



Discipleship Modules

relational discipleship resource

fbcva.org/discipleship

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Module

Introduction

This booklet was designed for someone who has never disciplined another person but is willing to do so with a little guidance. It is a tool that can be used by that person to introduce the person being disciplined to various aspects of the Christian life and help guide conversation(s) around each topic in order to provide further context between the mentor and disciple with the goal of incorporating that specific truth into the disciple's life.

The general layout for each module starts with an "Objective" that the mentor and disciple can pursue together. Then, "Conversation Guides" can help steer study and conversations around specific questions. Not all questions have to be answered; instead, they can be chosen according to what best fits the disciple at that time. Various scriptural passages are given with each question where the disciple can glean what God has to say about that subject, independently or with mentor guidance. Lastly, the "Think About It" section provides additional depth if time and desire allow. Each module gives material for 25-50 minutes and can be covered in one or two sessions. This works best in a weekly meeting context so that the disciple has time to think and consider what was discussed.

On the next page you will notice eight puzzle pieces, each with a specific subject. We believe these eight are foundational to every believer's maturing process. Struggles or inconsistencies within life can be due to a lack of understanding and/or appropriation in one or more of these foundations. Part of the mentor's responsibility is to ascertain where the disciple has a relatively solid understanding of each foundation, and where that understanding is having a practical impact on the disciple's life. Where there are gaps, effort should be made to intentionally strengthen the understanding and application within the disciple's life. A resource for additional discipleship in these eight foundations can be found on the FBC website (fbcva.org/discipleship).

Our prayer is that God will use these tools to help you either disciple or be disciplined and that they will guide you on that journey as you trust Him to transform your life while you behold the wonder of who God is.



GRACE is the cornerstone

A life lived out from a grace perspective instead of a legalistic or license foundation. Do I understand the admonition to grow in the grace of the Lord and am I pursuing grace and being taught by it? **2 Peter 3:18 | Titus 2:11-13**



POSITION in Christ

A right understanding of what the scriptures tell us about our position and identity in Christ. Do I personally understand and appropriate these truths and are they impacting the way that I live on a daily basis? How could/should positional truth affect the way that I live?

Ephesians 1-3 | Colossians 2:10-13



VIEW of God

A proper view and understanding of the nature and character of God. How a person views God is probably the most important thing about them. Our thinking about Him will inform what we believe about Him, impacting how we live. Does my view of God come from a biblical understanding or is it just a perception I have about God based on my feelings or experiences? Does my view accurately reflect who He really is, and am I growing in knowing Him more and more?

Philippians 3:8-10 | Ephesians 1:15-19 | 2 Peter 3:18



BODY life

A high regard for the body of Christ, the Church, and our place in the body. Is there a demonstrated desire to be used by God to impact others and for others to impact my life? Seeing this value at work necessitates time spent within the family of God, using our particular gifts and talents to build one another up in the faith.

Ephesians 4:11-16 | 1 Corinthians 12:4-11



THE GOSPEL and Salvation

An accurate understanding of what the Gospel is and how faith in the finished work of Christ leads to salvation. Do I have a clear gospel understanding? What am I trusting in for salvation? Do I question if I can lose my salvation or whether I am actually saved? We should also be able to communicate the gospel to others.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4



AUTHORITY of God's Word

A recognition that God's Word can and should speak into our lives, having the final say over our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Therefore, I benefit from studying it on a regular basis, rightly dividing and interpreting it so that I may become more mature in Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16



MINISTRY of the Holy Spirit

An understanding of the ministry that the Spirit of God has in my life. This is paramount to my growth and walk. Being led by Him, relying on His empowerment, yielding to Him, and responding to His conviction are all examples of how this foundation can impact my life.

Romans 8:14 | 1 Corinthians 12:13 | Galatians 5:16



WORSHIP of God

A reverence of God and a life lived for His glory. Worship is an essential response to God's nature, which is for His glory and our good. Getting our heart's attention off ourselves and on to Him is one way we describe worship. We desire to see this become more characteristically expressed within the life of a disciple.

John 4:23-24 | Romans 12:1

Introductory Meeting

OBJECTIVE

The introductory meeting is designed to begin establishing a relational foundation for both the mentor and the disciple. Free and honest communication will be a core value in this discipleship process and should begin to be established if it is not already present. Following are various questions or subjects to guide you in establishing that foundation and starting this journey.

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

Levels of communication parallel with levels of relationship. If you desire a deeper relationship, it will require deeper communication.

LEVEL 1 - Basic Communication

The most shallow level of communication, lasting only a few minutes and consisting of basic pleasantries.

LEVEL 2 - Gathering Information

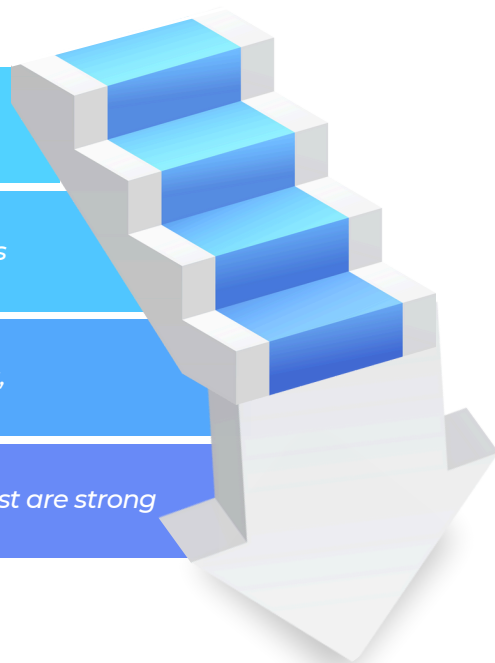
Following Level 1 but lasting slightly longer. Information is exchanged, including work, life, and family dynamics.

LEVEL 3 - Friendship

The most common level of communication, where beliefs, opinions, and values are shared. It is a comfortable level.

LEVEL 4 - The Heart

Where issues of the heart are shared. Confidence and trust are strong but the potential to sever the relationship is a higher risk.



CONVERSATION GUIDES

Describe your salvation experience: when it took place, the experience leading up to salvation, circumstances surrounding your salvation, and any details that you each might benefit from by knowing each others experiences with discipleship and mentoring.

Give a brief overview of your spiritual journey to this date. The desire is to learn about the things, events, etc., that God has used to bring each of you to this moment.

What are the expectations, hopes, or desires that you have for this mentoring time? What do you hope to get out of this?

Establish a schedule of where, when, and other details to make your mentoring time successful.

Suggest meeting once a week, every other week, or at least twice a month.

Other possible discussions:

Discuss the elements of trust between the mentor and disciple. Talk about the importance of acknowledging it, mutually pursuing it, and the need to develop trust.

Discuss the foundation that this discipling effort will be built on. Before this meeting, it is highly recommended that both the mentor and disciple read *Disciplined by Grace* by John Strombeck. The foundational thought of living in and from grace and the liberty in Christ should be the prevailing principle during this discipleship process. Legalism and license will challenge that foundation, but both mentor and disciple will seek to align their thoughts and beliefs with such grace. This foundation is fundamental to true discipleship and will help guard against the pursuit of performance-based theology (legalism) and the rebellious heart (license) that seeks to abuse grace and the liberty in Christ.

Mutually set goals for Levels of Communication/Relationships.

What is **Discipleship?**

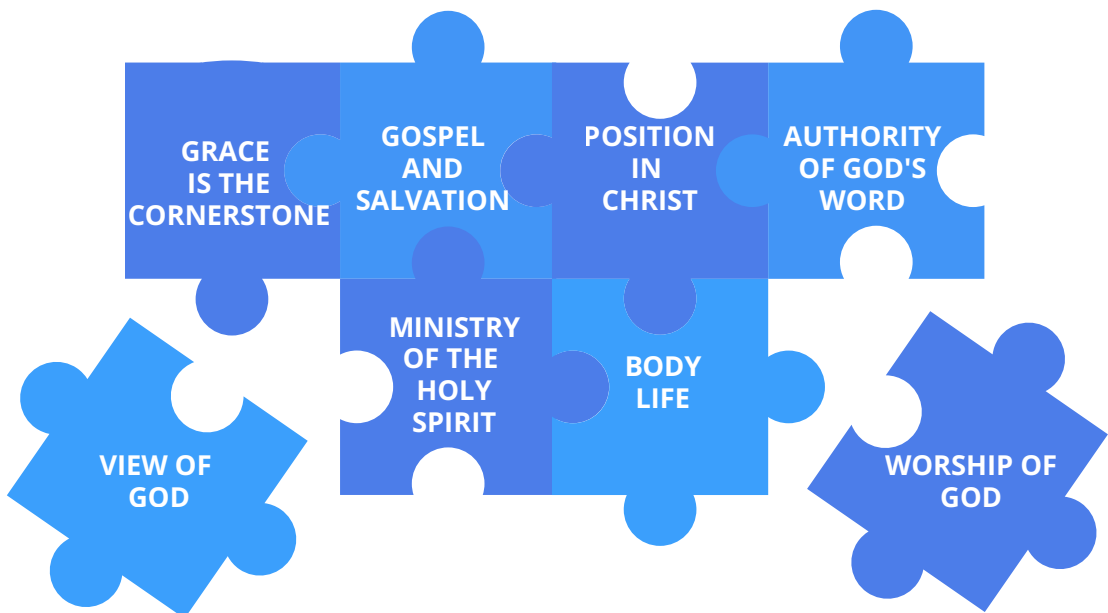
Discipleship is...

Helping one another to learn more about Christ and connecting that knowledge with our everyday lives so the life of Christ is being characteristically displayed.

Discipleship Foundations

Where is the disciple's understanding and practice in each of these foundations? To gain knowledge of where the disciple is weak or strong in these foundations, the mentor should:

- Ask quality questions.
- Spend time observing the disciple's life practice.
- Discern the disciple's ability to pass these truths on to others.



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CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is a disciple?

Does salvation make someone a disciple, or is there something more to it? Are there varying degrees of being a disciple?

In other words, does the Scripture indicate varying degrees of being a disciple that would challenge us to pursue truly being a disciple of Christ? Note how the Twelve were called Jesus' disciples but also others were described in the same way (Matthew 8:21; 16:24; 27:57; John 6:66; 19:38; Acts 9:10, 26). Some followed Christ casually and rejected Him later when they faced difficulties.

Why is it important to make the distinction? Read Matthew 28:19-20. What would it mean to be taught to "observe" everything that Christ commanded?

J. Dwight Pentecost says a disciple is "one who comes to be taught." Is that concept important for both the disciple and mentor? Why or why not? Is it important that the disciple desires mentoring? If so, why? How could the disciple express that desire?

What characteristics are developing in a true disciple of Christ?

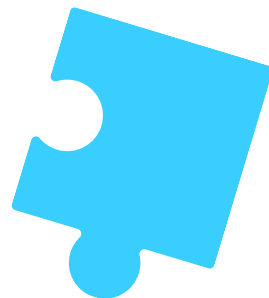
For example, the development of trust, teachability and openness to input, a growing faithfulness to what is learned, etc.

Discipleship is for a lifetime. Since this is true, how could a disciple make the most of that?

Ideas: pursuing multiple mentors throughout the lifetime, pursuing development rather than waiting for it to happen, making decisions in life that promote discipleship and demonstrate its value to oneself.

What is **THE GOSPEL?**

1 Corinthians 15:1-4



OBJECTIVE

The desire is that the disciple clearly understands the gospel, is able to communicate it clearly, and develops a heart of care for those still in need of its message.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

How does someone become a Christian or receive salvation?

What are the basics that a person must understand and trust in to be saved?

I am a sinner, Christ died for my sins and rose again, I trust in that.
1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Can a person know for sure that they are saved? If so, how?

1 John 5:13

How do works or “fruit” play into this assurance? Confidence needs to be in what the Word states rather than in what is seen or not seen in the life expression.

Titus 3:4-5; Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:4-9

Can you lose your salvation? Why or why not? How would you answer someone who said, “You can lose your salvation”?

What things do you struggle with in evangelism? How can a mentor help with this?

Discuss commonly accepted statements within Christianity regarding salvation and consider what they might mean to an unbeliever. Examples might be:

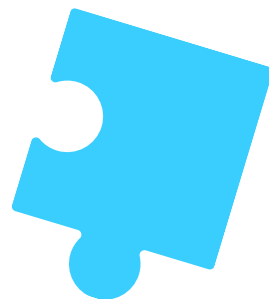
- Ask Jesus into your heart.
- Give your life to Jesus.

THINK ABOUT IT

- Consider memorizing 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.
- This session could be a good place to be challenged regarding the value of using your personal testimony in evangelism. It might be beneficial to write it out.

GRACE

is the cornerstone



2 Peter 3:18

Titus 2:11-13

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this session is to consider grace, understand what it is and is not, and consider the practical impact that it could or should have on how I live my life. Viewing grace as a foundational cornerstone for the believer's walk is imperative for combating legalistic performance and merit-based ways of thinking and living. In addition, the basis of grace in a believer's life combats "I'll do what I want" thinking and living. I should consider how it impacts a believer practically, according to Titus 2:11-13.



SUGGESTION

Read *Disciplined by Grace* by John Strombeck.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is grace? What is it not? How would you define it both simply and more deeply?

Consider how the Bible describes it including what it is not (i.e., freedom to do whatever one pleases. See Jude 1:4). Give examples of how or where Christ demonstrated grace.

How should/could an understanding of grace impact the life of the believer?

Consider Titus 2:11-13 and discuss what grace teaches; what does it teach us to deny, and how does it teach us to live? See Romans 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:15, 9:8, 12:9; 2 Timothy 2:1; James 4:6

Why do you think we are commanded to grow in grace in 2 Peter 3:18? How does the knowledge of Christ impact that growth?

Consider how you actually grow in grace. Consider how that affects relationships toward others, toward yourself, and toward patience and long-suffering.

Does the Bible support the notion that “too much grace” leads to a life of excess and sin?

Consider if there is any limit to God's grace toward you. Are there any examples in Scripture of that and any detrimental effect as a result? See Romans 6:1, 15; Hebrews 4:16

What does it mean to be “full of grace and truth” as Christ is described in John 1:14? How does being full of grace and truth impact us and others?

What is grace able to do, and how might that impact the way in which a person would disciple another according to Acts 20:32?

What does it mean to stand in grace and how do we stand in grace?

*Consider Romans 5:2; 1 Peter 5:12.
What does it mean to be "established by grace" in Hebrews 13:9?*

What does it mean to "fall from grace" according to Galatians 5:4 and Hebrews 12:15?

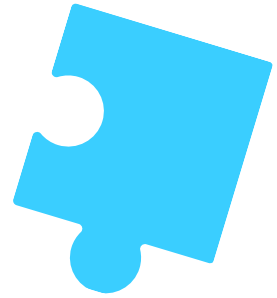
THINK ABOUT IT

- Consider grace in the book of Ephesians.
- Is grace merely a topic of the New Testament or is the grace of God also found in the Old Testament?
- How does wisdom help us grow in grace?

GROWTH

and time

1 Corinthians 3:1-2



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this session is to identify the need for growth in a person's life and the time it takes for that to happen. Identifying growth, becoming aware of things that hinder growth, and accepting that growth takes time are all part of the maturing process. Although growth is not the objective of life, the maturation process should be expectantly observed in my life.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Why should there be an expectation of growth in the believer's life?

Hebrews 5:12; Galatians 1:6; 1 Timothy 4:15-16; Ephesians 4:13-15; Philippians 3:12-14

How does a believer grow spiritually?

John 15:1-8; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

How do we expect a believer will change, and how do we expect a believer to remain the same?

Can the rate of growth be increased? Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Timothy 4:6-8

What factors impact growth? How can I patiently wait for growth while also being a good steward of the time it takes to grow?

Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13; 4:6-7

What part does mentoring play in growth? Can I grow without it? How important should this be to me that I find someone to mentor me?

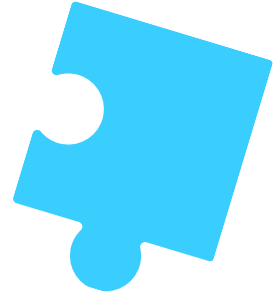
2 Timothy 2:1-2; Ephesians 4:16; Philippians 3:17

THINK ABOUT IT

- Growth is dynamic rather than static. Can I expect to ever "fully attain" to maturing in any area of growth?
- What could be my response if I don't have a healthy expectation of either my attainment or the rate at which I seem to be growing or not growing?

IDENTITY

Ephesians 1-3



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this session is to consider our identity in Christ, seeking to gain a foundational understanding and practical application of that in life. This begins with learning what Scripture says about my identity and knowing the basic foundational points, such as my identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and then considering the practical implications of these truths on my life. The desire should be to establish the basis on which the believer lives their life and put that into practice.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What does the Bible say about my identity in Christ? Is this really true about me or is it just a way that God thinks of me?

Romans 5-8; Ephesians 1-3; Colossians 2:10-13

How would it look in someone's life if they were truly convinced of their identity in Christ? How would it impact the way they see themselves and other believers?

What would it look like in someone's life if they were not convinced of their identity in Christ?

What is the difference between being "in Adam" and being "in Christ"?

Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22

What does it mean to be "dead to sin but alive to God in Christ" as written in Romans 6:11?

What excites me most about my identity in Christ?

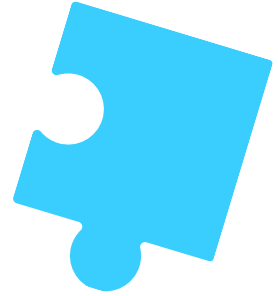
For example, I no longer am under the power of sin. I am completely and totally accepted. I already have every spiritual blessing. I am now part of the family of God.

THINK ABOUT IT

- Consider the identity truths in Ephesians 1-3. For example, we are accepted, adopted as sons, and sealed by His Spirit. What is my understanding of these truths, both intellectually and practically?
- Look up verses that describe how the believer is seen in Christ and discuss those. For example, Colossians 2:10 says that I am complete in Him. What does it mean to be complete?

ACCEPTANCE

Ephesians 1:6



OBJECTIVE

Building upon the understanding of our identity in Christ, the subject of the believer's acceptance in Christ is a good starting point in learning the specific things that are true about the believer's position. Consider and discern the fundamental need of the heart to be accepted, where that need is satisfied according to the Bible, and guide the disciple toward that realization in their life.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Can I identify the need for acceptance in my life? What actions on my part demonstrate that need?

Example - How I dress among my peers, what I am willing to do in order to "fit in," and what I will say or won't say in order to be accepted?

What do you think of the popular expression "Don't judge me"? Can this be an example of the need to be accepted?

How does perceived "acceptance" from my peers satisfy my heart? Does it satisfy me or am I always left with something less than complete acceptance? How does that compare with the acceptance that God has for me?

How would it look in someone's life if they were truly convinced of their acceptance in Christ? How would it impact the way they see themselves and the way they see other believers?

What do I need to do in order to enjoy being "accepted in the Beloved" as described in Ephesians 1:6?

How might knowing the truth that God truly accepts me because I am in Christ, and resting in that truth, change the way that I live?

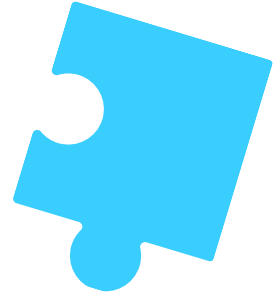
What would/could a life look like that is not secure in this acceptance?

THINK ABOUT IT

- What other specific truths are yours in Christ?
- Consider studying those truths.

APPROPRIATION:

making it mine



OBJECTIVE

This session will help the disciple understand the necessity of Biblical truth becoming more than just something that is intellectually understood. God desires that His Word impacts and changes a life in practical ways, including thoughts, and attitudes. It is marked by an understanding of truth and a pursuit of applying and practicing it in the daily life and walk of the believer. One author put it this way, *"Appropriation does not necessarily mean to gain something new, but to set aside for our practical possession something that already belongs to us."* - Guthrie Chamberlain

CONVERSATION GUIDES

One's thinking will determine one's attitude or settled conclusion, which will then, in turn, impact the actions or practical outworking of those thoughts and mindset. With this in mind, the first priority in growth related to appropriating truth is in the thinking process. What does God's Word say about our thinking? What thinking should be accepted by the believer, and what should be rejected?

Philippians 4:6, 9

According to Romans 6:1-16, believers should know what God says is true about them, believe that they are true, and choose to yield to the Spirit's work instead of yielding to our own desires, which leads to sin. Discuss these three parts of appropriation. Discuss the dynamics of choosing to sin.

For example: Sinning is now a choice because sin's power over the believer has been broken due to the work of Christ. Notice the wording that describes this choice in v. 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16.

When seeking to apply any Biblical truth to my life, do I need to wait until I feel like doing it in order to be authentic or can I apply it by faith, regardless of my feelings or circumstances?

Discuss this in detail.

How do I learn to rely on God's Spirit to give me the strength to appropriate Biblical truth instead of relying upon myself? What happens when I rely on myself instead?

What does it mean to walk by faith? How do I do that? What is the opposite of walking by faith?

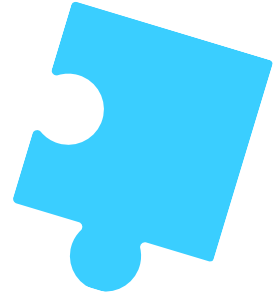
Romans 8:1, 6; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 5:16, 25; Ephesians 4:1; 5:8; Colossians 2:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 John 1:6-7

THINK ABOUT IT

- Do a word study on the words:
 - think
 - mind
 - thought
 - attitude

CREATED TO KNOW HIM

and make Him known



OBJECTIVE

This session will help the disciple embrace the imperative of knowing the Lord with an ever-greater understanding. Not only is this necessary for the disciple's life, but it is also crucial for making Him known to others. For example, in Philippians 3:8-10, Paul expresses his personal desire to know the Lord. He also prays for believers to know Him in Colossians 1:10 and Ephesians 1:15-19. Furthermore, Peter speaks of knowing Him and even concludes his second letter in chapter 3, verse 18, by commanding us to grow in "the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." These examples communicate that the believer must know the Lord with an ever-greater understanding.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Is there a difference between knowing about God and knowing God?

How would you explain the distinction to a new believer? Why is it significant to both know what the Bible says about God and to know in our experiences that He is who He says He is and does what He says He does?

What happens when we rely on experiences apart from an understanding of the Word?

What happens when we are filled with knowledge but no experience/application?

1 Corinthians 8:1

How is a hunger to know God developed and how do we get to know Him?

What part does time and experience play in this process?

What hinders us from knowing God?

Why is it important that the believer "knows" God? How would this understanding impact a life? How would the lack of this impact a life?

Example: Is knowing Him a part of maturing according to Ephesians 4:13 and 2 Peter 1:2

Whose responsibility is it that I grow in the knowledge of God? Is it my own personal responsibility, the church's responsibility, or both?

Who is responsible for making Christ known to those who don't know Him yet? How do we make Him known among others?

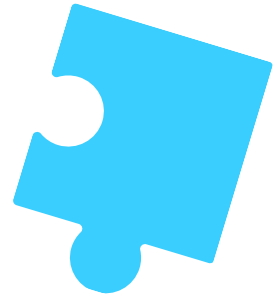
Matthew 28:18-20

THINK ABOUT IT

- Consider the following verses about knowing God:

- Titus 1:16
- 1 John 2:3
- 2 Corinthians 10:5
- 2 Peter 1:2-8
- 2 Peter 3:18

THE HOLY SPIRIT



OBJECTIVE

This session will help the believer become more aware and reliant upon the Spirit instead of fleshly effort. This two-part study of the Holy Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit will discuss who the Holy Spirit is, what His ministry is, and how the believer can be empowered and led by Him. Awareness of and cooperation with God's Spirit is crucial in the believer's life.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Is the Spirit of God a person or an immaterial force? What are the ramifications of these two options?

John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13-15.

Why does the Holy Spirit indwell or live within the believer?

2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:16, 25; Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:24; 4:13

What kinds of things does He do in and through the life of the believer?

1 Corinthians 2:10, 12; John 16:13; Romans 8:26

What does it mean to be led by the Spirit? How does He direct the believer?

Romans 8:14

What degree of power does He exert in the believer's life?

Ephesians 3:16; Romans 8:11

1 Corinthians 12:13 states that the Spirit places us in the body of Christ. What does this mean and what are the ramifications of that truth?

How do I participate in or cooperate with what the Spirit of God is doing in and through my life?

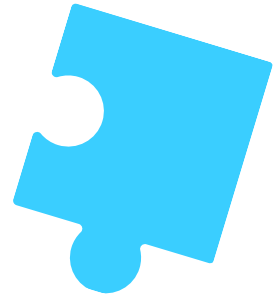
Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 talk about spiritual gifting. Who receives a gift, and for whom is it used? How does a believer get a gift and who determines which gift they receive?

THINK ABOUT IT

- What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18?
- How do I quench or grieve the Spirit? Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19
- Being indwelt by the Spirit is described in Ephesians 1:13-14 with the word "sealed." Discuss the ramifications of verse 14. Note also 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 4:30.

THE FRUIT

of the Spirit



OBJECTIVE

This module will help develop an understanding of what will be displayed in a life of a believer directed and empowered by the Spirit and to encourage the believer to live such a life. As fruit is a natural expression of the fruit tree, the fruit of the Spirit is a natural expression of a life that is yielded to Him and empowered by Him. When the Spirit produces fruit within a believer, the life of Christ will be lived and displayed in the believer's life. This results in giving glory to the Son and the Father.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is meant by the term "fruit of the Spirit" found in Galatians 5:22 and Ephesians 5:9?

How is this fruit produced in the life of the believer? Do all believers exhibit this fruit or only those walking with God in that moment?

What does the fruit of the Spirit look like or what is the expression in a life?

Galatians 5:22-23a

What hinders the fruit of the Spirit from being formed in the believer's life? Is a lack of this fruit an indication that the person is not saved, not walking with Him, or just immature?

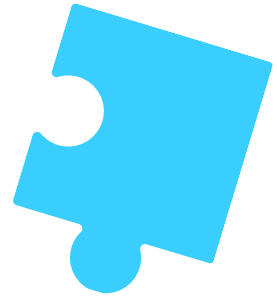
Is it possible to exhibit "parts" of the fruit of the Spirit but not all of them? How does the word "fruit," in the singular impact your thoughts on this question?

2 Corinthians 4:10-11 speaks of the life of Christ being manifested, or displayed, in the life of the believer. Is this synonymous with the fruit of the Spirit? What is described as necessary for that to be manifested?

THINK ABOUT IT

- What truths can be gleaned about the Spirit's involvement in the believer's life from the following verses?
 - Romans 8:14
 - 1 Corinthians 2:10
 - 1 Corinthians 2:12
 - 1 Corinthians 3:9-12
 - 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
 - Galatians 5:25
- Concerning the Holy Spirit, how do Church-age believers differ from Old Testament believers?

FAITH



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this session is to discuss and consider the various ways in which "faith" impacts us both for salvation and for the life of the believer. We will seek an understanding of what faith is and is not. Faith's expression in salvation and the walk of the believer are examples of how this subject should impact us.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is faith? How would you define it?

Is faith synonymous with trust, believe, rely upon, and have confidence in? Why or why not? Helpful Scriptures include Romans 4:20-21; 10:17; Hebrews 11:1.

What does the Bible say faith is and what does the world say faith is?

How does faith impact one's salvation? Is it a necessary aspect of a salvation experience?

Is there such a thing as "saving faith"? Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:26

Is there a distinction between faith that leads to salvation and some other kind of faith?

What is the difference - is it the kind of faith, the object of faith?

Romans 3:22, 30; Ephesians 2:8

How might faith in daily living be expressed in the life of a believer?

Romans 1:8, 17; Galatians 2:20, 3:11, 17; Hebrews 10:38, 11:6

Is it possible for the believer to live righteously, mature, and grow apart from exercising faith? How vital is faith for daily living?

What does it mean to "walk by faith"? Should this be a normal way of living for the believer? Practically, how does it look in the believer's life?

Give examples of where you are walking by faith.

2 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 6:16; 1 Timothy 4:12, 6:12; 1 Peter 1:7

What conclusions can we draw from examples of living by faith in the scriptures?

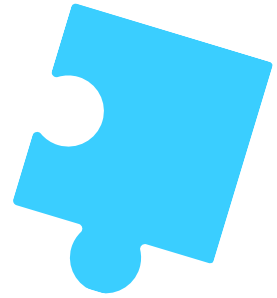
Hebrews 11

THINK ABOUT IT

- Describe how faith and works are connected/related.
 - Galatians 2:16
 - Philippians 3:9
 - James 2:14-26

DEALING

with sin



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this session is to better understand our sin struggles and how God directs us to deal with them. We can often address sin from our way of thinking, but this only leads to continued failure, discouragement, and hopelessness; it may even result in complete abandonment of oneself to sin at times. A proper understanding of what sin is, how God has provided the answers to sin's power, and the grace and long-suffering that He has for us in this journey of life are all helpful in our participation with the Lord as He exposes and practically frees us from the power of sin.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is sin? Is temptation sin or not?

James 1:12-15

Is it possible not to sin? Read 1 John 2:1. Do I have a choice to sin or not?

Are things like anger, lust, or anxiety just something that happens to me, or do I choose these? How can I learn to say no to sin before I sin?

If I sin, what does God desire for me to do about it? Read 1 John 1:8-9. Do I have to feel guilty or sorry in order for God to forgive me?

*What does it mean to "confess" sin?
What happens if we don't "confess" our sin?*

People often try to stop sinning by making promises to do better. Do you find this to be effective in your life? What do you do when you fail?

Romans 7:15-20

What does God's Word say about the power of sin over me? On what basis is sin's power broken? How can the realization of sin's power being broken in my life impact the way that I live?

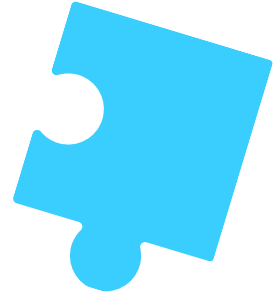
Romans 6:1-13; 8:1-13

When I sin, does God love me less? Do I need to do something in order for Him to love me again or to hear my prayers?

THINK ABOUT IT

- Consider 1 John 1:8. Is the use of the word "sin" referencing a sin one commits or the sin nature?
- How does Christ advocate for us in 1 John 2:1 and Romans 8:34?
- Hebrews 12:1 tells us to lay aside the sin that easily ensnares us. How does the believer do that?

FORGIVENESS



OBJECTIVE

In this session, we want to examine forgiveness, consider why it is so difficult, and grow further in our desire to extend and receive forgiveness. Forgiveness is such a struggle for humans. Our pride, selfishness, and sense of entitlement often prohibit us from extending forgiveness to others. Our insecurities often keep us from accepting the forgiveness of others. However, living life on this side of the Garden of Eden means that sin is in this world and that we will be impacted by it. Thus, there is a need for forgiveness.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is forgiveness?

Why do you think it is so difficult for us to forgive at times? Why is it difficult for us to accept forgiveness at times?

The penalty for sin was paid in full at the Cross, providing forgiveness of the sin debt to anyone who trusts in Christ's payment. This restored us to a proper relationship with God, but sin breaks our daily fellowship with God. Fellowship can only be restored through forgiveness. This forgiveness is based upon our agreement with God (i.e., confession) about our sin according to 1 John 1:9. Discuss how sin breaks our fellowship with God and the need for forgiveness to restore fellowship.

Before God could extend salvation to us, a condition had to be met so that God could forgive us, while at the same time, maintaining justice (Romans 3:24-26). Now that we are children of God, are there conditions that must be met for forgiveness as it relates to broken fellowship? If so, what are those conditions?

Are there conditions that must be met for you to forgive or be forgiven by another person?

*Consider 1 John 1:9; Luke 17:3-4; 23:34; Psalm 32:5;
2 Chronicles 7:14.*

Would holding a grudge, a sinful attitude toward another, and withholding fellowship be possible indications that one has not truly forgiven? What can a believer do who wants to forgive but also is struggling to forgive?

How can knowing God's forgiveness toward us impact the way that we forgive others?

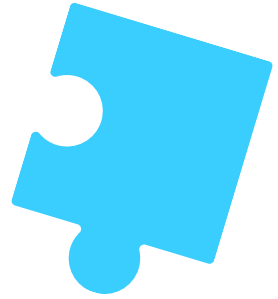
Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13

THINK ABOUT IT

- Some have implied that everyone has a "forgiveness language," or a way of expressing a true desire for forgiveness. It may range from "Please forgive me" to a longer explanation of why one is seeking forgiveness. Discuss what effectively communicates that a person truly sees their wrong and desires forgiveness from you. Thought: How you express that may be how you want that desire expressed.
- Is it possible to forgive and yet not forget? Is forgetting a part of forgiveness? When God "forgets," does it mean that He can't remember it or won't remember it by bringing it back against us?

THE CHURCH

(Part 1)



OBJECTIVE

The desire for this subject is to ensure that the believer has a Biblical view of the church and is growing in love for the body of Christ. God intends for each member of the church to embrace the truth that God loves His church and gave Himself for her. God desires that He be glorified through a group of believers gathering together, functioning as He directs in His Word, building each other up in the Lord, and reaching out in love to a lost world.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

The church is defined as a group of people called out of the world to be God's own unique people. Locally, this would mean it consists of a group of believers who meet in a specific place for the purposes of worship, growth, and outreach into the world under the direction of spiritual leadership. See Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2. Consider and discuss what this practice looks like in your part of the world. Could its expression be different in other areas of the world?

The Word of God is the final authority on all matters and issues pertaining to the church. As such, it is important that we study it to learn of God's direction for the church. Can you identify five areas in your local church culture where this is being expressed well and five areas that are different from what the Word directs?

What are the ramifications on the church and the community when we turn from God's Word?

How does the Bible lead us to work through conflict in a Biblical manner?

Matthew 18:15, 21; Philippians 4:2-3

What qualities or characteristics should be true about any conflict resolution between believers?

1 Corinthians 6:7-8; 10:24, 32; 13:1-8; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8

God has provided His Spirit, in part, to provide unity among believers. How is the believer exhorted to cooperate with the Spirit in maintaining that unity?

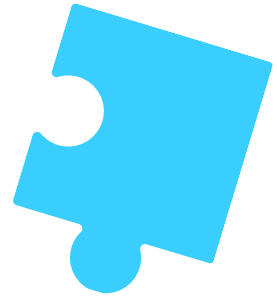
Ephesians 4:3

What can happen when a believer falls off balance in their interaction with either the local or global church?

Where do the issues of social justice, equality, climate change, etc., fit into the purpose and mandate of the church? Critically evaluate this from a Biblical perspective, as opposed to a cultural perspective, in determining whether or not these should be part of the church's expression.

THE CHURCH

(Part 2)



OBJECTIVE

In part 2 of the Church, we explore several ways that God describes His Church and how that understanding might develop a growing love for His Church. For any love to grow and flourish, knowledge of and appreciation for the one being loved is essential, and that truth also applies to our love for the church. Fortunately, God has described His Church in at least seven different ways, each giving us a unique perspective and appreciation for the Church.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Each member of the body of Christ (the church) is needed by the others (Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Discuss how the church is described as a body with many members in order to gain a better picture of this truth.

Consider also how each member has a specific spiritual gift and how that is supposed to function for the benefit of the body. Do you know your particular spiritual gift? How can your mentor help you in further understanding and exercising your gift(s) for the benefit of the body?

The church is described as being global, meaning that all believers are part of that same "universal" church. Therefore, a believer is to have a global mindset toward the church, as well as a local one. How should the believer engage globally with the church? What part does missions play in this engagement? Does ethnicity, geography, gender, or anything else change this global mindset and interaction?

The church is also described as a family with terms such as "brother," "children" and God as our "Father." See 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 John 2:9-11. How does this picture speak toward the need to relate to one another, having a proper view of each other, and caring or looking out for the wellbeing of each other?

How does God's view of the church as His bride impact how a believer should view the church?

THINK ABOUT IT

- There are four other ways that the Church is described. Read the following passages. How does each passage describe the Church? Consider each one and discuss what is uniquely expressed through each description.
 - Ephesians 2:19-22
 - 1 Peter 2:4-7
 - 1 Peter 5:2-4
 - 1 Corinthians 3:9-12
 - Hebrews 10:19-22
 - Hebrews 13:15-16
 - John 10:14-16
 - John 15:1-8
 - John 21:15-17

FELLOWSHIP



OBJECTIVE

This discussion intends to consider the concept of fellowship as it pertains to God and fellow believers. It is important to distinguish between fellowship and relationship because fellowship is a function of a relationship. For example, a believer will always be in a relationship with God. We will always be His children, but we will not always be in, nor enjoy, fellowship with God. Therefore, there are commands and exhortations to be in fellowship because it is possible not to be in fellowship with God or others. As we understand this function of a relationship, we will then learn the value that God places on it and will, in turn, pursue His exhortation to walk in fellowship, both with God and with our fellow believers.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What is meant by the term "fellowship"?

1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:20; 2 Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 2:9; Philippians 1:5

Are there other places in Scripture that reflect on this concept of fellowship?

How can we experience fellowship with God, and how is it maintained?
What does the Bible tell us to do in order to restore fellowship with God that has been broken?

Philippians 3:10; 1 John 1:6-7, 9; John 15:4

How can I experience fellowship with others and how is fellowship maintained or restored among believers?

Acts 2:42; Philippians 2:1-2; 1 John 1:3

Based upon the following references, what value does God put on being in fellowship with us and on us being in fellowship with one another?

Psalms 133:1; 1 John 1:3-4

Is fellowship to be maintained at all costs?
Is there anything that should sever it?

Titus 3:10; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11

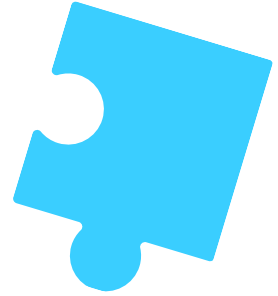
What fellowship should the believer have with unbelievers?

2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:11

THINK ABOUT IT

- One aspect of fellowship with God is that of sharing His life. We are actual partakers of His divine nature according to 2 Peter 1:4. How does this contribute to the sharing in common, or fellowship, that we have with God?
- Read Genesis 5:22-24; Hebrews 11:5-6; Genesis 6:9; Hebrews 11:7; 1 John 1:7. What other synonyms for fellowship do you see there?

TEAMWORK



OBJECTIVE

This session will consider the interaction, partnership, and fellowship that should exist between believers. We have previously seen that God's Word describes believers as a body, a family, a building, a flock, a branch, and a bride. Each provides opportunities to function and interact in partnership with God and other believers in distinct ways. God has placed us in this team called the Church for the responsibilities and benefits of dependence, mutual love, and appreciation, looking out for the needs of each other, and endeavoring to maintain unity.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

God has designed each individual believer to function in unity within the body of Christ. Before we walk in this truth, we must first know the details of what God has done to place each member into His body which includes understanding how the individual and the body relate to each other. He is the one who brings us together. God's word gives us teaching on these truths and He uses gifted teachers to give us understanding. What have you learned about the body and teamwork from your study of God's word or through what you have been taught?

Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-16

Pick one of the ways the church is described in the second sentence of the "Objective" statement for this module on Teamwork and discuss how that description impacts and affects teamwork. Contrast that with how an improper view produces a lack of teamwork.

Differences of opinion, perspective, and sinful behavior create dysfunction and disunity in any team. Grace, forgiveness, forbearance, faithfulness, and honesty are all ways to remedy this and, in the process, teach us more about God, ourselves, and our interactions with others.

Consider Paul's discussion on this in Philippians 3:14-4:3.

Teamwork requires dependence on others and cooperation with one another if we are going to benefit from such relationships and if God is going to receive glory and praise from that team. What do you think hinders that teamwork from happening?

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 addresses interdependence when it describes two incorrect ways of thinking. They are "This team of believers doesn't need me" and "I don't need this team." When reading this passage, what does God say about each of those thoughts? Do you struggle with either way of thinking? If so, how might you overcome that?

THINK ABOUT IT

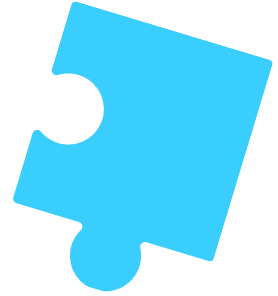
- Consider the passages that use the phrase "one another." Discuss the attitudes and responsibilities that we are to have for one another.

Examples:

- John 13:34-35
- Romans 12:10, 16; 14:13, 19; 15:7, 14
- 1 Corinthians 12:25
- Galatians 5:13, 15, 26
- Ephesians 4:2, 32

CHURCH

gathering



OBJECTIVE

The desire of this session is to think about how the church functions when it gathers together and to align that function with a Biblical model. We should consider various expressions incorporated into our church gatherings based on the Scriptures rather than cultural or experiential preferences.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Consider the following verses that provide either specific or general instructions for the local church. Discuss then how these are expressed in your local church.

1 Timothy 2:9-15; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; Romans 14:19; 2 Timothy 2:2; Romans 15:7; Philippians 2:2; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34.

The Bible is very specific about some expressions of the church and general about other expressions. General examples would be that the gathering as believers should include aspects such as worship, teaching, observing the ordinances, and fellowship with each other. Specific examples include that these expressions are not to be done in a confusing manner and that those in leadership must meet all of the qualifications found in 1 Timothy and Titus. Is it wrong then to insist that certain expressions in a local church are necessary for all global settings?

Can you identify any ways in which your local church expression or practices are seen as mandatory for the global church without any direct Biblical backing? An example to start with might be if songs are sung before or after a sermon or the use of musical instruments.

Does Scripture divide any believer's function between males and females? If so, what specifically?

1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:1-7; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; Titus 1:5-9

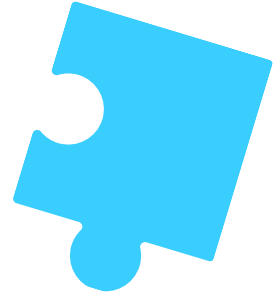
Based on Scripture, is a church gathering primarily for believers or unbelievers? How does this impact church function?

THINK ABOUT IT

- How might a church gathering provide opportunities for various spiritual gifts to function? What are practical ways that we can support this happening?
- The following is a partial list of Biblical things that may take place in a church gathering:
 - Worship, edifying believers, teaching, discipleship, mentoring, fellowship, discipline, prayer, giving, singing, practicing spiritual gifts, observation of the ordinances of the Lord's supper, and baptism.
 - How might the expression of these differ from place to place?

CHALLENGES

to the Christian life



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this session is to consider the things that threaten to break our fellowship with God. Ignoring such challenges is a failure to face the spiritual battles that each believer encounters with wisdom, as outlined in Ephesians 6:10-18. Our desire should be to trust in God as we learn about the enemy's devices, our own fleshly desires, and the world's influences on our thinking, attitudes, and actions. As we mature, we learn about what threatens us, but we also learn about the love and power of God to strengthen and uphold us. Philippians 3:10-14

CONVERSATION GUIDES

A brief study of the word "world" will quickly demonstrate its threat to us. "World" does not refer to the Earth or humanity but to the world system that functions contrary to God and godliness. Discuss how we should position ourselves in relation to Earth, humanity, and the world system.

Consider some of the following references to the world and our response to Christ's admonitions.

Matthew 13:22; John 3:16; John 15:18-19; 16:33; 17:15; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 5:19; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17

The most common obstacle to our faith is our flesh because we take it wherever we go. By flesh, we are not referring to the physical body but rather that propensity of indwelling sin that causes us to act contrary to God. The flesh always stands in opposition to godliness (Galatians 5:17). If the enemy is therefore "within," how are we expected to position ourselves in relation to it? What is the hope of the believer in overcoming the flesh? Is it correct to expect that its effect and impact on our lives will remain throughout our lives, or will we ever be completely free from its influence before heaven?

Romans 7:18-25; 8:1, 5, 8; 13:14; Galatians 5:13, 16-17, 19, 24; Ephesians 2:3; 1 John 2:16; Romans 6:1-14

Satan is the enemy of God and, therefore, the enemy of the believer. How important is it for us to be aware of Satan's schemes? What is the ultimate purpose that Satan is pursuing?

2 Corinthians 2:11, 4:4; Ephesians 2:2, 4:27, 6:11-16; Isaiah 14:12-15

How does the believer resist Satan?

James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9

Our associations with other people, the ways of thinking that we embrace, information we feed our mind and heart, and the neglect to renew our mind can also negatively contribute to our desire to walk with the Lord. Discuss how this might be true in your life and how your mentor might be helpful to you in this.

Proverbs 1:8-19; Psalm 1; Romans 12:2

DISCIPLINES



OBJECTIVE

In this session, we will look at the various disciplines involved in the Christian life. The root of the word "disciplines" is "disciple." Disciplines are the different aspects of Christian living that are the outworking of a godly life. Many have confused disciplines as requirements to be done in order to please God. Instead, we develop disciplines in partnership with His Spirit because God is already pleased with us through His Son. We must understand this truth. We must also realize that apart from the working of the Spirit, we cannot develop disciplines in our own strength which would demonstrate a performance-based way of approaching God. Instead, we must allow God to energize and develop these disciplines as part of the life of His Son being lived out through our bodies by His Spirit.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Consider the following disciplines, give your initial impressions of each, and describe the difficulties you have experienced in any or all of these as you have sought for them to become characteristics in your life.

Prayer: This topic will be discussed in greater detail in a coming session, but briefly describe what you enjoy the most about prayer and what you struggle most with when practicing it.

Study of the Word: Do you know how to study the Word of God so that you are spiritually fed? If not, consider practicing with your mentor. Reading the Word, studying and understanding each passage's meaning, meditating on it, and memorizing it are all aspects of this discipline that will help the believer mature and grow in knowing God and developing an intimate relationship with Him.

Giving: There are numerous ways to give (such as to a church or to a person in need) and things to give (such as money, time, and service).

Consider the attitude that God desires in giving (2 Corinthians 8:3, 12; 9:5,7; 1 Timothy 6:18), the priority of giving (1 Corinthians 16:2; Hebrews 13:16), and the fruit of giving (2 Corinthians 8:14; 9:12).

Sharing our faith: Discuss what would be important to communicate when sharing your faith or testimony. Discuss what makes this practice hard or fearful for you.

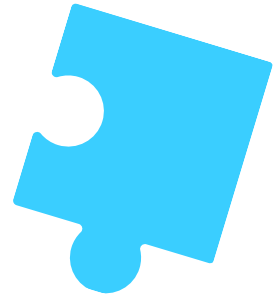
Serving: Sometimes, we don't feel like serving others. Consider why that might be and identify areas of service where you can grow and mature. Christ said that He came to serve. What were some characteristics of His service?

Matthew 20:28; John 13:3-17

Worship: The Word encourages us to gather as a body of believers for worship in Hebrews 10:25. Why do you think this is important for believers?

Consider the benefits of gathering to worship for the individual believer and for the body of Christ.

OBEDIENCE



OBJECTIVE

All too often, we might know the right thing to do but find it difficult to walk in obedience. We can make excuses, lack a genuine desire to be obedient, misunderstand what obedience is, or genuinely lack the wisdom to know how obedience applies to our lives. Mentoring can often help us work through these areas and provide practical solutions for being obedient to the Lord. This session is intended to challenge us in these areas.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Obedience is the practice of doing what we are told to do. Humans have struggled with obedience since the days of Adam and Eve. Why do you think Adam and Eve disobeyed?

Read Genesis 3:1-7. Can you identify those same reasons within yourself that hinder your obedience to the Lord? Have you ever given those excuses for why you did not obey?

Do you struggle with not wanting to obey God? Read Romans 7:15, 19. What practical things can you do to overcome struggles with disobedience?

Example - Asking the Lord to give you a heart to obey. Philippians 2:13

Can I obey without wanting to, or is that hypocritical? Ultimately, God desires our obedience to come from the heart. Would it be wise to obey while also asking Him to give you a desire to obey, instead of just going through the motions of obedience without the desire?

Matthew 21:28-31

Can we partially obey and deceive ourselves into thinking that we are being obedient?

1 Samuel 15:10-23

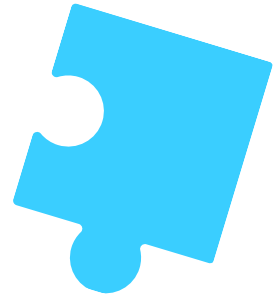
Sometimes, obedience is equated with legalism. Is this an accurate belief, and when would it be or not be legalism? Consider the motivation behind your obedience.

Can you discuss an area of life with your mentor where you struggle to obey what God says?

THINK ABOUT IT

- The struggle between what the flesh and God want often challenges our obedience. Consider the need to learn more about our selfishness and God's desires for us. Is it necessary for us to know about our selfishness if we are going to be obedient to the Lord?

PRAYER



OBJECTIVE

This session intends to explore our understanding and practice of prayer. The privilege of talking with God is extraordinary, and our boldness in this activity is directly proportional to our relationship with God.

"Prayer is one of the highest privileges of the child of God, the most significant form of service that can be rendered to God and men and is the delight of every mature believer."

-Ivan French.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

How would you define prayer in general? Specifically, discuss the four aspects of prayer found in 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

Supplication, intercession, giving thanks, and adoration.

A relationship with God is vital to praying. Discuss this.

1 Peter 1:17, "And if you call on the Father." Literally "Call on Him as Father" recognizes a familial relationship. The extent that we pray is the extent of our relationship with God and the extent of our relationship is the extent that we know Him.

What does it mean to "pray in the Spirit"?

Jude 1:20; Ephesians 6:18

Consider the subtle attitudes of manipulation we use in prayer trying to cause God to do what we want Him to do. Consider determinism, which asks, "Why pray because God has already determined what will happen?" In what ways can you see these attitudes being expressed when you pray?

When the Bible says that we should always pray, what does it mean? Are we to do nothing else but pray? Do we have a mindset or attitude toward prayer?

**Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2;
Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**

What things does Paul consistently request/pray for in his letters?

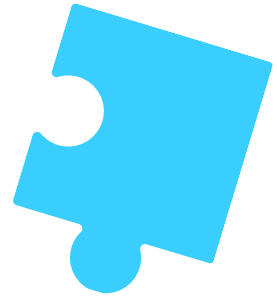
**Philippians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 4:2-4;
Ephesians 1:15-21; 3:14-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 3:1-5**

Do you find your prayer requests similar or different?

THINK ABOUT IT

- How might praying with my position in Christ in mind impact how I pray versus praying from a performance-based thinking to manipulate God?
- Ron Adams once said that "the definition of self-reliance is praying only when there is a crisis." Can you relate to that?
- What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name? Is this merely a formula we are to follow, or is there significance to it? (John 16:24)
- Prayer as the antidote for anxiety - discuss Philippians 4:6.

STEWARDSHIP



OBJECTIVE

During this module, we will consider the concept of stewardship, the kinds of things that believers are to be stewards of, and the qualities that make a good steward. Stewardship is caring for something that belongs to another and doing so as if you were that person. In other words, it means caring for something on another's behalf with their good as your intention.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

As stated earlier, stewardship is managing something that is not yours. What impact would it have if the steward acted as if what they were taking care of was theirs?

Titus 1:7

Consider the story of Abraham's servant's quest for a wife for Isaac in Genesis 24. What qualities would you want in a steward looking for a spouse on your behalf?

Consider those qualities in your life as a steward of God.

Another important aspect of stewardship is that of accountability. The steward gives an account of how those responsibilities were administered. When considering our stewardship of what God gives us, discuss how the thought of accountability impacts our decisions and actions.

Luke 16:1-10; 2 Kings 12:15; Psalm 10:13; Romans 14:12; Hebrews 4:13; 1 Peter 4:5; Colossians 3:23-24

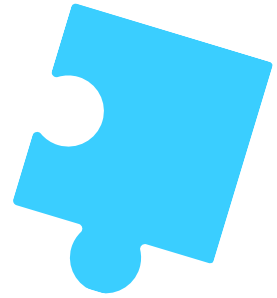
It is required for stewards to be found faithful according to 1 Corinthians 4:2. What criteria would you use to determine if you are a faithful steward or not? Consider how God determines if a steward is faithful or not. Are your thoughts echoing His thoughts on this, or are they different?

1 Samuel 2:35; Nehemiah 7:2; Psalm 78:8; Proverbs 11:13; 27:6; Luke 16:12; Colossians 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:12

What areas, things, concepts, and relationships is the believer commanded, exhorted, or encouraged to steward?

Spend some time with your mentor discussing some of the following verses: Colossians 1:23-25; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Peter 4:10; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 5:16, 25-28; 1 Timothy 4:6; 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:15, 24-26.

THE WILL of God



OBJECTIVE

Many people desire to know what God's will is for the overall direction of their lives and for specific decisions that they make throughout life. They are also concerned that they do not miss His will and ignorantly decide to act in opposition to His will. This desire can benefit the believer who truly wants what God wants, but it can also cause a paralyzing fear of "getting it wrong." This session aims to see what God says about His will, how we might be guided in knowing His will, and learn to trust Him and not be afraid when seeking His will. God Himself desires that we know His will and pursue this journey with excitement and anticipation rather than dread and fear.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Some of the most basic questions are, "Can we know God's will?" and "Does God want us to know His will?" Fortunately, God has revealed parts of His will to us in Scripture.

Consider the following references and discuss the specific will of God in each one. Psalm 143:10; Acts 18:21; Romans 1:10; 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:4; Colossians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:18; 1 Peter 2:15; 3:17; 1 John 2:17. It would be wise for us to practice the known will of God as described in the Scriptures and then trust Him to reveal His specific will for the situations and circumstances of our lives.

What if He asks me to do something I don't want to do? This then becomes a matter of my will, not God's will. The question becomes, "Will I do what He wills me to do, or will I do what I want to do?" Jesus Himself is a good example of this during His temptation in the garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:39; Ephesians 6:6; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 4:2,19

What if I get it wrong? Read Romans 8:27. From this example of prayer, we can see that God can intervene when we miss His will, and the attitude of God in this is one of grace rather than condemnation.

How does this truth change our thinking when we find ourselves with fear or anxiety about "getting God's will wrong?"

The Bible speaks of God's will, but does it speak anywhere of being partially in God's will or of being in the "center" of His will? If it says nothing, should we consider it wrong to think this way?

People have often used two phrases to distinguish between the things God causes to happen (His Sovereign will) and those He allows to happen, even if they are not what God desires (His Permissive will). Is there a difference between the two?

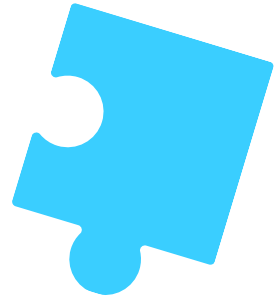
Can I resist the will of God?

Luke 7:30; Ephesians 4:30

THINK ABOUT IT

- Is there incorrect thinking when we believe God's will must always mean that He dictates what happens? Is it possible (and can we see this expressed in Scripture) that sometimes God's will is an expression of His desire for things to happen and yet other times His will is what He sovereignly makes happen?

THE TONGUE



OBJECTIVE

James 3:1-10 expresses that what we say, how we say it, truthfulness, and timeliness are all important aspects of how we use our tongues. We can either build one another up and glorify God or tear each other down and, therefore, not reflect God's nature. Our goal is to consider these four communication aspects and mature in our perspective and practice of them.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

What we say: The Bible describes values that we should consider when using our words because our words have an impact on others, for good or bad. Building others up or teaching truth are two examples of those values. Can you think of other values which could guide us in what words come from our mouths?

James 1:26; 3:5-8; 1 Peter 3:10; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:3; Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 28:20; Psalm 12:4; 34:13; Proverbs 18:21

How we say it: There are many scriptural admonitions regarding how we speak: a soft answer turns away wrath, avoiding sarcasm, our words being seasoned with salt, gracious words, and words that edify rather than tear down. Relate an experience when someone disregarded one or more of these principles and how that impacted you. From this experience, can you better appreciate the importance of considering how something is said?

Proverbs 15:1; 1 Corinthians 2:1-4; Colossians 4:6; Titus 2:8

Truthfulness: What we say should be the truth. Since God is truth, our speech should reflect that part of His nature. When we walk in the truth, there is also freedom that it produces in our lives (John 8:32). Intentional lying, as well as inadvertently not speaking the truth, undermines credibility and directs the hearer in a path that is detrimental. Most of us have struggled with lying at one time or another. Maybe it was with our parents so we wouldn't get into trouble or with someone we liked so they would like us more. The temptation to lie is rooted in Satan as the father of lies and not in God.

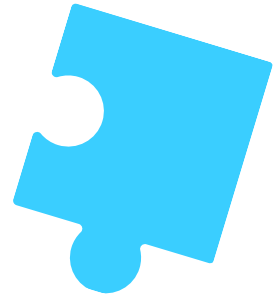
Consider the impact on us and others when we intentionally lie. Proverbs 6:17; 12:17, 19; Psalm 10:7; 120:2; 1 Peter 3:10; John 8:44.

Some, however, only consider the value of "truthfulness" when responding to others and "true" words end up damaging relationships and souls. The Bible, however, tells us that Jesus was full of grace and truth. Describe how grace and truth complement each other.

THINK ABOUT IT

- **Timeliness:** We are called to consider when we should speak and sometimes if we should speak at all. The Bible calls this "a word in season." Sometimes God desires that we say nothing at all about a given situation. At other times, He calls us to speak the truth. How would you determine when and if He desires for you to say something? Are there Biblical principles that can guide us in this?
 - Proverbs 15:23; Isaiah 50:4
 - Proverbs 16:1; 25:15; 27:6; Psalm 12:4; 39:1

PREPARING for Ministry



OBJECTIVE

The intention of this discipleship process has been more than just for your personal growth and development (2 Timothy 2:2). Christ walked and talked with His disciples and mentored them over several years. He also sent them out to testify about Him and to invite others to become His disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). He did not wait for them to "become more mature" but sent them out, knowing they had more to learn and His Spirit would be with them (Acts 1:4, 5). His model is our goal, too. We also see this modeled by Paul with Timothy in his two letters to him. This module encourages you to consider how God might want to further use you in telling others about Him, serving others with what He has given you, and finding a place where He continues to mature your heart while also using you in the lives of others.

CONVERSATION GUIDES

Have you ever considered how God might want to use you in His service? What are some things that interest you in that area? Are you open to other areas of service that might be outside your comfort zone? Have you ever considered serving God by telling people who have never heard of Him what Christ has done?

Have you considered becoming a mentor to someone? Would your mentor consider providing spiritual support to you as you mentor another?

In Matthew 28:20 it says to "teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you." What does it mean to "observe"? Is that merely a function of watching, or is practice a part of it as well?

Consider how you can "teach to observe."

1 Timothy 4:12 speaks of being an example to believers. Consider the areas that Paul challenges Timothy in as you think of being an example.

In a previous module on the Holy Spirit, you considered what your spiritual gift might be. Can you see any opportunities where that could be used? Can you speak with your mentor about those opportunities? Will you pray, asking God to direct you?

Ministry can be difficult and discouraging at times. 1 Peter 2:21 says that we should consider Christ at such times. Review Scripture with your mentor for any times when Christ suffered for what He said and did. Discuss how knowing Christ's suffering can encourage you.

The results of ministry are never ours to be proud of or discouraged over. God's working through us matters, and it is good always to remember the admonition of 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

THINK ABOUT IT

- Study the New Testament, looking for those examples where God used "ordinary" people to speak of Him to others. Some examples to begin with are:
 - Philip in Acts 8:26-38
 - Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:26

NOTES



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