



DISCIPLESHIP

10 Foundational Basics
Every Christian Needs To Know

Part 1

A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

Three
RIVERS CHURCH
Bedford

COMPASSION • RIGHTEOUSNESS • COURAGE

WEST AND EAST

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INTRODUCTION

The Guide

We've created this guide to help you become a disciple who can make disciples. We pray that it will give you the confidence you need to start stepping out in faith and to begin discipling the people whom God has placed in your life.

Inside the guide you will find Scripture to consider, questions to answer, suggestions, ideas and patterns to implement into your life. Our hope with this guide is that it will help you establish sustainable rhythms and disciplines as you seek to live out your faith in community with God's people.

The material is mostly based upon and adapted from the books *Multiply* by David Platt and Francis Chan and *Big 10 Discipleship* by Brian Brennt and Mike Riches. We believe the ten topics covered in this guide are essential and foundational disciplines for every Christian who is hungry to live out their faith practically.

Every person has a different and unique rhythm of life, so however you work this material out, it will probably look different to how someone else works this through. That's ok! What matters is that we are all faithfully seeking to follow our Saviour Jesus whilst joyfully fulfilling his commands, no matter how that looks.

From the beginning, God's good design has been for every single disciple of Jesus to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples until the gospel spreads to the ends of the earth.

We have a responsibility to grow in our love and service to God and others. This is what it means to be the church. We are not merely responsible for our own spiritual well-being; we are called to minister to the people around us, teaching them to obey all the things that Jesus commands.

The apostle Paul provides a great model for us when he writes in **1 Thessalonians 2:8** – *'Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well'*.

God wants us to live, serve and process truth in the context of a community. Working together with other people will be invaluable as you seek to sort out what the Bible is saying and how God wants that truth to play out in your life.

It doesn't mean we have to have it all together. We model what it means to be people in need of grace helping people in need of grace.

To see a shift it has to start with you. Be intentional. Be prayerfully dependent on God. And just make a start by sharing with others what God is teaching you and the difference it is making.

We will be praying for you.

SESSION 1: What is a Disciple?

Introduction

Two thousand years ago, Jesus walked up to a handful of men and said, 'Follow me!'

They were ordinary people like you and me and Jesus called them to walk away from their jobs, from their families, from their normal everyday lives.

Jesus called to them, 'Follow me! And I will make you fishers of men.'

It was a promise: Jesus **will** make disciples who make disciples.

It was a command: Jesus **commands** his disciples to make disciples.

Read the key text:

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

- Matt. 28:19-20

Definition

Read the following additional Bible passages:

- Luke 6:40
- Eph. 4:20-24

Disciple – a disciple is someone who is engaged in a process of **transformative learning** to become more and more **like** their teacher.

The goal of Christian discipleship is not just to know what Jesus knows but to learn how the truth about Him should shape the way we live and to pass it on.

Opening Question: What characteristics do you think make for a good disciple?

Read together the words of Jesus in **Luke 14:26-33** slowly and carefully. Understand that Jesus is speaking these words to you today.

Question: How should these words affect the way we approach being a disciple?

Question: If you choose to follow Jesus what might it cost you?

Pray: Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to work on your heart and prepare you for what following him might cost you. Be honest about your doubts, hesitations and fears. Ask Him to give you the strength to follow him no matter the cost.

The Character of a Disciple

The characteristics which mark a good disciple are:

Faithfulness
Availability
Teachability

Discussion: Describe what these look like and why they are so essential to being a good disciple of Jesus. What might you add? (You may want to consider Galatians 5:22-23).

Disciples who make Disciples

Every Christian should be a disciple who makes disciples who makes disciples.

Question: Why do you think many churches lose motivation and urgency for making disciples of Jesus?

Question: What do you think common obstacles are?

Pray: Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you overcome obstacles such as:

Fear Unbelief Selfishness Avoidance Withdrawal Rebellion

Reflection – Being Intentional

Question: How are you currently being disciplined?

Question: How intentional are you at building relationships?

Question: Who are you praying for to accept Jesus and what are you doing to build relationship with them?

Question: Are you only surrounded by Christians? What can you do to make changes?

Powerful and Effective Discipleship

Read **1 Cor. 3:7**

Question: Why is prayer essential to effective discipleship?

Also essential for effective discipleship is:

- **Walking with God** – you can't give away what you don't already possess.

Our own walk with God is always the starting place. If we are not in close relationship to Jesus we cannot help others with theirs. Everything must spring from the overflow of our own vulnerable and intimate relationship with Jesus.

- **Being with people** – Meaningful relationships are key.

If we spend time with God but never with people, evangelism and discipleship will never happen.

- **Having a plan – Homework:** Work through the **Discipleship Plan**.

Pray: Finish by praying for one another as we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus.

HOMEWORK: The Discipleship Plan

By David Platt from his book 'Follow Me'

1. How will I fill my mind with Truth?

How will I read God's word? How will I memorise God's word? How will I learn God's Word from others?

2. How will I fuel my affections for God?

How will I worship? How will I pray? How will I fast? How will I give?

3. How will I share God's love as a witness in the world?

Who? How? When?

4. How will I show God's love as a member of a church?

Where? What?

5. How will I spread God's glory among all peoples?

How will I pray for the nations? How will I give to the nations? How will I go to the nations?

6. How will I make disciple makers among a few people?

How will I bring them in? How will I teach them to obey? How will I model obedience? How will I send them out?

Book Recommendation: *Follow Me* by David Platt

SESSION 2: Who is Jesus?

Introduction – Who is Jesus to us?

Opening Discussion: Give a one line description of Jesus and what He means to you.

Going Deeper with Jesus

Read some or all of the Bible verses below and discuss the following question for each:

Question: Why do you think it is so important for Christians to continuously ask the Holy Spirit to help us grow deeper in our knowledge and understanding of Jesus and His Ministry?

- Jeremiah 9:23-24
- Philippians 3:7-10
- Matthew 6:19-21
- Exodus 33:13-18
- John 15:1-5
- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- Ephesians 1:17

What does the bible say about who Jesus is?

Group work: Split into two groups and give each group one set of bible passages below. Work through what they tell us about Jesus and then come back together to share what you have discovered.

Use the following questions to shape the discussion:

Question: What does the passage tell us about who Jesus is?

Question: How should this impact our perspective and focus?

Group 1

- John 1:1-5
- Colossians 1:15-23

Group 2

- John 1:14
- Hebrews 4:14-16
- Luke 4:1,14
- John 7:38-39
- John 15:5
- Hebrews 12:1-2

Pray: Finish the evening by focusing on Jesus. Thank and praise Him for all He is and all we have and are in Him.

Book Recommendation: *Christ Our Life* and *The Good God* by Mike Reeves

SESSION 3: Prayer

Introduction

Opening Discussion: When you hear the word 'prayer' what springs to mind?

Question: Why do you think we so often have negative images of prayer or struggle with it?

In this session we are going to see how prayer puts us in touch with the best friend we will ever have. Jesus desires to not only be our Lord, but our friend. The King of the universe wants to spend time with us and show himself to us. Prayer is the basic building block of this friendship.

Prayer is intimate conversation with Jesus Christ.

Prayer as Worship

For some people prayer seems to come really naturally when they come to faith in Jesus. For others, to speak their prayers out loud can initially be really difficult! One way to develop this is to begin by using written prayers read out loud.

Activity: Think about what you would want to say to Jesus if He was standing right there in the room with you. Write the words down on a piece of paper beginning with '*Jesus, I want to thank you...*'

Once everyone has finished writing, fold all the prayer sup and put them in a container in the middle. Each person take a sheet out and read it aloud as an act of worship.

How to Pray

Needing help learning how to pray is nothing new! Even the first disciples of Jesus went to him and said, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

Read **Luke 11:1-4**

Jesus gave a model to pray from. Sometimes we don't know what to pray and using a model can be helpful. One model, based upon the Lord's Prayer is known as 'TACIS' (pronounced 'TACK-iss'.)

- T** - Thanksgiving – thanking God for what He has done.
- A** - Adoration – praising God for who He is.
- C** - Confession – praying to God and acknowledging our Sin.
- I** - Intercession – praying to God for others.
- S** - Supplication – praying to God for ourselves.

Discussion: What sorts of things might you include under each section?

Pray: Try putting the model into practice as a group. Take each heading and go around the group with each person saying a short prayer based on the theme.

Thanksgiving – Thankyou God for...

Adoration – Praise you God for...

Confession – Lord, I'm sorry for...

Intercession – Lord, will you please...

Supplication – Lord, please help me with...

Finish by praying like the first disciples: 'Lord, teach me to pray'.

HOMEWORK: Putting it into Practice

Try and put the model into practice during the week to help you pray.

Elizabeth Alves, in her book, 'Becoming a Prayer Warrior' summarises the seven expressions of praise found in the Hebrew language. Look up the verses for each of these seven ways to help you praise God and begin to practice them in your life.

a. **Sacrifice** – to render, or give back, thanksgiving or praise (Psalms 42:4; 100:4).

b. **Gesture** – to throw hands in the air (Psalms 67:3; 107:8, 15, 21, 31).

c. **Gratitude** – to kneel in gratitude for God's provision (Psalms 31:21; 63:4; 95:6).

d. **Celebrate** (Psalms 56:4; 150:1, 2).

e. **Music** – to praise the Lord skilfully on an instrument. (Psalms 21:13; 33:2; 98:4).

f. **Corporate** – to praise with others (Psalms 22:3,25; 33:1; 35:28).

g. **Say it** – to comment on the qualities of the Lord. Praise God for his mighty acts and deeds (Psalms 63:3, 4; 117:1; 147:12).

Practice praising and thanking God by reading the Scriptures. Start by reading out loud **Psalms 145:1-7**. Read it to God.

Search for worship music to play in your home and car. Ask a friend for a favourite if you don't know where to begin. Enjoy some worship alone, just you and him!

Reflect

Question: What practical steps will you take to make intercession a weekly discipline?

Question: How would eliminating television and movies from your life allow prayer to blossom?

Question: What are some worship CD's that you currently own?

Practical Ideas

Try listening to worship music whilst you pray.

Go on a prayer walk around your community.

Ask for God's heart as you see the needs of people around you.

Book Recommendation: *Growing in Prayer* by Mike Bickle

SESSION 4: The Bible

Introduction

Opening Discussion: What is your first thought or reaction to the idea of reading the Bible on your own?

Discussion: Describe your experience with studying the Bible. What approaches have you tried? What has been effective? What has been ineffective? What have you learned in the process?

Many people can find the Bible intimidating and have a hard time understanding how all sixty-six books fit together. And yet the Bible contains a remarkable story with simple themes that unite the whole book. At times it is filled with adventure, in other moments it has romance, intrigue, hope, poetry, and wisdom.

What is the Bible?

Read the key text: **2 Timothy 3:16**

The Bible is a collection of writings from different authors writing at different times in different places.

In one sense it is written by men. The Apostle Paul wrote many of the letters. David wrote many of the Psalms and Jesus affirms that Moses wrote much of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). In fact, it is estimated that there are over 40 different human authors who wrote the Bible in Greek, Hebrew and even parts of Daniel which are in Aramaic!

And yet, when we read the Bible we are hearing God speak.

Read another key text: **2 Peter 1:20-21**

The Bible is both God-breathed and written by men. God has recorded his very words and the testimony of Jesus' followers in a book so we don't have to make guesses about what He is like or what He asks of us.

Andrew Wilson in his book *Unbreakable: What the Son of God said about the Word of God* offers a really helpful illustration of how this comes together. Read it together:

'Consider a Jazz musician who can play all sorts of different instruments. Nobody, listening to Louis Armstrong, would ask whether the music was being made by Louis or his trumpet; everybody knows that the breath and the tune come from Louis, but the instrument, through which the breath passes, in order to become audible, is the trumpet. The Bible writers, if you like, are the instruments of revelation – a trumpet here, an oboe there, a saxophone here – and they all make different sounds. But the musician, the skilled artist who fills them all with his breath and ensures the tune is played correctly, is the Holy Spirit. That's kind of how inspiration works'.

Question: How does this change our attitudes and response to Scripture? (Even the hard bits!)

Question: How do you tend to respond to the Bible's teaching? Would you say that you approach it humbly and with a desire to change? How do you need to adjust your approach to studying the Bible?

Why read the Bible?

Read the following passages:

- John 20:31
- Matt 4:4
- 1 Pet. 2:2-3

Question: Why should reading the Bible be considered an essential and regular discipline in the Christian life?

How to read the Bible?

Even after we have decided that reading the Bible is important, we still need to learn to approach it in the right way with the right motives. It is easy to misuse the Bible if we don't ask how to use it the right way.

1. It's important to read the Bible **Devotionally**

Have a glancing look through **Psalm 119** finally coming to focus on **vv. 129-133**. That's some serious desire!

Question: Take minute to meditate again on **1 Peter 2:1-2** and **Psalm 119**. What would your life look like if you desired the Word as described in those passages?

2. It's important to read the Bible **Prayerfully**

Christians often talk about praying AND reading their Bibles but we don't often hear much about praying while reading the Bible.

Read **1 Cor. 2:9-14**

Make sure you understand the point of the passage: you cannot understand the Bible without the Holy Spirit's help. We simply cannot understand spiritual truths apart from the Spirit of God. This is why prayer is absolutely essential to Bible study. It's not a symbolic gesture; it's not a formality: it is foundational to understanding the mind of God.

Question: In practical terms, what does it mean to study the bible prayerfully? What can you do to build prayer and dependence on God into your study of the Bible?

3. It's important to read the Bible **Transformationally**

We read the Bible understanding that the truth we learn about must shape and change our lives. Knowledge is a means to an end. We should always be responding to what we

read either in worship, praise and adoration or by practically looking at how to live it out with the help of Holy Spirit.

Read **James 1:22-25** and **Hebrews 4:12**

We must evaluate our lives in the light of what we discover in the word.

Question: What changes do you need to make to the way you study the Bible?

4. It's important to read the Bible **Responsibly**

We must let the Bible speak on its own terms, paying attention to context and the plain meaning of the text. The authors had an intended meaning and it's our job to work out firstly what they were saying to the people of their time and only then, build bridges into our context and time to establish how the same principles work out today.

Question: If you find yourself struggling to understand the Scriptures, where can you go for help?

5. It's important to read the Bible **Frequently**

There are loads of different Bible Reading Plans that can help you establish good patterns of reading the Bible. It doesn't matter if you miss a day, what matters is that you are regularly spending time hearing from God.

As with most disciplines the key is intentionality. Different plans will work better for different people. Just a few include:

The Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan

Bible in One Year

5 Day Bible Reading Program

Chronologically

5x5x5 Bible Reading Plan

To find out more about them and to discover even more methods go to <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/bible-reading-plans/> for more Bible Reading Plans than you will know what to do with!

However you end up reading the Bible, the goal is an intimate living relationship with Jesus. Never let it devolve into a sense of duty, guard yourself against boredom and heartless religion. Times in the word should touch your heart and transform you.

Prayer: Close this session by praying. Ask God to purify your heart with regard to Scripture. Ask Him to produce in you a longing for the pure milk of the Word of God.

Homework: Find a Bible Reading Plan and getting reading the word. Share what you discover and how it has impacted your heart with someone else in the church.

Book Recommendations:

Why Trust the Bible? by Amy Orr-Ewing

Unbreakable: What the Son of God said about the Word of God by Andrew Wilson

SESSION 5: Holy Spirit

Introduction

Opening Discussion: What words come to mind when you think about Holy Spirit?

Look up the following verses:

- **Genesis 1:2**
- **Genesis 2:7**

Question: What role does the Spirit play?

In **Genesis 2:7** the Spirit is life giving. The Hebrew word for breath is *ruach*, which is also the word for Spirit. The Spirit or breath of God brings physical life to humanity as well as spiritual life to people and churches).

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament we see Holy Spirit coming upon people at specific times. Read the passages which follow. You may want to briefly paraphrase the wider story but read out the part where the Spirit comes.

- Gideon - **Judges 6**
- Samson – **Judges 15**
- Saul – **1 Samuel 10**

Discussion: What difference did Holy Spirit make?

The prophet Joel prophesied that change would come. Read **Joel 2:28-29**.

Question: What would be different?

In the Old Testament God gave his law to his chosen people. In Jeremiah we see the promise that God put his law within the life of a believer. Read the following passages:

- **Jeremiah 31:33**
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27**

Question: What do the passages say about how God would put the Law in people's hearts?

Holy Spirit in the Earthly Life of Jesus

The Holy Spirit was involved in the very conception of Jesus in **Luke 1:35**. Luke also writes about the Spirit's involvement in the ministry of Jesus.

Read the following scriptures:

- **Luke 3:16**
- **Luke 3:21-22**
- **Luke 4:1-2**
- **Luke 4:14-21**

Discussion: What do they say about the role of Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus?

Holy Spirit in the Life of Believers

Jesus promised help from God's Spirit for his followers in **John 7:38-39**.

Question: Who can receive the Holy Spirit?

Read **Acts 2:1-21** and **37-41**.

Question: What were some of the sights and sounds that happened when the Spirit came?

Holy Spirit has a powerful impact – look at the effect on Peter's preaching!

Question: What should be the impact of Holy Spirit on our lives today?

Discussion: Are there any testimonies in the group of how Holy Spirit has made a difference?

HOMEWORK: Supplementary Reading

Look up the following scriptures and note down what they say about Holy Spirit:

- **Proverbs 1:23**
- **Isaiah 11:2**
- **Ephesians 1:16-17**
- **1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 13**
- **Luke 2:25-26**
- **John 14:26**
- **Mark 13:11**
- **1 Corinthians 12:8**
- **John 14:26**
- **Acts 15:28**
- **John 16:5-8 and 13-15**
- **Acts 9:31**
- **Eph 4:30**
- **Acts 7:51**

Book Recommendation: *The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts* by Sam Storms

