others, you're setting your disciples up for failure. Go out *with* them!
- You should have the freshest stories of life change from your own **Sphere of Influence List**. Only God controls the results, but you can model willingness and boldness for your disciples.

Keep the Fire Burning

The hardest part about tending a fire isn't adding wood to the flames, it's getting the fire started. Once a fire is going, keeping it alive is easy. However, if you stop adding wood, the fire burns down to embers. If you leave it go for too long, eventually you'll be back at square one needing to start the fire from scratch again.

Disciple-making is much like the fire. When your disciples are on fire for Jesus, send them out to make a difference for Jesus immediately! Don't wait. Often times, we believe that more training will lead to more fruit. What we've found is that training too much often leads to paralysis by analysis. We then overthink things and never actually enter the arena of life.

We will never have a solution prepared for every possible outcome. If we did, we'd no longer need God to walk with us.

Train a little, then send them out. As they are faithful in the small things, give them more training as they go. If too much time has passed in the training phase and they have never been released, time and time again we've seen complacency set in. Once that happens, you'll find that the fruit begins to dry up and multiplication doesn't happen the way that you'd hoped. Don't let the flames die down, keep the fire for Jesus burning.

Not a Class, It's a Lifestyle

Obedience to Jesus is greater than knowledge of truths and tools. Discipleship is not meant to only be an education. What you teach your disciples is meant to be applied to their lives through an

active, obedient faith in Christ. It's always better to obey the small amount of knowledge you currently have about Jesus than to choose to sit idly by while you wait to add to your knowledge.

Jesus didn't intend discipleship to be a class; He intended it to be a lifestyle.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." James 1:22-25

Living Sent

Celebrate What the Lord has Done for Us

During this last training time together, we want to celebrate all that God has done. One of the best ways to strengthen our faith in the Lord is to remember the unique ways God has shown Himself faithful in our lives. The most important way to remember the Lord's faithfulness is to remember what Jesus did for us on the Cross.

Read through 1st Corinthians 11:23-29. Take time before the Lord and share Communion together. Give your disciples some time to sit quietly with Jesus and thank Him for all He has done for them.

Celebrate What the Lord has Done Through Us

Following your time thanking the Lord for what He's done, spend time sharing stories of what God has done in the lives of each disciple over the last season. Give each person a chance to share a unique way they saw the Lord work in them and through them during their time in discipleship.

Once they've shared, lay hands on each person and pray over them as a discipleship group. Give everyone a chance to share up front and to be prayed for by the group.

Celebrate What the Lord Has in Store for Us

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." Hebrews 10:14

Ask for a volunteer to draw the *Justification vs. Sanctification Graph* from Lesson 1.

In the journey of growing into the person God wants you to be, we will never arrive at perfection. If you are waiting to arrive before being used by God, you will never get off the sideline for Jesus in this lifetime. Stay humble before God. Use what He's already given you for His glory. If He calls you to do more for His Kingdom, trust that He'll give you everything you need to equip you for His calling along the way. Keep practicing. Keep praying. Keep seeking what the Holy Spirit is asking you to do each day, and always be willing to say yes to Him!

Remember where your mission field is. If you need a reminder, look down and realize that your mission field is right where you are standing each day. Many disciples of Jesus have asked the question, *“How could I ever be part of generational discipleship?”*



Everything needed for generational discipleship is already in the harvest.

Say yes to God and love the people that He puts in front of you. Pursuing others will not make your life easier. As people open up and let you into the mess of life, things can get complicated. We don't pursue others for Jesus because it will make our life easier; we do it because there is no calling in life that is more worthy.

Owning the Vision

A young church planter spent time with an older leader who had made a tremendous impact for God's Kingdom in discipleship. The young leader asked, *“In your time traveling and speaking around the country, have you run into any churches that are doing discipleship really well?”* He said, *“No.”*

The young church planter was discouraged. Then he asked the seasoned leader, *“What do you think I should do?”* He paused and considered the question for a minute. Finally, he said, *“Pursue discipleship. What else are you going to do that's more important than that?”*

The young church planter walked away from the moment with more questions than answers, but he had received something from that conversation that would change his ministry's trajectory forever. A strong resolve to own the vision of discipleship.

When you own a vision, you find a way to make it happen. No matter what obstacles may be in the way, you are determined to find a way forward. You won't find respectable excuses to give you an out; you go to God and ask Him to give you needed solutions if this is what He's calling you to. You don't think, *“I'll do it if I have time.”* You think, *“I'll move things around in my life to make time.”*

Making disciples was Jesus' vision for His Church. If the Church today would look at disciple-making as something that isn't an optional addition to ministry but instead that it's the main goal Jesus has for us on Earth, our ministries would look much different.

It's been said, *“One can choose to go back towards safety or forward towards growth.”* Every step of growth as a follower of Jesus is a choice. And anything that's worthwhile will cost you something. Discipleship is no different. If we view investing spiritually in the life of someone else as an inconvenience or an obligation, it would be better not to pursue it. Discipleship is not an obligation to serve Jesus and others; it's a privilege.

When you pour your life into others, you may not feel like your efforts are being rewarded by them. Remember, you aren't following your feelings. You are following a Person. The hope we have as disciples of Jesus is that one day, we'll receive our praise directly from Him.

Jesus said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”* The best way to honor Jesus is to spend your life investing in the lives of others for Him.

“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’” Matthew 25:23

Wisdom for Discipleship

The Goal

- The goal for this section is to provide helpful advice that will shape how you lead in discipleship.

Practice is Crucial

Practice does three clear things for us:

- **Manages Fear** - When you try something for the first time, now you know what it feels like. Your experience grows and it eliminates the fear of the unknown.
- **Builds Confidence** - As you try something new and live through the experience of it going well, it gives you the courage to do it again and again.
- **Sharpens Performance** - By practicing these skills with others in discipleship, you'll hear how others do it. Through this process, you'll learn better ways to do it yourself. Very likely, God will use you to help sharpen skills for them as well.

Whether it's the practice of opening the Bible and turning the pages of Scripture together, practicing a spiritual illustration with someone else for the first time, or practicing sharing their Story of putting their faith in Christ, this may be the very first time these words have ever come out of their mouths. What better place for that to happen than with other people who love Jesus as much as they do?

Awesome Comes Right After Awkward

If God is calling you to do it, step boldly out of your comfort zone and trust that the Holy Spirit will be there with you. If you can't practice these things in discipleship with other believers who feel the very same awkwardness you do, then very likely, you will not be willing to do these things with people in your life who don't know Christ.

Some of the greatest life-changing conversations in your life happen right after you have the courage to ask a question that may feel awkward in the moment. It's true that there is no guarantee that every time you step out of your comfort zone, you'll experience something awesome on the other side. But if you are never willing to step out for Jesus, you can be assured that you'll likely never experience many of the moments of life change that God has planned to do in you and through you.

Trust God. He'll show you which moments are for you and which moments aren't. Listen to the Holy Spirit and be willing to say yes to Him.

Not What We Want... What God Wants

We believe God has uniquely prepared you for the good works that He has specifically created you for. You may not plant a church. You may not lead 1,000 people to Christ. You may not start a discipleship movement. But maybe you'll do something far greater than all of those things for the Lord.



We don't want you to become who we want you to be; we want you to become who God wants you to be.

The best thing that any believer in Jesus could ever do is *exactly* what God wants them to do. Nothing more and nothing less. That is what you should want for your disciples.

Beliefs, Skills, and Values

- **Beliefs** – We believe God revealed His will for us in His Word (the Bible). We'll ground all of what we believe in the Word of God. Every idea in discipleship will be born out of beliefs in the Scriptures.
- **Skills** – We'll provide practical tools and knowledge to help us grow in each area of our faith, and we'll practice those skills in discipleship. As God opens doors, we'll put those skills into practice in our community for Jesus.
- **Values** – Our lives are given to what we feel is valuable. Anything that we deem important, we make time for. Whatever is of value to us, we make it our priority.

If someone you're discipling is struggling with a certain area, whether that's spending time with Jesus, sharing their Story and their faith with others, or saying yes to God when He asks them to multiply in discipleship in some way, walk them through *Beliefs, Skills, and Values*.

Is there something they're unsure of in Scripture? Focus on *beliefs*. Walk with them through the truths of the Word in that area. Do they feel like they haven't been equipped with the tools and skillset to live out what God is asking of them? Focus on *skills*. Model those skills for them and, more importantly, model those skills in the community with them.

If they believe this is truly something God wants them to do, and they feel they have been given the skills to accomplish it, then the last question to ask is about *values*. Is disciple-making something they value in their life?

If the answer to all three areas is yes, and they still aren't willing to take a step forward in obedience in their faith, then it comes down to a matter of willingness. We can do everything right in discipling others, but there is one thing we can't do.



We can't put willingness into a person's heart.

That is between them and the Lord. Jesus invited people to follow Him in discipleship. With that invitation, we need to understand that we can't accept Jesus' invitation, *but only on our own terms*.

Jesus said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."* Luke 9:23-24

The cost of following Jesus in discipleship is great, but the reward is always far greater. Don't force, pressure, guilt, or manipulate someone into saying yes. Jesus didn't do that, and neither should we. Jesus set the bar high, but He offered an open invitation to all who wanted to follow Him.

Our offer in discipleship is the same. The bar is set high, but the invitation is open to anyone willing to lay down their life and follow Jesus.

Lead by the Pace of Obedience, Not the Pace of the Content

You will notice that the first lesson is titled Lesson 1, not Week 1. That's on purpose. Discipleship is not meant to be something you rush through to complete. It is a journey into a deeper, living, obedient faith in Jesus. If it takes your disciples a few weeks to understand and apply one lesson, so be it. Discipleship isn't a sprint, it's a marathon.

An Avalanche vs. A Glacier

An avalanche is notoriously powerful and moves very quickly. In a short amount of time, massive amounts of snow and debris are moved. An avalanche can even travel at speeds of over 200 miles per hour. It's terrifying, exciting, captivating, and you can't take your eyes off it. But after time has passed, and the dust has settled, many times, people may not even notice that an avalanche ever took place there. The impact of the avalanche didn't lead to any real lasting change.

On the other hand, when you see a glacier, it appears like nothing is happening. There's nothing exciting about it. A glacier moves incredibly slowly. It doesn't draw any attention for being powerful in the moment. It struggles to keep your attention. Yet, over time, a glacier has the power to move mountains. And the impact of its work will be known for generations.

There was a young leader with a passion for discipleship who was a new hire on a church staff team. The young leader entered into their first experience at the annual staff planning retreat. The question was posed by senior leadership, *"How do we pursue discipleship at our church?"* The young leader shared with excitement about God's wisdom of multiplying through discipleship over time. The leader drew out 2nd Timothy 2:2 before the staff team and showed the power of Jesus' simple plan of discipleship to reach the world. The young leader went on to share from their own experience how revolutionary discipleship could be inside the church and in the community to see lives changed for Jesus.

The senior leadership of the church quickly dismissed the young leader by saying, *"Well, that's a nice idea. But how do we reach the masses immediately?"*

What they landed on was to set up a series of discipleship classes at the church. The staff team expended much time, energy, and resources on these discipleship classes, and initially, there was a buzz among the people when the classes were rolled out to the church. But quickly, the momentum lost steam, the people in the church lost interest, and the staff team cut their losses and turned their attention elsewhere.

Less than 12 months later, at the next annual staff meeting, the senior leadership asked the question again, *"How should we pursue discipleship at our church?"* Sadly, years later, no intentional discipleship process ever formed there, and the multiplication that Jesus foresaw with the Great Commission never came to fruition.

So, what happened? The senior leadership pursued an avalanche to equip disciple-makers instead of a glacier.

This discipleship process may take 4-6 months to walk through before you begin to see real fruit of multiplication in others. Why is it so long?

Because discipleship is like a glacier, it takes time, and very often, the process of discipleship moves much slower than we might want. But just like the glacier, faithful obedience to Jesus in disciple-making has the power to change the world. Stay faithful with the discipleship process and be patient. Jesus is working in us and through us to impact future generations to come.



Knowledge about discipleship can be passed very quickly, but transforming a disciple into a disciple-maker for Christ takes time.

Let the Lord Set the Numbers

God is a much better CEO, Sales Manager, and Accountant than we are. Let Him handle the numbers. You may have a desire to set numerical goals for your disciples to hit throughout the discipleship process. Don't do it!

That doesn't mean there won't be numerical goals set for each disciple throughout discipleship. Many times, we have seen the Holy Spirit impress a specific, measurable numerical goal on the hearts of the people. But those goals are always best coming from Him, not from us.

In discipleship, your role as the leader is to always encourage your disciples to stretch themselves as the Lord leads. And to hold each other mutually accountable to be faithful to *exactly* what He asks you each to commit to. If the Lord gave them an **I Will Statement** that included a numerical goal that week, then lovingly hold them accountable to the number that He gave them.

Whether that's a number of chapters to read in Scripture, a number of people to pray for, a number of spiritual conversations to start with others, or something else, trust that the Holy Spirit will lead each disciple uniquely and individually. When He does, be willing to say yes to Him.



Our role before God is to be faithful. God will take care of the fruit.

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase." 1st Corinthians 3:6-7

Ideas to Add Value to Discipleship

Invitation to Discipleship

The Goal

- The goal of an invitation to discipleship is to cast a compelling vision from Jesus, set clear expectations, and let the person make a decision about saying yes between themselves and the Lord.

How Do I Invite Someone to Discipleship?

There are two main ways to invite someone into discipleship: with a personal one-on-one conversation or through an open invitation.

	One on One	Open Invitation
Pros	• More personal • Ask who you feel led to ask	• Will say "yes" for the right reasons • Willingness comes from the Lord • Anyone is welcome
Cons	• Pressure to say "yes" to you • May lack willingness • Could be accused of favoritism	• Less personal • Less say in what the group looks like

Open Invitation

If you are in a larger setting like a local church or established ministry, inviting everyone to come together to cast a vision for discipleship is one of the best ways to test the willingness in the hearts of the people. Those that show up to hear more have already demonstrated an interest in pursuing being disciplined.

When you provide an open opportunity, the people who sense God stirring in their hearts will take the step of faith to come forward and follow His call of discipleship. Very likely, some of the people you expected to show up may not come, and some of the people that you least expected will be there.

Lay aside any preconceived notions of who you think would be the best fit for discipleship based on their skillsets, experience, or education. The believers you want to invest in are those who are willing to run after Christ and are faithful, available, and teachable.

Cast a Compelling Vision

Schedule a meeting to cast a vision for discipleship. Here are some helpful components to consider including in a *Discipleship Vision Cast Meeting*.

- Cast a vision for Jesus' call to discipleship. Use His words in Scripture to explain His goal for our lives. There are many great passages to turn to for Jesus' heart for discipleship. Matthew 28:19-20 and Luke 9:23-26 are great places to start.
- Ask the following open-ended question, and write the group's answers on a board up front:

"If you had six months to disciple someone, what characteristics would you hope to see in their life after your time together?"

- Explain the three areas of discipleship: *Walk by Faith*, *Communicate your Faith*, and *Multiply your Faith*. Briefly walk through some of the focuses of the lessons in each area.
- Set clear expectations of your hopes and goals in discipleship for those who choose to say yes.
- Leave plenty of time for people to ask questions.

Set Clear Expectations

Set a clear time frame for discipleship. This process will take roughly 4-6 months of meeting weekly. Explain the **Sphere of Influence Lists** and **I Will Statements**. The most challenging part of discipleship is being willing to pursue other people for Jesus. If a person is willing to let the Holy Spirit lead them in that area, then they have what it takes to be a disciple-maker for Jesus.

A helpful step could be to print out a *Discipleship Expectation Form* with the following three questions:

1. *"Do you feel God is calling you to this?"*
2. *"Are you willing to take steps of faith to reach others in your life for Christ as God equips you to do so?"*
3. *"In the unique way and timing that God leads you, are you willing to follow Him to multiply in discipleship?"*

*You can find a printable *Discipleship Expectation Form* at GenerationalDiscipleshipBook.com, or feel free to make your own!

Let the Decision Stay Between Them and the Lord

You want to make sure people are pursuing discipleship for the right reasons. Never pressure, guilt, or manipulate someone into discipleship. Jesus didn't do that, and neither should we. Cast a compelling vision and let the people self-select if they want to meet the expectations that are set and come on board this disciple-making journey with you. If they say yes only because they want to please you, you both will likely experience discouragement and frustration down the road. You cannot put willingness into someone else's heart.



Jesus never lowered the standard of discipleship. He also never uses pressure, guilt, or manipulation to get us to follow Him. He invites us. We should do the same with others.

Discipleship Pairings

The Goal

- The goals of Discipleship Pairings are to share leadership among disciples, build deeper relationships with each other, and cultivate an environment of loving accountability.

What is a Discipleship Pairing?

A *Discipleship Pairing* is a partnership of two or three disciples within a larger discipleship group.

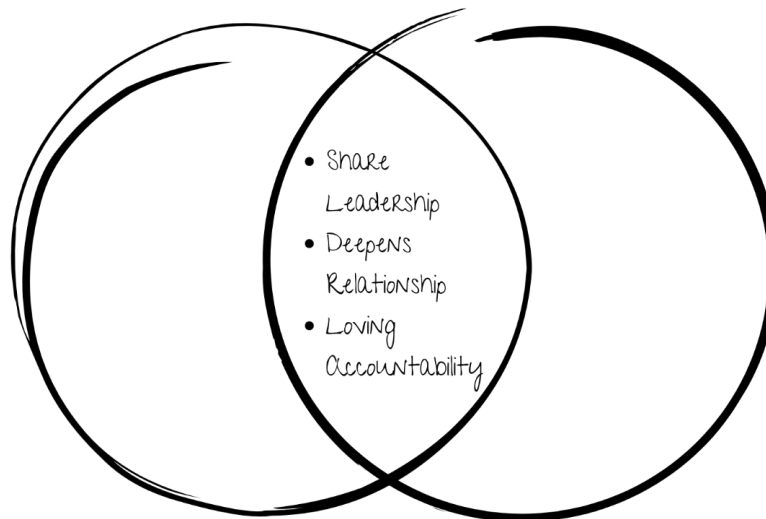
Who is this for?

Pairings are a useful tool for any discipleship group where more than three people are involved. Whether you have four people, forty people, or four hundred people in your discipleship training time, you'll want to find ways to stay small to keep the relationships personal.

Take time to think through which pairings make the most sense to benefit each other. This will add tremendous value to the experience and fruitfulness of discipleship.

What is this meant to accomplish?

Discipleship Pairings are meant to share leadership opportunities among the disciples, foster deeper relationships, and encourage loving accountability as we all pursue Jesus.



Why is this valuable?

Shared Leadership Opportunities

Sharing leadership opportunities is a great way to encourage multiplication. If you have a larger group of people involved in discipleship, breaking out into groups of two to three people will help give each disciple more opportunities to role-play conversations, draw illustrations, and practice discipleship

tools. The other benefit is that when a disciple misses a training time due to traveling, family or work schedule, or sickness, you can empower the other person in their pairing who was present to pursue a time with their partner to catch them up on the previous lesson.

Due to the busyness of life, this will likely result in every disciple having an opportunity to walk someone through a discipleship training lesson serving in the role of the leader. By the time they are ready to disciple someone else themselves, this experience will end up being invaluable to them.

Deepen Relationships

With a larger group of disciples, it's important that each disciple experiences a deep personal relationship with someone. If you are leading a larger group, that person can't always be you. When the disciples are paired up in groups of two to three, they will have more time and energy to pour into those personal relationships with each other.

A person may not feel like they're paired with someone they're close with at the beginning of discipleship but encourage them to be patient. Over time, when a common love for Jesus is shared, and both people are committed to growing in their faith, the relationships can become meaningful and life-giving. When you're committed and intentional with each other, it creates an environment where a Christ-centered friendship can flourish.

Loving Accountability

Each disciple needs someone who is willing to ask them the tough questions of life. In a smaller group of two to three trusted people, this is a much easier environment to see these questions asked and answered.

When should Discipleship Pairings begin?

By Lesson 4, you'll have a much better sense of the strengths and weaknesses of each disciple, and most importantly, you'll have a front-row seat to see their commitment level. This is a great time to pair people up for the rest of discipleship. Think through personalities and skill sets that will bear the most fruit within each pairing.

Discipleship Family Dinner

The Goal

- The goal of a Discipleship Family Dinner is to create an environment where relationships can grow, where you can serve your disciples tangibly, and where you can model and partake in the Lord's Supper together.

What is a Discipleship Family Dinner?

A *Discipleship Family Dinner* is a special night where you host your disciples with no other agenda than spending time with them. Once you've established your discipleship group, pick a training time where you press pause on the training that week, and you make dinner to serve your disciples instead.

Why is this valuable?

Environment for Relational Growth

There is something special about breaking bread with people. No matter what culture, generation, or time period, eating a meal together is a common shared experience where solid relationships can be built.

Serve Your Disciples

Very likely, your disciples will want to bring something along for the meal. Don't let them! This is your opportunity to serve your disciples. Whether you are a talented cook or not, put your best foot forward to let them know how much you care about them. It's a tangible display of the love you have for each of your disciples. If they want to repay you, tell them to pay it forward and do the same for others in their life.

The Lord's Supper

Take communion together with your disciples. This is often a beautiful moment together before the Lord. Make this a more intimate experience with the Lord than they may typically be used to. Don't rush it!

To make this experience more unique, a creative idea to consider would be to give each disciple a large piece of bread in addition to a nice-sized cup. This will encourage them to take their time while consuming both. This way, they're spending intentional time dwelling on what Jesus has done for them.

If appropriate, baking a fresh loaf of bread for communion is always a nice touch as well to show them that you care about them.

When should I host a Discipleship Family Dinner?

A great time to host a *Discipleship Family Dinner* is right at the end of an area of focus in discipleship, such as *Walk by Faith*. Based on your group size and schedule, feel free to come together for a meal a couple of times through discipleship. If you host a meal multiple times, allow others to help you prepare the meal after the first dinner.

What should a Discipleship Family Dinner look like?

A sample of your evening could look like this:

- Pray to open your time together.
- Speak over your disciples and encourage them.
- Serve the bread and cup.
- Read 1st Corinthians 11:23-29 and lead a time of communion before the Lord.
- Pray to close your communion time.
- Serve the meal.
- Spend the night enjoying each other. Talk about your lives and really listen. Celebrate together what the Lord has been doing through discipleship.

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” John 13:14-15

My Story Tract

The Goal

- The goal of a My Story Tract is to personalize the Gospel with someone you may have just met, by sharing the Story of your changed life for Jesus.

What is a My Story Tract?

This tool helps to share your Story in a way that builds bridges to share God's Story. It is a simple tool for the Gospel that includes your personal Story of coming to Christ, along with the Four Spiritual Laws Gospel presentation as well. You'll see a sample of a *My Story Tract* on the next page.

If you feel the Holy Spirit tugging on your heart to share about Jesus with someone, but you only have a moment with them, a *My Story Tract* can be a great way to accomplish that. This method will give someone the life-changing message of God's Story in a way that is still personal from you. It also includes useful information for them to follow up and get connected if they choose to do so.

Who is this for?

A *My Story Tract* is a tool for any disciple who would like help reaching people in their life for Christ.

Why is this valuable?

There are few things in life as valuable as a changed life for Jesus. Whenever possible, it's best to share your Story from your own lips, but for the times when you can't, a *My Story Tract* is a good option that still carries the power of your Story and God's Story together.

When should we create My Story Tracts?

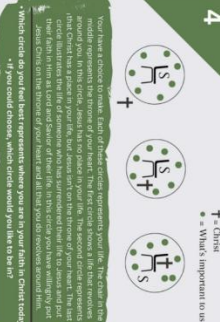
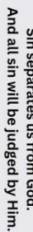
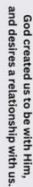
Once your disciples have crafted their Story into 150 words or less, take time and help put their Story into a *My Story Tract*. As a gift, print a few copies for them to help get them started.

*You can edit and print free copies of a My Story Tract at GenerationalDiscipleshipBook.com.

YOUR STORY HERE



Would you like to know God personally?
Open to read how it is possible.



Thank you for loving me and dying on the cross for me. I'm sorry for all the wrong things I've done in my life. I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness, Jesus. Please come into my life right now, change my heart, and show me how to live for You. I commit my life to You, I love You, and I want to follow You, Amen."

NEXT STEPS:

- G** Go to God in prayer daily. (*John 15:27*)
- R** Read God's Word daily. (*Acts 17:11*)
- O** Obey God moment by moment. (*John 14:21*)
- W** Witness for Christ by your life and words.
(*Matthew 4:19, John 15:26*)
- T** Trust God for every detail of your life.
(*1 Peter 5:7*)
- H** Holy Spirit – allow him to control and empower your daily life and witness.

(Galatians 5:16-17; Acts 1:8)

We are not here to walk with Jesus alone. God has given us the gift of friendships with other believers. Church can be a very painful place for many, but it is part of God's plan for His children to grow into who He wants them to be. Don't wait for someone to invite you. Find a local church that teaches the Word of God and shares the Gospel Message of Jesus and plug in! If you need help finding a good church locally, please let me know and we'll help you find one that's a great fit for you, your area!

The Talent Challenge

The Goal

- The goal of the Talent Challenge is to give your disciples an opportunity to think selflessly about those that they interact with every day, and to look intentionally for a divine appointment that the Holy Spirit may be leading them to.

What is the Talent Challenge?

The Talent Challenge is based on the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. This challenge will give every disciple a tangible opportunity to make an investment for the Gospel in a loving and easy way in their community. You'll facilitate this by picking a set amount of money that will be put into envelopes for each disciple to take with them. Aim for a small amount of money that could buy a gift card, a meal, or help towards a tank of gas for someone else.

It's always a good idea to get buy-in from your disciples. When there is a sacrifice that costs them something, they are more likely to be invested in the challenge. Have each disciple bring in an envelope with money to exchange with someone else in your discipleship group. If someone can't afford to participate, find a way to help them so they have a chance to be a part of it.

Once each person has an envelope, encourage your disciples to put a *Knowing God Personally Gospel Tract* or a *My Story Tract* in the envelope with the gift when they give it to someone. This way, the Gospel is sure to be present in the interaction, and the person who receives the gift could follow up if they choose to.

Here's an example of what your disciples could say when they hand out their envelope:

"I felt God leading me to give this to you. Jesus has changed my life, and I wanted to let you know that He loves you, too."

As a group, talk through different ideas of how you could use the money to bless someone in your community. Some ideas we've seen the Lord use are:

- Giving the envelope to a fast-food employee or cashier.
- Buying a gift for someone in need in your neighborhood.
- Two disciples combine their gifts to buy pizza for a staff team at a local store.
- Giving an extra generous tip to a waitress.
- Helping to fill someone's tank with gas.

Let the Holy Spirit lead you to the right moment He has set for you.

Why is this valuable?

If your disciples have been having a tough time stepping out of their comfort zone, this is a great discipleship tool to help them get over the hump. When we're given a gift from someone else to give away, we're more likely to follow through. When they have that gift in their hands, they will experience the tension of thinking about what they'll do with it.

Every time they step outside their front door, every interaction with other people, they'll be led to look at them selflessly, and they'll learn to lean into the Holy Spirit and hear His voice guiding them throughout their day.

Since this is a random act of kindness, there are no strings attached for the person they decide to bless. That provides your disciple with a chance to bless someone for Jesus in a way that is very likely to be received positively. Who wouldn't appreciate someone doing something this thoughtful for them?

Just like the Parable of the Talents, you are giving them an opportunity to invest in God's Kingdom for their King, Jesus.

When should we do a Talent Challenge?

A great time to try out the *Talent Challenge* would be after *Lesson 7, Relationship Building*. Follow up the Challenge by sharing stories of God's faithfulness among your discipleship group next time you get together.

"So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'" Matthew 25:20-21

Discovery Bible Study Bookmarks

The Goal

- The goal of a Discovery Bible Study Bookmark is to give your disciples a tool that will make it easy to remember how to lead a DBS anywhere at any time.

What is a Discovery Bible Study Bookmark?

A *Discovery Bible Study Bookmark* is a simple tool that will remind your disciples of the steps to lead through a fruitful Bible study with others. The bookmark serves as a reminder of how to **Look Back**, **Look Up**, and **Look Forward** during a DBS. They will also have a list of meaningful Bible discovery questions at their fingertips that can help them pull God's truth out of any passage of His Word.

Who is this for?

A *DBS Bookmark* is a helpful tool for any disciple who is looking to lead someone else in studying God's Word. Whether they're leading in a one-on-one setting or in a larger group, a DBS is a proven format that provides a way for people to meet Jesus through His Word right where they are today.

Why is this valuable?

This tool is valuable because it will give your disciples confidence that they could lead a DBS on their own. Even if you don't have time to prepare, with the simple DBS format ready to go, you'll have a tool available that can lead a meaningful Bible study in any context. Always encourage your disciples to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as they follow a set plan through a Discovery Bible Study.

When should we give DBS Bookmarks?

Print a bookmark for each disciple as you begin *Lesson 9, Leading a Discovery Bible Study*. Have them use their bookmarks to help lead through a DBS when you spend a full training time doing a Discovery Bible Study together.

*You can print a free copy of a **DBS Bookmark** at GenerationalDiscipleshipBook.com.

Sample of a Discovery Bible Study Bookmark

Front

Discovery Bible Study

Look Back

- Ask the group to share something they're **thankful** for as well as something that is a **challenge** for them in this season of life.
- Ask, "Does anyone have a story about their 'I will' statement from last week? How did it go?"
- Open the DBS in prayer.

Look Up

- Choose a passage of scripture. Have someone read the entire passage.
- Have someone reread the passage.
- Have someone else explain the passage in their own words. Open it up to the group to see if anyone has anything they'd like to add.
- Read through the questions on the back.

Look Forward

- At the end of the DBS, have each person go before God and ask Him to help them complete this sentence:

"This week, by the grace of God I will..."

- Ask for volunteers to share their "I will" statements with the group.
- Close with prayer.



Back

Discovery Bible Study Questions

Take your time. Give everyone that would like to share a chance to do so.

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about people?
- Does this passage give an example to follow? Or something to avoid?
- How does this passage change the way I interact with others?
- What does this passage ask me to change in my life?
- How does this passage prompt me to pray?
- Who might God want me to share this passage with?



Outreach Onramp Event

The Goal

- The goal of an Outreach Onramp Event is to give your disciples an opportunity to engage in spiritual conversations in an environment where they are normal and expected.

What is an Outreach Onramp Event?

An *Outreach Onramp Event* is a way to give your disciples an easy environment to begin to have spiritual conversations. This will typically be a setting where spiritual conversations would be more normal and expected, such as a food bank, a community outreach, or even greeting new families at church. In these situations, you can model spiritual conversations, pray for others with your disciples, and actively participate while you see your disciples do the same.

Why is this valuable?

If your disciples are struggling with initiating spiritual conversations with others, this is a great way to provide an opportunity for them to share Christ in real-life conversations outside of the classroom setting. The benefit of an event where spiritual conversations are more normal and expected is that your disciples will be less likely to run into strong opposition and rejection as they practice sharing their faith. As they get more opportunities to be faithful to Jesus in this way, it will remove fear, build confidence, and sharpen their ability to tell others about Christ.

When should we do an Outreach Onramp Event?

A great time to plan an *Outreach Onramp Event* is sometime after *Lesson 8, Transitions to the Gospel & Handling Tough Questions*. By this point, your disciples will have learned tools to communicate their faith, and they've had time to practice them in the classroom setting. This is the perfect time to give them a next step to share Jesus with others together in your community.

Outreach Dinner

The Goal

- The goal of an Outreach Dinner is to experience together how easily an everyday moment can become a spiritual moment.

What is an Outreach Dinner?

An *Outreach Dinner* is a meal out at a restaurant in your community with a few disciples where you intentionally look for ways to turn an everyday moment into a spiritual one. This could be by praying for your waiter, having a disciple share their Story with them, or something else.

If you have a larger group for discipleship, break them up into smaller groups of no more than 4-5 people. Send each group to a different restaurant and encourage them to listen to the Holy Spirit's leading. Model this for them and challenge them to be bold to engage the people they meet for Jesus.

Why is this valuable?

This is a valuable tool because going out to eat is a familiar experience for many people. The principles they see displayed here can help them reach others for Jesus across a variety of different contexts. Even if it's just going out to the grocery store to shop for their family when a disciple gets to see firsthand how simply an everyday moment can turn into a spiritual moment, it can be a life-changing experience, and it will motivate them to try it again the next time in other everyday situations.

When should we have an Outreach Dinner?

An *Outreach Dinner* is a great tool to include towards the end of your discipleship training time. Aim to find a time between lessons 10-12 to schedule a night out for this experience with your disciples.

Acknowledgments

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What God has done in me and through me wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for the faithfulness and example of these people and ministries.

I pray that God would use me in the same way in the lives of others to help them grow as disciple-makers. Most of all, my desire is to help people grow closer to the one who deserves all the honor and glory: Jesus Christ.

- Your Brother in Christ

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