

Discipleship: Training Through Ephesians

The Mission of GCC is *To Make Disciples*. A disciple someone who follows Jesus, abides in Jesus, and participates in the mission of Jesus. *To follow Jesus* is to be a radical, all-in, come what may, heartfelt believer in Jesus who acknowledges Jesus' divinity, Jesus' sacrificial death, and Jesus' justifying resurrection, who submits to the Lordship of Jesus, and who worships Jesus. *To abide in Jesus* is to live, dwell, and remain in Jesus' love and word. *To participate in the mission of Jesus* is to grow as His disciples and to help make disciples through evangelizing the lost and building up the body of believers.

GCC is committed to discipleship and therefore encourages the congregation to enter into discipleship relationships. A discipleship relationship is a consistent and focused effort to grow in Christlikeness together with another disciple. The idea is that two people will mutually invest in their own Christlikeness and in the Christlikeness of the other person. Discipleship pairs are individuals of the same gender (unless spouses or parent/child) who commit to meeting in person once a week for at least an hour. These meetings include a time of Teaching/Topic which will follow the content of the weekly sermon, a time of Association which is focused on getting to know the other person or to learn about the other's week, and a time of Guidance which focuses on practical application for the upcoming week and prayer together.

This round of discipleship relationships will run through the end of the year. Feel free to stay with your current discipleship partner or to enter into a new partnership. GCC will provide TAG (Teaching, Association, Guidance) materials weekly. Your responsibility is to find a partner and mutually to commit to meeting regularly and to growing in Christlikeness.

The weekly TAG materials will focus on the book of Ephesians. The book of Ephesians is a rich tapestry of theology and practical application. By focusing on one book of the Bible for the next four months, we have the opportunity to go deeper in our mutual Christlikeness. Ephesians teaches us who we are in Christ—chosen, adopted, redeemed, sealed, & raised. It teaches us how to live in unity with fellow believers, how to resist the schemes of the devil, and how to walk in holiness in a hostile world.

Chapters 1-3 explain our position in Christ—what God has done for us. Chapters 4-6 explain our practice in Christ—how we should live because of what God has done for us. This structure teaches a vital lesson: We don't live for approval; we live from approval. Our calling precedes our conduct. God's grace fuels our growth. Theology gives rise to transformation.

Association—Get to know your discipleship partner. Share how you came to Christ and what areas of Christlikeness in which you hope to grow.

Teaching—Have you ever read Ephesians? How familiar are you with it? How does its structure point to the Gospel's truth that God saves the willing, not the worthy?

Guidance—Consider journaling your interaction with Ephesians, noting what stands out, what confuses you, how it encourages or challenges you. Commit to reading the entire book this week. Pray with and for one another. Set a meeting time for next week.