

FIRST STEPS

One-on-One Discipleship

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FIRST STEPS  
*One-on-One Discipleship*



An Adventure for New and Renewed Believers.



# FIRST STEPS

*One-on-One Discipleship*



## **Discipleship Workbook**

Specificity Publications  
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For more information contact:  
Discipling Another To Love Jesus  
2301 Valley Loop Drive  
Springfield, Ohio 45504  
(937) 322-5381

[www.disciplinganother.com](http://www.disciplinganother.com)

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# Introduction

## A Question ...

*If you were responsible to teach and train a new Christian, would you know exactly what to do to maximize the chances that this new Christian would reach maturity?*

Before you answer consider two things: 1) That a significant percentage of new Christians walk away from faithfulness within three months of their initial decision, and 2) while most Christians would be able to do something with a new believer, would you know *exactly* what to do to *maximize* the chances that the new believer would reach maturity in Christ?

A Christian leader was asked this question while traveling on a plane to train pastors in Russia. After thoroughly considering this question he honestly answered “no” ... and became so upset with his answer that he now works for First Steps. Six hundred pastors were asked the same question during a conference in the Philippines, and only fifteen raised their hands to indicate that they knew *exactly* what to do.

How about you? Would you know exactly what to do to maximize the chances that a new Christians placed in your care would reach maturity?

**Most Christians would be able to do something with a new believer, but would you know *exactly* what to do to *maximize* the chances the new believer would reach maturity in Christ?**

**The church today does an excellent job reaching the lost but fails in actually keeping the lost.**

## Discipleship

Jesus said:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you ... (Matthew 28:19&20 NASB)*

The church today does an excellent job reaching the lost but fails in actually keeping the lost. Jesus instructs us to make disciples of all nations, not only reaching, but also teaching them to observe all that Jesus commands. As Christians, we must reach and also keep the lost. But does this happen?

A major with the Salvation Army said, “Those of us on the front lines see a lot of people come to know Jesus, and then where do they all go?”

Not too long ago a large Christian organization spent one million dollars to show the Jesus Film in St. Petersburg, Russia, during a ten day period of time. Over 160,000 people viewed the film and at least 60,000 went forward to confess faith in Jesus. In St. Petersburg (a city of about 5 million) only 10,000 people attend evangelical churches on a given Sunday. Yet, with 60,000 accepting Jesus within ten days, there was no significant increase in church attendance in the evangelical churches of St. Petersburg.

This type of statistic can be repeated for just about every crusade, evangelistic endeavor (both personal and large scale), Christian television, and even local churches. Many come to know Jesus but most soon walk away from faithfulness!

What is the problem? Perhaps we have missed something. Jesus said to “disciple” and also to “teach”. Are we doing that? Consider the question: *If you were responsible to teach and train a new Christian, would you know exactly what to do to maximize the chances that this new Christian would reach maturity?* Does answering “no” indicate the source and also the answer to the problem? It’s amazing that even though Jesus gave his last and great commission to disciple all nations, most Christians do not disciple and many do not even know how to disciple.

The result is that many come to know Jesus and then many walk away from faithfulness soon after their confession.

## Two Fears

If you were asked to disciple a new believer, you would probably have two fears:

- What will I teach a new believer?
- Will this discipling relationship take time that I don’t have?

The purpose of this notebook is to give you the teaching material needed to disciple a new believer – the exact teaching that will maximize the chances of your disciple reaching maturity. The Biblical teaching in this notebook has been developed over 35 years and tested with thousands of new believers. The notebook is designed to provide you with the content necessary for a successful and fulfilling one-on-one discipling relationship.

But do you have the time? Okay, you have answered the first question: *what will I teach a new believer?* But there is a second fear. You are busy, perhaps you have a demanding job, young children, or college exams approaching. Maybe you’ve had a recent health emergency or just a very busy life. So you ask the question: *Will this discipling relationship take time that I don’t have?*

A discipling relationship is a defined commitment. It is ten lessons that should take about one hour each. In order to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ, to go and disciple, you will spend ten hours with a new believer. Also, you should only disciple one person per year (ideally for the rest of your life). That's the commitment: one person, for ten weeks, per year. You can do this!

Think of the exponential effect of your commitment to discipleship. If you disciple one person per year, that's two disciples at the end of the first year. If both of you then disciple one other person the next year, that's four disciples. Soon four becomes eight; eight becomes sixteen; sixteen becomes thirty-two; thirty-two becomes sixty-four; and in a few short years you will have impacted hundreds if not thousands.

## Four Foundational Principles

One recent book on discipleship concluded by stating that discipleship is needed and that there are many ways to disciple – so pick one and start discipling. Is this true?

Yes, you need to disciple. But, are all methods equally effective? Knowing that there are many child-rearing methods, would you just pick any method to raise your children? Are all the methods of raising children equally effective? Of course not. Few parents follow Dr. Spock anymore, and most Christian parents wouldn't consider the child-rearing philosophy of an atheist. Some child-rearing techniques are more effective than others.

There are many discipleship programs available, but some are more effective than others. A discipleship plan that will *maximize the chances of a new believer reaching maturity* has four basic principles. It includes:

- Four foundational disciplines
- An understanding of similar temptation patterns
- A focus on the first three months of a new believer's walk, and
- One-on-one relationships!

### *Four Foundational Disciplines*

Christians who faithfully practice the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and evangelism/discipleship stay faithful to Jesus. Christianity is a relationship with Jesus, and all good relationships have discipline. Without discipline relationships will not grow and mature.

As a Christian, you must love Jesus and grow in this love. In all other religions you must work hard hoping to earn God's love; in Christianity God already loves you and sent Jesus to die for your sins (John 3:16). So you have discipline, not to prove yourself worthy of God's love, but to know Him and be like Him because He already loves you! As you grow in this love, sinful habits will diminish because you love God more than sin.

Prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and evangelism/discipleship are the four foundational disciplines that will allow you to have a growing and loving relationship with Jesus. This notebook emphasizes the four primary disciplines of the Christian faith.

### *An Understanding of Similar Temptation Patterns*

All new Christians have the same temptations!

Consider the physical development of new-born babies: they all have the same developmental issues. You would not teach a three year-old calculus and you wouldn't discuss potty-training with a sixteen year-old. Nor would you talk to a ten year-old about retirement plans or enroll a senior citizen in kindergarten. The instruction must match the development.

**If you were asked to disciple a new believer, you would probably have two fears:**

- **What will I teach a new believer?**
- **Will this discipling relationship take time that I don't have?**

**A discipleship plan that will *maximize the chances of a new believer reaching maturity* has four basic principles.**

**Christians who faithfully practice the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and evangelism/discipleship stay faithful to Jesus.**

**If all new believers go through similar temptations early in their walk with Jesus, then the discipleship material used to help them grow in Christ must understand these similar patterns and incorporate Biblical principles that are helpful in overcoming the temptations.**

These behavioral and physical development patterns are the same for babies born in the Philippines as well as America, in Russia as well as Italy, and in India as well as Mexico. A newborn baby in Buenos Aires would learn to speak about the same time (age wise) as a newborn in Calcutta. All babies, all over the world, have similar physical and emotional development.

Now consider the spiritual development of new Christians. They have similar temptations and growth issues. A new believer in New York City will need to learn to overcome lustful temptation about the same time as a new believer in St. Petersburg, Russia. A new believer in Manila will go through doubt and discouragement at the same time as a new believer in London.

If all new believers go through similar temptations early in their walk with Jesus, then the discipleship material used to help them grow in Christ must understand these similar patterns and incorporate Biblical principles that are helpful in overcoming the temptations. This notebook is structured to help a new believer grow through the similar temptation patterns.

### *The First Three Months*

Most new believers walk away from faithfulness within three months of their confession of Christ as Lord and Savior.

There have been significant studies indicating that it takes about three months for a person making a commitment to actualize that commitment into daily life. Though the commitment is made with sincerity, it takes about three months of hard work for that commitment to actually become a habit. That's why so many sincere New Year's resolutions last only a few weeks. It is why so many fail with a new diet plan, and it is why those who want to quit smoking seldom do.

For new believers who stay faithful for three months, there is a greater likelihood that they will reach maturity in Christ. The first three months are critical for new believers – make it three months and the Christian life gets easier.

One-on-one discipleship is the most effective method for helping new believers in the first three months. Personal relationships of encouragement, prayer, and accountability increase the odds that a new believer will mature. Small groups are important, but it often takes a new believer at least 6 months to find a small group. Large group worship is also needed, but a new believer who just attends a weekend worship service will probably have to attend for a year before developing adequate personal relationships.

If a church has developed a one-on-one discipleship ministry, a discipling relationship can begin the very day a new believer makes a confession of Christ!

### *One On One Relationship*

Have you noticed that the phrase “one-on-one” has been mentioned several times in this introduction?

The most effective discipleship is a one-on-one relationship. A classroom, even with an excellent teacher, isn't a good method for instructing new believers. We don't raise our children in a classroom, and a classroom doesn't work well for new believers either. When a local church begins a 10-week new believers' class with twenty five attendees, by the end of the course only seven or eight will still be attending. Where have the others gone?

When you disciple one-on-one and the person that you're discipling doesn't show up for a meeting, you will immediately call to find out what happened. That's the benefit of one-on-one discipleship – it has relationship and accountability. Discipleship works best in a one-on-one relationship.

First Steps is about one-on-one discipleship. This notebook can be used by you to disciple another person. Please note: it is a notebook for a reason. When you use this notebook with the person you disciple, you can review and discuss the questions in the first part of each lesson, then share the outline, and finally share a specific and practical application.

As you disciple through this notebook, the Spirit of God will give you practical insights into making relevant applications of truth that are needed with the person that you're discipling. You will observe your disciple maturing in Christ and find out something else: there is nothing more exciting in the Christian life than enjoying God work through you to impact the life of another person.

## Getting Started

You may have already been disciplined using this notebook, maybe you attended a First Steps conference, or perhaps, you've just picked up the notebook at a bookstore. How do you use the notebook and how do you begin to disciple another person? Let's examine this notebook and consider the first meeting you'll have with your disciple.

- **The cover:** First Steps is a one-on-one ministry to disciple believers. All those who are disciplined should disciple another.
- **The contents:** this notebook has two parts. The lessons are the first part and in the second part contains practical sections on how to effectively pray and use scripture to mature in Jesus. Don't worry too much about the practical sections at first since they will be explained in the lesson outlines.
- **The lessons:** each lesson has three parts. They are *conversation*, *consideration*, and *content*. In *conversation*, Owen (a new disciple) discusses the issues of his new-found faith with Peter (his discipler). In *consideration*, there is a three day Bible study on the topic of that lesson (make sure that they are completed on three separate days). In *content*, there is the lesson outline.

## What Is Expected Of You As A Disciple

- **Be committed** to attending all of the discipling sessions. A discipling relationship based on this notebook will help develop the foundational disciplines of prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and discipleship/evangelism in your life. Ask God to give you a desire for these disciplines.
- **Disciple another to love Jesus.** The ultimate goal of discipleship is not that you will be disciplined but that you will disciple another person. Commit to discipling another to love Jesus.
- **Be willing to change.** This notebook presents a lifestyle: how to live as a Christian and how to disciple others. To disciple effectively you must be an example. When you disciple you must actually be doing what you are asking others to do. This is why older Christians who use this notebook must be willing to change their patterns of prayer and Bible study so that the principles taught in this notebook become their lives, lives that will be shared with others.

**For new believers who stay faithful for three months, there is a greater likelihood that they will reach maturity in Christ. The first three months are critical for new believers – make it three months and the Christian life gets easier.**

**The most effective discipleship is a one-on-one relationship.**

The ultimate goal of discipleship is not that you will be disciplined, but that you will disciple another person to love Jesus.

You should not look to your discipler as a counselor or therapist but rather as a friend who is walking with you.

### More Information

More information can be found at [www.disciplinganother.com](http://www.disciplinganother.com)

## What Can You Expect From Your Discipler

- **Prayer.** Your discipler will pray for you daily.
- **An example.** Your discipler will be doing what is asked of you.
- **No gain.** Disciplers are not to gain from a discipling relationship – financially, professionally, or emotionally. Your discipler will not attempt to sell you anything, get you to join something, or try to manipulate you in anyway.
- **No control.** Disciplers are not to tell you what decisions to make with your life. They will only teach the principles taught in this notebook and help you apply Biblical wisdom to the decisions that you need to make.
- **Follow the plan.** Your discipler will use only the material outlined in this notebook.
- **Proper boundaries.** Your discipler has made a commitment to lead you through this notebook in about ten lessons. (Some lessons may take two sessions.) Your discipler does not have an obligation to spend more time with you than the ten required lessons. You should not look to your discipler as a counselor or therapist but rather as a friend who is walking with you. Your discipler will not be able to help you with severe emotional or financial difficulty. If you have difficulties outside the scope of this discipleship material, your discipler will help you find a Christian leader, pastor, or counselor who can help.
- **Lift up Jesus.** In all things we glorify Jesus. He alone deserves our praise.

### Next Steps?

*If you were responsible to teach and train a new Christian, would you know exactly what to do to maximize the chances that this new Christian would reach maturity?*

When you are finished with the discipling relationship defined in this notebook, you will be able to answer “yes” to the above question. You will know exactly what to do to maximize the chances that a new Christian will mature in Christ.

But what happens when your discipling relationship is over? Obviously the ten week discipling relationship taught in this notebook is not enough. What next?

It is important that new believers get involved in a strong and Biblical local church. One-on-one discipleship works best with a local church that has small groups. After the ten lesson discipleship (often taking about three months) a disciple should join a small group in a local church or be involved in a local church even if it doesn't have small groups.

One final point needs to be made: You will grow in Christ and gain His Kingdom when you learn to lay down your life for his. Discipleship is not about you. Yes, in discipleship you will learn how to pray, overcome temptation, find God's will, and many other necessary things, but discipleship is ultimately about you taking these same lessons and discipling someone else.

A prisoner in Ohio (USA), serving time for murder, felt helpless and worthless as a Christian because of his crimes. He wondered if God could ever use him again. He attended many Christian activities in prison, at the end of which, he would go back to his jail cell and wait for the next program. After being trained with First Steps, he went back to his cell and asked his cellmate if he would like to be disciplined.

During the next ten weeks this prisoner experienced God working through him for the first time in his Christian life as he disciplined his cellmate. Later he gave this testimony: “It is true there is nothing more exciting than seeing God work through me to impact the life of another person.”

That is what First Steps is all about.

# Lessons

Each lesson has three parts. They are *conversation*, *consideration*, and *content*. In *conversation*, Owen ( a new disciple) discusses the issues of his new-found faith with Peter (his discipler). In *consideration*, there is a three day Bible study on the topic of that lesson (make sure that they are completed on three separate days). In *content*, there is the lesson outline.



# 1

LESSON

## Assurance

The point: This lesson is to help you grow in faith by trusting Jesus. By trusting Jesus you will be able to overcome doubt and discouragement.

### SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 11:1 . . . *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

Romans 10:9-11 . . . *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

Ephesians 2:8 . . . *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Hebrews 11:6 . . . *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

1 John 1:9 . . . *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 Corinthians 10:13 . . . *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*



# Conversation

*Below is a portion of the dialogue between a discipler, Peter, and a disciple, Owen. Let's listen in during their first one-on-one discipling session...*

**Peter:** How have you been doing since you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

**Owen:** I've been doing okay, but I really don't understand this whole faith thing. How can I trust someone I can't see? Maybe this sounds silly, but wouldn't it be a lot easier if Jesus just appeared from time to time?

**Peter:** Well, the Bible says that we live by faith not sight. Of course, it's not a blind faith since Jesus actually lived, and scripture gives testimony of his life, death, and resurrection ...

**Owen:** Seeing how you're my discipler and everything, I want to be honest with you here. I read what the Bible says about faith, but I still have doubts. I don't feel like a Christian. I doubt, then I feel guilty, then I doubt whether I've been saved, then I feel more guilt and then I just want to quit. Maybe God hasn't really forgiven me. With all of my mistakes, are you sure God can forgive me?

**Peter:** Listen to the Bible, not your feelings. The Bible says you're saved by faith and not by your good deeds. It also says that if you confess your sins, God forgives you. (1 John 1:9)

**Owen:** But when I first became a Christian I felt great, Peter. Then some of my friends told me they didn't want to be around me any more, and I started doubting...now I feel awful. Does the Bible say anything about doubt and discouragement?

**Peter:** Plenty! The Bible says God forgives you and will give you strength to overcome temptation. And that Jesus will be with you during difficult times — times like now.

**Owen:** Fine, but I don't see any way I can make this Christianity thing work. Everything's changing so fast. It's so overwhelming.

**Peter:** Owen, you're not alone. God is with you and I'm here, too. Promise me this: if you feel like quitting, call me first. I'll be praying for you daily. God doesn't intend for you, or any other new Christian, to try to work it all out by yourselves.

**Owen:** Well...okay. I promise.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One

*Read: John 3:16; Romans 1:4; Romans 10:9-11; Hebrews 2:14-18; and Hebrews 11:1.*

- 1) Based on these scripture references, which of the following statements is true?
  - a. Faith is blind and not based upon facts.
  - b. Faith is a growing confidence and trust in the living Christ.
  - c. A person with strong faith in any religion will be saved.
- 2) What word could be a synonym for faith?
  - a. Love
  - b. Doubt
  - c. Trust
- 3) Write a sentence explaining why you became a Christian.

## Day Two

*Read: Romans 10:9-11; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 2:8; and Hebrews 11:6.*

- 1) Is it possible for you to earn your salvation? Why or why not?
- 2) Based upon the above scripture references, which of the following statements are true?  
God requires faith because ...
  - a. Faith is expressed through the humility of a believer who knows the need for God.
  - b. A Christian cannot earn God's favor.
  - c. Belief in God means that we will no longer have problems.
- 3) In one sentence, define God's grace.

## Day Three

*Read: John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 3:12; 1 John 2:3; and 1 John 1:9.*

- 1) Have you had doubts as a Christian? What are they?
  
- 2) What does 1 John 1:9 say about forgiveness?
  
- 3) Read 1 John 2:3 again. It teaches that we know God if we ...
  - a. Obey His commands
  - b. Feel like we have salvation
  - c. Know all the facts about Jesus
  
- 4) If you get discouraged as a Christian, list or describe two things that you can do.

# Content: Assurance

## One: Jesus Is The Object Of Our Faith

### A. Christian faith is ...

Hebrews 11:1 . . . *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

1. Trust
2. Confidence in truth
3. Based upon the historical Christ
  - a. Read “We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight” illustration on this page.
4. Focused on a relationship with Jesus
  - a. It is difficult to trust a philosophy or even a religion, but as you get to know and experience Jesus, you will be able to trust Him.
  - b. Note: Christianity is a relationship, not a religion — it’s knowing and following Jesus and not just a list of rules to obey.

### B. The object of a Christian’s faith is Jesus. Is He worthy of our trust?

Romans 10:9-11 . . . *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”*

## illustration

### **We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight**

2 Corinthians 5:7 . . . *We live by faith, not by sight.*

Two friends are hiking in the mountains.

At first it is a beautiful day with perfect fall weather. As is often the case, a storm moves in, quickly dropping temperature and rain, causing the path before and after the hikers to become impassable with ice.

They are stuck on a ledge, exposed to the cold, and their situation will prove fatal unless they receive help.

A couple of hours after darkness, a voice cries out from below. *“I realize that you can’t see, but there is a small cave about ten feet below the ledge where you are stranded. If you jump off the ledge, you will land beside the cave and find shelter for the night.”*

The friends can’t see and are exposed to the elements of weather. But they have been offered a chance of salvation if only they can trust the voice.

One of the friends asks the name behind the voice, and both quickly recognize him as a park ranger with many years of experience in the region. Trusting this ranger, they jump and find shelter from the storm.

The Christian faith is not blind because it is based upon Jesus Christ ... someone who can be trusted. Faith is also trust, because a believer follows Jesus into areas of obedience without actually being able to see the outcome—at least in the beginning.

But as the words and promises of Jesus prove trustworthy, faith grows.

1. Can you trust someone who is willing to die for you? Jesus died for your sins. (John 3:16; Romans 4:25)
2. Can you have confidence in someone's message as being from God if that person, after being put to death, was later resurrected? Jesus was resurrected from the grave. (Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 1:3)
3. Can you have confidence that a person who spoke, lived, died, and was resurrected like Jesus can save you from sin, help you during difficult times, and protect you from the devil? (Hebrews 2:14-18; John 14:6; Luke 4:17-19; Hebrews 7:25)

#### C. Reviewing the commitment!

1. Have you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior?
2. Do you have confidence of your salvation, forgiveness of sin, and hope for eternal life?
3. Do you understand that only Jesus can save you from sin and death?

## Two: Salvation Is By Faith And Not By Your Effort

### A. God's grace

Ephesians 2:8 . . . *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

1. Grace is unmerited favor.
2. God's  
Riches  
At  
Christ's  
Expense
3. Religion is *do*; Christianity is *done*. All of the world's religions, except Christianity, emphasize that a person must work to be good enough. But Christianity teaches that we are saved by the work of Christ on the cross, by faith in Jesus, and not by our good deeds.

### B. Received by faith

Hebrews 11:6 . . . *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

1. Faith reaches to God for His free gift of salvation.
2. True faith recognizes the inadequacy of human effort and humbly seeks God's help.
3. Faith is not blind, because it is based upon scripture and our relationship with Jesus.

## testimony

*Faith is the channel through which we receive God's gift of eternal life; it is not the cause.* - James Ryle

*God gives grace where he finds empty hands.* - Augustine

*If and when a horror turns up, you will then be given grace to help you. I don't think one is usually given to it in advance ... life has to be taken day by day and hour by hour.* - C.S. Lewis

*Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.* - Martin Luther

### Three: Doubt Is The Opposite Of Faith

Romans 8:38-39 . . . *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

#### A. Doubting is ...

1. A lack of trust (Can God really forgive my sins?)
2. A lack of understanding (How do I know God exists? Isn't the Bible full of errors?)
3. A wavering of belief (I know God answers prayers, but will He answer mine? Can God really keep *me* safe from temptation?)
4. A lack of biblical knowledge (I don't *feel* like a Christian.) Read 1 John 2:3; Romans 10:17.

#### B. God's plan for doubt ...

1. To point out a weakness in our walk with Jesus
2. To develop faith
3. To increase knowledge

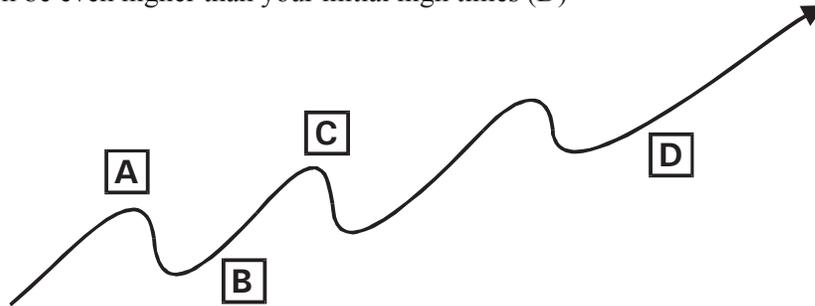
#### C. Satan's plan for doubt ...

1. Satan deceives by making you think that God can't forgive, that God can't give you strength, that you are unworthy of His love. (Read Romans 8:31.)
2. If you believe a deception, you will act as if it is true.
3. Satan will try to get you so discouraged that you will quit.

#### D. Moment of discouragement: rashly forsaking Christ

1. There will come a time in your new relationship with Christ when discouragement occurs for the first time. Don't get upset. All Christians go through discouragement and emotionally low times. This is normal. Stay faithful, and the joy will return.
2. When you decide to stay faithful during a trial or even during a time of emotional distress, you base your relationship with Christ upon your will and not your emotions.

3. Look at the diagram below. The pattern of the Christian life should be constantly upward, even though there are emotionally low times and even trials. It is a high point when you accept Jesus, and this high lasts for a while (A). Sooner or later, you will experience your first valley (B); if you get through this low time without quitting, you will soon have another mountain top experience (C). Eventually your low times will be even higher than your initial high times (D)



4. Do not walk alone. When you feel discouraged or experience a difficult temptation, call your discipler.

#### Four: Faith Is Assurance Of ...

- A. Forgiveness: if you can confess it, God will forgive it.

1 John 1:9 . . . *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

If you doubt that God can forgive your sins or that your sins are too big for God, remember that if you can confess it, God will forgive it. Some believe that they have committed the “unforgivable sin” mentioned by Jesus in Luke 12:10, but the unforgivable sin is an unwillingness to yield to the Spirit’s conviction of sin.

- B. Salvation and eternal life: salvation is based upon scripture and not feeling.

1 John 2:3 ... *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.*

You may not feel like a Christian. But your salvation is based upon scripture and not your feelings! If you believe, you are saved. Feelings will eventually follow obedience.

- C. Strength to resist temptation: you may feel inadequate to change bad habits and attitudes.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ... *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

You may be overwhelmed with the thought of changing your lifestyle, actions, and attitudes as a new believer. You may worry that you will not be able to resist temptations. Yes, you will not be perfect; but God is able to forgive you when you stumble and continually strengthen you so that you will be able to resist successfully.

*memorize*

**1 John 1:9**

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

- D. A relationship with God and a new family: even if your family and friends reject you because of your new faith.

*Ephesians 2:19 ... Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.*

After accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, former relationships may become strained. Others may not understand or accept your new commitment. However, as you remain faithful to Jesus, you will experience complete love and also experience the joy of fellowship with other Christians.

- E. Jesus is the only way to Heaven.

*John 14:6 ... Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the way to Heaven. Jesus died for our sins, and because of His death we receive grace and mercy! No other religion has a savior who died for our sins and gives us grace.

- F. Joy in the midst of trials and difficulties.

*James 1:2-4 ... Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

It is possible to have joy even in the midst of difficult times. If the most important thing in your life is Jesus, then, even in the midst of trials you will find yourself growing closer to Jesus and Jesus is the source of your joy!

### **Five: Review ... Increasing Faith To Overcome Doubt And Discouragement**

*Luke 17:5 ... The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*

1. Walk in relationship with Jesus through prayer, Bible study, evangelism, and fellowship.
2. Be committed to your discipleship relationship and, afterwards, to your small group (if your church has small groups). Then commit yourself to discipling another to love Jesus.
3. Learn to confess your difficulties, doubts, discouragements, and sins to your discipler or members of your small group.
4. Understand that doubt and discouragement are a natural part of the process of growing in Christ, and then you will increasingly learn to trust Jesus as He helps you grow stronger in your faith.

# *specificity ...*

## **I will ...**

- Meet faithfully with my discipler, and then I will disciple another to love Jesus!
- Call my discipler during a Moment of Discouragement. I will not attempt to walk through this discouragement alone! My discipler's phone numbers are:

## **My discipler will ...**

- Pray for me daily
- Be there to help encourage me during the Moment of Discouragement.

# 2 LESSON

## Freedom

The point: This lesson will help you understand how to find freedom. Freedom is the ability to do what you ought, not the right to do what you want.

### SCRIPTURE

Romans 6:23 . . . *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

James 1:13-15 . . . *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

1 Peter 1:14-16 . . . *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

2 Corinthians 3:18 . . . *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Romans 13:14 . . . *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

1 Thessalonians 4:4 . . . *Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable*

Galatians 5:1 . . . *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*



# Conversation

*Peter and Owen are continuing to meet for discipleship. Let's listen in as they sit down for their second session...*

- Owen:** Hi Peter! Hey, before we get started with our discipleship stuff I want you to know how excited I am about God working in my life!
- Peter:** Glad to hear it! It's probably because you have such a great discipler, you know...
- Owen:** Really?
- Peter:** No, not really. I'm just joking. But tell me – what's been going on?
- Owen:** Well, I memorized Romans 13:14. You know, that passage that says to think about Jesus instead of your problems or temptations. And last night, I noticed this really cute girl. She was walking towards me and dressed in pretty much nothing. I tried not to notice. That didn't work—not at all.
- Peter:** I see. What *did* work?
- Owen:** I tried to justify my thoughts by telling myself that it was good to appreciate beauty. But I was thinking stuff that went way beyond art appreciation, if you get my drift.
- Peter:** Then what?
- Owen:** Then, just as my thoughts started to spin out of control, Romans 13:14 popped into my mind. *Put on Jesus and make no allowance for these thoughts.* I started thinking about Jesus, and a few minutes later I realized the intensity of that temptation had passed. Of course, so had the girl.
- Peter:** Today let's talk about a *moment of temptation*. That's a moment when you decide to think about or even act on a temptation – at that moment you have victory or defeat. That's what you experienced last night, and you had victory.
- Owen:** Will it work like that all the time?
- Peter:** Probably not. You *will* have victory; the Bible assures us that Jesus will get us safely through our temptations. But there will also be struggles. The key to overcoming temptation is loving God. The more that you love God, the less you'll be tempted by sin.
- Owen:** Got it...sort of. How do I grow in my love for God?
- Peter:** Excellent question. Now here's a question for you: have you ever fallen in love?

- Owen:** Several times. One time I looked at this girl, and she looked at me, and wham! Fireworks! I was so in love.
- Peter:** Actually, when you first meet someone you don't fall in love. You fall into *grace*. Authentic love has an enduring quality to it, not the rush of emotions you just described. Grace is something that you don't deserve. When I first met my wife, and she showed interest in me, I felt totally unworthy. She was so beautiful and I was so...so me. Why would she want to have anything to do with *me*? That grace—her giving me attention—allowed me to love her.
- Owen:** Okay, I think I'm making the connection. Jesus loved me while I was still a sinner. That's grace. Understanding this, and also experiencing this grace, enables me to love Jesus more and more.
- Peter:** Exactly. And the more you love Jesus the less you want to sin and offend him. I love my wife now more than ever. I wouldn't want to be unfaithful to her because I wouldn't want to destroy her trust in me. I love her too much for that.
- Owen:** Another question: why doesn't God just make us perfect? He went to all of the trouble to send Jesus, even having him die on the cross. Couldn't God just make us perfect? Why risk having us walk away from being faithful?
- Peter:** I believe God wants us to depend upon him. His grace covers our sins, so if we stumble, he still forgives. That's a given. But there's something about wrestling with sin that allows new believers to recognize their need for God. If things were too easy we'd take credit for spiritual victories. When I am weak, he is strong.

# Consideration

Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.

## Day One

Read: Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Galatians 5:1; Titus 3:3; James 1:13-15; and 2 Peter 2:19.

- 1) Based upon these scripture references, what is freedom?
  - a. The right to do what you want.
  - b. The ability to do what you ought.
- 2) Which of the following statements are true?

T/F Sin is missing the mark.

T/F You can overcome sin without God's help.

T/F Sin is pleasure for the moment but consequences for a lifetime.
- 3) Read again James 1:13-15 (in the New International Version). Match the letters to the blanks:
  - a. Evil Desire
  - b. Sin
  - c. Temptation
  - d. Death
  1. Evil desires give birth to \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ is lust.
  3. Full-grown sin causes \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ should be fought in the mind.

## Day Two

Read: Romans 5:6-8; Romans 6:5-6; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 10:14; and 1 Peter 1:14-16.

- 1) Two words that theologians use to describe overcoming sin are justification and sanctification. Which is the correct definition for justification? Which of the following is the correct definition for sanctification?
  - a. Becoming holy
  - b. Just-As-If-I'd-Never-Sinned
- 2) Which of the following statements are true?

T/F The process of becoming holy will last a lifetime.

T/F Christians are forgiven of past, present, and future sins.

T/F Good works will get us into heaven.

- 3) Read again Romans 6:5-6 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. Complete the following statement in your own words.

*I am no longer a slave to sin because ...*

### Day Three

*Read: Romans 5:5; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:4; and Hebrews 7:25.*

- 1) Which of the above verses talk about ...
  - a. Controlling your body:
  - b. Hoping for righteousness:
  - c. Clothing yourself with Christ:
- 2) The moment you are tempted, what should you do? Look again at Romans 13:14.
- 3) Read Hebrews 12:10. What is the purpose of God's discipline?
- 4) Pause and become conscious of the fact that you are breathing. Now forget that you are breathing. This will be explained in the teaching with your discipler.

# Content: Freedom

## One: Sin

Romans 3:23 . . . *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Romans 6:23 . . . *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### A. Sin and death

1. The New Testament Greek word for sin means ... *missing the mark*.
  - a. All have sinned and missed the mark of God's holiness.
  - b. Holiness is peace, joy, love, faithfulness, self-control, etc. These are aspects of God's character. No one can have a joy-filled life without God's holiness.
  - c. Read the "It's More Fun Being Holy" illustration on this page.
2. The New Testament Greek word for death means ... *separation*.
  - a. Sin causes separation from God, others, and self
  - b. Without the peace, joy, love, faithfulness, self-control, etc., of God's holiness, no one can have good relationships. Sin (missing the mark of God's holiness) causes death (separation) in relationships.

### B. Sin is addictive and destructive.

#### 1. Slaves

##### a. Titus 3:3

*At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.*

##### b. 2 Peter 2:19

*A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.*

#### 2. Sin is pleasure for a moment and consequences for a lifetime.

- a. Christians live for heaven and the future, while unbelievers live for the present and now.
- b. *Magnify the consequences!* When tempted, don't underestimate the consequences of sin. The consequences will always be worse than you think. Instead, when tempted, magnify the consequences.

## illustration

### It's More Fun Being Holy

Some think that being holy will take away your fun. Holiness is the fruit of God's Spirit – peace, joy, love, self-control, faithfulness, etc. How can you have lasting fun or enduring relationships without these characteristics? The opposite of holiness is despair, hatred, unhappiness, addiction, betrayal, etc. How can you be happy with these characteristics? We all fall short of God's holiness and pay the penalty in our relationships with God, with others, and with ourselves.

## Two: Stages Of Sin ... Battle Of The Mind

James 1:13-15 . . . *When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

### A. Stage one: battle of the mind

1. Temptation: enticed by evil desire (lust) as you see and desire the temptation
  - a. Other versions of the Bible use the word “lust” instead of “evil desire.” Lust is an evil and strong desire.
2. Sin: evil desire conceived (thinking and dwelling on the temptation)

a. Temptation is a battle in the mind: fight it there.

*You can't stop birds from flying over your head but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair. - Martin Luther*

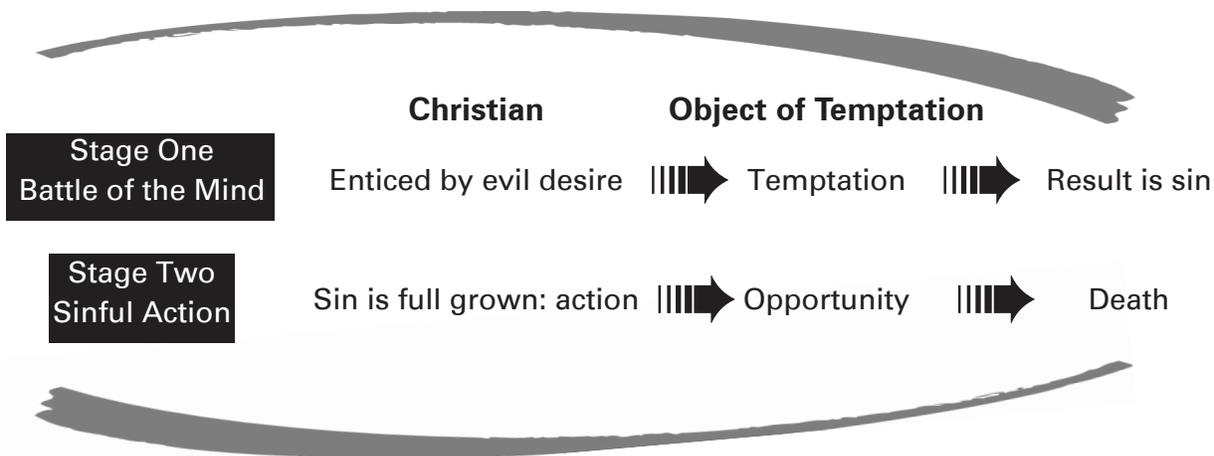
### B. Stage two: sinful action

1. Full grown: Sin is full grown when it comes out of the mind and into action during a moment of temptation.
2. Death: Sinful action causes death.
  - a. Spiritual, psychological and even physical death is caused by sin.

### C. Example of the stages of sin ...

A business traveler begins to entertain lustful thoughts, even dabbling in pornography, while away from home. He is losing the battle of the mind and sinning by allowing his mind to dwell on temptation. Eventually, an opportunity presents itself to spend the night with a beautiful woman, who he finds out later has AIDS. Sin has come out of the mind into action; this not only damages his relationship with God and his wife but could also cost him his life. As James says, “full grown [sin] gives birth to death.”

### D. Read diagram below.



### Three: Relational Holiness

#### A. We are forgiven.

##### 1. Romans 5:6-9

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

2. Scripture describes our forgiveness as "justification." It is Just-As-If-I'd-Never Sinned.
3. Past, present, and future sins are covered by the blood of Jesus.
4. Christians are called saints at least 46 times in the New Testament. The word "saint" means *holy*. We are called holy in the New Testament, even though we still sin. Why? Because holiness is based upon God's grace through Jesus Christ and not our own works. We are saints because God has forgiven us through Jesus.

#### B. We become like Jesus.

##### 1. 1 Peter 1:14-16

*As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

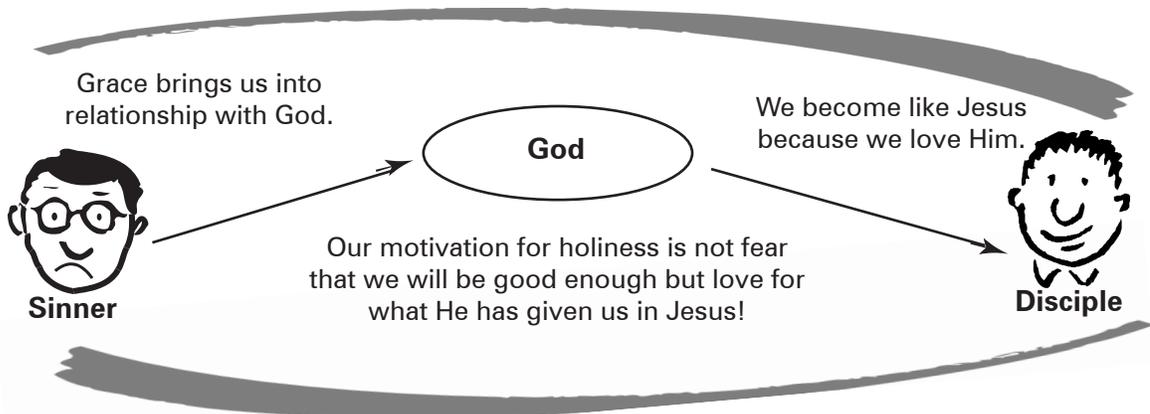
##### 2. This process of becoming holy (like Jesus) is called sanctification.

- a. A process lasting a lifetime that is finished in Heaven
- b. Becoming holy is a paradox. (Read Hebrews 10:14.)

*By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

##### c. Working out what He works in us ... Phil. 2:12-13

*Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*



3. Disciples of Jesus have the position of being with God because of Jesus (justification). But since we continue to sin, our actions are not consistent with our position – so we must become like Jesus (sanctification). This is a continuous process that lasts throughout our lives on earth as God’s power works through our obedience.

C. We develop a relationship with Jesus.

1. Christians have a relationship with God because of the grace we received through Jesus.
2. We come into the presence of Jesus because of forgiveness. We do not have to work for God’s favor; it is given to us through the grace of Jesus. Because we are already in the presence of God and have a relationship with Him, we desire to be like Him. Our holiness is not a means to our relationship with God but is a result of our relationship with God.
3. Read the diagram in the box on the previous page.
4. A relationship with God changes our desires. We no longer desire to sin, because we love God and do not want to offend him. It is easy to overcome a temptation from something that you don’t “like” to do. Because we love God, our “likes” have been changed.
  - a. Read the “Love Is The Only Way To Become Holy” illustration on this page.
5. A disciple’s motive for following Jesus is not primarily fear or obedience to rules but a love of God. Love is the greatest motivation. Understanding that our holiness flows out of our relationship with God is the key to maturing as a Christian. Other religions emphasize works – working hard enough to be good enough for God. Christianity gives us freedom from “works” through grace, while other religions oppress with the emphasis upon works that are beyond our ability.

D. Believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:2 ... *through the sanctifying work of the Spirit*

1. The Spirit transforms.
  - a. 2 Corinthians 3:18 . . . *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
  - b. Have faith in God’s power, not in your works.
2. The Spirit convicts.
  - a. John 16:8 . . . *When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.*

## *illustration*

### **Love Is The Only Way To Become Holy**

If you are married and love your spouse, you would not want to do anything that would jeopardize your relationship. Love, not legalism or guilt, is your motivation for faithfulness.

It is not hard to overcome sin when you do not enjoy the sin. When a Christian learns to love God, his desires will change from fleshly pursuits to the things of the Spirit. Such a Spirit-empowered relationship with God results in a Christian who can resist temptation because the love of God far surpasses the attraction of the sinful behavior.

- b. There is a difference between conviction and condemnation. Conviction leads to repentance and hope of future victory. Condemnation leads to discouragement and defeat. The Spirit convicts while the devil tempts and condemns.
- c. Romans 8:1 . . . *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
3. The Spirit empowers.
- a. Ephesians 3:16 . . . *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.*
- b. Why do we often struggle with sin? Sometimes we are immediately delivered from a habit, and other times there is a lengthy struggle. The Spirit empowers and enables holiness. Our best intentions and our works will fall short without a reliance on God's power. God allows us to struggle sometimes to learn reliance upon His power. The secret of holiness is humility—if we were always quickly victorious, it would be too easy to take the credit. God wants us to learn to depend upon Him.
- c. 1 Peter 5:6 . . . *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*
4. The Spirit gives a new law.
- a. Romans 7:6 . . . *But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*
- b. Read the “Balloon” illustration on this page.
5. The Spirit vs. sin (why do Christians sin?)
- a. Romans 7:17 . . . *As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.*
- b. Romans 6:6-7 . . . *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*
- c. An explanation:  
One of the paradoxes of the Christian faith is that in Christ we have died to sin, and yet as Paul says in Romans 7:17, “... sin is still living in us.” As followers of Jesus, we have been freed from the eternal effects of sin, but we still struggle daily to conform to the image of Christ.

## illustration

### Balloon

Drop a hammer and it drops to the ground. That's the law of gravity at work. The same law works with screwdrivers, bricks, cars, and, unfortunately, a person who falls off a ladder. Isn't it true that anything dropped will fall to the ground?

How about a balloon filled with helium? No, it wouldn't hit the ground because another law is at work — a law that overcomes the law of gravity and causes the balloon to float.

In the same way, sin means death (Romans 6:23). Just like the hammer falling to the ground when dropped, sin causes a person to be separated from God.

But there is another law at work. The law of grace has given us the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Because of the law of grace, a believer rises above the law of sin and of death.

A disciple experiences the joy of being set free from sin. Though still a sinner, a mature Christian learns to receive God's grace and does not dwell in self-condemnation (Romans 8:1). If a snake bites your leg, you do not beat your leg. In the same way, when you sin, don't beat up on yourself; beat on the sin. Confess it, repent of it, discipline yourself, and ask for God's help!

Don't be surprised when you sin but believe that you can and will be delivered from that sin – don't give up. He has eternally forgiven your sin. You don't have to dwell in guilt and despair because He will give you the strength to overcome sin. Rejoice in the Spirit and do not be discouraged by sin.

As you experience God's grace forgiving even your most severe sins, you will love Him more and more, which will provide the motivation to overcome the sin. Gradually your love for the Lord—your attraction to God and His ways—will become more important to you than your attraction to sin. You cannot be tempted by something that has no attraction to you. God changes your “likes” because you love Him. You are a saint who is becoming holy.

#### Four: Freedom ... The Ability To Do What You Ought, Not The Right To Do What You Want.

Romans 13:14 . . . *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

A. Learn to be holy ... Be prepared

1 Thessalonians 4:4 . . . *Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable.*

1. Do the things of the Spirit . . . the four basic disciplines of the faith (prayer, Bible study, discipleship, fellowship).

Galatians 5:16 . . . *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

2. Radically remove things of the flesh.

Matthew 5: 29 . . . *If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

3. Walk in faith.

Romans 5:5 . . . *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Hebrews 7:25 . . . *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

### testimony

*When God forgives your sins, He buries them in the deepest ocean and then places a sign on the beach that reads, "No fishing!" - Corrie Ten Boom*

*To be holy, we need to understand that only God can be the source of our holiness. Anything we do is only cooperation with Him, allowing more of His life into our lives ... if we miss this fundamental point ... that God is the source of holiness ... then we will attempt to make holiness the way to God. - John Wimber*

*Sin is pleasure for a moment and consequences for a lifetime. - Grant Edwards*

*Repentance is the porch of religion. Faith is the door of religion. Holiness is religion itself. - John Wesley*

*In this trial and struggle the righteous man always resembles more a loser than a victor, for the Lord lets him be tested and assailed to his utmost limits as gold is tested in a furnace. - Martin Luther*

*Humility before the Father delivers you from humiliation before the enemy. - Gordon Dalbey*

## 4. Resist the devil.

James 4:7 . . . *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

## 5. Take captive your thoughts.

2 Corinthians 10:5 . . . *And we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

## 6. Submit to God's discipline.

Hebrews 12:10 . . . *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*

## B. Present yourself to God as a holy sacrifice.

1. The best defense against sin is a good offense.
2. Romans 12:1 teaches that we need to present ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.*

3. Right now, present yourself a holy sacrifice.
  - a. Your discipler will pray the following prayer with you:

*Dear God, through Jesus you have made me a saint and brought me into your presence. Now I give my life, thoughts, and actions to you as an acceptable sacrifice. By your grace, strengthen me so that my life will be holy as I am holy in you.*

- b. You can memorize this prayer and pray it daily, presenting yourself each morning as a living and holy sacrifice.

## C. Clothe yourself with Christ.

1. Turn to a power greater than self
2. Read the "Breathing" illustration on this page.

**Five: Review ... Moment of Temptation**

Galatians 5:1 . . . *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

*illustration***Breathing**

You can overcome temptation by taking your mind off the temptation and putting it on Christ.

Close your eyes and try to forget that you are breathing. You can't. The more you try to forget the more you remember.

In the same way you can't force temptation out of your mind. Instead, take your mind off the temptation and place it on Christ.

As Romans 13:14 says, *"Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."*

## A. Remember:

1. Sin is pleasure for a moment but consequences for a lifetime.
2. Magnify the consequences – do not underestimate the consequences of sin; they will be worse than you think.

## B. Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit and give you the strength to resist temptation.

Ephesians 5:18 ... *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

## C. Confess your sins to your discipler.

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

## D. At the moment of temptation ...

1. Take your mind off the sin and place your thoughts on Jesus.

Romans 13:14 ... *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

2. Practice relational holiness.

*When you are tempted, say, "Jesus I love you more than this sin." And if you stumble, say, "Jesus, I have sinned, but you still love me."*

Read "Practicing Relational Holiness To Overcome Sin" on this page.

*memorize***Romans 13:14**

*Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

**Practicing Relational Holiness To Overcome Sin**

A young man was talking to a pastor about his continued stumbling in a particular area of sin. The young man was discouraged because nothing seemed to work to help him with freedom. The pastor told him, "The next time, right before you sin, look up to heaven and say, 'Jesus you love me, and I love you more than this sin.' If you then commit the sin, afterwards, look up into heaven and say, 'Jesus even though I sinned, you still love me.'"

Relational holiness – loving Jesus more than sin – will set you free!

*specificity ...*

- I will memorize Romans 13:14.
- When I am tempted, I will say, "Jesus I love you more than this sin." And if I stumble, I will say, "Jesus, I have sinned, but you still love me."



# 3

LESSON

## Priorities

The point: God has created you for His purposes. All of your decisions and choices must be focused on seeking first His Kingdom so that you will find out what He has created you for!

### SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:13 . . . *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*

2 Peter 1:11 . . . *And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Matthew 6:33 . . . *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

2 Peter 2:20 . . . *If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.*

John 15:7-8 . . . *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

2 Timothy 1:7 . . . *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*



# Conversation

*It's the third meeting for Peter and Owen, and Owen is starting to drift a bit. Let's listen in...*

- Peter:** How have your prayer and Bible study been going? Spending time with God every day?
- Owen:** I did when I first became a Christian. Lately I've been really busy. I haven't had time.
- Peter:** What did you do yesterday?
- Owen:** Well, I had to go to work early. Like I said, busy, busy.
- Peter:** So work was all you did? For 24 hours?
- Owen:** Okay, okay, I also played a round of golf in the afternoon and caught dinner with some friends. I didn't get home until late and then I was dragging out of bed at 6:00 am to get ready for work.
- Peter:** Owen, we all have challenges with our schedule. That won't get better. But a day without spending time with God can very easily become a week, then a month, and before long the relationship just isn't there.
- Owen:** Well, I don't want *that* to happen...
- Peter:** I think you need to commit first to the Kingdom of God. Jesus says in Matthew 6:33 that we need to seek first God's Kingdom.
- Owen:** Maybe it's obvious, but...um...what exactly *is* the Kingdom of God? It sounds like you're telling me to become a knight of the round table or something.
- Peter:** You're thinking of King Arthur's kingdom. *God's* kingdom is wherever he rules. If God rules in your heart, you're part of the kingdom. When you're living in God's kingdom you consider his will before you make decisions. You spend time with him. You make him a priority.
- Owen:** Got it. So give me a practical way I can seek first the Kingdom of God. Do I have to give up golf? Quit eating with friends?
- Peter:** When I first became a Christian, I read Matthew 6:33 and it really jumped out at me. It's a verse about seeking first the Kingdom of God. I decided right then I would never make a major decision in my life without first asking, "Is this seeking first the Kingdom of God?" That's helped me keep my priorities straight.
- Owen:** So golf is out? How can I tell if playing golf is seeking God's kingdom?
- Peter:** I think there's a good possibility that God is in favor of golf, Owen, especially since it's good exercise for you. It's rest, relaxation, and fun. God's not against any of those things. But golf can't be your top priority like it was yesterday. You didn't have time for God but you had time for eighteen holes? That's not Kingdom living.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One

*Read Matthew 13:45-46; Luke 9:62; Acts 10:42; Colossians 1:13; 2 Peter 1:11; Hebrews 10:26-27; and 1 John 4:14.*

- 1) What is the Kingdom of God?
  - a) The church
  - b) Heaven
  - c) Wherever God rules
- 2) 2 Peter 1:11 calls Jesus both Savior and Lord. What do both titles mean?
- 3) Indicate which statements are true:
  - a) God unconditionally accepts all people into heaven even if they don't profess Jesus as Savior.
  - b) Christians should love God.
  - c) Christians should fear God.

## Day Two

*Read Matthew 6:33; Matthew 18:3-4; Matthew 19:23-24; Romans 14:17; 2 Timothy 2:4; James 4:7; 2 Peter 2:20; and 1 John 2:16.*

- 1) List two things that would have to change in your life if the Kingdom of God were your first priority.
- 2) Order the following according to their priority in your life today:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ going to work
  - \_\_\_\_\_ reading your Bible
  - \_\_\_\_\_ recreation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ talking with your spouse

3) Read 1 John 2:16. Match the terms with the definitions:

- a. cravings of sinful man      \_\_\_\_\_ impurity, sexual sin
- b. lust of the eyes              \_\_\_\_\_ pride, a desire for fame
- c. boasting                        \_\_\_\_\_ riches, materialism

### Day Three

*Read John 15:7-8; Colossians 4:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 10:25; James 1:21; and 1 Peter 3:12.*

- 1) What kind of Christian would you like to be?
  - a. A believer who attends church but never witnesses.
  - b. A Christian who is lukewarm.
  - c. A follower of Christ who loves the Lord and looks for opportunities to witness.
  - d. A Christian who witnesses all the time but hardly prays.
- 2) Which of the following statements are true?
  - a. God has given Christians a spirit of discipline.
  - b. Christ led a disciplined life and we should follow His example.
  - c. Discipline earns us salvation.
- 3) Read Colossians 4:5; Hebrews 10:25; James 1:21; and 1 Peter 3:12 again. What four disciplines are mentioned?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.

# Content: Priorities

## One: The Kingdom

Colossians 1:13 . . . *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*

### A. Definition of the Kingdom of God

1. Where God rules . . . He reigns in your hearts
2. Other kingdoms that compete with God's kingdom:
  - a. Self . . . seeking selfish pride, sensuality, and materialism
  - b. Satan . . . either willfully serving Satan or being controlled by demonic strongholds

### B. Jesus is our king: two aspects.

2 Peter 1:11 . . . *You will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

1. Savior . . . saves the lost
  - a. We are saved from sin, death, and separation from God.
  - b. We are saved to eternal life, freedom from sin, and a relationship with God.

1 John 4:14 . . . *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*

### 2. Lord . . . rules the saved

- a. We should be holy because He is holy.
- b. We should serve Him.

Ephesians 5:8-9 . . . *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth).*

### C. A kingdom motivated by . . .

#### 1. Fear

- a. Fear is the beginning of wisdom.

Psalm 111:10 . . . *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*

- b. We often decide to change our lives because of fear.
- c. Fear is short-lived.

## 2. Love

- a. Perfect love casts out fear.

1 John 4:18 ... *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.*

- b. Eventually, you love God so much that you don't sin because you fear that it will ruin your relationship with Him!

## Two: Seek First The Kingdom

Matthew 6:33 . . . *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

### A. Avoid entanglements.

2 Peter 2:20 . . . *If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.*

#### 1. Three types of entanglements

1 John 2:16 . . . *For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

- a. Cravings of sinful man: lust, impurity, sexual sin, gluttony, indulgence, etc.
- b. Lust of the eyes: desire for material and physical possessions
- c. Boasting: pride—desire for fame, power, or position

#### 2. Order your life according to Kingdom priorities.

James 4:7 . . . *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

- a. Avoid the cravings of sinful man, lust of the eyes, and boastful pride.
- b. Avoid getting entangled in a multitude of little things.
- c. Read “O’Donnell’s Folly” illustration on this page.

### B. Allow Jesus to reign.

1. Humility instead of boastful pride (Matthew 18:3-4)
2. Trusting in God and not riches (Matthew 19:23-24)
3. Becoming holy instead of indulging in the cravings of sin (Romans 14:17)

## illustration

### O’Donnell’s Folly

There is a house in Charleston, South Carolina, USA, called *O’Donnell’s Folly* by the locals.

In the 1700’s, Patrick O’Donnell set out to build the nicest house in Charleston as a present for his bride-to-be, a house that would stand out in an area of outstanding houses.

And so he did, but at the cost of his love. For the house took so long to build that O’Donnell’s fiancée married someone else, leaving the tall Irish O’Donnell in a fine house with many bedrooms but no wife or children to fill them.

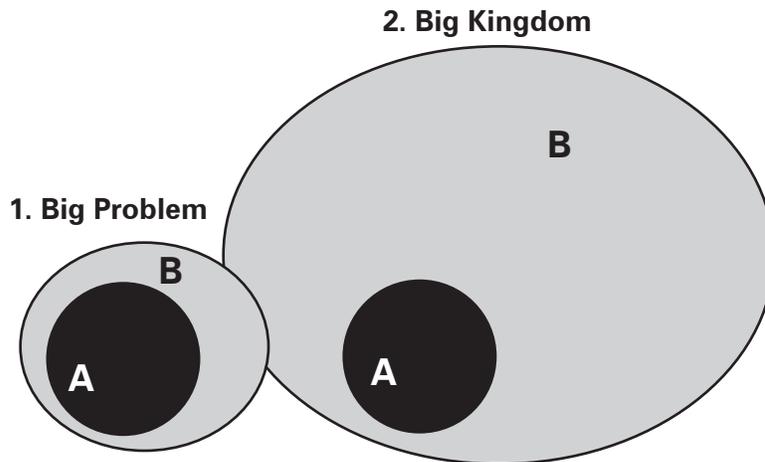
Patrick O’Donnell lived in the house until his death and died a bachelor.

### C. Life-Orientation Verse

Matthew 6:33... *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

1. Matthew 6:33 is one of most important verses of the Bible. It teaches the right priorities for living.
2. Make decisions based upon seeking first the Kingdom of God.
3. Read the testimony in the box to the right.

### D. Kingdom Perspective



The two circle diagrams illustrate the importance of Kingdom perspective. Consider A to be your biggest problem in life and B to be the Kingdom of God. Diagram 1 (Big Problem) has the problem and a smaller Kingdom perspective. Diagram 2 (Big Kingdom) has the same size problem and a larger Kingdom perspective. These two perspectives are contrasted below:

- When you have a Big Problem and Small Kingdom perspective, your problem will be the focus of your life.
- When your problem is the focus of your life, you will focus on your problem and not the Kingdom of God.
- When you have a Big Problem and a smaller perspective of the Kingdom of God, it leaves you with little strength to deal with your problems.
- A person with a Big Kingdom perspective might have a problem of the same size as a Big Problem person, but the Kingdom is the focus of life. The problem doesn't require the same attention, since the Kingdom is larger, and a Big Kingdom person has more strength to deal with the problem because of focusing upon God's strength.
- Big Problem believers tend to be lonely since they focus on their problems. Big Kingdom believers don't focus on themselves and experience the joy of sharing in fellowship with other Christians.

Determine to become a Big Kingdom person. As a new Christian, the Kingdom hasn't grown large in your life, and your problems may be the center of your life. As you learn to focus on the Kingdom of God, God's Kingdom and strength will grow in your life. With a Big Kingdom focus, the Kingdom will become your life and you will have the right perspective for your Big Problem. From this Big Kingdom perspective you will find joy in spite of your Big Problem. It is important for your joy, strength, service, and fellowship to become a Big Kingdom Christian.

## testimony

### From A New Christian

Matthew 6:33 was one of the first verses that I memorized as a new Christian. When I memorized this verse, I understood the importance of setting proper priorities for Christians, and I made a decision that I would never make a major decision in my life without asking this question: "Is the decision seeking first the Kingdom of God?" If the decision was discerned to be self-seeking, materialistic, or even of secondary importance, then I wouldn't make the decision. Seeking first the Kingdom of God has enabled me to make right decisions about college, marriage, job, and even what mission trips to go on. The only successful way to live is to seek first His Kingdom.

**Three: Priorities Are Needed.**

A. The two basic priorities of the Kingdom of God

1. Matthew 28:18-19

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

a. To do

2. Mark 12:30-31

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

a. To be

B. Types of Christians (Study the diagram below.)

John 15:7-8 . . . *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

1. Burned out

a. No “to be” but lots of “to do”

2. Lukewarm

a. No “to be” or “to do”

3. Stagnating

a. Lots of “to be” but no “to do”

4. Mature

a. “To Do” and “To Be”

*memorize*

**Matthew 6:33**

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

*types of Christians*

<b>Matthew 28:18-19 . . . To Do</b>	<b>Yes</b>	1. Burned Out	4. Mature
	<b>No</b>	2. Lukewarm	3. Stagnating
		<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Mark 12:30-31 . . . To Be**

## Four: Four Basic Disciplines Of The Christian Faith

2 Timothy 1:7 . . . *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

### A. Importance

1. Work out what God works within you.

Philippians 2:12-13 . . . *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

2. Read the “Windows Of Discipline” illustration on this page.
3. Follow the example of Christ and being an example for others.

- a. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1, *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

4. Do important little things.

Christians must set their minds on the things of the Spirit because the mind set on the flesh is death. Therefore, it is important for a Christian to have basic disciplines that allow the Holy Spirit to have influence. A disciplined Christian will avoid those activities that emphasize worldly values while spending time in those activities that allow the holiness of God. Victory over sin is mainly achieved by doing the important little things on a daily basis . . . prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and discipleship.

### B. Four basic disciplines of the Christian faith

#### 1. To Be

##### a. Prayer

1 Peter 3:12 . . . *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*

##### b. Bible study

James 1:21 . . . *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

#### 2. To Do

##### a. Discipleship/witnessing

Philemon 6 . . . *I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.*

## illustration

### Windows Of Discipline

Imagine a house in the middle of a field during the winter. It is daylight and the sun is brilliantly reflecting off the snow covered fields.

But inside the house it is dark because the doors are shut and the shutters are closed. Opening the shutters will instantly fill the house with light.

Disciplines work in the same manner. Prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and witnessing open the shutters for God’s grace to come into our souls. The disciplines do not earn or create the light but they do allow it to enter.

As a Christian practices the basic disciplines of the faith, God’s grace will be granted through these disciplines, enabling the Christian to walk in relationship with God and have His power to overcome temptation.

## b. Fellowship

Hebrews 10:25 . . . *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

**Five: Review ... Developing Proper Priorities**

1. Avoid the entanglement of little things that keep you from being focused on the priority of seeking first the Kingdom of God.
2. To mature in Christ, a Christian must “to do” by being involved in discipling and fellowship, and “to be” by praying and meditating in scripture.
3. We change our behavior at first because of fear, but fear must become love for change to last.

*testimony*

*“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done ...” This prayer is a petition for God to reign, to manifest His kingly sovereignty and power, to put to flight every enemy of righteousness and of His divine rule, that God alone may be King over all the world. - George Eldon Ladd*

*I grab nothing too tightly because it hurts too much when God takes it away. - Corrie Ten Boom*

*This is the perspective that rescues us. God narrows His gaze and looks only at our faith, not our countless errors and chronic mistakes, focusing with holy intensity on some gesture rather than the vast sickness within. Faith is only a gesture, but it becomes a handle God uses in snatching us out of our fate. - Steven Mosley.*

*The secret of the easy yoke is simple, actually. It is the intellectual, informed, unyielding resolve to live as Jesus lived in all aspects of his life, not just in the moment of specific choice or action. - Dallas Willard*

*specificity . . .***Base all decisions upon Matthew 6:33.**

Matthew 6:33 ... *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Make a commitment to base every major decision on Matthew 6:33.

Before a major decision, ask this question, “Does this seek first the Kingdom of God?”

# 4

LESSON

## The Bible

The point: By understanding how to use God's Word, you will be able to overcome temptation!

### SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 3:16-17 . . . *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Ephesians 1:13 . . . *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*

Isaiah 40:8 . . . *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.*

Romans 12:2 . . . *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Hebrews 4:12 . . . *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

James 1:21 . . . *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

Psalms 1:2-3 . . . *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*

Ephesians 6:17 . . . *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*



# Conversation

*Peter and Owen are meeting again, and this time Owen wants to discuss the Bible...and what's wrong with it. Let's listen in.*

**Owen:** Hey, Peter, I've been reading the Bible like you suggested, but I decided to just read the whole thing from front to back. You know, really dive in.

**Peter:** How's it going?

**Owen:** Genesis was interesting. Exodus barely passed. Now I'm reading Leviticus, and I can barely stay awake. So I'd say it's not going so well.

**Peter:** Strange...because the Bible *does* have a plot. There are epic battles between good and evil. There's even a hero who rides in on a horse at the end of time.

**Owen:** Where? I haven't seen any of that stuff.

**Peter:** Owen, you can't treat the Bible like a novel, reading it from beginning to end. While all the books of the Bible are inspired and cover some part of the story of God's dealings with mankind, not every book is equally relevant to you. The Book of Leviticus isn't nearly as important to a new believer as the book of Ephesians.

**Owen:** But reading the Bible *is* important, right?

**Peter:** I applaud your enthusiasm...but not your reading plan.

**Owen:** Some people tell me that the Bible will change my life. Exactly how does that work? Is it a deal where if I read it and believe what I read, God will come through with some blessings?

**Peter:** There's more to it than just reading and believing. You must also *obey*. And while Bible reading is good, I've found it especially helpful to memorize scripture.

**Owen:** Are you kidding me? The Bible is...like...a thousand pages long? And I've got to *memorize* it?

**Peter:** Not all of it, Owen. Just the verses and chapters that apply to you.

**Owen:** Okay...but which verses?

**Peter:** That depends on you. The areas in which you are tempted determine the scripture that you should memorize. Usually a new Christian has one particular area where he'll stumble again and again. With me it was anger. So I memorized four verses on anger and I go over these verses every morning. I call them my "life verses."

**Owen:** So the Bible *does* work like magic. Find my area of weakness, memorize a few verses, and “poof”—I overcome sin.

**Peter:** Again, not exactly. We’re usually tempted because our thinking is wrong. When I got angry I used to think my temper was justified because the other person was stupid and wrong. That was faulty thinking on my part. When I memorized the verse that talks about “turning the other cheek when someone offends you” I realized it wasn’t important for me to get even or justify my anger. What counts is my being loving and forgiving. That’s a *big* difference.

**Owen:** So, if you’re thinking right it helps you to act right. Right?

**Peter:** Right. Overcoming temptation begins with understanding God’s Word and being renewed in your mind. Scripture is powerful stuff. Even Jesus quoted Scripture when he was being tempted by Satan.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three Sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One

*Read: Galatians 1:8; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; and Revelation 22:18.*

- 1) What does the term *God-breathed* in 2 Timothy 3:16 mean?
  - a. Inspired
  - b. Expired
  - c. Of human origin
- 2) Which of the following would be a good definition of scriptural inspiration?
  - a. Something similar to what happened to Shakespeare before writing a play
  - b. Myths that man made up
  - c. Something that originally came from God
- 3) According to Galatians 1:8, what is a good answer to Mormons who claim to have another book that adds to the Bible?

## Day Two

*Read: Romans 8:6; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 1 Peter 5:8; and 1 John 2:16.*

- 1) To overcome temptation, where does a believer begin the battle? Read Romans 12:2.
  - a. By changing bad habits
  - b. By renewing the mind
  - c. By rebuking Satan
- 2) Define the term *stronghold* mentioned in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

- 3) How well will you do resisting the devil in your own strength?
  
- 4) Which statement is true? Christians sin because ...
  - a. They want to.
  - b. The devil made them do it.
  - c. Their friends are responsible.
  
- 5) What is our main offensive weapon in overcoming evil? Read Ephesians 6:17 again.
  - a) Prayer
  - b) Word of God
  - c) Fellowship

### Day Three

*Read: Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2-3; Psalm 19:9-14; Psalm 119:105; and James 1:21-22.*

- 1) What does it mean to meditate on scripture?
  
- 2) What does Joshua 1:8 say about prosperity and success?
  
- 3) Which of the following statements are true?
  - a) The word is a lamp unto our feet.
  - b) The words of our mouth and meditations of our heart should be pleasing to God.
  - c) Christians only need to read the Bible and nothing else.

# Content: The Bible

## One: What The Bible Claims

A. It is inspired.

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

a. Also read 2 Peter 1:19-21.

2. Definition of inspiration: The Bible originates from God.

3. The Bible can be considered to be love letters from God that reveal His nature, our separation from Him because of sin, and His desire for a restored relationship through the blood of Jesus.

B. It is complete.

1. Revelation 22:18

*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.*

2. Galatians 1:8

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*

3. Cults usually add books, have another book, or use their own translation.

C. It is necessary for salvation.

1. Ephesians 1:13

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*

2. Read the “Map” illustration in the box.

## illustration

### Map

A person might doubt the need for the Bible. Why can't someone just worship the God seen in nature?

Imagine a person trying to sail a ship across the Atlantic Ocean from the United States to England. England is there, but without a map and proper tools for navigation, the chances are good that the ship would never arrive. It would just sail in circles in the middle of the ocean.

The Bible is a believer's map. It enables us to understand God's nature, man's separation from God because of sin, and our relationship with God can be restored through faith in Jesus.

### Archer

The Bible is unique and reliable. Imagine 40 blindfolded archers lining up fifty feet from a target, taking aim, releasing their arrows, and then taking off the blindfolds to see that each had hit the bulls-eye. Impossible!

The Bible was written by 40-plus authors over a period of 1,600 years without contradiction. Certainly the only explanation is divine authorship. How could 40 authors who lived in different centuries—some kings, some paupers, some Gentiles, some Jews, in differing occupations, writing in different locations that varied from palaces to dungeons—all agree?

## Two: Three Reasons To Believe The Bible

Isaiah 40:8 . . . *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.*

### A. The authors agree.

1. 66 books by over 40 authors over a period of 1,600 years, and yet they agree
2. Read the “Archer” illustration in the box on page 52.

### B. Prophecy

1. Over 300 prophecies of the coming of Christ
2. Eight examples: Born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1); preceded by messenger (Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:1-2); enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9 and Luke 19:35); betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9 and Matthew 10:4); 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12 and Matthew 26:15); money thrown in temple (Zechariah 11:13 and Matthew 27:5); silent before accusers (Isaiah 53:7 and Matthew 27:12-14); hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16 and Luke 24:38-40)
3. Read the “Silver Dollars In Texas, USA” illustration in the box below.

### C. Testimony from others

#### 1. Martin Luther

*The scriptures are like an orchard. All kinds of trees grow there. All sorts of fruit are harvested. The Bible, rich in variety, offers us priceless comfort, wisdom, counsel, assurances, warnings against dangers. I have shaken every tree in this orchard, and got at least a couple of apples or pears from each one.*

#### 2. George Mueller

*The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of 54 years. The first 3 years after conversion I neglected the word of God. Since I began to search it diligently, the blessing has been wonderful. Great has been the blessing from consecutive, diligent, daily study. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the word of God.*

#### 3. Charles Colson

*The Bible—banned, burned, beloved. More widely read, more frequently attacked than any other book in history. Generations of intellectuals have attempted to discredit it; dictators of every age have outlawed it and executed those who read it. Yet soldiers carry it into battle believing it more powerful than their weapons. Fragments of it smuggled into solitary prison cells have transformed ruthless killers into gentle saints.*

## illustration

### Silver Dollars In Texas, USA

Peter Stoner writes in his book *Science Speaks* that the chances for all eight prophecies being fulfilled in the life of one individual is 1 in 10 to the 17th power. Take this number of silver dollars and pile them two feet deep. They will cover the state of Texas. Mark one of the dollars with an “X.” A person must travel into this pile blindfolded — as far and as long as he wants — and with one try, pull out the silver dollar marked with an “X.”

- D. There are three basic evidences for the authority of the Bible: 1. the Bible itself, with its clear unified message; 2. fulfilled prophecy; and, 3. testimony of those who have been impacted by the Bible. Each of the three areas affirms the authority of the Bible, but when all three are considered together, the evidence is overwhelming.

1. A story about the importance of reading the Bible ...

*A man was out walking at night in the desert when a voice said to him, "Pick up some pebbles and put them in your pocket, and tomorrow you will be both sorry and glad." The man obeyed. He stooped down and picked up a handful of pebbles and put them in his pocket. The next morning he reached into his pocket and found diamonds and rubies and emeralds. He was both glad and sorry. Glad that he had taken some — sorry that he hadn't taken more. And so it is with God's word. When you understand the riches and benefits of knowing scripture, you will desire it more and more.*

### Three: Blessings Received From The Bible

- A. It brings salvation.

1. James 1:21

*Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

2. 1 Peter 2:1

*Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.*

- B. It is a solid foundation upon which to build your life.

1. Matthew 7:24-25

*Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*

2. 1 Peter 1:24-25

*For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.*

- C. It is the key to success.

1. Joshua 1:8

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

2. James 1:25

*But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.*

## Four: Reading The Bible

*Note ... There are three necessary ways of allowing scripture to impact your life: reading, studying, and memorizing. All three methods allow a different aspect of scripture to become real and also enable the Bible to have its full impact in your life.*

A. Ask God to give you a desire for scripture.

It is important to ask God to give you a heart and desire for scripture. Pray that God would allow scripture to seem relevant and come alive to you. Christians become so accustomed to reading the Bible and praying that their day seems empty if they don't begin the day with daily devotions. As the Psalmist says ... "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8).

B. Reading the Bible

A Christian should regularly sit and read the Bible. Reading means just that ... reading the Bible in a quiet place as a letter from God about His relationship with you. If you received a letter from your spouse or a girlfriend or boyfriend while separated on a long trip, you would sit and read it, perhaps several times. Why? Because it came from someone you loved, you would want to hear what he or she had to say and, in a sense, you would be in their presence by reading what was written.

C. How to read the Bible ... The RCA Method

1. Read the Bible.

a. Psalm 119:105 . . . *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

b. Read the "Three Circle Or Five Circle Reading Plan" in the box on page 56. Many new Christians don't know where to start reading the Bible and what sections are most important. This reading plan explains the different sections of the Bible and also allows a new Christian to read the sections that are initially important for Christian growth.

2. Consider scripture.

a. Psalm 119:15-16 . . . *I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.*

### *testimony*

Concerning the Bible, Patrick Henry said, "*There is only one book.*"

*A common analogy for how inspiration works is a sailboat and the wind. The Holy Spirit, like the wind, filled the sails of the writers. Without the wind, the boat could go nowhere.* - John Wimber

*When we find ourselves deficient in wisdom, it is not because the Word of God has pages missing, but because we have not seen all there is on the pages we already have. It is not another book we need, but better attention to the book we have.* - Eugene H. Peterson

- b. Allow the Holy Spirit to teach and convict through scripture.

John 16:8 . . . *When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.*

John 14:26 . . . *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

- c. Considering scripture basically means to ask the following questions as you read the Bible: What does it mean? What does it say or mean to me? Am I to do something as a result of reading this passage?

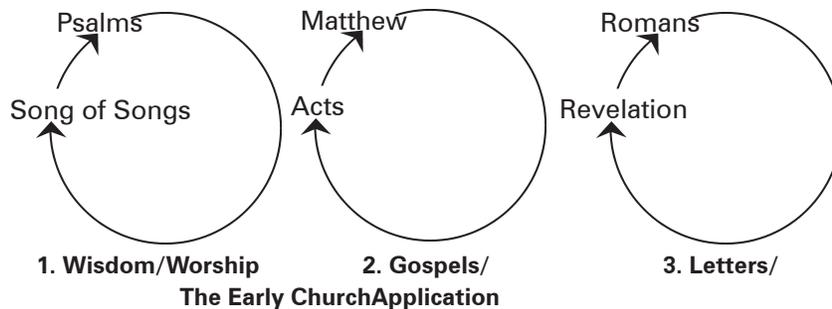
3. Assimilate scripture.

- a. James 1:22 . . . *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

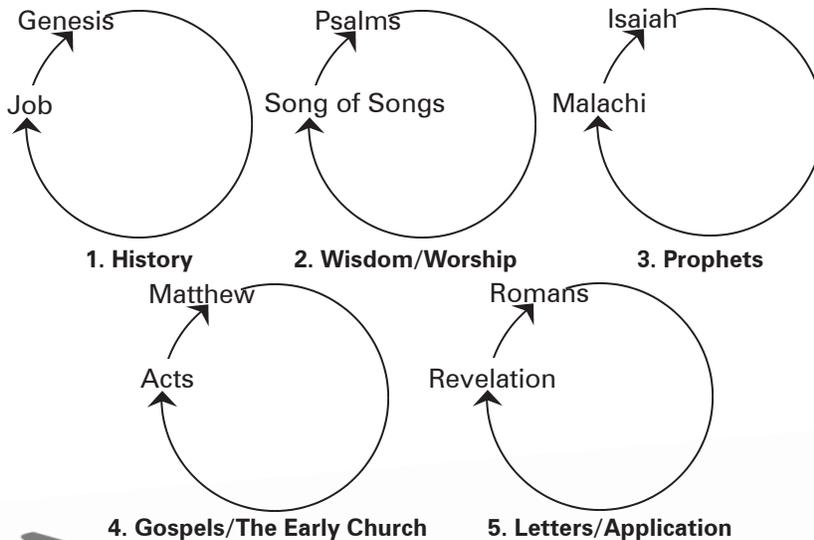
- b. Use the journal in the Discipling Notebook (page 161). When you get an insight from reading scripture, record it in the “insight” column. When you are convicted to do something from scripture, record it in the “Point of Obedience” column of the journal section of your Discipling Notebook.

### Three Circle or Five Circle Reading Plan

#### Three Circle Plan



#### Five Circle Plan



It is best not to begin reading the Bible in the book of Genesis and then ending with Revelation. Genesis and Exodus would be interesting but Leviticus would get boring. A new Christian needs to understand what sections of the Bible are more applicable to the new Christian life.

The Bible is divided into five sections. Reading the Bible by using a circle method simply means to start with the first book in the circle and then read to the last book and begin again. For example, if you wanted to read the Gospels/The Early Church circle, you would start with Matthew, reading one chapter a day until you have read through Acts; then you would circle back and begin with Matthew again.

Since there are five circles (or sections of the Bible), if you read one chapter a day from each of the circles, you would be reading in each of the major sections each day. For some, five chapters would be too much, so try the three circle method. The three circle method would allow a new Christian to read daily in the three sections of the Bible most helpful to a new Christian.

## Five: Study The Bible

### A. Importance of study

1. A workman who doesn't have to be ashamed

2 Timothy 2:15 . . . *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

2. As a defense against false teaching

1 Timothy 4:1 . . . *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

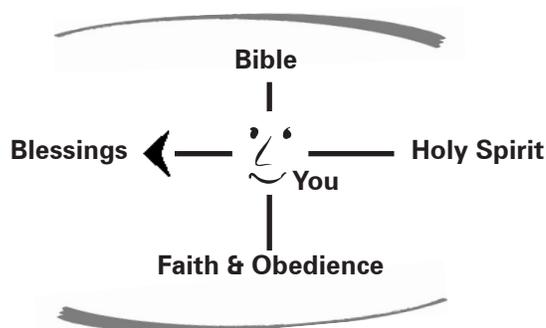
### B. Growing faith

1. Romans 10:17 . . . *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*
2. Study the diagram below.

As you read and study the Bible, the Holy Spirit will teach and convict. You will be convicted of areas of sin and weakness that need to change and you will learn about God and His will. As you obey God in faith, with repentance and action, you will be blessed — blessed with forgiveness, healthy relationships, active ministry, even answers to prayer. This will cause you to continue seeking God. It becomes an increasing cycle of obedience and blessing that encourages you to make scripture a daily part of your life.

### C. How to study the Bible

1. Use the Three Circle or Five Circle reading plan.



### Tips For Memorizing Scripture Passages

1. Write them down.
2. Once memorized, repeat every morning before you begin your day.
3. Make memorizing a part of your weekly routine.
4. Memorize verses in context ... Phil. 2:12-13

## Six: Memorizing Scripture

### A. Our Greatest Weapon Against Evil

#### 1. Sword of the Spirit

- a. Ephesians 6:17 . . . *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*
- b. The only spiritual offensive weapon mentioned in the New Testament

#### 2. A weapon capable of ...

##### a. Destroying strongholds

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 . . . *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.*

##### b. Resisting attacks of the evil one

1 John 2:14 . . . *I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

##### c. Overcoming temptations

Ephesians 5:26 . . . *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word . . .*

### B. Life Issues and Life Verses

#### 1. Temptation

##### a. 1 John 2:16 ... lust, materialism/greed, and pride

*For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.*

##### b. Description of temptations ...

- The three areas of temptations are found in 1 John 2:16 – they are lust, materialism/greed, and pride. All sin falls into one of these three general categories
- Temptations can be generational – children imitate the sins of their fathers and mothers.
- Temptations become addictive. Sin is pleasure for a moment but consequences for a lifetime.
- You cannot overcome temptations by your own strength.

- c. When Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:2-11), he overcame temptation and the devil by quoting scripture. Also note that Jesus was tempted in the three areas of temptations – turn the rocks into bread (lust); be given the kingdoms of the world by Satan (materialism/greed); and throw himself off the temple so the angels would rescue Him (pride or ego).

## 2. Life Issues

- a. All Christians have a primary area of temptation. This area will cause the Christian to stumble repeatedly. As the Christian matures, other areas of weakness to temptation will be revealed. *These are life issues!*
- b. Life issues can be lustful thoughts, sexual sin, alcoholism, anger, bitterness, gossip, ambition, materialism, pride, etc. Lists of potential life issues are found in the Bible section of your discipling notebook.

Galatians 5:19-20 ... *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions.*

Colossians 3:8 ... *But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

Revelation 21:8 ... *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*

- c. God, in His mercy, does not reveal all your life issues at once. He will reveal them gradually as you grow in Christ. But since your primary life issue will cause you to stumble again and again, it is important to discern it as soon as possible.
- d. When discerning a primary life issue, ask the following questions:
- What temptation just won't go away?
  - What causes me to stumble more than anything else?
  - What causes the most feelings of guilt and condemnation?
- e. Ask the Lord to reveal to you the life issue that He wants you to overcome at this time.
- What temptation does the Spirit convict you of?
  - What temptations do others sense in your life?
  - What temptation is acted out repeatedly?

## 3. Life Verses

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 . . . *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

### *memorize*

#### **Ephesians 6:17**

*Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

- a. Life verses are three to five verses of scripture that you memorize to help overcome the temptation of your life issues.
- b. Our primary weapon to renew the mind and fend off temptation is scripture. After discerning an area of temptation, memorize three to five verses that give God's perspective against the temptation. These verses then become your *life verses* that help you find victory over the temptation. After you memorize these verses, repeat them often.
- c. In the course of living a Christian life, you will probably discover three to five life issues. If you memorize three to five verses for each life issue, then out of all scripture, only a few verses will become *your* life verses, used by you to defeat your life issues.
- d. An example of a life issue might be thinking impure thoughts, and a life verse for that temptation could be Psalm 19:14: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." Or if you have a temptation of anxiety or fear, a life verse could be 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all of your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

### Seven: Review ... Implanting The Word Of God In Your Life

1. Pray and ask the Lord for a desire for His Word in your life.
2. Commit to reading the Bible using the Three or Five Circle reading method found on page 56.
3. Learn to use your journal to record "Points Of Obedience" and "Insights" that the Lord reveals to you from scripture (Page 161).
4. Repeat your life verses daily to help overcome the temptation of your life issues.



### Life Issues and Life Verses

In the Bible section of this notebook beginning on page 143, there are instructions for finding your life issues and potential life verses to help overcome these temptations. Go to this section now to find your primary Life Issue and Life Verses.

Remember: All Christians have life issues that cause them to succumb to temptation. You overcome temptation by memorizing life verses.

# 5 Prayer

LESSON

The point: By learning to pray  
"specifically," prayers will be answered!

## SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 4:16 . . . *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Philippians 4:5-6 . . . *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

John 14:13-14 . . . *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Psalms 34:8 . . . *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*

Ephesians 3:20 . . . *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

Matthew 7:7 . . . *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*



# Conversation

*Owen has some questions about prayer. As always, when Owen has a question it's a teaching opportunity for Peter. Let's listen in...*

**Owen:** Does God really answer prayer?

**Peter:** Absolutely, in my journal I've kept track of hundreds of prayers God has answered.

**Owen:** Well, God doesn't seem to be answering *my* prayers.

**Peter:** Tell me more about what you've been praying.

**Owen:** I've asked God to save the lost people and also for the Kingdom of God to prevail in our community. Those are good prayers, but nothing's happened. Why isn't God answering my prayers?

**Peter:** I think we need to talk about being specific. Your prayers are good prayers, Owen, but how would you know if they were answered? They're too general. When you ask God to bless your day, or for his Kingdom to grow, you're not being specific enough.

**Owen:** Give me an example of a specific prayer request.

**Peter:** If you asked God for five hundred dollars so you could pay for an unexpected car repair expense, and you asked for the money to come today, that's specific. If someone unexpectedly hands you five hundred dollars this afternoon then you know God answered your prayer. Specific prayers have noticeable answers.

**Owen:** Suppose I ask God to double my salary at work. I'd definitely notice that answer and I'd give God all kinds of praise and thanks. Can I ask for that?

**Peter:** You could, and God might answer it. But keep in mind that we're praying for *God's* will to be done. We're here to cooperate with *his* purposes. Do you believe it's God's will to double your salary? Does the request require faith? Are there impure motives in your request?

**Owen:** Impure motives – like wanting to go on a scuba diving vacation? Well...maybe. But suppose I asked God to help me figure out ways to make more money so I can support missionaries? Is that better?

**Peter:** Probably, but keep in mind that God gives good gifts to his children. The word used most often in the Bible for prayer is "ask." God is okay with you asking for things. He wants you to ask, ask often, and receive lots of specific answers to your prayers.

- Owen:** Big question – and it’s been bothering me: What happens if you ask for something you honestly believe is God’s will...and you don’t get it? Doesn’t God love you?
- Peter:** Owen, when you were a child, did you ever ask your parents for something and not get it?
- Owen:** Constantly.
- Peter:** Yet your parents loved you. So why wouldn’t they give you what you wanted?
- Owen:** Sometimes what I wanted would have actually *hurt* me. I was in love with the idea of bungee jumping and I wanted my own bungee cord. I figured I’d tie it to tall stuff and jump off. I’d have been dead in ten minutes.
- Peter:** Why else?
- Owen:** Sometimes they had something better in mind. Why give me a new seat for my old, falling-apart bike when they’re going to give me a new bike in a few months for my birthday? And sometimes they never did explain why I got “no” for an answer ...I just figured they knew something I didn’t know.
- Peter:** And yet you think if God says “no” that he somehow doesn’t love you?
- Owen:** I get the point. Maybe me doubling my salary is like giving me a bungee cord and pointing toward a cliff. Let’s jump into the study.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## One

*Read: Matthew 6:9-13; Philippians 4:5-6; and Hebrews 4:16.*

- 1) Define prayer in one sentence.
- 2) Read Matthew 6:9-13 again. This passage is described as the Lord's Prayer. What components of prayer does the passage include?
  - a. praise
  - b. asking for needs
  - c. complaints
  - d. forgiveness
- 3) Why is thanksgiving an important part of prayer?
- 4) Which of the following statements are true?
  - a. Prayer is talking and listening.
  - b. Since God already knows your needs, prayer is useless.
  - c. Praise takes our attention away from ourselves.

## Two

*Read: Psalm 27:14; Matthew 6:6; Matthew 18:19; John 14:13-14; John 15:7; James 4:3; and 1 John 3:21-22.*

- 1) Which of the following prayer requests would probably go unanswered?
  - a. I think I need a car; would you provide a Mercedes for me?
  - b. Give me boldness so that I can witness to my sister.
  - c. In spite of how he feels about Jesus, would you make my best friend a Christian?
  - d. God, would you provide a job for me?
- 2) Which of the following will help effectiveness in prayer?
  - a. A regular time and place for praying
  - b. Sharing prayer concerns with another Christian
  - c. Assuming that what you want is God's will

- 3) Do you find it easy to discipline yourself to pray on a regular basis?

### Three

*Read: Matthew 7:7; Matthew 21:22; Luke 18:1-8; John 16:23-24; and Ephesians 3:20.*

- 1) In the above passages, what word is used the most in connection with prayer?
  
- 2) Read Ephesians 3:20 again. If God is willing to do more than we ask or think, what kind of prayers should we offer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Read Luke 18:1-8. What is the lesson of this parable?
  - a. We should nag God.
  - b. Some prayer requests require continued vigilance.
  - c. God doesn't want to answer our prayers.

# Content: Prayer

## One: What Is Prayer?

Hebrews 4:16 . . . *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

### A. Talking and listening

1. Good relationships include good communication. Prayer enables a good relationship with God.
2. Read the “Talking And Listening” illustration on this page.
3. Dr. Richard Halverson

*Prayer is not a soliloquy. It is a dialogue between man and God. Prayer is conversation with a real person who actually hears what is prayed and does something about it. ... A man never stands taller than when he kneels before God.*

### B. Elements of Prayer (ACTS)

#### 1. Adoration

- a. Praise recognizes God’s character.
- b. Praise shifts attention from ourselves to God. By yourself you can do little, but praise allows us to proclaim an almighty God who can do all things. With your strength, problems seem big, but with God, they are small.
- c. Example of adoration: God, you are holy.

#### 2. Confession

- a. Confess your sins and inadequacies to God.
- b. Confession means humility before God. When you are humble, then God can be strong and in weakness you will find God’s grace.
- c. Example: God, I am a sinner and I am in need of you!

#### 3. Thanksgiving

- a. Give credit for what God has done.
- b. Thanksgiving recognizes that God has done good things for you in the past and builds confidence that He will continue to give you grace and mercy.

## illustration

### Talking And Listening

Imagine a married couple sitting on a couch, night after night, watching television and not talking to one another. Do they have a good relationship? No, because they don’t talk. Some Christians don’t have a good relationship with God because they don’t pray.

Another couple sits at the breakfast table, morning after morning, with the husband reading the newspaper and the wife talking. The husband isn’t listening, just reading the paper. Is this a great relationship? No, because the talk is one sided. Many Christians have this type of relationship with God ... they talk in prayer but never listen.

Finally, imagine a couple walking through the park. Both of them are conversing on the events of the day. They have a good relationship. This is the type of prayer life a Christian should develop ... talking and listening.

Philippians 4:5-6 . . . *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

- c. Example: God, thank you for giving me strength to be victorious over sin in the past.

#### 4. Supplication

- a. Ask God specific requests.
- b. God is holy (praise); you are not (confession). He has helped you in the past (thanksgiving); now He will give you help again (supplication).
- c. Example: God, I need your help with this area of temptation.

### Two: Answered Prayer

#### A. Helpful hints for successful prayer

##### 1. Rooted in God's word

John 15:7 . . . *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

##### 2. Regularity of schedule and place . . . same time and same place

Matthew 6:6 . . . *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.*

##### 3. Agreement with others

Matthew 18:19 . . . *Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.*

##### 4. In the name of Jesus

John 14:13-14 . . . *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

##### 5. Wait (one of the most difficult aspects of prayer)

Psalms 27:14 . . . *Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*

##### 6. Obedience

1 John 3:21-22 . . . *Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.*

##### 7. Praise and thanksgiving

Focusing on God's ability takes our minds off our inability.

## B. Hindrances to prayer

### 1. Wrong motives

James 4:3 . . . *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

### 2. Lack of integrity in relationships

1 Peter 3:7 . . . *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

Matthew 5:23-24 . . . *Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

### 3. Unconfessed sin

Psalm 66:18 . . . *If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*

### 4. Lack of faith

James 1:6 . . . *But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

## C. Develop an appetite for God.

Psalm 34:8 . . . *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*

1. Your spirit can develop an appetite for God.
  - a. Read the “Eating” illustration on this page.
2. Something that begins as a discipline eventually becomes a habit.
  - a. Read the “Brushing Teeth” illustration on this page.
3. Ask God to give you a desire to pray. Have your discipler pray with you, so that you will have a desire to pray.
  - a. If you have a desire to be with God, it will be easier to maintain a disciplined devotional life of prayer and Bible study. The principle of “specificity” enables prayer and Bible study to be exciting.

## illustration

### Eating

Your body needs food. If you do not eat on your normal schedule, you will have hunger pangs.

A Christian who develops a strong devotional walk with the Lord has a spirit that needs to be in the presence of the Lord regularly. If periods of prayer and reading the Bible are missed, a Christian will feel spiritually drained and weak. It is easy to maintain the habit of daily devotions when your spirit becomes accustomed to feasting on the Lord regularly.

### Brushing Teeth

Many young children have difficulty developing bodily hygiene habits like brushing their teeth. Most adults no longer have this problem. In fact many adults brush several times a day. For a person used to having clean teeth, getting up in the morning and starting the day without brushing his teeth would be unthinkable.

### Three: God's Willingness To Answer Prayer

- A. Ask: The word used most often in connection with prayer in the New Testament is *ask*.
1. The word used most often in the New Testament for *prayer* is *ask* and not the word *prayer*:
  2. In the New Testament the word *ask* is used instead of *prayer* because God wants you to ask..
    - a. Learning to ask for God's help keeps us humble ... we are needy and God is God. This is an important attitude to maintain!
    - b. New Christians are often given special grace by God and receive a lot of answered prayers. Perhaps it's childlike faith or maybe God wants them to know of His love.
  3. Have confidence. Scripture teaches that God answers prayer.

Matthew 21:22 . . . *If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.*

John 14:13-14 . . . *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

John 16:23-24 . . . *In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

Ephesians 3:20 . . . *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

#### B. Learn to ask specifically.

1. A specific prayer request is one that allows you to know if it has been answered.
  - a. "God, give me strength today" is a general prayer request – how will you know if it is answered?
  - b. "God, give me strength to say no when I'm tempted to get drunk tonight" is a specific request – you will know if it is answered.
2. When a specific prayer is answered ...
  - a. Give God thanks!
  - b. Everybody gets excited by answered prayer. Praying specifically means maximum victory and answers.

### *testimony*

#### **A Note From First Steps**

One pastor writes: "When I was a young Christian, I realized that I had lost interest in reading the Bible and praying. I thought it was boring. I didn't see the relevance, and because I had little discipline, I was easily distracted. Now I enjoy prayer and reading the Bible. I can't wait to spend intense time with God. Why the change? I realized that my lack of interest in prayer and reading the Bible were caused by the lack of a vital relationship with God. So I prayed, 'God, help prayer and the study of your word not to be boring. Help me enjoy it because it is a way to develop a loving relationship with you.' Now, I love reading the Bible and praying, because I have broken through to a relationship with Jesus."

## C. Prayer Lists

1. Prayer lists are essential for effective “specific” prayers.
2. Ask yourself this question: Do I know what I prayed about last week? If God has given you a burden or a specific request . . . if you don’t remember what you prayed . . . how can you experience the joy of answered prayer?
3. Prayer has a cumulative effect. Prayer usually starts with a burden and then develops into specific prayers based on that burden; if prayers aren’t listed, then the you won’t experience the impact of seeing God answer prayers you’ve been praying for a long time.
4. Seeing God answer prayers that have been listed on prayer lists will increase your faith and enable you to pray bigger prayers! Read the “Roots of Faith Praying” illustration on this page.
  - a. Through your answered prayers, you will discern how God works through you. It is different with each Christian.

### Four: General To Specific

Matthew 7:7 . . . *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

#### A. General

1. Prayer always goes from general to specific. When you get a burden, learn how to specifically pray for this burden. After getting a specific request, continue to pray until it is answered.
2. Ask God to give you His burdens—a desire for what He is doing.

John 5:19 . . . *Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”*
3. Burdens are almost always “general” requests – a burden for a friend, a family member, a particular mission, a new job, etc.
  - a. Prayer burdens are general directions and passions.
  - b. From this burden what are the specific requests?

## illustration

### Roots Of Faith Praying

A young believer told her discipler, “I’ve been called as a missionary to India. Would you pray with me that God will provide the money? I’m leaving in a month.”

A tree that stands tall in a field has a significant root system that can provide the tree nutrients and the ability to withstand the assault of storms. Some prayers don’t have adequate roots, having been prompted more by immaturity than God’s will.

What is wrong with the young Christian’s request? Perhaps the Lord did tell the young believer to go to India, but what about proper timing? It might take years to develop the roots needed to sustain a missionary effort in India – training, spiritual maturity, and financial support. If the young Christian learns to wait, allowing her roots to grow, then when she actually goes to India there will be the spiritual strength and financial support to weather the difficulties of a mission’s calling.

This is what the discipler told the young believer. “Write down your prayer request to go to India on a prayer list. It is a general request – you want to go to India. Begin praying specifically about training, what type of mission, and financial support. Some of these requests might take years, but by the time you get there, having experienced all the answered specific prayers, you will have the roots (faith) to stand strong against the difficulties found in India.”

4. Ask for wisdom on how to pray specifically for this burden.

James 1:5 . . . *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

5. Asking specific prayers means knowing God's will. There are a lot of factors to consider – sinful motives, pleasing others, ambition, or even the possibility of misunderstanding God's will. Keeping your general and specific prayers listed will help you discern whether your request is in God's will. Remember: Discern what God is doing, ask for a burden (a general direction), and then seek the specifics in prayer.

6. Example . . .

- a. Your son (a general request)

- b. Over the years God gives you these specific requests for your son.

- Marry a Christian woman
- Be financially prosperous
- Have a knowledge of his calling in life
- Graduate from college
- Never be hurt in a car wreck

## B. Specific

1. The best requests are specific requests.

James 4:2 . . . *You do not have, because you do not ask God.*

1 John 5:14-15 . . . *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.*

2. It is difficult for us to know when God answers a general prayer.
3. Ask this question to determine if it is a specific request: *Will I know if this prayer is answered?*
4. When our prayers are answered, we get excited about praying and God receives praise!
5. Examples
  - a. If you ask God to bless your day, how will you know if he does? If you need \$100 to pay your electric bill, you will know if He answers that specific request.
  - b. If you have a burden for a particular person who isn't a Christian, ask God for an opportunity to tell that person about Jesus.

## *memorize*

### **Matthew 7:7**

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

6. The more specific the request, the easier it is to know when it is answered. God wants to answer your prayers – ask frequently and ask specifically!

### C. Intercession

1. If you have a prayer burden (general request), have spent time asking for wisdom to know God's will, and that prayer hasn't been answered, keep asking! (Read Luke 18:1-8.)
2. Some specific requests take years before the answer is received. Why? Perhaps it's so you learn faith and perseverance. Maybe it's the Lord's timing. Also, some strongholds erected against God take continual prayer assault for their defeat. (Read Mark 9:17-29.)
3. When you maintain prayer lists, you may want to keep one page for those prayers that take time. God will lead you to long-term, lifetime requests for your prayers.

### Five: Review ... Asking And Receiving

1. Ask God to give you a desire to pray.
2. Set aside time in a particular place at least three times a week for prayer.
3. Find some place to pray and read your Bible. Keep your Bible, Discipleship Workbook, and any other books that you are reading there.
4. Maintain General to Specific prayer lists in your Discipleship Workbook. (See examples in the Prayer section starting on page 151.) You need to develop four prayer lists on the following topics.
  - a. Urgent
  - b. Family and Friends
  - c. Personal
  - d. Kingdom

### quotes

*Worship and praise of God demands a shift of center from self to God. One cannot pray without relinquishing occupation with self. - Paul Billheimer*

*There is a world with its needs entirely dependent upon and waiting to be helped by intercession. There is a God in heaven, with His all-sufficient supply for all those needs, waiting to be asked. - Dr. Andrew Murray*

*He distributes gold! Remember, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are his ways above your ways, and his thoughts above your thoughts; ask for great things, for you are before a great throne of grace. - Charles Spurgeon*

*"There are many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray; many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding. - Leonard Ravenhill*

# *specificity . . .*

## **Your Main Request!**

1. What is the one request — your most important specific request — that you would like answered?
2. Before writing it below, ask these questions:
  - a. Does this request agree with what I know of the teachings of the Bible?
  - b. Does this request reflect godly motives and intentions?
  - c. Would my discipler and others that I trust agree with this request?
  - d. Will God be glorified by the answer to this request?
3. Write your most important specific prayer request below and on the prayer list in your Discipleship Workbook (page 159).



# 6 Fellowship

## LESSON

The point: A Christian can't stand alone. Christians are called together, to minister to one another and to a lost world.

### SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:22 . . . *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.*

Matthew 16:18 . . . *And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

Acts 1:8 . . . *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

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

Hebrews 10:25 . . . *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*



# Conversation

*As Owen looks around at his new church family he realizes something: they're not perfect. Let's listen in as Owen and Peter talk about the Church.*

**Owen:** A question for you, Peter: Is going to church really that important? My father used to say the church is filled with hypocrites. I don't know if I'd say that, but it is true Christians often say one thing and do another. And I don't understand why the church doesn't meet more of my needs.

**Peter:** You've brought up three issues, Owen. Let me respond to each one. Yes, it *is* necessary that you get involved with a local church. A Christian can't grow without the encouragement and talents of other Christians helping him.

**Owen:** Okay, but why are Christians such ...

**Peter:** Now let's talk about Christians being hypocrites. One of the hardest lessons any new Christian – including you – has to learn is how to deal with sin in your life, and the lives of others. Yes, other believers make mistakes...but so do you. You've got to learn to receive forgiveness and not get discouraged when you sin. And you've got to learn to extend that same forgiveness to others.

**Owen:** Fine, but I still don't understand why...

**Peter:** I know it's hard when other Christians don't live up to your expectations, Owen. And, to be honest, you don't live up to their expectations, either. But remember Satan wants you to get discouraged with other Christians so that you drop out of fellowship and grow alone. When you do that you quit growing in the Lord. You make it easy for Satan to tempt you and you don't have any accountability in your life.

**Owen:** Peter, is there any particular reason you keep interrupting me? It's major league annoying.

**Peter:** I'm sorry, Owen. It's just that I'm really passionate about this. So many Christians think they can go it alone, that they don't need other Christians. But they're wrong – and as a result they don't mature. Owen, you need others and they need you. God intended the church to be a place where imperfect people live in grace and somehow get a lot accomplished.

**Owen:** Really? Because all I see getting accomplished in some churches is infighting and gossip. It's like those people can't stand each other.

**Peter:** I know, and that bothers me as well. When Christians learn to love one another, in spite of their differences, they set an example of love that's a tremendous witness to people who don't know Jesus. What Jesus wants is for us to love each other like he loved us.

**Owen:** You mean like forgiving each other like he forgave us? And loving us even when we don't deserve it?

**Peter:** Exactly. You wouldn't mind being around people like that, would you?

**Owen:** I'd *love* it. But who at my church is like *that*?

**Peter:** If you let God's Spirit live in you and move through you, *you'll* be like that, Owen.

**Owen:** Oh. So I guess I should quit complaining?

**Peter:** That would be a start. But even better: start loving.

**Owen:** Got it.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One:

*Read: Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 1:22; and 1 Peter 4:3-4.*

1. How would you define the term *church*?
2. List four things that describe the early church in the Book of Acts.
3. What will your old friends think when they hear that you have become a Christian?

## Day Two:

*Read: John 13:34-35; Philippians 2:1-11; and 1 John 1:3.*

1. Which statement best describes Christian fellowship?
  - a. Fun times with friends
  - b. Committed relationships
  - c. Something needed by emotionally weak believers
2. Consider the attitude of Christ described in Philippians 2:1-11. What do you think about the following comments?
  - a. Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven.
  - b. Love means doing what's best for the other person.
  - c. Just as we have been forgiven, we must forgive others.



# Content: Fellowship

## One: What Is The Church?

Ephesians 1:22 . . . *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.*

### A. Defining the church

1. The word *church* comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*. There are two meanings of the word in the original Greek language:
  - a. *an assembly*
  - b. *“called together”* or *“called out”*
2. The church is an *assembly* of God’s people *called out* and *called together* for relationship with God and with each other to accomplish His mission. In other words, we are *called together* to *reach out*.
  - a. The church is to be . . . A Christian and the members of a church should love God and also love others as they love themselves (Mark 12:29-31).
  - b. The church is to do . . . Christians and the church are called to accomplish His mission of discipling the nations (Matthew 28:18-20).
  - c. The vision of First Steps combines both of these passages.
3. Leaving old friendships for new relationships
  - a. Our old friends often influenced us in ungodly ways.
  - b. 1 Peter 4:3-4

*For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.*

- c. It is okay to associate with your old friends, but now that you are a Christian your friendships will change. Old friendships might seem different now because you have a new best friend — Jesus. You will have many opportunities to share Jesus with your old friends. You might notice that some will not want to associate with you but others will be very interested in your newfound faith.

## *testimonies*

*But fellowship requires more than the supportive love that wraps its arms around someone who is hurting. It also requires the tough love that holds one fast to the truth and the pursuit of righteousness. - Charles Colson*

*The life we receive does not allow us to be independent, for our life is dependent on the life of others. It is a dependent life: I depend on you and you depend on me. Isolation takes away life as well as fullness. - Watchman Nee*

- d. When you spend time with friends who are non-Christians, be careful that they do not influence you more (with the temptations of the past) than you are a witness to them for Jesus and your newfound way of life.

## B. Describing the church

1. The church is/was founded by Christ.

- a. Matthew 16:18

*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

- b. The church was not started by men but by Jesus—nothing will be able to destroy the church.

2. The church is empowered by the Spirit of God.

- a. Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

- b. The church must depend upon the Holy Spirit for power.

3. All members of the church have spiritual gifts.

- a. Romans 12:6

*We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.*

- b. Every Christian has a unique blend of spiritual gifts with which to serve God and other Christians.

4. All Christians are members of the church.

- a. Galatians 3:28

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

- b. All Christians are unified in Christ by being members of Christ's church. It is okay to be members of local churches or different denominations; though we might disagree with other Christians on doctrinal issues, we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

5. The church has a mission to contend for the gospel.

- a. Philippians 1:27

*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only*

*memorize*

**Hebrews 10:25**

*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

*hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.*

- b. The purpose of the church is not to remain exclusive but to preach the gospel to the lost.
6. The church is a local body of believers.

- a. 1 Thessalonians 1:1

*To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ...*

- b. The word *church* is used in two forms: one means the universal church (Ephesians 1:22) and the other means a local body of believers. All Christians are members of the church (universal), and all Christians should also be members of a local church.

## Two: Fellowship

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

### A. Defining fellowship

- 1. The Greek word for fellowship is *koinonia*.

- a. In the Bible the word *koinonia* basically means communion, fellowship, and sharing in common.
- b. The word *koinonia* in its earliest form was used as a business term meaning partnership.
- c. 1 Corinthians 12:26

*If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

- 2. Follow the example of Christ, who gave Himself for us.

- a. Read Philippians 2:1-11.
- b. It says in Philippians 2:5 . . . *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*
- c. Fellowship is giving yourself to others.

### B. A loving community

- 1. John 13:34-35

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

2. Many of us are wounded because of past relationships that were unhealthy, or even abusive. The church is a community of believers where there can be healing in the context of loving relationships.
3. There is psychological healing for you when you serve others. Read the “Former Prisoners” illustration on this page.
4. First Steps is about learning to disciple others—being empowered to disciple and also finding purpose by serving others.

### Three: The Blessings And Difficulties Of Being A Member Of A Local Church

Hebrews 10:25 . . . *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

#### A. Blessings of being a member of a local church

1. We support one another in difficult times.
  - a. Galatians 6:1-2
 

*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*
  - b. Read the “Candles In The Dark” illustration on this page.
2. We use our spiritual gifts to serve one another.
  - a. 1 Peter 4:10
 

*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.*
  - b. No single person has all the gifts necessary to grow as a Christian.
3. When we walk together in unity . . .
  - a. God answers our prayers.

Matthew 18:19 . . . *Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.*

## illustration

### Former Prisoners

Corrie Ten Boom, who, as an elderly woman, was arrested for helping Jews escape the Nazis, later detailed her story in the book entitled The Hiding Place. After World War II, Corrie helped found and oversee a ministry for those emotionally troubled by the disasters of the war.

Each resident of the program was required to raise vegetables in a small plot of ground. Corrie explains, *“I could tell a patient was recovering when they began to give their vegetables to others rather than hoarding for themselves.”* Emotional healing starts when Christians learn to give, rather than just receive.

### Candles In The Dark

No Christian is self-supporting. The strength of others provides needed encouragement during discouraging times.

Imagine two candles in a darkened room. Only one is burning, but the light from one candle supplies light for the other, even if the other candle is not lit.

When a Christian of dampened spirit is committed to other Christians, the strength of others will enlighten and uplift the Christian who is weak.

- b. It is a witness to non-Christians.

John 17:20-21 . . . *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

## B. Difficulties of being a member of a local church

### 1. Lack of forgiveness

- a. One of the most difficult lessons for a Christian to learn is to put up with the sins of self and others.
- b. Matthew 6:14-15 teaches that we must forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

### 2. False expectations

- a. Expectations are formed according to what happened or didn't happen in past relationships. We expect others to be like or not like the good and bad things we have experienced in others. Your mother was a certain way and you expect your wife to be the same, whether or not she has agreed to the expectation. When the other people don't live up to our expectations (and often they do not even know that we have the expectations of them), we can become angry with them.
- b. It is also easy to bring false expectations into our relationships with the church and members of the church. Read the quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. And when they don't live up to our expectations, we begin to judge others and become bitter.

### 3. Bitterness

James 3:15-16 . . . *Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*

- a. Effects
- Destroys peace of mind
  - Ruins relationships
  - Is a bad witness to non-Christians
- b. Symptoms of bitterness
- Difficult thinking "good thoughts" about a person
  - Tendency to speak negative things about the person
  - Hostile attitude toward the person can lead to sinful actions

## quote

### Dietrich Bonhoeffer Speaks About Expectations ...

*He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial.*

*God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious. The man who fashions a visionary ideal of community demands that it be realized by God, by others, and by himself. . . . When things do not go his way, he calls the effort a failure. When his ideal picture is destroyed, he sees the community going to smash. So he becomes, first an accuser of his brethren, then an accuser of God, and finally the despairing accuser of himself.*

## C. Being a peacemaker

Matthew 5:9... *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

1. You need to ...
  - a. Pray for your enemies (Matthew 5:44).
  - b. Speak blessings about those who offend you (Romans 12:14).
  - c. If possible, go to others and get their side of the story (Matthew 5:23-24).
  - d. Forgive as you have been forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).
  - e. Stay humble (Galatians 6:1). Often our anger is based upon misinformation and even misperception that quickly leaves when we see the other person's side of the story.
2. Since no Christian has the ability to grow as an independent Christian, Satan desires to get a new Christian to try to stand alone. The evil one does this by enticing the new believer to become disillusioned or angry with other Christians so that, in bitterness, the new Christian withdraws from fellowship.
3. If Satan can separate a Christian from the flock for any reason, that new Christian is vulnerable. The evil one can also use doctrinal confusion, broken relationships, or even a new job offer in another city to separate a new Christian from fellowship.

## Four: Fellowship Opportunities At Church

### A. Large group

1. In a large group there is ...
  - a. Worship
  - b. Lord's Supper
  - c. Tithes and offerings
  - d. Preaching and teaching ministry
  - e. Vision for the entire church taught and modeled
2. Are you ready to join your local church?
  - a. Make an appointment with your pastor.
  - b. Read "Joining A Church" on this page.

## illustration

### Joining A Church

Our culture promotes independence; often the statement is heard, *"I don't need to join a church. I'm attending; they know I'm committed."*

A similar path of logic is followed when a young couple, in love, avoids marriage and lives together. They say, *"We don't need to get married; we love one another."* Though emotionally charged with sincere desire, the above words often seem shallow when times of distress arrive. Then the statement can be heard, *"He said he loved me; how could he just leave?"*

Commitment requires *form* for accountability. The Bible requires the *form* of baptism for a new believer, marriage has the *form* of the ceremony, and Christians should participate in the visible *form* of joining a church. This helps a new Christian commit to a body of believers and also helps the church body and leadership provide the new believer with ministry and accountability.

True love finds freedom in *forms* of commitment.

## B. Small group

1. In a small group there is ...
  - a. Personalized ministry —confession, prayer, healing
  - b. Release of spiritual gifts
  - c. A support group for you
2. Are you ready to join a small group?
  - a. In a small group you will receive personalized ministry and have an opportunity to develop close relationships. No matter how large a church grows, if every member of the church joins a small group, the church will never be impersonal.
  - b. If you become a member of a church that has small groups, speak with your pastor about joining one. If your church does not have small groups, consider meeting regularly with a group of Christians for ministry, teaching, prayer, and encouragement.

## C. One-on-one culture

1. Discipleship means ...
  - a. One-on-one relational discipleship that sustains new Christians through the first weeks after new birth
  - b. Developing the foundational disciplines of prayer, Bible study, discipleship, and fellowship in an accountable one-on-one relationship
  - c. Practicing the fundamental lessons of learning God's will, overcoming temptation, developing assurance, understanding Kingdom priorities, and living in hope
2. Are you ready to learn to disciple another to love Jesus?
  - a. Complete the basic discipleship course.
  - b. Begin using your Discipleship Workbook.
  - c. Be committed to becoming a qualified discipler.

## Five: Review . . . Involvement In Fellowship

1. Join the church.
  - a. Speak with your pastor.
2. Join a small group.
  - a. If your church has small groups, talk to your pastor about joining one.
  - b. Your discipler will help you find a small group.

3. Commit to the vision of First Steps.
  - a. Finish the initial discipleship lessons.
  - b. Use your notebook as you practice the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, evangelism, and fellowship.
  - c. Complete the training to become a qualified discipler. More information can be found at [www.disciplinganother.com](http://www.disciplinganother.com) or your local church.

*specificity . . .*

### **Guard Yourself From Bitterness**

Hebrews 12:15 . . . *See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*

1. The number one reason keeping Christians and the church from walking in the fullness of power, strength, witness, and fruitfulness that God intends is bitterness. Bitterness takes root in broken relationships, and the more broken relationships a culture or individual has – the greater the tendency for bitterness.
2. Will you guard yourself from bitterness? Pray the following prayer:

*God, just as I have been forgiven; I will forgive others. I commit to praying for my enemies, thinking the best of my friends, going to the other person who I perceive has offended me to get the other side of the story, and, above all else, I will speak blessings on all. Now protect me from bitterness; set me free from anger so that I can be loved and love others!*



# 7

LESSON

# Evangelism

The Point: God will use you to tell your friends and family about Jesus.

## SCRIPTURE

Mark 16:15 . . . *He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”*

Galatians 1:11 . . . *I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.*

Romans 3:23 . . . *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 . . . *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Romans 1:16-17 . . . *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”*

John 16:7-8 . . . *But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.*

Colossians 4:5-6 . . . *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

Galatians 6:9 . . . *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

1 Peter 3:15 . . . *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*



# Conversation

*Owen wants to share his faith—but he needs a bit of coaching. Let’s listen in as Owen and Peter discuss witnessing.*

**Peter:** So how have you been doing, Owen?

**Owen:** Okay...but I need help witnessing to this guy at work.

**Peter:** What kind of help do you need?

**Owen:** The man’s name is Will and he’s a total sinner. He even laughs at my faith. I’ve tried to share the gospel with him, but nothing I say seems to have any effect. Do you think he’s hopeless?

**Peter:** Exactly how have you been trying to share the gospel with him?

**Owen:** I’ve been leaving tracts on his desk. Today, while Will was away from his desk, I put a tract in his lunch bag. It was a *great* tract, too, all about damnation. It had these drawings of unsaved people in Hell, writhing in flames and gnashing their teeth. On the last page there was a fill-in line where I wrote in Will’s name. All he had to do was check one of two little boxes. The first one said, “As it stands now I am eternally saved.” The second one said, “As it stands now I am going to Hell where I’ll be flame-broiled and gnash my teeth until they’re bloody stumps.”

I figured after reading the tract Will would check the box to be saved, fall on the floor, and repent.

**Peter:** What happened?

**Owen:** Well, he fell on the floor all right. He fell on the floor *laughing*. I was shocked. That guy’s heart must be harder than Pharaoh’s was when Moses sent the plague of flying lizards.

**Peter:** Flying *locusts*, not flying lizards.

**Owen:** Whatever. You get my point.

**Peter:** I’m glad you’re trying to share the gospel with others. One of the great joys of the Christian faith is allowing God to work through you to bring others into his kingdom. By the way, did you pray for Will before you started your witnessing campaign?

**Owen:** What’s the point? It’s obvious Will needs the Lord. What’s there to pray about?

**Peter:** And did you try to get to know him first? You know, engage him in conversation, invite him to lunch, see if you two have any common interests?

- Owen:** Again: what's the point? *He doesn't know the Lord*. What difference does it make if we both play golf?
- Peter:** Most people are won to the Lord by people they know and trust. That makes sense, since Christianity is a relationship. The most effective way to witness about the relationship we have with Jesus is to have relationships with those who don't know Jesus.
- Owen:** Sounds time consuming. Tracts are way quicker.
- Peter:** Good relationships aren't time consuming, Owen. When you like to be with someone you look forward to it. It's not a burden. Do this: start praying for Will. Ask God to give you opportunities to become his friend. Then, in the context of your friendship, look for ways to share the love of Christ. He'll listen to you then.
- Owen:** But what about the tracts? I bought a thousand of them. I could put one under his car windshield, and on his desk, and one under the welcome mat at his house...
- Peter:** Maybe I should hang onto the tracts for now. You work on the relationship.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One:

*Read: Mark 16:15; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 10:14; and 1 John 4:9.*

1. Circle the statements that reflect the meaning of the word *gospel*.
  - a. Good news
  - b. Salvation that must be earned
  - c. Jesus who came to save the lost
2. Read Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23. Which statements are false?
  - a. Most people will get into heaven because they are good people.
  - b. Sin causes death.
  - c. There is no hope for sinners without Jesus.
3. Review Hebrews 10:14 and 1 John 4:9 and answer the following questions:
  - a. God is holy and loving. Could God just overlook our sin?
  - b. Why didn't God annihilate Adam when Adam sinned?
  - c. What is God's solution for sin?

## Day Two:

*Read: 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; Galatians 6:9; Colossians 4:4-6; and 1 Peter 3:15.*

1. Have you had anyone ask about your conversion? If so, do you believe that you gave a good answer?

2. Write a few brief sentences explaining how a person could become a Christian.

3. True or false: Do Christians ...

a. Need to witness? T/F

b. Receive joy from sharing the gospel? T/F

c. Do best when they let the pastor do all the evangelism? T/F

### Day Three:

*Read: Revelation 12:11; Romans 1:16-17; John 14:6; Mark 8:36; and Matthew 7:21-23.*

1. Write one sentence in response to each of the following questions:

a. What was your life like before you became a Christian?

b. Why did you become a Christian?

c. What has your life been like since you have become a Christian?

2. Are you intimidated by the thought of sharing (witnessing) your faith with another person? If so, why?

3. Read John 14:6 again. Why should we be bold in our witness to unbelievers?

4. A Christian believes that Jesus is both Savior and Lord. What does it mean to you that Jesus is Lord?

# Content: Evangelism

## One: The Gospel

Mark 16:15 . . . *He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”*

### A. Defining the Gospel

1. The Greek word for *gospel* means *good news*.
2. The Gospel is a message from God.
  - a. Galatians 1:11

*I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.*

### B. Man’s condition: *Bad News*

1. Man is a sinner.
  - a. Romans 3:23  
*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
  - b. All have sinned, sin destroys relationships, and there is nothing you can do about this sin. This is really bad news. Read the “Target” illustration on this page.
2. Sin causes death.
  - a. Romans 6:23  
*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
  - b. Death is separation . . . from God, others, and self.
  - c. Read the “Three Sins A Day” illustration in the box.
3. Man cannot save himself.
  - a. Ephesians 2:8-9  
*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

## illustration

### Target

Sin means to miss the mark, to miss the target, to fail to live up to God’s standard. If we both take aim with a bow and arrow at a bullseye, and I miss by 1 inch and you miss by 5 inches, who missed the mark? We both did.

The Bible says that all have missed the mark. Agreed, some have missed more than others, but all will be judged unless they have been forgiven.

### Three Sins A Day

Imagine being stopped for a traffic violation and the officer who pulled you over found out that you had been stopped three times a day for the last ten years. That’s over 10,000 traffic violations. Do you believe that he will grant you mercy?

Some people are proud of their good works. They don’t believe that they are as bad as others. However, most will admit that they probably make at least three mistakes a day. That’s over 1,000 per year, or over 70,000 in 70 years. With 70,000 violations, who could expect mercy before a righteous judge?

### C. God's solution: *Good News!*

#### 1. Only through Jesus are we saved.

John 10:9 ... *I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.*

Romans 10:13 ... *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

- a. Our past, present, and future sins are forgiven.
- b. We have eternal life.
- c. We can have restored relationship with God through Jesus along with the beginnings of restored personal relationships!

#### 2. Supernatural

Ephesians 2:3-5... *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

- a. When God created the world, it was perfect, with every need provided – air to breathe, food to eat, and water to drink. When Adam and Eve sinned, there was nothing in all of creation (in natural creation) to deal with sin. So, something from outside (the supernatural) had to be given to take away sin. Jesus came from the Father and supernaturally took away our sins.
- b. The things we need from the natural we can work to obtain; we can earn our food, drink, and place we live. But since salvation is not from the natural but from the supernatural, we can't earn it. God sent Jesus as a free gift.
- c. Only Christianity offers supernatural help for salvation. No one earns salvation; it is a free gift. The motive to be holy with many religions is fear – are you good enough? The motive for holiness in Christianity is love – I want to be like the God who has given me salvation.

## Two: General To Specific Method Of Praying For The Lost

Most Christians accept Christ because of the invitation of a friend. Relational evangelism is by far the most effective method of sharing Jesus. You don't need to be an expert to share Jesus relationally because you are witnessing to friends about what Jesus has done for you. As a new Christian, you can be very effective in relational evangelism because you have a lot of friends who aren't Christians, who know you, and who can see changes in your life. The **General To Specific Method** of evangelism keeps you focused on praying for, and sharing the gospel with, the people that you know relationally.

### A. **General** (ask for a burden for a particular person)

John 16:7-8 . . . *But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.*

1. In evangelism it is best to work with God and follow what He is doing.
2. Ask God to give you a burden for a particular person— someone He is already convicting.
  - a. In the General column of a prayer list, write, “Lord, give me a burden for someone that you are already convicting.” (See page 159.)
  - b. There are specific people that God wants you to tell about Jesus. If you don’t ask God for a burden for those people, and then seek to develop a witnessing relationship with them — who will? The serious nature of your responsibility becomes apparent when you realize that most of the lost that you pray for will be family, friends, and co-workers.
3. The more specifically we pray, the more opportunity God has to work. Start looking and discerning someone for whom God gives you a burden to evangelize.
  - a. When you have a burden for a specific person, place that person’s name on a prayer list. Then, begin praying for specific opportunities to develop a relationship and to share the gospel.

**B. Specific** (seek opportunities to develop a relationship and share the gospel).

Colossians 4:5-6 . . . *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

1. Begin praying specifically that God will give you opportunities to develop a relationship.
  - a. You can do social things, develop mutual recreational interests, invite people to your house, and even ask people to attend church functions.
2. In relational evangelism some people use the phrase “*earn the right to speak.*” You are developing a relationship, and from this relationship you are looking for opportunities to share Jesus.
  - a. Some relationships can be service-oriented. You are meeting a need people have. From this foothold, you earn the right to speak about Jesus. Other relationships might be recreational (a common interest in a sport) or even social (a member of the same club).
  - b. Remember to pray daily that God will convict this person of sin, righteousness, and judgement.
3. Begin asking God for specifics in how to witness to your friends.

Galatians 6:9 . . . *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

- a. As you begin to develop a relationship and sense the Lord’s conviction in a non-Christian’s life, ask the Lord

### *memorize*

#### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*

specifically how to spend time with them, how to serve them, and how to show them Jesus.

- b. In all evangelistic relationships you need actually to talk to the person about Jesus and ask them specific questions. If they are interested in accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, then you need to be able to present a simple plan of salvation.
- c. Pray specifically that you will be able to ...
  - Share your testimony. (This will be discussed later.)
  - Ask the “right questions.” (This will be discussed later.)

### C. Keep Praying

There is no greater joy as a Christian than seeing God work through you to bring salvation to another person. God wants to use you in evangelism, and there are certain people to whom God will lead you to be a witness. Your responsibility, through prayer and seeking God’s will, is to have a God-given burden for these specific people and then step-by-step to develop a relationship that leads you to share with them the gospel of salvation.

Prayer remains the most important aspect of witnessing. Pray for a burden, pray for the specifics on how to witness, and, above all else, keep praying. Some burdens for specific people will lead you into praying for them for years. *Remember: Many come to know Jesus through the prayers of others.*

## Review . . .

1. **General**—ask for a burden for a particular person.
2. **Specific**—seek opportunities to develop a relationship and share Jesus.
3. **Keep praying and using your prayer lists to remember the prayers!**

## Three: Sharing The Gospel (Tools)

- A. First tool: Write your testimony.

Acts 20:24 . . . *However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.*

Revelation 12:11 . . . *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.*

1. Usually the first step in relational evangelism is telling another person what has happened in your life. If you have a brief testimony written and memorized, you should be able to share quickly when an opportunity arises.
2. Write your testimony on the page provided in the addendum (page A1) of this notebook .

3. Content: Keep it short so that it can be spoken in 5 minutes.
  - a. 20% should explain your life before you became a Christian.
  - b. 30% should talk about why you became a Christian.
  - c. 50% should share the effect of Christ in your life since you became a Christian.

4. Read the “sample testimony” on this page.

B. Second tool: Ask the right questions.

Sooner or later you will have to ask a person if he wants to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. When you believe the time to be right, asking the right questions allows the conversation to be relational and non-combative. Note that the following three questions use the word *Heaven* not *salvation* since *Heaven* is a less confrontational word.

1. Do you want to spend eternity in Heaven?
  - a. You may expand this question by mentioning that Heaven will be a place of perfect peace, love, joy, with purpose, enduring and fulfilling relationships with our sins forgiven, our questions answered, and our physical and emotional wounds healed.
  - b. Key passages that describe Heaven are 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 and Revelation 21:1-4.
2. How do you get to heaven? Do you know how to get to heaven?
  - a. Many believe that they will go to Heaven because they are good enough; others know they need Jesus but don't want to submit to Jesus at this time; some may have no clue whatsoever.
  - b. No matter what a person says after asking the two questions above, now is a good time to ask the third question.
3. Would you like to know what the Bible says about getting to Heaven?
  - a. If the person says “yes,” then follow the Roman Road explained next.
  - b. If the person says “no,” then leave the topic alone and continue to pray for the relationship. You can't force a person into the Kingdom of God. Don't act judgmentally.

### *sample testimony*

Before I came to Christ, my life was okay on the surface. It seemed like I needed nothing. But deep down I knew my life was not what I wanted it to be. A friend of mine explained how I could accept Christ into my life, and I knew that was what I needed to do, so I prayed to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Since then I have been able to live with a hope and confidence that I didn't have before. Just knowing that my sins are forgiven is a great assurance to me. My life has totally changed since I made that decision. I feel I have a purpose and direction in my life now.

C. Third tool: Walk the Roman Road.

1. If a person is interested in getting to Heaven, explain that the book of Romans shares the way to Heaven in three simple verses.

## 2. The verses:

- a. Romans 3:23. . . *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
- b. Romans 6:23 . . . *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- c. Romans 10:9 . . . *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

3. Note: Look up Romans 3:23 in your Bible and write the passage and the page number on where the passage is found on the front cover of your Bible. Then, next to Romans 3:23, write “Romans 6:23”; then next to Romans 6:23, write “Romans 10:9.” Listing the verse in this manner will enable you to quickly share with someone the Roman Road to salvation.

4. The information about sin, death, and Jesus taught at the beginning of this lesson will also help you to explain more fully the need for Jesus.

## D. Fourth tool: Pray with a person to receive Jesus.

1. Finally, ask the person if he would like to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. If he says “yes,” then . . .
2. Ask him two final questions.
  - a. *Are you ready to repent of your sins? Repentance means change your mind from following self to following Jesus. Read Acts 2:38.*
  - b. *Are you ready to pray to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If he wants to, then ask him to pray the following prayer:*

*Dear God, I confess that Jesus is my Savior and that only through faith in Him can I be saved. I repent of my sins and I determine, by your grace, to live with Jesus as my Lord. Lord Jesus, come into my life, save me, and fill me with your Spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen!*

## *Review of the Four Tools . . .*

**Tool One** . . . Write your testimony.

**Tool Two** . . . Ask the right questions.

**Tool Three** . . . Walk the Roman Road.

**Tool Four** . . . Pray with a person to receive Jesus.

## Four: Clarifying Commitment

After a person prays to receive Christ, you should review the following points to help the person clarify and understand the commitment he has made.

### A. Jesus is our Savior.

#### 1. No other Savior

John 14:6 . . . *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

#### 2. Good works will not save you.

Hebrews 4:2 . . . *For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.*

### B. Jesus is our Lord.

#### 1. Lose our life and find it.

Mark 8:35 . . . *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.*

#### 2. Do God's will, not ours.

Matthew 7:21-23 . . . *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

### C. Christians should be baptized.

#### 1. In the New Testament, after someone accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, Christian baptism was practiced symbolizing the union between the believer and Christ.

#### 2. Have you been baptized? Both old and new Christians need to ask this question. Since there are many viewpoints on baptism, the following scripture should help clarify baptism.

#### 3. Scripture about baptism

##### a. Identifies a Christian with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus

Romans 6:3-4 . . . *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

## *the right questions*

### **Remember The Right Questions:**

- Do you want to spend eternity in Heaven?
- Do you know how to get to Heaven?
- Would you like to know what the Bible says about getting to Heaven?

- b. Indicates that a Christian has repented and received the Spirit

*Acts 2:38 . . . Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

#### D. Discipleship . . . One Person Per Year

1. You are challenged to have a vision for First Steps. As soon as someone accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior, he needs to begin the discipling process.
2. The best person to disciple a new believer is the one who led him to Christ. Workers are needed for the Lord’s harvest. Consider making a commitment to be disciplined and then discipling another to love Jesus—one person a year for the rest of your life.
3. If your church has a First Steps program, contact your pastor for more information on discipleship. You can also get more information from [www.disciplinganother.com](http://www.disciplinganother.com).

### Five: Review . . . Praying And Discipling

1. Practice the **General to Specific** method of praying for the lost.
2. Know and be able to use the *Four Tools* of sharing the gospel.
3. Commit to disciple another to love Jesus . . . one person a year.



#### Developing A Prayer List

1. In the prayer section start another prayer list using the blank sheet on page 159 and title it “Evangelism.”
2. Ask the Lord to give you a burden for one person. Place this person’s name on the list and begin praying for specific opportunities to share Jesus.
3. Commit to continuing this discipline of praying for people for whom the Lord has given you a burden, and you will lead many to the Lord.



# 8 God's Will

## LESSON

The point: God has a plan for your life; by following this plan you will find joy.

### SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:14 . . . *Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Matthew 6:33 . . . *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Colossians 1:9-10 . . . *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 . . . *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Galatians 5:25 . . . *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

Hebrews 13:17 . . . *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*



# Conversation

*Owen is asking the deep questions now. Let's listen in as he and Peter discuss knowing God's will for Owen's life...*

- Owen:** Why is it important to find God's will for your life? I've been thinking about my life lately and it seems like a big deal to do what God wants me to do.
- Peter:** It *is* a big deal, Owen. God has created you for his purposes. Those purposes are his will for your life. You won't find fulfillment unless you're doing God's will because you won't be doing what God created you for.
- Owen:** I understand that part of it. The hard part is figuring out exactly what God wants me to do. Wouldn't it be easier if the Bible just listed every Christian by name, and next to each name there was a list of what that person should do? Next to my name would be what school I should attend, who I should marry, whether I should try out for the church choir. I'd know exactly what God's will was for my life. There could even be a list of people who should be my friends, a list of who I should share the gospel with...the more I think about this the more I like it.
- Peter:** Interesting idea, but there are a couple problems with your plan. We'll get to those later. What's your real concern?
- Owen:** I've been talking to a new believer named George. George is dating a girl who isn't a Christian, but George says she has good morals and he hopes to bring her to church soon. He even wants to marry her. What's God's will on that one?
- Peter:** That situation is actually addressed in the Bible – which makes knowing God's will easy. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 Paul writes that Christians shouldn't marry non-Christians. Knowing God's will when it's already described in the Bible is fairly simple. Other decisions can be more difficult.
- Owen:** Then try this one on for size: I just got offered a job in another town. I'll make a ton more money, but I've done some research and there's not a solid, Bible-teaching church anywhere nearby. What should I do? Here's where that list I mentioned earlier would come in handy.
- Peter:** I think you should read James 4:13-17. That passage teaches that God's will should be the motive for our decisions. If you take the other job simply to make more money, it probably won't be the best decision.
- Owen:** But what if I never get another offer like this one? It's got a great benefit package, too.
- Peter:** You know, I've seen a lot of new Christians suddenly get new job offers. Just when those new Christians are starting to grow, to get planted firmly in the faith, those new Christians are given a reason to leave the discipling relationship.

- Owen:** Why is that?
- Peter:** I think it's a kind of last attempt by Satan to pull a new believer away from discipleship and out of fellowship.
- Owen:** Wow...I don't want *that* to happen. But why does it always seem so hard to know what God wants for me?
- Peter:** The struggling with temptation and decision-making is part of the process of finding God's will, Owen. It lets God cleanse you of impure motives. When we want something it's way too easy to convince ourselves that what we want is God's will. Struggling keeps us humble and dependent on God. One of my favorite Bible passages is James 1:5-8. It says if we lack wisdom all we need to do is ask in faith and God will give us wisdom.
- Owen:** Wouldn't it be easier for God to fire down a bolt of lightning when I need advice? Okay, okay – just kidding. Actually, I see the importance of seeking God's will. It's like my relationship with my wife. When I bought a new car without asking what she wanted, it caused a huge problem.
- Peter:** You actually bought a new car without talking with your wife first?
- Owen:** I think it's time to get into the lesson now...

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One:

*Read: Matthew 6:33; Matthew 7:21-23; Romans 8:14; and Romans 8:28.*

1. Explain the following statement: Our activity and decisions, as Christians, should flow out of our relationship with God.
2. Based on the scripture references listed above, which statements are true about a relationship with God?
  - T/F The relationship could be characterized as a father and child relationship.
  - T/F In the relationship, God works all things for our good.
  - T/F In the relationship, miracles are always a sign of doing God's will.
3. Read Matthew 6:33 again. What does it mean to "seek first His kingdom"?

## Day Two:

*Read: Psalm 27:14; John 10:27; James 4:13-17; Galatians 6:9; Colossians 1:9-10; and James 4:7.*

1. What phrases or words describe God's guidance?
  - a. Trust
  - b. Impatience
  - c. Given all at once
  - d. Step-by-step
2. What could hinder God's will from being fulfilled in your life?
3. Why should we ask God before we make a major decision?

## Day Three:

*Read: Proverbs 13:10; Galatians 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; and Hebrews 13:17.*

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 again. Which, if any, of the following statements are true?
  - a. The Bible has a specific and direct word for all decisions.
  - b. The Bible teaches principles that are helpful in all decision-making.
  - c. Another Christian's discernment is just as important as the Bible.
  
2. In what ways would the following be helpful in finding God's will?
  - a. Other Christian leaders and friends
  
  - b. Circumstances
  
  - c. The Holy Spirit
  
3. Why is submission important in discerning God's will?

# Content: God's Will

## One: Base God's Will Upon ...

### A. Our relationship with God

1. We are His children.

Romans 8:14 . . . *Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

2. Activity and decisions should flow from our relationship with God.
3. Read "Five Relational Rules Of Finding God's Will" on this page.

### B. Faith in God

1. God desires our best.

Matthew 7:11 . . . *If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*

2. He works all things for our good.

Romans 8:28 . . . *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

### C. Love of God

1. Love is found in relationships. Since you can have a relationship with God and love Him, allow your love for Him and His ways to determine the decisions you make in life.
2. As you experience the blessings of following God and witness Him keeping His promises to you, your love for God will grow stronger, increasing your desire to do His will.

1 John 5:3 ... *This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.*

### D. Our obedience to Him

1. Obedience is more important than great works.

Matthew 7:21-23 . . . *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

## illustration

### Five Relational Rules Of Finding God's Will

1. God has a purpose for your life.
2. Finding God's purpose for your life will give you joy and peace.
3. God will lead you to find His purposes.
4. You must have faith to walk in His purpose.
5. Always confirm what you believe to be God's will.

2. Order your life
  - a. James 4:7 . . . *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
  - b. The Greek word for *submit* in James 4:7 means “to order.” When we submit to God, we order our lives according to His will and purposes. We do not do “our own thing” anymore but seek His will in our decisions.
3. Our work will be tested.

1 Corinthians 3:13 ... *His work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.*

## Two: God's Will Is Progressive

Finding God's will is progressive. It is not revealed in one instant but comes into focus as we walk with Him. God speaks to us in many ways—through scripture, parents, close friends, life experiences, trials, our talents, etc.—and all of these have to be tested. God's will comes from our relationship with Him, and as we grow and learn, His will becomes clearer. As we take steps of faith, with varying results, and learn the lessons from these steps, we gain confidence.

### A. Step-by-step

1. Received daily
  - a. Not packaged as a gift given in its entirety upon receiving salvation, but revealed gradually through life from wisdom found in the Bible, dreams, visions, encouragement from others, etc.
2. Read the “Saul” illustration on this page.

### B. More specific guidance is given when the decision is important.

1. The more important the decision, the more specific and abundant will be God's guidance.
2. Read the “Alton Tomlin” illustration on page 110.

### C. Given through calling and spiritual gifts

1. Read James 4:13-17
  - a. verse 15 ... *If it is the Lord's will*
  - b. verse 17 ... *Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

## illustration

### Saul — Acts 9:4-6 and Acts 13:2-3

Saul was converted on the road to Damascus. Many have heard his testimony: a persecutor of Christians who was traveling to Damascus to imprison believers but who changed his mind and character after being struck with blindness during Jesus' appearance. In Acts 9:6 we read that Jesus told him, “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” Later, in Damascus, Ananias prayed for his sight to be restored. Ananias explained that Paul was to carry the name of Jesus to the Gentiles. (Read Acts 9:15.)

In Acts 13:2-3, we read that Saul finally received the command to begin his missionary activities to the Gentiles. Though only a few chapters separate Saul's conversion (when he received God's will for his life in Acts 9) and his commissioning in Acts 13, (While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’), most commentators agree that there was a ten year time period in between.

2. God has a calling or purpose for every Christian, and this determines His will for your life. God also gives each Christian spiritual gifts to enable His will to be fulfilled. If you can discern His calling, then you will be better able to know His will on specific decisions and how to use your spiritual gifts.
3. A good way to understand God's calling is to use the journal pages in your Discipleship Workbook, a discussion of which begins on page 161. Christians are made by God with distinct temperaments and are given specific spiritual gifts. No two Christians are alike; God has a distinct purpose for each. As you use the journal it will help you understand God's fingerprint in your life. You will be able to observe points of obedience, times of success, things that discourage, and answered prayers over a period of time. Thus, you will be able to understand better God's working in your life.

#### D. Seeking God's will by ...

1. Asking for wisdom in faith

James 1:5-6 . . . *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

2. Asking to be filled with a knowledge of His will

Colossians 1:9-10 . . . *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.*

#### E. God's will is hindered by ...

1. Bad motives

James 4:3 . . . *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

2. Bad relationships

1 Peter 3:7 . . . *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

## illustration

### Alton Tomlin

Alton Tomlin, a relatively new Christian, was welding and working overtime, by himself, when he heard a voice. Surprised that he could hear someone call his name so clearly amidst the roar of the welder, he stopped and looked around, but he could see no one. He went back to his work and again he heard someone call his name. Again, he stopped working, looked around - - no one.

The same thing happened a third time before Alton discerned that it was the Lord speaking. When the Lord spoke a fourth time, Alton began a conversation in which the Lord told Alton to begin attending the Christian liberal arts college Pepperdine University.

Even though it was Saturday, he immediately left the shop and went to a telephone and called the school. The dean of the college answered the phone and set up an appointment to discuss admittance for that very afternoon. Arriving at the school, Alton explained his incredulous story to the dean and was somewhat surprised when the dean seemed to believe him. Tomlin asked the dean, "Do you believe what I am telling you, that the Lord actually spoke to me and told me to come to Pepperdine?"

The dean replied, "Yes, I do. Since it is Saturday, the switchboard of the college is closed down today. Not only did your call get through the switchboard, but it also arrived in my office, and I am the only one working today."

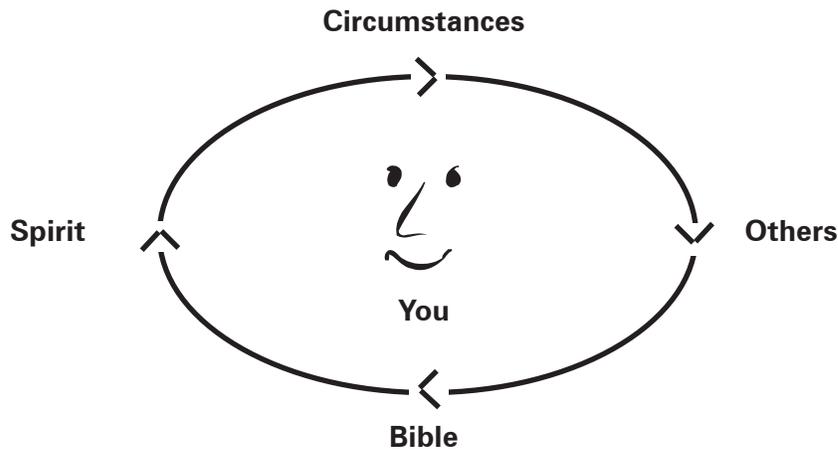
### 3. Growing weary

Galatians 6:9 . . . *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

## Three: Finding God's Will

### A. Cycle of confirmation

#### 1. Diagram



#### 2. Principles

- a. God's will is usually confirmed in all areas.
- b. Confirmations increase in intensity and the burden grows.

#### 3. Explanation

When you get an idea, you're likely to ask, "Is it God's will?" The answer requires a process of discernment. This process involves understanding biblical principles, the wisdom of other Christians, what the Spirit says to you personally, and whether or not the correct circumstances are present. Usually, as you seek God, the cycle of confirmation illustrated above will increase in intensity, affirming your faith that the idea is God's will. You will find more and more biblical passages that agree, other Christians will speak words to confirm, and the Spirit's conviction will increase. So the idea then becomes a burden—a burden so intense that you will have the faith to overcome any negative circumstances keeping you from accomplishing God's will.

### B. Areas of confirmation

#### 1. Bible

2 Timothy 3:16-17 . . . *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

- a. There are general commands given in Scripture that apply to every Christian. God's will always promotes and never negates these biblical commands. Two examples of general commands to all Christians follow:

Matthew 28:18-19 . . . *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

2 Corinthians 6:14 . . . *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*

- b. The Bible isn't specific about the details of a Christian's life. Things like jobs, marriage, and where to live must be discerned.

Galatians 5:25 . . . *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

## 2. Circumstances

- a. Confirm what God has already indicated

Mark 16:20 . . . *Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

- b. Satan can hinder.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 . . . *For we wanted to come to you — certainly I, Paul, did, again and again — but Satan stopped us.*

- c. Judging circumstances can be the most difficult aspect of discerning God's will. Just because there is an open door doesn't mean that you should enter it, and even when doors are closed, it still could be God's will that you go through them. As the Spirit convicts, the Bible instructs, and other Christians encourage, you will be given faith to be cautious about an open door or to command a closed door to be opened in the name of Jesus.

## 3. Others

- a. Wisdom is given to those who seek advice.

Proverbs 13:10 . . . *Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.*

- b. Whom should we ask for advice?

Hebrews 13:17 . . . *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

Ephesians 6:1 . . . *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

Ephesians 5:21 . . . *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

- c. Remember that you are responsible for discerning God's will for your life. God does use others to confirm and give wisdom, but you are still responsible for making the decision. Nobody except God should have control over you. God usually does not work by telling someone else what you need to do. God will speak to you and use others to confirm it.

## memorize

### Romans 8:14

*Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

#### 4. Holy Spirit gives peace.

- a. Conscience: *Is this right or wrong?*

Romans 9:1 . . . *I speak the truth in Christ — I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.*

- b. Intuition: *Has this been given by the Spirit speaking to me, by insight into scripture, by a sense of my calling or other leading of God?*

Ephesians 1:17 . . . *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

- c. Presence: *Do I sense God in this? Do I have God's peace?*

Romans 8:16 . . . *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

## Four: Other Principles

### A. Grace experiences

1. Example: Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19)
2. Description
  - a. God deals individually with Christians; what happens to one may not happen to another.
  - b. Grace experiences happen infrequently and are entirely at God's initiative. You may be given a vision like Paul on the road to Damascus or see an angel. However, these are grace experiences of God working uniquely and are not something that can be conjured at your convenience.

### B. Proper timing

1. Example: Moses
  - a. Didn't wait for God (Exodus 2:11-15).
  - b. Lived to be 120 years old: First 40 years thought he was somebody, second 40 years thought he was nobody, third 40 years God made him somebody

2. Discern God's timing
  - a. Calling and fulfillment can be years apart.
  - b. Those who wait will be blessed (Psalm 27:14).
- C. Spiritual gifts often determine your ministry.
  1. God gives all Christians spiritual gifts.
    - a. Employ in serving one another (1 Peter 4:10)
  2. God's will is to utilize spiritual gifts.
    - a. Use spiritual gifts according to the grace given to you (Romans 12:3-8).
- D. Laying out a fleece
  1. Example: Gideon (Judges 6:36-38)
  2. Asking God for confirmation through a distinct set of circumstances
  3. Should be confirmed with elders and discipler
- E. Step of faith

Romans 1:17 . . . *For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

1. Example: Abraham (James 2:21-23)
2. Read the "Battleship" illustration on this page.
3. Always try to discern motives before taking a step of faith.

## Five: Journaling

### A. Fingerprints

If you read biographies of famous saints, you'll notice a consistent pattern of journaling. Saints throughout the history of the church have journaled. Why? Because it helps them understand God's will for their lives. God speaks and works in our lives individually; journaling helps us to listen to the unique ways God speaks to us and leads us.

1. It is important to remember that God works with each Christian in an individual manner. You have completely unique fingerprints on your hands and also an individual spiritual fingerprint as well – God's will for you, how He relates to you, and your individual gifts and calling. Journaling will enable you to see the specific "fingerprints" of God's working in your life, helping you to discern His will.

## *illustration*

### **Battleship**

A battleship is one of the largest naval vessels afloat, approximately the length of a football field. Needless to say, it takes a lot of time and energy to steer the ship. But any captain will tell you that it is easier to navigate a moving ship, even one going in the wrong direction, than one sitting dead in the water.

2. Read “On Journaling . . . From An Older Christian” on this page.

B. Four areas in which to journal . . .

1. **Point of Obedience:** When you hear God tell you to do something, record it by marking this column. Remember God can speak through the Bible, a sermon, or an experience while you are driving your car. When you hear God speak, make sure to record it immediately.
2. **Insight:** While reading the Bible, have you ever had an insight into that scripture’s meaning? Record it by marking this column. Whenever you have a spiritual insight, record it here.
3. **Praise And Thanks:** When you are thankful for something, use this column. When there is an answered prayer from one of your prayer lists, record the answer by marking this column. At the end of the year you can easily see how many prayers God answered!
4. **Significant Event:** Baptisms, conferences, births, deaths, even the day your child began college—mark this column to record significant events.

C. Using the journal section of the Discipleship Workbook

1. Your discipler will explain how he or she uses the journal.
2. Read the introduction in the journal section starting on page 161.

## Six: Review . . . Discerning God’s Will

1. Stay faithful with prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and witnessing.
2. Develop your relationship with God and allow activity and decisions to flow from that relationship.
3. Apply the principles of the Cycle of Confirmation found on page 111.
4. Develop an understanding of calling by faithfully recording notations in the journal section of the Discipling Notebook.

### *illustration*

#### **On Journaling . . . From An Older Christian**

It is important to learn how specifically and uniquely God works in your life. God usually opens doors for me without any effort on my part. If I have to strive to make something happen, then it usually isn’t God’s will. But if after a time of prayer God opens a door, then I know it is God. I am now involved in a ministry of discipleship in the Philippines. I did nothing to make this happen. A woman in the church I pastor introduced me to a Filipino pastor, and the ministry took off from there. How do I know to look for this pattern of God working in my life? From years of journaling, I see a persistent pattern of God opening doors at the proper times.



## Discovering Your Fingerprints

1. Who you are in Christ:
  - a. Your sins have been forgiven.
  - b. You have gifts and a calling.
  - c. God is able to accomplish His will through you.
  
2. To accomplish God's will you need to ...
  - a. Practice the four foundational disciplines of the Christian faith – prayer, Bible study, discipleship, and fellowship.
  - b. Practice journaling to discern “God’s fingerprints” in your spirit.
  - c. Seek first the Kingdom of God!

# The Soon Return of Jesus

The point: Live with an expectation of the soon return of Jesus.

## SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 1:3 . . . *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 13:13 . . . *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23 . . . *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:13 . . . *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

1 John 3:2-3 . . . *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

1 Peter 4:12-13 . . . *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Revelation 22:20 . . . *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*



# Conversation

*Owen and Peter are discussing prophecy today. Let's listen in...*

**Peter:** You look excited today. What's going on?

**Owen:** You might not believe this but I know the date Jesus will return.

**Peter:** Really. And how exactly did you find that out?

**Owen:** Last night I couldn't sleep so I got out of bed and turned on the TV. There was this Bible teacher on and he told us the exact date of Jesus' return. I'm thinking it was God who was not letting me sleep so I could get that message. Do you want the date? I wrote it down.

**Peter:** Owen, stop and think for a minute. If this guy *really* knew the date and was a credible teacher, why would he be announcing it on late-night TV? He'd be the best selling author of all *time*. I can tell you without any doubt that the guy doesn't know the date of Christ's return.

**Owen:** How can you say such a thing? I haven't even told you the date yet!

**Peter:** I don't need the date. All I need is the Bible and the Bible quotes Jesus in Mark 13:32: "*No one knows about that day or hour; not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*" If God didn't reveal the date to Jesus, he certainly didn't give it to that Bible teacher you saw on late-night TV.

**Owen:** Well, if we can't know that, can we know anything? I've been reading some books lately on the return of Jesus and I've got to tell you: it's confusing. Maybe that's why I was excited about the late-night Bible teacher – it seemed like he had it nailed down.

**Peter:** Owen, here's the thing: God wants us to live as if Jesus could return at any time. He wants us to be prepared. If we knew the date, I doubt if we'd stay alert and prepared.

**Owen:** Okay – but why is teaching in the Bible about the end times so confusing? Why couldn't Paul stick some handouts in the book of Romans and outline it all?

**Peter:** Prophecy isn't hard to understand if you start with the right Biblical thoughts and realize why there's teaching about the end times.

**Owen:** What thoughts? What reason?

**Peter:** The Bible teaches about the end times for one reason: to get believers to live as if Jesus could return at any moment. If we really did that we wouldn't get too comfortable in this world. We'd have an urgency about evangelism. We'd care

about discipleship. We'd see our suffering in the context of our future glory. And maybe we'd show a little more love to one another.

**Owen:** So that's the point of Bible teaching about the end times? For us to love one another better?

**Peter:** Pretty much. All of us who call Jesus as Lord and Savior are on the same team. So let's work together and keep our priorities in the proper order. Our job is to take the gospel to the entire world. It's going to be a lot easier if we're working together.

**Owen:** I was reading Matthew 24 this week. You know, about two men in a field and one is taken? I don't want to be the one left behind.

**Peter.** Then love and follow Jesus, Owen. That's all it takes.

# Consideration

*Each one of these studies has Day One, Day Two, and Day Three sections.  
It is best to study these on different days during the week.*

## Day One

*Read: 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; and 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9.*

1. Match the words in the left column with the words in the right column.

Faith	Trust
Love	Future
Hope	Serving

2. Identify which of the following statements are true:

T/F Satan can duplicate the love described in the above verses.

T/F Unbelievers will be convicted by the integrity of Christianity if they see Christians living in faith, hope, and love.

T/F The way we live our lives should be conditioned by what we hope for in the future.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:13 again. Why is love greater than faith and hope?

## Day Two

*Read: 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:12; 2 Peter 3:13; and Revelation 21:3-4.*

1. Circle the things that the future holds for Christians.

New Heaven	Eternal death
New body	Judgment
Understanding	Fear

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:12 and Revelation 21:3-4 again. What do these passages seem to indicate for those who are hurting, have suffered, or have questions as to why things happened on earth?

### Day Three

*Read: Matthew 6:21; Matthew 6:33; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Peter 4:12-13; and 1 John 3:2-3.*

1. Why is it important to live as if Jesus could return at any time?
2. Will Christians suffer? Why is it important to stay faithful during trials?
3. What is the best investment for the future that a person can make?

# Content: The Soon Return Of Jesus

## One: Love, Faith, And Hope

A. These three words are interconnected in scripture.

Galatians 5:5-6 . . . *But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. . . . The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

1. Faith, hope, and love are three words often used together in scripture.
2. They are also used together in these passages: 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9; Colossians 1:3-5; and 1 Corinthians 13:13.

B. Relational words

1. Love, faith, and hope summarize all that the Bible says about how to have a fulfilling relationship with God.
2. Definitions
  - a. Hope means expectation. Because we expect Jesus to return, we are holy today.
  - b. Faith means trust. Because we trust Jesus, we live beyond our ability in faith. We receive salvation in faith, serve in faith, and endure in faith. We know that Jesus will give us strength, and we trust He will return for us soon.
  - c. Love is our motivation. Love means to do what is best for God and others. Life isn't about us; it is about Jesus and His Kingdom. Love is the only enduring motivation.

3. Implications of faith, hope, and love in our lives. Read the "Love, Faith And Hope In Jesus" illustration on this page.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 . . . *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- a. Living with hope means endurance in difficulty, commitment in trials, and even sacrifice in persecution.
- b. Living with faith means discerning God's will and stepping outside your natural ability to accomplish His purposes! Faith means constant growth and change as we become like Jesus and walk in His will.

## illustration

### Love, Faith And Hope In Jesus

You cannot love a rock, have faith in a tree, or hope in a flower. These are inanimate. The words *love, faith, and hope* require a living being for an object. You can love another, have faith in another, and have hope for a future with another. Unfortunately, since people are sinful and fail to live up to our expectations, our love, faith, and hope in others is often repaid with betrayal, which creates disillusionment. There is only one person worthy of our love, faith, and hope . . . Jesus Christ.

- c. When you love God, the things of the world lose their appeal – the temporariness of the world can't compare with a relationship with the living God.
4. Faith, hope, and love are miraculous.
    - a. Satan can't duplicate love, faith, or hope. Instead of faith, Satan gives fear; instead of hope, he brings despair; and instead of love, he inspires hatred.
    - b. Faith, hope, and love are a tremendous witness to the world. Satan can't duplicate faith, hope, or love. They are fruit of God's Spirit, and when they are displayed by Christians, non-Christians are convicted of the reality of Jesus.
    - c. John 13:35 . . . *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

C. Live today looking toward Eternity.

Colossians 1:3-5 . . . *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints — the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel.*

1. Now (the way we live today) should be conditioned by *then* (our future relationship with Jesus).
2. Faith, hope, and love make no sense apart from an eternal perspective. Those who don't know Jesus have no basis for faith, hope, and love. Consider the despair of living without faith, hope, and love. The world needs Jesus!
3. Read the "Soldier" illustration on this page.

## Two: What Will Happen In Our Future?

### A. Marriage feast of the Lamb

#### 1. Scripture

Ephesians 5:25-27 . . . *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*

Revelation 19:9 . . . *Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."*

## illustration

### Soldier

A soldier reads a letter from his wife. The letter isn't the same as seeing and talking to her personally, but it's the only thing available. The soldier loves his wife and, because of this love, refrains from being unfaithful when he gets leave in a foreign city.

Christians read the Bible, pray, attend fellowship, and witness to develop a relationship with Jesus. We are faithful because, even though we don't see Him now, we hope for a future together.

## B. New heaven and a new earth

1. 2 Peter 3:13 . . . *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*
2. This world is not our home. A saint once said that she grabs nothing too tightly because it hurts too much when God takes it away. The saint didn't mean that God is an ogre intent on taking our toys away from us; she did mean that we shouldn't grasp the things of the world too tightly because we are not of this world. God, in love, will take those things away from us that keep us from experiencing His full love.

## C. New body

1. 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 . . . *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*
2. It is difficult to imagine this new body. It will be like the one Christ had after the resurrection. Remember, Jesus could eat, but He could also appear in a room without using the door.

## D. Reign with Him

### 1. Scripture

2 Timothy 2:12 . . . *If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.*

Revelation 20:6 . . . *Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

2. We won't be sitting on clouds in heaven playing harps. We will actually reign with Jesus. What does this mean? No one knows exactly. It will be revealed on Judgment Day. But our lives – all trials and blessings – must be viewed from the perspective that God is preparing us to reign with Jesus for eternity.

## E. Judgment

### 1. Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:10 . . . *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

1 Corinthians 13:12 . . . *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Revelation 21:3-4 . . . *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

2. There are different opinions on how Christians will be judged by God. Some believe that God will not remember our sins and so we will stand blameless before God. Others believe that even Christians will be judged for their deeds and will receive their rewards accordingly.
3. Let’s examine God’s judgment from a relational perspective. In Heaven we will know and be known. *In Heaven we will be fully known by God and still fully loved.* How many of us have longed for a relationship in which we could be totally honest and yet still loved? This will be our relationship with Jesus.

F. No questions—we will understand all things!

1. Scripture

1 Corinthians 13:12 . . . *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Romans 2:16 . . . *This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.*

Revelation 22:20 . . . *He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

2. Consider a tapestry: one side is a tangled mess of thread, and on the other side those same threads are woven into a beautiful picture. From the perspective of life, we see the underside of the tapestry with the threads of life a seemingly tangled mess. From eternity we look down and see everything from God’s perspective and know that He has indeed taken the tangled threads and woven them into a beautiful picture.
3. The early Christians had a greeting. It was *maranatha*, which meant, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus.” As we see the evil in the world, the pain and suffering, and many who are rebellious against Jesus, let us cry, *“Maranatha, come quickly, Lord Jesus.”*

### Three: How Should We Live?

A. We should be holy because we love God!

1. Scripture

1 John 3:2-3 . . . *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

*memorize*

**Revelation 22:20**

*He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Romans 13:11-14 . . . *And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

2. A bride keeps herself pure for the bridegroom. The motivation is love. There is no greater motivation than love. The reason we want to be holy is because we love Jesus.

B. We should be good stewards.

1. Scripture

Matthew 6:21 . . . *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 6:33 . . . *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

2. Read the “Investment” illustration on this page.

C. We should be faithful through trials and suffering.

1. Painful trial in the first century

1 Peter 4:12-13 . . . *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

2. Stay faithful

2 Timothy 4:7-8 . . . *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

3. Read the “End Of The Book” illustration in on page 127.

D. With urgency, we should evangelize and disciple.

1. 2 Peter 3:8-13 . . . *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.*

## illustration

### Investment

Peter Lowe writes the following ...

I often ask business people, “If I could show you how to be a millionaire in 30 days, would you like it?” They reply, “Of course!”

Then I add, “Ok, you’ll be a millionaire in 30 days, but for only one day and then you’ll be bankrupt for the rest of your life. Now do you like it?”

That’s the way it is for people without eternal life. So what if you have lots of money and success in this life? What is 50 or even 100 years in the time line of eternity? You can’t consider yourself a success if you don’t have eternal life. True success necessitates having an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ.

*The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

2. Read the “Burning House” illustration on this page.

#### **Four: Review . . . Jesus Is Coming Soon**

1. Ask God to help you grow in faith, hope, and love.
2. Live with expectancy of the soon return of Jesus.
3. Commit to being a good steward of your time, talent, and resources.
4. Understand the urgent need to share the gospel.
5. Be holy because He is holy.

*specificity . . .*

#### **Hope In All Things**

A pastor writes . . .

“As a pastor for 32 years, I have been with many people during the death of a loved one. I would like to share two stories:

A young college girl was killed in a car wreck on the way to the church I pastor. Her parents weren’t believers and I was in the hospital room when they came to see the body of their daughter. They cried in anguish and the father said to the mother, ‘We will never see our daughter again.’

I was also in the room of a young couple who had recently given birth to a baby who died shortly after birth. The mother held the baby tightly while the father prayed, ‘God, we entrust our baby to you where we will be reunited in eternity.’

Both couples were filled with grief and both did not know why the tragedy they confronted had happened. One couple had hope and the other had no hope. You will confront tragedy and trial in your life, and you will not know exactly why – but can you imagine confronting the death of a loved one (or any other tragedy) without hope?

Our hope will not disappoint us! (Read Romans 5:1-5.)”

*illustration*

#### **End Of The Book**

Have you ever become so engrossed in a novel, so enthralled with the main character, that in a moment of tension you just have to know if the hero lives?

You turn to the last page of the book, and if you see the person’s name, you feel relief and return to your original place in the book.

Christians can read the last page of human history. What we see is that Jesus is alive and all those who have faith in Him will live with Him for eternity.

We can live in the present, not fully knowing all the details of the plots of our lives, but we have confidence that all will end well because we have read the end of the book.

#### **Burning House**

If you walk along a street and peer through a window, you might see a family eating dinner together. You would probably not want to knock on the door because disturbing the family at this time just wouldn’t seem right. Many Christians don’t witness because they just don’t want to disturb people.

However, if you continued to look at the house and then noticed a fire on the opposite end of the house, you would immediately disturb the family because their lives are in danger.

When we believe and hope for the soon return of Jesus, we don’t feel as bad about disturbing our friends, co-workers, and family members because their eternal lives are in danger.



# 10

LESSON

## First Steps Review

### SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 29:18 . . . *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (KJV)*

John 15:5-8 . . . *I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

Matthew 9:37-38 . . . *Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

1 Corinthians 11:1 . . . *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

Ephesians 5:18 . . . *Be filled with the Spirit.*



# Conversation

*This is the last discipling session between Owen and Peter. They're discussing what happens next. Let's listen in...*

**Peter:** This is our last session, Owen. We've met 12 times...once for an introduction and then ten lessons.

**Owen:** That's only eleven times.

**Peter:** True, but we met twice on the lesson about God's will.

**Owen:** I think we should have met three weeks on that one. I'll have to be caring about God's will for the rest of my life. Which brings me to what I've been thinking about since our last meeting: what happens next?

**Peter:** Next? You continue to grow as a Christian. I'm confident that some day you'll be a spiritual giant. The kind of Christian who, when you're in Heaven, will have the Apostle Paul stopping by to say hello.

**Owen:** Thanks for the encouragement—and the humor. But what I really meant to ask was: what happens next in our relationship.

**Peter:** We continue as friends. We *are* co-workers for the Lord.

**Owen:** Okay, let me be clear, here. I want to continue our discipling relationship. It's been really helpful, you know? Since we've finished the discipling notebook maybe we could pick out another good book and go through that one.

**Peter:** It's best if initial discipleship ends after ten weeks. A discipling relationship that lasts longer than that can become too much of a commitment. Now it's time for you to keep going to that small group, and to be faithful in attending church.

**Owen:** Which means what—I'm a *burden* to you or something?

**Peter:** Not at all. But you'll remember that when we first met I said our discipling relationship wasn't just about us, but also about you discipling someone else?

**Owen:** Now that you mention it, yeah, I do sorta remember that.

**Peter:** When you were so new to the faith, it was great for you to have me here to cover this material and help you as you started your Christian walk. I've prayed for you and disciplined you, but now it's time for you to get out on your own. It's time for you not to depend on me so closely. It's time for you to disciple someone else. As you teach another person how to walk with Jesus it will cement the lessons even deeper in your own heart.

**Owen:** And you actually think I'm actually ready to disciple another person?

- Peter:** Sure. Your notebook provides the content and I know you've got the time—you'll just use the time we've been meeting to meet with someone else. That's one reason we need to wrap up our appointments; so you have time to disciple someone else.
- Owen:** One final thing, though. I want to thank you for discipling me. I don't know if I'd have made it through the last few months without your help.
- Peter:** Thanks. It's been fulfilling to see God work through me in your life. And you'll be filled with joy when you see God working through you to impact the life of someone else. I'm grateful God brought us together.
- Owen:** So...be honest, here. Has it been harder to disciple me than most people?
- Peter:** Hmmmm...let's just say that I've been *particularly* fulfilled to see the progress in you. And when it comes to questions...
- Owen:** Yeah, I've had a few of those.
- Peter:** *More* than a few. Anyway, we've had plenty of laughs, cried a bit, and here we are: we made it. *And* we're friends. Owen, I look forward to God using both of us to disciple others for years to come. In Heaven I expect we'll see a huge harvest that grew out of seeds planted here in us these past months.
- Owen:** Amen, me too!

# review

You have fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith. You have completed the nine discipleship lessons.

You have endured with Owen as he sought answers to his questions and learned from the study guides and lessons with your discipler.

Every good course must end with a test, or to put it in more user friendly terms — a review. Answer the questions below using your notebook.

## Day One

*Read: Mark 12:28-31 and Matthew 28:18-20.*

1. (Fill in the blanks) The purpose of your discipleship is so that you can \_\_\_\_\_ another to love \_\_\_\_\_.

### *From Lesson One On Assurance*

1. Christian faith is \_\_\_\_\_. The object of a Christian's faith is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Fill in the blanks

G \_\_\_\_\_

R \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

3. God's plan for doubt

a.

b.

c.

4. What should you do during a moment of discouragement?

### *From Lesson Two On Freedom*

1. Sin means \_\_\_\_\_. Death means \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Where must temptation be fought?

3. As disciples of Jesus we become like Him when we \_\_\_\_\_ Him more than anything else.
4. How should you respond to a moment of temptation?

***From Lesson Three On Priorities***

1. What is the Kingdom of God?
2. Jesus is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Why are the following passages important?
  - a. Matthew 28:18-20
  - b. Mark 12:28-31
4. What are the four basic disciplines of the Christian faith?
5. What verse should be used as a “life purpose” verse to examine all of your major life decisions?

**Day Two**

***From Lesson Four On The Bible***

1. What does *inspired* mean in reference to the Bible?
2. What is a primary life issue?
3. Why is it important to select and memorize life verses?

*From Lesson Five On Prayer*

1. What are the elements of prayer?

A \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why is it important to ask God?

3. Define each area of the General to Specific method of prayer.

General:

Specific:

*From Lesson Six On Fellowship*

1. What is the church?

2. Describe fellowship.

3. What are the three fellowship opportunities that are presented in the Bible and in the lesson on fellowship?

4. Why do you need to overcome bitterness? Why is it important to be a peacemaker?

## Day Three

### *From Lesson Seven On Evangelism*

1. What does the word *gospel* mean?
2. Why can't man save himself?
3. You learned to pray \_\_\_\_\_ for individuals to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
4. What are the questions that you should ask to learn about a person's relationship with Jesus?

### *From Lesson Eight On God's Will*

1. God's will is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What are the four parts of the *Cycle of Confirmation*?
3. Why should you use the journal section of your Discipleship Workbook?

### *From Lesson Nine On The Soon Return Of Jesus*

1. We should live with \_\_\_\_\_ of the soon return of Jesus.
2. What three words sum up the way that we should live until Jesus returns?
3. In difficult circumstances, how can hope still give peace?

# Content: First Steps

## One: The Vision of First Steps

Proverbs 29:18 . . . *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (KJV)*

A. The vision of First Steps is found in two passages:

1. Mark 12: 28-31 ... The Great Commandment

*One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

2. Matthew 28:18-20 ... The Great Commission

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

B. Why do we share this vision?

1. The church should grow.

a. Colossians 1:6

*All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.*

b. John 15:5-8

*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

c. Matthew 21:43

*Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.*

d. The Kingdom of God is designed to grow. If the church doesn't grow, it often becomes stagnant.

2. Workers are needed for the harvest.

a. Matthew 9:37-38

*Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

b. The challenge of discipleship isn't a lack of harvest—it's plentiful. The challenge is a lack of trained workers..

3. Joy is found in discipling another.

a. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

*For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.*

b. To be complete as a Christian and to obtain the full joy that God intends, a believer must disciple and bear fruit.

C. What are the principles of discipleship?

1. There are four basic disciplines of the Christian faith. You will never stumble if you maintain these disciplines.

a. Prayer

b. Bible study/memorization

c. Fellowship

d. Evangelism/discipleship

2. There are Four Fundamental Temptations that all new Christians experience, and learning biblical principles defends against these temptations. Almost all temptation for a new Christian comes from experiencing doubt, not knowing God's will, lacking priorities, and not knowing how to resist temptation. The four principles of the Christian faith needed to overcome the initial temptation that a new Christian confronts are assurance, knowing God's will, priorities, and freedom from temptation.

3. You can't disciple someone to do something that you aren't doing yourself.

a. 1 Corinthians 11:1

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

b. Be an example by keeping your prayer lists, praying for the lost, and journaling.

4. Three points of fellowship
  - a. Large group ... Sunday worship
  - b. Small group
  - c. One-on-one discipleship
5. Since Christianity is a relationship with God, you must learn to understand how God works in your life to lead you into His will.
  - a. Understand God's fingerprints.
  - b. Keep a journal.

## Two: What Do You Do Next?

1. You need three types of relationships to grow as a Christian: one-on-one, small group, and large group. As a part of the discipleship process, you make a commitment to join a small group (if available) and also a local church.
  - a. After finishing the one-on-one discipleship meetings, transition into a small group to complement your large group involvement.
2. Commit to discipling another person, one per year, for the rest of your life.
  - a. Your church may have further qualification processes to help you get ready to disciple. Talk to your discipler.
  - b. Beginning to disciple is often the best way to prepare yourself to disciple.
  - c. Discipleship is as much relationship as it is teaching—the teaching will become exciting and relevant because of the relationship.
3. *There is nothing more exciting than seeing God work through you to impact spiritually the life of another person.*
  - a. Joy is found in working with others. (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)
  - b. Through your obedience, God will open more doors for you to serve Him. (Matthew 13:12)
  - c. Your faith will grow as you see God work through you. (2 Thessalonians 1:3)

## Three: Your Promises And Your Testimony

- A. God has a plan for you!
  1. Ephesians 2:10 ... *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

2. As you discover God's plan, you will take steps of faith to accomplish God's will. When you see victory as a result of your obedience and God's faithfulness, this testimony will help your faith increase.

#### B. God's promises

1. 2 Peter 1:4 ... *For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (NASV)*
2. The Bible has many promises that are relevant to all Christians: promises about the return of Jesus, about receiving wisdom for decisions, for forgiveness, etc.
3. God will also give you personal promises. These will be discovered relationally through sensing God's will, your spiritual gifts and calling, and many other factors.
  - a. Often God's promises are revealed through time. Journaling to discover your promises is important.

#### C. Testimony

1. Revelation 12:11 ... *And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. (NASV)*
2. Understanding God's will and experiencing God keeping promises to help you fulfill His will builds testimony. This testimony gives you the confidence to increase your steps of faith.
3. A Christian should always be growing in obedience, promise, and faith.

### Four: Love

#### A. Love is the most enduring motivation.

1. Fear is the initial motive for becoming a Christian, but love enables a Christian to endure for years in the faith.

#### B. Loving God more than sin is the key to freedom.

1. It is possible to love God so much that temptation with sin diminishes.
2. You don't want to sin because you love God more than the sin.

#### C. Love grows through blessings and trials.

1. All experiences in life enable a Christian to grow closer to God. Therefore, there is nothing to fear. If Jesus is most important, blessings and trials will bring you closer to Him.
2. Your most difficult times will enable you to experience the deep love of God.

# specificity ...

## Break Through Into A Relationship With Jesus

- In Ephesians 3:18, Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be rooted and grounded in love and that they would know the length, breadth, height and depth of his love.
- Pray with your discipler that you will break through the disciplines and priorities of the Christian faith into a loving relationship with God. Pray this prayer ...

*Lord, help me to desire your Kingdom and your character more than anything else in the world. Create within me a desire for prayer and for the Bible, because it enhances my relationship with you. **Lord help me break through into a loving relationship with you.***

Tradition pictures the apostle John during his latter years living in Ephesus.

With his age he couldn't walk and literally had to be carried about by some of the young men in the church. John always told them, "Love one another." Again and again, he would tell this to the young men and to others. Considering all of the life experiences of John—his time with Jesus, his writings, his life as an apostle—one of the men finally asked the apostle John, "Why do you keep telling us to love one another?" John answered, "Because if you truly love, that is enough."

Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love others as yourself." If you love, that is enough. The hope is that this Discipleship Workbook, and the one-on-one discipling relationship that you have experienced have taught you just that!

# Commitment To ...

- Maintain the four basic disciplines
- Journal to understand God's will and ways
- Disciple another to love Jesus

## Remember ...

### Assurance ... Lesson One

2 Corinthians 5:7 . . . *We live by faith, not by sight.*

### Freedom ... Lesson Two

Romans 13:14 . . . *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

### Priorities ... Lesson Three

Matthew 6:33 . . . *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

### The Bible ... Lesson Four

James 1:21 . . . *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

### Prayer ... Lesson Five

Matthew 7:7 . . . *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

### Fellowship ... Lesson Six

Hebrews 10:25 . . . *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

### Evangelism ... Lesson Seven

1 Corinthians 3:6 . . . *I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.*

### God's Will ... Lesson Eight

Romans 8:14 . . . *Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

### The Soon Return Of Jesus ... Lesson Nine

Revelation 22:20 . . . *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Signed: Disciple \_\_\_\_\_ Discipler \_\_\_\_\_  
Print: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please give to your pastor or person supervising discipleship at your church.)*

Please e-mail to us any comments, questions, or testimonies.

For more information, contact [www.disciplinganother.com](http://www.disciplinganother.com).



# *Bible introduction*

## **A Note From First Steps**

Christians must develop an appetite for scripture.

New believers may find it difficult to have the necessary discipline to read the Bible regularly. It will get much easier when the power of scripture is experienced.

The Word of God must be used as the sword of the Spirit. Ephesians 6:17 describes the sword of the Spirit and defines the sword as the Word of God. To withstand the attacks and temptations, a Christian must have a sharpened sword. When Jesus was tempted after his forty-day fast in the wilderness, He resisted Satan by quoting scripture. In Matthew 4:3-4, when Jesus was tempted to change stones into bread, Jesus said, “Man does not live on bread alone.”

This section of the Discipleship Workbook will help you to develop an appetite for the Bible and to wield it effectively in overcoming temptations. Studying and memorizing scripture requires discipline – a discipline that becomes easier as you experience the Bible’s life-changing power.

This section of the Discipleship Workbook will help you to develop an appetite for the Bible and to wield it effectively in overcoming temptations.

## Life Issues And Life Verses

The words of scripture are the most important weapon for overcoming temptations. But the Word has to be readily available, like a sword in its sheath by your side, ready at a moment's notice.

A new Christian will stumble over the same life issue (sin) over and over again. There will be other life issues revealed as the Christian matures, but it is important to discern the primary life issue immediately after conversion.

Soon after becoming a Christian, a young man memorized Romans 13:14, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh according to its lust." (NASV) Later in the day, this young man went to a local shopping area. It was hot, and most of the young women weren't wearing that much. One attractive young woman walked past and the young man's mind began to think thoughts not particularly Christian. Suddenly, Romans 13:14 appeared in his mind, "... making no provision for the flesh according to its lust."

Temptation was met and overcome because of a single verse committed to memory.

### Primary Life Issue

I John 2:16

*For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.*

**Name the sinful attitude or action that you have the most difficulty with in each area below . . .**

**Cravings of sinful man:** lustful thoughts, adultery, promiscuity, one night stands, overeating, relaxation, pornography, sexual addiction, addiction to tobacco, alcohol addiction, or drug abuse.

*List one:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Lust of the eyes:** materialism, anxiety, depression, financial problems, overspending, idolatry, envy, jealousy, poverty, selfishness, greed, bankruptcy, failure to keep commitments, procrastination, or laziness.

*List one:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Pride of life:** desire for fame, anger, abuse, control, gossip, sarcasm, discouragement, bitterness, selfish ambition, fits of rage, hatred, racism, power struggles, depression, deception, fearfulness, insecurity, low self-esteem, intellectual bondage, unbelief, doubt, spiritual blindness, skepticism, or seeking approval of others.

*List one:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Life Issue:** Of the three issues listed above, which one is the most significant in your life? Ask the following questions:

- What temptation just won't go away?
- What causes me to stumble more than anything else?
- What causes the most feelings of guilt and condemnation?

*List the most important Life Issue:* \_\_\_\_\_.  
This is your primary Life Issue.

## Life Verses

In this section of the notebook you will find a list of ten verses for each area of major temptation. Mark three to five verses from the major areas (cravings of sinful man, lust of the eye, and pride of life) that correspond to your primary Life Issue. If you don't find verses that are helpful and relevant to you, your discipler will help you find others from the Bible.

Write the verses below:

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## Memorize The Life Verses

On the page provided, write out the references and verses entirely. Memorize the verses, and after you have memorized them, repeat them every day.

You are only listing verses for your primary Life Issue at this time. As you mature in Christ, other Life Issues will be revealed to you by the Holy Spirit; after you discover new Life Issues, list the primary Life Issue and find verses that relate. As you live your life in Christ, you will discover three to four Life Issues, and the memorized verses (15 to 20) will be your life verses—verses that should be repeated every day!

**The words of scripture are the most important weapon for overcoming temptations. But the Word has to be readily available, like a sword in its sheath by your side, ready at a moment's notice.**

A new Christian will stumble over the same life issue (sin) over and over again. There will be other life issues revealed as the Christian matures, but it is important to discern the primary life issue immediately after conversion.

# Verses

## Cravings

- ( ) Psalm 19:14 ... *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*
- ( ) Matthew 5:8 ... *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
- ( ) Romans 8:1... *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- ( ) Romans 12:1... *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*
- ( ) Romans 13:14 ... *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*
- ( ) 1 Corinthians 10:13 ... *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*
- ( ) Galatians 5:1 ... *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*
- ( ) James 1:21 ... *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*
- ( ) 1 Peter 1:13-16 ... *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*
- ( ) 1 John 1:9 ... *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

## Lust of the eyes

- ( ) Deuteronomy 23:21 ... *If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin.*
- ( ) Nehemiah 8:10 ... *Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*
- ( ) Psalm 91:11 ... *For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*
- ( ) Colossians 3:15 ... *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*
- ( ) Matthew 6:34 ... *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

- ( ) 1 Peter 5:6-7 ... *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*
- ( ) 1 John 2:15 ... *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
- ( ) 1 Timothy 6:6-7 ... *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.*
- ( ) 2 Timothy 1:7 ... *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*
- ( ) Romans 1:17 ... *For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

**As you mature in Christ, other Life Issues will be revealed to you by the Holy Spirit; after you discover new Life Issues, list the primary Life Issue and find verses that relate.**

## **Pride**

- ( ) Psalm 63:1 ... *O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*
- ( ) Jeremiah 9:4-5 ... *Beware of your friends; do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer. Friend deceives friend, and no one speaks the truth. They have taught their tongues to lie; they weary themselves with sinning.*
- ( ) Matthew 7:15-16 ... *Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?*
- ( ) Romans 5:5 ... *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*
- ( ) Romans 12:19 ... *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*
- ( ) Ephesians 2:10 ... *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
- ( ) James 1:2-3 ... *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*
- ( ) James 3:14 ... *But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.*
- ( ) James 4:6 ... *But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*
- ( ) 1 Peter 4:7-9 ... *The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.*
- ( ) 1 John 3:16 ... *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*







# Prayer introduction

## A Note From First Steps

*Think specific.* This section of the Discipleship Workbook helps to develop active and successful prayer as a discipline of the Christian faith. Receiving answers to prayers makes prayer exciting and successful. The key to answered prayer is learning to pray specifically.

Consider the difference between general prayers and specific prayers. General prayers are wide and sweeping requests like, “Bless me, Lord” or “Help me.” Even if God answers these prayers, we might not notice that He has. If you don’t ask the Lord about specific needs to help you in specific ways—how can you tell if He has or has not answered your request?

**Receiving answers to prayers makes prayer exciting and successful.**

**Most Christians never experience the joy of answered prayer because they don't learn to start with a general prayer burden and then let wisdom and the Holy Spirit add the specifics of God's will.**

Specific prayers are requests for something particular. Instead of “Bless me Lord,” you might pray, “God, give me a job.” Once a job is given to you, you can then testify to this instance where God answered your specific request. Instead of “Help me,” you could ask God “to give me strength to overcome smoking”—again this is an easily verifiable prayer.

How do you know what to pray for specifically? Read the following two passages:

James 1:5 . . . *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

Romans 8:14 . . . *Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

## Praying From General To Specific Requests

Learning to pray specifically *usually begins with a general burden* that gets more specific as wisdom (James 1:5) and the Spirit's leading (Romans 8:14) are added. Let's go back to the general request mentioned previously—“Bless me, Lord.” Though not specific, your prayer is something God wants to answer. But how?

Perhaps you get up one morning and you have a sense of unease that something isn't right. It's not an unconfessed sin and you are perfectly healthy, but there is disquiet in your spirit. “Bless me, Lord; give me wisdom to know what's wrong,” you pray (James 1:5). That's a general prayer request—something that has you convicted or concerned. That evening at church, after listening to a missionary, the Spirit speaks to your heart (Romans 8:14) that you are to become a missionary. Now you have something specific to pray about.

“Lord, show me where to get training.” “God, help me to get out of debt so I can obey this calling.” “Oh Lord, help my spouse to want to go as well.” All of these specific requests came from a general request—and when these things come about, you will know that your prayers have been answered! Most Christians never experience the joy of answered prayer because they don't learn to start with a general prayer burden and then let wisdom and the Holy Spirit add the specifics of God's will.

## Notebook Pages

This section of your notebook will help you develop specific requests from general prayer requests. Notice that there are two columns—General and Specific. When you get a general request, list the date, check the “General” column, and then write the request, asking God how now to pray specifically for this request. Leave room under the request for specific requests. As God begins to give you specific requests, write the date, check the “Specific” column, and list the request. When God answers this specific request, make sure that you list the answer in the journal section of the Discipleship Workbook and place a check in the Praise and Thanksgiving column.

Some specific requests aren't answered easily. Suppose you know that you are to pray specifically about something, but there doesn't seem to be an immediate answer. God may want you to remain faithful to the request in intercession over a period of time. Often, lengthy prayers are needed for salvation of family members, strongholds in cities and culture, and emotional issues. After a time, you may want to start a page listing only these “long-term” specific requests that you will continue to intercede for God to answer. Jesus taught the parable of the widow and the unrighteous judge with the purpose of explaining that we should pray and not faint (Luke 18:1-8).

## Four Categories Of Prayer Lists

Note that there are four pages for prayer lists in your notebook. There are four lists of prayer requests that you need to develop. These lists pertain to the four general categories of prayers about which all Christians need to pray. Note the four categories printed: Urgent, Kingdom, Personal, Family and Friends.

*On page 159, you will find a blank prayer list page. You can copy this page, adding the categories of Urgent, Kingdom, Personal, Family & Friends as you need more pages.*

- 1. Urgent List.** On this page, list prayer requests that are emergencies; almost always short term. List those with health problems, people who are having a crisis, personal problems that must be solved now, and anything else that requires an immediate answer.
- 2. Kingdom.** Pray for your church with this list. Pray for your pastor and other church leaders. Also pray for other issues pertaining to the Kingdom of God as the Spirit leads. *Please pray for the First Steps ministry.*
- 3. Personal.** List your personal requests. Write besetting sins and issues of spiritual growth. Also list requests for your ministry and material needs on this page.
- 4. Family and Friends.** If married, list your spouse and children and their prayer needs. You may also want to list your parents and siblings. Pray for lost family members and anything that has to do with immediate family members and close personal friends.

Learning to pray and understanding exactly how to use these prayer lists will be further explained by your discipler. But remember, the basic lesson for answered prayer is to start with general prayer burdens and learn to pray specifically for each request.

**This section of your notebook will help you develop specific requests from general prayer requests.**

**There are four lists of prayer requests that you need to develop.**















# *Journal introduction*

## **A Note From First Steps On Using The Journal Section**

Take a few seconds and look at your fingers. Do you notice anything unusual? You can't see them very clearly, but your fingers each have fingerprints.

Your fingerprints are completely unique. Nobody else in the history of the world has fingerprints exactly like yours. It's also the same with the way you look, with your spiritual gift-mix, and probably with the way you think.

Now if you mention to a friend that you are different, your friend will probably say, "Amen!" And if you say that nobody in all the world is just like you, your friend might shout, "Hallelujah!" Ignore your friend's humor. God has made you just the way you are.

Just as God has made everything about you different from others, the way He talks to you is different as well. Some people hear God in a small voice, others more directly, some through sermons, others from the Bible, and some through the wisdom of others.

**Just as God has made everything about you different from others, the way He talks to you is different as well.**

At one time or another, God will use all of the means mentioned above to talk to you. But there are certain things about God's relating to you that are not the same as the way He relates to others. When you learn to discern His voice print in your life, it is easier to know when He is speaking to you—to recognize His voice.

Do you know how God speaks to you? There is perhaps no better way to learn to hear God's voice than by journaling. Many of the well-known saints through the ages took the time to journal. Why? Because they wanted to discover God's voice print in their lives so that they would be able to hear and obey. I encourage you to follow after these saints and begin journaling yourself.

## Notebook Pages

There is only one type of page in the journaling section. This page has four columns: Point of Obedience, Insight, Praise and Thanks, Significant Event. I have found in my personal journaling experience that all of my entries can be listed in one of these areas.

**Point of Obedience:** When you hear God tell you to do something, record it and mark this column. Remember God can speak through the Bible, a sermon, or even an inspiration while you are driving your car; but when you hear God speak, make sure to record it immediately.

**Insight:** While reading the Bible, have you ever had an insight into the meaning? Record it and mark this column. Whenever you have a spiritual insight, record it here.

**Praise and Thanks:** When you are thankful for something, record it and check this column. When there is an answered prayer from one of your prayer lists, record the answer and mark this column. At the end of the year, you can easily see how many prayers God has answered!

**Significant Event:** Baptisms, conferences, births, deaths, even the day your sixteen-year-old began to drive — record and mark this column to have a history of significant events.

## Using The Pages

When using the pages, write the date and then check a column for what you are recording: a Point of Obedience, Insight, Praise and Thanks, or Significant Event. Then make the entry, taking as many lines as needed. When finished, draw a line under the entry. Then start your next entry.

Please do not make journaling a burden. You do not have to write something every day, but try to record all answered prayers. Also do a weekly review of any insights or significant events.

Remember, God wants to use you and He will speak to you. These journal pages will help you listen to His voice.

## Finding More Pages

You can copy the journal page in the back of this notebook or purchase a journal from [www.disciplinanoother.com](http://www.disciplinanoother.com).

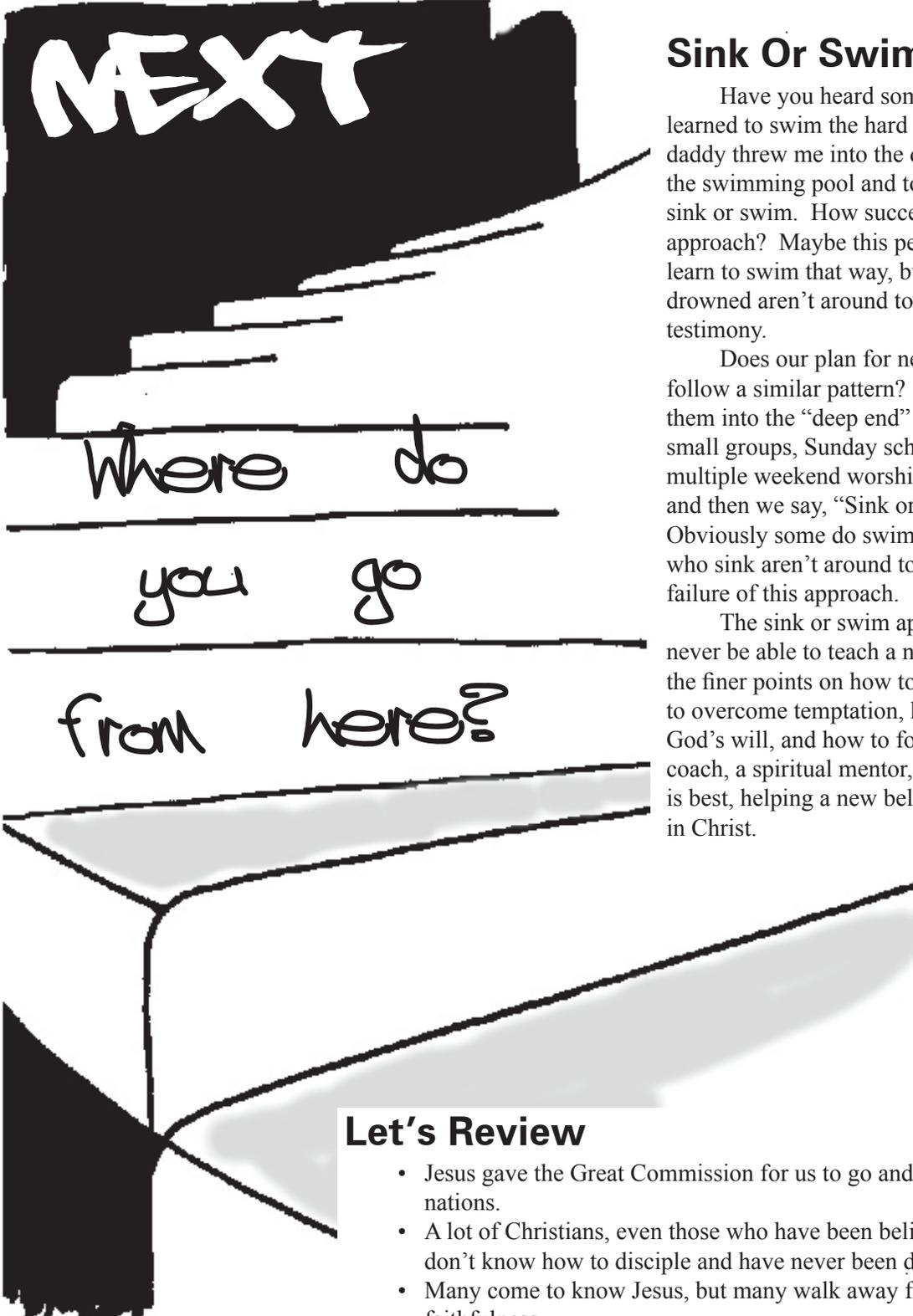
**There is perhaps no better way to learn to hear God's voice than by journaling.**

DATE	Point of Obedience			Significant Event
	Insight	Praise and Thanks		
4/8	✓			I listened to a sermon by the pastor today on Malachi 3:10. I believe that I am to begin tithing. Tithing means to give 10% of what I earn to the Lord and His work in the church.
12/12	✓			I was reading today in Matthew 7:7-11. Jesus was teaching about prayer. He said that if you ask, you will receive. He also used the example of a child asking his “earthly” father for a loaf of bread with the comparison that no “earthly” father would give a child who asked for a loaf of bread a stone instead. And if an “earthly” father gives good gifts, how much more will our heavenly Father give good gifts? I am going to learn how to “ask” –to ask specifically—with the motive of serving God. God is a giver of good gifts!
1/22		✓		Our small group has been praying for Cindy ... a member of our group. She has been going through many trials lately and didn't have enough money to pay her college tuition. We have been praying specifically that God would provide her tuition for the upcoming semester. Cindy shared last night that her aunt called and said that she would pay a semester's tuition for her. Wow, God really does answer specific prayers!
11/18			✓	I attended a First Steps conference. I have read the Bible enough to know that the Great Commission in Matthew 28 says that we are to go into all the world and disciple the nations. I just didn't know how. The material presented not only gave me the teaching that is most relevant to new believers but it also allowed me to understand that discipleship is about relationships. Discipleship is about being an example.









# NEXT

Where do

you go

from here?

## Sink Or Swim

Have you heard someone say, “I learned to swim the hard way”? My daddy threw me into the deep end of the swimming pool and told me to sink or swim. How successful is this approach? Maybe this person did learn to swim that way, but those who drowned aren’t around to give their testimony.

Does our plan for new believers follow a similar pattern? We throw them into the “deep end” of programs, small groups, Sunday school classes, multiple weekend worship services; and then we say, “Sink or swim.” Obviously some do swim, but those who sink aren’t around to testify of the failure of this approach.

The sink or swim approach will never be able to teach a new Christian the finer points on how to pray, how to overcome temptation, how to know God’s will, and how to forgive. A coach, a spiritual mentor, or a discipler is best, helping a new believer mature in Christ.

## Let’s Review

- Jesus gave the Great Commission for us to go and disciple all nations.
- A lot of Christians, even those who have been believers for years, don’t know how to disciple and have never been disciplined.
- Many come to know Jesus, but many walk away from faithfulness.

Now that you understand the principles explained in the Discipleship Workbook, you know how to disciple. But will you?

At the beginning of the notebook you were asked the question, “If a recently born believer were placed into your care, would you know exactly what to do to maximize the chances that this new believer would reach maturity in Christ?”

Now that you know, consider another question: Would you commit to discipling one person per year for the rest of your life?

## One-On-One Culture

Most Christians think “large group” or “small group” as their programmatic way of expressing their Christian faith. The culture not only of the American church but also of churches in many other nations is either “large group” or “small group.”

One-on-one discipleship is a change of culture. It shifts the focus from programs to personal relationships as the primary focus of maturity. Large churches with programs are needed. Small groups should be encouraged in all churches. But a personal relationship with Jesus is best taught in a personal relationship.

The idea of “one-on-one” culture is mentioned at the end of this notebook because many of you will now attempt to disciple as member of a church that doesn’t understand one-on-one culture.

Don’t be discouraged and don’t become critical of others. Fortunately, one-on-one discipleship can happen anywhere. It is not absolutely necessary for your church organizationally to support discipleship for you to disciple.

It comes back to the commitment – will you disciple one person per year?

## How Do I Start?

If the church you attend has a one-on-one discipleship program, these questions can be answered through the discipleship point person at your church. If you are on your own, do this:

- Ask the Lord to show you someone to disciple.
- When the Lord indicates someone, ask the person, “Would you like to know what the Bible says about living a successful and fulfilled life?”
- If the answer is “yes,” give that person a notebook, explain the general plan of the notebook, and ask to meet with the person to get started.

One-on-one discipleship is not about a scholar, pastor, or great theologian sitting down to explain deep mysteries to a new Christian. Discipleship is about relationship—a relationship that includes sharing scriptural truth and insights found in this notebook, and the encouragement of the relationship itself. Both information and relationship are essential for successful one-on-one discipleship.

Don’t feel intimidated to begin a discipling relationship. Your disciple will appreciate your efforts and be gracious toward your beginning attempts. The most important thing is to begin!

## Common Sense Guidelines

- Do not seek personal gain through the discipling relationship. Be a servant!
- Do not give advice. Stick with the material in the notebook.
- Be a good example. Discipleship is effective because you are sharing your life with your disciple.
- Discipleship is a one-on-one relationship.
- Disciple the same sex: men with men and women with women.
- Do not allow your discipleship times to become counseling sessions.
- Do not give the person you are discipling large amounts of time, money, or other resources.
- Get the person you are discipling involved in large group worship and small groups!

## Define And Limit The Discipling Relationship

- **Expectations**

Let your disciple know what he can expect from you: that you will pray for them and that they can contact you during moments of discouragement or temptation. Also let your disciple know that you expect commitment to the discipling sessions and that the ultimate goal is not for them to be disciplined but for them to disciple another to love Jesus. Do not give the impression that you will be available for hours on end at any time. If difficulties arise that are outside the scope of the discipling relationship or too complicated, get help!

- **The Ten Minute Rule**

A discipling session should last about one hour. Allow only ten minutes for introductory comments and then begin. Get through the notebook. It is easy for discipleship sessions to devolve into chit-chat, discussion of problems, and sharing about family or personal matters. Remember to get into the notebook material within ten minutes of starting the discipleship session.

- **Help But Don't Fix**

Discipleship will give a new believer the foundations to live the Christian life and seek God's guidance. The discipleship session is not the place to fix problems but an opportunity to develop foundations. A discipling session that just "talks" about problems will probably "talk" about problems the next session and the next as well. Problems can be endless, but with foundational principles shared and understood, the disciple will be able to fix his own problems.

- **The Discipling Relationship Should Last About Three Months**

A discipling relationship that lasts too long has the potential to cause many problems: a discipler can begin to exert too much influence into the life of a new believer, a disciple will begin to imitate the weaknesses along with the strengths of the discipler, and the burden itself of an overly-long relationship will hinder the yearly discipling commitment.

- **Discipleship Needs Small Groups**

A one-on-one relationship is best for the initial nurture of a new believer. But what happens at the end of the one-on-one relationship? Hopefully the new believer will be attending a small group. A small group has resources and a variety of spiritual gifts to provide a more balanced long-term influence, teaching, and encouragement of the disciple.

## Four Foundations Of Effective Discipleship

- One-on-one
- Similar temptation patterns
- Four foundational disciplines
- Three months

## Be On The Alert For The Similar Temptation Patterns Of New Believers

- Watch for moments of doubt and discouragement.
- There will be moments of temptation.
- Doctrine without love can cause confusion and legalism.
- A mature Christian learns how to receive grace and extend it to others.
- The new Christian must learn Kingdom perspective for proper priorities
- Prayer and Bible study can become boring until the Principle of Specificity is learned.
- Cults often seek out new believers.
- Bad decisions will render a new believer ineffective; help new believers learn the cycle of confirmation!
- There will be many enticements to keep a new believer from fellowship.
- Love, faith, and hope define how all believers should live until the return of Christ.

### Principle Of Specificity

God intends for Christians to have prayers answered, find victory over temptation, use their talents and gifts to serve others, and be used to disciple others. Christianity is not about inadequacy, fear, boredom, or doubt.

The Principle of Specificity teaches a new believer how to:

- Pray specific prayers that can be answered. What joy!
- Learn specific Life Verses that will bring victory over personal temptations.
- Serve others with specific spiritual gifts and talents.
- Disciple another to love Jesus ... what a thrill to experience God using you to impact the life of another!





# VERSES

## Jesus

John 14:6 ... *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

John 10:11 ... *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

Romans 13:14 ... *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

## Sin

Romans 3:23 ... *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Romans 6:23 ... *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## Born Again

John 3:3 ... *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

## Believe

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

Romans 10:9 ... *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

## Faith

Ephesians 2:8-9 ... *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Romans 5:1 ... *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Repentance

Acts 17:30 ... *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*

Acts 26:20 ... *I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*

## Baptism

Acts 2:38 ... *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

1 Peter 3:21 ... *This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

Romans 6:4 ... *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

## Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 5:5 ... *Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

John 16:13 ... *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

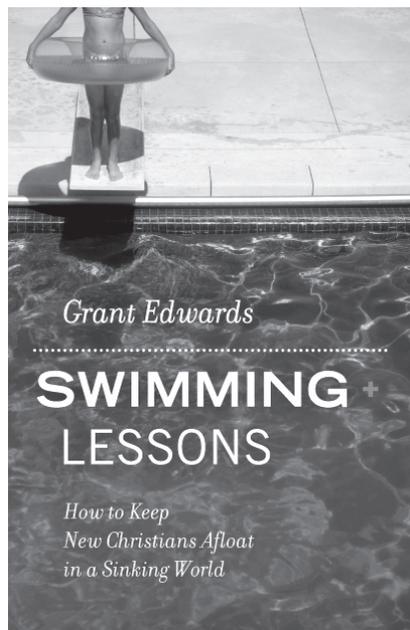
Acts 1:8 ... *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

1 Corinthians 12:7 ... *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*



# SWIMMING LESSONS

How to keep new Christians afloat in a sinking world



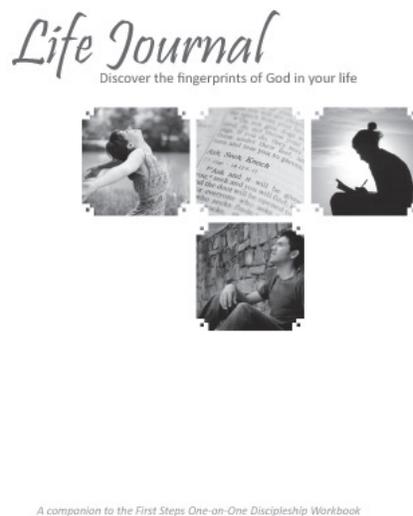
Growing in the Christian faith is like learning to swim: things go smoother if you get some help.

Swimming Lessons is an engaging book that explores the foundational principles of one-on-one discipleship, and serves as a companion to the First Steps Discipleship workbook, giving a more in-depth understanding of why and how to disciple.

Written by Grant Edwards

# FIRST STEPS LIFE JOURNAL

Discover the fingerprints of God in your life.



Journaling helps to see how God moves in your life, and helps develop specificity in prayer. The First Steps Life Journal includes two distinct sections:

- 1) *Journal* to record insights, points of obedience, praise and thanks, and significant life events
- 2) *Prayer* to capture both general and specific personal prayers

Use alone or in conjunction with the First Steps One-on-One Discipleship Workbook.

*A companion to the discipleship journey*

To order a copy of either of these resources go to: [www.disciplinganother.com](http://www.disciplinganother.com)  
or call: (937) 322-5381 or email: [info@disciplinganother.com](mailto:info@disciplinganother.com)



# Welcome to the Kingdom.

*We're glad you're here.  
Let's make sure you stick around.*

Becoming a Christian—and growing as one—is an adventure. And like most adventures, it helps if you're prepared.

In this First Steps notebook you'll find everything you need to move deeper into your faith. You'll discover...

- Four foundational disciplines that cement you in the new life you've found in Christ,
- Where you're most likely to be tempted to disappoint God and yourself,
- How to develop a strategy to defend yourself against temptation, and
- Ways to form healthy, encouraging friendships with other believers.

Whether you've been a Christian for decades or just since lunch, the First Steps notebook is your passport to the adventure of a lifetime. And it's a lifetime that stretches on forever.

Keep your Notebook handy. You and your discipler will look at it often in the coming three months. And you'll refer to it often in the years to come when you're discipling others to do what matters most: love Jesus.

# FIRST STEPS

*One-on-One Discipleship*

An Adventure for New and Renewed Believers.