



EQUIP



DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

EQUIP Discipleship Training

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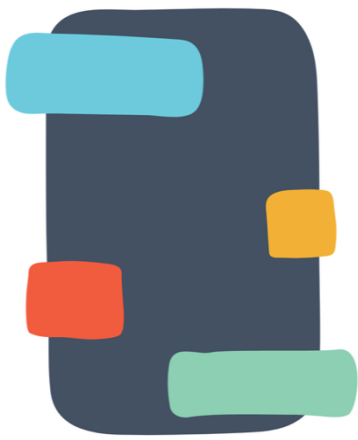
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Acknowledgements

First, I want to offer my sincere appreciation to Crossroads Fellowship in Raleigh, NC and Senior Pastor Andy George, part of the Liberty Church Network, who graciously and at no charge shared their original EQUIP document to provide us a template to write a version of this discipleship material for our own church—integrating it with our own DNA, church culture and context. Without this generosity, it would have been much harder to figure out how to begin.

Several people helped review the original material that is now our existing document. Lynette Schatz, Kaia Rauen, Jessica Brinkman, Brian Heim, Brandon Nanke, and Casey Schmidt volunteered to read and provide thoughts on all sections, spending time reading the material, providing thoughts and comments, and meeting frequently to go through the material. Crossroads Church staff, including me, Brandon Golden, Jeremy Diaz, Megan Diaz, Heather Heim and Pastor Matt Beers also reviewed and processed the material together for cultural context, Scripture changes or additions, illustrations and models. Pastor Matt also reviewed portions of this content with his Community Group.

My wife, Lynette, (a very part-time staff person, mostly volunteer!) went through the material with Kaia and Jessica, rewrote and typed up all of the content with the suggested and agreed upon changes, validated citations, brainstormed ideas with me, recruited desktop publishers and copy-editors, organized the desktop publishing and copy editing process, authored some sections and real-life examples, and provided editing as well and help with printing and binding.

Tess Freiburger and Mary Tindle gave freely of their time to take the material and put it into a professional desktop publishing format that could be both printed and used digitally. They leveraged their daily paid skills and put them to work for us for free. Lynette and I met in person with them, had multiple conversations via email and text as they graciously shared their excellent skill

set with us. (And we now know publishing terms like ‘ragged right’, ‘justified’ and ‘em-dash’ 😊)

Alek Eglinton modified and developed brand-new graphic designs for EQUIP and our new Disciple Making Process (DMP) material—also as a volunteer. Alek is a furniture designer by day with an amazing gift for graphic design; he has contributed to Crossroads over the years in various ways with his gifts.

Judy Knowler reviewed all the material as copyeditor, volunteering her time and skill on a pretty tight schedule!

And thank you to Heather Heim for her skill and assistance in publishing and production.

Most of all, I want to express Lynette’s and my gratitude to God the Father, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit who went before us.

When we started this process in the summer of 2024 and had a goal to finish by July 2025—not just with this EQUIP material but with multiple pieces of a discipleship making process—it seemed daunting. My allocated time and pastoral responsibilities at Crossroads are fairly limited, with several other professional and personal responsibilities outside the church. Lynette encouraged us to pause and pray on multiple occasions, and we saw God go before us in so many ways. The work has not been without challenges, of course. At one point, an entire chapter, the longest chapter of the work, was lost and had to be rebuilt. Our volunteers fought against some illnesses and health issues during difficult deadlines. The Eglintons welcomed twin baby girls in the middle of Alek’s graphic design work! Lynette and I had a substantial argument one day while stressed by the intensity of the work, not immediately recognize the spiritual component working against us... We are imperfect for certain, but we invite you to imitate us as we imitate Christ in our diligent pursuit of growing in obedience to Jesus. It is our desire that as you engage with this material and repeat the EQUIP process with others—replicating yourself by making disciples who make disciples—you will be able to say the same: “Imitate me as I imitate Jesus.” Not perfectly, but with a heart pursuing Him.

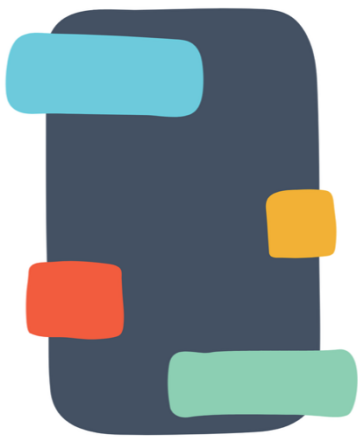
It is my prayer, along with the leadership at Crossroads Church Peosta, that this material will help lay a groundwork for increasing our individual and collective obedience to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and accelerate our efforts to make disciples who make disciples.

May you be blessed, encouraged, and see personal spiritual growth as you engage with this material.

Matthew 28:18–20 (NLT)

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

In Him,
Brian Schatz
Community Life Pastor
Crossroads Church Peosta
July 2025



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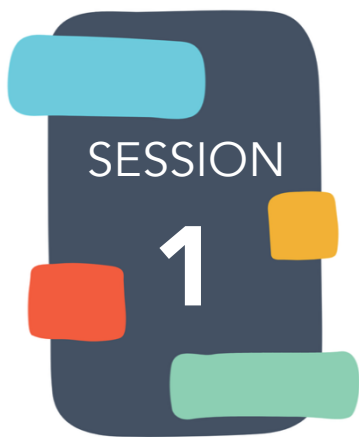
EQUIP Discipleship Training

The purpose of this EQUIP Discipleship Training is to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus. Whether you are new to following Jesus or have been a Jesus-follower for years, we are intending this training to help you become a more activated and mobilized disciple—who is also a disciple-maker on mission with Jesus for the growth of His kingdom.

Regardless of your past experiences with discipleship approaches or curriculum, or whether you feel you have ever been ‘discipled’ at all, the leadership at Crossroads is asking you to invest your time and attention to this discipleship experience, and learn what God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has for you personally. We also acknowledge that there is no “one size fits all” plan for spiritual growth. People are unique individuals, and we grow in our relationship with the Lord in different ways. A couple critical elements for you to receive maximum benefit from this training are: 1) invest your time and attention in it wholeheartedly, 2) have an open posture and the mind-set of a learner, and 3) do this in a small group of two to three people so you can really dive deep with one another and truly be accountable. These will help ensure your receptivity to spiritual things. You may find familiar practices or ideas encouraged in this material. You will also find fresh perspective as the Holy Spirit guides you in new disciplines and thoughts that lead to your growth as a follower of Jesus. Ultimately, all spiritual growth comes directly from God by the Holy Spirit of God. It is our prayer that God’s Spirit gives us all a fantastic journey.

Connect. Follow. Multiply. This is our charge.

Let’s get started!



The Purpose of EQUIP Discipleship Training

Overview

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples.” Most churches are content with helping people become believers and convincing them that church is so fun and helpful that they should invite their friends to join as well. While a fun and helpful church is part of God’s plan, it falls short of Jesus’ command and the example He set. Jesus personally influenced others toward growth and development. Jesus didn’t just encourage us to share the good news so people could believe, He commanded that we “go and make disciples” so that we could teach them how to follow Him and conform their lives to Him in everything. It only stands to reason that “everything” would include the idea that they should also “Go and make disciples.”

2 Timothy 2:2

You have heard Me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

God’s vision is for faithful people to influence others to become faithful people who will continue this cycle. The vision for this EQUIP discipleship training manual is to present material specifically designed to describe the process of helping believers walk down the path toward becoming fully devoted disciples and helping others do the same.

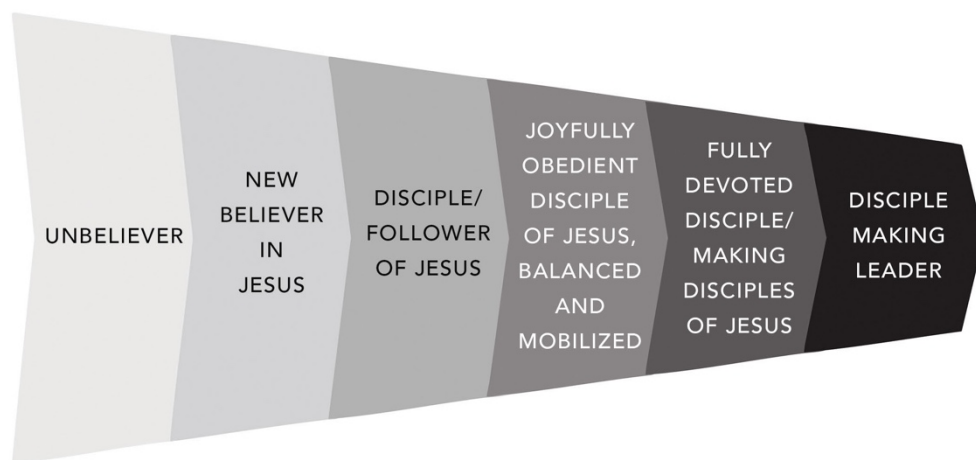
Spiritual-Personal Development

Jesus challenges those He encounters to grow. To the woman at the well He said, “Go and sin no more” (stop sinning). To the rich young ruler He said, “Go and sell all your possessions” (sacrifice for Me). How would Jesus challenge you today?

The answer requires a little self-examination and self-awareness of where you are currently.

Where do you see yourself in the process of your personal spiritual development? How is God continuing to grow you into His image and preparing you for your ministry that lies ahead? The author of the Book of Hebrews instructs “let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.”

In the diagram, draw an arrow pointing to the segment(s) that best describe where you are in your personal spiritual development.



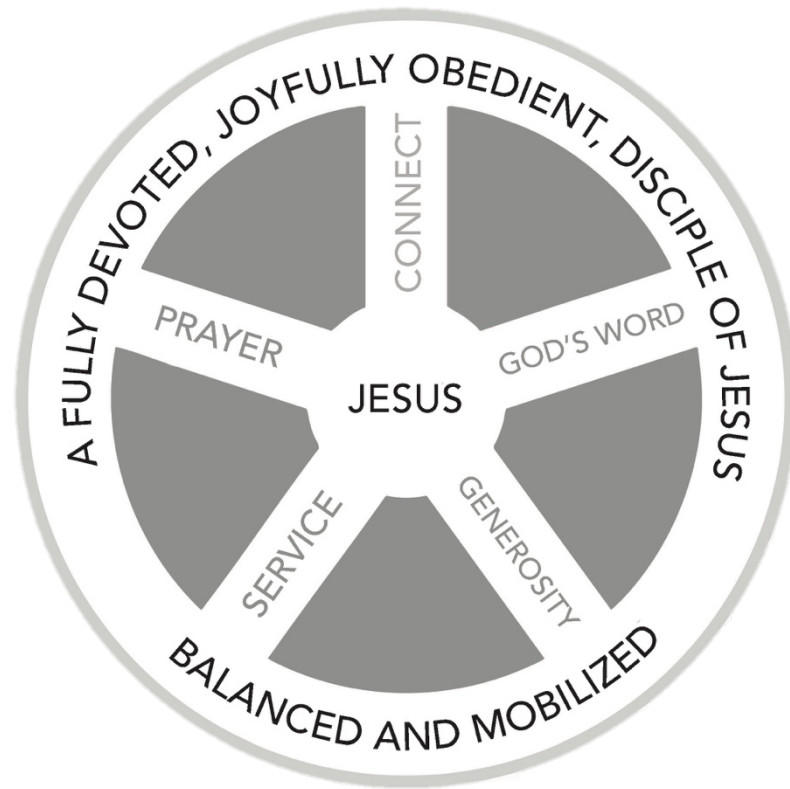
Why do you place the arrow(s) there?

Defining a Disciple

As stated in Matthew 28, Jesus’ goal is to help us become disciples who are making disciples. So how do we get there? In the diagram above, there is a segment labeled Fully Devoted Disciple/Balanced and Mobilized. What do you think this means?

In the space below, write your definition of the phrase “Fully Devoted Disciple of Jesus/Balanced and Mobilized.”

"A Disciple's life begins with connection to God through a relationship with Christ ..."



The illustration above helps to describe the Fully Devoted Disciple.¹ A disciple's life begins with connection to God through a relationship with Jesus Christ (as indicated by the center hub). The spokes of the wheel represent a disciple's life of Connecting, Growing, Serving, Praying and Giving of their time, talents and treasure. The goal is to live life for Jesus with these components/disciplines active and balanced, and to become and remain mobilized for ministry.

How did your definition compare? What elements were lacking in your definition of a Fully Devoted Disciple? What is the shape of your wheel? Based on the strength of your spokes, is it round or kind of lopsided?

Draw your wheel below.

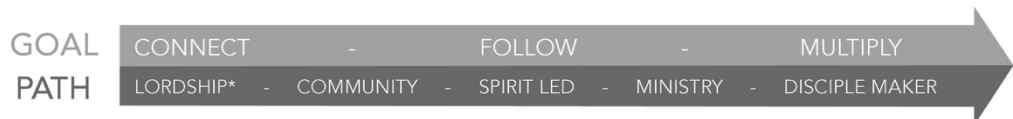
A Personal and Relational Process

At Crossroads Church there is a pathway that begins with attending Sunday worship or a Crossroads event, and continues with Crossroads Connect, serving on a team, joining a Community Group or Study, and eventually Partnership. The goal is to help people become healthy, equipped and mobilized disciples of Jesus who transform their communities. Although you are following a church process, there is a personal process happening as well.

CHURCH PROCESS



PERSONAL PROCESS



Jesus is calling you to a personal process. How is the church process different from your personal process? As you consider the next steps in your growth, what part of the personal process needs to grow or be renewed in your life?

Take time to write your thoughts in the space below.

Creating the Discipleship Zone

Many churches do not have a culture of discipleship. Why is that? Most churches have probably drifted into one of the four cultures or zones below.



On the diagram² above:

1. Write “CR” in the quadrant or zone that you believe describes Crossroads’ culture or zone.
2. Write “ME” in the quadrant where you would place yourself.
3. Circle the quadrant or zone in which you would prefer to operate.

The path toward creating a **Discipleship Zone** is a path that emphasizes relationships and responsibility.

Let's create a culture where we can value each relationship uniquely (High on Invitation / High on Relationships), and at the same time have a culture that has high expectations (High Challenge/High Responsibility). We call this the Discipleship Zone. In this zone, we follow Jesus' ways and practice as he challenges us to become mature and healthy equipped disciples who help make other mature and healthy equipped disciples.

As you think through how to apply what you will be learning through this training, listen to the Holy Spirit and grow in the way that God intends for you personally to grow. Here at Crossroads, we want you to grow; we love you too much to allow you to stay where you are. But how you grow and accomplish these objectives must be personalized based on all the factors that describe your life. Just as Jesus challenged Zacchaeus differently than the Rich Young Ruler, He also challenged the Pharisees differently from His own disciples. Jesus knows where you are and what you need. Trust Him to guide you through a process.

Next Steps

1. Memorize the following Scripture verses for this session:

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 6:33

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.

2. Read through the content in Session 1, respond to the questions by writing your answers in the book.
3. Look for ways to positively change your personal process and positively impact church culture at Crossroads.

Questions for Discussion

2 Timothy 2:2

You have heard Me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

1. As you heard the vision for this EQUIP training, what excited you the most? Is there anything that makes you nervous?
2. What from this session's reading impacted you the most? Where do you think Jesus is asking you to focus in your personal process to become a Fully Devoted, Healthy, Joyfully Obedient Disciple?
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:2 again. What are some of your observations from this passage of Scripture? What is Jesus asking of us? What obstacles do you see in getting this accomplished?

Close your time in prayer.

Notes



Lordship— Christ at the Center

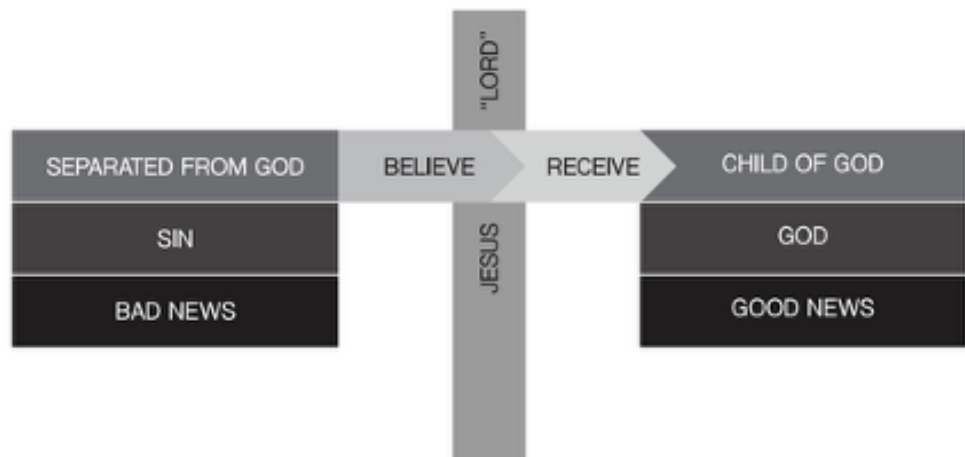
Salvation: The Beginning of Our Connection to God

Responding to the gospel is the beginning of our relationship with Jesus.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

So what is the message that Romans 10:17 is referring to? It is the gospel. When you repent of your sins, accept the forgiveness Jesus offers, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life, we would say you have “accepted Jesus” into your life, and you have become “saved.” And also—“Saved People Share Jesus with Others.” You will want to share your freedom and hope with others. To become a trained disciple, and have the ability to train others, you need to clearly understand the gospel (which literally means “good news”) and how to convey it. One of the most straightforward ways to hear the gospel message is by the “One Verse Method” depicted below.¹



John 1:12

But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God.

Here is a further explanation about how to use this model. John 1:12 makes it clear that God wants us to be His children, and we do this by repenting of our sin and believing by faith in the sufficient sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. Looking at the diagram, our sin has separated us from God. God is holy, and sin cannot be in His presence. If our sin “debt” remains unpaid, we will remain separated from God for eternity. That’s the bad news. The good news is that God has provided a way to have the penalty for our sin paid, and for us to have eternal life with Him in heaven. How does this happen? **It happens through Jesus, God’s son.** Jesus (fully God, fully Man) came to earth and in His full yet perfect (sinless) humanity, He died on a cross for us, taking the punishment for our sin. And Jesus did not remain dead, but conquered death by rising to life again! He is alive! If we make Jesus the Lord of our life and follow Him, we will become children of God.

Another model you may find helpful is from Dare to Share²:

GOD created us to be with Him. (Genesis 1–2)

OUR sins separate us from God. (Genesis 3)

SINS cannot be removed by good deeds. (Genesis 4, Malachi 4)

PAYING the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again. (Matthew-Luke)

EVERYONE who trusts in Him alone has eternal life. (John)

LIFE with Jesus starts now and lasts forever! (Acts-Revelation)

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is also a helpful model from CRU entitled “How To Know God.” It can be found at this link: <https://www.cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html>³

For someone who has never personally responded to the truth of the gospel, you can help them respond to the good news. Here is a simple prayer you can help someone pray directly to God.

“God, I am a sinner and I know I fall short of your standard. Today I repent and turn away from my sin and ask for Your forgiveness. I accept by faith Your forgiveness made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross on my behalf. Jesus, you died for me and were raised to life again—You are alive! Jesus, I choose to follow You as Lord of my life. Thank You for adopting me into Your family. Amen.”

If you help someone pray this prayer, they have responded to the gospel. Be clear that the prayer itself does not save them, it is their faith in Jesus and the sufficiency of his sacrifice that saves them. The gift they have received from responding to the gospel is they are now adopted into God's family as His son or daughter. They have secured their eternity with God! This is indeed Good News!

Reflection

Now for you—the reader—do you believe this? If you don't, it is the most important decision you will ever make. Take a few minutes to do business with God. And if you respond to this gospel, this good news, tell someone!

Salvation—A Moment in Time

Our initial response to the gospel, inviting Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, is the moment of our salvation. When and how did this event happen in your life? For some of you, you recall vividly a specific moment in time when you responded to the gospel. For others, it has been more of a process where at some point you just “knew” you had repented of your sins and relied on Jesus alone for your salvation.

Take a moment and write out the circumstances surrounding your salvation and your own salvation story.

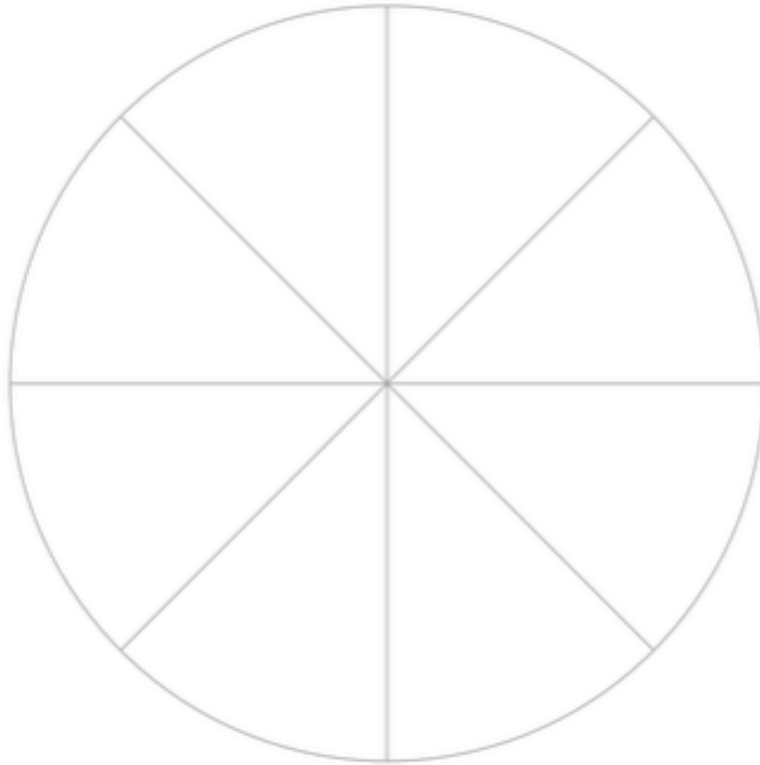
Although someone can be ministered to for years prior to salvation, their salvation experience begins with an authentic expression of faith. They believe the truth of the biblical message and apply it to their lives personally through a response of faith. This moment of time is the beginning of Lordship. The Bible calls this theological event Justification and Redemption.

Take a few moments to look up these important words, either through a Google search, Bible dictionary or other method. Then read and consider the Scriptures below, and write out a good definition for each of them:

- Salvation (Luke 1:77, Acts 2:38, John 14:6)
- Faith (Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 11:1 & 3, Galatians 2:16)
- Redemption (Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:7)
- Justification (Acts 13:39, Romans 4:25; 5:16, 18, 21)
- Sanctification (Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:15, Hebrews 12:14)

The Areas of Your Life

Draw your life as a pie, describing the key segments or areas of your life. These segments might include things like career, hobbies, spouse, parents, friends, money, kids, thought life, etc. Feel free to expand the number of segments as needed in the drawing below.



Lordship—A Process over a Lifetime

The process of continuing to submit to the Holy Spirit's leadership does not stop.

Once you have responded to the gospel by inviting Jesus to be Savior and Lord of your life, a process begins where you learn how to yield control of your life to His loving leadership. This work is an ongoing process called Sanctification. During this process a New Believer begins to willingly submit to Jesus' love and control. Even as one becomes a disciple and a disciple-maker, the process of continuing to submit to the Holy Spirit's leadership does not stop.

Where are you in this process? In the diagram above, what areas of your life need to be submitted into closer alignment with God's will?

Our Ongoing Connection to God—Lordship

Galatians 2:20

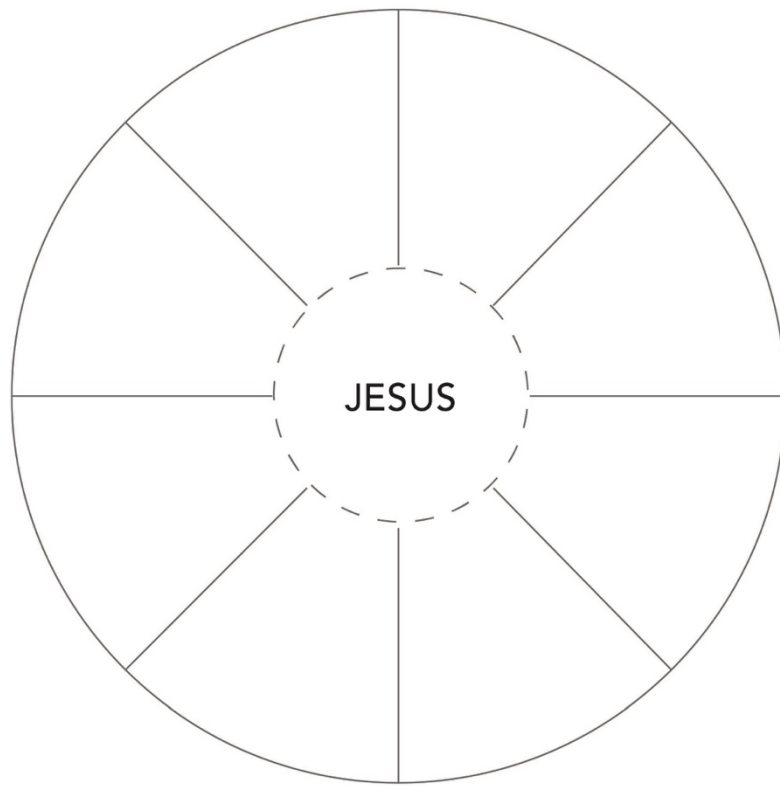
My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Take a few moments to evaluate your practice of the Lordship of Jesus in the various areas of your life. A good way to determine if Jesus is in control is to ask, “Am I willing to do whatever Jesus desires in this area?” “Will I be able to thank God for whatever may happen in this area?” Place an asterisk in the segments of your pie where you feel Jesus is not yet “in control” as He should be.

Galatians 2:20 speaks to this area of Lordship. Meditate on this verse and think through how living out its message would impact the areas of your life that are not under Jesus’ Lordship as they should be. In the space below, share your insights and how you believe your faith could transform the various aspects of your life.

A Life Centered on Jesus Christ

In the diagram below, rewrite your Life’s Diagram⁴; this time order your various activities around Jesus as the center. Jesus wants your “Life of Faith” to influence every area of your life, rather than your “Christian Faith” only being one segment. Make your drawing reflect this.



Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Session 1:
(Matthew 28:19–20; Matthew 6:33)
2. Memorize the following Scripture verses for this session:

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:17

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

3. Practice the “One Verse” and “Dare to Share” methods from this session to figure out if either of these approaches work for you. Feel free to adapt your own model with the guidance of Scripture and the Holy Spirit.
4. Look for opportunities to reflect Lordship in all areas of your life.

Questions for Discussion

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. Take a moment and reflect on the various areas of your life in the pie diagram. Describe these different segments that fill your life.
3. Re-read Galatians 2:20. In light of what Jesus has done for you, how do you want to live your life by faith? As you think about your life reordered with Jesus at the center, what area of your life will be most affected by this change?

Close your time in prayer.

Notes



Connect to Community

Our Need for Others

One of the first behaviors of a disciple is to Connect to others. We were meant to do life together and were all born with a desire to belong.

If you have ever stood before a sequoia tree, you may have felt in awe of how tiny you were in its presence. Sequoias are the largest living things on the earth. They reach 250 feet tall and live for as many as 1500 years. How have they grown so tall and lived so long? Surprisingly, it is not because of deep roots; the roots are actually only about four feet deep in the ground.¹ The reason for the height and longevity of sequoias is that there are other sequoias surrounding them. Sequoia trees only grow in groves. Their roots don't go very deep, but they intermingle with the other sequoias next to them. Each tree is able to stand strong through the centuries because each tree has an interdependent posture. No sequoia grows alone, just as no believer is transformed alone.

Read Proverbs 27:17 and Ecclesiastes 4:9–10. In the space below answer “Why is fellowship important?”

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron,
so a friend sharpens
a friend.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Two people are better
off than one, for they
can help each other
succeed. If one
person falls, the other
can reach out and
help. But—someone
who falls alone—is in
real trouble.

The Posture of Interdependence

Luke 8:6

Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture.

While there are many resources available for individual spiritual growth, community is necessary for growth to happen. It is destructive for believers to attempt to live and develop faith on their own. Solo believers are a target for the enemy and more susceptible to the power of sin. Good seed sown in an independent person's life is like sowing seed on rocky soil. Growth comes up, but the plant withers (Luke 8:6). Dietrich Bonhoeffer, author of *The Cost of Discipleship*, said, "Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him."²

Perhaps your "posture" is better understood when described as your position, attitude or mindset. A dependent mindset is unhealthy because it finds security and worth in another person rather than in Christ. By finding ultimate fulfillment in someone other than God, dependence becomes a form of idolatry. Transformation is most likely to occur when a believer has truth applied to his or her life while in an interdependent position.



On the scale above, place an "X" representing where you see yourself today and your need for "others". (Acknowledging that this rating can change from time to time). In the space below, write how you describe your current attitude toward connection and fellowship.

"Faith is always personal, but never private."

Jim Wallis³

Having an interdependent posture is more than merely attending a small group or class. You must also be in a place of openness. It is necessary to be vulnerable, authentic and transparent for transformation to happen. **Both a community group leader and the group culture must balance authenticity without fostering an unhealthy dependence or independence.**

Through the biblical narrative, community is emphasized and commanded; it is never optional. Many have a misconception that the Christian faith is private. Jesus desires that His followers live with an interdependent posture in community with other Christian believers.

Jesus-His Desires for Our Relationships

In the hours leading up to his arrest, Jesus begged the Father to make His disciples one. He prayed:

John 17:20–23

I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as You and I are One—as You are in Me, Father, and I am in You. And may they be in Us so that the world will believe You sent Me. I have given them the glory You gave Me, so they may be one as We are One. I am in them and You are in Me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that You sent Me and that You love them as much as You love Me.

Jesus desires for His people to be unified as He and the Father are unified. God, who exists in community, designed His followers to live in community to facilitate growth and to reflect His character.

Hebrews 10:24–25

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.

What do you believe is the purpose of meeting together as believers?

Read Hebrews 10:24–25 and write your answer in the space below.

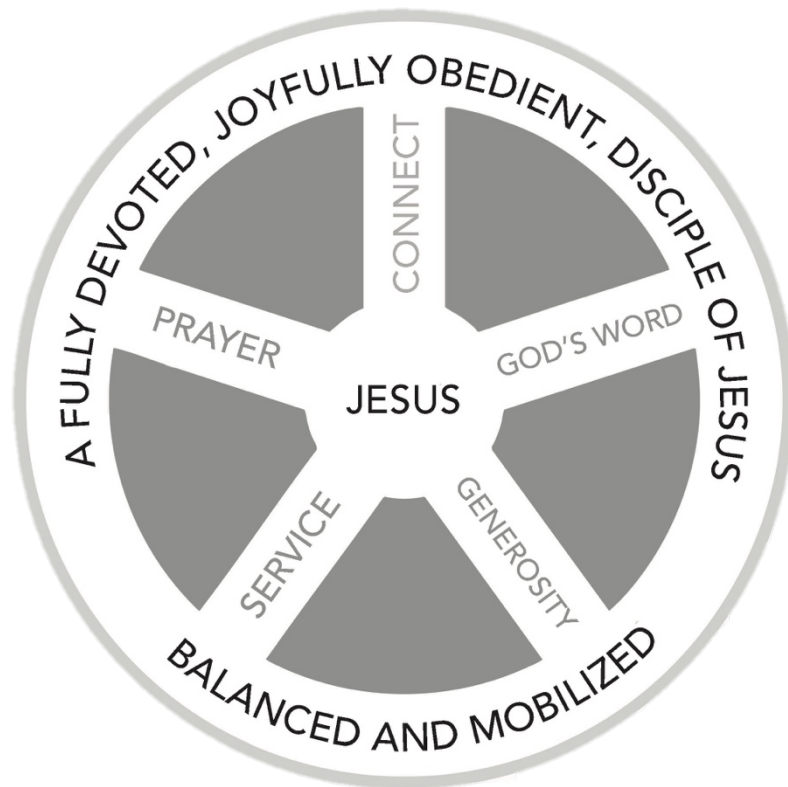
Devoting Yourself to Fellowship

When the first Christians responded to the gospel, they immediately threw themselves fully into community with one another. At Crossroads, we use Acts 2:42–47 as our model goal for Community Groups. Acts 2:42 says, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship” (koinonia). Take note of the word “devoted”. Koinonia expresses committed participation, not just association. Transformational community is much deeper than mere association because of proximity. It is shared partnership for spiritual growth. Steve Murrell, a well-known Christian leader, defined discipleship in this way:

“It’s following Jesus. It’s fishing for people. And it’s doing that in conjunction with others, in fellowship with others. Discipleship is simply helping someone find and follow Jesus. Helping someone live out relationships with the lost, fishing for men, and helping someone do that in community with others.”

Steve Murrell, Founding Pastor of Victory Church⁴

As a church, Crossroads believes discipleship consists of five elements: Connect, God's Word, Service, Prayer and Generosity. Connection implies both a connection to God and a connection with others—to the church at its best and to transformational relationships.



Describe below how you are connected to Jesus and His church through community. Is the quality of your “community” sufficient for your growth and development, or is this an area needing some improvement in your life? If so, what changes are you considering?

Write your answers in the space below.

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 and 2:

(Matthew 28:19–20; Matthew 6:33)

(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

2. Memorize the following Scripture verses for this session:

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

Hebrews 10:24–25

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.

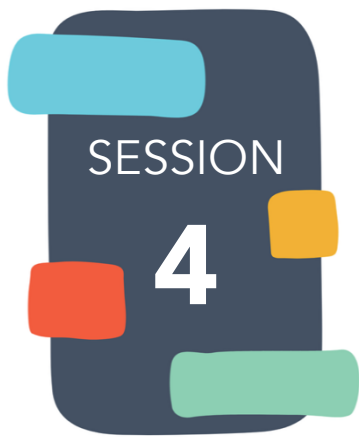
3. Is there anyone with whom you are not in community because of sin or a disagreement that could be reconciled? Consider taking one action this week to improve this relationship.
4. Do you have authentic Christian community in your life? If not, what is one step you can take to improve it?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. Why do you think community with other believers is important? What is the purpose of Christian community? (Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9–10; Hebrews 10:24–25)
3. Reflect on the continuum of interdependence and dependence. Describe how you are connected currently to Christian community. Is the quality of your Christian community sufficient for your growth as a follower of Jesus? Share your thoughts and any action steps you identified that you could take to improve in this area.

Close your time in prayer.

Notes



Grow—God's Word

How Growth Happens Through His Word

The second behavior of a disciple is to Grow. God has chosen to bring transformation to His people through the truth of His Word. Maybe you have heard it said that we will either grow daily or die gradually. Daily growth comes through God's Word. But so often, it seems we choose to die gradually rather than grow daily. Why?

Whether you grow or not has much to do with your posture or attitude. Disciplines can simply be religious exercises that produce no growth, or they can be the vehicle that carries you into a deep and active relationship with the Lord. In the following example, even if you are not a water skier, consider what must happen when someone skis. When a person skis behind a boat, they can't get up on their own power. The posture on the skis makes all the difference as to whether they will actually be able to get up out of the water and enjoy their time on the lake or river behind the boat, or never even make it out of the water.

What is a posture that helps you respond to God's Word and grow? In the space below write some characteristics that would help a person have the correct position to grow as the Holy Spirit interacts in their life through God's Word.

The Sweet Spot of Transformation

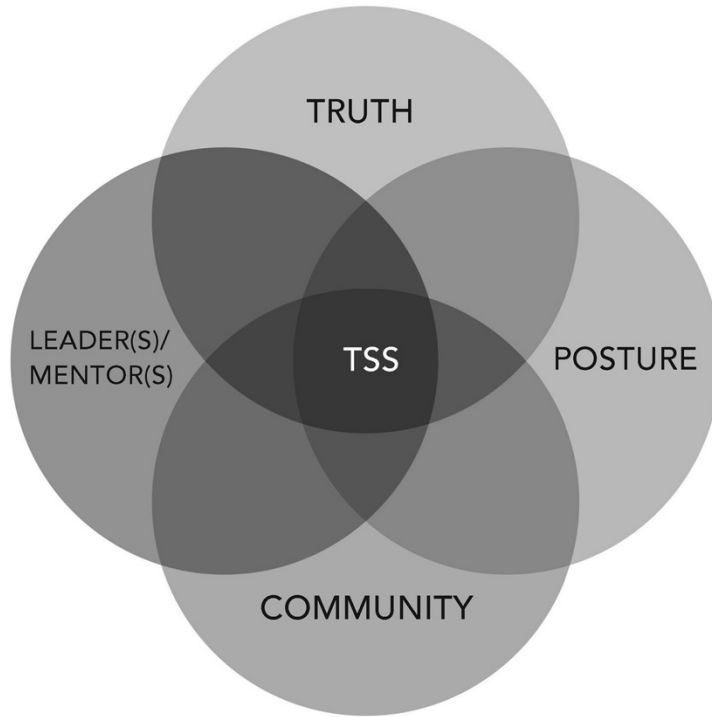
If it hasn't been said yet, we want to be clear. Discipleship and spiritual maturity don't happen in just nine simple sessions. Spiritual growth is a result of the Holy Spirit's interaction in a person's life over time. As a church, we can help facilitate that process through this material. But, we cannot force it to happen or make it happen on a defined schedule.

So, what factors help spiritual growth occur?

Just as a tennis racket or golf club has a sweet spot where the ball flies best off the strings or the club face, there is a sweet spot in spiritual growth and discipleship. People grow the most when the factors line up in this sweet spot. It is a combination of Truth (God's Word), loving Leader(s)/Mentor(s) (The right people), an individual's Posture (receptivity/good soil), and a supportive Community (the right group of people). No transformation happens apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit causes an alignment between God's truth (His Word), a person's receptivity (Posture), the right people (Leaders/Mentors) and a supportive Community (a right group of people). The combination of these four factors is referred to as a Transformational Sweet Spot (the TSS) and is optimal for spiritual growth.¹

Spiritual growth is a result of the Holy Spirit's interaction in a person's life.

Think about your own life in the times of your greatest growth. What was your mindset when this growth occurred? Maybe it was during a time of trial, weakness or difficulty. Some of our greatest growth "opportunities" are when difficulties hit. Perhaps your growth was during a time when you were in a particularly open posture, receptive, humble and looking for growth and change. This is good soil and cannot be manufactured. Did growth happen through reading the Bible or other spiritual content, or by listening to the preaching and teaching of God's Word? For example, was it through a Bible study or training through some spiritual disciplines? Did your growth happen through a person(s) or a leader(s)/mentor(s)? Did the right person challenge you? Did someone reach out and lead you through something? Or was someone there for you during a difficult time? God uses the right leaders, in the right situations equipped with His truth. Did your growth happen in the context of receiving truth in some way? Or did growth happen when you were involved with a group of people, small group or community group during a certain period of time?



Think of a period of time in your life when you experienced significant spiritual growth. Do you see the factors in the above diagram present in your own experience?

Describe your experience in the space below.

2 Peter 1:20–21

Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

God’s Word—The Bible

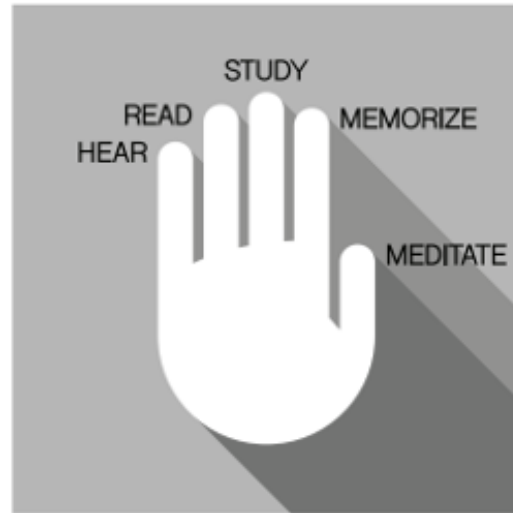
The Bible is the most remarkable book ever written. About 40 men of many occupations wrote the Bible (66 separate books) over approximately 1500 years. It was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Yet the Bible has one great theme and central figure, Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible had one supreme Author—and it did, the Holy Spirit. Read 2 Peter 1:20–21 to understand how God’s word came to us.

Getting a Grip on God's Word

In today's culture there is a significant lack of knowledge when it comes to God's Word. Have you noticed? If you have a desire to get a "good grip" on Scripture, let us suggest the five-finger method.²

Five-Finger Method:

- **Pinkie Finger**
- *Hear the Word*
- **Ring Finger**
- *Read the Word*
- **Middle Finger**
- *Study the Word*
- **Pointer Finger**
- *Memorize the Word*
- **Thumb**
- *Meditate on the Word*



If you try to hold your Bible with one finger, you won't have much success. With two fingers it will still be difficult. With three and four fingers it gets easier, but the best grip is with all five fingers. The same is true for your grip on the word of God.

In the space below, share ways in which you are getting a grip on God's Word.

Beginning a Quiet Time or Devotional Life

When it comes to having regular time in God’s Word, it really isn’t complicated. The main thing is to simply do something. Here is one example of how to get started:

Pick a Place/Time Pick a specific place and time. The more routine you can make your quiet time the better. Your place should be free from distractions. Eventually your place will become very comfortable to you. Using an electronic calendar can help remind you of your quiet time period. Start with 15 minutes.

Format Decide how you will structure your quiet time. We suggest you read Scripture and spend time in prayer. Begin your time in His Word by choosing a book of the Bible or a daily devotional series. (Crossroads offers opportunities here!) Initially plan to spend about six minutes reading the Bible, three minutes talking to God, two minutes considering how God might want you to apply what you read and four minutes writing down your summary. This suggested format is not so you will be mechanical or punch a clock but rather to provide a simple structure to get you started.

Application Consider how God may be asking you to respond to your time with Him. For instance, is there some way he may want you to apply the Scripture you read? An application can be something “to know,” “to do,” or a way “to be.” With that understanding you can receive an application from basically any passage of Scripture. Ask what God is wanting you to specifically know, do, or become. (Remember, however, an isolated verse can have different meaning when read without the surrounding detail! Much of Scripture does need some context. Over time you will start to get a feel for this as you understand the breadth of God’s Word.)

Write It Down Consider writing down what you are learning from your quiet time. A simple way to do this is with a journal/notebook or electronically in a document. First, write the date and the passage reference you read. Next, write a brief summary of what you read in your own words. Then write out your simple application. Writing it down will ensure you retain what you are learning.

Modern Bible Study Resources

You might find it helpful to become familiar with some online or downloadable software apps for Bible study, Bible reading or devotionals. There are numerous good, free resources including the few listed below:

- YouVersion App (Crossroads highly recommends this, and our devotional readings are out of this tool)
- Bible Gateway App
- Blue Letter Bible App
- RightNow Media (Crossroads has a church-wide subscription to this tool)

Experiencing a Quiet Time

There are five days of “homework” outlined in the section below. If you have never done something like this, the goal is to give you a taste of having a regular quiet time or devotional life and to work through John Chapter 1 (as an example). Give it a try.

Daily Format

You can use the following format each day with the passages indicated below.

1. Begin with prayer. Ask God to point out and forgive you of any sin(s) He calls to mind, and to speak to you during your time in the Word.
2. Read the passage for comprehension. You may need to read the entire passage twice.
3. Summarize the passage in writing.
4. Write down an application: something to know, to do, or a way to be.
5. Close in prayer. Thank God for the time with Him and anything He is teaching or revealing to you.

DAY 1. Read John 1:1–18

DAY 2. Read John 1:19–28

DAY 3. Read John 1:29–34

DAY 4. Read John 1:35–42

DAY 5. Read John 1:43–51

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 through 3:

(Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 6:33)

(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

(Proverbs 27:1 and Hebrews 10:24–25).

2. Memorize the following Scripture verses for this session:

Joshua 1:8

Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

3. Put into practice the Five Daily Quiet Times outlined in this session if you do not already have a developed habit.
4. Download and learn about the various Bible apps mentioned above.

Questions for Discussion

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. As you reflect on your own periods of spiritual growth, or the experiences others may share with you about their periods of spiritual growth, what factors in the TSS (Transformational Sweet Spot) do you notice?
3. Read Joshua 1:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16. In your opinion what makes the Bible such a remarkable book?
4. How do you know you can trust the Bible? What gives you that confidence?
5. What are some of the practical disciplines or study habits you have experienced or used? What have you found most helpful and why?

Close your time in prayer.



Serve and Share Your Story

Serving people, especially those who have nothing to give in return, requires growth on our part.

Serve Through the Lens of the Gospel

Spiritual growth is often considered to be the personal or private work of the believer. However, much of what we do in the Christian life is in front of others. It is especially true when we engage in God's mission. Serving people, especially those who have nothing to give in return, requires growth on our part.

Service is not our natural inclination; self-preservation is. Going public with your faith tests your commitment. As a discipline, service gives room for us to develop in our character. With the mission of God as our focus, transformation of our hearts occurs as we experience God's work in us. It is through serving that we discover our God-given gifts. Service grows our love and refines our view of God's work. This is a good place to be reminded of our Mission Statement at Crossroads Church: "Love God. Love People. Make Disciples of Jesus." The primary way Jesus-followers love other people is through serving them.

Serving Others Inside and Outside of the Church

When you choose to follow Jesus, you have chosen the life of a servant. Jesus has been given authority over all things. God the Father has made Jesus the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And all of creation—seen and unseen—is subject to Him. Yet Jesus chose and modelled the life of a servant.

Mark 10:42–45

So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever

wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Jesus performed the greatest act of service in the history of humanity when He made the ultimate sacrifice of Himself on the cross for our sins. Jesus served us. And Jesus makes it clear that when we are serving others, we are serving Him. When you serve others, you are serving Jesus.

Matthew 25:34–40

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!'..."

Followers of Jesus emulate Him in their service to others—both people inside the Church and outside the Church. Are you loving people through serving them? How are you loving and serving people inside the Church? How are you loving and serving people that are not yet followers of Jesus?

Take a few moments to write down how you are currently serving other people.

When serving (loving) others, we will naturally have opportunities to share the good news about Jesus with them. In this session, we want to help you solidify and practice your own story—how you became a follower of Jesus and how He has impacted your life.

The Gospel is Good News

The word gospel literally means “good news.” The gospel is the good news that we may freely receive God’s forgiveness and righteousness because Jesus suffered and died in our place for our sins. Paul says that it is essential for both justification and sanctification. In 1 Corinthians 15:1–5, the gospel is clearly defined; Christ died for our sins. He truly died physically and was buried. However, He conquered death and was raised to life again! The great news is that this allows us to join Him in eternal life.

Paul describes the gospel message as being God’s power.

1 Corinthians 15:1–5

Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve.

Romans 1:16–17

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

Because God is righteous, He demands righteousness. Without perfection and holiness, we are unable to be with Him and unable to receive eternal life. Because of our sin, we are incapable of making ourselves worthy to approach Him. On account of God’s grace, through the sacrifice of Jesus, He freely gives righteousness to all who repent and trust in Him. Our righteous God gave His righteousness in exchange for the sinfulness of sinful people. Martin Luther described this as “a blessed exchange,” our sin in exchange for Jesus’ righteousness.¹

The importance of this “blessed exchange” cannot be overstated. Meditating on the reality of what Jesus has done for us and the exchange that we have personally received is foundational for all transformational discipleship.

This is the essence of your story with Jesus. How did you receive the “blessed exchange” of Jesus’ righteousness for your sinfulness? What transpired in your life for you to recognize your sin and understand this good news? (We will give you an opportunity to begin to write down your story later in this session).

Serving People in 5 Steps of Outreach

As we become fully devoted followers of Jesus, our attitudes and actions should reflect His love and compassion toward others. In Luke 15, Jesus spoke through parables about the importance of reaching one lost soul. Throughout Jesus’ ministry it is evident that He didn’t let social or cultural boundaries prevent Him from reaching out to anyone. Jesus came to seek and save lost people!

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.

Each of us have people we can influence in our life. It is no accident that we have the relationships that we do. God might be prompting you to reach out to someone in your sphere of influence. Stop for a moment, pray and consider who that might be. Then follow these practical steps:

1. Spend time with people at work or in your neighborhood.
2. Listen to them so you can get to know them and recognize their needs. (What is their “God need”—where do they need God?)
3. Pray for their needs as they are revealed to you.
4. Serve them by meeting one of the needs they share.
5. Share your story with them when the Holy Spirit gives you the opportunity.

Who are the lost souls that God has placed in your life? Write the names of people in your sphere of influence with whom God may want you to share His good news.

Everyone Has a Story

There is a famous movie about the life of Jesus entitled, “The Greatest Story Ever Told!” Just like Jesus, you have a story to tell. When God comes into your life you are forever changed. Being able to briefly tell your unique life story and how you came to trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord is very valuable. The Apostle Peter encouraged us this way:

1 Peter 3:15

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks you about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.

Sharing your faith story is both a privilege and a serious responsibility. Your story may help someone begin to understand the gospel good news.

How to Write Your Story

These guidelines will help you develop a brief explanation of your life BEFORE Jesus, the simple explanation of HOW you received Jesus, and realistically what your life has been like AFTER you professed Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

Remember you want people to hear and understand your story. Therefore, you will want to avoid using words others would not understand. Make your story brief, about three to four minutes. Keep it real. Your story may be the first authentic encounter they have ever had with a follower of Jesus (a Christian).

Your story should clearly express the good news and how it has impacted your life. Your goal should be to share your story and allow the Holy Spirit to inspire listeners to invite Jesus to be their Savior. If you received Jesus as a child and do not remember details, then put the emphasis on your life after being saved. Remember, knowing precisely when Jesus became your Lord and Savior is not as important as knowing He is in your life.

Use this simple outline to write your brief testimony in the spaces provided below:

BEFORE I followed Jesus...

Try to remember the things you felt were wrong in your life before you became a Christian. What was it that convicted you to want to follow Jesus?

HOW I accepted Jesus...

Be very specific, but not wordy. How and when did you decide to follow Jesus? What things happened in your life that caused you to discover Jesus and commit your life to Him?

AFTER I received Jesus...

What are the benefits of being a Christian? How is your life being changed by Jesus? Be honest. Being saved doesn't mean you are perfect.

These are some questions to help you evaluate your story. Can you share it within three to four minutes? Does it relate to a wide variety of people and personalities? Is it personal and not preachy? Is Jesus central in your story? Is the gospel clearly expressed?

Finally, you can refer back to Session 2 to help someone respond to your story and accept Jesus into their life. Sharing your story this way may feel very unnatural. Evangelism is actually a God-given spiritual gift for some people who will more naturally have conversations about Jesus. We will address spiritual gifts a little more in Session 8.

Everyone, as a believer, however, is asked to share the Good News. You may have opportunities to share things that start smaller versus jumping straight into your personal testimony. Natural situations will arise where you can ‘drop’ something spiritual into a conversation and then see if there is a response. Always pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit in your interactions.

Here are two examples from Crossroads attendees:

One time when I was flying, the gentleman next to me was sharing that he had grown up in England and his parents had paid for him to go to a private Christian school. It was apparent from the ensuing conversation he was not a believer. We were on a three-hour flight, and I continued to ask him questions, and he shared more specific pieces of his life story with me. At one point he shared that he was a vegetarian. Because I knew from Scripture that when God created the world He had initially made us vegetarians, I was able to weave a spiritual element into the conversation. “You said you went to a Christian school, right?” Affirmative from him. “Then you are probably familiar with the story of the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve.” A nod. I continued, “Did you know God originally created us to be vegetarians?” He did a sort of, “What? No way?” Then he sat quietly pondering for a few minutes, processing this information. I don’t recall where the conversation went from there. I didn’t ‘walk him across the line with a salvation verse’, but more seeds were potentially planted in his life. He knew he could ask me questions, and that I was ‘safe’ to talk to about his thoughts—especially because we would go our separate ways after the flight!

Another example:

I worked as an executive in healthcare in 'corporate' America for many years. Although I asked on several occasions to lead a Bible study at my place of business before work hours, I was told this wasn't allowed as people might feel they 'had to attend' because of my position. There was a period of about 15 years, however, that the knowledge I was a 'Christian' continued to leak out all over the company, and I had many, many people stop in my office for advice and counsel because they had both heard I was a Christian and then told me they saw I lived differently than most people. I would also have people from other businesses I interacted with call me with questions. During Covid, specifically, I had a lady, well known in the business community, ask me, "How can you possibly stay so calm in the midst of this craziness?!" I simply stated, "I have Jesus. He is helping me. And I have peace because I know how it all ends—He wins and restores everything...It doesn't mean work isn't crazy now...and there isn't stress...but I have this hope and His peace."

Hopefully these two examples will help you think more broadly about how you walk and interact with non-believers who you desire to impact and guide into a relationship with Jesus. We should always prayerfully consider opportunities and be gentle and loving in our conversations.

Regardless of your specific spiritual gifts (see Session 8), we are all called to be evangelists. Be ready at all times to share seeds of biblical truth and to be ready to share your story when Jesus gives you an opportunity!

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 through 4:

(Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 6:33)

(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

(Proverbs 27:1 and Hebrews 10:24–25)

(Joshua 1:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16)

2. Memorize the following Scripture verses for this session:

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Romans 1:16a

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.

3. Write out your testimony/story using your notes from earlier in this session, and practice sharing it.
4. Continue with your regular quiet time/devotional life.

Questions for Discussion

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. When you think about sharing your story about Jesus, how do you react? (Reference Acts 4:20 and reflect on how the Apostle Peter would have answered this question).
3. (Read 1 John 1:3) Sometimes you may feel as though you “need to know all the answers” before you can be an effective witness for Jesus. What is it that we really need to know?
4. What was your reaction to the 5 Steps of Outreach? What do you see as a barrier or difficulty to overcome in carrying out this outreach plan within your sphere of influence?

Close your time in prayer.



Pray–Alignment with God

“...we align ourselves with what God is doing. We don’t align God with what we are doing.”

Prayer is Aligning Ourselves with God

A fourth identifying characteristic of a disciple is that they pray. Prayer is the greatest ministry of discipleship; it involves purpose, practice, and power. In our church, we believe in the power of prayer and in the God who answers. You can pray directly to God the Father, to God the Son (Jesus), or to God the Spirit (Holy Spirit). When you pray to One, you are praying to All—God the Trinity is “three-in-one.” When we pray, we are inviting God’s Kingdom into all areas of our lives. Prayer is two-fold: our part is to faithfully pray (connect with, ask and listen) and believe in the One to whom we are praying; God’s part is to answer in His time and in His way.

Picture the image of a man adrift in a boat. Finding a rope and a hook, he throws it to the shore to secure it. As he pulls on the rope, is he pulling the shore to his boat or his boat to the shore? Obviously, the latter. Prayer works in the same fashion. Prayer is a tool by which we align ourselves with what God is doing. We don’t align God with what we are doing.¹

John 15:7

But if you remain in Me and My words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!

As we align ourselves with God, it is okay to bring our needs and our desires to Him. Charles Spurgeon said, “Asking is the rule of the Kingdom.”² Making the proper petitions is a natural outcome of a believer who is relationally intimate with Jesus and investing in God’s Word, as described in John 15:7. God expects His people will make requests of Him for life’s needs and wants us to listen for His guidance. As God answers our prayers,

sometimes in ways we don't expect or not the way we have asked, we become aligned with Him in His will for our lives. Another thought is this: if we are fully aligned with God's will, it is easier for God to grant our petitions. When we want the same things that God wants, He is more likely to give us the desires of our heart because it is also His heart. Aligning ourselves with God's will and heart is the work of prayer, and it is critical for transformational spiritual growth.

Four Elements of Prayer

These elements can be remembered by the acrostic ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (asking).

Adoration—*Praise for who God is.*

Hebrews 13:15

Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to His name.

Psalms 40:5

O LORD my God, You have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. You have no equal. If I tried to recite all Your wonderful deeds, I would never come to the end of them.

Confession—*Admitting our sins to God.*

Psalms 32:5a

Finally, I confessed all my sins to You and stopped trying to hide my guilt.

Psalms 38:18

But I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done.

Thanksgiving—*Thanking Him for what He has done.*

Ephesians 5:20

And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Supplication—*Prayer for others and ourselves.*

James 1:5

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.

John 16:24

You haven't done this before. Ask, using My Name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

Jesus Teaching Prayer

In Matthew 6 we read what is referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer” which gives us a glimpse of Jesus teaching His disciples to pray. Try to find the elements of prayer from the previous page in the prayer below.

Matthew 6:9–13

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy. May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

Indicate below the aspects of prayer (ACTS) you find in Jesus' model.

Practical Ideas to Consider Related to Prayer

Prayer should be organic, natural, consistent and relational. Here are some helpful thoughts about prayer:

1. **Pray Without Ceasing.** (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Many feel guilty that they don't pray or don't feel like they have time to pray. Some people are more naturally inclined to action and movement and the idea of sitting and praying is suffocating. For those who are more action-oriented, be encouraged by this verse that only contains three words, "Pray without ceasing." That means that prayer does not have to be something you do while you sit still. You can consider God throughout your day, including Him in your thoughts, and express things to Him moment by moment. Another way to explain this is that prayer is an ongoing constant two-way conversation with God, verbally and/or in your mind. We need to both speak and listen, and we can do this continually throughout our day.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Never stop praying.

List below some specific ways that you can apply this verse in your life.

2. **Silence in Prayer**

The proper stance when it comes to transformation is sometimes less action and more being quiet. Listening is a key part of prayer. To always have our mouth open and speaking limits our ability to hear from God. We acknowledge this may be difficult for some. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1–7 for insight on this discipline that might help bring forth more silence in your prayer time.

How can ceasing chatter and sitting in God's presence make a difference in your life?

Write your answer in the space below and reflections from the Ecclesiastes verses.

3. Pray During Your Quiet Time

In a previous session we encouraged the discipline of a “quiet time” or “devotional time.” This is a time set aside for your relationship with the Lord. It is primarily composed of reading God’s Word, praying, listening, and considering how God wants you to apply His Word to your life.

A practical idea is to infuse the elements of prayer into your time with the Lord: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (ACTS). Begin your quiet time with Adoration. Start by expressing your belief in who God is, expressing His worth and greatness and placing Him over your life. Then you can move into a time of Confession, asking forgiveness for falling short of God’s standard of righteousness.

At this point, you are in a proper position to hear from Him while reading His Word. After you read, you can return to a prayer of Thanksgiving, thanking Him for his provisions and insights. Then you can ask for things that seem appropriate as you align your life to God. This is the Supplication portion of your time with the Lord.

4. Use a Prayer List

A prayer list can help you remember things you might otherwise forget to pray over. During this application portion of your quiet time, you can use a prayer list to help guide you.

It can include:

- Your family
- Your non-Christian friends
- 1. Your pastors, elders and church
- Missionaries and Christian workers
- 2. Needs in your community, our government and elected leaders, and the world

Leave space by the requests to write and reflect on how God answers these prayers. This can be so encouraging over the years as you look back and see God’s faithfulness.

Prayer should have an outward focus with a desire to align with God to accomplish a purpose here in this world.

5. Prayer for People Who Live in Your Community

Prayer should have an outward focus with the desire to align with God to accomplish His purpose here in this world. This prayer work could help transform your community and your sphere of influence. Pray for the areas around you asking God to work in your neighbors, relationships, local businesses, grocery stores, restaurants, schools, work and your work relationships. All of this represents your sphere of influence, and you should enlist God's help in transforming people into fully devoted followers of Jesus. This takes prayer. When you pray in this way, then your interactions with people become much more meaningful. They become part of God's will to accomplish His larger plan.

6. Prayer Walk

Another strategy is to prayer walk. And this is especially helpful for people who like to be active. Walk your neighborhood or areas in your community and pray. Pray for influence, success and God's transforming power to impact these areas according to His will. Ask God to use you in this process.

7. Pray in Groups

Praying together in small community groups or Bible studies unites members to God's purposes. Our model (Crossroads Community Groups), based on Acts 2:42, expects group prayer. Leaders have been provided tools for this practice. Group prayer helps you experience God's presence uniquely and fosters unity, encouragement, and support, as referenced in Scripture.

Ephesians 5:31–32

As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."

This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

Acts 2:42

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

8. Pray with Your Spouse

Praying together regularly with your spouse is a wonderful idea. In Ephesians 5:31–32, it is described as a "great mystery" to be united with your spouse in marriage. This mystery is spiritual in nature and your marriage should share a spiritual component in connection. Perhaps the most important advice for any Christian couple, in addition to reading

God's Word together, is to pray together. Many find this practical and doable as a part of their routine, at the start of the day prior to daily activity beginning, or at the end of the day when one or both spouses are heading to bed. This moment of connection to share may only take a few minutes, but it can be the most important few minutes of your day. When you are not physically together, this can be done over the phone. If you haven't prayed together in a regular and consistent way, consider this to enhance your spiritual life in your marriage.

9. Fasting for Prayer

The purpose of biblical fasting is to grow in your relationship with the Lord. Fasting is a discipline that commonly goes alongside prayer. Scripture does not prescribe how often one should fast or the amount of time to fast, but we know it was a regular discipline in both the Old and New Testament.

Matthew 6:16–18, Mark 2:18–20, Acts 13:2–3 and Acts 14:23 share a few examples. Jesus fasted. Moses fasted 40 days from food and water on two different occasions! (Reference Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 9:9). We know Jesus fasted for 40 days as well when He was led into the wilderness following His baptism. (Reference Matthew 4:1–11)

If you have never fasted for the purpose of prayer, we would suggest starting by periodically setting a time before the Lord to skip a meal and use that time to pray. Then over time grow this discipline to a day or even longer. Do not correlate spiritual fasting with a diet plan, simply do this out of love for and worship of Jesus. Fasting in Scripture is giving up food to seek the Lord and put Him first.

In the busyness of life, you may not always be able to set aside a whole day or a portion of a day dedicated exclusively to prayer and fasting. But even during an otherwise normal day, when fasting, your hunger will remind you to take a few seconds to pray, or you can dedicate the time when you would otherwise be eating a meal to prayer.

You will find that God can teach you through the discipline of fasting. At minimum you will gain a greater understanding of your reliance on Him. See the Got Questions.org website article “Christian Fasting—What Does the Bible Say?”³ for some additional teaching.

Matthew 6:16a

And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do...

If you have a health condition or something that precludes you from fasting from food due to health issues, **FOLLOW** your doctor's recommendations. You may be able to do a modified fast, however, such as eating only nuts or vegetables or broth.

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 through 5:
(Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 6:33)
(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)
(Proverbs 27:1 and Hebrews 10:24–25)
(Joshua 1:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16)
(Mark 10:45 and Romans 1:16a)
2. Memorize the following Scripture memory verses from this section:

John 16:24

You haven't done this before. Ask, using My Name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

Philippians 4:6–7

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

3. Continue with your daily Quiet/Devotional time, incorporating prayer into this time (if you have not already).
4. Incorporate one or two of the practical prayer ideas from this session (1–9 shared above) into your next week.

Questions

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. Have you personally had any practical prior experience with any of the 1–9 prayer suggestions shared in this session? What prayer practices have you found helpful? What have you found difficult?
3. Which of the prayer suggestions are you interested in trying maybe for the first time? Why?
4. Consider the additional Scriptures to the left and our memorization verse from Philippians. What do you observe or learn about prayer from these verses?

Hebrews 4:16

So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Psalms 62:8

O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.

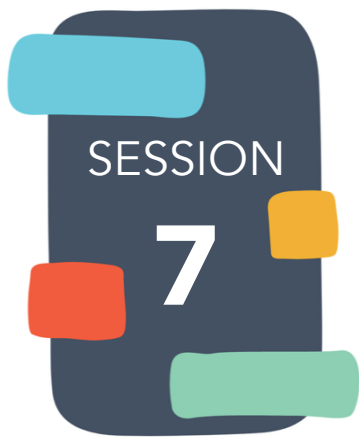
Philippians 4:6–7

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Close your time in prayer.

Notes

Notes



Give—Time, Talents, and Treasures

John 3:16

For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

We Serve a Generous God

The fifth, and possibly most difficult identifying characteristic of a disciple, is their giving. In our desire to be more like our Heavenly Father, it is important we grow in generosity. No one can out give God! The Apostle John reminds us in John 3:16 that because of God's great love for us, He gave His only Son. And that Son, Jesus, who Himself is God, is the exact representation of God's nature and came giving and serving even to the point of death.

Jesus' desire to seek and save the lost overshadowed His desire for status, wealth, position and authority. To determine His priorities, He viewed life and the world through the lens of the gospel. Paul also encouraged believers to consider Jesus' example as it relates to our finances and other priorities like sharing time and talents in service to others.

2 Corinthians 8:7–9

Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty He could make you rich.

We have a lavish God who desires for us to be like Him in generosity with our time, talents, and treasures. As we internalize the significance of the gospel and consider that Jesus became poor so that we could be rich eternally, our generosity will continue to grow.

Finance and Identity

Before we discuss giving and finances, it is imperative to take a moment to remember our identity and what defines us as people. It would be easy and misleading to summarize our worth and assume that God looks at us through an accountant's lens. He does not, and we should not view our worth in this way either.

Paul reminds us of who we are in 1 Peter 2:

1 Peter 2:9–12

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when He judges the world.

In just a few sentences, Paul declares that we are chosen, priests, holy, God's possession and strangers in the world.¹ Whether you are in the financial category of the "haves" or the "have nots," in Jesus we are all the same. We are children of the King and aliens in this world. We are brothers and sisters who love one another because God is our loving Father. Since we are His children, God desires for us to reflect His nature through our generosity and giving. Can someone tell you are a follower of Jesus by looking at the way you spend your money? By remembering who we are in Jesus, focusing on the truth that He loves and accepts us just the way we are, we can keep growing into maturity.

Here are some additional Scriptures about our "identity in Christ" that you can review on your own:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Ephesians 2:10
- Galatians 2:20

"Since we are His children, God desires for us to reflect His nature through our generosity in giving."

- John 1:12
- Jeremiah 1:5
- 1 Corinthians 12:27
- Romans 8:17
- 1 John 3:1a

What the Bible Teaches About Giving

Matthew 23:23

“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.

Giving is certainly about more than just dollars and cents. But it includes our money. God owns everything! The Scriptures specifically describe a tithe as a material testimony of God’s ownership of both the material and spiritual things of our lives. The tithe is first mentioned in Genesis 14. On his return from the daring rescue of Lot from four enemy kings, Abraham encountered the priest Melchizedek and voluntarily surrendered to him a tithe (one-tenth) of everything he had.

In Hebrew, “tithe” literally means “tenth,” and it appears 30 times throughout the Old and New Testament. In Matthew 23:23 Jesus condemns the religious leaders for only tithing. He makes it clear they should not only be tithing, but also attending to even more important matters: justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Tithing does not make up for a life that is not following God. Tithing is biblically understood as a proper baseline for determining financial Lordship. Additionally, we should generously share our time and financial gifts which are all from the Lord. God is the owner of all things, our time and our money. We are stewards of everything He made and everything He owns. Giving back our first and best portions to Him is demonstrating His Lordship in our lives.

Our Attitude Toward Giving

Our time and our tithes should be given bountifully and cheerfully. Giving is not about getting money out of our wallets; giving financially is about getting greed out of our hearts and not allowing money to become an idol. God does not need our money because, as we have said, He already owns everything. God desires that our hearts come into alignment with His. Remember, God does not see our worth in terms of how much we have or how much we give. All people are created in God’s image and have infinite worth.

Matthew 6:19–21

Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

2 Corinthians 9:6–7

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

Malachi 3:10–12

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in My Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put Me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

Financial Freedom: Living the 10-10-80 Lifestyle

At Crossroads, we suggest living the 10-10-80 Lifestyle for balanced financial stewardship². The 10-10-80 Lifestyle is a simple plan that can prevent a lot of heartache and debt.

- We **GIVE** 10% of our income. (We place this first in priority since God asks us to give our first and best—our “first fruits”)
- We **SAVE** 10% of our income.
- We **LIVE** on 80% of our income.

GIVE Giving is your tithe to the Church and it's Kingdom work. (Jesus speaks of “tithes and offerings”. Tithes are to the Church and Offerings are beyond the

church to greater Kingdom work. We are not limited to giving only 10% of our income).

SAVE Savings includes your emergency fund, 3-6 months of savings in case of job loss, and saving/investing for the future.

LIVE Living expenses include all of your household expenses, entertainment and lifestyle choices. It also includes larger purchases, which you have to plan and save for over time, like automobiles, college, weddings, etc.

Start Where You Are and Take a Next Step

Understand that the plan we are teaching is a biblical ideal. If you are unemployed or have some catastrophic family issue, do not feel pressured to give—take care of your family. If you are not facing significant financial hardship, or are just needing to work on reprioritizing your budget and spending, strive to be mature and trust God in this area. You can begin where you are and take positive baby steps toward becoming financially free.

To gain specific training, help and support in the area of finances, Crossroads periodically offers classes to help you work toward financial freedom. The basic financial maturity steps to work through are:³

Step 1: Live on a Budget (10–10–80)

Step 2: Save an Emergency Fund (\$1000)

Step 3: Pay off Consumer Debt

Step 4: Save 3 to 6 months of Living Expenses

Step 5: Build Wealth and Live Generously

We are all a work in progress. No one is perfect. Start where you are, set goals, and work toward bringing your life into conformity with the Lord's will and His wise financial stewardship principles. Don't spend time and energy debating what God has said about giving. Your time will be much better spent focusing on the next personal step that you need to achieve. Know that we at Crossroads want to help you, and all of us, become financially free. As we become financially free, God will be able to use His church as an amazing instrument of blessing in this world.

For private reflection, take a moment and think through where you and your family are on the steps outlined above. What would be a wise next step in your life financially?

Giving of Your Entire Life: Time and Talents

Giving should include our wallets and our budgets, but it shouldn't stop there. Giving includes having a generous attitude with how we spend our time and how we use our talents (including the specific Spiritual Gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit). To become like Jesus, we must use our time and abilities to make a difference in the lives of others. We must view the world and our time through the lens of the gospel.

How are you gifted to help others? If you have never taken a Spiritual Gifts Assessment, you can access a free assessment tool [here](http://www.spiritualgiftstest.com) and learn about your specific giftings and how they can be used in Jesus' church: www.spiritualgiftstest.com. Take some time to complete this assessment tool.

Write your top three identified Spiritual Gifts in the space below.

What can God use in your life to make a difference for his Kingdom?

In the space below write where you give of yourself, and where you could serve and give your time and talents to support Jesus' church at Crossroads, and His broader Kingdom.

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 through 5:

(Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 6:33)

(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

(Proverbs 27:1 and Hebrews 10:24–25)

(Joshua 1:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16)

(Mark 10:45 and Romans 1:16a)

(John 16:24 and Philippians 4:6–7)

2. Memorize the two Scripture memory verses from this section:

Matthew 6:19–21

Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

2 Corinthians 9:6–7

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

3. Develop a personal budget and include tithing and saving.
4. Consider how you give of your time and talents and determine if there are any changes needed in this area of generosity.

Questions for Discussion

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. How do your finances affect your identity and how you think about yourself?
3. In what ways have you been impacted by God's generosity? Share a story about how God was faithful financially during a time of need. What was your experience?
4. Read or recite (from memory!) 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 again. What makes a person a generous and cheerful giver? Is it determined by how much a person has or gives?

Close your time in prayer.

Notes

Notes



Empowered to "GO"

Empowerment by the Holy Spirit

When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He places His spirit in us. The Holy Spirit resides in the believer and provides our source of spiritual power. Jesus said the following to His disciples before His death and resurrection. We now, as believers, have the Holy Spirit living in us.

John 7:37–39

On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to Me! Anyone who believes in Me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" (When He said "living water," He was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in Him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into His glory).

Although a refrigerator possesses all the ability it needs to do what it was created to do (keep food cold), it has no power on its own. A refrigerator cannot do its job unless it is plugged into a power source. Similarly, because you are a new creation in Christ, you have all the capacity you need to live the Christian life. However, you must continually draw from the proper source of power—the Holy Spirit. A transformation takes place when you surrender control to Jesus as Savior and Lord. This change is vital to a personal relationship with God. Jesus describes this transformation in John 7.

An abundant and overflowing life is the result of a growing relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Paul likens the Holy Spirit's work in our lives to producing the fruit of character.

Galatians 5:22–25

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

Just as our relationship with God depends totally on what God has done through Jesus Christ, so the power to live a dynamic Christian life also comes totally from God through the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

So, having the Holy Spirit is having everything we need to go and accomplish His Great Commission described in Matthew 28:19–20. The Holy Spirit equips you to be a witness for Jesus. What are your thoughts about why the Holy Spirit's power is needed to be His witness?

Record your thoughts in the space below.

Sin's Distracting Work

Although you became a Christian through the Holy Spirit's work, sin can easily distract and interrupt your fellowship (connection) with the Holy Spirit. Sin's influence can cause you to slowly drift away from the firm foundation of Jesus in your life. Soon, you will find yourself relying on your own strength and power instead of Jesus' strength and power. If you discover that sin or disobedience is

causing you to retake control of your life, it's important to recognize your sin and repent before God, and surrender control back to Jesus. The Christian life is one of continual confession and repentance. Even when you can't see the way, trust in His direction.

1 John 1:9

But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

From Unable to Empowered

Do you sometimes question if God can really use you to help other people grow spiritually? This is not unique to you. Early disciples had similar doubts and needed this encouragement from Paul.

Ephesians 3:14–21

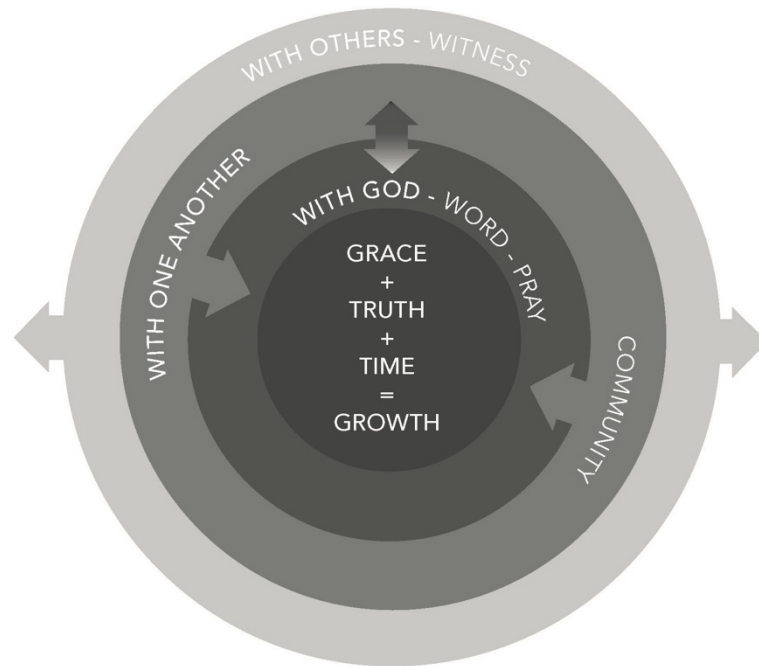
When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

God has plans for you. As you allow, He will use you in ways that you can't begin to imagine. Lean into the Holy Spirit that resides within you and be empowered by Him.

God's Plan for You IN Ministry

As you consider how God may plan to use you to encourage spiritual growth in the lives of others, it helps to understand how growth occurs. The graphic below describes the dynamics of the growth environment and how people experience spiritual growth.



Starting with the **circle at the center** of this diagram, there are two primary ingredients God uses to cause growth in our lives: Grace and Truth. Truth gives us the understanding we need to live the Christian life. Grace provides the acceptance and encouragement we need to keep on going. But growth doesn't happen all at once. It occurs as a process over time. Thus, the formula for an ideal growth environment is:

$$\text{Grace} + \text{Truth} + \text{Time} = \text{Growth}$$

Moving outward, the **second circle** describes the upward and downward relationship with God experienced through His Word and Prayer. This is an ongoing two-way communication process with God.

The **third concentric circle** recognizes that inward relationships are with other believers and are experienced in community. Like the new believers in Acts, we experience "Grace + Truth + Time" in the context of relationships with other believers.

The **outer circle** reflects the outward relationships we have with those who do not believe in Jesus. Our influence with them is through our witness for Jesus by sharing the gospel and our story.

The **Stages of Discipleship Process** diagram is an example of the process a person goes through from his first exposure to the gospel to becoming a leader that multiplies disciples. It is not meant to represent the only way a person develops spiritually. Rather, it is an effective progression through which a person can develop on his or her journey to become a spiritual leader and disciple multiplier.

The Stages of the Discipleship Process¹



The purpose of EQUIP Discipleship Training is to help you become a disciple and teach you how to reproduce yourself spiritually and make disciples.

A Disciple Is:

- A follower of Jesus
- Someone who has received Jesus and is Connecting, Engaging with God's Word, Generous, Serving, and Praying.
- A person living in a Jesus-Centered way, not perfect, but has a proper posture toward the Lord.
- Someone influencing others to also become followers of Jesus solely out of their love for Him, not for personal gain.

Are you a disciple of Jesus? Where has God naturally equipped you to fit on the previous diagram? Are you more interested in evangelizing and working with those who don't know Jesus yet? Are you more interested in training those who have recently come to know Jesus? Are you more equipped for personal one on one relationships, or in a role as a group leader? Are you more naturally inclined to work with a certain age group or demographic? Where will God place you in His work? This can change at different phases in your life.

Write your thoughts in response in the space below.

Your Gifting FOR Ministry

As you determine where you fit in ministry, it is helpful to know more about how you are gifted as an individual and as a leader. God has given each believer spiritual gifts. Every Christian is a minister with a unique contribution to make in the body of Christ. Where you best fit in ministry depends on the spiritual gifts you have received and been entrusted with.

1 Corinthians 12:7

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

1 Peter 4:10

God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

Spiritual gifts are not limited to a subgroup of believers. They are distributed by the Holy Spirit to all believers. The following list covers some of the most common spiritual gifts (but is not an exhaustive list of all the gifts of the Spirit).

- ☐ Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
- ☐ Teaching (Matthew 28:19)
- ☐ Faith (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- ☐ Giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- ☐ Discernment (1 John 4:1)
- ☐ Exhortation (Hebrews 3:13; 10:25)
- ☐ Knowledge (2 Peter 3:18)
- ☐ Mercy (Ephesians 4:32)
- ☐ Service (Galatians 5:13)
- ☐ Wisdom (James 1:5)

Based on your knowledge of yourself, place a check in the box next to the two or three primary spiritual gifts that you believe you may have.

Spiritual gifts are often validated by others and through your experience in ministry. We encourage you to take a free online spiritual gifts inventory at this site to become more informed about where God may have equipped you for ministry:

www.spiritualgiftstest.com

What are your top three listed spiritual gifts from this assessment tool?

Not only do you have a spiritual gift, but your life experience and your passions can help guide you toward ministry as well.

What life experiences or passions do you have that might be a factor in selecting where you can best serve in ministry?

Respond to this question in the space below.

1 Corinthians 11:1

And you should
imitate me, just as I
imitate Christ.
(Apostle Paul)

Your Life Example

When ministering to others, the personal example you set is the most important quality you possess for ensuring success or failure. What kind of life do you lead? Your character and a lifestyle centered on the Lordship of Jesus are critical for effectiveness. Obviously, you do not have to be perfect and lead a life free from struggles. Actually, an authentic life that demonstrates faithfulness in God through struggles is fertile ground for spiritual growth and provides opportunities for effective ministry. People are inspired to change as they see you live for Jesus in the midst of hardships. As you persevere through trials your faithfulness and hope in Jesus shine brightly. So, use your life example, your character and your Jesus-centered lifestyle for your ministry. Consider what the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Corinthian church. Is your life an example worthy of imitation by others due to how you live?

Allow God to Use You

How will you take the next step of ministry development?

How will you allow God to use you in your life to influence others for Jesus' Kingdom and to multiply disciples?

This may require a purposeful and intentional shift on your part. Perhaps you will be able to infuse your current relationships with a purpose and boldly take the risk to become an influencer in the lives around you.

How will you use your time, talents, giftings, treasure, life experience and passion to help multiply disciples of Jesus?

Take a few minutes to pray and talk to God about how He might use you to make disciples in the world around you.

In the space below, write how God might be leading you.

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 through 7:

(Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 6:33)

(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

(Proverbs 27:1 and Hebrews 10:24–25)

(Joshua 1:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16)

(Mark 10:45 and Romans 1:16a)

(John 16:24 and Philippians 4:6–7)

(Matthew 6:19–21 and 2 Corinthians 9:16–17)

2. Memorize the Scripture memory verse for this section:

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

3. Discuss the results of your spiritual gifts assessment from the spiritual gifts assessment with another believer. What giftings do they validate or see in you?
4. Begin to formulate a plan for where God might use you in discipleship of others.

Questions for Discussion

1. What from this session stood out to you as the most interesting or helpful?
2. Read Acts 1:8 again. How important is the Holy Spirit in the work of preparing and empowering us for ministry? What is the danger of doing the work of ministry without the Holy Spirit?
3. Consider again the concentric circle diagram of how people grow spiritually. Can you relate to this diagram? Think of a time in your life when you experienced spiritual growth. How do you see the elements of Grace, Truth, and Time at work?
4. As you think about your life and any current ministry where you serve, where do you see yourself on the Discipleship Process Diagram? Why do you see yourself there?
5. Do you feel like you already have a ministry that is working to multiply disciples? How would you describe this ministry? What next ministry steps do you see God cultivating in your life?

Close your time in prayer

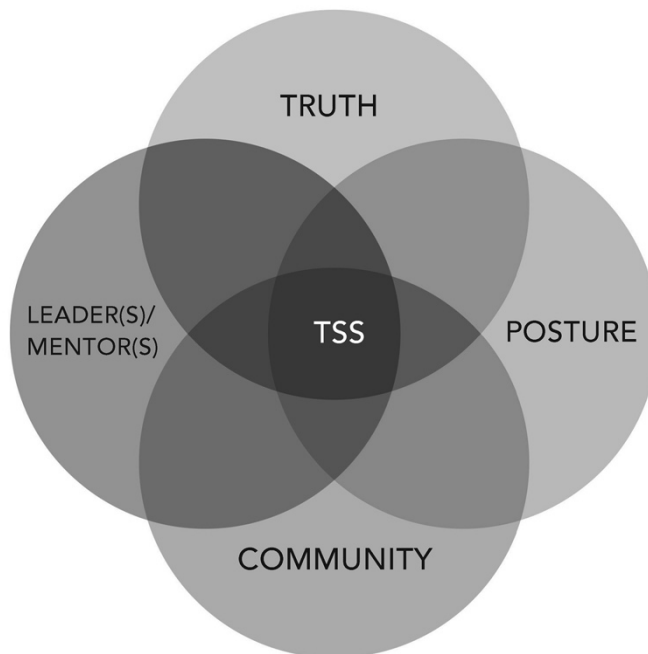
Notes



Mobilized to "GO"

The Leaders God Uses

Throughout this material, we have seen the role that God's word plays in discipleship. We have also learned that discipleship is most transformational when a person is in a good posture to receive the truth and is part of a supportive community. The final key ingredient of discipleship is leadership/mentorship. You may not consider yourself a leader or a mentor. You may think you are just being a good friend. But when "friends" point people toward truth while they are in an open posture, transformation happens. Friends like this are called leaders and mentors, and they are key in hitting the TSS-Transformational Sweet Spot.¹



Without leadership, would-be disciples wander aimlessly with no sense of direction. Something amazing happens when leaders and mentors embrace their responsibility to help people apply the truth of God's word. Jesus's leadership guided the original disciples to become disciple makers, and today God wants to use you to make disciples also.

"It is possible to engage in the ministry of making disciples without making your life CRAZY."

Staying Healthy as a Leader

As exciting as it is to think about the ways God wants to use you, it is also important to evaluate your current level of health and stress. Healthy discipleship and leadership contain a balance of Connecting, Engaging with God's Word, Serving, Praying and Being Generous. In your excitement, it could be tempting to "add one more thing to your plate." Christian leaders often overload in the area of Connecting and Serving. So, as you evaluate how you can "make disciples," please don't add this new ministry idea on top of an already crazy schedule. Yes, God has commanded us to be a disciple and to make disciples but doing that in a way that maintains your health is critical. If you are unhealthy as a leader, you will not be able to minister and lead by the example you desire. Crossroads' hope is that you will be inspired to incorporate ideas from this bible discipleship training into your existing relationships, lifestyle and the ministries you serve in to help others grow as disciples and become disciple makers.

Consider these examples:

A young adult invited two of her high school friends to read a book with her and then meet for a monthly lunch and talk. As they discussed the book, the young adult used her insights on discipleship to help her friends grow spiritually. She took time during one of their meetings to explain how to have a personal quiet time. One of the young ladies immediately went out, bought a Bible and notebook and began having a personal time with the Lord because of the influence of a "Leader". On the surface, this monthly lunch was just a friend meeting with friends. But because this young lady, who was open to receiving influence, heard the truth of God's word, transformation happened.

A business leader invited friends to join her to breakfast every other week for three months. During this time they read through a few Scripture excerpts: Genesis 1, Psalm 1 and a few sections of Mark. They also talked about work, and their family lives. This leader helped guide the Scripture discussion by asking questions like: 'If this is true, what does it tell you about humankind, what does it tell you about God, and what do you intend to do differently in your life this week as

a result?' Then at each ensuing breakfast meeting she asked what people were grateful for, and if they had taken an action step as a result of the prior reading and used the previously stated questions again. There was also some time for prayer and catching up with people about their personal lives. They didn't get to every topic every time, but they had conversations about all these things over the course of the three months. When the three months was over, the business leader invited those who had been faithful in attendance to go through the EQUIP material if they felt they were ready for that next step, remembering to prayerfully ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit.

A young stay-at-home mom had a play group once a month and the women would use this time to encourage each other in their parenting. This mom formed a text group where the women could share thoughts and the mom, doing informal discipling, could add encouragement, prayer thoughts and Scripture as applicable/appropriate in the text messages. After the group met for six months, the mom invited some of the women who seemed warm to the idea to do more formal discipleship by reading a book. She didn't necessarily use this term 'discipleship/mentor', she simply suggested they read a topical book that taught spiritual elements and then discuss it once a month either in person or over Zoom (or other format) after their children were in bed. Eventually, she was able to continue meeting with two or three women and go through the EQUIP material with them and encourage them to consider the same process with a few other women.

So, how will becoming a disciple maker change and influence your schedule? It is possible to engage in the ministry of making disciples without making your life crazy. When you operate within your giftings and lifestyle, you can serve and disciple others in a balanced way. The goal is to accomplish the Great Commission over your lifetime, not with an intense plan that you can't sustain in a healthy way.

At the conclusion of this EQUIP study, we are going to ask you to consider inviting one to three people to join you once a month to engage in this EQUIP discipleship curriculum together. Discipleship involves equipping others to

become disciple makers themselves. Not everyone you invite will be in a good posture for growth or ready for this study. Do not think that this is a failure on your part. Your job is to sow the seed by inviting. It is the Holy Spirit's job to help people respond and grow. What needs to change in your life in order to maintain proper health, balance and margin?

Write your thoughts in the space below.

Luke 5:1–5

One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish." "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again."

Becoming a Disciple Maker!

To become an effective discipler of others, it's helpful to start by learning certain basic personal ministry skills. This will enable you to minister to people as well as help them develop as spiritual leaders. You can begin by cultivating a mindset of seeing each person you meet "with spiritual eyes" and evaluating their spiritual needs and interests.

Jesus began His ministry on earth by ministering to the crowds. Through this, He made contact with individual men, some of whom He would specifically select later (Luke 4:38; 5:1–11). One by one, He called specific individuals to follow Him as he continued His public teaching. The following principles can be seen from Jesus' example of starting His ministry:²

1. Take the initiative to meet people and expand your sphere of influence. (There may be people already within your sphere of influence that do not yet know Jesus, or who you think you can help develop as disciples).
2. Be willing to help meet people's needs and help them take a next step spiritually.

3. Depend on the Holy Spirit to move in people's lives in special ways to increase their commitment. God will cause many to desire more spiritual growth. View these people as potential spiritual leaders (as future disciples and disciple multipliers).
4. Even after choosing people to invest in, it is important to continue meeting new people and trusting God for ministry opportunities in which you can involve those whom you are discipling.

Luke 5:6–11

And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking. When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Who are some individuals in your direct sphere of influence, both Christians and non-Christians, that need your help spiritually right now?

Mindset of an Effective Leader

Investing in the spiritual life of another person is one of the most rewarding and challenging things you can do as a Christian. By helping people receive Christ, gain confidence in their relationship with God and understand Christian foundations, you will be preparing them to live for Christ for a lifetime. You will also have begun a life-long adventure of spiritual multiplication that will significantly affect many lives for years to come.

Developing other leaders and reaching people for Jesus is just wishful thinking unless the spiritual leader has a mindset that guides the process. This mindset affects how you perceive things and ultimately how you make decisions.³

DO:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to Guide You
- Think Relationally
- Think Multiplication, Not Addition
- Think Transformation, Not Knowledge Impartation

DON'T:

- Lose sight of the objective “grow people spiritually/make disciples”
- Be weighed down by feelings of inadequacy
- Get discouraged in the everyday challenges of working with people

Activating Your Disciple Making

God is calling you to a mission field. Maybe that mission field is within your community. Maybe it is in your workplace. Maybe it is in relationships you meet through church, or through school. There are people that God wants reached for Him. He is asking for available souls willing to be used to influence others. This can be done individually or in groups. As Jesus looked for His disciples, several qualities made them better choices. They were “FAT”: Faithful, Available and Teachable. But not perfect! As you look for people to invite to join your group, or to invest in individually, look for those with the traits that Jesus’ first disciples displayed. Individuals who are faithful, available and teachable are generally in a posture of openness to growth. With whom has God given you influence? Is there a pool of people that you can choose from to minister to in groups or individually?

In the space below, list the names of people who come to mind, or write a description of the ministry area that you feel God is placing on your heart.

Where Do I Start?

Even after going through this training, getting started may still feel a daunting task. This is where the Holy Spirit leads and guides you.

- Prayerfully ask the Lord to lead you to one, and no more than three, people.
- Invite each person to have an individual conversation with you. During that conversation, express your desire for them to pray about being part of an EQUIP Discipleship Group you are starting.

- Do not water down the expectation. Here's an example: "This will be a group that meets at least once a month for nine months to a year. We will go through this EQUIP Discipleship Training together with the purpose of encouraging each other in our journey to become more like Jesus. The hope and expectation are that when we are finished with our group, you will repeat the process and take another one to three people through this EQUIP training."
- Ask them to respond by a certain date. Always follow up the conversation with an email and/or text message.

GO!

The Great Commission is not a suggestion or an option; it contains marching orders for all of us to build disciples.

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

2 Timothy 2: 2

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Too often there are relatively few laborers to carry on the Great Commission because we have failed to follow the last part of the imperative, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you..." We are to build men and women with the same burning heart commitment to others that our Lord and His apostles demonstrated. And we can make it organically part of the culture at Crossroads Church.

Are you willing to "Go and Make Disciples"? Read 2 Timothy 2:2 again. This is making disciples of Jesus who go on to make other disciples of Jesus. It is worth the cost, it is worth the time and investment, it is the imperative of every follower of Jesus, and it is the hope of the world.

SO GO!

Next Steps

1. Repeat the memorization verses from Sessions 1 through 8:

(Matthew 28:19–20 and Matthew 6:33)

(Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

(Proverbs 27:1 and Hebrews 10:24–25)

(Joshua 1:8 and 2 Timothy 3:16)

(Mark 10:45 and Romans 1:16a)

(John 16:24 and Philippians 4:6–7)

(Matthew 6:19–21 and 2 Corinthians 9:16–17)

(Acts 1:8)

2. Memorize the Scripture memory verse for this session:

2 Timothy 2:2

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Questions for Discussion

1. What have you found most impactful about this EQUIP Discipleship Training course?
2. As you think about becoming a healthy leader and mentor, what do you believe needs to change in your life to maintain proper balance and margin? Be specific.
3. Do you feel like God is calling you into a specific ministry area for disciple making at this point? Share this idea with your group.
4. As you think about the mindset of an effective spiritual leader who makes other disciples of Jesus, what to you is most important on the DO list below? Which item on the DON'T list will you be most susceptible to?

DO:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to Guide You
- Think Relationally
- Think Multiplication, Not Addition
- Think Transformation, Not Knowledge Impartation

DON'T:

- Lose sight of the objective “grow people spiritually/make disciples”
- Be weighed down by feelings of inadequacy
- Get discouraged in the everyday challenges of working with people

5. Read Matthew 28:19–20 again.

Matthew 28:19–20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Write and share any final observations of your own.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed EQUIP Discipleship Training!

Notes

Notes



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Session 8

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Session 9

¹Geiger, Eric, Michael Kelly and Philip Nation. Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012, 202.

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