

# LAUNCHING MULTIPLIERS!



Equipping Christ-Centered  
People for Contagious Influence

ministry**catalysts**

*LAUNCHING MULTIPLIERS!*

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## **Beginning the Journey**

In 1968, my youth pastor contacted me about a classmate who had recently placed his trust in Christ. He asked if I could spend some time with Jerry to help him get started as a believer. I was a seventeen-year-old senior who had a reputation as a spiritual leader that far outdistanced the reality of my walk with God. I was handed a booklet on “follow up” and encouraged to begin meeting with my classmate. Jerry was excited about his new relationship with Christ and faithfully completed the workbook each week. His enthusiasm was far more significant for me than any insight I could offer him. As we spent time together each week, we both experienced spiritual growth which transformed our lives, cemented an enduring friendship and resulted in fruitful ministry for decades.

My initial engagement in one-on-one discipleship was strengthened by the training and practical experience provided by Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU) during college. Opportunities during three years in the Air Force revealed that people from other parts of the country were also interested in this pattern of intentional spiritual investment. Throughout seminary and several years of youth ministry, one-on-one discipleship was a consistent focus.

Then, in the mid 1980s I became the pastor of a large evangelical church. The pressures of that ministry led me to the unfortunate conclusion that I could no longer invest weekly time with individuals. Instead, I focused on preaching on Sunday and leading group studies for men. The fruit of those ministries was substantial. Many people grew spiritually and enjoyed fruitful influence in their relational spheres. However, very few of them gained the confidence needed to initiate the kind of one-on-one discipleship that launches contagious multipliers.

## **Renewing a Passion**

About five years ago, my brother Ron and his wife, Terri, concluded a lengthy ministry as a pastor and joined Campus Crusade for Christ to focus

on one-on-one discipleship. Unlike me, he had made this focused ministry a priority throughout his years as a pastor. His enthusiasm for this new opportunity was palpable. Our discussions about discipleship led to my reluctant acknowledgement that small groups can help people grow, but developing disciple-makers is pursued most effectively in a one-on-one context.<sup>1</sup> During my last few years as a pastor it was a blessing to renew my focus on launching multipliers. Now Ron, Terri and I have the privilege of investing in the lives of dozens of faithful people each year through Ministry Catalysts.<sup>2</sup>

***Launching Multipliers!*** integrates decades of theological reflection with the experience of discipling scores of people who are now actively engaged in spiritual multiplication. Our exposure to discipleship resources produced by The Navigators, CRU, and the churches where we served have all contributed to this eighteen-session pathway. These carefully chosen tools are anchored in God's Word and are useful for spiritual reproduction which maximizes personal ministry. While these sessions may be used in a variety of ways, they are designed for a one-on-one relationship focused on mutual spiritual growth and preparation for a lifetime of spiritual joy as we equip faithful people.

This mentoring relationship requires the kind of intentionality that makes ongoing participation a key priority rooted in Jesus' command to "make disciples" ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)). This approach also emphasizes individuality, encouraging questions and discussion about the personal issues affecting the spiritual growth of the participants. As each lesson is completed, it strengthens a friendship which helps both partners pursue a pattern of Christ-centered spiritual influence. Since believers are challenged to "make the most of the time" ([Eph. 5:16](#)), each day is an unrepeatability opportunity for investments which will matter for eternity.

While there are many ways to be involved in the good works for which we were created ([Eph. 2:10](#)), certainly one-on-one discipleship is a distinctive opportunity to fully leverage this life for eternal blessings. Imagine enjoying heaven with scores of people disciplined by those you personally equipped for this lifetime of fruitfulness! Our hope is that your interaction

with these truths will fill you with joyful gratitude for the privilege of participating in the Jesus' Great Imperative: **Make Disciples!**

## **Preview:**

There are eighteen sessions in *Launching Multipliers!* organized under three core concepts: Established for Growth, Equipped for Ministry, and Empowered for Multiplication.

Each session has four sections:<sup>3</sup>

**What If?**

**God Says What?**

**So What?**

**Now What?**

We begin with **What If?**, which introduces a real-life situation relating to the biblical truth addressed in the session. This is like a pretest that helps you begin to think about the issue at hand based on your present understanding. Keep this initial perspective in view as you gain new insights from God's Word. Do not erase your initial thoughts. You will want to share them with those you disciple so that they will sense that you are a fellow learner in this process.

Then we focus on **God Says What?**. A number of Scriptures will be examined, but we will begin with a biblical passage to be memorized that highlights the core truth of the session. Our goal is not just to remember the passage (often two verses), but to review it so often we cannot forget it. Scripture memorization is not complicated, but it does require effort. Here are some suggestions:

*\*Read* the passage out loud several times and then attempt to write the verse or passage.

*\*Repeat* that process 2-3 times and you will discover that it is beginning to stick in your brain. This will take about five minutes each day. By the third

day you will be able to repeat the passage from memory. Once you can say it from memory, use free moments during the day to review the passage. By the end of the week the passage will be close to unforgettable and you will be ready to learn the next passage.

*\*Review consistently.* When you begin memorizing the second passage, review your first one each time you study the second. We have a list of all the memory verses at the end of this discipleship resource to assist your review. After sharing the passage with your partner, you will review your answers to questions regarding biblical passages being considered. While you focus on specific verses, you will often be asked to read paragraphs of Scripture so you can grasp the context. This is critical to clear understanding. There will also be questions about other passages which sharpen your perspective of the key passage for the session.

The third part of each session is **So What?**. Once the meaning of the Scripture is clarified, the issue becomes how that truth should affect the way we live. While a biblical passage will have only one full meaning (which no single person may completely grasp), each passage will have numerous applications which relate to the distinctive circumstances faced by individuals. Biblical truth touches our thoughts, actions, motivations, relationships and material possessions. One truth may have several applications for a person in different areas of life.

The final part of each session is **Now What?**. There is a big difference between deciding and doing. This section moves the participants from application to action. It defines what obedience means for your situation and joins prayerful dependence on God with specific accountability to a trusted friend. You can reinforce this by discussing the progress made in implementing the personal application of spiritual truth decided upon the previous week.

Each session should begin and conclude with prayer, letting both partners take leadership in prayer. Sharing a few specific requests at the end or beginning will enrich the relational and spiritual dynamic of this experience.

**May God fill you with joy as you experience the privilege of launching faithful followers of Christ toward a lifetime of contagious spiritual multiplication yielding an eternity of grateful celebration!**

## Footnotes

1. Greg Ogden (*Transforming Discipleship* [Downers Grove, IL; IVP Books, 2003], 140-152) provides excellent insights on discipleship which make this a valuable resource for disciplers. However, the advantages for triads (three people involved with a “keeper of the covenant” guiding the process relationally) which Ogden prefers, must be weighed against the practical challenges of managing adjustments in the schedules of three people (sick children, last minute work requirements, etc.), the likelihood that at least one of the participants may be hesitant to ask all his questions (especially if he is substantially less knowledgeable about the Scripture) and the reality that opportunities to discuss personal issues (problems at home or work) may be diminished by the presence of a third person. Triads are more effective than groups if your goal is launching multipliers, but one-on-one offers a unique environment for people to ask all their questions and unpack their consistent struggles as they prepare to launch spiritual multipliers.
2. Ministry Catalysts ([www.ministrycatalysts.com](http://www.ministrycatalysts.com)) is a nonprofit organization which focuses on spiritual multiplication through one-on-one discipleship, pastoral mentoring though encouraging collaboration and coaching, and equipping global leaders in places with limited Christian influence.
3. These four questions reflect a pattern often followed by Pastor Jon Sherman of Trinity Bible Church in Willow Park, TX.

Ken Horton, Ph.D.

August 2012

(Revised 2020)

## **A Primer for the One-on-One Discipleship Process**

This primer is designed for the discipleship facilitator to provide a guide in selecting and leading a faithful person through the sessions which follow. For the learner, this primer will hopefully provide an understanding of what is required through the discipleship curriculum/process which follows.

As we allow God's Word to work its way deeper into the fabric of our lives in guiding our thoughts, actions, words, and attitudes, something transformative happens. By God's grace, and with the enabling of His Spirit, we become more Christlike in ways we could have never imagined. And then, as we make ourselves available to others who also have a heart to pursue Christlikeness and obediently obey His command to "make disciples," we find ourselves involved in an ever-expanding network of spiritual multipliers whose lives are making a difference in others for eternity.

As you embark on this grand venture, we want to encourage and equip you through sharing "lessons learned" over the years. What follows is a compilation of "best practices" from our perspective.

Of course, you may proceed as you desire, but we nevertheless encourage you to give careful and even prayerful regard to the principles/practices that, by God's grace, have helped us stay focused and fruitful over the years as we have engaged in one-on-one discipleship.

### **Personal Preparation**

1. Pray about your place in God's plan to be a faithful spiritual multiplier.
2. Trust that God will bring the right person at the right time into your life to disciple.

3. Focus on cultivating relationships, looking for people who have a heart for God, a desire for spiritual growth, and the desire to become a Christ-centered multiplier.
4. Seek, by the grace of God and the power of His indwelling Spirit, to consistently model Christlikeness in all the influential spheres of your life. God will use this to transform your life and build you up in character, competence, and credibility.

## Selection Process

With prayerful consideration, carefully screen everyone before committing yourself to a discipling relationship. Take your time. Feel free, if you do not know the person well, to meet several times just to get better acquainted, to get to know their heart for God and to make sure they understand the discipleship process and all that it will entail. You want to find people who will commit themselves to the work of spiritual multiplication. Such ministry is joyful beyond measure, but it does require a persevering commitment. Character counts. A person willing to learn a process can be taught! But, you will save yourself much heartache down the road if you ask probing questions and trust God to lead you to people who will be just as committed to this ministry as you are. We use the following acrostic (FAITH) in helping us “find” that right person:

**F** aithful - Has this person demonstrated or indicated a desire to grow in this area of their life? Does this person have any kind of track record of dependability in their family, at church, or on the job? Is this person trustworthy, reliable? Will they put forth their best effort in going through the disciple-making process?

**A** vailable - Will this person make this discipleship relationship a priority? Is he/she willing to consistently meet with you, and the others God will bring into their life to disciple? Do not be afraid to ask about their other time demands and life responsibilities right up front.

**I**ntentional - Will this person be willing to persevere through a very intentional discipling process and be committed to following the directions given? Will they go through the process required to become an equipped spiritual multiplier?

**T**eachable - Does this person have a humble desire to learn and then submit to the counsel of God's Word? Communicate up front that "both of us" will be learners along the way, and that it is vitally important that "we both be open, transparent, and teachable before God and one another."

**H**eat - Is this person committed to God's purpose to fulfill the Great Commission? Does he/she yearn to know and serve God with all their being, loving Him with their whole heart and ready to pour their life into others as He leads?

We strongly suggest that you take your time on the front end, prayerfully and carefully evaluating the people God may want you to disciple. God will always bless what He has commanded. Our prayer for you is that you will see generations of spiritual multipliers launched as a result of your efforts. For that to happen more consistently, you need to pay attention and make sure you invest in people who have the character and commitment to "pass the baton" forward.

## **Appointments**

1. Start and stop on time (see #6 below for additional considerations on this).
2. Make sure your partner knows to complete the whole session, including the memory work, before your meeting. Based on the spiritual maturity and life experiences of the one being disciplined, the discipler should exercise wise judgment as to which questions/issues to discuss and to what extent. The "Insight" panels found throughout this resource contain content that may serve to help generate even deeper discussions.

3. After prayer and as you begin your instructional time together, review and share updates from the Now What? section of the previous week's session.
4. Transitions within each session are significant. Reading transitions to your partner may limit the effectiveness of your conversation. Consider highlighting key points (think playing hopscotch) or reviewing key insights back and forth (think playing ping pong).
5. Do not be afraid to ask the really hard questions of accountability. We have learned that deep down, most people long for this kind of relationship, grounded, of course, in love.
6. Do not be concerned about necessarily finishing a session every week. We have found that most of our discipling discussions last 75-90 minutes. The person across the table, not whether or not a session is completed, is most important! TIP: Ask the person as you start the session what time they need to leave. That shows respect and high regard for their time and schedule. Stop at the agreed upon time!
7. Teach and share with your Bible opened. Or, make sure you have a Bible available on your smart phone. Make sure you stay in the Scriptures. That is your authority because that is God's Word. Make it a habit to carefully discuss the memory passage and its context each week. Relate that text to the main truth of the session as you begin.
8. Ask thought-provoking questions and listen carefully to your partner's responses. Go from there. If possible, avoid questions where a "yes" or "no" answer will suffice.
9. Make sure your partner comprehends the truths of each session. Just as important, make sure he/she also has a good idea how they would impart those truths to the disciple(s) God will bring into their life.

## Launching Multipliers

As you move through the discipleship process, you and your partner will want to stay focused on spiritual multiplication. Consider the following recommendations as helpful endeavors toward that end:

1. Serve in ministries together whenever and wherever possible. It will help both of you get to know one another better and give you a platform for modeling what you are teaching. That was certainly the manner of Jesus as He trained His disciples.
2. Since you told your disciple at the beginning that the process would start and then have a defined ending, make sure you do all you can to help him/her find someone to disciple as you move toward the end of your time together.
3. To ensure a successful launch, lead a final review session with a commissioning prayer, present a small token gift, and make a commitment to connect every month or so to maintain your relationship.

Remember: **Teach, Coach and Model** is an appropriate mantra for this ministry focus.

## Acknowledgements

During the last four decades God has stretched our understanding and sharpened our passion for one-on-one discipleship through authors, professors, pastors, and fellow multipliers too numerous to mention.

The honest questions and spiritual insights of scores of discipleship partners over the years have strengthened each aspect of *Launching Multipliers!* We are grateful for each of you and look forward to joyfully connecting the dots of God's grace from heaven's perspective.

However, this publication and the decades of ministry it reflects would

not have been possible without the loving encouragement and faithful example of our wives, Kathy and Terri. Their joyful investment in people for eternity and their many improvements of these sessions were pivotal blessings for us and for all who will use this resource. Such a wife is a delightful gift from God.

May the God Who finishes all He begins be glorified!

Ron Horton

August 2012

(Revised 2020)

**... Established for Growth**

## **Session 1 – BEGINNING A CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE**

### **A. What If?**

A neighbor dies suddenly. He was the picture of health, yet collapsed after playing racquetball and was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. After his funeral a friend who lives on your street brings up her sadness and confusion at such a painful circumstance. After rambling for a few moments about the shortness and uncertainties of life and her own lack of clarity about what might happen after we die, she asks you, “What do you think? How important is religion anyway? How good do you need to be to be all right with God, if there is one?”

Discussing life and death issues are often difficult. Understanding God’s truth about the subject and speaking with clarity are essential.

1. How would you respond to your neighbor?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is distinctive about the Christian teaching on life and death?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How is a relationship with Jesus different from the many religious systems in our world?<sup>1</sup>

4. If a friend is interested in knowing more about Jesus and His offer of eternal life, would you be prepared to explain this simple, yet profound message? If so, this next section will be a helpful review. If not, this may be the most important information you have ever encountered.

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Romans 6:23](#). Review the suggestions in the introduction. Remember, decide now on the translation you will use in your scripture memorization and then be consistent in your memorization from that translation.

This single verse captures both the bad news and good news every person needs to grasp to begin sorting through the life and death issues we all eventually face. Let's start at the beginning and think through what the Bible says about life, death, sin, and salvation. First, the **Good News** (Figure 1).

\* **Good News:** We were created for intimate fellowship with God.

### *Insight*

The most frequently used word for sin in the New Testament means missing the mark. According to Charles Ryrie, "this is not only a negative idea but includes the positive idea of hitting some wrong mark."

(*Basic Theology* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1999]), 241.



Figure 1 - Good News

Genesis 1-2 describes God's creative work, which reached its apex when He made man from the dust of the ground and then fashioned the woman from the man's side. The following questions will help you understand the relationship Adam and Eve enjoyed with God in the garden.

1. What is the significance of man's creation in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27)?

2. What were God's instructions for Adam in Genesis 2:15-20? What were the consequences for disobedience (Figure 2)?

### ***Insight***

In the Bible, the word "death" is used to describe the concept of separation. When a person dies physically, the material part of their being (body) is separated from the immaterial part (soul and spirit). When a person is dead spiritually, that person (soul/spirit) is separated from God.

\* **Bad News:** Man's sin leads to physical and spiritual death (separation).

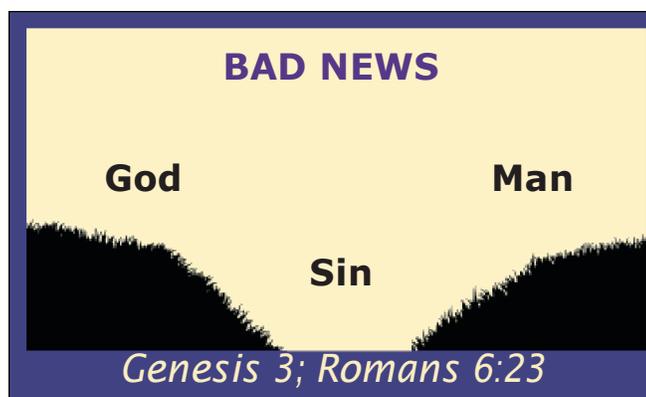


Figure 2 - Bad News

3. How are your temptations similar to Eve's in [Genesis 3:1-6](#)? What is the significance of Adam being "with her" (vs. 6) during the temptation?

**Insight**

Two other passages worth reading regarding the nature of temptation are [Matthew 4:1-11](#) and [1 John 2:15-16](#).

4. According to [Genesis 3:7-14](#), how did sin impact relationships in the Garden? In what ways are our responses to God like theirs?

**Insight**

There are numerous and practical marriage principles we can learn from [Genesis 2-3](#).

\* **Bad News Gets Worse:** Separated by sin, man suffers consequences he cannot remedy (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - Bad News...Gets Worse

5. Read [Romans 3:23](#).

a. What does it mean to "fall short of the glory of God"?

**Insight**

Reflecting on [Romans 6:23](#) helps us identify some of the excuses and rationalizations we sometimes use to justify the choices we make.

b. What percentage of people have done this?

c. How does your experience fit into this verse?

*At just the right time (Gal. 4:4), God bridged the chasm caused by our sin, doing for us what we could not do for ourselves (Figure 4).*

\* **Great News:** Jesus Christ died on the cross to completely pay for our sins.

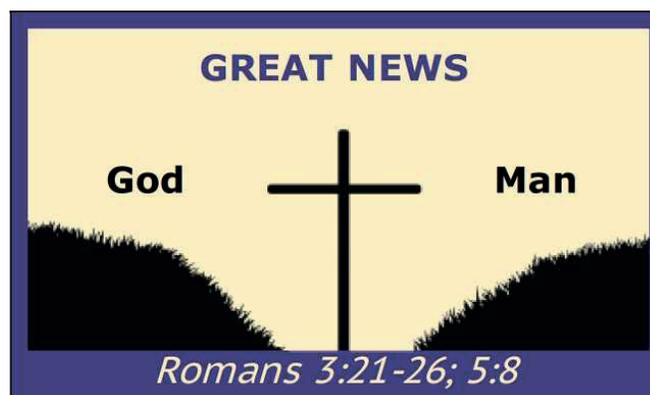


Figure 4 - Great News

Jesus Christ's death on the Cross in our place satisfied God's righteous wrath toward sin (Rom. 3:25-26; 1 Jn. 4:10)<sup>2</sup> and redeemed us from our slavery to sin (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7).<sup>3</sup> As a result, the one who trusts in Christ alone can now be justified before God.<sup>4</sup>

6. This incredible blessing, the best news people have ever heard, is summarized in [Romans 6:23](#). Take a few minutes to meditate further on this verse.

a. How is a wage different from a gift?

b. What is the wage for our sin?

c. Since death means separation, what does eternal life mean?

d. What is the proper response to an amazing gift?

7. Read [Romans 1:1-4](#) and [1 Corinthians 15:17-19](#).

a. How is the resurrection of Jesus related to our confidence that He is God's Son and that His death on the cross was full payment for our sin?

### ***Insight***

“The resurrection sets Christianity apart from other religions. Only Christianity claims a Messiah that conquered death. The founders of other major world religions are venerated in their final resting place on earth. But those of us who worship Christ have no need to visit His tomb to worship Him there. Instead, we make an audacious claim that no other religion even attempts to make: we worship a risen Savior!” (Randy Singer, pastor and author, Trinity Church, Virginia Beach, VA)

b. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, what would be the impact on Christianity?

8. Reflect on [John 3:16](#) and [Romans 5:8-10](#). Write a few words that help you describe the impact of God's love in your life (Figure 5).

\* **Urgent News:** You must personally receive God's gracious gift of salvation in Jesus through faith.



Figure 5 - Urgent News

Read [Ephesians 2:1-10](#) below.

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

<sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

**Insight**

Note that we are not saved by good works, but we are created for good works ([Eph. 2:10](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

<sup>7</sup> so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

<sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (NASB95)

9. First, underline the bad news. Put a box around the connecting word in verse four. Now underline twice what this passage reveals as good news.

***Insight***

How you define “faith” is at the core of your personal understanding of what it means to “be saved.”

***Insight***

Boasting in a gift from God is totally inappropriate for a Christian. Doing so reveals a lack of understanding and appreciation of the Gospel of Christ.

10. Now focus on [Ephesians 2:8-9](#). Circle the phrase that indicates how we receive God's gift of grace. Be prepared to share your understanding of the concept of "God's grace."

### C. So What?

This session focuses on history's most *revolutionary concept* . . . that God took the initiative in reconciling rebellious people to himself by paying their debt through the sacrificial death of His Son. Two questions must be faced:

1. Have you personally trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, receiving the gift of eternal life? If so, share your story with your partner. If not, this is a time for complete honesty. Review the truths in this session and ask, "What is keeping me from trusting Christ now?"
  
2. If you are a follower of Jesus, could you clearly explain the Gospel in a way that would encourage someone to respond to God's gracious gift through faith? Share with your partner how you would communicate this amazing truth.

## D. Now What?

1. Do you have friends or family who do not yet know Jesus personally? Put their first names on your prayer list and ask God to draw them toward His Son and prepare you to explain the Gospel to them.

2. Summarize the **GoodNews/BadNews/BadNewsGetsWorse/GreatNews/Urgent News** using the five sketches. Work with your partner to be comfortable drawing them on a piece of paper/napkin when the opportunity arises.

3. Read John 3-4 and observe how Jesus modeled relational evangelism. Discuss your insights with your partner.

4. If you lived each day focused on the truth of the Gospel, how would your life be different? Pray with your partner for an opportunity to share this life-changing truth with a friend on your list this week.

## Footnotes

1. While Christianity is similar to other world religions because it involves worship, a moral code, and the hope of something better beyond this life, it is unique in its foundational premise. The religions of the world believe man's core problem is a wicked environment which is ultimately escaped by moral behavior which gains God's favor. The code of their religion is the path for proving we deserve the blessings of the next life. Christianity presents a radically different concept. Man is the problem and his sin separates him from God. No amount of our good works can restore our relationship with

Him. So God pursued us, sending Jesus as our substitute to pay our debt when He died on the cross. Our relationship with Jesus is rooted in what He did for us, not what we do for Him. It begins when we receive this gift of grace by faith in what Jesus did. We were created for good works to express gratitude for the gift, not to earn it ([Eph. 2:8-10](#)). Our confidence in the message about Jesus is anchored in a climactic difference between Christianity and all other religions...Jesus' resurrection from the dead ([Rom. 1:1-4](#); [1 Cor. 15:1-8](#)).

2. <http://www.gotquestions.org/propitiation.html>
3. <http://www.gotquestions.org/redemption.html>
4. <http://www.gotquestions.org/justification.html>

... Established for Growth

## Session 2 – GRASPING THE FAITH PROCESS

### A. What If?

Your coworker begins to show an interest in spiritual issues. You have several conversations in which you explain the bad news and good news addressed in Session 1. His wife has been encouraging him to attend church and he finally agrees. He comes in on Monday with a blazing smile and whispers, “I did it! The pastor talked about what we have been discussing and it finally clicked. I trusted Jesus to forgive my sin and give me eternal life. What do I do now?”

1. How would you respond to his exciting news and important question?

#### *Insight*

God often uses multiple people to draw others to faith in Christ.

2. What is the first truth you would teach a new believer in Jesus Christ?

### B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Hebrews 11:6](#). (A final reminder - review the suggestions in the introduction.)

This verse gives us insight into the priority of faith in God for His payment for our sin, His provision for our daily lives, and His promises for our eternal future. Our faith in God, anchored in our confidence in His Word (Session 3), is the pivotal factor in both pleasing Him and participating in His purpose.

1. Read [Hebrews 11:1-6](#). How would you define faith in light of this passage?

### ***Insight***

Even an atheist believes in something. But, the object of one's faith is more critical than the amount of faith.

2. Look up these verses and fill in the blanks:

\* [Romans 10:17](#)

Faith comes from hearing the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

\* [Romans 14:23](#)

Everything that does not come from \_\_\_\_\_ is sin.

\* [2 Corinthians 5:7](#)

We live by \_\_\_\_\_, not by sight.

\* [Galatians 2:20](#)

The life I live in the body, I live by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God.

3. From the verses above, what can we conclude about what faith is or is not?

### ***Insight***

Reflecting on these verses should sharpen your understanding of the significance of the object of your faith.

4. Discuss the following **faith definition**:

**Faith that pleases God chooses to know and obey God's Word regardless of feelings, circumstances, or cultural pressures.**

### ***Insight***

[John 14:21](#) clarifies the connection between faith, love, and obedience.

\*The bumper sticker version  
of this step is . . .

**Embrace Faith.**

### ***Insight***

Life is different when you are walking by faith in Christ step-by-step.

5. Read [Colossians 2:6-7](#). According to these verses, how does a person begin a relationship with Jesus Christ? How does a believer experience the blessings of daily fellowship with God?

## **C. So What?**

Without faith we cannot please God ([Heb.11:6a](#)) and everything that does not come from faith is sin ([Rom.14:23](#)). Moment by moment, we're to live by faith in the Son of God ([Gal. 2:20](#)), walking each step by faith, not by sight ([2 Cor. 5:7](#)). Faith in God's Word is a big deal **So how do we pursue lives where this truth is experienced?**

The **faith definition** needs to be a "front-burner" reality in our perspective on life. Our normal position is to trust ourselves, to depend on our fleshly capacities to handle life on our terms for our benefit. This is our *default mode* in which we have years of experience. The outcome may be socially respectable or morally reprehensible, but it is all about us. We need to have the *faith definition* so imprinted in our thoughts that it is neon sign that consistently points us toward choosing to live according to the truths of God's Word no matter what.

### ***Insight***

The truth from God's Word that most encourages a person's spiritual growth reveals a key opportunity to practice the faith process.

Once you are consistently thinking about the faith definition, there is a **faith question** that needs to be asked each time we study the Bible. As we observe what the Bible says and grapple with what it means (more on this

in session 9, “Transformed by God’s Word”), we should always ask. *“If I live today in obedience to this biblical truth, how will my life be different?”*

\*The bumper sticker version  
of this step is . . .

**Envision Obedience.**

Practice envisioning obedience (focused on specific truths, people, and situations) while examining [Philippians 2:3-4](#).

First, read [Philippians 2:1-11](#). It is always critical to grasp the context of a biblical truth. Then focus on verses 3-4 as you answer the following questions.

1. What does it say? Take a few notes on what you see.
  
2. What does it mean? Summarize several key concepts.
  
3. How is [Philippians 2:3-4](#) related to the warning against the “squeezing influence” of the world ([Rom. 12:2](#))?

***Insight***

In answering the **faith question**, be so specific you can see (and smell) the obedient response.

***Insight***

You may want to reflect on [Psalm 139:23-24](#) as you **Envision Obedience**. Once you have a clear, specific answer to this question, you must move beyond awareness to action by doing what the Bible teaches ([Jas. 1:22-23](#)). Remember that deciding to follow God’s truth is not the same as living God’s truth. You need to be able to answer “Did I do it by faith to please God?”

4. Write down some specific answers to the pivotal **faith question**, “If I live today in obedience to this biblical truth, how will my life be different?”

This brings us to a *third* essential aspect of living by faith.

\*The bumper sticker version of this final step is . . .

**Expect Empowerment.**

God’s Word tells us that apart from Christ we can do nothing and that we must abide in Christ to bear spiritual fruit that lasts ([John 15:5-11](#)). Jesus taught His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be sent after His ascension to help, encourage, teach and guide them as they followed Jesus ([Jn. 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:12-15](#)). The Spirit also would convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment ([Jn. 16:7-11](#)) as the Father draws people to the Son ([Jn. 6:35-40,44](#)). By faith we must **Expect Empowerment** by God’s Spirit as we live out the truths of His Word. This *dependence mode* allows us to experience God’s strength even while we are learning the basics of the Christian life.

### **Insight**

The difference between living in **default mode** *versus* **dependence mode** is whether you are relying on yourself or Christ.

## **D. Now What?**

1. As you review this session, describe/define the three essentials of grasping the *faith process*:

Embrace Faith:

Envision Obedience:

Expect Empowerment:

2. Share with your partner **specific** ways your life will be different this week as you obey the truths in [Colossians 2:6-7](#) and [Philippians 2:3-4](#).

3. Read Paul's letter to the Philippians. Focus on a chapter each day (there are only four chapters) and pick a couple of key verses that challenge you to live differently in light of God's Word. Keep any notes and the answers to your faith questions to share with your partner.

4. Pray for each other and begin next week's session with an update on how you applied the faith process in your life.

## Footnote

1. Ron and Della Proctor, *Mentoring 101: Book 1* (Life Builders, 2008), p.8. This is part of a four-book discipleship resource which has many excellent insights. One of the most strategic is the priority of the faith process (pp. 11-15) which includes a faith definition which we have adapted.

... Established for Growth

## Session 3 – BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S WORD

### A. What If?

While at lunch with a couple of coworkers, one mentions seeing a TV program which raised doubts about the reliability of the Bible. Your friends begin to discuss their own concerns about whether they should depend on the Bible to define their understanding of a relationship with God, how to live wisely with family and friends or specific historical information. Since you are known as a Christian, they soon ask you “What do you think? Do you really believe the Bible can be trusted?”

1. How would you respond to their questions?

2. How would you feel if you did not know how to respond?

#### *Insight*

A consistent review of the three “bumper stickers” of the **faith process** will enrich each session.

### B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#).

These verses present Scripture as a **supernatural instrument** of spiritual transformation ([Ps. 19:7-11](#)). Before continuing this session, **discuss** the benefits of knowing and obeying God's Word found in [Psalm 19:7-11](#).

**There are three key factors that strengthen our confidence in God's Word:**

**1. Internal Evidence - What does the Bible say about itself?**

a. What do we learn from [Psalm 119:160](#) and [Proverbs 30:5](#) about the Hebrew perspective on Scripture?

b. Read [2 Peter 1:20-21](#). According to these verses, what is the origin of Scripture?

c. Examine how Jesus dealt with Scripture

[Matthew 4:1-11](#) - He saw Scripture as relevant to our daily lives.

[Matthew 5:17-18](#) - He saw Scripture as totally reliable.

[Matthew 12:39-42](#) - He saw Scripture as historically accurate and prophetically trustworthy.

***Insight***

Jesus' approach regarding the trustworthiness and relevance of Scripture is the model for His followers.

Matthew 19:4-6 - He saw the creation narrative in Genesis 1-2 as a trustworthy account and universally the basis for the marriage relationship between man and woman.

Matthew 22:23-33 - He believed and used the Old Testament as the authoritative Word of God.

## 2. External Evidence - What evidence outside the Scripture itself affirms its authority and credibility?

There are four lines of evidence we need to explore:

a. The Bible is *unique* among all literature regarding its continuity in the midst of diversity. The Bible was written during a span of over 1500 years, by more than 40 authors from all backgrounds (prophet, philosopher, king, doctor, fisherman), in widely different settings (palace, prison, wilderness), using three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) and numerous literary genres (poetry, history, biography, short story, drama, correspondence) while addressing issues with transcultural application. Through this great diversity, there is a central focus: *God's gracious work of salvation through Jesus Christ*.

b. The Bible has been preserved in manuscripts more numerous and more thoroughly critiqued than any other literature in history. With over 5000 Greek manuscripts and 15,000 manuscripts in other languages, the New Testament is the most widely attested

### ***Insight***

Do not rush through this section of the session. Make sure you ask and find answers from your partner or another resource. This is foundational information regarding the nature of what God has revealed in His Word. It is worth careful consideration because so much is at stake in the way we choose to respond to all that God has revealed.

### ***Insight***

Another great resource: *Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Time Lines* (published by Rose Publishing)

literature in antiquity. No other ancient literature compares regarding the interval between the original composition and the earliest manuscripts. While the Old Testament does not have the volume of evidence, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 (consisting of 40,000 document fragments) reduced the gap between composition and our earliest documents by almost 1000 years and provided compelling evidence of the reliability of our present understanding of these texts. For more info:

<http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/bib-docu.html>

[http://visualunit.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/nt\\_reliability1.jpg](http://visualunit.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/nt_reliability1.jpg)

c. The translation of the Bible into numerous languages (which has exploded in the last 100 years, resulting in portions of the Bible now in almost 2500 languages) depends on a meticulous examination of the most reliable ancient manuscripts. It is not a linear process where earlier translations are translated, but a vigorous attempt to discern the reconstructed original as the starting point for a careful team of translators who are experts in the original languages and the principles of textual criticism. While translations may reveal the theological perspectives of the scholars involved, these nuances do not reflect uncertainty about the reliability of the ancient texts themselves. For more info:

### ***Insight***

If you don't have time to carefully check these web links now, you can always come back later and do more research. Let these be your gateway to more careful study and consideration.

<http://www.gotquestions.org/translation-inspiration.html>

<http://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-how-we-got-bible>

d. Archeological discoveries have repeatedly affirmed the reliability of the Old and New Testament. The historical support of the account of Luke 1 regarding the census, the discovery of a large Hittite civilization in the nineteenth century, and the support for the account of Genesis 14 from the Ebla tablets discovered in Syria in 1974 are examples of this pattern of validation. In addition, the secular historians of the Roman world

speak of Christianity in ways that authenticate the affect of the message of Christ's followers on the Roman world. For more info examine the following:

<http://www.faithfacts.org/search-for-truth/maps/archaeological-and-external-evidence>

### 3. Theological Evidence - How does fulfilled prophecy strengthen our confidence in God's Word?

The prophecies about Jesus' birth, life, crucifixion, and resurrection number over 300 and were fulfilled in startling accuracy:

- Born in Bethlehem ([Mic. 5:2](#); [Matt. 2:1](#))
- To a young virgin ([Is. 7:14](#); [Matt.1:18,24-25](#); [Lk. 1:34](#))
- To be worshipped by shepherds ([Ps. 72:9](#); [Lk.2:8-16](#)) and elite leaders ([Ps. 72:10,15](#); [Matt. 2:1-11](#)) who brought gifts befitting a king
- The seed of a woman ([Gen. 3:15](#))
- Descended from Abraham ([Gen. 12:3](#); [Matt. 1:1](#))
- In the kingly line of David ([Jer. 23:5-6](#); [Matt. 1:1](#))
- Fulfilling Messianic ministries ([Is. 61:1-2](#); [Lk. 4:18-19](#))
- The agony and anguish of His sufferings ([Is.53](#))
- His hands and feet would be pierced ([Ps. 22:16](#); [Lk. 23:33](#))
- His garments would be divided by lot ([Ps. 22:18](#); [Jn. 19:23-24](#))
- None of his bones would be broken ([Ps. 34:20](#); [Jn. 19:33](#))

#### *Insight*

**Bonus study:** Check out the website below regarding objections to evangelical understandings of fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ. This will help you to give gentle and respectful answers ([1 Pet. 3:15-16](#)).

[christianthinktank.com/falsechrist.html](http://christianthinktank.com/falsechrist.html)

**Also,** prophecies fulfilled in history also support the reliability of Scripture. One of the most dramatic is the destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 26) discussed in the following website:

[aboutbibleprophecy.com/tyre.htm](http://aboutbibleprophecy.com/tyre.htm)

- Not abandoned to the grave or held captive by death ([Ps. 16:10-11](#); [Jn. 20:1-31](#))

<http://bible.org/article/messianic-prophecies>

## Personal Reflections:

1. What aspect of the evidences for the Bible's reliability is most encouraging to you?

2. Which prophecy in the preceding reading is most intriguing to you?

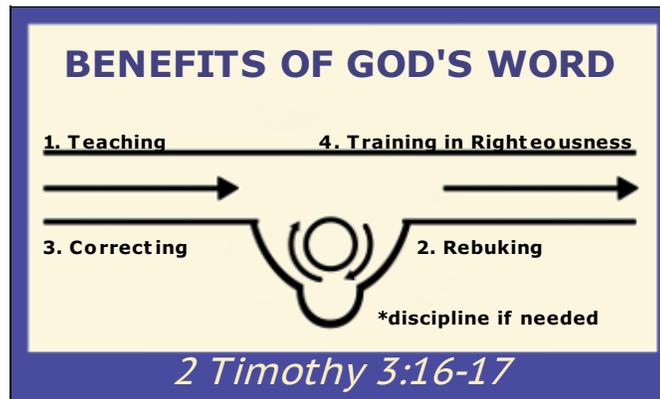
3. Examine [James 1:22-25](#). Summarize the significance of studying and obeying God's Word in spiritual growth. How is "deciding" different from "doing" in this process?

4. According to [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), the Scripture is useful in four key ways. Note carefully the illustrative chart below. Make sure you understand and can describe each aspect of the four benefits of God's Word in your life.

### ***Insight***

The Benefits of Carefully Studying God's Word:

1. Teaching - shows us the path of God's truth.
2. Rebuking (or reproving) - shows us where we have gotten off the path.
3. Correcting - shows us how to get back on the path.
4. Training in righteousness - shows us how to stay on the path of fruitful living.



*\*Failure to respond to God's rebuke leads to painful discipline.*

Figure 6 - Adapted from illustration used by The Navigators in the 2:7 Series.

### C. So What?

1. Is there an area where God's Word has taught you what to do and you have been rebuked by Scripture for not obeying? If so, you are stuck in the cul-de-sac of spiritual discouragement and God's discipline until you confess your disobedience ([Jam. 1:22](#); [1 Jn. 1:9](#)) and ask God to strengthen you as you move beyond deciding to doing what you have learned. When you allow God's Word to correct your path, God is eager to teach you even more as He expands your capacity to serve Him (training in righteousness).

2. How would the area you mentioned above be different if you followed the principles of [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)?

3. Recall your time spent reading God's Word over the past month. Circle the words below that are generally descriptive of your attitude/desires in those moments:

Hot/Cold	Satisfying	Puzzling	Wheaties (dry, but
Worshipful	Can't get	Boring	it's good for me)
	enough		Usually a guilt trip

Discuss these observations with your partner.

4. Draw lines matching what the following passages teach us about desirable patterns of learning/doing.

- [Psalm 19:7-11](#)
- [2 Timothy 2:15](#)
- [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)
- [James 1:22](#)
- Do it, don't just know it!
- Only way to be competent and really equipped for good works
- Learn, obey, rejoice
- Work hard, handle rightfully

## D. Now What

1. Review the insights from your study of Philippians. This week read the letter again and keep a chart in four columns: **Teach / Rebuke / Correct / Training in Righteousness**. List verses in Philippians that accomplish these purposes of Scripture for you personally. Plan to share these with your partner.

### *Insight*

Remember what we are calling the **Faith Process**:

1. Embrace Faith
2. Envision Obedience
3. Expect Empowerment

2. Discuss with your partner what you have learned from this session about maximizing your time in God's Word.

3. How is my response to Scripture similar to the way Jesus dealt with God's Word? What one change in this area would make me more like Jesus?

4. Who is praying for your spiritual growth as you study God's Word? Share your plan for reading and studying God's Word with your partner and commit to pray for each other.

**... Established for Growth**

## **Session 4 – APPRECIATING YOUR SECURITY IN CHRIST**

### **A. What If?**

Jim and Bob grew up in the same neighborhood and got involved in a church youth ministry where both heard a clear presentation of the Gospel. Over a period of months both teenagers trusted Christ and began to encourage each other as they grew spiritually. After graduation, they went to different colleges, eventually drifted apart and after two decades, happily reconnected at a class reunion. As they shared their stories, Jim finally asked, “Bob, how is your spiritual life? Some of my best memories are the great times we shared at that youth group.”

After a long silence, Bob responded, “I guess I got derailed during college. At first, I felt awful about my choices. I went to church at times and found short-term encouragement, but the more I struggled, the more discouraged I became. I felt so isolated and didn’t know how to get back on track. I still believe what we heard at that church, but I have no idea how to live as a Christian. So, I keep it to myself because I know my life isn’t what it should be. Sometimes I even wonder if I really trusted Christ back then.”

1. If you were Jim, how would you respond?

2. Do you think doubting one’s salvation is a common issue among believers today? Why or why not?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [John 10:28-29](#).

1. According to [John 10:27-30](#), who takes responsibility for the security of a person who has eternal life through faith in Jesus?

2. Carefully read [John 6:35-40](#). What are some phrases that indicate that Jesus is passionate about a believer's security?

### ***Insight***

Eternal life begins the moment you trust in Christ and will last forever!

3. According to [John 1:12](#), [John 5:24](#) and [1 John 5:11-13](#),

- A person receives eternal life by . . .
  
- A person begins to experience eternal life when she . . .

4. Reflect again on [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) (see Session 1) and explain why no one can boast about their salvation.

***Insight***

According to [Romans 8:38-39](#), there is *nothing* that can separate us from the love of God.

5. How do [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) and [4:30](#) help you appreciate the eternal security enjoyed by a follower of Christ?

6. Read [Romans 8:12-17](#). What do you learn from this passage about our security in Christ and the assurance given by the indwelling Holy Spirit?

7. How does God show His love when we disobey Him according to [Hebrews 12:4-11](#)?

Our relationship with God is secure because it is based on what Christ did on the cross. It is rooted in His faithfulness, not our faithfulness. Our enjoyment of this blessing, what the Bible calls fellowship, is experienced by dependence on the Spirit's empowerment day by day. Disobedience does not destroy our relationship with God, but it does disrupt our fellowship with Him and may distort our feelings about our security in Christ. As you grapple with the **So What?** of this session, realize that clarity about our relationship (which we cannot lose) and our fellowship (which we must embrace each day by obedient faith) is a key to joyful and fruitful living.

### C. So What?

1. What is the difference between having a relationship with God and enjoying fellowship with God?

Assurance of our salvation is one of the key steps in growing in our faith. It is a daily opportunity to choose to live according to the truths of the Bible regardless of our feelings, circumstances, or cultural pressures.

**Assurance is anchored in our understanding that our salvation is not based on our commitment to do something for God in the future, but rather confidence in what Christ has done for us in the past.**

2. Consider the following statements and mark True or False:

\_\_\_A person may be secure in Christ and yet not experience the blessing of assurance of salvation.

\_\_\_A person may have feelings of assurance and not have a relationship with Christ that makes salvation certain.

<b>Security</b>	is rooted in what God has done for us.
<b>Assurance</b>	reflects our understanding of what God has done for us in Christ.

#### *Insight*

Remember the **Faith Definition** introduced in Session 2: *Faith that pleases God chooses to know and obey God's Word regardless of feelings, circumstances or cultural pressures.*

#### *Insight*

As we saw in the previous section, God's Word speaks with clarity about the security we enjoy in a relationship with Christ. Our security is not about either our faithfulness or our ability to consistently obey or do works for God. *It is totally based on God's faithfulness and Christ's complete payment for our sin on the cross.*

3. Which of the verses we considered in this session gives you the most encouragement about your security in Christ? Why?

4. How would you change your answer for the **What If?** section in light of the truths in this session?

### **D. Now What?**

1. Read [Philippians 1-4](#) again this week. Make a list of any verses that strengthen your understanding of the security of your salvation in Jesus Christ. Bring that list to the next session.

2. Be prepared to share with your partner any specific changes (at least one) you have experienced because of what you have learned about eternal security and assurance of salvation.

3. How do these truths motivate you to know and serve Christ?

4. Pray with your partner for God to give you an opportunity both to live out these truths in your own life and also to share them with others.

**... Established for Growth**

## **Session 5 – EMBRACING YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

### **A. What If?**

You are a fireman about to go off duty after a long 24 hours of being on call. On the way to your car, an urgent call comes in to your station. There is a five-alarm fire involving an office building downtown and your unit must respond immediately with every available fireman.

Three minutes later you are on your truck heading downtown. As you arrive at the site, amidst all the chaos and confusion, you are immediately aware of glass and metal parts falling all around. Violent explosions and bursts of flames can be heard and seen high above. Nobody in their right mind would ever volunteer to go into that burning building. Scores of people are running for safety and now you are told to go inside and make your way up a stairwell to the floors where people are trapped and the fires are raging. However, you have been trained for just such a moment as this.

This is your job. You lower your head and rush into the building because of who you are and how you have been trained. You would respond to such a crisis in light of who you are.

1. How does this scenario relate to the connection between your identity in Christ and your daily behavior?

2. In our world today, what are some ways a person's identity is defined?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Galatians 2:20](#).

1. Note the changes in verb tenses in [Galatians 2:20](#). What is “past” and what is “present” in Paul’s description of his spiritual life?

2. What does this verse reveal about your identity “in Christ” as you continue to live as a Christian?

3. How does [2 Corinthians 5:14-17](#) help you understand the relationship between our identity and our spiritual motivations?

The Bible is clear about the identity of every follower of Christ.

- We are a new creation in Christ ([2 Cor. 5:17](#))
- We are adopted children of the Father<sup>1</sup> ([Jn. 1:12](#); [Rom. 8:15-16](#))
- We are joint heirs with Christ ([Rom. 8:17](#); [Gal. 4:7](#))
- We are declared righteous<sup>2</sup> through our identification with His death on the cross ([Rom.3:21-26](#))
- We are now living in the power of His resurrection as we walk by faith ([Eph. 1:18-20](#)).

4. How does [Romans 7:15-25](#) help you understand the conflict between our new identity in Christ and our old way of living to satisfy ourselves (which the Bible calls “the flesh”)?

**Insight**

[Galatians 5:16-17](#) and [24-25](#) clarify both our problem and God’s solution to this struggle.

5. Read [Romans 6:1-10](#). What do these verses reveal about our identity in Christ?

**Insight**

When Paul exhorts his readers in [Romans 6:11](#) to consider themselves “dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus,” he introduces an accounting idea of a ledger with distinct columns. Paul is saying, “Put yourself in the ‘dead to sin’ and ‘alive to God’ column, not the ‘slave to sin’ column.”

6. Examine [Romans 6:11-14](#). Make a list of both the positive and negative commands in these verses.

**Positive Commands**

**Negative Commands**

(Do ...)

(Do not ...)

7. Reflect on a struggle you have with a specific sin. How does this passage instruct us to respond in that situation? How does the fact that sin is no longer our master ([Rom. 6:14](#)) and God has promised to provide a way of escape ([1 Cor. 10:13](#)) affect your response to temptation?

Relationships have an impact on our identity. We (the authors of this discipleship resource) are two of three brothers and a younger sister who had a dad who possessed strongly held and clearly communicated values. It was never “You should or shouldn’t do something,” but “Horton kids

tell the truth” or “Horton kids work hard and do their best.” He taught us that how we behave should be rooted in who we are. We may not have followed our dad’s instructions in every situation, but we always knew that being a Horton was a defining reality. Our dad loved us no matter what we did and we experienced that love in healthy doses of affirmation and discipline, both rooted in his love.

By faith, realize that you are “in Christ,” and that this identity should impact your life each day. Making that new relationship your starting point (“consider yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus”) is both a decisive choice ([Rom. 6:5-14](#)) and a daily commitment ([Rom. 12:1-2](#)).

When a bride and groom exchange vows and depart for their honeymoon to begin life together, their identity has changed. He is now her husband, committed to cherishing and loving her sacrificially. She is his wife, focused on respecting and blessing him even when he struggles. She changes her name, but they both change their identity. They belong to each other and their lives are different from that day forward. In the same way, our identity changes the moment we trust Christ. We were formerly slaves to sin, but now we are God’s children held securely in his hands. He has plans for us and gives us His Spirit to enable us to fulfill His purpose. Our motivation for obedience is gratitude for the gracious gift we have experienced in Christ ([2 Cor. 9:15](#)).

### ***Insight***

Daily commitments reflect decisive choices.

## **C. So What?**

1. Reflect on [Zephaniah 3:17](#). What do you learn from this verse about how God looks at you as one of His children? What would God include in His “song” for you?

### ***Insight***

According to [1 John 1:6](#), when a Christian sins, he’s out of fellowship with God. However, that’s not the same as having no relationship with God.

2. As you reflect on Sessions 4 and 5, explain your perspective on whether a believer can behave badly enough to sever his/her relationship with God.

As a child of God, He has declared you righteous, cleansing you of the guilt and the condemnation of your sin. You are forgiven! You are no longer imprisoned by sin ([Romans 6:11-13](#)). Now, according to [Colossians 1:13](#), you have been rescued from one realm (sin and death) and transferred into another, the kingdom of God's

Son, Jesus Christ. When sin comes into your life, and it will, do not allow it to have mastery over you. Immediately confess the sin ([1 Jn. 1:9](#)) and by faith claim the forgiveness that has already been provided through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The fact that Jesus rose bodily from the dead is compelling proof that God the Father was satisfied with the sacrificial death of His Son for your sins. And, because Jesus is now alive, you too, can daily live the new life you have in Christ as God's dearly loved, totally accepted and righteous child. This is your identity in Christ . . . which can only be experienced by faith!

### ***Insight***

We must learn to not only confess the truth of our sin, but also the truth of our identity in Christ.

3. Make a list of specific ways you are agreeing with God when you confess your sin.

4. What do lingering guilt feelings after a prayer of genuine confession to God reveal about the understanding of your identity in Christ and confidence in God's faithfulness?

## D. Now What?

1. Reflect on the commands you discovered in [Romans 6:11-14](#).

With your discipleship partner, rehearse the faith process:

**Embrace Faith** - Write down at least one truth God wants you to really know and obey.

**Envision Obedience** - Write down what at least one specific response of obedience would look like in your life today/this week if you responded in faith to what God had revealed to you from this text.

**Expect Empowerment** - Realize that only God's Spirit living in you can enable you to obey God's revealed truth. Be willing to turn away from any known sin and release yourself to the Spirit's enabling power. What we cannot do, He specializes in doing . . . as we trust in Him, not ourselves to do it. More about this principle follows in Session 6.

2. Read a chapter each day from Paul's letter to the Ephesians (six chapters in one week). Circle the repeated phrase "in Christ" and list some of the blessings associated with this identity.

3. Take a moment and summarize your understanding of who you are in Christ. Focus your time in prayer on thanksgiving for these blessings.

## Footnotes

1. <http://www.gotquestions.org/Abba-Father.html>
2. <http://www.gotquestions.org/justification.html>

... Established for Growth

## Session 6 – LIVING IN GOD’S PRESENCE AND POWER

### A. What If?

Your sales job occasionally involves traveling through a sales area with one of your retail distributors. Over the last few months you have formed a good friendship as you visit various stores with one of your associates named Mike. Your conversations have revealed that Mike is a believer who has been blessed to attend a good church where many of the basics of our relationship with Christ have been clearly explained. He is confident that he is a follower of Christ and that he will spend eternity with Him. But he is also struggling to live in a way that reflects that relationship. After mentioning that he often feels like a spiritual failure, he says, “You seem to enjoy your walk with Christ. To be honest, I don’t seem to have the ability to make it work. I pretend that things are fine when I’m in church, but I’m running on fumes spiritually. What am I missing?”

1. How would you respond to Mike’s question?

2. Circle the words that describe your present perspective on daily fellowship with Christ.

- |              |             |            |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Devoted      | Discouraged | Fulfilling |
| Fragile      | Strong      | Growing    |
| Inconsistent | Boring      | Exciting   |
| Exhausting   | Impossible  |            |

3. Have you discovered any key patterns that help you live each day in God's presence and power?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Galatians 5:25](#).

1. In this verse we are told that, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by (or keep in step with) the Spirit." In [Galatians 5:16](#) Paul also exhorts us to live/walk by the Spirit. What insights do you gain from these repeated exhortations?

2. Discuss what you can learn from [Galatians 5:19-23](#) about how depending on God's Spirit can impact your life.

As we continue our study we must explore several key truths about the Holy Spirit. Take your Bible and spend a few minutes pursuing this biblical and theological portrait.

- The Holy Spirit is God. Reflect on [Acts 5:3-4](#) and notice that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God.
- The Spirit was involved in the creation of the world ([Gen. 1:2](#)).
- The Spirit divinely inspired the human authors of God's Word (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

### *Insight*

When Peter says we have received "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3), he is summarizing the full scope of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This life transformation, motivated by gratitude for God's gracious gift, shaped by the truths of God's Word, fueled by the power of God's Spirit, and fulfilling the Father's purpose to conform us to the image of His Son, is called sanctification by theologians (see [www.gotquestions.org/sanctification.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/sanctification.html)).

- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity ([Eph. 1:3-14](#)).
- The Spirit seals us for our redemption ([Eph. 1:13; 4:30](#)).
- The Spirit is grieved by our sin ([Eph. 4:30](#)).
- The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus ([Jn. 16:7](#)) as our divine source of encouragement, teaching, guidance, wisdom, exhortation, and conviction ([Jn. 14:16-18; 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:8-11](#)) after Jesus' ascension.
- The Spirit's purpose is to glorify the Son as He works in the lives of believers ([Jn. 16:14](#)).
- The Spirit baptizes believers into Christ's body ([Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13](#)).
- The Spirit entrusts to believers spiritual gifts for fruitful ministry ([Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:7-11](#)) at the moment of their salvation.
- The Spirit of God dwells in believers to empower them ([Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:18](#)) and prays for them whenever they do not know how to pray ([Rom. 8:26-27](#)).

3. Which one of these ministries of the Holy Spirit do you appreciate the most?

4. Examine [Ephesians 5:15-18](#). What is the significance of the contrast of being filled by the Spirit and being drunk? How does a person become filled (controlled or empowered) by the Holy Spirit? This is an important concept. Do not leave this point till you fully grasp its significance in your life.

### ***Insight***

We have been, are being, and will be set apart as both instruments and trophies of God's grace.

### ***Insight***

In [Ephesians 5:18](#), note that the subject of "be filled" is plural, indicating that it is a blessing God offers all believers, not just a few elites. The verb is a present tense imperative, indicating that it is a command that all Christ followers should obey continuously (what is called a "standing order" in the military). This verb is in the passive voice, emphasizing that God is proactive as He controls/guides our life. We are not to be passive, but we are to be dependent on God in all circumstances. This is significant, transforming truth as it is fully grasped and obeyed.

### C. So What?

As we consider this pivotal concept in living for Christ each day, we must face the reality that we need the Spirit's power to successfully live the Christian life. When we became a new creation through faith in Christ, we were given a new nature which is alive to God's Spirit and eager to please God. Though we are no longer obligated to sin ([Rom. 7:1-6](#)), we are vulnerable to sin because of our flesh ([Jer. 17:9](#); [Rom. 3:10-12](#)). This is sometimes called our "sin nature" and is expressed each time we are selfish in either respectable or reprehensible ways. Sadly, it is still operative in all believers to some extent.

Even as a follower of Christ, the flesh is our **default mode**. If we live our normal way, we will depend on our strength. We can even try to live for Christ empowered by our flesh, doing spiritual things in hopes of earning God's favor or impressing others.

Living in the **default mode** leads to exhaustion and exasperation. Because we have years of habits reinforced by our flesh, we must consciously yield ourselves as God's instruments ([Rom. 6:11-14](#)). Think through this pattern for yielding your life to the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit day by day.

#### A Daily Strategy for Spiritual Success

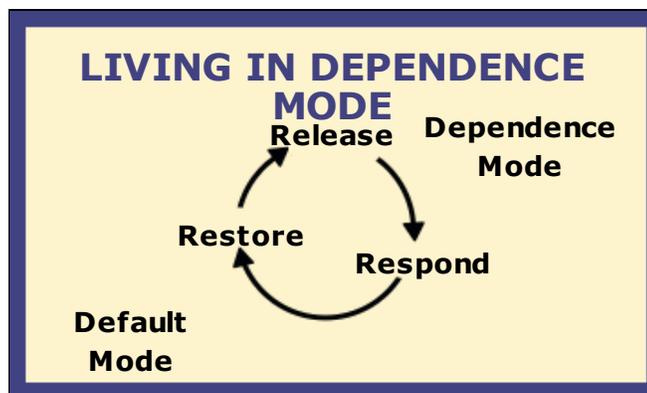


Figure 7 - Living in Dependence Mode

Step 1. **RELEASE** - At the beginning of your day, as an act of worship ([Rom. 12:1-2](#)), consciously yield your life to the control of God's Spirit. You can do this with the confidence that He has all the spiritual resources you will need in order to be His instrument in the situations you will face that day. This is an appropriate conclusion to your daily devotional time (often called a "quiet time") as you reflect on God's Word, confess any known sin ([1Jn.1:9](#)) and share time with Him in prayer. It is a step of faith where emotions may or may not accompany our obedience. This could be called the **dependence mode**, where we intentionally depend on the Holy Spirit's strength as we walk in obedience to God.

1. Take a few minutes and review the passages mentioned in this first step. Now recall and review the **Faith Process** (Session 2). Briefly summarize and write down below several of the truths you have noted that require a faith response on your part.

Step 2. **RESPOND** - Having released your life to the Spirit's control (in obedience to [Eph. 5:18](#)), you enter your day with confidence that God has good works already prepared for you ([Eph. 2:10](#)) which put the spotlight on Jesus. As you depend on the Spirit, those situations will become clear while you are "in them," rather than hours later. Each day becomes an exciting adventure where our focus on pleasing Christ increases our joy ([Jn. 15:11](#)).

2. Review your activities over the past three days. Were there opportunities to bless others which you missed because of selfishness? What part of these days was most joyful for you?

### ***Insight***

If we are too busy to place our lives at God's direction by the Spirit, we will miss much of what God has planned for our day and be vulnerable to the destructive impact of selfish, fleshly living.

Step 3. **RESTORE** - As life happens, you will inevitably encounter situations where your selfish tendencies disrupt your “partnership” (this is the best understanding of the word usually translated “fellowship”) with God. It could be a sarcastic comment to a coworker, a lustful thought as you pass a billboard, or an envious attitude toward a neighbor. You know it is rooted in your fleshly nature and that it hinders your ability to stay in step with the Spirit. You have reverted to **default mode**, depending on your selfish desires to guide your life.

### *Insight*

Faith Process:

- Embrace Faith
- Envision Obedience
- Expect Empowerment

At this point, you do not need to wait until the next morning for a fresh start. Christ is our Righteous Advocate, the One who is ready to stand with us as we confess our sin. As soon as you are aware of any sin, agree with God about what you did or thought. Then, thank Him for the forgiveness provided by Christ's death and by faith allow God to restore you into fellowship with Him. This is the essence of releasing control of your life to the Holy Spirit in obedience to [Ephesians 5:18](#). God delights to use forgiven people who walk by faith.

### *Insight*

Three common indicators that a person has drifted into default mode are **anxiety**, **anger** or **arrogance**.

This **RELEASE / RESPOND / RESTORE** pattern will most likely have to be repeated numerous times each day. It is the way we “keep in step with the Spirit” as He empowers humble, available, and imperfect people.

## **D. Now What?**

1. Keep a diary/journal of your walk with Christ this week as you follow this pattern. Write some of the key verses in this session that encourage you to live in God's presence and power.

2. Read [Ephesians 4-6](#) again this week and make a list of the commands you find in this important letter of spiritual instruction. Which of these commands require supernatural power for you to consistently obey?

3. Focus on two key commands in Ephesians. How should your decisions be different this week because of these commands? Pray with your partner for God to help you live out these truths this week.

## Footnote

1. See <https://ministrycatalysts.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Gifts.pdf> for more information on spiritual gifts.

**... Equipped for Ministry**

## **Session 7 – CELEBRATING GOD’S CHARACTER**

### **A. What If?**

Your teenage son has invited some friends over for the big game. As you watch the action from the back of the room, you are initially astounded at how quickly a half dozen 15 year-olds devour a couple of large pizzas and dozens of chicken wings. After plenty of excitement and yelling during the game (and another order of pizzas), one of the players begins his post-game interview by thanking “the Big Guy upstairs.” Another expresses gratitude to his “Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” One of the teenagers remarks that he is uncomfortable with speaking about Jesus in a public setting. Another responds that he squirms when people talk about God flippantly as the “Big Guy” or “my homeboy.” A couple of other comments are offered, but it is an obvious stalemate. After another slice of pizza and some good-natured harassment for the fans of the losing team, the party breaks up.

When they leave, your son asks if you heard what his friends were talking about. When you nod affirmatively, he asks, “How should we talk about God? Is He our heavenly buddy or the all-powerful Judge? Does He want to be our friend or is He so great that He is completely different from us?”

1. How would you respond to such a question?

2. How does this question relate to the commandment to “not take the name of the Lord your God in vain” ([Ex. 20:7](#))?

**Insight**

The Sovereign God desires to be our closest friend.

**B. God Says What?**

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Psalm 145:3-4](#).

Worship can be defined as “declaring or celebrating the value or worth of someone or something.” As we observe our society, it is obvious that people are innately worshippers. We will find something to value, treasure, or cherish. Whether it is our family, job, a hobby, a pleasure, or even charitable effort, whatever is most highly esteemed is an indicator of our focus of worship.

As we have seen in our first six sessions, we have been blessed in amazing ways through God's grace experienced in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of this indescribable gift, it is only reasonable that our worship of God should follow. This session grapples with what the Bible says about God's character. It is the primer we need for speaking and living in ways that honor God. This truth is fuel for God-focused living whether we are at a church service, engaged in our daily time with God or working in ways that point people toward Jesus. You may find that some of these concepts are challenging. Would you not want God to be so awesome He makes your *mind ache* and *heart soar* when you attempt to grasp His greatness?

Since the Bible reveals God as both friend ([Ex. 33:11](#); [Jn. 15:13-14](#)) and judge ([Gen. 18:25](#); [Jn. 5:27](#)), we need God's wisdom as we relate to Him in reverence and intimacy. God does not reveal Himself exhaustively and our capacity to understand and know Him is limited by our own frailties. God

has communicated truthfully to us about Himself so that we might have a personal, intimate, worshipful relationship with Him. Let's examine three key ways God reveals Himself to us.

1. According to [Psalm 19:1](#) and [Romans 1:20](#), how has God revealed Himself so that every person can see His glory, power and divine nature?

2. What do [John 17:17](#) and [Hebrews 1:1](#) reveal about how God communicates His truth to us?

3. How do [Hebrews 1:2-3](#) and [John 1:18](#) clarify a unique way God reveals Himself?

4. How has God used these three means of revelation to help you know Him better? What impact has this had on your personal and corporate worship?

### ***Insight***

What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you. A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: Harper Collins, 1961), 1.

God's gracious pursuit of intimate fellowship with rebellious creatures is an amazing thread which connects all of His revelation. He is both perfectly glorious and gracious. Knowing Him personally is the greatest privilege of this life and eternity ([Phil. 3:8-11](#); [Col. 1:27](#)). As you ponder the following ten attributes of God's character, remember that this is a select list, not an exhaustive one. It is intended to stimulate both worship of God in spirit and truth and study of Scripture with special sensitivity to the multifaceted greatness of God.

1. **Infinite** - God has no limits or boundaries and cannot be hindered or limited in any way. This aspect of God's character affirms that He possesses all His attributes inexhaustibly and perfectly.

a. What do you learn about God's infiniteness from [1 Kings 8:27](#) and [Acts 17:24-25](#)?

b. How does an understanding of this attribute of God stimulate worship?

***Insight***

The **Faith Process** (Session 2) is critical as we grapple with truths about God's attributes.

2. **Eternal** - God is endless with respect to time, with neither beginning or end. There was never a time when God did not exist. He relates to the past, present and future without distinction, completely free from all succession of time.

a. Examine [Psalm 90:2](#) and [1 Timothy 1:17](#). What do these verses reveal about God's eternity?

b. How would a greater appreciation of God's eternity encourage your faithfulness as a follower of Christ?

3. **Omniscient** - God perfectly knows all things, actual and possible: past, present, and future through all eternity.

a. What do you discover from [Psalm 139:1-6](#) and [Hebrews 4:13](#) about God's omniscience?

b. How does your awareness of God's omniscience impact your prayer life?

4. **Omnipotent** - God is all-powerful and able to do anything He chooses to do in harmony with His perfect character.

a. Examine [Job 42:1-2](#) and [Matthew 19:26](#). How do these passages stimulate your confidence in God?

b. Describe a recent time when remembering God's omnipotence strengthened your commitment to obediently follow Christ. What biblical story strengthens your understanding of this attribute?

5. **Omnipresent** - God is always present everywhere at all times.

a. Ponder the truths in [Psalm 139:7-12](#) and [Jeremiah 23:24](#). How does this attribute impact your sense of accountability to God?

b. In what way does an awareness of God's omnipresence strengthen your spiritual life? How does this truth affect a person's struggle with loneliness?

6. **Immutable** - God is unchangeable and unchanging. While His dealings with each person are unique, His attributes in all circumstances remain perfectly consistent.

a. What do you learn from [Numbers 23:19](#) and [James 1:17](#) about God's immutability? Why is this truth critical for people living in a chaotic world?

b. How should we understand passages like [Genesis 6:6](#), [Exodus 32:14](#) and [Jonah 4:1-4](#) in light of the clear teaching on God's immutability? Examine this link (<http://gotquestions.org/God-change-mind.html>) and discuss your conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

7. **Sovereign** - God is in complete control and everything He does is right.

a. How do [Psalm 115:3](#) and [Acts 17:26](#) clarify the meaning of God's sovereignty?

b. Discuss a time when the truth about God's sovereignty strengthened your walk with Christ.

8. **Just** - God perfectly deals with all people and circumstances in complete righteousness.

a. Examine [Deuteronomy 32:4](#) and [Romans 3:25-26](#) as you reflect on God's justice. What do you learn from these passages about the significance of God being just?

***Insight***

For additional perspective on God's justice and mercy consider [2 Chronicles 12:1-12](#).

b. How is justice different from fairness? How is discipline ([Heb. 12:4-11](#)) distinct from punishment?

9. **Holy** - God is perfect in every aspect of His being, always demonstrating absolute moral purity as He completely fulfills His purpose.

a. What do you learn from [Leviticus 11:44-45](#) and [Revelation 4:8](#) about God's holiness?

***Insight***

Holiness literally means to be "set apart." God is perfect in purity and purpose.

b. How do both purity and purpose relate to the command of [1 Peter 1:15-16](#)?

10. **Love** - God seeks what is ultimately best for His redeemed, lavishing His grace, mercy, discipline, and goodness upon them.

a. What do [Psalm 36:7](#) and [1 John 4:7-10](#) reveal about God's love?

b. Share with your partner a time when you experienced God's love in a life-changing way.

c. What do you learn from [Exodus 34:5-7](#) about how God is perfect in both His love and justice? What event in human history brings God's love and justice into sharpest focus?

Worship touches all of life, and can be expressed in solitude, close personal interaction, and large gatherings. Our capacity for worship is enlarged as our awareness and appreciation for God's greatness expands and our obedience to His truth becomes more consistent. The definition of worship in the adjacent Insight box will guide

### ***Insight***

Worship is the believer's response of all that he is - mind, emotion, will, and body - to all that God is, says, and does. This response has its mystical side in subjective experience, and its practical side in objective obedience to God's revealed truth. It is a loving response that is balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better. *Warren W. Wiersbe, Real Worship: It Will Transform Your Life* (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1986), 27.

your continued study and reflection on God's attributes as they are revealed in His Word and gracious work in your life.

### **C. So What?**

1. Which of these attributes of God encourage you to worship Him spontaneously (like Paul in [Rom. 11:33-36](#))?

2. What comes to your mind now when you think about God?

3. Who is your "audience" during the worship gatherings with your church family?

### **D. Now What?**

1. Review a second aspect of God's character discussed in this session and spend a few extra minutes once again celebrating God. How does this truth from God's Word motivate you in loving and serving Christ?

2. Spend at least 15 minutes on Saturday reviewing this session. Share with your partner how this affected your corporate worship at church on Sunday.

3. Read Ephesians a third time and make a list of any passages which help you celebrate God's character.

## Footnote

1. For additional study, go to <http://carm.org/does-god-repent-an-examination-of-exodus-32-14-and-gen...>

**... Equipped for Ministry**

## **Session 8 – EXPERIENCING GOD’S FORGIVENESS**

### **A. What If?**

Your brother and his family are visiting for the weekend. You notice that he is quieter than usual. During a morning walk, you mention that he seems to be a bit down. After a brief silence and a sigh, he responds, “You and I both trusted Christ at Young Life camp. As long as I spent lots of time with the group from that camp, I made progress. Eventually I met and married Jennifer and now we have two kids. I find that I have become critical of my wife and exasperated with the children. I often have to exaggerate to make a sale at work and then I have crushing remorse. I am tired of feeling guilty about everything and I am not sure God will keep on forgiving me. How can I stop this cycle?”

1. How would you respond to your brother?

2. Have you ever had similar thoughts?

3. What have you learned from God’s Word that helps you deal with nagging guilt?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Hebrews 10:10](#).

### OUR PROBLEM

Before we focus on this verse, let's review the biblical teaching on the source of man's struggle with sin and the reason it took Christ's death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin.

1. What do the following passages reveal about our sinful nature, or what the Bible calls "our flesh" ([Rom. 7:18](#))?

[Isaiah 53:6](#)

#### ***Insight***

According to [Mark 7:20-23](#), our sin comes from within.

[Romans 3:10-12](#)

2. What do you learn from [Romans 12:1-2](#) about the challenge of living in a sinful world? When have you felt squeezed by the world's values?

3. What do you learn from [Ephesians 2:1-3](#) about who is the ultimate initiator/orchestrator of mankind's chronic disobedience against God?

We obviously struggle with sin and Scripture tells us how to stay away from sin ([Phil. 2:13-14](#); [2 Tim. 2:22](#)). But Scripture also helps us understand how to restore our fellowship with God when we sin. Religion often teaches people to do good things to make up for our sin or emotionally punish ourselves to show our sorrow for sin. These are distracting discouragements rooted in confusion about what Christ accomplished on the cross.

*If you are like most people, perhaps you have done good things motivated by guilt. Or, you have stewed in self-loathing to prove you really intend to do better in the future.*

4. What are the possible outcomes of such pursuits? Do these approaches put the focus on Christ and the cross or on us?

5. Reflect on [1 Corinthians 2:2](#). What patterns help you keep your focus on the cross ("making the cross big")? What happens when you begin to focus on yourself or other people rather than the cross on which Christ died in our place?

### **Insight**

The consequences of comparing ourselves to others are arrogance or discouragement (and usually a combination of both). This is a toxic environment for spiritual growth.

6. How does minimizing our sinfulness (pretending to be better than we are) or marginalizing God's holiness (performing good works to earn God's favor) impact our spiritual growth?

7. When we minimize our sin or marginalize God's holiness, we shrink the cross, distorting our spiritual perception so that we are "stuck" in the default mode of reliance on ourselves. Is there a pattern in your life that shrinks the cross?

***Insight***

It is not possible for a person to live by faith and shrink the cross at the same time.

**GOD'S SOLUTION**

1. Read [Hebrews 10:1-18](#) and review [Hebrews 7:27](#), [9:12](#), [9:27-28](#). Since repetition indicates emphasis, what are the key truths in these verses? Who has made us holy?

2. Reflect on [1 John 1:9](#). What does it mean to confess your sins to God?

3. What do we learn from [Psalm 103:12](#) and [Micah 7:19](#) about how far God removes our sin from us?

The terms for forgiveness in Scripture focus primarily on removing or sending away our sin. It can be seen as a debt that has been completely paid ([Col. 2:13-15](#)). There is no smudge or spot left when we are forgiven by God. There are temporal consequences that God will graciously help us face, but there is no condemnation ([Rom. 8:1](#)) and no barrier to full enjoyment of God's presence and power.

**Insight**

**Confession** - agreeing with God about both our sin and Christ's complete payment for that sin.

**Cleansing** - experiencing God's forgiveness and the blessings of restored fellowship.

**C. So What?**

When we sin, it is our *fellowship* with God, not our *relationship* with Him, that is broken. Experiencing God's forgiveness and cleansing through confession restores us to *fellowship*, which is enjoyed as we depend upon the Spirit's empowerment.

	Relationship	Fellowship
<b>Begins</b>	When we trust Christ	When we trust Christ
<b>Broken</b>	Never	By sin
<b>Maintained</b>	By Christ	By confession/then living in dependence mode

1. What do you learn from [Romans 3:21-26](#) and [Colossians 1:13-14](#) about the blessings of forgiveness in Christ?

2. According to [Matthew 18:21-35](#), how should this truth affect our eagerness to forgive people who offend us?

## D. Now What?

1. What do we learn from [Hebrews 4:12-16](#) about approaching God when we are convicted of sin?

2. Meditate on [Psalm 32:1-5](#) and write any insights that help you appreciate God's forgiveness.

3. Make a list of any sin that you have not confessed to God. Add that to that list any confessed sin for which you still feel guilty. Confess (agree with God) each sin and write over them "paid in full once for all." Jot down any verses from this session that help you see God's truth about your forgiveness. Consider setting the list on fire, take the ashes outside, and let the wind blow them away. This is a good visual for the forgiveness of God. No trace or residual of the sin is left.

### *Insight*

Through faith in Christ, all your sins - past, present, and future - are forgiven.

4. False guilt is a general sense of alienation from God reflecting a lack of understanding about our identity and security in Christ and a failure to practice the RELEASE / RESPOND / RESTORE pattern (Session 6). Discuss how this session will help you discover freedom from false guilt.

### *Insight*

False guilt may be the result of a lack of faith that God will keep His promises or a vague sense of guilt about your sinfulness (perhaps rooted in your religious experience or family environment). Satan is an adversary skilled at using false guilt to derail your fellowship and fruitfulness.

5. Share with your partner the joy of being cleansed of all unrighteousness. Pray for each other this week as you consistently keep in step with the Spirit.

## Footnote

1. <http://www.serge.org/resources/publications> *The Gospel-Centered Life* is an excellent small group curriculum which emphasizes this concept of making the cross as large as it really is in our daily lives, encouraging us to live in dependence mode, relying on the empowerment of God's Spirit.

**... Equipped for Ministry**

## **Session 9 – TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S WORD**

### **A. What If?**

After months of conversations with Susan, Jan trusted Christ and began a personal relationship with God. Susan had answered many of her questions during that process and Jan soon began to attend church with her. She began to grow spiritually through the biblical messages and soon joined a community group where they discussed the previous Sunday’s sermon. Both Susan and the group leader encouraged Jan to read and study the Bible for herself. But she felt she was getting enough spiritual nurturing through these church experiences. When the issue kept coming up, Jan asked Susan why personal study of the Bible was such a big deal. Finally, she asked Susan, “Why aren’t two hours a week at church enough for studying the Bible? Plus, there are so many confusing parts, I’m afraid I’ll come to the wrong conclusions if I study it by myself.”

1. How would you respond to Jan?

2. Why is it important for each believer to study the Bible for themselves?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Hebrews 4:12](#).

1. How has your appreciation for the reliability and benefits of God's Word changed during the first eight sessions?

2. How do [Hebrews 4:12](#) and [Isaiah 55:11](#) clarify the power of God's Word to impact our lives?

3. Examine [Philippians 2:12-13](#) and [2 Timothy 2:15](#). What do you learn from these verses about the diligence required to be faithful in studying and obeying God's Word?

### ***Insight***

[1 Peter 2:2](#) and [Hebrews 5:14](#) illustrate growing toward maturity through the study and practice of God's Word.

4. How does the connection between [John 14:25-26](#) and [2 Peter 1:21](#) encourage you to study God's Word with confidence and hope for insight?

5. How would your life change if you consistently practiced the *Faith Process* (review Session 2) in response to any of the verses above?

The Bible was living, powerful, and profitable for its first readers and hearers. Today, it continues to have that life-changing impact on people's lives throughout the world. Though written in a distinctive culture for a specific historical context, the Bible communicates spiritual truths that transcend cultures and times. In order to clearly grasp these truths, an understanding of the biblical content in its context, as well as the historical circumstances, and cultural environment of the human author and his original audience, are of great value. This understanding sharpens our focus as we seek to discern the biblical principles in a specific passage. The process we use to study the Bible systematically guides us to the meaning in its original context, its spiritual significance in our lives, and its specific impact in how we should live each day.

6. How does [Ezra 7:10](#) help us understand how God wants us to study His Word?

7. The three core elements of the **Inductive Bible Study Process**<sup>1</sup> are:

- a. **Observation** - What does God's Word say?
- b. **Interpretation** - What does God's Word mean?
- c. **Application** - How will obedience to this truth change my daily life and honor God?

### ***Insight***

When you understand and daily demonstrate biblical truth in your life, people will be interested in what you teach (in a large group or in a coffee shop).

Additionally, we suggest initial and concluding steps to ensure that we receive the supernatural help God provides so that we move beyond deciding to doing. In this way we consistently practice the command of [James 1:22](#). Because the truths and wisdom from God's Word are more valuable than gold ([Ps. 19:10](#); [119:127](#)) and precious jewels ([Prov. 3:15](#)), it is appropriate to understand the study of Scripture as a mining operation.

**Observation** would be like the "spade" or "sorting work" required to uncover and organize this precious resource from God. It takes serious digging to expose the insights that will help us clearly grasp God's truth. It involves shovels of different sizes as you unearth the details which are valuable throughout the study process. Generally, the harder you work with the shovel, the more treasure you have available as you begin the "sorting work."

After you expose and organize the facts of the passage, you are ready to begin **interpretation**, the "significance work," which probes the data with the "What does this mean in its original setting and in today's world?" question. As you grapple with the meaning of the passage, you will begin to think of ways you could best utilize the treasure you have discovered in your life. This is called **application**, which involves knowing and choosing to obediently live out the truth or truths God has revealed in His Word.

## HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

**Step One: Prayer** - Depend on God's Spirit for focus, diligence, discernment, and an obedient heart as you study a passage. Pray for the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide, encourage, and teach you ([Jn. 14:25-26](#); [16:13](#)) as you study the Scripture written by people He inspired ([2 Pet. 1:20-21](#)).

### *Insight*

The more time you invest in observing and seeking to correctly interpret the passage, the more specific and confident you can be regarding how God wants you to "set it" in a specific context where obedience in your daily life displays God's glory ([Matt. 5:16](#)).

### *Insight*

Prayer is essential as you study God's Word.

Ask God to generously give you wisdom ([Jam. 1:5](#)) with a heart that already says *Yes!* to whatever He shows you from His Word.

**Step Two: Observation** - Ask yourself, "What does this passage say?". Here you are ***digging*** for and ***sorting*** spiritual treasure.

Though the Bible is supernaturally powerful, it is still literature that can be explored the way you learned during English literature classes in school.

Each book in the Bible has a historical context that needs to be examined. A good study Bible or Bible dictionary will help you in this area. It is also important to consider the literary genre (i.e., history, poetry, letters, apocalyptic prophecy) in the book in order to wisely sort the specific observations you identify.

As you develop this critical study process, you will return to a passage you have already examined several times a few weeks ago, [Philippians 4:4-9](#). A helpful step would be to look for the facts like a good investigative journalist who focuses initially on "who, what, when, where, why, and how." Read [Philippians 4:1-9](#) to review the immediate context and complete this list of questions.

### **Digging Questions:**

**1. Who?** Paul (author), brothers and sisters (believers in Philippi), the Lord, . . . (add other insights you discover for each question).

**2. What?** rejoice in everything, present your requests to God, . . .

**3. When?** About A.D. 62

**4. Where?**

**5. Why?**

**6. How?**

After you have completed all your initial digging (you may need to dig some more as you sort what you have found), organize your discoveries into these basic categories. Complete as many categories as possible. As you reflect on these observations, begin to consider the following:

**Sorting Questions:**

**7. Context to consider:** conflict between Euodia and Syntyche (verses 1-3), . . .

**8. Commands to obey:** rejoice in the Lord always, . . .

**9. Promises to believe:**

**10. Repeated words:** rejoice, peace, . . .

**11. Connecting words:** finally, . . .

**12. Contrasts:** anxiety / prayer, anything / everything, . . .

**13. Comparisons:**

**14. Descriptions:**

**15. Verb tenses:** present tense (continuing action)

**16. Questions to consider:** For example, in what way is the Lord near? Or, how are our prayer life and thought life connected? (These kinds of questions are the **hinge** between observation and interpretation. The more thoughtful questions you identify, the more fruitful you will be in discovering the significance of your observations.)

Review your passage and see if there is any more digging you can do. Remember, *thoroughness in observation enhances clarity in interpretation.*

### ***Insight***

You will notice that each passage may not have specifics for each category, but knowing what to look for is critical. You can practice this process on [Ephesians 5:1-2](#) (which you have also read several times) or [Romans 12:1-2](#) to identify other examples from these categories.

**Step Three: Interpretation** - Ask yourself, "What does this passage mean?". Here you are *grasping the significance of the spiritual treasure.*

This step seeks to determine what the original author intended to communicate with his original audience, and the significance of that message for today's world. As you continue with conscious dependence on God's Spirit, you are seeking to understand the significance of what you've discovered.

**1. Define key words** (expand this list as necessary):

- a. rejoice
- b. peace
- c. transcends
- d. noble
- e.
- f.

**2. Ask questions about facts observed in the passage** (expand this list of questions as appropriate):

- a. What is Paul's relationship with the Philippians ([Acts 16:11-40](#), [Phil. 4:15-17](#))?
- b. Is there a difference between prayer, petition and requests?
- c. How are our prayer life and thought life connected?
- d.
- e.

**3. Use other Scriptures to help understand the passage** (called **correlation**)

This is pursued in *The Circles of Significance* (see Figure 8 below). Note the five circles of context around each passage: the preceding and following paragraphs, the entire book of which it is part, the author's other writings, the testament in which the book is located and the entire Bible.

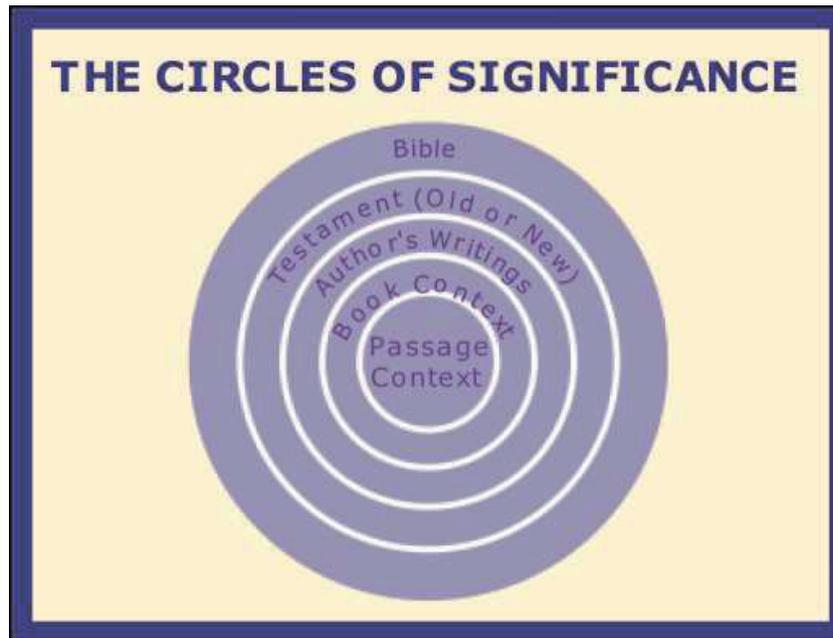


Figure 8 - The Circles of Significance

A Bible with cross-references (associated references usually listed next to the verse) and a concordance (which lists the words in other biblical passages) is important for this part of the study.<sup>2</sup> The more you study, the more possible connections you will be able to make.

So, let's work through the circles of significance. This is illustrative, not exhaustive. You may find other passages which are valuable resources.

a. *Passage Context*: How does the conflict described in [Philippians 4:2-3](#) stir up turmoil and anxiety that robs people of joy?

b. *Book Context*: How does Paul's similar exhortations in [Philippians 2:1-2](#) and [3:1](#) help you grasp the urgency of this issue?

c. *Author's Writings:* Colossians was written about the same time as Philippians while Paul was under house arrest in Rome ([Acts 28:16](#)). How does [Colossians 1:24-27](#) help you understand what it means to rejoice in the Lord? What does [Philippians 4:2](#) add to your understanding of this matter?

d. *Testament:* Read [John 15:5-11](#). How does this passage relate to the joy, peace, and fruitful ministry encouraged in [Philippians 4:4-9](#)?

e. *Bible:* How do [Psalm 13:5](#) and [Isaiah 26:3-4](#) help you understand how you can experience the joy and peace offered in [Philippians 4:4-9](#)?

While all of these passages are significant for spiritual encouragement, the closer the reference is to the center of the circle, the more helpful and significant it is for clarifying the meaning of a particular passage.

#### **4. Summarize your insights:**

a. As you reflect on the spiritual truths you are gleaning from [Philippians 4:4-9](#), there will be several key thoughts or principles that move you from the biblical text to 21st Century life. An example might be: "Worry and prayer are our only possible responses to life's problems." With your partner, share some of the spiritual principles you found in [Philippians 4:4-9](#).

b. Now try to write a single statement ("the big idea") that pulls these thoughts into a focused concept.

As noted before, there are numerous resources available to help us explore God's Word. After you have completed your initial study, biblically faithful resources<sup>3</sup> will both sharpen your understanding and enlarge your capacity to wisely "set" or obey this truth in your daily life.

## C. So What?

**Step Four: Application** - Ask yourself, "How will obedience to this truth change my life and honor God?". Here you *are putting the treasure in the right "setting" for maximum spiritual influence.*

This step is rooted in seeing how scriptural truths should change our lives. As you prayerfully meditate on the insights and principles you gained from your study, ask God to show you specific actions that reflect an obedient response to those truths.

1. Is there a specific command I need to obey, a promise I need to trust, an example I need to follow, or a hazard I need to avoid as I live by faith in the days ahead?

An understanding of the **Faith Process** is pivotal as you practice the application step of inductive Bible study.

### ***Insight***

**Faith Definition:** *Faith that pleases God chooses to know and obey God's Word regardless of feelings, circumstances or cultural pressures.*

### **Faith Process:**

1. Embrace Faith
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Obedience
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Empowerment

2. Is there an area of my life that is not in harmony with the truths and principles in [Philippians 4:4-9](#)? What would it look like if I chose to obey God's Word in this area of my life?

3. What needs to happen for me to get in step with the Spirit ([Gal.5:25](#)) in this area?

## D. Now What?

**Step Five: Obedience Empowered by the Holy Spirit** (*moving from deciding to doing in real life*)

1. Identify at least two changes for which you are expecting empowerment from God as you practice the truths of [Philippians 4:4-9](#). Share the specific obedience you have envisioned in light of God's truth.

2. Practice the RELEASE/RESPOND/RESTORE pattern with specific attention to these areas of obedience to God's truth.

3. Read [John 13-17](#). Make a list of the truths you observe that help you appreciate the ministry of the Holy Spirit, especially as it relates to understanding and obeying God's Word.

4. Commit to pray daily for each other in these areas of spiritual growth.

## Footnotes

1. Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible*, Revised and Updated (Chicago: Word Publishers, 2007). This excellent book will allow you to explore the concepts presented in this session more fully.
2. There are numerous free Bible study resources available at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/library/> and <http://www.studylight.org/>. Extensive additional resources are available for purchase at <http://www.logos.com/>

3. Such as the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* and [www.soniclight.com/constable](http://www.soniclight.com/constable)

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## **Session 10 – COMMUNICATING WITH GOD**

### **A. What If?**

Judy heard a sermon that challenged her to begin a regular prayer journal. Since she was a young Christian and was looking for a way to grow closer to God, she bought a journal and starting making a prayer list. Few of her prayers seemed to be answered the way she hoped and soon she began to wonder if she even knew how to pray. Was it just telling God what you and others needed or was there more? Soon she began to have doubts about whether God was even listening.

She went to lunch with one of her friends who excitedly mentioned an encouraging answer to an issue she had prayed about for several years. At that point, Judy realized she must be missing something. She could not imagine praying for years with no answer. She told her friend, “That must be exciting, but I can not relate to what you just said. I’ve been trying to pray, but it doesn’t seem to work for me. What part of this am I missing?”

1. How would you respond to Judy?

2. What has God taught you about prayer that you desire to share with others?

Most people have some concept of prayer and people in all religions (or no religion) spontaneously feel a need to pray in the midst of crisis. But those same people have much confusion and many questions. Therefore, people often default to a prayerless life when the emergency passes. There are 650 prayers in the Bible (with 450 specific answers).<sup>1</sup> Jesus specifically taught His disciples how to pray.<sup>2</sup> Several of Paul's letters include extended prayers<sup>3</sup> which are powerful models for our prayers.

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Philippians 4:6-7](#).

There are three questions we need to explore in order for our prayer life to be the rich blessing God intends. First, what is prayer? Second, how do we pray? And third, how does God communicate with us through prayer? Let's begin with . . .

### 1. What Is Prayer?

**At its most basic level, prayer is communicating with God. God wants us to interact with Him, and it is essential for a growing, healthy relationship with God.**

a. Read [Psalm 5:1-3](#) and [Matthew 7:7-11](#) and list the key truths you learn about prayer.

b. Read [Psalm 139:1-6](#) and then write a paraphrase of verses 5-6.

**Since those who trust in Jesus Christ are God's children, answering our prayers delights our Heavenly Father.**

c. How do the passages below help you grasp God's heart toward you when you seek His help?

- [Psalm 34:17-18](#)

- [Psalm 62:5-8](#)

- [Revelation 5:8](#)

***Insight***

Because God knows everything about us, He knows what we want before we ask Him. The issue in prayer is not informing God regarding our situation, but God transforming our heart in our circumstances.

**Because God is always with us ([Heb.13:5](#)), He hears and answers our prayers.**

d. How do the following passages confirm and clarify this principle?

- [Psalm 6:9](#)

- [Matthew 21:22](#)

- [1 John 5:14-15](#)

**Prayer encourages us to be honest before God with confidence since we know He desires to show us mercy and grace in our need.**

e. Examine [Psalm 51:1-19](#) and list the phrases that reveal David's transparency before God. What were the circumstances surrounding this passage and why was David called a man after God's heart ([Acts 13:22](#))?

**Prayer draws us close to God by helping us focus on His faithfulness more than our frailties.**

f. What insights do you gain from [Psalm 103:1-5](#) and [James 4:7-10](#) regarding the blessings and challenges of intimacy with God?

**Both God's Son and His Spirit are actively partnering with us as we pray.**

g. What do you learn from [Romans 8:26-27](#) and [8:34](#) that gives you confidence as you pray?

Prayer is an amazing spiritual privilege. Yet, uncertainty about how to pray robs many believers of full enjoyment of this blessing. So, let's consider . . .

## 2. How Do We Pray?

There are four primary aspects of prayer: **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving** and **Supplication** (ACTS)

**Adoration** - *prayer that praises God for His majestic greatness and merciful compassion.*

a. List some of the reasons David joyfully offers adoration to God in [Psalm 145:1-21](#).

**Confession** - *prayer that agrees fully with God about our sin.*

b. How do [James 5:15-16](#) and [1 John 1:9](#) help you clarify the significance of confession?

**Thanksgiving** - *prayer that expresses joyful gratitude to God for His spiritual, relational, and tangible blessings.*

c. How do [1 Thessalonians 5:18](#) and [James 1:17](#) help us understand the scope of our thanksgiving?

**Supplication** - *prayer that requests something from God, asking Him to help us or others as we pursue opportunities or face obstacles in life.*

### **Insight**

ACTS:

**A** doration

**C** onfession

**T** hanksgiving

**S** upplication

d. What are we commanded to do in [1 Peter 5:7](#)?

e. Discuss both the imperative and promise found in [Philippians 4:6-7](#). When have you experienced the blessing promised in these verses?

**Insight**

It would be helpful to review the specific ways you agree with God when you confess your sins.

Please note that the issue is not the order of our prayers. You may begin in a different category of prayer on any given day, depending on the spiritual issues you are facing. You may also move back and forth between all four during a prayer time or you may only focus on one area in another time of prayer. However, these four aspects of prayer are part of a healthy pattern of our intimate communication with God.

**Insight**

According to [1 Timothy 2:1](#), we should pray for everyone, especially those in authority.

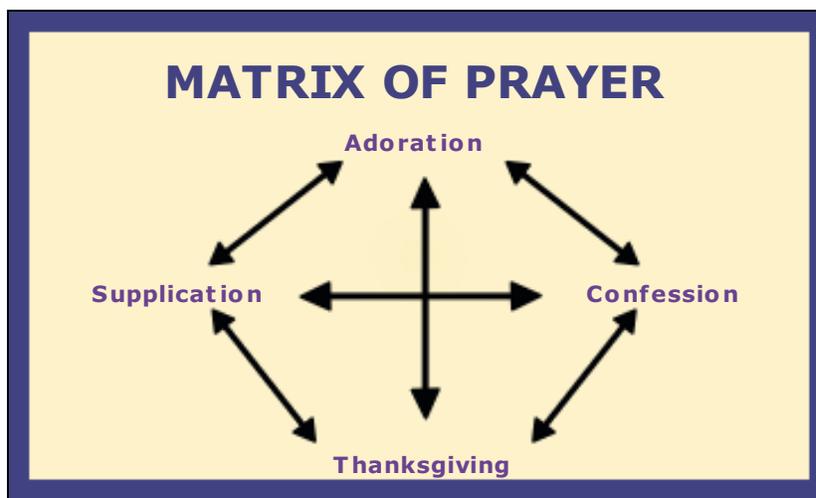


Figure 9 - Matrix of Prayer

### 3. How Does God Communicate With Us Through Prayer?

The Bible is the core of God's communication with us, but God guides our understanding in specific ways as we enjoy His presence through prayer.

- a. How is the Holy Spirit involved in God's communication with us according to [John 14:25-26](#) and [16:7-13](#)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. How do [Psalms 46:10](#) and [139:23-24](#) reveal ways to be more sensitive to God in your prayer life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. In what ways have you experienced the truth Jesus taught in [John 10:3-6](#) and [10:27](#)? Why is listening harder than talking in all our relationships ([Eccl. 5:1-3](#); [Jas. 1:19-23](#))?

**Remember that God's Spirit will guide us in harmony with God's Word while putting the spotlight on God's Son.<sup>4</sup>**

### C. So What?

1. As you examine your pattern of prayer, what hinders or strengthens your faithfulness in pursuing this privilege?

2. Which aspect of prayer is most well-developed in your life?

3. What do you learn from [Matthew 6:5-8](#) about what you should avoid when you pray?

4. How do you respond when God answers your prayer with “Not yet” or “No”? Can you be certain which of these is the answer in the short term? How does God work in our lives while we are in “the waiting room”? Describe a time when God answered your prayer with a “Yes.”

### **D. Now What?**

1. What one change would strengthen your prayer life this week?

2. Keep a journal describing both the content of your prayers and the impact of God’s answers in your life.

3. As you review [Ephesians 1:15-23](#) and [3:14-21](#), what are the similarities and differences between Paul's prayers and your prayers?

4. Review the four aspects of prayer and then pray with your partner with gratitude that you are joined in prayer by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

## Footnotes

1. [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How\\_many\\_prayers\\_are\\_mentioned\\_in\\_the\\_Bible](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_prayers_are_mentioned_in_the_Bible)
2. [Matt. 6:5-14](#); [Luke 11:1-13](#)
3. [Eph. 1:3-14](#); [1:15-23](#); [3:14-21](#); [Phil. 1:9-11](#); [Col. 1:9-14](#); [1 Thess. 3:11-12](#); [2 Thess. 1:11-12](#)
4. Priscilla Shirer (*Discerning the Voice of God: How to Recognize When God Is Speaking* [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012]). Priscilla Shirer provides helpful insights in this aspect of prayer and would be a valuable resource as you learn to listen and wisely follow Christ.

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## **Session 11 – CULTIVATING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

### **A. What If?**

Susan and Joan meet weekly for encouragement and accountability. The previous week the discussion in their fellowship group at church was on forgiving others. There were lots of questions and more than the normal amount of transparency. Susan did not say much, but Joan could tell this was a challenging topic for her. Over coffee Susan finally opened up about some of the painful experiences of her childhood. She explained that she could never meet her mother's expectations, and the hurt from years earlier still makes their relationship tense.

As she talked, a knot formed in Joan's stomach as she was reminded of the sibling rivalry with her brother. His constant harping on any mistake wounded Joan deeply and still caused insecurity in her friendships. As tears welled up for both of them, there was a long pause. Then...

1. Can you relate to the pain experienced by these women? If you were sitting at the table, how would you offer encouragement to them?

2. How do unresolved hurt/anger/bitterness impact our lives and relationships?<sup>1</sup> Why is it so difficult to forgive others?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Ephesians 4:32](#).

### FORGIVING OTHERS

*Forgiveness is critical to our spiritual and emotional health and essential for healthy relationships. As we grow toward Christ-centered maturity, forgiving others because Christ forgave us results in spiritual freedom and enlarged fruitfulness.*

Since God has planned and provided for our forgiveness ([Eph. 1:3-14](#)), He is our model for forgiveness that addresses life's real hurts while making restored relationships possible. So, let's review two key truths we learned about how God deals with us in providing our forgiveness.

1. What do you learn from [Ephesians 2:4-5](#) and [Romans 5:8-10](#) about the timing and impact of God's loving initiative toward us?
  
2. Are you in a relationship that calls for you to offer forgiveness to another person? Look at [Matthew 5:43-47](#). What would forgiving initiative look like in that situation?

#### ***Insight***

1. God is the perfect, gracious initiator in our relationship with Him.
  
2. Therefore, Christ-centered people must take the initiative to forgive others and pursue reconciliation.

God loves us unconditionally, constantly focusing on our long-term best interests. Therefore, Christ-centered people **share God's love** without selfish strings.

3. How does [Colossians 3:12-14](#) help you understand the ways God uses hurtful people to increase our capacity to express His love? Is there any possibility that you can obey these commands in your own strength? How would obedience impact your spiritual credibility?

4. Read [Romans 5:3-5](#) and [1 John 3:1-3](#). How does God's love being poured out/lavished on you, especially in painful situations, strengthen your confidence that God will give you His love for difficult people?

5. According to [Ephesians 4:32](#), how and why are we to forgive others?

Forgiveness is costly. It often requires that we absorb the hurt and pain of another person's sin in order to release them from the relational debt they owe. Sometimes the cost may be financial. *However, the greater cost of continued bitterness is emotionally corrosive and spiritually destructive.*

### ***Insight***

The **Release/Respond/Restore** pattern is of critical importance as we pursue healthy relationships with others.

## BLESSING OTHERS

Though forgiveness is essential for healthy relationships, it is not the only clear instruction from God's Word that nourishes fulfilling fellowship with other believers. Each of the "one another" commands of the New Testament<sup>2</sup> contributes to relationships that honor God and bless people.

Below are a few of the almost 50 passages in the Bible which command behavior that will help you cultivate healthy relationships. As you look at just this handful, you will be reminded that supernatural empowerment necessary for such living. What do you learn from the following passages?

1. [Romans 12:10](#) and [15:7](#)

2. [Ephesians 4:2](#) and [5:21](#)<sup>3</sup>

## PURSUING RECONCILIATION

In addition to forgiveness for others and proactive investment in relationships, we will sometimes find ourselves in situations where we have offended others. God's Spirit is faithful to show us our sin ([Ps. 139:23-24](#)) and instructs us to obediently and promptly confess our sin to God ([1 Jn. 1:9](#)).

### *Insight*

The parable of the forgiving master and unforgiving servant ([Matt.18:21-35](#)) illuminates God's perspective on the significance of forgiving others.

1. According to [Matthew 5:23-24](#), what should we do when we realize we have sinned against another person? Why is obedience to this passage so challenging? What are the blessings associated with obedience in pursuing restitution?

2. Reflect on [Ephesians 4:1-2](#) and [Philippians 2:3-4](#). How do the truths in these passages strengthen your commitment to pursue reconciliation when you have wounded people?

### **C. So What?**

We are able to obey these truths only through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we allow Him to direct our life choices, we experience the ability to love and relate to others as God commanded. This pattern of life not only pleases God, but also enriches life's relationships.

1. Which of the "one another" commands examined above is most challenging for you? How would obedience to this truth impact your closest relationships?

2. How would your life change if you embraced faith, envisioned obedience, and expected God's power in obedience to [Ephesians 4:32](#)?

## D. Now What?

1. Discuss with your partner your questions, concerns, and plans for addressing a specific forgiveness issue you are facing. Explain the situation (being sensitive about not sharing specific names) and seek wisdom and prayer for this important step. Decide the first step and set a time and course for action.

2. Discuss ways in which forgiveness is different from trust? Are healthy boundaries in relationships consistent with loving forgiveness? What are some issues that hinder our willingness to forgive others?

3. Study the book of Philemon and share two or three insights from this short letter on reconciliation (using the pattern you learned in Session 9).

### ***Insight***

Mutual accountability requires prayer and encouragement as we practice the truths of God's Word. Discipleship partners have unique opportunities to practice mutual accountability.

## Footnotes

1. Dr. Les Carter (*The Anger Trap: Free Yourself from the Frustrations That Sabotage Your Life* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003]) offers keen insights into the patterns and consequences of anger as well as a healthy path toward addressing anger wisely.
2. <http://www.missionaloutreachnetwork.com/profiles/blogs/the-59-one-anothe...>
3. Two other significant passages are [Hebrews 3:13](#) and [James 5:9](#)

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## Session 12 – PURSUING SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

### A. What If?

You are enjoying your weekly lunch with Gary, discussing what you are learning through the various growth opportunities at church and encouraging each other in specific challenges at work and at home. Gary mentions that he had just finished reading Paul's second letter to Timothy. "Have you ever noticed 2 Timothy 2:2? It seems that Paul had a chain reaction of discipleship from Paul to Timothy to faithful people to even more people. That sounds pretty exciting, but how do you know what to teach people? Paul apparently taught Timothy the things that were essential for this, but I wouldn't know where to start. I have lots of questions myself. Do you think that verse is just for pastors?"

1. How would you respond to Gary's question?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. If you were asked to prepare a faithful follower of Christ to teach others how to follow Him, what are some key truths / skills you would include?

### B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize 2 Timothy 2:2.

One of the “hot topics” in the business world today is mentoring. The priority on “experienced” professionals making a personal investment in younger colleagues is an encouraging trend. But it is not a new concept. Moses was Joshua’s mentor; Jesus equipped His twelve disciples for world-changing ministry; and Paul invested personally in Timothy, Titus, and others as the next generation of leaders for the growing church. Mentoring is a mutually encouraging relationship distinguished by the **power of example** (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1), the **wisdom of humility** (Jam. 3:13; 1 Pet. 5:5-7), and an **attitude of enthusiasm** (Rom. 12:11; 3 John 4). These are experienced by both parties as God works His transforming purpose in them.

While spiritual nurturing and preparation for fruitful ministry may occur in large or small group settings, a mentoring relationship is often best experienced in a one-on-one relationship that encourages honest questions and personal transparency.

### ***Insight***

We will dive deeper into these significant aspects of launching multipliers in Session 18.

Certainly Joshua, the twelve disciples, and Paul’s proteges shared group time with their mentor. However, their extended times together (years of traveling together in each case) made numerous one-on-one conversations a reasonable expectation, though this is explicitly noted in just a few cases.<sup>1</sup>

A disciple is a learner, and as our memory verse makes clear, the learning is multiplied as faithful disciples teach other faithful people what they have been blessed to discover. It is this commitment to continue “passing the torch” of life-changing truth that makes one-on-one discipleship so significant for both partners. As we will see in the following passages, *biblical discipleship is a form of mentoring distinguished by an intentional process, a strategic purpose, and an eternal reward.*

### **An Intentional Process**

1. Read carefully the following passages and comment on Moses’ approach to preparing Joshua for leadership among the people.

a. [Exodus 17:8-16](#)

b. [Deuteronomy 31:7-8](#)

2. What do you learn from [Mark 1:14-20](#), [John 1:35-49](#) and [Luke 6:12-19](#) about Jesus' intentionality in choosing His disciples?

3. As you reflect on [Mark 6:52](#), [8:17](#) and [10:35-45](#), how would you describe the disciples' maturity? What is the difference between maturity and faithfulness? Why were the disciples good candidates to spread the message about Jesus to the world?

4. Reflect on [Matthew 28:18-20](#). How many commands are in these verses? How do these verses describe an intentional process?

***Insight***

Jesus focused His ministry on building people rather than developing an organization.

***Insight***

Spiritual transformation is more caught than taught.

5. How does [Acts 1:8](#) clarify the disciples' priorities and specify the source of their strength as they pursued Jesus' Great Commission?

### A Strategic Purpose

Barnabas was one of the men the Apostles nurtured in the early church in Jerusalem ([Acts 4:32-37](#); [11:22-24](#)). Though Paul was given unique training in the desert near Damascus ([Gal. 1:17](#)), Barnabas was an encouraging example for him in ministry ([Acts 9:27](#) and [11:25-26](#)).

1. Examine [2 Timothy 2:1-7](#). From [2 Timothy 2:2](#) and the description of his prior work with Timothy, what can we note about . . .

a. Paul's **intentional process** with Timothy?

b. Paul's **strategic purpose** for Timothy?

c. Paul's **sense of urgency** in encouraging Timothy?

### *Insight*

Note that there are four generations of disciples in [2 Timothy 2:2](#) (Paul, Timothy, faithful men, and others).

2. Discuss what can be learned from [2 Timothy 2:3-7](#) about the challenges of spiritual multiplication efforts.

3. What wisdom do you gain about discipleship from [Titus 2:1-8](#)?

*Preparing people who are motivated to be spiritual multipliers is the goal of discipleship. We define a spiritual multiplier as someone who is committed to and doing the work of equipping others to become faithful spiritual multipliers.*

4. How does [Philippians 3:12-14](#) demonstrate the attitude necessary for life-long spiritual growth?

### **Insight**

Examine [www.biblestudycd.com/spiritualmult.html](http://www.biblestudycd.com/spiritualmult.html) as you reflect on your opportunity to launch multipliers.

5. What qualities do you see in Timothy ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)) and Titus ([2 Cor. 8:16-18](#); [Tit. 2:7-8](#)) that will help you identify faithful people to become spiritual multipliers?

6. Which is the better model for significant growth, *addition* or *multiplication*? Be sure to consider the link in the Insight above. How many people would be discipled in ten years if you prepared one faithful multiplier each year and each person you discipled prepared one faithful person who prepared one faithful person each of those years as well?

### **An Eternal Reward**

Believers are exhorted to lay up treasure in heaven ([Matt. 6:19-21](#); [1 Tim. 6:17-19](#)). Various crowns are also promised for faithful service:

- Crown of righteousness - [2 Timothy 4:8](#)
- Crown of life - [James 1:12](#); [Revelation 2:10](#)
- Crown of glory - [1 Peter 5:4](#)

We will likely follow the example of the twenty-four elders in laying any crowns we receive before God's throne ([Rev. 4:10](#)). Every obedient response to the good works for which we were fashioned by God ([Eph. 2:10](#)) will be rewarded ([1 Cor. 3:10-15](#)). Our faithfulness and motivations will be judged at the Bema Seat ([2 Cor. 5:9-10](#)) and we will enter eternity blessed to share perfect intimacy with our Savior and all those belonging to Him. *But what is the nature of our reward?*

Let's consider a few verses.

1. According to [1 Thessalonians 2:7-12](#), how did Paul invest in the believers at Thessalonica?

2. What do [Philippians 4:1](#) and [1 Thessalonians 2:19-20](#) reveal about Paul's perspective on his reward in Christ's presence? Who will be your joy and crown at the appearing of Jesus Christ?

This eternal reward is compatible with the earthly reward experienced by people who invest spiritually in others. The intentional, strategic spiritual multiplication described in [2 Timothy 2:1-7](#) is illustrated by the dedication of a soldier, the discipline of an athlete and the diligence of a farmer. As the farmer delights in eating the firstfruits of a crop, multipliers know the

blessings of seeing God's gracious work in the life of their partner. ***The joy of spiritual investments multiply for eternity, but begin in special ways in this life.***

### C. So What?

In [1 Thessalonians 2:7-12](#), we see the pattern of Paul's life and ministry in the city of Thessalonica. There, he loved and cared for God's people as a gentle mother for her children. He labored for and taught them as a diligent father. With passion and conviction, Paul gave his life to serve and meet the needs of the believers in that city. Through the example of his life, he encouraged many to faithfully follow after Christ bringing much glory to the Savior's name. His life made a great difference long ago and his legacy is still alive today . . . because he chose to pour his life into others for Christ's sake!

#### ***Insight***

Faithfully launching spiritual multipliers through one-on-one discipleship enlarges our capacity for joy in heaven.

1. What specific changes are needed for you to be a compelling example for others who desire to become spiritual multipliers?

2. How has your attitude toward building a spiritual legacy through launching spiritual multipliers changed during this process?

## D. Now What?

Ask God for wisdom and patience as you indentify your next discipleship partner.

1. Make a list of possible multipliers (guided by the FAITH acrostic - see sidebar). Pray that God will stir their desire for eternal impact through spiritual multiplication.

2. Review Sessions 1-6 and begin preparing for your sessions with certain people in mind. This, in itself, is a step of faith. Share with your partner your questions and concerns about this experience.

3. Look for opportunities to share with friends how much you are enjoying your discipleship experience. Keep on praying for God to bring the right person into your life.

4. When possible, look for ways to use the insights you have gained as you encourage others in their walk with Christ. When they notice (i.e. "Where did you learn about that?"), briefly explain how helpful one-on-one discipleship has been for your growth.

### *Insight*

When considering people to disciple, look for those who are . . .

**F** aithful

**A** vailable

**I** ntentional

**T** eachable

**H** eart (for God's purposes)

5. Pray each day for God to connect you with individuals with whom you can share the blessings of spiritual multiplication. Continue to read and reflect on [2 Timothy 2:1-7](#) in the days ahead. *As God guides your relationships and thoughts, challenge a person of FAITH and spiritual influence to join you in this process.*

## Footnote

1. [Ex. 32:17-18](#); [Deut. 31:7-8](#); [Matt. 16:22-23](#); [20:20-23](#); [Jn. 1:43-51](#); [21:15-19](#)

... Empowered for Multiplication

## Session 13 – SPOTLIGHTING JESUS THROUGH YOUR STORY

### A. What If?

Susan and Joan began a friendship while watching their sons practice and play baseball. They discovered that their children attended the same school, though there was a year's difference in their ages. They had lots to talk about, but Susan had no idea about Joan's spiritual perspective. A friend had mentioned that Susan should pray for opportunities to tell others how they could trust Christ. As she began praying, Susan was concerned about what she would say if the opportunity arose. She did not want to drive Joan away, but she cared about her and desired to be faithful to Christ. There was a growing sense of pressure and she wanted to talk with someone.

1. Have you ever been in a similar situation?

2. If Susan approached you with her concerns, how would you respond?

3. Have you ever had someone respond negatively when you shared the Gospel with them? Anyone ever respond positively?

#### ***Insight***

Spiritual conversations are often difficult with family and friends. Preparation ([1 Pet.3:15](#)) and prayer ([Col.4:3-6](#)) are essential.

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [1 Peter 3:15](#).

1. Read and reflect on [2 Corinthians 5:14-21](#). What is our motivation for telling others about Jesus' sacrifice for their sin (v.14)? Who takes the initiative in reconciling<sup>1</sup> us to God (vv.17-19)?

2. What is the role of an ambassador (v. 20)? Why does an ambassador live in a foreign country? What happens if he speaks for himself and not the government he represents?

3. How does [2 Corinthians 2:14-16](#) amplify our understanding of representing Jesus in our sphere of influence?

### ***Insight***

We are not responsible for how people respond to Christ's *fragrance* in our lives.

4. Examine [1 Peter 3:14-16](#). Why are many believers unprepared to give an answer to questions people ask about their hope in Christ? In what ways are good questions a valuable aspect of such conversations?

### ***Insight***

Gentleness and respect are key factors in spiritual conversations.

5. According to [Acts 26:1-29](#), how did Paul attempt to identify with King Agrippa? What do you learn about sharing your story from Paul's example in this passage?

6. What do we learn from [Mark 2:15-17](#) about the people spiritual ambassadors should pursue?

To be truly effective, an ambassador must build relationships with those to whom he is sent as a representative. This requires an understanding of their cultural perspectives and personal challenges. Intentional investments in these kinds of friendships are essential as we build bridges of spiritual influence and equip contagious multipliers.

### C. So What?

In Session 1 we learned a method for explaining God's provision of salvation in Christ through a series of simple drawings connected with key biblical truths. While these truths are essential for clarity about the Gospel, each person has a unique "frame" for this amazing picture of God's grace. The purpose of a frame is to bring proper attention to the picture. Each believer's story focuses on how God drew us to Christ, graciously adopted us as His child when we trusted His Son, and then began a transformation process through His Spirit that will ultimately make us like Jesus. This is an exciting story no matter what the frame looks like. Whether the frame is bright and colorful or plain and simple, such an awesome picture of God's love and purpose needs to be what people remember.

As you prepare for opportunities to put the spotlight on Jesus through the story of your relationship with Him, *remember the power of questions*. Your genuine interest in their lives revealed through wise questions will



3. What was most important/most difficult in your life during that period?

Summary:

**How God drew you toward Christ and helped you understand and respond to the Gospel**

1. Who were the people God used to point you toward Christ?

2. What was your initial response when you first heard about Jesus' death on the cross for you?

3. How did God help you change your mind (repent) about who Christ is and the message of His Gospel?

4. Describe your experience when you trusted Christ. Be as specific as your memory allows, but know that it is not critical that you know the exact day or hour of your "I trusted in Christ" moment.

5. Present the Gospel (a brief, clear verbal presentation of what we learned in Session 1) in the context of your own experience. Anyone listening to your story should be able to know how to trust Christ for themselves, even if this is the only time they hear the Gospel.

Summary:

**How God is changing your life (even through your struggles) in a growing relationship with Christ**

1. What changes have you (or others) noticed in your life since you began a relationship with God by grace through faith in Christ?

2. How is God's Spirit encouraging and helping you as you are seeking to serve Christ?

3. How has God proven to you that you are His child through loving discipline ([Heb. 12:4-11](#))?

4. How has God been faithful to you regarding His promises in [Romans 5:1-5](#) even amidst life's difficult moments?

Summary:

Now, expand the three paragraphs into a longer version of your personal encounter with Christ, utilizing the three subject areas above. Do not go over two pages double-spaced. Look for opportunities to share your story with others. Do not try to memorize your account. When the opportunity to share your story or answer a question about your faith in Christ comes, do not panic! Instead, make sure you are clean before the Lord, dependent upon His Spirit, and trusting in His power to help you recall all you should share in that particular moment. God will help you ([Lk.12:11-12](#)).

As you think of **BEFORE, WHEN/HOW, and AFTER**, God will give you just the right words to share in every situation. And, through many opportunities, God will help you become even clearer and more focused as you share. In fact, over time, you will discover that in just 3-5 sentences in each section of your story, you will be able to communicate all that is necessary in 2-3 minutes, an appropriate time during a conversation over lunch.

Continue to practice and polish this personal "picture frame" for the amazing portrait of God's grace in Christ. You should be able to share it spontaneously with a friend. Ask a couple of Christian friends to listen to your story and give you some feedback. Make sure you ask, "Would you have understood the Gospel clearly enough to trust Christ after hearing my story?" Then develop a **thirty-second** "elevator" version and a **ten-second**

### *Insight*

Some people use a "life verse" from the Scripture or develop their story around a dominant theme. Allow God to give you creativity in this process.

headline that captures the essence of your unique spotlight on Christ. This may be a process requiring significant revision, but get a first draft of each of these written before discussing your story with your partner.

This portrait of Jesus framed by your life story is a significant resource as you build bridges of friendship with people who do not yet know Christ. As you enjoy relationships at work, during your children's activities, and in your neighborhood, look for the "common ground" interests such as sports, hobbies, or shared life experiences.

When you genuinely engage in their lives, most people reciprocate with questions about your life. The more you know them and respond to life's blessings and challenges with concern and kindness, you will have opportunities to answer their questions with clarity about spiritual issues in a gentle and respectful way. It should not surprise you when these friends do not share your Christian values. You can find activities that do not compromise your convictions, but their language or perspectives may be far from yours. Love them, be interested in their lives, and be ready to answer questions about why you are different in a way that puts the spotlight on Jesus Christ.

## **D. Now What?**

1. How effective has your ambassadorship been for Christ this past month? How has your sense of urgency to share the Gospel changed as a result of this session?

2. Can you think of three "lead-in" questions that you can ask to stimulate spiritual conversations?

3. Review [Colossians 4:2-6](#) and [1 Peter 3:14-16](#). Spend time with your partner discussing how you will cultivate “common ground friendships” with the five people you have been praying for since Session 1.

4. Review and use the Inductive Bible Study Process (Session 9) on [Acts 17:16-34](#). Share with your partner what you learned about “common ground relationships.”<sup>2</sup> How will Paul’s example help you be faithful as Christ’s ambassador?

### ***Insight***

Your testimony, along with the method of explaining the Gospel presented in Session 1, will help you make the most of the opportunities God gives you.

5. Pray that God will use you this week as you respond to specific opportunities He orchestrates to share your faith in Christ with others.

## **Footnotes**

1. <http://www.gotquestions.org/reconciliation.html>
2. The word translated “dispute” in verse 18 is “sumballo,” which means “to throw with” or “discuss.” Paul was “playing catch” with Stoic and Epicurean philosophers ([1 Cor. 9:19-23](#)) so well and winsomely that they asked him to meet all their friends. Notice how he connected with their culture and then clearly explained key truths about God in terms they could grasp in verses 22-28.

**... Empowered for Multiplication**

## **Session 14 – ENJOYING YOUR SHAPE AS YOU SERVE CHRIST**

### **A. What If?**

A coworker who had trusted Christ a couple of years ago began attending your church. He enjoyed the worship and teaching, and soon responded to an announcement for people to help with the hospitality team. It seemed that he was growing spiritually and poured himself into his new role for several weeks. He discovered that enthusiastically greeting strangers sounded good at the orientation, but the harder he tried, the more uncomfortable he felt each Sunday morning. He was relieved when his family went on a two-week vacation and felt guilty when he realized that he just did not enjoy being a greeter. He was pretty sure he was not making many people feel welcome.

Since you had been at the church for years, he valued your opinion. After telling you about his dilemma, he sighed and said, “I like the church, want to help, and certainly don’t want to disappoint the Assimilation Pastor. I hate quitting anything. But, if I can’t handle being a greeter, I’m not sure there is any place God can use me. What should I do?”

1. How would you respond to his question?

2. What has God used to help you learn to focus your ministry in fruitful and fulfilling ways?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [1 Peter 4:10](#).

1. What do you learn from [Psalm 139:13-18](#) about God's perspective on both your uniqueness as a person and His engagement in your life?

### *Insight*

[Ephesians 2:10](#) sharpens our appreciation of how God prepares people for specific opportunities in ministry.

2. According to [1 Corinthians 12:4 -11](#) and [Romans 12:3-8](#), \_\_\_\_\_ % of believers have received spiritual gifts for ministry to others. According to [1 Peter 4:10-11](#), what happens when we use the spiritual gifts God has given us? Who gets the glory (and credit) for whatever blessing is accomplished in that experience?

3. List below several of the key words or phrases Paul uses to describe the heart for ministry exhibited by Timothy and Epaphroditus in [Philippians 2:19-30](#).

4. Review [Acts 17:16-34](#). How did Paul's conversation with the intellectuals of the Areopagus reveal his education and skills as a communicator?

5. What do you learn from [Acts 15:36-41](#) about the personality differences between Paul and Barnabas? What was the outcome of their conflict?

6. How did Peter's experiences ([Matt. 16:22-23](#); [17:4](#); [26:33-35](#) and [26:69-75](#)) impact his emphasis on humility in [1 Peter 5:2-7](#)?

As we see in these passages, God uses different people in different ways to fulfill His gracious purposes. In Session 8 you considered the perils of comparing yourself to others. Such a pattern leads to either arrogance or discouragement (usually some of both). This is a lethal combination certain to destroy your joy and derail your fruitfulness for Christ. One of the most helpful concepts for both understanding our uniqueness and addressing the problems caused by comparison was introduced years ago at Saddleback Church<sup>1</sup> and explains key elements of God's work preparing us for His purposes for us.

**S - Spiritual Gifts** are supernatural capacities to serve Christ in ways that bless others and bring fulfillment to the believer. According to [1 Corinthians 12:4-13](#), the Holy Spirit gives one or more gifts to each believer at the moment they become God's child through faith in Christ.

**H - Heart** relates to our inward motivations that guide how we invest our lives. Some may call this passion. When you want to do something and are willing to get up early for it (think hunting or antiquing), you have a heart for it. Jesus said

### *Insight*

God uses us through our *SHAPE* . . .

**S**piritual Gifts

**H**earth

**A**bilities

**P**ersonality

**E**xperience

### *Insight*

God leverages both our pain and joy to maximize our fruitfulness. Nothing goes to waste in God's economy.

that our hearts follow our treasure ([Matt. 6:21](#)). Your heart is being changed throughout life by your experiences. Your enthusiasm for a specific ministry is often related to a spiritual blessing (Young Life leaders often trusted Christ through Young Life) or spiritual challenge (most volunteers in divorce recovery groups know the pain of divorce).

**A - Abilities** include all the capabilities you received from God through your natural birth and your life experiences, including intelligence, business skills, and wisdom for living. While these can be the blessing of people who have not yet trusted Christ, they are special instruments in God's hands for believers. Such abilities are obviously similar to spiritual gifts. At times it is difficult to distinguish a spiritual gift from a personal ability. Since God is the source of all our blessings ([Jas. 1:17](#)), it really does not matter. He uses everything we have since it is all from Him.

**P - Personality** is a complex of instinctive behavioral tendencies that influence relationships as well as effectiveness and fulfillment in all relational environments. While we may learn to function primarily in the strengths of our personality, we do not have the capacity to change this God-given set of instincts for living.

**E - Experience** is the ever-growing reservoir of potential wisdom and perspective which we receive in daily doses. God values experience ([Prov. 16:31](#)) even when a culture does not. Since experience impacts our heart, our focus in ministry may develop over the years, opening seasons of fruitfulness more joyful than we could have imagined ([Eph. 3:20-21](#)).

7. Review Questions 2-6 in this section. Identify which aspects of SHAPE are revealed in the biblical passages in each section.

8. How do you understand your SHAPE as you anticipate God using your life?

### C. So What?

God's Word clearly teaches that God has equipped you for the privilege of blessing others as you serve Him ([Rom. 12:3-21](#); [1 Cor. 12:4-31](#); [1 Pet. 4:8-11](#)) and that He has also crafted you for specific good works "prepared in advance" ([Eph. 2:10](#)).

Resources that will help you work through these issues are often prepared by healthy evangelical churches that are eager to help believers fulfill God's purpose. Check with your church to see if they have a curriculum already designed. There are books<sup>1</sup> and small group studies<sup>2</sup> to guide your discovery process. There are also specific inventories for spiritual gifts<sup>3</sup> and personality types.<sup>4</sup> The issues of abilities, heart, and experiences can be pursued through honest, personal reflection and interaction with close friends about how you best contribute in work, home, and ministry environments.

Once you begin to gain insight into your SHAPE, you will have a valuable resource that will help you focus on pursuing opportunities where you will be most fruitful. Also, you will have freedom to say "no" to long-term commitments that are not compatible with your SHAPE.

#### *Insight*

Insight about your **SHAPE** will help you be more fruitful and joyful ([Jn. 15:5-11](#)).

#### *Insight*

Reflection on the fulfilling times in your life gives insight into your motivations for ministry.

Since our spiritual gifts are the aspect of SHAPE for which we receive significant instruction as believers, please review the following explanation of both the development and potential dangers of such gifts.

### The Development of Spiritual Gifts

**Attitude:** Humility ([Rom. 12:3](#)) and love ([1 Cor. 13:1-13](#)) are the key attitudes for ministry that honor God. We must focus on maturity evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit ([Gal. 5:22-23](#)) as the foundation for all ministry.

**Availability:** [Romans 12:6-8](#) describes how believers are to use their gifts: with faith, generosity, diligence, and cheerfulness. As God gives us a heart of loving humility, we serve others with enthusiasm. This availability will give a believer a range of ministry experiences that will encourage a specific focus in ministry more likely.

**Assessment:** As a believer keeps in step with the Spirit ([Galatians 5:16-26](#)), studies the Scriptures related to spiritual gifts, and cheerfully serves in the body, God will begin to use that person. Personal joy and spiritual blessing to others in specific ministries are key indicators of potential spiritual gifts. As we ask for wisdom ([James 1:5](#)), seek the counsel of mature friends, and rest in the Spirit's help ([Romans 8:26-27](#)) and Son's intercession ([Rom. 8:34](#); [Heb. 7:25](#)), God will guide us toward our niche for most effective ministry.

### The Possible Hazards Associated with Spiritual Gifts

**Arrogance or Discouragement:** This is the consequence of comparison with others. "My gift is better than others" or "If you don't have this gift, you are not spiritual" leads to destructive divisiveness.

#### *Insight*

We may all have to help short-term in specific ministry situations, but we should focus our time long-term in areas where the spiritual impact and joy are greatest.

**Confusion:** The assumption that God's unchanging power requires consistent methods in accomplishing His purpose provokes confusion. God's power is the same in each generation, but His purpose does not require uniform utilization of that power. The truth revealed in

[Hebrews 13:8](#) has no bearing on how God may choose to work in any generation. The diverse lists of gifts ([Rom. 12:3-8](#); [1 Cor. 12:7-11](#); [1 Pet. 4:8-11](#)) also point to God's freedom to give gifts selectively according to the needs of the church.

### ***Insight***

God is free to accomplish His purposes in any way He chooses.

**Limiting our Availability to God:** Determining that God can use our lives only in ways where we think we are gifted can easily lead to a narrow focus that limits our joy in serving. All are not gifted as evangelists, but all believers are ambassadors for Christ who should be looking for opportunities to "give the reason for the hope" they have in Christ. All are not gifted as givers, but all believers are to give cheerfully. All are not gifted as servers, but all believers must be willing to serve in appropriate situations. *Our gifts help establish priorities of ministry, but are not absolute boundaries.*

### ***Insight***

God may surprise you with special ministry opportunities that will magnify your joy as you see God use you in new ways.

## **D. Now What?**

1. Take a sheet of paper and divide it into five sections, one for each aspect of your SHAPE. Use available resources (from your church or online) to gain as much insight as you can about how you personally are uniquely wired for ministry to others. After listing some of your thoughts, talk to two or three friends who know you well and have seen you in environments where you are blessing others. Seek their wisdom and add their insights.

2. What opportunities has God already given you to serve Him? How did you respond?

3. How will the awareness of your SHAPE help you enthusiastically embrace some opportunities for service and confidently choose not to pursue others?

4. Pray with your partner for God's wisdom (Jas. 1:5) as you develop greater awareness of your SHAPE and respond to future opportunities.

5. Read 1 Peter this week. Make a list of verses that encourage you to serve God by blessing others with a grateful heart.

### ***Insight***

Faith that pleases God chooses to know and obey God's Word regardless of feelings, circumstances, or cultural pressures.

### ***Insight***

The application of the Faith Process (Embrace Faith, Envision Obedience, Expect Empowerment) encourages our engagement in ministry according to our SHAPE.

## **Footnotes**

1. <https://store.pastors.com/resources/small-group/shape.html>
2. Brett Eastman, *Developing Your Shape to Serve Others: Six Sessions on Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI : Zondervan, 2002).
3. <https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/>; also see <https://ministrycatalysts.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Gifts.pdf> for more information on spiritual gifts.
4. <http://www3.dbu.edu/jeanhumphreys/SocialPsych/smalleytrentpersonality.htm>

## ... Empowered for Multiplication

## Session 15 – MAKING DECISIONS WITH GOD’S WISDOM

### A. What If?

Each year your family has a weekend reunion at a lake resort near your childhood home. After a day of boating and eating, one of your cousins asks if he can talk to you about something. As you walk along one of the shaded pathways, he explains that he has an important decision to make about a possible relocation three states away. As he unpacks the details, it is obvious he is excited about the immediate rewards of this job, but concerned about uncertainty in that industry in the years ahead. His wife is not eager to uproot their three teenagers and he would dread the thought of being that far away from his extended family. On the other hand, his roommate from college is now the pastor of an excellent church in the town in which he would live. At least they would have a good church. After rattling off the scrambled list of pros and cons, he asks, “Any suggestions? How do you make a call with a decision like this?”

1. How would you respond to your cousin?

2. How would you describe God’s attitude toward people who are seeking to live according to His will?

***Insight***

Developing a “hip pocket” strategy for making wise decisions will serve you and those you influence in the years ahead.

3. Why do some people attempt to make important decisions by flipping a coin, blindly following a pastor's counsel, or making decisions based on a "sign from God"?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Proverbs 3:5-6](#).

1. As you reflect on [Proverbs 3:5-6](#), how does a person acknowledge God in all his ways? Describe a time when you trusted the Lord and He made your path straight.

2. How do [Psalm 103:11-13](#) and [1 John 3:1-3](#) encourage you to wholeheartedly trust God?

Each person makes hundreds of decisions each day. Most of them have practical (what to wear or where to get coffee on the way to work), but not moral implications. Each day, however, there are a few decisions that reveal whether we are selfishly stuck in **default mode** or gratefully enjoying the freedom of **dependence mode**. While purchasing good coffee at a reduced price may make financial sense, getting to visit with

### *Insight*

Wise decisions impact our enjoyment and influence in life.

a friend with spiritual questions while sipping more expensive coffee may be the wiser choice. Even in small things, we need God's perspective on what is really important. It is not that we are paralyzed over where we have coffee, but we make choices according to our values. The more God shapes our values, the easier it will be to make choices that reflect His wisdom.

We often think that the way to stay in tune with God's will is to put Him at the front of our priorities. Certainly [Matthew 6:33](#) indicates that this is true. But God is more than our first priority. He is the heart, the center, of all our choices and activities. The Bible is filled with wisdom for life, marriage, parenting, friendships, business practices, leadership development, temptation, forgiveness, conflict resolution, and scores of other matters that impact our life.

The great majority of our decisions can be made simply by obeying what God has **already** told us in His Word. If we do not know what God has said, we will stumble and struggle daily with a life complicated by the consequences of not doing what God has communicated. Here are a few examples where God's will is clearly revealed and the only wise choice is obedience. What is God's will according to these passages?

- a. [Ephesians 4:29-31](#)
- b. [Philippians 2:14-16](#)
- c. [Philippians 4:6-7](#)
- d. [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)

However, there are significant life choices - what career we pursue, whom we marry, where we live, where our children go to school, what

### *Insight*

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you ([Matt. 6:33](#)).

kind of car we drive, and dozens of other issues - for which the Bible may give a measure of wisdom, but no specific guidance. This session will focus on a process that will help you wisely and confidently make such decisions. But please remember, knowing and obeying the clear truths of God's Word are the critical first steps for a life God guides by His grace. If we disregard or disobey God's Word, we may ask for wisdom, but we will be double-minded, tossed about on the ocean of life ([Jam. 1:5-7](#)). It is a spiritually nauseating place to be and you will want to help yourself and those you love find solid ground through God's wisdom for life's decisions.

### C. So What?

When we encounter situations where we have to make a choice that does not involve a biblical absolute, there are several questions that will help us gain the wisdom we need.

**1. What is happening in my walk with Jesus?** Am I living in *dependence mode* or *default mode*? Am I abiding in Christ ([Jn. 15:1-11](#)) and keeping in step with the Spirit ([Gal. 5:16, 25](#))?

**2. Have I asked God for His wisdom and prayed for His clear direction?**

From [James 1:5](#) we learn that God desires to give us His wisdom in abundant measure. Note that God does not promise to give His wisdom to the double-minded person (i.e., "God, show me what to do and then I'll decide if I'm willing to do it.").

**3. Are there spiritual/moral factors in this decision?** Even if the decision is not dealt with directly in the Bible, the impact of the decision (i.e., how it will affect your family or ministry) may require prayerful consideration of biblical truths associated with the consequences of the choice.

***Insight***

Honestly sorting out your motivations ([Jas. 4:3](#)) will help you discover God's wisdom in your decisions.

**4. How can my life best honor God in fulfilling His purposes?** Read carefully the following passages and note what you learn from each about how God desires to use your life:

a. [Matthew 5:16](#)

b. [1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1](#)

c. [1 Peter 2:12-16](#)

While we know God can use us in any situation, the issue in making decisions is whether there are factors in the choice that appear to maximize such opportunities.

**5. Have I sought the wise counsel of mature people?** At this point, the focus primarily is on seeking the counsel of mature, discerning believers. However, you may also have family or friends who are not yet believers whom God can use in specific ways to help you gain wise counsel.

a. What do you learn from [Proverbs 12:15](#), [15:22](#), and [19:20](#) about the benefits of seeking wise counsel from multiple people?

b. Who are the people who have given you wise counsel in the past?

When you talk to more than one mature person, you may receive diverse opinions. This forces you to grapple with all the issues and seek God's wisdom in the matter. *Wise counsel is not a shortcut to the right answer, but a path that helps you consider all the important questions that will give you confidence as you follow God in your decision.*

**6. What do I desire to do?** After you have obediently and humbly worked through each of the first five questions, you are ready for an important (though surprising) part of the decision-making process.

a. What do you observe in [2 Timothy 1:7](#) about how God has prepared you to make decisions without fear?

- b. Reflect on [Psalm 37:3-4](#). How does faithfulness in the first five questions give you freedom to pursue the desires of your heart?

Now, one final question . . .

**7. What happens if I become confused or disobedient and make a poor choice?** While poor choices can sometimes have costly consequences, God does not waste our pain. The wise counselors you seek often gained some of their most helpful wisdom in the midst of poor choices. God will graciously help you through any consequences and give you wisdom for your life and for others.

### *Insight*

You have a Father Who always desires what is best for you. When you allow the “waiting room” of decision-making to draw you close to His heart, your desires will be increasingly consistent with His will.

## **D. Now What?**

1. Meditate on [Psalm 37:23-24](#). Share how this passage gives you confidence as you face the significant decisions in your life.
  
2. Review [Matthew 7:7-11](#). Describe your concept of God. How will this impact your capacity to trust that He will give you what is best?

3. What significant life decision are you facing at this time? How will you make this decision differently because of the truths discovered in this session? Map out a strategy for making a wise decision in this situation. Commit to pray for each other this week.

After all questions have been asked and answered, sometimes a "Pro/Con" list is extremely helpful in facing a major life decision. Take as much time as needed at this point, seeking all the information and wise counsel you can gather. As you continue praying, God's direction often becomes clearer. However, if you come to a point where a decision must be made and you still lack clarity, review this process one final time and make the wisest choice possible with certainty that God can redirect a willing servant (see [Prov. 16:9](#)). As you depend upon Him, God will faithfully guide your steps even through an occasional detour. Sometimes life's greatest lessons are learned during those detours.

4. Read Proverbs 16 at least four times this week. List the nuggets of wisdom about making decisions found in this chapter and share them with your partner next week.

**... Empowered for Multiplication**

## **Session 16 – MAXIMIZING YOUR INVESTMENTS**

### **A. What If?**

A week after his 50th birthday, Fred met with his investment counselor at lunch to evaluate the financial plan recommended in a colorful brochure the year before. There had been some growth in the portfolio (unlike the preceding year), but the prospects for the future seemed uncertain at best. The “stay the course” strategy of recent years appeared increasingly suspect. Having minimized his family vacation the previous summer and facing the challenge of exploding college expenses awaiting his sixteen year-old in two years, Fred's mind was whirling as he drove back to the office. As he entered the parking garage, he remembered that he had to leave work early to get to his son's baseball game. Tomorrow night he and his wife were hosting their community group and he had not exercised in three days.

As he walked down the office hallway, he stopped at your door and knocked. When he entered, he shared with you some of the stress he was feeling. Finally Fred sighed and said, “The harder I work and the more I try to save, the less I have to show for it. And not just with our money. Seems like I need a bailout in several areas right now. We have similar jobs and the same number of kids, but you don't seem to be as hassled as I feel. How do you handle all this in your life?”

1. How would you respond to this situation?

2. What one principle is most significant to you when you make investment decisions for your family?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Psalm 24:1](#)

1. According to [Psalm 24:1](#), how much of what you have does God own? List the kinds of assets included in this verse?

2. Describe briefly what you learn about your responsibility for God's tangible and spiritual resources from the following passages:

a. [Genesis 2:15-17](#)

b. [1 Corinthians 4:1-7](#)

c. [1 Peter 4:10](#)

3. How does [Ephesians 1:19-23](#) enlarge your perspective of God's authority?

From the beginning, *we were created to be stewards*, trustees or responsible managers of someone else's assets. We are privileged to enjoy the assets belonging to someone else as long as we are faithful to use those assets as the owner desires. As Christ's followers we are *created* to be stewards, *crafted* to serve Christ, and *certain* that we will give an account of our stewardship.

4. The following passages help clarify our accountability to God as stewards. Note how important this issue was to Paul.

a. [Romans 14:12](#)

b. [2 Corinthians 5:9-10](#)

c. [2 Timothy 4:6-8](#)

### ***Insight***

For the Apostle Paul, the anticipation of eternal rewards was a consistent motivation for faithful service to Christ.

5. Examine [1 Corinthians 3:5-15](#). Briefly answer the questions below:

a. What is the foundation upon which every worker builds?

b. What determines whether our service for Christ has lasting value or is consumed in the judgment?

c. How does our sin impact our ministry for Christ?

d. Is the outcome the same for each person in this judgment?

6. Reflect on [Matthew 25:14-30](#). Briefly comment on the questions below:

a. How did the Master respond to the faithful stewards?

b. Why was the response to the unfaithful steward so harsh(vv. 29-30)?

### **C. So What?**

God owns everything. As a steward of all God's blessings, you are responsible to wisely manage all that is rightfully His. As God's masterpiece for ministry, you have unique opportunities to be His instrument in our world. One day you will give an account of how you have invested all the tangible, relational, and spiritual assets He has entrusted to you.

In light of these biblical truths, wise stewardship requires that each believer assess these assets and develop an investment strategy that reflects God’s priorities.

**Asset Inventory:** (Write out using four columns on a separate piece of paper.)

**Insight**

Everything in our lives is actually from God:

1. Our time
2. Our talents
3. Our treasure

Tangible Assets	Relational Assets	Temporal Assets	Spiritual Assets
(All the material and financial resources for which you are responsible)	(All the people you have opportunity to influence)	(Each hour every day of all the years of your life)	(Every aspect of your SHAPE that God can use to honor Christ and bless others)

**Investment Strategy:**

An investment strategy begins with principles that provide the framework for the decisions required as you implement the strategy.<sup>1</sup> As we have seen above, God entrusts a variety of assets for our wise investment. Four that are dealt with extensively in God’s Word are *money*, *time*, *relationships* (see Session 11), and our *ministry opportunities* (see Session 14). Let’s focus briefly on money and time as we develop an investment plan. This is appropriate because evaluating our checking account and our calendar will always reveal what we truly value.

**Insight**

Consistent application of the Faith Process impacts wise stewardship of God’s resources.

### Money Matters

1. The following passages teach us about the perils of focusing on money. Record your insights below:

a. Matthew 6:24

b. 1 Timothy 6:6-10

2. How does Ecclesiastes 5:10-15 help you see money from God's perspective?

3. Examine 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. Make a list of the benefits of cheerful, generous giving found in this passage.

### Time Flies

4. What insights do you gain from Ephesians 5:15-17 and Colossians 4:2-6 about how you can make the most of your time?

5. How do [Psalms 90:12](#) and [103:15-16](#) sharpen your perspective on each day as God's gift?

### **Work Your Plan**

6. Read the following passages and record your insights regarding how a wise investment of life's assets allows us to enjoy God's gifts most fully.

a. [Matthew 6:19-21](#)

b. [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#)

### **D. Now What?**

1. Identify and discuss three key principles you have learned in this session that will help you live as both a faithful steward and ministry masterpiece.

2. If your financial planner managed your assets like you have managed God's, would you be pleased? Why or why not?

3. How long will you be the steward of God's assets which you listed in the inventory above? In light of what God has entrusted to you and what you have learned in this session, how will your stewardship of God's resources be different this next week/month/year?

4. Study [Luke 12:13-21](#) and [16:1-13](#), utilizing the Bible study pattern explained in Session 9. How do these passages motivate you to be faithful steward? Commit to pray for each other as you are stewards of God's resources this week.

## Footnote

1. Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001). This is an excellent resource for people grappling with issues regarding stewardship, especially as it regards financial generosity. Alcorn explains six keys: #1 - God owns everything. I'm His money-manager (p. 25); #2 - My heart always goes where I put His money (p. 43); #3 - Heaven, not earth is my home (p. 47); #4 - I should live for the line [eternity], not the dot [this brief life](p. 51); #5 - Giving is the only antidote to materialism (p.58); #6 - God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but my standard of giving (p.75).

... Empowered for Multiplication

## Session 17 – SUSTAINING MOTIVATION FOR SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

### A. What If?

Carol was fascinated by her pastor's sermon about heaven. While there was attention given to the glory of our eternal home, she was most intrigued by the emphasis on our rewards for faithfulness in serving Christ. The pastor even said that our capacity to enjoy heaven is enlarged by our engagement in fruitful ministry motivated by gratitude to God. How could that be possible? You attend a different church, but because she knows you are serious about your walk with Christ, she asks you what you think.

1. How would you respond to her question?

2. Describe your sustaining motivations for serving Christ.

### B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize  
2 Timothy 4:7-8.

#### *Insight*

Numbering your days  
(Ps. 90:10-12) will help you make  
the most of the gift of each day.  
Remember: a decade of life  
equals 3650 days.

1. According to 2 Timothy 4:7-8, circle the words below reflecting Paul's attitudes/priorities during his last months of life. What do these reveal about his focus?

Faithful	Determined	Engaged
Active	Inactive	Nonchalant
Energized	Coasting	Servanthood
Withdrawn	Laser-like	Hopeful

2. What do you learn from 2 Timothy 4:9-18 about Paul's relationships? Did his disciples always flourish in ministry?

3. What principles for fruitful ministry do you glean from the following passages?

a. 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:7

b. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

c. Ephesians 5:15-17

4. What do you learn from [Psalm 103:13-16](#) and [Isaiah 40:6-8](#) about the shortness of life and the significance of obedience to God?

***Insight***

Evangelism is the one critical ministry you can pursue in this life that will not be possible in heaven.

5. How do [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#) and [Philippians 3:17-21](#) clarify your perspective on the priorities of this earthly life?

*We know that our heavenly home is being prepared by Christ Himself ([Jn.14:2-3](#)). In heaven we will offer to God . . .*

\* Glorious worship ([Rev. 4:8-11](#); [5:9-14](#); [7:9-17](#))

\* Grateful obedience in celebration of God's truth ([Jn. 17:17](#); [Col. 3:16](#); [1 Pet. 1:23-25](#))

\* Joyful fellowship with all the redeemed ([Jn. 14:1-3](#); [Rev. 22:3-5](#))

\* Service to Christ, the Messiah of Israel ([Zech. 12:10; 14:4-9](#)) and the Savior of the world ([Jn. 3:16; Rev. 7:9; 21:3-4; 22:3-5](#))

6. What insights do you gain from the parable in [Luke 16:19-31](#) regarding the value we should place on the eternal future of people we love?

7. Reflect on [1 Thessalonians 2:19-20](#) and [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#). After a person trusts Christ, what blessing can we give them that will enable them to lay up treasure in heaven for the rest of their life (review [Matt. 28:18-20](#) and [2 Tim. 2:2](#))?

8. According to [2 Corinthians 5:14](#) and [9:15](#), what is the essential motivation for any ministry, whether serving, giving, teaching, or discipling?

### C. So What?

1. Make a list of things that last forever.

#### ***Insight***

It is possible to do the right thing because of guilt, anxiety, or even anger. These motivations are unsustainable and dishonoring to God.

2. How does investing in faithful believers committed to spiritual multiplication strengthen our love and gratitude for Christ? How do these daily pursuits help protect us from false guilt, anxiety, and bitterness?

The rewards in heaven are ultimately **relational**. Though we may receive tangible crowns, we will follow the example of the 24 elders and place them at Jesus' feet in worship ([Rev. 4:10-11](#)). The glorious beauty of heaven ([Rev. 21:15-21](#)) will not be the focus of our attention. We will be enthralled with the greatness of our God and the glory of His Son.

As joint heirs with Christ, we will share in His joy. That joy will be magnified as we see how God worked His purpose in our lives in the context of our relationships with people. Every person will experience full joy in heaven, but our capacity for that joy is directly connected to the faithfulness and motivation of our ministry to others.

Any ministry done to impress people will be hay, wood, and straw. Faithful ministry motivated by gratitude to God for Christ's indescribable gift will be gold, silver, and precious jewels ([1 Cor. 3:10-15](#)). The judgment will expose our faithfulness and motives (which are always a mixed reality), and God will delight in rewarding His servants.

The person saved "escaping through the flames" will surely be full of joy in heaven. He will not envy anyone and will be delighted in every celebration of God's amazing grace. But, the person who has poured his life into others, resulting in a multi-generational wave of spiritual fruitfulness, will experience those celebrations with the delight of someone who was privileged to partner in that gracious work of God. Such personal investment enlarges our capacity for joy both now and forever.

On January 1, 2011 Ken and Kathy enjoyed attending the Rose Bowl. After investing seventeen years as the chaplain of the TCU football team, it was an amazing experience. Kathy was full of joy. She sat on the fifth

row, watched the game with genuine interest through eyes that preferred basketball (she is a Tarheel). Though she only knew a handful of the players and coaches, she was excited when TCU won. She had an after-game field pass and happily made her way to share the confetti-filled celebration with the team in that majestic stadium.

Ken had a sideline pass, watched the game a few feet from the action, hugging players after they made great plays and attempting to be as vocal as possible in his support. He knew many of them well after years of conversations during road trips and after practices. There was a lump in Ken's throat as he watched happy tears flow down the faces of dozens of strong, athletic students and coaches who swarmed the field celebrating their win over a powerful Wisconsin team.

Scout team players were on the same sideline. They had on game uniforms and theoretically could have played, but knew they were not going to have that honor. But their hard work had been one of the key factors in a great season. They had invested hundreds of hours in the previous 11 months and were on the team. They had received the special gifts provided at a BCS bowl game and would receive a spectacular ring declaring they were Rose Bowl champions, a distinction they would carry for the rest of their lives.

The players who played, especially the starting lineup and the star players, had the thrill of impacting the outcome of the game. They had expended every ounce of energy and utilized the months of training to play as a team, accomplishing something none of them would have expected a few



Ken and Coach Tony Tademy at the 2011 Rose Bowl just after TCU's exciting victory.

months before. Covered with sweat, and in some cases bloodied by the intense action, they smiled and cried simultaneously as they attempted to absorb the delights of that moment.

The coaches were exhausted from months of fifteen-hour days and the stress of preparing for the biggest game of their careers, not to mention the challenge of keeping 125 college students focused for nine days in downtown Los Angeles. Their faces were marked by exploding grins moistened by tears of happiness and relief. It was a moment none would forget.

Every person on the Rose Bowl turf wearing purple<sup>1</sup> that night was as joyful as they could be. They were part of the winning team. It was a glorious experience. But Kathy's joy was different than Ken's. Without doubt, Ken's was less than the scout team players. And theirs was not as great as the ones who actually played in the game. Even the role players experienced a different sense of fulfillment from those in the starting lineups who had made decisive plays. For the coaches it was a career-defining moment, one to be savored all their days. Everyone was filled with joy, each with a distinct capacity shaped by the scope of their investment and participation in the triumph.

Unlike championship football teams, God's team is not built on the fastest, strongest, or smartest. There is room for anyone available for the game-changing action. You will determine whether you are on the field or the sidelines. God is looking for people He can strengthen "whose hearts are fully committed to Him" ([2 Chron. 16:9a](#)) regardless of their SHAPE.

3. Discuss your view of where you are on God's team: a spectator, a bench warmer, a starter, or perhaps a coach.

Your faithfulness in Christ's mission, motivated by gratitude to God and relying on the Spirit's empowerment, will establish your capacity to embrace the infinite joys of eternal life.

## D. Now What?

1. Read 1 Thessalonians this week.

a. How did God help Paul stay focused on ministry with eternal significance?

b. What do you learn from [1 Thessalonians 2:4-12](#) about the attitudes essential for spiritual multiplication?

2. Meditate on [1 Thessalonians 2:19-20](#).

a. Make a list of the people who will be your "hope, joy, glory, and crown" when Christ returns. How could your investment through one-on-one discipleship change their eternity?

b. Are there other "faithful people" in your life who could be effective as spiritual multipliers?

### *Insight*

Remember:

*Faith that pleases God chooses to know and obey God's Word regardless of feelings, circumstances, or cultural pressures.*

1. Embrace Faith

2. Envision Obedience

3. Expect Empowerment

3. Make a list of people for whom you will be their “hope, joy, glory and crown.” Write or call a couple of them this week. It will be a delightful appetizer of heaven.

4. Discuss your personal one-on-one discipleship strategy. Pray for each other regarding this long-term commitment to launch multipliers.

## Footnote

1. You could fit the folks in Wisconsin red (who were wailing and gnashing teeth) into this illustration, but I (Ken) will resist the urge. We hope some Badgers will eventually use this resource.



**... Empowered for Multiplication**

## **Session 18 – NURTURING SPIRITUAL MULTIPLIERS**

### **A. What If?**

For several months you met each Thursday morning at a local coffee shop with a growing believer named Carey. His enthusiasm for spiritual truth was obvious and his questions sharpened your thinking and living by some of the truths you discussed. As you approached the completion of the Launching Multipliers! sessions, Carey excitedly began to meet with one of his friends each week. After several weeks Carey called and wanted to talk. His friend had decided one-on-one discipleship was too demanding for him. Carey felt that he had failed and was not sure he was suited for this kind of ministry. After a long pause, he asked, “Does this ever happen to you? How do you keep going when it doesn’t work out with someone? I want to finish well like Paul, but it is harder than I imagined.”

1. How would you respond to Carey?

2. What helps you to stay focused and faithful when there is discouragement?

## B. God Says What?

**A Key Passage:** Write and memorize [Hebrews 12:2-3](#).

1. What do you learn from [2 Corinthians 4:1-18](#) about the causes and remedies for discouragement (losing heart)?

2. Read [2 Timothy 4:9-16](#). How does this passage help sharpen your understanding about disappointments in ministry?

### ***Insight***

It is healthy and appropriate to acknowledge when we are struggling spiritually.

3. Discuss ways you are thankful for God's indescribable gift ([2 Cor. 9:15](#)).

4. How does [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)<sup>1</sup> complement the truth in [2 Corinthians 4](#)? How is fixing your eyes on eternal things ([Col. 3:1-4](#)) linked to fixing your eyes on Jesus?

5. In what ways is discouragement a prevalent problem for believers? How does focusing on Christ impact our attitude during difficult circumstances?

Both Jesus and Paul practiced “constrained availability,” putting their disciples in situations where they learned to depend on God without their mentor physically present (Mk. 6:45-52; Lk. 9:1-6; 10:1-24; 1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:5).

6. The following passages reveal the value Paul placed on exhortation and affirmation after a spiritual multiplier had been launched. Beside each passage, record one or two of your own insights.

a. 1 Timothy 4:12-16

b. 1 Timothy 6:11-16

c. 2 Timothy 1:5-12

d. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

e. [Titus 2:7-8](#)

## C. So What?

**One-on-one discipleship** is a distinctive mentoring relationship<sup>2</sup> which leverages an intentional process and a strategic purpose for enlarged spiritual influence that results in eternal reward.

**The intentional process** focuses on key biblical insights/skills essential for growth toward maturity and fruitful ministry ([Eph. 4:11-16](#)).

**The strategic purpose** is to launch spiritual multipliers who are prepared and motivated to invest in other faithful people who will pass the baton to others ([2 Tim. 2:2](#)).

**The eternal reward** is the relational joy which begins in this life and will be shared for all eternity with those we disciple and with all those they and their disciples influence ([1 Thess. 2:19-20](#)).

These biblical truths must be absorbed in a context that encourages transparency, strengthens accountability, and inflames God-honoring motivations. After months of meeting weekly, discussing the truths, developing the skills, and cultivating the attitudes pursued in these sessions, a deep friendship and spiritual partnership will be formed.

Like Jesus and Paul, committed spiritual multipliers today must continue to invest in those they launch. These relationships require a faithful pattern of personal encouragement in the context of constrained availability which is essential to long-term fruitfulness.

There are also opportunities to share in ministry together, either in a ministry of your local church, a mission outreach in your community, or an opportunity to serve Christ in an international setting. The shared experi-

ence of partnering in God's purposes (what the Bible calls "fellowship") is always encouraging and may be strategic as you look for the next spiritual multiplier to whom you will entrust these truths. As your personal ministry expands, the possibility of taking a group of multipliers to another church or nation to encourage others in one-on-one discipleship would be particularly joyful. At the heart of this strategy is the conviction that we live in community with other believers, and that such community is greatly enriched as people live and share the truths that Launch Multipliers!

### **D. Now What?**

1. How do you presently offer affirmation and accountability to those you influence spiritually? What are specific ways you can follow Paul's example as you nurture spiritual multipliers?
2. Who has God used to help you grow through the painful disappointments which can lead to discouragement?
3. Read [2 Timothy](#) and meditate on [2 Timothy 4:6-8](#). What changes will be necessary in your life for verses 6-8 to be true for you?
4. What is your strategy for nurturing the spiritual multipliers you will launch? Pray for each other as you pursue this plan.

**“Be fruitful and multiply” was the first command given to human beings. May we each obey this imperative in the spiritual realm so that our earthly lives will have a joyful echo throughout eternity.**

## Footnotes

1. We do not know who wrote this powerful letter, but we do know he was a master encourager like Barnabas, the “son of encouragement.”
2. Spiritual mentoring is a mutually encouraging relationship distinguished by the power of example ([1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1](#)), the wisdom of humility ([Jas. 3:13; 1 Pet. 5:5-7](#)), and the blessing of enthusiasm ([Rom. 12:11; 3 John 3-4](#)). These relationships occur in various settings with differing levels of individual interaction. Whether in large or small groups, people involved in spiritual mentoring are strengthened in their spiritual growth as God uses His truth to transform each person. As with all faithful ministry motivated by gratitude to God, there will be an eternal reward for this fruitful ministry.

## **Scripture Memory**

All passages on the pages which follow are from the NASB 95 translation. We use this translation for our study and Scripture memorization, but you may chose another translation if you like. However, we highly recommend that you consistently use the same translation for all your scripture memory.

Also, if you have an iPhone/iPad, we have found a great APP for cataloging your memory verses. Search for and check out “ScriptureTyper” if you’re interested. Android users might check out the APP, “Remember Me.”

**Session 1 - Beginning a Christ Centered Life**

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

Romans 6:23

**Session 2 - Grasping the Faith Process**

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

**Session 3- Building Confidence In God's Word**

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Session 4 - Appreciating Your Security In Christ**

... and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

John 10:28-29

**Session 5 - Embracing Your Identity In Christ**

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Galatians 2:20

**Session 6 - Living In God's Presence and Power**

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25

**Session 7 - Celebrating God's Character**

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised,  
And His greatness is unsearchable. One  
generation shall praise Your works to  
another, And shall declare Your mighty  
acts.

Psalms 145:3-4

**Session 8 - Experiencing God's  
Forgiveness**

By this will we have been sanctified  
through the offering of the body of Jesus  
Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10:10

**Session 9 - Transformed By  
God's Word**

For the word of God is living and active and  
sharper than any two-edged sword, and  
piercing as far as the division of soul and  
spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able  
to judge the thoughts and intentions of  
the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

**Session 10 - Communicating  
With God**

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by  
prayer and supplication with thanksgiving  
let your requests be made known to God.  
And the peace of God, which surpasses all  
comprehension, will guard your hearts and  
your minds in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4:6-7

**Session 11 - Cultivating Healthy  
Relationships**

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted,  
forgiving each other, just as God in Christ  
also has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32

**Session 12 - Pursuing Spiritual  
Multiplication**

The things which you have heard from me  
in the presence of many witnesses entrust  
these to faithful men who will be able to  
teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

**Session 13 - Spotighting Jesus Through Your Story**

... but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence ...

1 Peter 3:15

**Session 14 - Enjoying Your SHAPE As You Serve Christ**

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:10

**Session 15 - Making Decisions With God's Wisdom**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

**Session 16 - Maximizing Your Investments**

The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.

Psalms 24:1

**Session 17 - Sustaining Motivation For Spiritual Multiplication**

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up 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 loved His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

**Session 18 - Nurturing Spiritual Multipliers**

... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:2-3