Mobilize

STUDENT GUIDE

NAME_____

CITY_____

YEAR_____

8.5" X 11"

Introducing the Mobilize Training

Welcome to the Mobilize Training!

This training will help you learn actionable skills based on biblical principles so that you can use your God-given gifts to make an impact for the Kingdom.

Did you know God put you here for a purpose and prepared things in advance to be ready for you to participate? Paul said it this way,

> "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." - Eph 2:10

The work we are here to do has two purposes: to bless the church family and to bless those outside the church family (out in the community). You might call this inreach and outreach.

God gifts us so we can be a gift to others.

God is a God on a mission - to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He doesn't want any to perish but all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus came into this world and called people to follow Him (Matt 4:19). He transformed their lives and sent them on mission both during His ministry (Luke 9 & 10) and at the end (Matthew 28:19-20).

Imagine the impact that can be made when all of God's people get equipped in basic ministry skills, based on solid biblical principles, and go out to impact lives with the good news! Serving others in the church and community is for everyone.

Learning skills to serve applies to more than mission. It is also essential to the life and functioning of the church body. God has gifted the body and given roles to the body (Eph 4:11f). There is no longer a select group of priests, rather all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:9-10)! That means we all have a function and role to serve in within the church body (1 Cor 12).

Here is the problem - often people have never received any training in how to serve the church family or community. They just don't know what to do and often others have been doing the work for them. We are usually really good at teaching the Bible but less experienced at training skills.

This training is a step-by-step experience that will teach you the core principles of being a disciple of Jesus who serves and helps others be disciples of Jesus and who serve the local church body and community in love.

As you go through this training, you are going to find:

- A series of practical biblical lessons and exercises that will launch you out to make a kingdom impact
- Actionable skills that you will be trained in that are tied to Scripture
- Activities to do to practice new skills to be a disciple who makes disciples
- Time in prayer, seeking God's direction and help
- Spiritual transformation in your own life and relationships

Instructions

Work through this material one step at a time. Do your best to complete the activities. Try your best to not skip anything (unless you or your leadership has decided to not cover every lesson). Discussion questions are to be done together. If you are doing this with others, it is a team effort.

Discussion Questions

What opportunities do you see in your community to serve and open doors for the gospel?

How is your church/gathering positioned to make an impact?

What gifts and talents has God given you that you can use to bless others?

Pray to Launch Your Training

The first thing you want to do is pray. Pray about everything you do. Pray before everything you do.

As you start into each part of this training, pray! The next page will give you guidance. You will receive some prayer prompts you can make part of your daily prayers for life on mission. You might consider printing it and praying through it often.

Prayer reminds us that we are not in charge. God is in charge. We seek His help and guidance. Without Him, we can do nothing.

First, you need to establish a daily prayer habit. This doesn't have to be a long period of time. In fact, shorter is sometimes better because a longer commitment is not always sustainable. What is more important is that it is regular. Short, consistent prayer over time can be more impactful than sporadic prayer marathons.

While you are going to be praying together through these lessons, you also need to be praying on your own.

The focus of the daily prayers is praying for mission/people. You may start at 2-3 minutes a day and over time find yourself getting up to 5-10 minutes a day as you see more things to pray about in the lives of those God connects you with.

Second, we have a guide to help keep you on track.
This contains your daily prayer prompts. Use the 15 daily prayer prompts for mission from Shodankeh Johnson as a starting point. The more consistently you pray for these things, the more you will see your heart and mind focus on the harvest. You will see people in a way you never saw them before and reaching out to them will become far more natural.

Time to print the next page (you will use it often) and pray! Put it some place where you will see it regularly to remind you to pray for mission! The more we pray for mission, the more likely we will engage the mission.

Discussion Questions
Are there any barriers you often face to prayer? Why?

What are some things you don't struggle to pray for regularly? Why are those not a struggle?

What distractions might you need to remove to pray daily for mission?

Extraordinary Prayer List

Prayer is essential for kingdom movement. The following prayer prompts come from Shodankeh Johnson in Sierra Leone**:**

Pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out workers
Pray for open doors to engage the lost
Pray that God will show us people of peace
Pray for gatekeepers
Pray for protection
Pray for miracles
Pray for the movement of God
Pray for movements around the world
Pray for more partners
Pray for more boldness
Pray for deliverance
Pray for provision, because the commission is greater than my resources
Pray for spiritual breakthroughs as it relates to strongholds of the enemy
Pray against my personal strongholds
Pray for the disciples in my care

We must start praying for the movement of God and that will also mean the movement of his people. This is such a simple thing to start. Let's get started!

Other things to add to your prayer list:

Introduction to the "Discipleship Fundamentals" Course

The Discipleship Fundamentals Course will teach you the basic principles of discipleship. These are building blocks you will need in order to be a disciple who makes disciples. Rather than start with teaching technique (which is coming later) you need biblical principles to build off of that are grounded in the approach Jesus used to make disciples.

Why Discipleship?

Discipleship at its most basic level is following Jesus to learn from Jesus to become more like Jesus. Discipleship is God's plan to reach the world through Jesus by the power of the Spirit and the participation of God's people.

We want to be growing in our walk with Jesus on a regular basis and helping others do the same. Jesus showed his disciples how to do this and they taught the next generation who taught the next…all the way down to us!

The word "Disciple" is used nearly 300 times in the New Testament. The word "Christian" is only used three times (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16). This is a very important word and one that has largely been lost in many Christian churches today.

A study was done in 2020 about how serious American churches were about making disciples and they found that 4% of American churches were making disciples in an intentional way. That is shocking! We are determined to help move that needle and we are so thankful you are too!

We need to have churches that are serious about discipleship. How can we be serious about it if we don't understand it or if we don't know how to implement discipleship practices modeled after Jesus?

Five Main Course Objectives for the Discipleship Fundamentals Course:

1 - Know the biblical rationale for why we make disciples
2 - Learn how Jesus made disciples
3 - Understand the Holy Spirit's role in being disciples who make disciples
4 - Define and understand Key terms with Biblically-informed definitions
5 - Learn the importance of reproducibility

Practice Activity: Discipleship Self-Check

- Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on each part of the definition: following Jesus, learning from Jesus, becoming more like Jesus.
- Share with a partner which part was easiest to rate and which was hardest. You don't have to share your numbers.

Discussion Questions

How would you define discipleship? [If various people have various definitions, what are the similarities and differences in how those in your group/church are defining this term?]

Why do you think so few churches and Christians/disciples are making disciples?

Pray For Discipleship

When it comes to making disciples who make disciples and learning a theology of disciple making everything starts with prayer. As the greatest disciple maker who ever lived, Jesus is our example in all things. Jesus started his ministry in prayer (Luke 3:21). He prayed before he selected his apostles (Luke 6:12-16). Jesus prayed before He went to the cross (Matt 26:36-46). When we follow Jesus' example in making disciples we will start as He started – in prayer.

Before you start a lesson or your assignments ask God to help you with this. Ask God to open your heart to receive what He is trying to tell you through the Scriptures you will memorize, the disciple-makers you will read and watch, etc. A big part of making disciples is the expectation and anticipation that God is working, helping and empowering us!

And keep in mind, when God answers prayers directly and specifically, we thank Him for it! We can also tell another person what happened. Now you have a testimony about the power of God!

Things to Pray About:

Lesson 1 - Why Make Disciples?

Why Make Disciples?

It is so important that we start anything we do that is of importance with "why?". If we don't know why we are making disciples, chances are we won't accomplish our objective. We won't stay focused. The temptation is for our ministry and approach to drift over time. Keeping things on track will take intentionality. It will take a solid plan that is done with consistency. It will take a good role model (Jesus).

In The Disciple Maker's Handbook by Harrington and Patrick, they list 7 reasons for making disciples and the main reason. The 7 reasons include:

1. We obey Jesus' final command (Matthew 28:19-20) to make disciples.
2. We follow Jesus and Jesus made disciples.
3. We help people receive eternal life.
4. We give people the personal help they need.
5. We change lives.
6. We truly love others!
7. We live out the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9-10).

The one BIG reason we make disciples is Jesus. Jesus embodied discipleship and God designed discipleship to be the way He would change the world. Jesus made disciples who make disciples who make disciples. These disciples have their lives transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit (more on that later) to be more and more like Jesus.

In a course on discipleship, it is tempting to rush to the what and the how but before we can do that, we must start with why. If you haven't ever watched Simon Sinek's brilliant video on why starting with why matters, I encourage you to take a moment and watch it here.

The why isn't a disciple-making process or program. The why isn't personal spiritual growth. The why is a person. The person is Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

If you don't get Jesus in the center of being disciples who make disciples, then all of our efforts will be misdirected.

Some of the abuses of past disciple making movements were that Jesus was shifted from the center and other things or other people (the discipler or church leadership) were elevated or positioned to the center. Jesus warned us about this in verses like Matthew 23:8-12. One of Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People is to "Put First Things First." The "first thing" is Jesus!

In conclusion, we understand that there are many reasons we need to make disciples who make disciples. It could be as simple as saying Jesus told us to do this and so we are just being obedient to King Jesus! But we know that, although that is true and although that would be sufficient in and of itself, there are far more reasons – rich and deep reasons to follow Jesus' lead on this.

Jesus didn't give us an instruction that we cannot follow. He showed us by his example how to make disciples who make disciples. In effect, Jesus was the greatest disciple maker who ever lived and that

means our theology of disciple making (the disciple making gospel) is rooted in the person of Jesus the Christ and how he modeled for us how to make disciples who really do reproduce effectively.

The Gospels open with Jesus calling disciples to himself. There are few things that all four gospels have across the board and this is one of them – the calling of disciples. Jesus called them and they followed. Again, they obeyed the call. They didn't fully know what they were getting into. If you've read the Bible for long, you know more than they did when they dropped everything to follow, and still we struggle to obey that call to follow Jesus and learn how to make disciples!

It is also important to recognize what we are not doing when we make disciples – we are not creating hierarchies. We are not putting ourselves as an authority figure. We are not domineering or controlling people. In fact, quite the opposite – we are setting people free to follow Jesus. We are a catalyst for them to follow Jesus. Just as Paul wrote in 1 Cor 11:1 – "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ" that is all we are doing – pointing people to Jesus and leading by following Jesus' example.

We make disciples for the very same reason Jesus made disciples – to train people in the ways of the kingdom in order to get the good news kingdom message in front of as many people as possible. I believe (and I hope you do as well) that the Jesus way of life is the best way of life a human being can possibly live! It is a life that is full of hope. It is, as Jesus once said, "life to the full" (John 10:10).

So we welcome you into the journey of learning the disciple making gospel – that the good news of Jesus inevitably leads to making disciples who make more disciples. It is an exciting and rewarding journey. And just as Jesus instigated real life change in the people he came into contact with – you will as well!

Practice Activity: Why Make Disciples?

- Write down your own reasons why Christians should make disciples.
- Compare your list with the 7 reasons in this lesson.
- Read Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 23:8–12.
- Share which of the 7 reasons motivates you most, and why.

Discussion Questions

Why is making disciples essential to the future?

What happens if no one makes disciples?

Homework - Scripture Memorization

Memorize Matthew 28:19-20, the Great Commission. A 2018 Barna study found that half of Christians didn't recognize the term "Great Commission". That is astounding!

One way to practice your memorization is to pair up with someone else who is in this training with your church, group or team and recite it to each other.

Lesson 2 - Defining the Terms

Without defining the terms up front it is very easy to talk past each other and assume we mean the same thing when we may mean very different things.

Defining Key Terms

It is very important we have common definitions for the terms we use. If we don't take time to define our terms we can spend three months working through material and be talking about very different conceptions of disciples and discipleship. It is very important we define the main terms we use when discussing making disciples: disciple, discipleship, disciple making, etc. It can be so easy to use words without realizing we don't mean the same thing. Defining the terms is an intentional part of the learning process to keep us focused in our task of making disciples who make disciples.

Here are the definitions of discipleship from Discipleship.org/Renew.org:

1. Disciple – someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus (Matt. 4:19).

2. Discipleship – is simply the state of being a disciple. This word (like the word evangelism) is not in the Bible. Unfortunately, in the North American Church, discipleship is typically seen as an educational process designed to orient new believers to the biblical and everyday practices of our churches – and so we often prefer the term disciple making.

3. Disciple making – is entering into relationships to intentionally help people follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and join the mission of Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20).

4. Disciple maker – a disciple of Jesus who enters into relationships with people to intentionally help them follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and join the mission of Jesus.

5. A Church – A spiritual family growing in surrendered obedience to all the teachings of Jesus Christ who gather together regularly under biblically recognized leadership for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission (making disciples) with a Great Commandment heart (loving God, loving people).

6. A Disciple making Culture – The beliefs, habits, and narrative of a church constantly repeated with congruence and intentionality, that make it clear to almost everyone, all the time, including newcomers, that disciple making is what everyone does in this church.

7. A Disciple making Church – A church where disciple making is the core DNA and culture of the church, where the average church member makes disciples to the fourth generation and this disciple making activity is regularly produced in significant and diverse streams within the church and these streams multiply consistently into new churches.

8. Disciple making Movement (DMM) – A disciple making movement exists when churches plant multiple churches (within a few short years), through gospel activity, that has abundant fruit among the lost, that multiplies these disciples (people growing in obedience to all of Jesus' commands), who in turn replicate themselves in others, so that we can see at least four generations regularly produced in multi-

ple streams of disciple making activity and these streams multiply consistently into churches.

There are a number of very important terms we have discussed in this lesson. Interestingly enough not all of these terms are found in the Bible. While we seek to have a "biblical definition" of terms, in some cases that won't ever work out in the strictest sense.

However, it is a worthwhile exercise to create widely accepted definitions of terms so that we can have a conversation on the same level with common ground and common understanding.

Our understanding of the words we use can also impact our practice. Take the definition of "church":

Church – A spiritual family growing in surrendered obedience to all the teachings of Jesus Christ who gather together regularly under biblically recognized leadership for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission (making disciples) with a Great Commandment heart (loving God, loving people).

This definition is instructive. We see the church as relational. We see the church as a family that is bound together under Christ for the mission of Jesus to make disciples. If your definition of church is a gathering of believers to worship, then you will have a different set of expectations for what church is all about and what the church should be doing together.

We can have biblically influenced definitions even if the word itself isn't in the Bible. In some circles the language is shifting to replace non-biblical terms with biblical terms. For instance, we often use the word "missionary". In the Bible this is someone who is "sent". We might say "make disciples" from the Great Commission rather than "evangelize" because it bears more biblical weight.

In all of this the most important concept is the gospel. If we don't grasp why the news about Jesus and His kingdom is "good news" then chances are we won't be very serious about making disciples. If we think that Jesus is just one of many great ways to live, then we won't take making disciples very seriously. The truth is, Jesus is the good news…the best news of all time! And it is very important that we share this message with others. But how do we share what we don't understand?

Our hope is that you can see biblical influence in the terms that are not directly used in the Bible as well as biblical influence for the terms that are used. This lesson serves as an object lesson that everything we do needs to come back to God's Word and our desire to be obedient to what God has told us. How do you define a term? Go back to the Bible and see what you can find to help. It is very important that the Bible guide our conversation and that we rely on the power of God and the Word of God to be effective disciple-makers!

Practice Activity: Defining Discipleship

- Write down what comes to mind when you hear the word "discipleship."
- Compare the group's answers with the definitions in this lesson.
- Talk with the group about the similarities and differences, and how different definitions could create confusion in practice.

Discussion Questions

Why do consistent definitions matter?

Did any of the definitions surprise you? Why?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: Matthew 4:18-20

Once again, you might pair up and recite this with someone else who is in this training.

Lesson 3 - Imitating Jesus' Approach to Making Disciples

Learning Your Role from Jesus' Example

"Jesus was the greatest disciple maker who ever lived." - Bobby Harrington

The foremost expert on this concept in disciple making circles is Robert Coleman. In his landmark book, "The Master Plan of Evangelism", Coleman demonstrated how Jesus made disciples who made disciples. While you aren't reading that book, it is important to be familiar with that book as the impetus for these ideas. Coleman realized there was more to the gospels than the teaching of Jesus. He realized (based on the influence of several previous authors) that the gospels also showed us Jesus' approach to making disciples!

This changes the way we read the Gospels. We can read the Gospels for information, and that is good... but what if we read them (the Gospels) for transformation and an example of how to be disciples who make disciples? What if we read it for training? What if we watched how Jesus discipled his followers and followed Jesus' example?

Jesus' disciples took on the world and within a generation had converted untold numbers of people across the Roman Empire. Jesus has a proven track record for success. He, of course, had the benefit of being the Son of God, however, we can still benefit and find success using his approach with people today!

The main takeaway for us is that any disciple making plan we create has to center on Jesus' example of how to make disciples who make disciples. If you look at the fruit of Jesus' ministry we see his disciples going from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (as Jesus said they would in Acts 1:8) making disciples who made disciples who started new churches. We need to follow in Jesus' steps in His approach because Jesus was intentional, purposeful, and knew what He was doing. He intended His disciples to do what they saw him do and pass it along. That is precisely what we are doing in this approach.

A disciple follows the master/rabbi to learn from them and live like them. Jesus showed us what life in the kingdom really looks like. It is important that we spend time in the Gospels studying what he said (red letters) and what he did (black letters) in order to imitate his lifestyle. This also impacts the way we see and treat people. We need to treat people as Jesus did, with grace and truth. We need to love as Jesus loved. And that means we will reach out to those who don't know Jesus with the kingdom good news!

We also need to learn Jesus' approach to making disciples as demonstrated in the gospels. This is not just an intellectual exercise. These are activities to be lived out in the world with others. The next section will give more specifics on what this looks like.

Practice Activity: Gospels Discipleship Overview

- Look over the gospels to find various things Jesus did to make disciples
- Examples would include: teaching them, his prayer example, delegation, sending, etc.
- We can use these same methods, Jesus' methods, to make disciples today!

Discussion Questions

What do you think about the statement, “Jesus is the greatest disciple maker who ever lived.”?

Why does Jesus’ approach to making disciples matter today?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: 1 Corinthians 11:1

Prayer

Pray that Jesus would be Lord over your process and over your life. That He would lead the way and you would follow him so that as others follow your lead they are really just following Jesus’ lead. Pray for boldness and courage to make the needed adjustments to our lives to make this so.

Lesson 4 - Love is the Foundation

Jesus was all about people. He was interested in them. He wanted to connect with them and impact them. He had this interest in them because Jesus had a genuine love for all people. Jesus even loved those who killed him and forgave them from the cross (Luke 23:34)!

If you want to be an expert disciple maker you cannot do it without love. It isn't about a system or a pattern or a plan. It is about a genuine love for people. Take out love and you miss the point just like if you take out Jesus you miss the point. God is love, John told us in 1 John 4:8. Love drives everything we do. It drives everything we do not because it is one more part of the plan (we can't make a plan for love) but because love was in the center of Jesus' very approach to making disciples who made more disciples. Because it was at the center of Jesus' approach, love must be front and center in our approach as well.

Sometimes people say we have an evangelism problem or a discipleship problem. The reality is we have a love problem. When we have a romantic interest when we are single, or for your spouse if you are married, we pursue them on some level. No one has to convince us to pay attention to them. We are attracted to them. How attracted are we to people who don't know Jesus? I hear people say "We have an evangelism problem." My response is "We have a love problem." When you love someone you will find a way to reach them!

Think about what makes someone a great interviewer. It is their apparent interest in the person in front of them. They are so in tune with that person that they ask the questions you wanted asked next. When we have a genuine interest in others, a solid love for them, we will pursue them.

How much time did Jesus spend with people? He definitely got his alone time with God but so much of his time was spent with people. He asked people questions. He invited people along. He ate with people. Jesus even invited himself over for dinner a time or two. Jesus spent time with people because He loved them. We need to do the same. And if our love for others is lacking we should pray God would increase our love for other people! Pray God would open you up to new conversations and new relationships, to see people in a new light as divine image bearers, just like you!

There is no effective way of making mature followers of Jesus without love. Jesus didn't try that and neither should we. If we are going to follow Jesus' disciple-making example we will be people who love.

What would your relationships look like if you really loved people well? Love drives disciple-making because love is a genuine concern for the well-being of others and we know that the best possible life a person can live is life in Christ…life that is lived abundantly (John 10:10)! Jesus actually commanded us to love one another – John 13:34 says, "A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." If we obey what Jesus taught here, we will have the basis for being effective disciple makers.

We can make disciples without loving but they won't be the same kind of disciples Jesus made! They either won't make more disciples (multiplication) or they will make more unloving disciples and the world knows we don't need more of those!

Practice Activity: Love Inventory

- List the practical ways you currently show love to people outside your immediate family.
- In a small group, compare lists and talk about how love can be shown more intentionally.

Scripture Reflection: Luke 23:34
- How did Jesus' love extend even to His enemies? What would it look like to love that way in every-day life?

Discussion Questions
It is tempting to make a program out of this rather than make it about people. Why is that often the case?

Why did Jesus care so much about people?

Why should we care so much about people?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: John 13:35

Prayer

Pray that God would increase the love you have in your heart for those who are different from you. That you would be drawn to those who need Jesus.

Lesson 5 - The Path to Maturity

Part of our faith journey is a journey to maturation. Dallas Willard wrote and said many times that we are all undergoing spiritual formation on a daily basis. It is just a matter of whether that formation is for the good or for the bad.

There is no neutral gear when it comes to our faith. There is no sitting on the fence. We are advancing the kingdom or we are holding it back.

You are advancing the kingdom in your disciple-making efforts!

Maturation comes not just through learning information through lecture. It doesn't just come through a textbook. That can be part of it. Maturation comes through time in the Word (the Bible), time in prayer, time in fasting, time in godly relationships and connections, and time in obedience to God, and even repentance to God. This is how we grow.

God made clear in His word that He expects us to grow: 1 Cor 3:2, Hebrews 5:12-13, James 1:4 says, "Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Our maturity in Christ results in personal spiritual growth, which eventually has a positive spiritual impact on the people around us.

As we do what Jesus told us to do (be disciples who make disciples) we will grow in maturity. As we make disciple-makers we are helping others grow in maturity. As we hand people off to start groups of their own and they have to stretch to work the process you worked for the very first time, they will grow in their maturity.

This whole process in this course is a maturation process! God is stretching and growing you. It can be stressful. It will be challenging. But it is good and right! The Scripture memorization is part of your maturation process, putting the Word of God in your mind and in your heart!

So keep going and keep growing! It is God's work through the Holy Spirit to mature us more and more into the likeness, mind and attitude of Jesus as we learn to follow Him and invite others to do the same.

Practice Activity: Growth Timeline

- Reflect on your faith journey. Identify specific moments when you grew spiritually (trials, ministry challenges, new disciplines).
- Share in a small group how God used those seasons to mature you.
- Write down one specific way you will put your faith into action this week, and pair up with someone to check in next week.

Practice Activity: Action Step Exercise

- Write down one specific way you can put faith into action this week (e.g., initiating a spiritual conversation, fasting, or taking on a new ministry responsibility).

Discussion Questions

Why does maturing in our faith matter?

Why does putting our beliefs into action help us mature in our faith?

What are your current challenges to maturing in your faith?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: Hebrews 5:12-14

Prayer

Pray to grow deeper and wider in your love for Christ and your obedience to Christ. Ask God to mature you and help you to mature those around you in their faith who God is inviting you to share with. Thank God for helping you get to this point!

Lesson 6 - The Role of the Holy Spirit in Discipleship

The Holy Spirit and Discipleship

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit played a role in many things. The Spirit played a role in creation (Gen 1:1-2). The Spirit played a role in the creation of mankind (Gen 1:26 – make man in "our" [plural] image). The Spirit empowered some of the judges like Gideon and Samson, the prophets, and some of the kings. The Spirit would come "on" people and empower them for a limited amount of time.

But the prophets spoke of a time when the Spirit would be poured out on all people, not just a select few as we see in Joel 2:28 (which is quoted in Acts 2). The new work of the Spirit in the new covenant is on all God's people and isn't just "on" us but is "in" us.

What is the role of the Spirit in the life of the believer? Jesus said the Spirit would inform the disciples (John 14:26). Jesus said the Spirit would empower the disciples (Acts 1:8). Jesus said the Spirit would convict people of sin (John 16:8-11). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be our helper (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit sanctifies us, which means makes us holy to God (1 Cor 6:11). The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts for the building up of the church (1 Cor 12). The Holy Spirit helps us pray (Romans 8:26).

The Holy Spirit does many things. I believe the Holy Spirit empowers and informs our disciple making. Keep in mind, as disciples we are learning to do what Jesus did and teach what Jesus taught. Then we see that the Spirit both empowers and informs! Without the Holy Spirit's help, we would never be effective at making disciples. We must receive the Spirit's help for us to have any success in these efforts at all. We aren't doing this by ourselves. God is walking alongside us.

This all points to one very important point – we must rely on the Holy Spirit in the disciple making process. When you pray for those in your group, pray for the Spirit to help them. Pray for the Spirit to help you lead your group. The Holy Spirit is living and active. He didn't go into retirement or check out! He will help you, especially as you become more and more aware of and open to His help.

The Holy Spirit is real. The Holy Spirit is powerful. In the absence of Jesus is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is still able to do all Jesus said the Spirit would do and that includes helping us make disciples. The Spirit will not only help us. The Holy Spirit will empower us. The Spirit empowers us best when we are willing participants who acknowledge and anticipate His leading and assistance.

You and I cannot change hearts and minds. We can present information but we have no power to change hearts and minds. The Holy Spirit has power unlike our own. The Holy Spirit can and will go before us and prepare the harvest field for the workers' arrival.

Our dependence on the Spirit also drives us to the Word of God. Because the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, we can come to know the Spirit and come into alignment with the Spirit when we read the Bible.

If we are going to be effective disciple makers, we need a healthy, robust and biblical view of the Holy Spirit. Not only that, we need an actual relationship and connection with the Spirit. That might terrify us just a bit but there is no better place to be than aligned with the will of God, walking in step with the Spirit!

Practice Activity: **Scripture Role Review**

- In your group, read your assigned passage (John 14:26; Acts 1:8; John 16:8–11; or Romans 8:26).
- Summarize what it says about the Spirit's role, and share it with everyone.
- Pray together for the Spirit's help in your own growth and disciple making.

Discussion Questions

Why is the Holy Spirit essential to our success in all things?

Do you find it normal and natural to rely on the Spirit or something foreign to your faith walk or challenging?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: John 16:7

Prayer

Pray that the Holy Spirit would be your helper, counselor and advocate in this disciple making process.

Lesson 7 - Sending and Being Sent

God is a sending God. He sent Abraham where he needed to go (a place that took faith and courage to journey to). God sent Moses from the palace to the wilderness, back to Pharaoh and back to the wilderness. God sent Jesus into the world! God is a sending God. Jesus didn't approach ministry with a wait-and-see attitude!

In the New Testament, the word apostle means someone who is sent. They are sent with the message and mission of the good news of Jesus. In Ephesians 4 it says that Jesus gave the gift of apostleship to people. Some people are gifted at going out and connecting and sharing. Like Jesus, Paul didn't wait on people to come to him. He went out to them and obeyed God's call to go (Acts 13).

Unfortunately, the church has often been more of a "build it and they will come" model for some time. Churches create programs to attract people into our space and on our terms. We need more people who are willing to go and this is not about paid missionaries going to another country. This is about going out into our communities and connecting with people. This is how God designed the kingdom to expand and we get to be part of it!

There are a number of things you can do to effectively go out, connect, invite, and help people discover Jesus. All of these things are simple. None of them take money or a degree in theology! We will go over these in future lessons. But first, we must lay the foundation that God is a sending God.

Jesus was sent to us to deliver the most important message the world has ever known. God came in the flesh (John 1:14). In a similar way, God uses us to deliver the good news to the people we are around! There may be people in your life only you can reach. If you rely on someone else to reach them, they may never be reached.

One of the big obstacles for people going out on mission is they just don't know what to do. We will address that through training in upcoming lessons!

We have seen in this lesson the essential nature of being sent to make an impact. This is God's intention for His people and it is part of our vocation as image bearers of God. We live in an unshakable kingdom that leans toward explosive growth. This was seen in the early church. This is seen all over the world today in massive and fast-growing disciple making movements. We can see it happen in our neighborhoods as well!

The kingdom of God is a growing kingdom! We get to be part of it and participate in the mission through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, like we studied last lesson!

Thank you for your diligence in working through the course material. We are nearing the end of the first course in this training. Keep on studying, praying, and seeking God's help in community with others. You are going to get to partner with God in going out in the name of Jesus to make an eternal impact for the kingdom!

Practice Activity: **Scripture Reading & Reflection**

- Read John 20:21. What does it mean for you to be "sent like Jesus"?
- Write down one area of your life (work, neighborhood, school, friendships) where God may be

sending you.
- Share with the group if you're willing.

Personal Application
- Write down one area of your life (work, neighborhood, school, friendships) where God may be sending you.
- Consider volunteering to share your answer with everyone.

Discussion Questions
What do you think about God sending you out on mission?

Does anything about that make you anxious or afraid? If so, which parts?

How can you support each other on this mission to not lose heart and to stay the course?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: Acts 1:8

Prayer

Ask God to send you into the harvest field starting right where you are.

Lesson 8 - Biblical Reproduction of Disciples

Jesus came and made disciples who made more disciples who made more disciples. This is the way the kingdom grows. It grows by Jesus showing his disciples how to make disciples and they followed his example in doing the same for others. This is reproduction. It can turn into exponential growth through multiplying generations of disciples.

Jesus taught on the principle and power of kingdom reproduction. He did this in the parable of the sower, where the harvest is far beyond what was sown. Jesus demonstrated this in his ministry when he sent the 12 and the 72 in Luke 9 and 10. They went out and made a difference in the towns they visited. They would later be sent in the Great Commission in the absence of Jesus but in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:16-20 & Acts 1-2).

We see this in the book of Acts that the disciples made disciples per Jesus' instruction and that those disciples were engaged in the mission (Read Acts 8:1-8 for an example of this). The early church grew for several hundred years by everyday people passing on and living what they had learned from the apostles and ultimately from the Scriptures.

Paul wrote this to Timothy. Take note of how many "generations" are involved,

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

Paul taught Timothy who is to entrust that teaching to reliable people who will teach others. That's four generations!

If we want to reproduce disciples we need to make sure that we are healthy disciples. Healthy disciples reproduce healthy disciples and unhealthy disciples don't. It is hard for someone to be healthier or more mature than the person they learn from. Your example matters. Paul wrote in 1 Cor 11:1 to follow his example as he followed the example of Christ. We are trying to get people to follow Jesus, not us. But it is inevitable that their view of following Jesus will be influenced by you and the approaches you take and the views you hold.

Think for a moment about who reached you and who reached them. We are indebted to those who took the time and made the sacrifices to reach us.

Who is God calling you to reach out to? What will it take to reach them?

Thank you for investing your time and energy into helping transform the lives of others. When we are young we receive so much blessing. We view success by what we achieve. But as we mature and get older we begin to see that true success is found in elevating others and pouring into them. You are a blessing and I have been praying for you.

The ultimate success of a disciple is to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples so that you become a spiritual grandparent. That is the path you are on. To get there you need a process that is simple and reproducible.

Practice Activity: Spiritual Family Tree

- Write down who discipled you, and who discipled them, if you know.
- Then write down who you are discipling now, or who God may be calling you to disciple.

Discussion Questions

What happens if a generation or two decides to stop making disciples?

Who is God calling you to reach out to? What will it take to reach them?

Homework - Scripture Memorization: Matthew 28:16-20.

You already memorized 28:19-20; now let's add three more verses.

Prayer

Pray for your disciples to make disciples who make disciples and for God to continue to equip you with a reproducible approach.

Discipleship Fundamentals Prayer Wrap Up

Leader Prayer:

My prayer is that you will allow God to take all you have learned in this course and use it for exponential kingdom growth. We can't make the kingdom grow. Only God can make it grow but we can be faithful with what we have learned. I pray for your faithfulness to what God is showing you - not a program here but his kingdom mission and message. I thank God for you and am here to help you!

Student Prayer:

Pray that God would help you put into practice the things you have learned in this course to help transform lives around the globe starting in your own home, neighborhood and city.

Introduction to the "Ministry Skills & Disciplines" Course

Wouldn't it be amazing if the majority of those who attended our churches had a basic knowledge of ministry practices and disciplines? Let's take it one step further - wouldn't it be amazing if those who attended the churches not only knew basic competencies but practiced them regularly? We would be able to mobilize the masses for ministry! It doesn't require a degree to serve others. It doesn't require a position in the church to serve. God calls us all to serve.

This course is designed for a church to use to train their members in basic skills and spiritual disciplines in order to leverage the giftedness of the church for kingdom impact. This is in line with the "priesthood of all believers" in 1 Peter 2:9-10.

Six Main Course Objectives for the Ministry Skills & Disciplines Course:

1. Learn basic ministry skills to impact the congregation and community
2. Gain competency in care of the church family
3. Gain competency in outreach
4. Gain competency in encouraging and equipping others
5. Learn how spiritual disciplines like fasting, prayer and Bible study ground your ministry in a healthy perspective
6. Become a practitioner rather than someone caught up in theory

Skill 1 - How to Train Skills

Learning Mindset

If you want to learn a skill, it helps to go through a few steps to get proficient at it. We recognize that skills are learned through getting the right information and also executing on that information. Then we evaluate what happened, make corrections and try again.

The big thing is - don't try to be perfect and don't fear failure. Failure is the path to success.

How do you simply train skills? You have probably heard - I do. I do, you watch. You do, I watch. You do. That is a healthy way to train a skill. It requires a mentor. Someone to show you, hands on.

Curtis Sergeant uses this acronym - MAWL:
- Model - I do, you watch
- Assist - We do together
- Watch - You do, I watch
- Launch - You do

It is the same idea and same progression.

You can teach others skills and you go first. If you don't know the skill, get with someone and/or ask for help and learn!

Roleplay & Practice are Essential

One great way to learn a skill is roleplay. Pair up with another person and practice a skill until you both agree it makes sense and is working. We will dive into this one in a later lesson but want to make you aware that if you don't know how to do something - practice it! Practice what you are going to say before you need to say it and do it with someone for feedback on what was confusing.

Skill examples:
- How to pray
- How to invite someone to the gathering

Practice Activity: **MAWL Demonstration**
- Watch as a simple skill (sharing a Bible verse or leading a short prayer) is walked through using MAWL.
- Pair up and roleplay the skill with your partner.
- Give each other feedback: What worked? What was unclear?

Discussion Questions
Can you think of a skill you have learned through the MAWL progression like riding a bike or shaving?

What do you think makes this progression effective?

Homework: Use MAWL to teach someone a simple skill this week

Skill 2 - Contributing to the Gathering

When the church gathers, you aren't just there to watch. You're there to contribute.

That looks different depending on where you gather. In some churches, people serve in planned roles: leading singing, reading Scripture, leading a prayer, giving a communion talk. In others, the sharing is more open and anyone might share a verse, a prayer or something God has been showing them.

But either way, the skill underneath is the same.

Paul described a gathering like this: "When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up." (1 Cor 14:26)

Notice two things. First, everyone came with something. Second, the goal of all of it was to build each other up.

Come Prepared

Some people hop up to serve without any forethought and often you can tell. Sometimes that gets done under the banner of being "Spirit-led." And there are times for that! But being Spirit led isn't an excuse to never plan ahead.

The best spontaneous sharing usually comes from people who prayed before they walked in the door. Ask God before you gather – what do you want me to bring today? A verse? A prayer? An encouragement for someone?

Stay Open to the Spirit

The flip side is just as true. Always prepare, but leave room for the Spirit to set the agenda. Pay attention to who is in the room, what has been said and who might be hurting. It might become clear what you came to say isn't the thing to say. Follow the Spirit's lead.

If You Serve in a Planned Role

Practice beforehand. If you're reading Scripture, read it out loud a few times. Find the hard words like "Shittim" and practice them.

Speak clearly. We get anxious and talk fast. Slow down so people can follow.

Know when you're up. Know who goes before you so the gathering isn't waiting on you to make your way up from the back row.

If Your Gathering Has Open Sharing

Share and then make room. Don't dominate. Some people need a little space before they'll speak up. Build on what's been said. Listen to others instead of just waiting for your turn. Sometimes the Spirit

ties things together across several people.

Be okay with silence. Not every pause needs to be filled.

Consider the children. How might what you share include them or apply to them? And are there things you shouldn't say with kids in the room?

So whether you have a microphone or a seat on the couch, the question is the same: what will build up the people in this room?

Practice Activity: Two Ways to Contribute

- Round 1, planned roles: A few people read Scripture or lead a short prayer in front of the group.
- Round 2, open sharing: After a brief prayer, anyone can share a verse, a short prayer, something God has been teaching them, or an encouragement for someone in the room. Listen to and build on what others share.
- Talk about it: Which round felt more natural to you? What did preparation add? Where did you sense the Spirit at work?

Discussion Questions

Why is preparation important, even when sharing is spontaneous?

How do you balance being Spirit -ed and being prepared?

What would it look like for you to come to our next gathering with something to give?

Review: Were you able to use MAWL to teach someone a simple skill this week? How did it go?

Homework: Before your next gathering, spend some time in prayer. Ask God what He might want you to bring – a verse, a prayer, a word of encouragement, a question – and come ready to share it.

Skill 3 - How to Use Your Spiritual Gifts to Serve Others

The Pareto principle says 80% of the outcome comes from 20% of the causes.

In church world we might say, “20% of the people do 80% of the work.”

We want 100% of the people to do 100% of the work. Instead, we have been sold the idea that it is fine to just show up…Just show up, attend worship and make sure you give and you will never be questioned!

But is that okay?

Not to beat anyone up or anything but that doesn’t seem like what we see in the Bible.

I really think a lot of people just consume and don’t produce because that is all they know. And I want to get people to know that there is more in store because when we serve we tend to grow and we tend to get less self-centered.

Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” - Mark 10:45

And if that is Jesus, shouldn’t we follow His example? Or how about this one from Paul,

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

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,
  did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
  by taking the very nature of a servant,
  being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
  he humbled himself
  by becoming obedient to death—
    even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
  and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
  in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
  to the glory of God the Father.” - Phil 2:3-11

We are here to serve. We serve the body/church and we serve the community.

The biggest obstacle to service is availability. People are just so busy. But we set our own schedule and we don't often think to put God's work as a priority.

Are you available? Hard to serve if you are booked!

Do you know your gifts and skills?

I try to be careful with this one because we can develop the attitude to only serve in the areas we have skill and God will call us to things we aren't very good at! If you want to learn your gifts/skills you might use this - the Discover Your Spiritual Gift guide below.

When we think of serving in the gathering we might think of roles that make it in the bulletin with your name next to it. But there are far more opportunities to serve outside the gathering. You can reach out to a neighbor, write an encouraging note, share a verse with someone etc. If the whole church understood this and moved to action, it would be a game changer.

Read the Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s) Handout on the next page.

Practice Activity: Identify gifts

- Name one spiritual gift or skill God has given you.
- In a small group, brainstorm how you could use it when the church gathers, in both official and unofficial ways.
- Share your ideas with the whole group.

Discussion Questions

What gifts has God given you that you can use when you gather on Sunday?

What opportunities might you be on the lookout for when you gather?

Review: Did you come to your last gathering with something to share? How did it go?

Handout: Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s)

What does the Bible say about how God gifts His people?

Here are three key passages in the New Testament that list spiritual gifts:

Romans 12:3-8
- Prophecy
- Serving
- Teaching
- Encouragement
- Giving
- Leading
- Showing mercy

1 Corinthians 12:7-11
- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Miraculous powers
- Prophecy
- Distinguishing between spirits
- Speaking in tongues
- Interpreting tongues

Ephesians 4:11-16
- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Pastors
- Teachers

How to Identify your gift:
Most people have at least one of these gifts that stands out above the rest. There will be a small group of people who have two. There are a few things you can do to determine which of these gifts best suits you and how the Holy Spirit has gifted you.

1. Pray and ask God to make it clear which of these gifts best suits you. Ask God to give you James 1:5 wisdom to make this clear. Commit to God that before it is clear you will be faithful in the opportunities that present to be of service to the kingdom and after the gift becomes clear you will continue to be faithful in participating in kingdom building activities (God doesn't just want us to know our gift but to use it and God doesn't want us to exclude everything outside our giftedness. Gifts are not an excuse for inaction).
2. Read and re-read the passages above and see if anything resonates and draws you more than the rest.
3. Ask people around you which of these gifts best describes what they see in you. This affirmation

can be confirmation of what you believe God is showing you about your gift.
4. Move ahead in faithfulness. If you want God to show you something, it helps to already be participating in what God is putting in front of you. Don't put action on hold waiting for an answer.

Why this is important:
This is important because of what Paul says is the purpose of the gifts when they are all working together in a congregation. These gifts are given for specific purposes all explained in Ephesians 4:11-16: to equip the church for service, to build up the church, to help us reach maturity and the whole measure of Christ, to keep us out of false teaching, and to help us grow.

These are all very important outcomes. It is essential that churches understand these gifts, identify and utilize the gifts and then work together out of our strengths.

How the gifts work together for making disciples:
The amazing thing about the church is that God doesn't give one person all the gifts. For the church to function in a healthy way we have to rely on each other. We all need each other. The gifts complement each other. If you have all teachers and no shepherds you will have knowledgeable people who aren't being nurtured. If you have all shepherds and no evangelists you will have strong fellowship and connection but little kingdom impact in the community.

Imagine a church where the evangelistically geared people are working with the apostolically minded to strategize about how to reach the community. They start bringing in new people to a church that has strong teachers and shepherds so that the new people get solid teaching to grow to maturity and a solid connection and nurturing care from the shepherds. These new people see and experience the very real voice and guidance of God through the example of the prophetically gifted. When things work like this – the whole body grows and the impact of the church is amplified!

Every Disciple a Disciple Maker:
When you view evangelism and discipleship through this combination of gifts you can see very quickly that everyone can have a role in reaching someone who is seeking God. We often think outreach means everyone has to be on the front lines. The reality is someone has to welcome these new people and those on the front lines cannot and will not be good at everything. Evangelism is a whole church body exercise when viewed through this framework!

Disclaimer – There can be a temptation to avoid things that we aren't good at. You might hear someone say "I can't do that because that is just not my gift!" Well, sometimes God calls us to do things we stink at. We need to be faithful to what God is asking of us or telling us even if we aren't the best at it.

Skill 4 - How to Share Your Testimony

Have you ever wanted to share your testimony with someone but were too afraid to try?

Practice & Roleplay

Practice sharing your story so that when the time comes you are prepared. Now, this is your story but it is really a God story.

When you share a testimony it is about how God has worked in your life so you can encourage someone that he is working in their life too. One simple way to structure that is your life before Christ (any problems you faced), what got you to turn to Christ and what your life is like now that you have Christ (compare to your old life before Jesus). This helps people see Jesus is a real solution to actual problems.

How do you practice?

Pair up with someone and take time to write down: 30 second testimony, 60 second testimony, 2 minute testimony. (Thanks to Curtis Sergeant and Zume for pioneering this approach)

Why different times? Because you get different amounts of time with people in different situations.

Before you roleplay, pray. This is good practice because before you share your testimony with someone, you might speak a little prayer in your mind to God, asking for help.

Person 1 tells their testimony to Person 2.
Person 2 gives feedback: what wasn't clear or what was confusing.
Person 1 rewrites it a bit and tries again.
Person 2 gives feedback and you do this until it is very clear.
Then you flip the roles.

Practice Activity: Writing Exercise & Roleplay

- Write a 30-second, a 60-second, and a 2-minute version of your testimony.
- Pair up and share. Your partner gives feedback on what was clear and what was confusing.
- Rewrite it and try again until it's clear, then switch roles.

Discussion Questions

Why is practicing an important component to sharing our testimony?

How did you feel when you received feedback? Was it hard to hear? Why?

Review: Were you able to identify your spiritual gift(s) last week? What conclusion did you come to? Did anyone around you confirm what you're seeing?

Homework:

Find someone to roleplay the above activity with this week. Once you are comfortable with the results, ask God for opportunity and share this with at least one person. After you have done this, find someone else to share it with that is not just practice.

Skill 5 - How to Share the Gospel

What if every Christian would take a moment to tell people about Jesus and demonstrate the love of Jesus to the world? Things might actually change. But so often many of us are afraid to share. Sometimes I am afraid to share. What will someone think of me? I have thought this many times and am working on being bolder. Maybe you are too!

Sharing the gospel (good news) about Jesus isn't just for preachers on Sunday! Imagine the impact we could make if everyone were prepared to share this good news with others. Sometimes we don't share because we don't know what to say. We can fix this just like we did with the testimony!

First, you need to have a basic understanding of the gospel to share it. It needs to be simple so that it isn't confusing.

The main idea is that Jesus Christ defeated the evil one through His death on the cross, which brings forgiveness of sins, and He conquered death through His bodily resurrection. This is the source of our current and future hope that He will raise us too! Jesus came to right the wrongs…to bring justice and to show grace and mercy all while speaking the truth! He is the only way to the Father and to truly living.

You might sum it up a bit differently than that and that's okay.

How would you sum it all up?

How would you share it in 30 seconds, 60 seconds, 2 minutes like you did with the testimonies?

Practice Activity: **Write It Out & Roleplay**
- Write a 30-second, a 60-second, and a 2-minute version of the gospel.
- Pair up and share. Your partner gives feedback on clarity and emphasis.
- Revise and practice until you're both confident, then switch roles.

I got the roleplay approach from Curtis Sergeant and it is so simple and effective!

Discussion Questions
What are the most fundamental components of the gospel?

Why did you pick those things and leave out other things?

Why is sharing the good news important?

Review: Were you able to share your testimony with someone? If not, try to do so this week.

Homework:
Find someone to roleplay the above activity with this week. Once you are comfortable with the results, ask God for opportunity and share this with at least one person. Find another person who might need to hear the good news and share one of the 30-second, 60-second or 2-minute versions with them.

Handout: Prayer Walk Guide

What is a prayer walk?
Walking around a community, neighborhood, downtown, college campus, etc praying for the community and for people you meet along the way. Prayer walking activates Christians to see and experience the movement of God in real time.

Where to prayer walk?
Your neighborhood, around your church, community centers, or wherever God leads you through praying and asking God to guide your decision on where to prayer walk. You can pray and ask God to help you know where to prayer walk (e.g. pray over a list of neighborhoods in your city).

7 Things to do on a prayer walk

1 – Go with at least one other person
Jesus said in Luke 10:1 to go out two by two. In Acts, they went together. You can prayer walk alone but there are some added benefits of taking others with you such as training more people to prayer walk, having extra eyes to notice people, and more people praying.

2 – Start with a prayer
Prayer suggestions:

- God would guide us to the right people (like a person of peace – more on that in a minute)
- God would open doors in the community
- God would bring us the people we need to meet.
- Boldness and the words to say
- Pray for the Lord to open hearts (Acts 16:14)
- Guide your steps

3 – Start walking, talking, and praying
After praying, the group starts walking. You can pray in your mind while you walk, take time to talk with each other, but don't get distracted from why you are out.

If you get to an intersection you might stop to pray and ask God which way to go. At times when you don't see anyone around, you can stop in various places to pray as a group for the surrounding area and people. Pray that God would bless them and that they might come to faith in Christ and become disciples of Christ. Pray for the existing Christians in the vicinity to be effective in reaching the neighborhood.

4 – Pay attention to who is around you
As you asked for God to connect you with the right people (those open to the message) it is important that you tune into God's lead. There may be people or places that stand out to you. Move in those directions. You might feel some reservation at times about walking up to someone. Always try your best to move in the direction and speak to those God points you to and opens the door with. You will miss some people or make a mental excuse at times and miss an opportunity. That is going to happen. Just keep trying!

5 – Pray over the area & people
As you walk you can pray for businesses (those who own them, work in them and shop in them), homes (those who live in them) and the people you see. You might see a kid's bike in the yard and pray for the kids who live there, that they might grow up to know the Lord.

6 – If you feel drawn to particular people, initiate a conversation
You might say something like, "Good morning…how are you today? We love this community and the people here. We want to see this community/neighborhood thrive and are walking, praying God's blessings over this place. Is there anything we can pray for you about?"

While one person is talking with them, the rest of the group can pray silently for God to open their hearts and have success in either leading them to Christ or growing them to maturity in Christ.

You have to feel out how things are going in the conversation. You might share your testimony and ask them about God's involvement in their life. You might also share the good news about Jesus with them. If you can get contact info for followup, that is helpful. Invite them to a Bible study or your church.

7 – Finishing up
When you finish the prayer walk and get back to where you started, pray. Ask God to produce fruit from what has been sown and watered. Talk with anyone who came about what they experienced and how they saw God moving. Follow p with anyone who you got contact info on and invite them to study or church. Commit to pray for them on a regular basis.

Handout: Finding a Person of Peace

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house."
– Luke 10:5-7

When Jesus sent out the 72, he gave his disciples very specific instructions. He told them to look for a particular kind of person. A person of peace.

Who is a person of peace?
Someone you greet with peace (shalom) and who returns peace back to you. They are comfortable with you. They are hospitable to you. This is a person who will be open to you and your message.

How do you find a person of peace?
You go out looking for them. Whether it is through a prayer walk or through a conversation with a stranger, it is important to know the characteristics of a person of peace so you can spot them when they show up.

The only way you will go out looking for them is if you believe they exist. Do you believe that God has prepared people ahead of you who can accelerate the success of the mission, purpose and vision God has given you? If you don't then pray about that. Maybe even go looking for them and see if they don't show up. Sometimes the best evidence for something is the person or thing you don't believe in showing up right in front of you!

Pray that God will help you find them. It isn't just one person. This will be multiple people, across your mission and across your lifetime.

What happens when you find a person of peace?
There is no set answer to this biblically but from experience we see that people of peace may be some of your first converts. Not only that but they can get you into their networks of relationships and add credibility to your message. They can multiply the effectiveness of your ministry in terms of scale and they can expedite your message, helping get it in front of more people more quickly and with built-in trust.

People of peace in the Bible
Lydia and the Philippian jailer in Acts 16 both serve as people of peace. They were open to the message. They got other people into the conversation that accelerated the success of the mission. Imagine how much more slowly the mission in Philippi would have gone had God not led Paul and Silas to these two people. Other people of peace include Zacchaeus and the Samaritan woman.

People of peace are critical to the success of your mission. Some ministries will not move forward in a neighborhood or community until they have prayed for and located a person of peace.

God has prepared people in advance of your arrival. Pray for them for God to send them and pray for God to open your eyes to recognize them.

Skill 6 - How to Prayer Walk

Prayer walking is one of the simplest and most impactful things you can do to meet new people and make an impact. Going on regular prayer walks can really bless your community and those in your gathering.

This allows you to see God answer prayers right before your eyes.

It is an easy way to have our kids get involved in ministry and see God move/work.

It is also a great way to engage your neighborhood or community!

What is a prayer walk?
Walking around a community, neighborhood, downtown, etc praying for the community and for people you meet along the way. Activating Christians to see and experience the movement of God in real time.

Where to prayer walk?
Your neighborhood, around your church, community centers, or wherever God leads you through praying and asking God to guide your decision on where to prayer walk.

7 Things to do on a prayer walk

1. Gather at least one other person - Jesus said in Luke 10:1 to go out two by two. You can prayer walk alone but there are some added benefits of taking others with you such as training more people to prayer walk, having extra eyes to notice people, and more people praying.
2. Start with a prayer - Prayer suggestions: God would guide us to the right people, God would open doors in the community, God would connect you with those you need to meet, Boldness, to guide your steps
3. Start walking, talking, and praying - The group starts walking. You can pray in your mind while you walk, take time to talk with each other, but don't get distracted from why you are out. If you get to an intersection you might stop to pray and ask God which way to go. You can stop in various places to pray as a group for the surrounding area and people.
4. Pay attention to who is around you - As you asked for God to connect you with the right people (those open to the message) it is important that you tune into God's lead. There may be people or places that stand out to you. Move in those directions.
5. Pray over the area & people - As you walk you can pray for businesses (those who own them, work in them and shop in them), homes (those who live in them) and the people you see. You might see a kid's bike in the yard and pray for the kids who live there, that they might grow up to know the Lord.
6. If you feel drawn to particular people, initiate a conversation - You might say something like, "Good morning…how are you today? We love this community and the people here. We want to see this community/neighborhood thrive and are walking, praying God's blessings over this place. Is there anything we can pray for you about?" While one person is talking with them, the rest of the group can pray silently for God to open their hearts and have success in either leading them to Christ or growing them to maturity in Christ. If you can get contact info for follow-up that is helpful. You just have to feel out how things are going in the conversation.
7. Finish with a prayer - Ask God to produce fruit from what has been sown and watered. Follow-up with anyone who you got contact info on and invite them to study or church. Commit to pray for

them on a regular basis.

Practice Activity: Prayer Walk Prep

- Pair up or form a small group.
- Write down two or three short prayers you might pray over homes, schools, or people.
- Roleplay meeting a neighbor. One person plays the neighbor, and the other introduces themselves and offers prayer: “We’re walking the neighborhood and praying for blessings here. Is there anything we can pray for you about?”
- Give feedback and switch roles.

Discussion Questions

What about going on a prayer walk, if anything, makes you nervous?

How can you encourage each other about this, remembering you don’t do this alone?

Review: Were you able to share the gospel with someone? How did it go/What did you learn? If not, go ahead and do that in the next week.

Homework: Get together with at least one other person (Jesus sent them out with at least one other person) to go on a prayer walk. When it is done, you can discuss what you saw God do during your time on the prayer walk.

Skill 7 - How to Be Spiritually Attentive

Remember the time Jesus healed a blind man twice? Ever wonder why he didn't completely heal him the first time? This is found in Mark 8:22-26, and the story right after it is Jesus asking his disciples who he is. Peter gives the correct answer but doesn't entirely see it clearly. The blind man serves as a teaching moment to help his disciples understand that they see who Jesus is partially but not yet fully. They are like a blind man halfway healed!

Jesus was trying to get his disciples to have eyes to see things as they really are and ears to truly hear things as they really are. "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." (Matthew 13:16)

Do you have eyes to see and ears to hear, or are there things that keep you from seeing and hearing completely?

We all have things that block our vision and hearing on some level. It is important that we become more and more aware of those things and weed them out of our lives. Incomplete understanding, like the disciples in the story above, can keep us from seeing God or neighbor clearly, whereas love helps clear up our vision and hearing.

What does it mean to see and hear things for what they are? When you do, you notice things you didn't notice before. You might hear someone say something you would have passed right over before, but now you recognize they are in distress, so you follow up with them to make sure they are okay.

Tuning In to the Holy Spirit

Having eyes to see and ears to hear isn't only about noticing people. It is also about noticing what God is doing. The Holy Spirit is still working today, and it is important that we tune in. There is no formula for how to do this. There are no tricks or tips to get the Holy Spirit to do something. But we can posture ourselves to be open to the Spirit's lead and the Spirit's fruit in our lives.

What can we do?

Avoid the works of the flesh, which work against the Spirit (Gal 5 & Rom 8). Resist them!

Repent of any desire you have to be in control. You and the Spirit can't be in charge at the same time.

Sit in silence and spend time listening. It is hard to hear from others when you are speaking. If your prayer time is just you talking, you need more time to listen. Prayer and listening for God help us get the spiritual earwax out of our ears so we hear things for what they are.

Be in the Word. The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, so hearing from the Word tunes our ears to hear from the Spirit.

Talk with others about it to learn their experiences with the Holy Spirit.

If you believe God prompted you to do something: 1) make sure it aligns with Scripture and 2) do what

you can to do it. Ignoring the Spirit's prompting is the fastest way to lose touch with the Spirit.

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." - John 3:8

This is how the Spirit works. You can't game the system, but you can learn to be receptive.

How amazing would it be if more and more Christians developed eyes and ears like Jesus! We would have more unity and less division. We would have more mission and growth because we would be moving more and more in the direction God is taking us, in tune with his lead!

Practice Activity: Eyes to See & Ears to Hear

- Read Mark 8:22–26. Why do you think Jesus healed the man in two stages? What might this teach us about spiritual perception?
- Pair up. One person shares about their week, and the listener repeats back not just the words but the feelings or concerns they noticed. Then switch. What did you notice when you slowed down to really listen?
- Spend at least 10 minutes in silence. Ask God if there is anything He would like to share with you, and listen.

Discussion Questions

Looking back, when did you pick up on something spiritual that would have been easy to miss? What got your attention about it?

When was a time you think God might have been trying to get your attention and you ignored it?

What might be blocking you from seeing things as they really are?

Review: Were you able to go on a prayer walk with someone? What did you see God do? If not, schedule one with someone this week.

Homework: Pray and ask God to give you eyes to see and ears to hear. The next time you go out to the store, work, school, etc., try to really see the people around you. Really listen to what they are saying. If you do this a few times, you will begin to pick up on things you missed before in the rush of life, and this will open doors to be a blessing.

As you go through your day, also consider things the Holy Spirit may be putting before you. This may be a name that keeps coming to mind. It might be something from your Bible reading that convicts you of a change you need to make. It could be something three different people told you this week, where the message may be, "There is something to pay attention to in what you are hearing over and over." Then consider what actions you need to take in response, and do them.

Skill 8 - How to Be an Encourager

There was a guy in the Bible who was so upbeat they called him Barnabas - “Son of encouragement.”

I can think of worse things to be called!

He did such a great job at this that he influenced a man named Paul. Barnabas stood up for Paul when no one else wanted to (Acts 9:27). The rest is history.

And here is what that Paul guy said later,

“He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” - 1 Thess 5:10-11

Wonder where he learned the value of encouragement?

We can all be encouragers. We all get to choose to do this and anyone can do it.

We can encourage through our actions and our words.

What are some examples you can think of how our actions can encourage another person?

What about our words? What are words of encouragement someone spoke to you that you still remember?

You can say and do things that others will never forget!

What if, instead of gathering on Sunday to get something out of it (which is fine - often we need that!) you came to give? You prayed and asked God for opportunity to find someone to encourage. You never know…you might even save the life of someone who has given up!

There are two things needed to make this work:

1 - This takes eyes to see

How can you encourage the people you are blind to? Those you walk right past without thinking? We need to open our eyes to the fact that the person slowing us down at the store or while driving might really just need some encouragement!

2 - It takes a heart full of love

It is hard to give from an empty tank. When your heart is full make sure to give to others! And make sure to do this out of love and not out of obligation.

Practice Activity: Encouragement Brainstorm

- With a partner or small group, brainstorm actions that encourage and words that encourage.
- Share one encouragement you still remember receiving, and why it stuck with you.

- Write down one or two encouraging things you could say or do for someone this week.

Discussion Questions
Who is someone who has encouraged you and what about their approach was meaningful to you?

What are you going to do when the opportunity arises this week? Make a commitment to the others in your training, if you are comfortable doing that.

Review: Did you notice the Holy Spirit laying anything on your heart or mind this past week? If so, what was it, and how did you respond?

Homework: Make a list of some people you know who need encouragement. Pray and ask God for opportunity to connect and encourage them. Reach out to them!

Skill 9 - How to Show Hospitality & Welcome Visitors

The family of God should be big on showing hospitality. Part of that includes welcoming others into our gatherings and into our homes. In some ways this happens more naturally in a home environment than in a church environment. This is because we are used to having people in our homes and you wouldn't not greet a guest in your home. In the big building there are lots of people who might do it and often it goes undone because people assume others will take care of it. Have you ever been new to a church and had zero people talk to you? It isn't a good feeling!

When our eyes see and our heart loves - people are going to feel it. We won't miss people. And if the whole church catches on to this it will be powerful!

One of the biggest reasons people don't greet is they are afraid the person they greet as a visitor has been worshiping there for years and there will be embarrassment. But go ahead and try. Just don't start with "Are you new here?" or "I am so glad you came today!" (a setup for failure) but instead "Nice to meet you!" and give your name.

Once you meet someone new, offer for them to sit with you and participate with you in the gathering so they feel at home. You might offer them guidance on anything they might not understand during the gathering. For instance, if you take communion…you might need to explain how to go about it, if appropriate.

Now that you are with them, they can relax knowing someone is looking out for them.

The bigger word for this isn't welcoming - it is hospitality.

Practice Activity: Preparing for Visitors

- Pair up. One person plays a visitor, and the other practices introducing themselves, offering to sit together, and guiding them through the gathering.
- Switch roles.
- As a group, list practical ways to show hospitality beyond the greeting.

Discussion Questions

Are you an extrovert (enjoys and is energized by time with others) or an introvert (gets drained by too much time around others)?

How can you make someone new feel at home?

Review: Were you able to encourage someone this past week? Did you notice the impact of your words or actions?

Homework:

At your next gathering - Find someone you don't know and introduce yourself. Invite them to join you in the gathering and sit with you. If appropriate, invite them to lunch or to the next gathering.

Skill 10 - How to Visit People in Homes, Hospitals and Assisted Living (Student)

Visiting the sick, those in assisted living and those who have lost loved ones or are in hospice care is not just for the ministers. But often people don't go because they don't know what to do.

There are a few simple skills you can learn to be a real blessing to others in difficult times.

If you are in a hospital or facility, sanitize your hands frequently. The hospital is a good place to get sick or get people more sick. Often if you end up praying with someone you may hold their hand or touch their shoulder - you want clean hands.

Feel out how you are received when you show up. It may be clear that you don't need to enter a home or a room in a care facility but just stay out on the porch/hallway. If they invite you in, then you are good to go in if you want to.

Don't stay long. It is hard to feel sick and also feel like you have to entertain guests for hours. Be brief. They will appreciate that.

Ask if you can pray.

If their non-verbals start to change they probably want you to go. They yawn, look around the room, disengage, etc. Time to leave.

When you go, be gracious and encouraging.

A few tips to help things go smoothly and to learn to be sensitive to their needs:

- Sanitize your hands often, especially in hospitals - If you pray with someone or touch their hand/shoulder, do so with clean hands.
- Respect the Space - Don't assume you should enter—sometimes it's better to stay on the porch, in the hallway, or outside the room. If invited in, proceed respectfully.
- Keep Visits Brief - Short visits are best, especially when people are sick or grieving. Being brief helps them rest and not feel pressured to host you.
- Offer Prayer - Gently ask if you can pray with them. A short prayer can bring comfort and peace.
- Watch Non-Verbal Cues - Signs of restlessness (yawning, looking away, disengagement) often mean it's time to leave.
- Exit with Grace - Use polite phrases to leave naturally, e.g., "I'm going to let you get some rest now." Leave them feeling encouraged, not drained.

When it is time to leave, I usually say something like "I am going to let you get some rest and go now…" It is important to consider what you might say to ensure you say something polite and effective. Otherwise you might overstay your welcome even longer looking for a way to leave.

Practice Activity: Visitation

- Pair up. One person plays the visitor, and the other plays someone who is recovering or grieving.
- Practice entering respectfully, offering prayer, and leaving graciously.
- Switch roles, then talk about it: What felt natural? What felt awkward?

Discussion Questions
How would you know you had overstayed your welcome when visiting someone?

How might you excuse yourself to leave at the proper time?

Review: Were you able to welcome someone new at your last gathering? What did you learn from that experience?

Homework:
If someone in your church is in one of the above situations, if appropriate for the person you are considering, stop in for a quick visit. Feel out what to do and pray with them if possible. Usually a quick visit is best. It is better to have them say, “Please stay longer” than have them wish you would leave! If you have one person in the hospital, make sure to not swarm or overwhelm them in response to this assignment! Sometimes assisted living facilities might let you visit with someone who gets no visitors if you ask.

Skill 11 - How to Be Emotionally Mature

This one would take at least one whole book. That book has already been written called “A Failure of Nerve” by Edwin Friedman. In the church context Peter Steinke wrote something similar called “Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times”. The other author you want to pay attention to is Pete Scazzero on this topic.

Now having said that, this can’t be learned in an hour’s worth of learning or reading. But we can lay the foundation for you to start on the journey to emotional maturity.

What do we mean by emotional maturity?

This is the ability to regulate your emotions and boundaries with others in a healthy way.

You may have noticed that in church settings, people often struggle with emotional regulation. Maybe they yell at the preacher or corner the elders or gossip about others. It is all emotional immaturity and a failure to thrive or mature in their feelings.

Emotionally mature disciples bring less drama and more energy toward things that matter.

How do you become emotionally mature?

Let me ask it another way; what would it take to become hard to offend?

If someone took your pew…do you get mad? Why?

What is it…not about the pew stealer…but about YOU that allows you to get that worked up over this?

So here we go: We start with a personal examination of our emotions. When do I get angry and why? Do I have unresolved grief?

Who do I choose to let my emotions out on? The scapegoat. What makes them an easy target for me?

When I feel those emotions welling up inside, what are healthy alternatives to blowing up on others?

How can I disengage from the situation, take a breather and come back when things have cooled down?

2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us to take every thought captive to Christ. Does this thought honor Christ?

Often what we find is our first thought is a reactive thought - and it isn’t helpful. And we need to give ourselves some grace on our first thought…and then focus more time and attention on the second thought…which is the responsive thought. This is a more thoughtful thought and is more who we are than the first one because we have had some time to consider what is going on and respond appropriately.

Someone once told me, “If the doctor says your body is reacting to the medications…that’s bad! But if

they say your body is responding to the meds…that's good!"

Responsiveness rather than reaction is a path to emotional maturity. And we have Christ to guide us along the way.

Practice Activity: Examine Your Emotions

- Examine your emotions: When do I get angry, and why? Are there unresolved griefs or triggers beneath the surface?
- Recognize your scapegoats: Who do I vent on? Why do they become an easy target?
- Choose healthy alternatives: When emotions rise, what constructive outlet can I find? (Take a break, breathe, pray, then return when calmer.)
- Shift from reaction to response: Move from quick, unfiltered thoughts to slower, Christ-centered ones. "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Cor 10:5)

Discussion Questions

Have you had a role model of someone who was emotionally mature? Who was it and why do you think they were emotionally mature?

In what area of your life do you believe this might be most challenging? Why?

How could you help each other grow in this area? Anything you could practice or hard conversations to roleplay?

Review: Were you able to make a visit? How did it go?

Homework:

- Make a list of things that bother you.
- Reflect: Why do these things push my buttons?
- For each one, think through what a healthy, Christlike response might look like the next time it happens.

Skill 12 - How to Resolve Conflict in the Church Family

What do you usually do when someone in the church hurts you?

If you're like most of us, you do one of two things. You avoid it – stay quiet, keep your distance, maybe even find another church. Or you talk about it – just not to the person. You tell your spouse, a friend, a leader... everyone except the one person who needs to hear it.

Jesus gave us a better way.
"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector." – Matthew 18:15–17

Notice the order:
1. Go to them privately. Just the two of you. Most conflict ends right here.
2. Take one or two others. Not to gang up on them but to help both of you see clearly.
3. Tell it to the church. Usually this means the church's leaders.
4. If they still refuse, the relationship changes. But remember how Jesus treated tax collectors... He ate with them and kept inviting them to follow Him.

And notice the goal – "you have won them over." The point isn't to win the argument. The point is to win your brother or sister back.

Look at what surrounds this passage. Right before it, Jesus tells about a shepherd who leaves 99 sheep to go after the one that wandered off (Matt 18:12–14). Right after it, Peter asks how many times he has to forgive, and Jesus answers:

"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." – Matthew 18:22

Pursuit on one side. Forgiveness on the other. That's the spirit of Matthew 18.

What if I'm the one who did wrong?
Jesus covered that too. If you remember that someone has something against you, go make it right – even before you worship (Matt 5:23–24). It doesn't matter who started it. Whether you were hurt or you did the hurting, you take the first step.

A few things that help
- Pray first. Ask God to soften both your hearts.
- Check yourself first. Jesus said to take the log out of your own eye before the speck in someone else's (Matt 7:3–5). What part did you play?
- Go to restore, not to win. Paul says to restore someone gently and watch yourself (Gal 6:1).
- Don't wait too long. "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Eph 4:26). Hurt grows when we sit on it.
- Keep the circle small. Every person you tell before you talk to them makes it harder to resolve.
- Be ready to forgive. Just as the Lord forgave you (Col 3:13).

You might start with something as simple as, “Can we talk? I value our friendship, and something has been bothering me that I want to clear up with you.”

One important note – this passage is about ordinary sin and conflict between believers. If someone is being abused, threatened, or harmed, that is not something to handle alone in a private conversation. Go to your church leaders, and when needed, the authorities.

Imagine a church where people actually did this. Less gossip. Fewer people quietly slipping out the back door. More reconciliation, more trust, more unity. It would be a powerful witness to a world that has no idea how to handle conflict.

Practice Activity: Working It Out

- Read Matthew 18:12–35. How do the stories before and after verses 15–17 shape how we should read them?
- Pair up and roleplay going to someone privately about a simple, low-stakes situation. You might start with: “Can we talk? I value our friendship, and something has been bothering me that I want to clear up with you...”
- Your partner gives feedback on tone, clarity, and humility. Then switch roles.
- Talk about it: What made the conversation feel safe? What made it feel like an attack?

Discussion Questions

Why do you think we so often talk about people instead of to them?

Which step in Matthew 18 would be hardest for you? Why?

How does knowing the goal is restoration change the way you would approach someone?

What might change in our church family if everyone followed this pattern?

Review: Did you make your list of things that bother you? What did you learn about why they bother you, and what healthier response are you working on?

Homework: Pray and ask God to bring to mind any unresolved conflict – someone you hurt or someone who hurt you. If someone comes to mind, take the first step this week and go to them privately.

If no one comes to mind, practice the other side of this. The next time someone starts venting to you about another person, gently ask, “Have you talked to them about it?”

Handout: How to Form a Prayer Culture In Your Church

Here is what one church does regularly to form a prayer culture.

1. **Prayer team** - Use WhatsApp to put out prayer requests in real time. Studying with someone at 11am? Ask for prayers for that time.
2. **Saturday night prayer Zoom** - Every Saturday night at 8pm we pray for 15 minutes about what God is going to do on Sunday morning. People from several nations have joined our prayer time. It is small and it is powerful. 15 minutes is short enough for people to hop on and not feel like it is going to be an hour.
3. **Prayer walk** - Get in the habit of a monthly prayer walk where you and at least one other person go out and talk with/pray with people. You might share a God story or testimony with them or the gospel with them. Invite them to your home church. Invite them to study.
4. **Praying Leadership** - The leadership is committed to praying about everything we do. Every decision. Everything we decide to help out with. It is all prayed about. We wait on God's lead and then move in the direction He provides.
5. **Prayer Sunday** - Every first Sunday of the month is prayer Sunday. We teach that we begin all we do in prayer, even the month.
6. **Recognizing Answered Prayers/Testimony** - We make a big deal out of answered prayers. We tell those stories when they happen and thank God for his help! We love that our kids hear these stories. Sometimes they have their own stories because their hearts and minds have been attuned to pray and watch God work!

Discipline 1 - How to Pray & Connect with God

Prayer isn't a formula. There are no magic words. However, there are things we can learn about prayer to help us grow closer to God. Here are three tips to improve your prayer life and connection with God. This is not a formula. It is all in what you do with it in surrender to God.

Tip #1 - Pray like Jesus

Once Jesus' disciples came to him and said, 'Teach us to pray.' And this was Jesus' answer,

'He said to them, 'When you pray, say:
'Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation.'

"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'" - **Luke 11:1-4,9--13**

Jesus told us the kinds of things to pray about. We need to pray the kinds of things he told us to pray about. We need to trust God in order to pray to him. We trust that He is doing good things and has our best interest at heart. We trust that God hears our prayers and actually does move to action!

What else did Jesus say about prayer?

Jesus also told us to pray for mission,

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" - **Luke 10:1-2**

Do you ever pray this prayer? What might happen to the way you see the world (and yourself and your neighbors) if you prayed this every day? How might going to the store or work or school look different? You might eventually realize that He is sending YOU!

Jesus prayed all the time about lots of things:

- Before selecting the 12 (Luke 6)
- Before his arrest (John 17)

- While on the cross (Luke 23:34)
- Early in the morning (Mark 1:35)

No wonder Paul wrote,

“Pray on all occasions” - Eph 6:18 and “Pray without ceasing” - 1 Thess 5:17

The people of God are people of prayer and Jesus showed us how to pray!

Shodankeh Johnson will often say, “Prayer is the strategy.” The more I pray, the more I agree!

Tip #2 - Pray in layers

Here is how this works. Let’s say you are upset and you don’t know what to pray for. Pray for God to help you to know what to pray for. As those things come to light, pray over those things. Each thing you pray for brings up new things to pray for.

Let’s say you want a new job - you pray God shows you the right one. But what if you won’t recognize the right one? Pray for eyes to see it. Pray James 1:5 wisdom to know what is right. Pray for boldness to make the changes to work out the new job and let go of the old one…see how this works?

Tip #3 - Pray specifically and boldly

I used to pray pretty generically - God please heal this person. Now, I pray far more specifically - God, please remove the cancer from their body. Reach down and take it right out. And when we get the report that the cancer is gone we won’t be surprised! Instead we will tell as many people as possible what you did!

When you pray specifically and boldly (pray for miracles) then it is easier to see God’s answer. And as always - pray and ask God for help!

Practice Activity: Prayer Time
- Read Luke 11:1–13 together.
- In pairs or small groups, each person prays using one of the three tips: pray like Jesus, pray in layers, or pray specifically and boldly.
- Pray aloud for one another.

Discussion Questions
Is there anything above from Jesus’ example on prayer that stands out to you? Why does it stand out?

What are typical obstacles to you being consistent in prayer? How might they be overcome?

Review: Did you take a step toward resolving a conflict? How did it go?

Homework: Spend at least 10 minutes in prayer to God. Pray about anything that is on your mind.

Discipline 2 - How to Listen to God

For most of my life I didn't think God had anything to say except in the Bible. Maybe that is exactly what you believe in this very moment. I won't try to change your mind but I will encourage you to spend time listening.

Jesus said this,

"Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." - John 10:1-5

Now, you might believe this is figurative or just on principle but I have come to believe that Jesus can still have something to say today. Again, not asking you to agree with me. I didn't agree with me a few years ago!

When we read Acts we find out that the Holy Spirit speaks and people hear the Spirit. I missed this for years - read right past it!

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off." - Acts 13:2-3

The Holy Spirit said…And clearly they heard and obeyed!

Here is the main thing: Pray about it - ask God that if He does still speak, to speak to you! Spend time listening. When you pray to God also take time to be silent before the Lord (Psalm 37:7).

If you will spend time in stillness and silence…just listening, you may well find God has more to say than you knew but we rush around so much that we don't often take time to listen!

Here is how this impacts church life

When we start to listen to God we get more in tune with God and more expectant that He is working. We learn to wait on His lead and follow His lead. This helps the church head in the same direction together without as much division because it all goes back to what has God said (Bible) and what is God telling us?

Practice Activity: Listen!

- Set aside 10 minutes for prayer and silence. Begin by asking God to speak if He desires.
- Spend time in stillness, paying attention to thoughts, impressions, or Scripture that come to mind.
- Write down what you notice, and consider whether any actions are needed in response.

Discussion Questions

After you do your listening exercise, ask yourself if anything stood out to you. What?

Were there any thoughts you were having that seemed to get in the way? What were they?

Review: Were you able to spend at least 10 minutes in prayer? How did it go?

Homework:
Spend 20 minutes in prayer and silence/listening. Ask God to let you know anything He wants to share with you. Try to discern between your thoughts and whatever God is sharing with you. Consider what came to mind and if there are any things you need to take action on.

Discipline 3 - Discovery Bible Study Explanation

What is Discovery Bible Study?

Discovery Bible Study (DBS) is a simple, powerful way to study the Bible on your own or with others. DBS can be used with anyone, anywhere. The same set of questions is used each time. All you need is a passage of Scripture and someone to study it with. We will talk about how to get the Scriptures to use in a future lesson.

DBS Question List

Here are the questions that are asked in every DBS. The only exception is #3, which is not asked the first week because they don't have an "I will" statement until the second study.

1. What is going well this week?
2. What challenges are you facing?
3. What did you do with your "I will" statement from last week? (Not asked the first week)
4. Read the Scripture then have someone else read the Scripture
5. Retell the Scripture in your own words. Then have someone else do the same.
6. What do you learn about God from this passage?
7. What do you learn about people (including yourself)?
8. What will you do this week based on what you learned? (Make an "I will…" statement)
9. Who will you share what you learned with this week?

Important Guidelines

- Cover all the items every week. Don't skip 3, 8, or 9—they're essential for growth.
- Stick with the passage. Don't bring in other Scriptures or outside teaching.
- Share time fairly. Everyone should have a voice.
- Be considerate of where others are in their faith journey.
- Encourage without guilt. If someone didn't do their "I will," they simply do it this week.
- Keep it under an hour. It helps with consistency and commitment.

What if someone doesn't do their "I will"?

If someone doesn't do their "I will" give them another week to try again. It is important that we keep our commitments. If they cannot seem to get it done, find out why. Maybe they don't know how and need some help. For example, let's say they made a commitment to talk to a coworker about something but are concerned how the conversation will go. Roleplay with them. They say what they think they would say and you (or another person in the group) be the coworker. Give them feedback on what was understandable and what was confusing. They will try again until they are comfortable with what they can say.

Item Explanation:

Questions 1–2 build relationship and allow for mutual care and prayer.
Question 3 promotes accountability in a supportive way—not guilt, just encouragement.
Questions 4–5 help the group listen closely to God's Word.
Questions 6–7 focus on understanding what God is saying.

Questions 8–9 help you live it out through obedience and sharing with others.

Practice Activity: DBS

- Your leader will walk the group through a sample DBS using Luke 19:1–10, covering every question except #3.
- Afterward, talk about it: What felt natural? What felt new?

Discussion Questions

Why is it important to discover truths from Scripture rather than just being told by someone else?

Why does it matter that you live out and share what you learn rather than just gaining more knowledge?

Review: Were you able to spend 20 minutes in prayer and silent listening? Did anything stand out to you?

Homework: Scripture Selection

Step 1: Pray for God to guide you in choosing a topic or passage list.
Step 2: Decide if you want to use an expository or topical approach.
Step 3: Search the Scriptures and note ideas that stand out.
Step 4: Create a short 8–12 week plan with specific passages.

Handout: Discovery Bible Study Scripture Selection

How to Select Scriptures

Every meeting needs a Scripture passage — and the way you select that passage shapes the group's learning and growth. There are many ways to choose Scriptures, but two main approaches stand out:

1. Expository – Working through a book of the Bible or a section in order, verse-by-verse. Example: a study through Ephesians or the Sermon on the Mount.
2. Topical – Choosing passages on a specific theme relevant to the group's needs. Example: a 12-week study on "Do Not Fear" featuring verses on courage and trust in God.

You can find ready-made Scripture lists online or in DBS apps, or you can develop your own. This lesson focuses on how to prayerfully create a list for your group.

The process:

- Plan at least a month in advance when possible.
- Begin in prayer, asking God to guide your selection.
- Read the Bible with your group members in mind, paying attention to what "clicks."
- Confirm the theme or passage through continued prayer.
- Build your list and keep seeking God's guidance.

Handout: DBS - Frequently Asked Questions

DBS FAQ - In case anyone you are teaching/training has questions - this can help clear up the most common ones so that you have some answers for your people.

What makes DBS so effective?

Simplicity - It is so simple that anyone can understand it and do it.

Reproducibility - Simplicity leads to reproducibility. It is hard to reproduce complex (difficult) things but much easier to reproduce simple things. This allows you to not only have the group study but be training those in the group study to run DBS discipling groups with people they know.

Maturation - DBS focuses on the three areas that make a mature disciple, growing in: knowledge, obedience/faithfulness, and sharing.

What happens if someone fails to complete their "I will"?

You have them do it the next week along with their new "I will." The reason for this is that we need to be firm that when we make a commitment to live God's Word that we follow up on it.

What if someone doesn't know how to do what they committed to do?

Help them. If they committed to a difficult conversation you might roleplay the person they are going to talk to. They try out what they want to say and you give feedback. This is all part of kind coaching to help them grow.

How is DBS used in other countries with success?

It is used all over the world and has been for a few decades. Because the questions are so simple there are times a missionary will give someone who is not a Christian the questions and a Scripture, ask them to work on it and come back later and check on it. It doesn't take Christians of 30+ years to make this effective! They also instruct people to share with others these Scriptures and questions so that it multiplies.

What if someone dominates the conversation?

You can approach them after the study with some kind feedback. Encourage them. Let them know that you love their enthusiasm but it is possible they don't see what they are doing clearly. Help them to see how they might be hindering others from talking and encourage them to continue to share but to give others a chance to talk.

How long should a DBS run each week? In total?

DBS needs to be kept under an hour each week. 45-60 minutes should be sufficient. Going over 60 minutes on a consistent basis can be a barrier to participation. DBS can be done in a group for at least 6 months. There are two ways of looking at it. If you want to multiply groups, then you might do it for 6-12 months. If you are doing this more like a fellowship/study group then it could go on for years.

Discipline 4 - How to Fast

Fasting is something that rarely gets taught on. And we rarely get models on it because we were told to not go around telling people when we are fasting (Matt 6:18).

But it is important we teach on this and lead by example.

I once thought fasting was for the most serious times…to show God I really meant something or was desperate for help.

Fasting is about a relationship of trust. To trust God and need God more than any and everything else.

Jesus implied that we should fast and it is easy to miss but here it is in two passages,

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,” - Matt 6:17

Not “if you fast” but “when you fast” - it was and is expected for those who are healthy enough to do so.

Here is the second,

“They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.”

“Jesus answered, ‘Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.’” - Luke 5:33-35

When will they fast? When the bridegroom is gone. Jesus has been taken from us. Now we fast.

How to fast

As Shodankeh Johnson often says, “Start small to end big.”

This means start with a small commitment and keep it. Don’t promise 24 hours once a week and not be able to keep the commitment. It is better to succeed at a smaller commitment on a regular basis than fail at a large commitment. Because when we commit something to the Lord we need to make good on it.

Start small - pick a meal one day a week and fast for that meal. Instead of eating, pray. When your stomach grumbles - pray. Remind yourself that you don’t live by bread alone but you live based on God.

God is your provision.

Trust God. Rely on God. Turn to God for everything.

Do that for several months. Then, if healthy enough (again, consult your doctor), possibly add a second meal either another day or two meals in a row the same day.

Here is what you will find

When you make this a regular part of your week rather than an exceptional activity done a few times in your lifetime, you will find yourself trusting God more and more. You will find more peace than you can imagine because you will be closer to God and more trusting of Him. He will fight for you in ways you couldn't see before!

Health Disclaimer – If you have reason to believe fasting might not be good for your health, please consult your doctor before any type or level of fasting.

Practice Activity: Fasting takes time so we cannot practice it during the lesson. That is saved for the Homework. However, you can spend a few minutes discussing with other people any reservations you might have about fasting. And always remember, if you are not physically healthy enough to fast or have any health-related questions, you must ask your doctor before fasting.

Discussion Questions
Why is fasting important?

Why do you think many to most Christians never fast?

What might make fasting a key to our progress?

Review: Were you able to practice a DBS on your own or with someone? What did you learn?

Homework: Start by praying and asking God for help! Use the guide above (p.106-107) to start a fasting rhythm if this is okay with your health/doctor.

Handout: Establishing a Fasting Rhythm

The Biblical basis for fasting

Jesus never commanded us to fast. But it is clear from the Gospels that Jesus wants His followers today to fast. Jesus taught on fasting on a few occasions. He taught on fasting in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:16-18,

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Jesus has a clear expectation that His people will fast. He didn't say "If you fast" but "When you fast."

If that isn't direct enough, here is what Jesus taught in Matthew 9:14-15.

"Then John's disciples came and asked him, 'How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?'

"Jesus answered, 'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.'"

The bridegroom being taken is a reference to Jesus' ascension back to the Father. Jesus has ascended to the Father. Now we fast.

They fasted in Acts – it is clear that Jesus' early followers knew to do this. We see this in Acts 13:1-3. They were trying to determine who God wanted to send on mission. They fasted and prayed to ask God for an answer and God responded by the Holy Spirit telling them what to do.

Then in Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders with fasting. We see in these two passages as well as in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 (Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the wilderness to begin his ministry) that it is entirely appropriate to begin new things seeking God through fasting and prayer. As you begin your disciple making journey, it is important to make fasting part of your weekly discipline and later to teach this to others to reproduce these practices.

The reason for fasting

Fasting isn't about our physical health (weight loss). It is for our spiritual health and connection with God. We rely on God in all things and demonstrate this by setting aside food for a limited amount of time and turning our focus to God through prayer and listening.

How to fast

Shodankeh Johnson has said many times, "Start small to end big!" Fasting is a commitment. And we are committing to fast on a rhythm (the same set time each week). Because we are making a commitment to God we want to fulfill our commitment. In order to do that it has to be kept small enough to maintain

for the long run.

You might start by not having breakfast on Tuesday. Eat dinner Monday and lunch and dinner on Tuesday. Repeat that for at least a month. During your fasting times, when you get hungry, pray and listen. You might read Matthew 4 (Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God). Express to God your trust in Him and your reliance on Him. Ask Him to help you grow in your faith, trust and reliance.

You will have other things on your schedule. You will have to live your life, work your job, etc. Just take some mental focus where you can and turn it to God during your fasting time.

After a month or more of this rhythm (same commitment every week) you might remove lunch that same day. So now you are going from dinner Monday, skipping breakfast and lunch on Tuesday and eating dinner on Tuesday. Some people might be able to stretch further than that. I would not recommend a 24-hour fasting commitment every week because you are going to compromise that at some point. We want to make good on our commitments to God. Again, this is only if you are healthy enough to fast.

The result

There is no guaranteed result but I can speak from my experience. As I turn over this time to God each week and learn to trust God with more and more of my week and focus, I begin to find more peace in my life. As you begin to grow in your focus on God and trust in God, you begin to understand and experience that He is working on your behalf all the time. It all doesn't depend on you. That can give you the "peace that passes understanding" (Phil 4:7).

As your fasting rhythm grows out to (possibly) two meals one day a week you might begin to notice as time goes by (6 months+ out) that the peace you experience begins to run further and further into your week. What was at first peace with God one day a week might grow into two, three, four days and beyond as the effects of this focused attention on God in total surrender during part of your week begin to affect more and more of your life.

Fasting is essential to being a disciple who makes disciples

Establishing and faithfully executing a consistent fasting rhythm puts us in the proper mindset to make disciples who plant new churches because we are learning to trust God in all things and rely on Him because only God can make our mission successful. We cannot rely on ourselves or feel self-sufficient to this task. Fasting humbles us and helps us learn to make a habit out of relying on God in all situations. Those we disciple will also see this and learn this and this will help them make disciples who also learn to lean on God!

Health Disclaimer – If you have reason to believe fasting might not be good for your health, please consult your doctor before any type or level of fasting.

Discipline 5 - Solitude & Silence

We live in a world full of noise. When it is quiet…we create more noise. Turn on the radio. Get YouTube pulled up on the phone. Put the AirPods in and don't be bothered!

The lack of silence only accentuates our need for silence. Silence won't find you. You have to find it.

Vacuums get filled. Filled things don't tend to empty out. This means you have to be intentional about practicing silence.

Here is what Jesus showed us,

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for you!'" - Mark 1:35-37

Notice the contrast - the disciples seem a bit frantic to find Jesus because people are looking for him. They need to help these people find Jesus! But Jesus, even though people wanted to see him, had gone off to a solitary place to pray. In our world of social media you don't go dark when the crowd hits a frenzy. You feed the crowd what they want!

Not Jesus.

Jesus was more interested in connecting with God than getting attention. But notice he had to make it happen. It wasn't going to find him. He had to find it. If you don't plan silence, you won't practice it.

Practice Activity: Quiet Time

- Spend 10 to 20 minutes in silence together. It may feel a little awkward at first, but it is a good first step in learning not to fill every moment with noise.

Discussion Questions

Is being in silence and/or solitude hard for you? Why or why not?

When are some times you could repurpose to have more time in silence/solitude?

What kinds of adjustments would you have to make to take advantage of those times?

Review: If you are healthy enough to start, were you able to start a fasting rhythm? If not, try to start something small and simple this week.

Homework:

- Plan a specific time of silence and solitude this week.
- Protect it from interruptions just as you would any other important commitment.
- Afterward, reflect on how your soul feels—more at peace, more attentive to God, less hurried.

Discipline 6 - Praise & Gratitude

We often think of praise as something we do with other people but you can also praise God alone sometimes. Praising God is not something that has to be done at a building on a specific day of the week with specific people (although that is praise too!).

Paul wrote this,

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." - Rom 12:1-2

True and proper praise is daily praise. It is the giving over of ourselves to God on a regular basis.

Our praise of God recognizes the worthiness and glory of God.

We need to recognize this, not just on Sunday but every day. Praise puts our hearts in the proper position to understand our place in the world.

If your praise of God is just on Sunday…your faith will be dry!

Try praising Him on Monday-Saturday and see what happens.

Try praising Him in the good times and the bad and see what happens. Try living for Him even when the decision to do so is tough. This is a fragrant offering to God.

Let's get a lesson from Job on this one,

"While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said:

'Naked I came from my mother's womb,
  and naked I will depart.
The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
  may the name of the Lord be praised.'"

"In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." - Job 1:18-22

Job got bad news. Job responded with praise.

Here is why it works that way. God is always worthy of praise. God is always supreme. Therefore our

praise is not dictated by our circumstances because God hasn't changed just because things for us got hard.

Sing to him! Sing an old song…sing a new song! Give him the glory he deserves every day of the week. It will change your outlook on life and give you hope.

Some of the people you have most enjoyed being around are people who live in gratitude. It only makes sense that if we live that way as well, we might draw more people to Christ.

Practice Activity: Song time

- Spend some time singing a couple of praise songs to God together.

Discussion Questions

What challenges your gratitude on a regular basis? Why do you think that is the case?

What are some things you are thankful for that often get forgotten in day-to-day life?

Review: Were you able to set aside a time of silence and solitude this week? How did your soul feel afterward: more at peace, more attentive to God, less hurried?

Homework:

Work worship/praise into your daily schedule. It could be singing praise in the shower or on the ride to work. Look at your schedule and get creative on small, repeatable acts of worship. These have big impact over time but they must be small enough commitments to be repeated over time.

You might consider singing together and talking about what you are thankful for.

Discipline 7 - Fellowship

Some think fellowship means hanging out or eating a meal. That can be part of it! But the word means "partnership," and partnership is an investment in the lives of others.

When you think of fellowship as partnership, the major verses on it in the New Testament make more sense:

"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." - 1 Cor 1:9

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." - 1 John 1:3

Paul used this same word when he thanked the church in Philippi,

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." - Phil 1:3-5

They weren't just friends who hung out. They were partners in the mission.

When the early church first met, they had this kind of partnership,

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts." - Acts 2:42, 44-46

Notice they did eat together. But their fellowship went much deeper. They met each other's needs. They were devoted to one another.

What does partnership look like?

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." - Gal 6:2

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

Partnership means:

You know what someone is carrying, and you help carry it.
You pray for them by name, and you follow up.
You serve alongside them.
You spur them on toward love and good deeds, and they do the same for you.

You can sit next to someone at church for years and never know what they are going through. That's attendance, not fellowship.

Don’t wait on a program

Too often we rely on the church to set the calendar for what we should be doing on our own. Fellowship shouldn’t depend on a church event. When we love each other, we invest in each other. So invite someone over. Serve alongside someone. Study the Bible and pray with another believer. Ask, “How can I help?” and mean it.

Practice Activity: From Hanging Out to Partnership

- Pair up. Share one burden you are carrying and one thing you are trying to grow in or accomplish for God.
- Ask your partner, “How can I help you with that?”
- Together, choose one specific way you will partner over the next two weeks, and write it down.
- Pray for each other.

Discussion Questions

What is the difference between hanging out and partnership? Which one describes most of your church relationships?

What keeps us at the level of small talk with other believers?

Who has been a true partner to you in your faith? What did they do?

What is one burden you could let someone help you carry?

Review: How were you able to work praise into more aspects of your life since the last lesson?

Homework:

- Follow through on the partnership commitment you made with your partner.
- Invite someone into table fellowship this week. Go beyond small talk. Ask how they are really doing, ask how you can help, and pray together.
- Look for one burden you can help someone carry this week.

Discipline 8 - Confession

Confession - it doesn't come easily. Who likes to admit they are wrong and who likes to say it out loud for all to hear?

And yet we are told to do it - maybe one of the biggest things we are told to do that we don't do.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." - James 5:16

God couldn't have been more direct!

Here is the issue - if we think confession can only be done to a certain person, in a certain place and at a certain time - the Bible never says that! We made that part up.

And that is scary because who wants to go before the church after the sermon and say those things out loud?

But you don't have to.

1 - You can confess to God and…
2 - You can confess to other people…James tells us to. And it is good for us to do this with TRUSTED people who won't go blabbing to everyone else who doesn't need to know.

Practice Activity: None

Discussion Questions
Do you have anyone in your life you can confess to safely? Who?

When would be a good time to meet with them, if you are willing, and get some of the heavy burdens lifted out of your life through confession?

Review: How did your partnership commitment go? Were you able to share a meal and go beyond small talk?

Homework:
- Find a trusted friend and confess something, knowing you are still loved just as much as before. Establish clear expectations that this is private information.
- Reflect on whether you are someone others would feel safe confessing to. Work on cultivating the kind of grace-filled attitude and careful words that make you trustworthy.
- If you feel safe to confess something you are struggling with, you are welcome to do so. Again, confession cannot be forced to comply with a lesson activity. It must be something you seek out.

Discipline 9 - Submission & Surrender

Like confession, submission and surrender don't come naturally to us. Our survival instincts like to try to have some level of control over what is going on in our lives.

In walks King Jesus.

He is the one who was dead and is alive again, and He is inviting us to be with Him! He invites us to live under His rule and reign. And when you accept that invitation you are recognizing that there aren't two kings (us and Him) but only one King!

Following Jesus means He is in charge. We surrender our will to His will. We surrender our control to His control. We submit to Him in reverence.

Jesus put it this way,

"Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'" - Luke 9:23

Notice the word daily. Surrender isn't something we do once and check off. It is something we do every day.

And Jesus didn't ask us to do anything He didn't do Himself. The night before He went to the cross, He prayed,

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." - Luke 22:42

That is what surrender sounds like.

Paul wrote this in Romans 8:5-8,

"Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God."

If we submit to the flesh, we cannot also submit to God's law. It can only be one or the other. What comes naturally to us is submitting to the flesh, not the Spirit… not God. If it came naturally to us, it wouldn't be surrender or submission!

How do you surrender?

Start by getting specific. It is easy to say "Jesus is Lord of my life" and still keep certain areas off-limits. Maybe it's your money, your schedule, a relationship, your plans for the future, or a grudge you're holding onto. Surrender happens one area at a time.

Then practice it daily. Pray like Jesus prayed: “Not my will, but yours.” Take a step of obedience in that area. When you feel yourself grabbing for control again, and you will, stop and hand it back to Him.

Now, when someone comes along and aggravates you but you are surrendered to Him… then you will respond as someone under His control and direction. You will respond more like Jesus than like the old you.

Practice Activity: Surrender Inventory

- Look at these areas of life: time, money, relationships, work/school, plans for the future, habits, reputation, fears, and hurts or grudges.
- Privately write down which areas feel most “under Jesus’ rule” and which feel most “under my control.”
- Circle one area you sense Jesus is asking you to hand over right now.
- Pray over it: “Jesus, not my will, but yours be done in _____.”

Discussion Questions

Why is it so hard to hand control over to Jesus?

What makes surrendering to Jesus easy or hard for you?

What is one area of your life you struggle to hand over to Jesus? Why?

What might change in your daily life if that area were fully under His rule?

Review: Confession is hard. Maybe you avoided it. But I encourage you to try, even if it is something that doesn’t terrify you to tell a trusted friend. How did the confession go last week? Without getting into personal details, what was your experience like?

Homework:

- Each morning this week, pray: “Jesus, you are King. Not my will, but yours be done today.”
- Take one concrete step of obedience in the area you circled.
- When you feel yourself wanting to take control, stop, pray, and ask, “What would it look like to respond under Jesus’ rule right now?”
- Jot down what happened so you can share it next week.

This will be a lifelong process!

Discipline 10 - Benevolence & Giving

There is a discipline to giving that is born out of a benevolent heart and mind. When we are grateful for what God has done for us we are to be people who are generous toward others.

Our generosity and giving are born out of God's generosity and giving.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

God is a giving God by his very nature.

Here is another one,

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" - Luke 11:11-13

God is generous enough to give his own Son. And Jesus was generous enough, loved us enough, to give his very life! We need to have a discipline of giving. Give to your local church. Give to the needs that you see around you. Have eyes to see and ears to hear the real hurts of the real people around you.

The average Christian gives just a couple percent of their income. Imagine if it were 10% or higher…how much could be done. And that doesn't even count our time…what if we gave away 10% of our time to help others!

And this is all born out of love or else it all becomes about ourselves.

Practice Activity: Giving Ideas

- As a group, brainstorm opportunities to give to needs in your gathering, community, or beyond.
- Consider how you could be a blessing to another person with your time, talents, or treasure.

Discussion Questions

What excuses have you made to yourself that hinder your generosity?

How generous has God been with you?

What are some needs you can meet?

Review: What area did you surrender to Jesus last week? What step of obedience did you take? How did praying "Not my will, but yours" each morning change the way you responded when you wanted to take control?

Homework:

Consider how open-handed you are with your time and money and assess ways you can be more giving to the needs of the church, community, neighborhood, etc. Then take an action…don't just assess it. Do something about a real need.

Discipline 11 - Frugality & Extravagance

What does it mean to be frugal? It means to be sparing or careful with what you spend/buy.

Frugality matters because frugality is part of not living an entitled life. Frugality is also restraint. And an unrestrained life with unrestrained spending is a view of life that has commoditized the world. Everything is there for the taking. But is it? Frugality helps us become producers rather than consumers.

Proverbs has quite a bit to say about frugality. Here are a few relevant verses to reflect on:

"The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down." - Prov 21:20

"Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow." - Prov 13:11

"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander... yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest." - Prov 6:6-8

God values us being frugal. Now, there was the woman with the expensive jar of perfume who poured it out on Jesus. Some condemned her for not being more frugal but Jesus praised her for her extravagant love and care for him (Mark 14:3-9). There are times to be extravagant!

We will never live 100% like Jesus but we can look at his life and see he had very little. His little bit of earthly possessions meant he could live much more freely to do the will of the Father.

This is not to demonize possessions but it is to remind us that our possessions cannot own us or control us and frugality can be one way to tame the beast and to keep our appetites in check.

Practice Activity: Brainstorm areas of your life where you might need to cut some things back and other areas where you might consider being more generous or extravagant with your love of God or others.

Discussion Questions
What is the area you struggle most with frugality? Why?

Where might God be calling you to more extravagance in love, generosity, or service?

Review: Were there any acts of benevolence that came out of the last lesson? What do you think about it now? If not, try one this week!

Homework:
Find an area you spend excess time and money on that could really be healthy to cut back on. Make the necessary adjustments. Find another area where you are not being extravagant enough and address it.

Discipline 12 - Secrecy

This is not an area we talk about much but here is what it boils down to. Sometimes in our pride we like people to know that we know. This must be fought tooth and nail! Here is what Jesus said about it,

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” - Matthew 6:1-8

Secrecy…it matters because it reveals our motives. Why do we do what we do? If no one knew or would find out - would we still do the things we are doing? But what if the audience was God and we lived to please him regardless of what anyone else knew or found out?

This is a challenge in a social media world where all the vacations and fancy meals are broadcast to the world! There are even acts of kindness done for views and likes! Secrecy - what a challenging teaching!

Practice Activity: None.

Discussion Questions
What is something you do to be seen? Why do you think you do that?

What might you do differently if God alone was your audience?

What’s the hardest part about secrecy in a social-media-driven world?

Review: Were there any areas you made adjustments on from the Frugality & Extravagance lesson?

Homework:
- Choose one act of kindness, generosity, or prayer this week to do completely in secret.
- Tell no one—only God.

Notice how it feels to resist the urge for recognition.

Action Item: Pray for Future Disciples

Set aside 30 minutes to pray for future disciples. You may still want to be praying through the Extraordinary Prayer List is found on page 5.

Some things to pray together now:

- For God to open the way to make disciples
- That God would use you to sow and water
- That God would bring the harvest
- That God would open hearts like he did with Lydia in Acts 16
- That the right people would accept the invitation to the discipleship group
- That generations of new disciples could be made - that those you disciple would make disciples

Ideally, you would spend this prayer time with another person who is also working through this. If you are doing this as a church, leadership group, small group, etc you might pair up and do this together.

Discipleship Group: Learn to Make Disciples Like Jesus

Jesus showed us how to make disciples, and we can follow His example! He did more than teach, and even His teaching wasn't a classroom lecture. Jesus used a variety of methods to raise up disciples who make disciples.

Jesus wasn't just looking for changed minds. He was looking for changed lives. And when Jesus changes our life, we can help others experience the same (reproducing disciples).

You can find everything you need to know about discipleship (following Jesus) and disciple making (helping others learn to follow Jesus) in the gospels by watching Jesus and following His example!

Look at how it all started:

"'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.'" – Matthew 4:19

Notice the order. Follow me first. Then I will send you out. Jesus didn't hand them a curriculum and tell them to come back when they finished. He invited them into His life.

Mark tells us the same thing:

"He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." – Mark 3:14

With Him and sent out. That's the whole plan in one verse.

The disciples learned by being with Jesus. They watched Him pray. They ate with Him. They served alongside Him. They rested with Him. They asked Him questions on the road. Then He sent them out to do what they had seen Him do… and eventually to train others to do it too.

Here's the catch: if our approach to making disciples is complicated, it won't reproduce. If it takes a seminary degree, a big budget, or a gifted teacher, most people will never try it. Jesus' approach was simple enough that a group of fishermen and a tax collector could pass it on. So can you.

You've already practiced several of these things in earlier lessons: fasting and prayer, serving, and training others. Now we're going to put them together and ask, "What would a discipleship group look like if it did what Jesus did?"

In this lesson, you will spend some time considering Jesus' approach and then think practically about how to integrate what you learn from Jesus into your discipleship group.

Practice Activity: Jesus Review

Step 1: As a group, talk about the different ways Jesus made disciples in the gospels. Think beyond His teaching. What did He do with His disciples?

Step 2: Write down as many as you can think of below. Include Scripture references if you can.

Step 3: Compare your list with the 7 Rhythms of Jesus' disciple making below (adapted from Discipleship.org). What did you find that's on this list? What did you find that isn't?

1. Fasting and Praying – Everything Jesus did flowed from His relationship with the Father. (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12-13)
2. Inviting Along – Jesus loved people and invited those who welcomed Him to come along with Him. (Matthew 4:19; Luke 19:5)
3. Serving – Jesus served people, and He did it with His disciples right beside Him. (Luke 9:1-2; John 13:14-15)
4. Eating and Debriefing – Jesus shared meals and talked through what they had experienced together. (Luke 5:29; Luke 10:17-20)
5. Resting – Jesus took His disciples away to rest and get refreshed. (Mark 6:31)
6. Learning – Jesus taught the good news of the kingdom in all of life, not just in formal settings. (Matthew 5:1-2; Mark 4:34)
7. Maturing while Multiplying – Jesus grew His disciples up so He could send them out to make disciples who make disciples. (Luke 10:1; Matthew 28:19-20)

Step 4: Brainstorm how these rhythms might be built into your discipleship group to make it a more holistic group. For example, how often would you eat together? Serve together? Rest together?

Discussion Questions
Why is it important to do more than teach information?

What other ways did Jesus raise up disciple makers?

Which of these rhythms are most often missing from the way churches make disciples today? Why do you think that is?

How to Start a Discipleship Group

In this section, you are going to learn a simple and reproducible approach to making disciples by launching Discipleship Groups. This approach is modeled on the ministry of Jesus, so you can learn more by simply going to the Gospels, seeing what Jesus did, and imitating Him!

Why Simple?

More people can do simple than complex. Simple mobilizes more people for more impact. Jesus didn't make it complicated and neither should we.

Why Reproducible?

We want to reach more people to make more disciples. What's more, simple and reproducible go together, because simple reproduces more naturally and easily than complex does!

Why Jesus-style?

Jesus was the greatest disciple maker who ever lived. He only made a handful of disciples in His three-year ministry, and those disciples went on to reach the world and even die for Jesus and Jesus' people!

It Starts with Prayer

Before Jesus invited His disciples to follow Him, He spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12–16). That same dependence on God is the foundation for starting a Discipleship Group.

Group Details

Group size: 3–5
Reproducible: yes
Gender segregated: yes or no. Gender-segregated groups allow things to be shared that might not be shared otherwise. Mixed groups work well for groups of couples. Let your context guide you.
Meeting length: roughly one hour a week (it can run longer if the group agrees; just don't burn out)
Total time: 12 months, then multiply

Here's the Process

Step 1 – Establish a prayer foundation / Pray before you invite. Seek God's guidance on whom to approach. This is a time of personal prayer and engagement for those who will be in the group.

Step 2 – Make a list and pray over the list. Pray for God to help you know who to invite. After time in prayer (and possibly fasting), list potential people. Pray over that list and ask God for clarity and open hearts.

Step 3 – Invite intentionally. Narrow down the list to the 2–4 people you are going to invite into the group. When you add yourself, this creates a group of 3–5 people. You may choose to have them sign a group covenant (example provided). Keep inviting until you have your 3–5 people, including yourself.

Step 4 – Meet regularly, following the meeting order you choose (more on that later). Your first 3–5 meetings, depending on how many are in the group, will each give one person a week to tell their story. Then you will spend time together learning New Testament teaching, sharing life together, living out skills and disciplines, and more.

Step 5 – Equip & Delegate (train skills and disciplines). You will delegate meeting items to group members so they gradually learn to facilitate and lead a group, so more groups can be reproduced at the end of the process. This means you will also need to train them in the skill of how to train skills, so they can help others learn (multiplication).

Step 6 – Reproduce New Groups. Your delegation and training in skills and disciplines has prepared them to take this training and learn and implement it with others. This is what makes the training reproducible.

There will be a lesson on each step in the lessons that follow. Things are about to get intensely practical!

What you might say to invite someone: It can be intimidating to invite someone to something you have never done. You can pair up with someone else in this training and practice what you might say. It might go something like this: "We are about to start a Bible study on the teachings of Jesus, and I was thinking it might be something you would find helpful. We are going to meet once a week for an hour or less for about a year. It will be a time of encouragement, prayer and study. Would you like to join us?"

Practice Activity: **Step-by-Step Prayer & List**

- Read Luke 6:12–16. How did Jesus begin His ministry team?
- Spend 3–5 minutes in silent prayer, asking God to bring to mind people who might be open to joining a discipleship group.
- Write down every name that comes to mind, without filtering yet.
- Pray again, asking God to highlight certain names. Circle the top 4–5.
- Share in pairs about the people God is putting on your heart, and pray for them together.
- With a partner, practice what you might say to invite someone.

Discussion Questions

Why is it important for Jesus to be the model for making disciples?

Why is it important that the process be simple in order for others to reproduce it?

Why is prayer so important in helping others grow spiritually?

Discipleship Group Covenant

By being in the group, I agree to the following:

I will be present for the weekly session to the best of my ability.
I will complete any homework assigned to me.
I will be ready to openly receive the other group members when we meet by being as fully present for them as possible.
I will not share things outside the group that are shared inside the group without prior permission.
I understand that we will meet weekly for 12 months with a few possible exceptions.

I agree to consider starting my own group after the 12 months are complete.

Name Date

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Step 1 - Establishing a Prayer Foundation

Jesus invited people to come and follow him. Do you know what he did before he did that?

He prayed! All night!

“12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: 14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.” - Luke 6:12-16

We need to ask God for wisdom on who to invite.

If you created a prayer team on text - ask them to also help you establish this prayer foundation.

It is helpful if you can commit to praying daily for the disciples in your care/group.

This is how we start to lay the prayer foundation. It actually started above in the page titled “It Starts with Prayer” (p.137).

Discussion Questions
Why is prayer an essential part of our preparation?

What makes prayer powerful?

Note: When you engage in ministry, you may find yourself in spiritual warfare. You might read **Appendix B** to prepare yourself for what could come your way.

Step 2 - Make a List and Pray Over the List

Get out a piece of paper and pray over the empty page. Ask God to help you fill it with names of people who might need to be in the group. Ask God to help bring to mind those you need to invite.

Sit in silence for a moment if you need to.

Begin writing names. List as many names as come to mind. You may end up with 20, 50, or even 100 names. Your mind might start to make excuses but just write them down. Don't exclude anyone because it might seem impossible for them to join. Just listen and write.

Once you finish your list pray over the names you wrote down and ask God if you should invite them into a group.

Prayer expectations - Spend 10 minutes a day praying for God to use you to be a disciple who makes disciples. Ask God to help you form this group with exactly who needs to be in it and that God would make it clear and open up minds and hearts to get the group that is right for this season.

Discussion Questions
How hard was it for you to list 20 people? 50 people? 100 people? Why?

Step 3 - Invite intentionally

You will take the names you have been praying over, identify the 2-4 people you feel convicted about inviting into your discipleship group and invite them to your group.

How to invite them

Explain that you are inviting them into a group to learn to follow Jesus as a disciple of Jesus and that it will be a commitment of their time per the group covenant that they will sign (if you choose to use one - not everyone does but they can be helpful to keep people on track). Give them a copy of the covenant by email, hard copy, etc (p.139) and give them a week to think and pray over it to decide if they want to be part of the group. If they want to be part of the group invite them to your first meeting.

Explain the purpose of the group - to learn the teachings of Jesus to live them out together (you can word this another way if that is best).

Explain the time commitment - Once a week for the lesson, about an hour per meeting (it can go a bit longer but we try to keep it close to an hour), for 12 months.

Continue to be in prayer for each person on your list, that they would be receptive to the invitation and that it could truly transform their lives. Pray for each person, daily this week. Again, prayer is central to making disciples. Each new step will include prayer. This reminds us that we are not in charge. Only Jesus is in charge.

What if people turn down your invitation?

You have no control over whether or not people accept your invitation but there are some things you can do to bring them clarity (how you describe it, letting them see the group covenant). If they do not want to be part of your group, go back to your list and pray over the remaining names and invite others until you get 2-4 people to commit to coming to your first meeting. Invite the additional person/people and ask them to make their decision before your first meeting.

Discussion Questions
How can God help you invite people who might be most receptive?

Why is prayer essential to the process?

Review: How did making your list go? Did names become clear? If not, keep working on it.

Step 4 - Meet Regularly, Following the Meeting Order You Choose

Meeting 1: Introduce yourselves, give a quick explanation of the group.

Have them sign covenants if you are doing that (see the covenant example earlier in the training). The value of the covenant is it gets them to take attending and their work in the group more seriously and it also emphasizes confidentiality. Some people choose to not use a group covenant. You might pray for clarity on this.

Tell Your Story First

You tell your story to the group in the first meeting. This is the time to tell your story. Keep it within the hour meeting time. You will have less than an hour as you welcome people and do some housekeeping (See the First Meeting Handout on the next page). It is important to map it out in advance so you stay on track. Make sure to include significant spiritual moments in your life/times God really impacted you.

Assign someone to tell their story the next week.

Meetings 2-5:

Over the next several meetings, various group members will be assigned to tell their story. Continue with one story per week until everyone has had a chance. Encourage them to write out a timeline to stay on track.

Refer to the “A Typical Group Meeting Handout” to get an idea of how a group can be organized.

Discussion Questions
How can you prepare to tell your story in a way that is succinct (they can go far longer than you might imagine if you don’t prepare)?

Why does it matter that you go first?

Handout: Your First Meeting

Why the First Meeting Matters

Your first meeting sets the tone for the whole group. It is different from the meetings that follow because you are introducing the process and getting to know each other.

A good first meeting sets clear expectations, builds trust, and creates a welcoming environment where people want to return.

Seven Steps for Your First Meeting

1. Welcome everyone. Create a warm environment where each person feels welcomed and is acknowledged as they arrive.
2. Make introductions. Give each person a chance to introduce themselves (not their full life story).
3. Explain the purpose of the group. Clarify why you are meeting and what you hope to accomplish through the group (to learn to be a follower of Jesus in your everyday life - or whatever explanation is appropriate to your group). You may invite the group to agree to a group covenant (page 139).
4. Set expectations. Share how often you will meet (typically weekly) and how long meetings will last (trying to keep it around 60 minutes).
5. Field any questions they might have, encourage them to get to know each other if they don't.
6. Tell your story (if this needs to wait until next week due to time, that is okay)
7. Pray for the group. Dedicate the time and the people to God.

Before You Meet

Share the purpose, frequency, and length of the group before the first meeting. That way people know what to expect and can decide if it's a good fit.

Keys to a Great Start

• Clarity prevents confusion. Communicate the group's purpose and expectations early.
• Warmth builds connection. Make the first meeting personal and relational.

Handout: A Typical Group Meeting

Most weeks, your group meets for about an hour. Every meeting opens in prayer, makes room for connection and encouragement, and then does one of the things Jesus did with His disciples.

The Shape of a Meeting

1. Open in prayer. Begin everything in prayer. It reminds the group that Jesus is in charge, not us.
2. Connect and encourage. Ask what is going well and what challenges people are facing. Pray for one another, and check in on last week's commitments with grace, not guilt.
3. Do what Jesus did. Spend the heart of the meeting on one of the things Jesus did with His disciples. Many weeks this is a Discovery Bible Study (or another method of your choice), but it can also be training a skill, serving together, sharing a meal, or taking a week to rest.

Choosing This Week's Focus

Jesus did more than teach. He trained His disciples in living the kingdom life. Like Jesus, you are able to teach and train with these lessons material to facilitate your discipleship group:

- Biblical teaching via DBS
- 12 skills to train
- 12 disciplines to train
- Teach them how to do what you have done for them so they start a group (give them this material)

If you are interested in adjusting this approach, pray and ask God to help you structure the meetings and show you the path forward.

A Sample Schedule

Here is one way the first few months might unfold for a group of five. Map it out in whatever way fits your group.

Weeks	Focus
1–5	Each person shares their spiritual story; you might choose to do this over a meal
6–10	Leader introduces DBS and leads it, gradually handing off parts to members
11–15	A different member leads the whole DBS each week
16+	Begin training skills and disciplines

Once you learn a skill or discipline, you can repeat it occasionally. Discipleship is more than information transfer. It is about living it out and sharing it with others.

Keys to a Healthy Meeting

- Keep it to about an hour. Meetings that regularly run long make it harder for people to show up.
- Share the time fairly. Everyone should have a voice. Don't let one person dominate.
- Keep it simple. A simple meeting is one others can reproduce.
- Share the leading. Over time, hand off pieces like the opening prayer, part of the DBS, or group communication.
- Stay sensitive to the Spirit. If people are worn out, take a rest week. Follow the people, not a rigid schedule.

Step 5 - Equip & Delegate (Train Skills and Disciplines)

You are now ready to do for others what was done for you. Someone led you through this training, showed you how each skill and discipline works, practiced it with you, and gave you feedback. Now it's your turn.

This step has two parts. First, you equip your group by training them in the skills and disciplines you learned. Second, you delegate by handing off pieces of the group a little at a time, so that by the end, they are ready to lead.

Equip: Train Skills and Disciplines

Look back over the skills and disciplines in this training and pray about which ones your group needs most. Then build them into your meetings. Whether it's using spiritual gifts, prayer walking, fasting, or sharing the gospel, take some time when you gather to practice these things together. Use the same approach you learned in Skill 1: show them, practice together, give feedback, and send them out to do it.

You don't have to cover every skill and discipline, and you don't have to cover them in order. Once your group has learned one, come back to it from time to time.

Delegate: Train Through MAWL

You learned MAWL earlier in this training. Here is how it plays out across the life of your group.

Stage	What You Do	When
Model	Lead the whole meeting yourself so they see it done well. Explain what you are doing and why.	First 2–3 DBS meetings
Assist	Hand off parts of the meeting. Talk it through with them beforehand and give feedback afterward.	From the 3rd or 4th DBS on
Watch	Each person leads an entire meeting while you observe and coach	After everyone has led each part
Launch	They start their own group, with you still coaching them.	Second half of the year

The key is that you are always doing two things at once: leading the meeting and training the people in it.

What to Hand Off

Start with the DBS itself. Split the nine questions among the group and rotate each week until everyone has led every part:

Person 1 – Catching up (items 1–3): What's going well? What challenges are you facing? What did you do with your "I will"?

Person 2 – The Word (items 4–5): Read, re-read, tell, and re-tell the passage.
Person 3 – Understanding (items 6–7): What do we learn about God? About people?
Person 4 – Living it (items 8–9): "I will" statements and who we'll share with.

But leading a group is more than leading a study. Hand off the other pieces too:

Praying for the group
Training a skill or discipline
Group communication and scheduling for a month
Hosting a meeting in their home
Choosing upcoming Scripture passages
Planning a rhythm week: a meal, a serving project, or a rest week
Praying over names and inviting someone new

For anything you hand off, follow the same pattern: talk it through beforehand, let them do it, then debrief afterward. If someone needs more support, meet with them before their turn and walk through it together.

Recognizing Who Is Ready

Not everyone in your group will lead a group, and that's okay. But watch for people who show these signs:

- They have led an entire meeting well, and others responded.
- They follow through on their "I will" statements.
- They use DBS on their own as part of how they study.
- They talk about people in their life who need Jesus.
- They are faithful in showing up and serving the group.

When you see these signs, have a one-on-one conversation. Ask how they sense God leading and invite them to pray about starting a group. Those who say yes will need your continued support, training, and encouragement.

Pass It On

You already have the Student Version of each lesson to give your people. Now you also have the Leader Version, so you can lead others through these same lessons and exercises.

This is what makes the process reproducible. Those you train will receive the same material so they can train others. Feel free to share both the Leader and Student Versions with anyone who wants to lead people through this training.

When we raise up generations of Christians who are living out ministry skills and disciplines in the world, the kingdom impact will last for years to come. Thank you for being part of the process!

Pray

As always, prayer is essential. Pray for each person in your group by name. Ask God to use you to change lives and even change communities for the gospel.

Discussion Questions

Why is it important to do more than Bible study to help disciple someone?

Which skills or disciplines does your group need most right now? Why?

What part of the group could you hand off first?

Step 6 - How to Reproduce Groups

Groups reproduce when leaders train people along the way, not when they announce a launch at the end. Every week you model, hand something off, and give feedback, so by the time your group wraps up, its members have already been leading.

Reproduction Starts on Day One
If you do everything in the group, people learn that the group depends on you. Then, when it is time to launch new groups, no one feels ready, because no one has done it. Jesus took a different approach. He appointed the Twelve "that they might be with him and that he might send them out" (Mark 3:14). They watched Him, then did what He did with Him beside them, then went out on their own.

So lead every meeting with a question in mind: What am I doing that someone else could learn to do? Reproduction isn't a final step you add at the end. It is the result of modeling and handing things off every week.

Launching New Groups
You don't have to wait until your group ends to launch new ones. Here is one approach for a 52-week group:

1. Weeks 1–26: Train. Move through Model, Assist, and Watch until each person has led an entire meeting.
2. Weeks 27–52: Transition. Those who are ready start their own groups while staying in yours. For this season they are in two groups: one you lead and one they lead. Your group becomes their place for coaching, prayer, and debriefing. You might co-lead their first few meetings if they need it.
3. Around week 52: Wrap up. Close your group well (see Your Last Group Meeting). By now, people in their groups are already being trained to lead.
4. Start again. Begin the process over with prayer, listing names, and inviting.
   They will follow the same steps you followed in this course. Because you modeled everything for them, the process is easy to reproduce.

Why Reproducing Groups Matters
When only the leader starts groups, growth is slow and steady. When every group trains new leaders, growth multiplies.

Pray and Pray Some More
Pray for each person you are training by name. Pray for the people they will invite, and for generations of disciples who will come after them. Only Jesus is in charge of this work.

Discussion Questions
How might you help someone in your group start their own group?

How might you know someone is ready to start a new group?

Why does handing things off along the way make launching easier than waiting until the end?

Handout: Your Last Group Meeting

Why the Last Meeting Matters

How you end a group matters. Whether your group meets for six months, a year, or longer, it is important that it ends well.

Discipleship groups don't have to be lifelong assignments that depend on one leader. They are launch pads for new groups that reach more people. The last meeting together will serve as a launch pad for those who are called to start new discipleship groups. This is also a time for you to decide if you are going to launch a new group.

Five Steps for Your Last Meeting

1. Celebrate. Acknowledge your time together and the ways you have seen God at work.
2. Share stories. Invite each person to reflect on what they have learned and experienced.
3. Speak blessings and encouragement. Build one another up in love and faith.
4. Send out. Encourage those who feel called to start new groups. You can supply them with these guides so they have the process in hand.
5. Pray together. Thank God for the journey and ask for His guidance for what's next.

Preparing New Leaders

Before the group ends, help those who feel called to lead get ready.

• Watch. Do they need any more preparation or do they have what they need? Do they need a co-leader for their first discipleship group?

• Launch and leave. Encourage them to start their own group using the same process you used to start yours (again, give them the PDF to get started).

Keys to Ending Well

- End on a positive note. Leave the group with a vision for what God will do next.
- Give specific feedback. If there are things they need to hear before they start a new group, you are welcome to share that with them. Make sure the time is encouraging as you wrap up!
- Encourage reproduction. Not everyone needs to lead a group, but those who do need support, training, and encouragement.
- Ongoing help: Let them know if they have any questions, you are there for them along the way.

Launching Groups

After going through the training, it may be time for you to launch your first discipleship group following the 6 steps just explained! Just remember to pray about everything, seek out help when you hit a road-block and just keep trying. If you are afraid to fail, you will never see success!

Thank you so much for taking this course. I am praying for your kingdom success! Feel free to use this material to help those you train to train others.

You don't have to do this perfectly for it to work. God is working and helping! The main thing is to start and try and get help when needed.

You Become the Next Leader

Now that you have been through this training, you have what you need to train others! In order to do that, you are now getting a link to the Mobilize Leader Guide and other resources so that you can guide others through this process. Remember, you don't have to cover every lesson. You can pray over the material and decide if you are to use the entire training or just select parts.

When trained people train new people, the impact is exponential!

Feel free to share the link below with other Christians, churches, church leaders or anyone you believe would benefit from this material. Thank you!

Those you train will get the Student Guide PDF, which concludes with this page and a link to the Leader Guide so the training continues for generations!

Here is a link to the all of the Mobilize Resources, including the Student Guide!

Appendix A: Your Role and God's Role in Spiritual Formation

Making disciples and forming disciple making groups is not just a human endeavor. This is a spiritual exercise and that means that God is at work when we do what He said to do. He told us to "go and make disciples of all nations" in Matthew 28:19-20. I can't begin to tell you how thankful I am that you have taken that command seriously enough to be in these courses!

You are a facilitator. Jesus is the leader.

We need to know our role and God's role in spiritual formation - both for ourselves and for those we disciple.

Paul said it this way in 1 Cor 3:6-9

"6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building."

We each have a role and your role will be different from someone else's.

And God has a role and your role will never be his role! Here is the key thing to understand…the thing that will keep us humble and avoid pride!

"Only God who makes things grow" - only God!

You don't make others grow. You can't. You aren't smart enough. You aren't powerful enough. You don't have the authority to make someone else grow spiritually. You can help set them up for God to help them grow (facilitate the arrangement) but only God makes people grow!

So know your role and know God's role!

Your role is to humbly submit to God. To live faithfully for Him. To admit when you are wrong and repent. To be a person of love and action. To engage in those things God has called us to do, faithfully. No one else can do this for you. They can do it with you but not for you.

This takes the pressure off of you and puts it on God.

Many of you are probably conscientious and don't want to mess other people up. That is a valid concern but just remember that you are here to point people to Jesus. You won't always get it right but God can better work through our fumbling steps forward than He can work through our inaction. At least, that's how it often seems! Even mistakes are teaching opportunities!

Discussion Questions
What do you believe your role is in making disciples and spiritual formation?

What do you believe God's role is in making disciples and spiritual formation?

Appendix B: A Warning About Spiritual Warfare

When you begin making disciples you have made a decision that runs counter to the devil's plans. This means you may encounter resistance along the way.

You can get caught off guard if you don't know of the possibility.

Here is what Jesus said about it in Mark 3:27,

"In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house."

Satan is the strong man. Jesus came to plunder his house…to take people from captivity to freedom. And Jesus instructed us to do what he did - make disciples. Don't you think we will have to enter the strong man's house to do this?

What is the strong man's house?

It can be a community, a neighborhood, or even a specific household that is under the influence of the evil one. We go into those places - those dark places - to shine the light of truth. We offer deliverance and freedom!

When you make disciples you are helping people align themselves with Jesus. That means they are repenting to turn from Satan to God. And that often doesn't happen without a fight.

What might you see happen?

A relationship goes bad

Something at work that bubbles up to distract you

A health crisis that hits you in the middle of leading a discipleship group

It won't be the same thing for every person but you can have the eyes to see it when it happens.

In John 17:15, Jesus prayed,

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."

We need to pray this prayer for ourselves and those we disciple. The attack may come against those you invite. As they begin making a commitment to join the group or are in the group making changes in their life…they can come under spiritual attack. And it will go better if you know what to look for and are in prayer daily for their well-being.

So let us pray that God would break the strongholds of the enemy and protect His people! Pray that we can endure the attacks of the evil one. Let me end with this Scripture,

"10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you

can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." - Eph 6:10-18

If you need prayer, please reach out to those you are training with and/or your church leadership.

Discussion Questions
Have you ever undergone spiritual attack? What happened?

How might those of you training together help each other through whatever the devil throws your way?