

PHASE 4

STUDENT MANUAL

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StrategicDiscipleship.com

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Strategic Discipleship: Fall 2025 Schedule

1. Lesson 1: Sept. 15
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Student Notes

Historically, a disciple was a person who studied under a master-teacher to learn both his knowledge and approach to life, with the goal of passing that knowledge and lifestyle on to others. As disciples of Jesus, we long to understand everything Jesus taught, live by it and teach others to do the same. Discipleship ALWAYS has the intent of passing what you have learned on to others.

Jesus was very clear his intention was that we would spread his teaching throughout the world, so that people of all nations could enter relationship with him and experience his forgiveness and life. So discipleship is not an accidental by-product of going to church; discipleship is to be strategic and intentional, with a kingdom-impacting goal in mind.

God has called others to disciple you, but that does not negate your personal responsibility for your growth. No teacher can make a student grow spiritually. The student needs to assume responsibility to do the hard work of learning, developing disciplines, and stepping out in faith in ministry and missional experiences.

To grow as a disciple, there are four areas that need to be developed:

- 1) Truths you need to understand and embrace
- 2) Disciplines you will need to embed
- 3) Ministry responsibility to a local church family
- 4) Missional focus, both locally and globally

This curriculum merely raises the “issues” we believe are beneficial to address in the discipleship journey. It is your job to work on practical expressions of your growth through developing disciplines, experimenting with various ministries and finding ways to share your faith with those in your spheres of influence.

The challenge of discipleship is learning to die to self and allowing Christ to live in and through us. This means putting an end to our expectations and priorities and learning to allow his agenda to direct our days. Living by faith takes on a whole new understanding as we follow the Spirit’s leading, not knowing the outcomes or how he will provide. We follow anyway, because we have declared Jesus is Lord.

Session 1: The Grace Tension

We often say “grace” before a meal. What is the meaning of the word “grace,” and what does this have to do with food?

Grace defined:

Acronym:

Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

As believers, we understand that we are saved by grace. However, once in the family of God, we often struggle with understanding the role between our behavior and how God chooses to bless us.

Have you ever had an experience when you felt your sin (your lack of righteous behavior) limited God’s blessing in your life? Discuss your thoughts around the following tensions.

After you stumble spiritually:

- Do you feel you can’t ask God for anything in prayer; that he won’t listen?
- Do you think God will withhold blessing from your life?
- Do you feel you will receive some form of judgment?
- How long do you feel you must wallow in your guilt/shame before you are back in God’s good books again?

Have you ever felt frustrated that God hasn't blessed you more than he has? Share your experience.

Have you ever felt like the Psalmist in Psalm 73:13, "All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence."? What is the frustration behind this statement?

Does the following story of Ahab frustrate you in any way?

Context: Ahab is one of the most spiritually apathetic kings in all of Israel's history. He allows his pagan wife, Jezebel, to lead all of Israel into Baal worship. Ahab wants Naboth's vineyard for a vegetable garden. When Naboth refuses for godly principles, Ahab goes home and sulks. Queen Jezebel, with Ahab's consent, maliciously arranges for Naboth to be murdered so that the property can be claimed by Ahab.

1 Kings 21:16-29 (ESV)

¹⁶ *And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.*

¹⁷ *Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ¹⁸ "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. ¹⁹ And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Have you killed and also taken possession?"' And you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood."'"*

²⁰ *Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. ²¹ Behold, I will bring disaster upon you. I will utterly burn you up, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. ²² And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the anger to which you have provoked me, and because you have made Israel to sin. ²³ And of Jezebel the LORD also said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of*

Jezreel.’ ²⁴ Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat.”

²⁵ (There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. ²⁶ He acted very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel.) ²⁷ And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly. ²⁸ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ²⁹ “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son’s days I will bring the disaster upon his house.”

Why might God’s grace to Ahab in verse 29 be frustrating to some of us?

What insight does this frustration give us with regard to our perspective of grace?

What does it imply about how we think blessing should be withheld or granted?

Part of the problem is that our perspective of “who is deserving” has become very distorted. Without realizing it, we have slowly developed a culture of entitlement. What do we mean when we say we live in a culture of entitlement?

What are some examples of things we have begun to assume we rightfully deserve in society?

What are some possible ways have we promoted a culture of entitlement within our churches?

What happens when people feel they are not given what they deserve?

This perspective of entitlement also creeps into our relationship with God. It is tempting to feel that if we live a relatively “righteous” life, then God should bless us; he owes it to us.

How is this thinking in conflict with the very definition of grace?

Romans 11:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Whenever we struggle with grace, we expose a belief that we can be righteous enough to deserve God’s blessing.

Romans 3:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Romans 3:20 (ESV)

For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

What do the above scriptures reveal about our ability to earn blessing?

Anyone who has been following Christ for some time understands this truth. You may already be saying, “I know all this stuff.” However, the reality is, we still revert back to a performance mentality when it comes to expecting blessing from God. Grace gets left at salvation, and the lie of performance continues to distort our view of God and life.

How might a distorted view of grace create tension in our relationship with God?

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

If God gave us the greatest expression of grace (life through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice) when we were the most rebellious, then what does that teach us about our ability to receive grace right now?

Do you ever feel that you are too flawed to be blessed by God? Explain.

Colossians 1:21-22 (ESV)

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...

Romans 8:1 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes we feel God must be unhappy with us because we do not “see” his blessing in our lives. How do these passages counter that misbelief?

How does an understanding of grace actually put our life into proper balance?

What are some practical steps we can take to shift from a culture of entitlement to a deeper appreciation for the grace of God?

Romans 1:21 (ESV)

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Ephesians 5:20 (ESV)

...giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ... **A Culture of Thankfulness:**

How might thankfulness destroy a culture of entitlement?

What are some examples of things we take for granted, that are really gifts of God's grace?

Why are we to give thanks for "everything" in Ephesians 5:20?

How might starting your day with thankfulness affect the rest of the day?

Spend some time in prayer, thanking God for his incredible grace.

Session 2: The Scorecard

How do you feel when someone else pays for your bill at a restaurant?

If they do pay, we will often say that we will get the bill the next time. Why do we do this?

How would you feel if someone gave you a Christmas present, but you never got them anything? Why do you feel that way? What do you do the following year?

In what other ways do we tend to keep score and make sure things get evened out?

If someone fails to reciprocate, does that limit the amount of grace we choose to show them in the future? What would that reveal about our view of “grace”?

In what ways might we be tempted to “even” the score with God or “pay him back” for all he has done?

Isaiah 26:12 (NLT)

LORD, you will grant us peace; all we have accomplished is really from you.

What are some problems with the idea of paying God back?

In what ways does our pride become a barrier to receiving grace?

Romans 10:12 (ESV)

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

Why might this passage have been perceived as a great insult to some Jews?

Luke 4:25-30 (ESV)

²⁵ *But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,* ²⁶ *and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.* ²⁷ *And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”* ²⁸ *When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.* ²⁹ *And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.* ³⁰ *But passing through their midst, he went away.*

What was the point of Jesus’ message that infuriated the Jews so much they wanted to kill him?

In what ways did their response to Jesus limit the amount of grace he may have been able to show them?

In what ways might we sometimes hinder the grace of God at work in our lives?

Isaiah 55:1 (ESV)

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

The one condition of experiencing God’s grace is to receive it. What does the above verse mean when it says “come”?

What do we do if we believe we have turned to God, but our needs or deep desires are still not being met?

Paul addresses these concerns in his letter to the Philippians who were fighting for their personal perspectives or agendas.

What key points do the following passages teach regarding finding peace when it seems your needs are not being met?

Philippians 4:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Philippians 4:12-13 (ESV)

¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

4) _____

How can we determine if something is a need or a desire?

What is the secret, then, to Paul's contentment at times when he experienced lack?

How might focusing on our needs prevent us from experiencing all that God has for us?

Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

5) _____

2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

God will usually choose to bless us “through” his body, the people of God. Provide some examples of how God has shown grace to you through his body.

What are some ways you have resisted other believers showing you God's grace?

How has a scorecard mentality possibly prevented you from receiving grace or giving grace to others?

Instead of feeling like we need to pay somebody back, or pay it forward, by showing grace to somebody else, how does God want us to respond to those who show us grace?

Are there some people with whom you have been trying to keep the scorecard even? What should you do in these cases?

Are there some ways you realize you have been trying to pay God back, instead of simply enjoying his grace? What should you do differently?

Have you ever offered a gift with strings attached?

How can your approach be freer in the way you give and receive this week?

Session 3: Grace and Obedience

We understand that we are saved purely by the grace of God. We also understand that grace is applied to our lives when we choose to receive it by faith. So now you're a part of the family of God, and there is no need to work for or earn your righteousness or the blessings of God.

If this is true, does grace mean that we are free to sin without spiritual consequences in our relationship with God? What are your thoughts?

Romans 5:20-21, 6:1 (ESV)

²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

^{6:1} What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

Paul was writing to “believers” who claimed that not only was it okay to sin, they also argued that the more you sinned the more you increased the grace of Jesus transferred to you. How would you respond to such a perspective?

Paul's response:

Romans 6:2-7 (ESV)

² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.

What does Paul mean when he said we “died to sin”?

How would you summarize the relationship between sin and grace?

Romans 6:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What are some inconsistencies about the Romans' argument for the right to sin?

John had to address a similar tension. Read his response below.

1 John 3:4-10 (ESV)

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

This passage seems quite severe. How would you paraphrase what John has written?

What is John's rationale as to why a believer cannot continue to defiantly sin?

What is the implication for the person who claims to be a believer but chooses to knowingly continue in sin?

Jesus' comments on obedience:

John 14:15 (ESV)

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

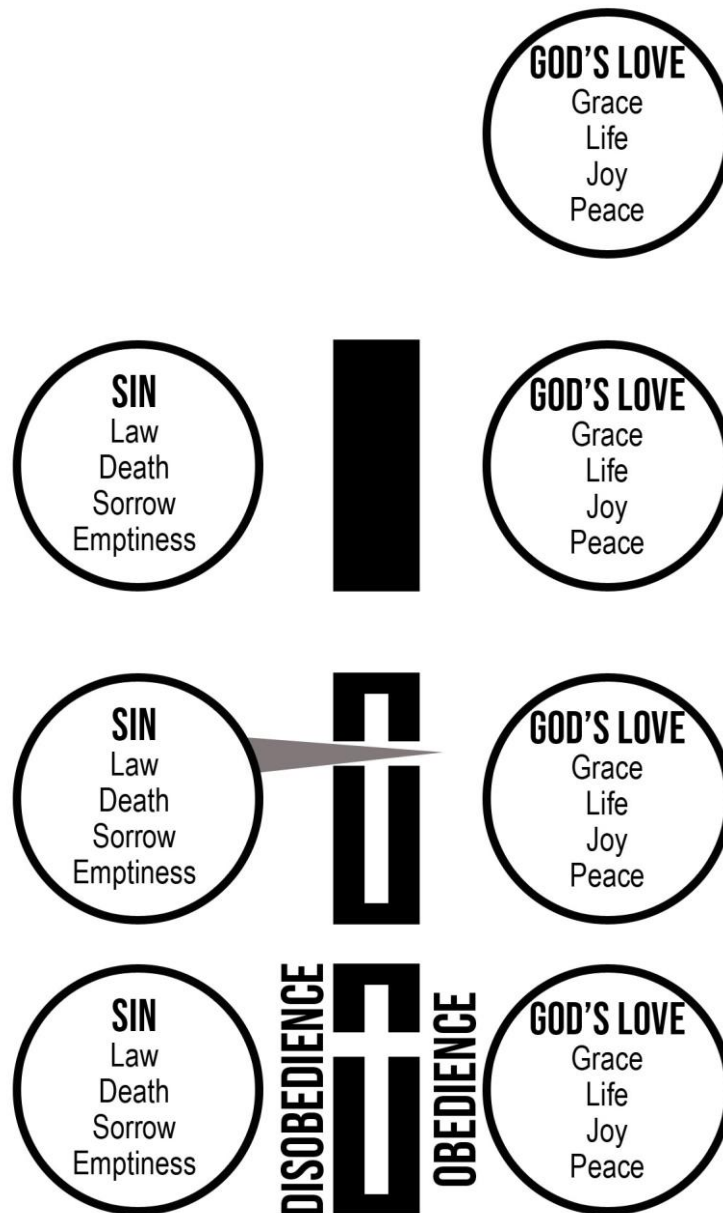
John 14:23-24 (ESV)

²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

John 15:10 (ESV)

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

These verses almost seem to imply that God's love and grace are dependent on our obedience. How would you explain the relationship between God's love/grace and our obedience?



OBEDIENCE IS A GIFT OF GRACE

Does God hold believers accountable when they sin?

Godly discipline

Hebrews 12:5-13 (ESV)

⁵ *And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?*

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

⁶ *For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”*

⁷ *It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

¹² *Therefore, lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.*

If God does not condemn us, then on what basis does he discipline us?

What is the focus of condemnation?

What is the focus of discipline?

Why do we resist discipline so much?

In what ways is discipline another expression of God’s grace?

Have you ever experienced a time when God had to discipline you in order to bring you back to the blessed life he prepared for you?

Why do you think he links holy living and being healed in verses 12-13?

God has all the blessings of the heavenly realm waiting for you. This week, consider if your present behavior and perspectives may be preventing you from experiencing the best that God has for you.

In what ways has sin deceived you and prevented you from experiencing the peace and joy Jesus said are available to you?

Session 4: Sharing Grace

James 1:17 (ESV)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

God has revealed grace in many different ways. Use the questions below to develop a deeper grasp of the grace of God.

What are some ways God shows grace that everyone in the world benefits from, whether they realize it or not?

What are some ways in which God shows grace even when we are opposed to him and his purposes?

What are some ways God makes grace available to us, but we must actively receive it?

Luke 7:34 (ESV)

The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"

The term "friend of sinners" was obviously meant as an insult. Jesus most likely took it as a compliment. In what ways was Jesus' behavior unexpected, and yet a powerful display of grace?

How might things have gone differently if Jesus simply focused on condemning them the same way the Pharisees did?

In what ways does God desire us to show this same grace to others?

Luke 6:27-31 (ESV)

²⁷ But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Why do we find showing this type of grace so challenging?

Do you sometimes find showing grace to those close to you (family members, other church members, coworkers, etc.) even more challenging? Why is this often the case?

In what ways might our feelings be the biggest barrier to showing grace?

Do you sometimes find you have a “grace limit”? In other words, you can show grace to a certain extent, but after that you start resenting the person? Without naming people, can you share an experience?

What determines when we should show grace to another person?

What determines if we should limit the amount of grace that we show?

Can you think of some examples where tough love is the best kind of grace we can show?

For most of us, most of the time, this is not our major problem. Our greater problem rests in being impatient with people and not looking out for their best interests. How can we start to shift our lives so that we more accurately represent the grace of God?

Ephesians 2:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

How might remembering what Christ has done for us affect how we relate to others this week?

Colossians 4:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

What does it mean for our conversation to be full of grace or seasoned with salt?

How might you remember to talk in such a way this week?

The New Testament is full of “one another” passages. Hopefully, if we can learn to apply these principles within the family of God we will become a brighter light to the world around us.

Quietly read through the “one another” passages below and check the ones where you find it hard to show grace. Share your responses and reasons with the group.

- ☐ **Romans 12:16 (ESV)**
Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.
- ☐ **Romans 14:13 (ESV)**
Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.
- ☐ **Romans 15:14 (ESV)**
I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.
- ☐ **Ephesians 4:2-3 (ESV)**
² ...bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- ☐ **Ephesians 5:21 (ESV)**
...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- ☐ **Colossians 3:16 (ESV)**
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- ☐ **1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)**
Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
- ☐ **Hebrews 10:24 (ESV)**
And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works...
- ☐ **James 4:11 (ESV)**

Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

☐ **1 Peter 1:22 (ESV)**

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart...

☐ **1 Peter 4:9 (ESV)**

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Which display of grace (from the verses above) will you consciously try to show this week? Share how you might try to do that.

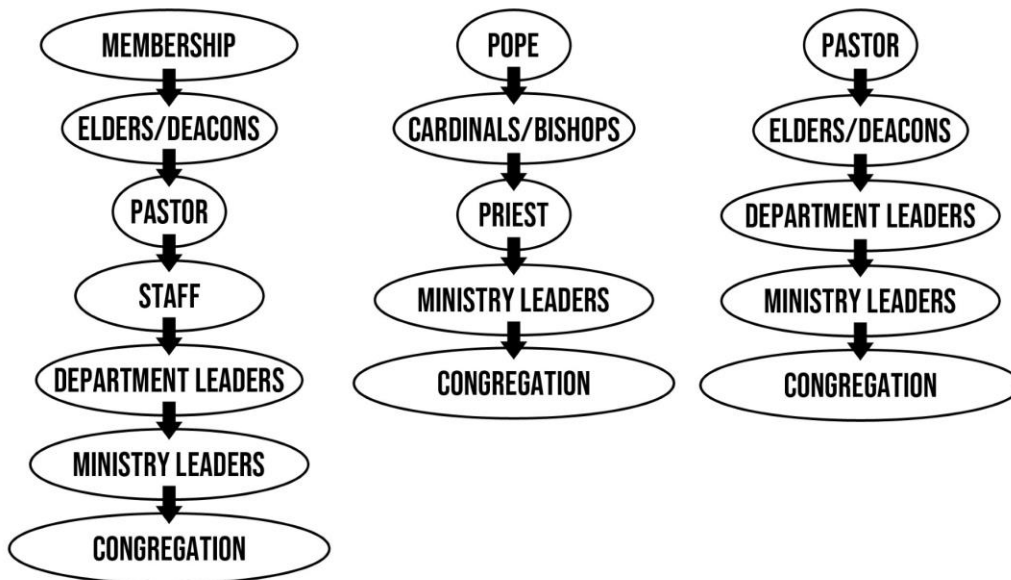
Wouldn't it be great if your church was known for its grace? What role might you play?

Session 1: Church Offices

If the church is to be a spiritual family, why would it need a leadership structure?

Do you know the church leadership structure of your church?

Can you sketch your church's government structure? What is the flow of authority?
(Implied in each structure is the understanding that Christ is to be ultimately over everything)



you were to design a leadership structure for a new church, what structure/model would you use?

Organizational structure in the early church was constantly evolving as the church grew and needed varying levels of support and oversight. Though some leadership

offices are mentioned in scripture, there are no specific statements as to what governance structure the church should follow. Why do you think this is?

What are the various church offices mentioned in scripture?

1. Presbuteros: _____

2. Poimen: _____

3. Episkopos: _____

4. Diakonos: _____

What insights do you gain from the following passages with regard to how these titles relate to one another?

Acts 20:17-18, 28 (NASB)

¹⁷ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church ¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them...

²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Titus 1:5-9 (NASB)

⁵ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, ⁶ namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. ⁷ For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NASB)

¹ Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

¹ But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and

² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

For convenience, through the rest of this study we will use the term “elder” in reference to the position of the leader responsible for overseeing the church.

ELDERS

How would you define the role of the elder? What is his job description?

From the following passages, summarize some of the responsibilities of an elder.

Acts 15:1-2 (ESV)

Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

Acts 20:28 (ESV)

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

1 Timothy 4:14 (ESV)

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

1 Timothy 5:17 (ESV)

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

James 5:14-15 (ESV)

²⁴ *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*

² *The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*

1 Peter 5:2 (ESV)

...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly...

Look at the following passages to determine the biblical qualifications for an elder.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (ESV)**Titus 1:6-9 (ESV)**

⁶ *...if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.* ⁷ *For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,* ⁸ *but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.* ⁹ *He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

Write the elder qualifications from each passage in the table below. Place similar statements from the passages beside each other to make it easier to see any unique qualifications.

1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:6-9

How would you summarize what you would look for in an elder over your church?

DEACONS

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (ESV)

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good

standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Write the qualifications for a deacon in the space below.

Deacons
Deacon's Wives

What do you think are the differences between the functions of an elder and a deacon?

1 Timothy 5:22 (ESV)

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.

Paul gave Timothy the responsibility of appointing leadership in the church, yet he also told him not to be too hasty in doing so. Why do you think this is the case?

Why are the roles of Elder and Deacon (or whatever name one gives them) so important to the church?

These can be weighty roles, carrying much responsibility. Is there some practical way you can encourage the Elders in your church this week?

Session 2: Leadership Ministries

In addition to the offices of elder and deacon, Paul also highlights specific ministries that God has given to the church through spiritually empowered people.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV)

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...

What is the difference between the role of Elder and these specific ministry people?

What specific ministry impact does each of these roles have?

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Obviously, the role of “apostle” was not restricted to the twelve Apostles. What do you think is the role of an apostle?

Apostle

Acts 14:14 (ESV)

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out...

Galatians 1:19 (ESV)

But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (ESV)

Read the following passages and discuss some of the responsibilities of an apostle.

Acts 6:1-4 (ESV)

¹ Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Romans 15:20 (ESV)

...and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation...

Titus 1:5 (ESV)

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you...

Galatians 2:8 (ESV)

...for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles...

1 Timothy 1:3 (ESV)

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine...

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. ³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. ⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

SUMMARY:

The role of apostle is not clearly understood in our present culture. Are there any people you can identify as fulfilling the role of apostle today?

Why do you think the role of apostle is so important in scripture?

What might we miss by not having an apostle's influence over the local church?

Prophet

What is a prophet?

What is the role of a prophet?

Read the following passages and discuss some of the responsibilities of a prophet.

Deuteronomy 18:18 (ESV)

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

2 Chronicles 24:19 (ESV)

Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention.

Acts 11:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).

Acts 21:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and

said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”

How can you know if a prophet is trustworthy?

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (ESV)

²¹ *And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’—*

²² *when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.*

The following verse occurs in the middle of a discussion about orderly worship in a church.

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 (ESV)

²⁹ *Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.*

Why might God want to send a specific message to a church?

Do you think God still wants to communicate to churches today? What are your thoughts?

How might true, godly prophecy strengthen the church?

1 Corinthians 12:28 (ESV)

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...

Ephesians 2:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...

Revelation 18:20 (ESV)

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!

Why do you think God highlights the roles of apostle and prophet with regard to the leadership of the church?

Evangelist**Acts 21:8 (ESV)**

On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

Why do you think the role of evangelist is listed as one of the leadership ministries of the local church?

2 Timothy 4:5 (ESV)

As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

What will happen to a church that ignores the leadership function of the evangelist?

Shepherd

1 Peter 5:2 (ESV)

...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly...

Since we covered this topic in the previous study, we will not spend time on it now.

Teacher

James 3:1 (ESV)

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Why do you think teachers will be held so accountable?

What does this five-fold leadership team concept reveal about a single person's ability to lead the entire church?

In what ways could you encourage and support people God has called to these ministry roles?

If we understand these roles are critical to the strengthening of everyone in the church, how might that affect how we pray for them?

Session 3: Struggling With Authority

Everyone, at some point in time, has struggled with someone in authority, whether a parent, a policeman, a politician or a church leader.

Why do you think there is so much tension with authority in our world?

The Apostles understood tension with both religious and political authorities, yet look at the words they wrote.

Romans 13:1-7 (ESV)

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

1 Peter 2:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

What is the base argument as to why we should submit to and honour those in positions of authority over us?

What type of leadership was in place when Paul and Peter wrote these words?

Acts 23:3-5 (ESV)

³ Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” ⁴ Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?” ⁵ And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

Exodus 22:28 (ESV)

“You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

If we are to respect leadership, how might that affect how we talk about them, and to them?

We often find it easy to get caught up in criticizing the faults of leadership. Instead of constantly condemning leaders, what should be our attitude towards them? Why?

Is it possible you may need to repent to God for your attitude toward certain leaders – political, vocational or spiritual? What type of leadership do you find you are most critical toward?

Does this mean we are never to deal with conflict with a leader? If so, how should this be handled?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV)

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

Why does Paul tell us to respect those leaders who work hard among us in the church?

Why do you think Paul felt he needed to give this directive?

In what ways do we sometimes disrupt the peace and unity of the church in “how” we relate to church leaders?

1 Timothy 5:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

What is Paul implying about the importance of the role that elders play in the church?

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

In what ways are we to submit to church leaders?

Do you feel the way you are relating to church leaders is making their work a joy or a burden?

Elders play a significant God-designed role in the church and therefore that role is to be respected. But we also know that church leaders are human and can sometimes act in sinful ways. Some people have been deeply wounded by those in spiritual authority.

How should we respond if we believe elders are being ungodly in their leadership?

We always have a responsibility to speak to any Christ-follower if we believe they are engaging in sin.

Galatians 6:1 (ESV)

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

What should we do if the leader does not repent of sinful activity?

Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

1 Timothy 5:19 (ESV)

Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Why do you think Paul placed this restriction of multiple witnesses on listening to accusations?

How might you encourage your church leadership this week?

NOTE FOR ALL:

Sometimes people have been wounded by a leader and they carry around judgment against that leader, or perhaps all leadership, for many years. In so doing, they become trapped in bitterness and distrust, unable to lovingly embrace and apply the scriptures addressed in this study.

The key here is to go back and reflect on the studies in the “Living Your Faith” series dealing with judgment and forgiveness. Judgment creates a barrier between you and God and traps you in the past. By trusting God to be judge, it will free you to love your enemies and those who have hurt you. It will also free you to be able to trust other leaders, knowing God is ultimately in control and will take care of you.

Everyone is sinful. Our foundation in life is never to come from leaders or anyone else; it is always to be rooted in Christ. No downfall of any leader should shake the core of our faith, or how we relate to others. If the sinful actions of a leader have caused you to put up personal walls of defence and judgment, then it reveals that your faith was more rooted in man than in God and his purposes. That type of faith will always fail and render you ineffective in the kingdom of God. You can stop judging, you can forgive and you can be free to trust God works through leaders.

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP

LESSON 1: THE DISCIPLESHIP CYCLE

The Discipleship Cycle

1. Multiplying And Maturing Disciples
2. Multiplying Leaders

Introduction

Through our Christian Walk, we will always need the help of others. Each of us has something to learn from others, and each of us has valuable experiences that should be shared. Discipleship (or growing in our Christlikeness) will never be fully realized on earth. In this lesson, we will look at the discipleship cycle, which is completed when the disciple can mentor others and pass knowledge on to them.

MULTIPLYING AND MATURING DISCIPLES

One of the main objectives in discipleship is to _____ and thereby _____. We refer to this as the Discipleship Cycle.

2 Timothy 2:2

"What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

- The goal is not to _____, but to _____.

The discipleship cycle Goal

The goal of the discipleship cycle is to multiply:

- Multiply _____
- Multiplying _____
- Multiply _____

Stages of the Discipleship Cycle

Here, we will look at the different stages of the discipleship cycle. Some of these stages will overlap somewhat, but you can use this chart to effectively guide your new disciple. This chart lists what a disciple will learn or practise and the resources you can use to help them.

PRE EVANGELISM: A person must be ready to hear the Gospel in order for it to be well received. We must meet people where they are, and begin with what they already understand. Sometimes a relationship is necessary to demonstrate the Gospel. Sometimes we must meet a person's physical needs before they are ready to think about their spiritual needs.	• Help them have a positive attitude towards Christianity by showing love in action. • Help them have a positive attitude toward the Bible by showing its relevance to their life. • Help them see the need for a Saviour by sharing your testimony, and letting them see your changed life. • Help them learn about the person and work of Jesus Christ so they are ready to put their faith in Him. • This may include casual conversation, acts of service or meeting of physical needs, formal debates, spiritual surveys, literature distribution, concerts, special classes etc.
EVANGELISM: When a person understands who Jesus is and why He came, we can present the Gospel to them and show them their need for a Saviour. The act of evangelism can take many forms, and many different tools can be used. Some people will need to hear the Gospel multiple times before they are ready to receive it and respond to it.	• Help them understand who Jesus is and why He came. • Help them to see their sin and their need for a Saviour. • Tell them how your life has been changed. • Present the Good News of salvation available in Jesus Christ and offer them the opportunity to respond with a prayer of faith. • Follow up with their decision by explaining the new life they have in Christ, and the power available to them from the Holy Spirit. • Evangelism can take place one-on-one or through large group evangelism, events, or Bible studies.
CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS: New Christians will need an understanding of what the Bible teaches. They must understand their salvation and the implications of it, as well as how living as a Christian differs from their old way of life.	• Help them understand what the Christian life is all about. • They may spend time with you or others in fellowship and study of the Bible. • The practices of baptism and communion as well as church

	membership (where appropriate) can be explained at this stage. • They should begin habits of daily prayer, Bible reading and group Bible study, as well as worship with other believers if possible. • Help them to deal with matters of sin by exposing them to the Word of God, allowing the Holy Spirit to convict them. • Teach them to rely on God's Word and the Holy Spirit. • Answer questions they have on the Christian faith, or seek out answers together. • A disciple should be taught the foundation of Biblical truth in some systematic way.
GROWTH AND SERVICE: The life of a Christian is centered on Jesus Christ. A believer who is growing in their faith will make choices that put God's desires before their own. This stage can be difficult and take a long time. It is impossible for this to occur without the help of the Holy Spirit, so the new Christian must learn to lean on God and be faithful in prayer. At this stage, they should begin to serve others and undertake specific efforts towards evangelism. This is Christian ministry. Training in evangelism may occur at the earlier stages, but they may now be ready to grasp new opportunities, plan a personal ministry and undertake planned evangelism.	• Gently show them areas of their life where they need to put Jesus first (such as finances, time, attitude). • Help them see the need for healthy relationships, sexual purity, and personal integrity. • Introduce them to other Christians who are walking with God so they see many examples of Christ-centered living. • The goal is consistent Christian living, and a reliance on God rather than self. • Help the disciple discover their spiritual gifts. • Model serving God and others, and set up opportunities to serve together. • Take opportunities to share the Gospel with others together. • Encourage the disciple towards goals of serving others, sharing the Gospel and getting involved in a ministry.

	• Help them understand the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism, and prepare them for spiritual opposition by studying spiritual warfare together.
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP: At this stage, the disciple is reproducing new believers. They are leading others to Jesus, training or teaching others, but still require discipleship to lead effectively. Most Christians will not end up pastoring a church or leading a spiritual movement – but every Christian can lead in small but significant ways. Leadership of family, prayer, small groups, and Bible studies are great starting places. The goal is multiplication – not simply addition of new believers.	• As a disciple grows in their ability to minister and serve, they will grow in their capacity for leadership. • Encourage your disciple to teach and disciple others, possibly by taking leadership of a group. • Effective leadership requires Godly character and a desire to serve rather than wield power. • Help the disciple develop skills they need to lead more effectively (such as communication and decision-making). • Help them see weaknesses in their leadership and rely on God to strengthen them. Pray with them. • Help them give good leadership and training to others so that more fruit is produced. • Keep them accountable to a high standard of Christian living.

A Never-Ending Cycle

- Since Jesus trained His Apostles, disciples have been teaching new disciples! This process of following someone's example is what strengthens us all in our faith.

Starting Again

- When you share the Gospel with someone and they accept Jesus as their Saviour, the cycle starts again.
- It is not necessary for you to have completed all five stages.

Leading the Way

- The person who is discipling should be at a _____

A Life-Long Process:

- While one person may move through the first few stages in a year or less, it may take someone else several years before they accept the Gospel.
- _____ Some people will never attain level five. This is not a formal scale, merely a guide to illustrate how discipleship works.
- _____; we will always need to become more like Jesus Christ while learning to serve Him.
- Knowing that _____ will help us not to be discouraged!

MULTIPLYING LEADERS

God

_____ of
the Gospel under wise leadership. This concept is seen throughout scripture.
1 Corinthians 12:14-16
Galatians 6:2
Proverbs 11:14

A Leadership Problem:

- Our churches and ministries become weak when there is only one leader with vision trying to do all the work alone! This problem is a lack of leadership, and it may have many causes, but it is not a new problem!

Exodus 18:13-27

Moses was chastised by his father-in-law for not building up others in leadership and giving them permission and authority to lead.

Levels of Leadership

- There are several examples in the Bible that show the wisdom of sharing the workload.

Deuteronomy 1:15

Acts 6:2-6

Numbers 11:16-17

Identifying Potential Leaders:

- For your ministry to survive and for God's work to be done effectively, _____

- Not everyone will become a top-level leader, but many can _____

Careful Observation:

- You probably have people around you who can be encouraged to take on more than they are currently doing. Those who have been faithful with what they have can be entrusted with more (Matthew 25:21).

Biblical Qualifications:

- God's Word has much to say about selecting leaders. No one is perfect, but a person should _____

1 Timothy 3:1-13

1 Peter 5:2

Titus 1:7

Stages of Leadership Development

- Once a leader has been identified and invited to lead, they should receive some training.

The four stages of this leadership training will allow the person to transition from being a follower to becoming one who can assume the necessary responsibility and authority of leadership. This is _____

1. _____: The potential leader should watch someone else lead and pay careful attention. They should be invited to observe a leader in the environment of their possible area of leadership.
2. _____: At this stage, the potential leader should be invited to lead alongside the existing leader. This could involve leading a small portion of a Bible study, followed by feedback on how they did.
3. _____: Once the potential leader has gained experience alongside someone else, they are likely ready to lead by themselves. This should begin with a period of observation, where the existing leader can give feedback, encouragement, advice, and further training to the potential leader.

4. _____: Finally, the new leader begins to lead on their own. They still require encouragement and sometimes advice, but they should be able to successfully lead others.

Following Jesus

This path of identifying, inviting, and training leaders mirrors how Jesus Christ trained His disciples.

- Jesus' disciples first observed what He taught and did (Matthew 11:1).
- Jesus invited His disciples to participate in the work – they helped serve lunch to the people, and picked up pieces of bread left over after it had miraculously multiplied (Mark 8:1-10).
- Jesus then sent out the disciples in pairs to teach and perform miracles. Jesus gave them responsibility and authority (Matthew 10:1-15).
- Jesus left the disciples to do the work He had given them on earth and did not leave them unequipped. He sent them the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Multiplying Leadership

When we develop new leaders, _____. When they, in turn, identify and train new leaders, the work done grows even more.

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP

LESSON 2: PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Personal Spiritual Disciplines

1. Personal Spiritual Disciplines
2. Personal Devotional Life and Worship
3. Public Life of a Spiritual Leader

Introduction

Leadership requires preparation and ongoing discipline. Even though some people seem to be born leaders and have the personality and character traits that set them apart for that role, they still require preparation in their particular field. They must also be disciplined and focused.

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

- _____: they are the exercises that allow us to grow in godliness and are certainly necessary for anyone in leadership.
1 Timothy 4:6-16.
- _____, and the intentional actions we take to depend on God for our deepest needs.
- We realize that our salvation is not achieved through participation in spiritual disciplines, but rather it is by God's grace, through putting our faith in Christ, that we are saved.
- The purpose of engaging in spiritual disciplines is to_____

(Ephesians 2:8-9, Ephesians 6:13-18).

Practising Spiritual Disciplines with Purpose

When we want to improve ourselves in any area, it requires hard work and persistence.

- Spiritual Disciplines are not_____. They are intentional acts that strengthen our relationship with God and our ability to serve Him.
1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Hebrews 12:1
1 Peter 1:13

PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL LIFE AND WORSHIP

All Christian leaders face specific risks. One of these is that their public spiritual duties leave little or no room for private devotion to God. They can be involved in many spiritual activities and be admired by their followers, but inside, they may feel empty as they neglect their own spiritual health.

We Are Held to a High Standard:

- _____
If we lead people with an attitude of superiority or with false motives, we will be found out. If we neglect to serve with love, people will know.
- _____,
and we need God's help every day.
1 Timothy 4:12
Titus 1:5-9
James 3:1

We Are Responsible for Others:

- Any position of Christian leadership assumes some level of responsibility for others (what we teach them, how we care for them, the example we set, etc.).
Proverbs 27:23
Hebrews 13:17
1 Peter 5:2

We face Unique Struggles:

- Christian leaders face unique challenges. We may struggle with any of these problems:
 - **P**_____: We may be tempted to think more highly of ourselves than we should.
 - **L**_____: We confuse who we are (a Christian) with what we do (our work) and can neglect the duties of loving God first and devoting ourselves to Him.
 - **S**_____: When dealing with the problems of others, we often have no time to deal with our own struggles or share them with someone. We can get weighed down by the stresses of other people.
 - **A**_____: Christian leaders are especially susceptible to attacks from Satan. The enemy wants to destroy the good work we are doing, and may attack us, tempt us, or frustrate our families.

- **C** _____: If we make decisions, we will find someone who disagrees with us. Our work will be met with criticism and conflict, which can be taken personally.
- **B** _____: We enjoy the work we do – but it can be difficult to set personal boundaries, like setting aside time for ourselves and our family. This can lead to burnout, depression, and ministry fatigue.

Personal Devotional Life: John 15:1-11

- When leaders make a priority of spending time alone with God, they are looking to Him to fill their souls. They are saying that He is the source of their life. They are giving God (rather than working for God) first place in their life.
- **Personal Devotions:** Setting aside a time to meet with God is sometimes called ‘personal devotions’. Usually, this time includes some of the following activities:
 - **P** _____: Prayers of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession, or conversation.
 - **G** _____: Reading a portion of the Word and thinking about it. Sometimes, setting a goal, such as reading 4 or 10 chapters a day, or reading the whole Bible within a year.
 - **M** _____: It is filling the mind with the very Words of God and considering their application to life.
 - **J** _____: It is writing down what is being learned from and about God, and what He is saying to you in His Word.
 - **R** _____: Sometimes people will read the writings of other Christians (for example, devotional books) to get a better understanding of the Word.

Feeding Our Soul

- If you are responsible for teaching and feeding God’s Word to others, you must be certain to look after your own spiritual needs first. Ensure that you are receiving spiritual food and being challenged in the way that you live.

Daily Life of Worship

- We must maintain an attitude of worship every day and throughout the day. Prayer is vital to maintaining our close relationship with God.

- It is a particular risk when Christian leaders fill their days with the work of God and neglect to be with God. We must be aware of the challenges.
- Simply doing spiritual work does not necessarily please God if we neglect Him, our 'first love.'
- Our ministries will suffer and lack the power of the Spirit. Press on to abide more and more with Jesus this week and be the leader that God has called you to be!

PUBLIC LIFE OF A SPIRITUAL LEADER

Anytime you are in a position of leadership, you should expect to be treated differently. It is natural for those you lead to be critical, and this is often one of the greatest struggles of leadership.

- Leaders _____ When they preach, teach, or give advice, they must hold themselves accountable to the same standard and apply the same advice to their own lives first. Otherwise, who will listen to them?
- How you behave in public when everyone is watching is very important, but who you are when no one sees you is more critical.
- We tend to portray a better version of ourselves in public. _____

- We have a right to require _____
1 Timothy 3:1-13
1 Peter 5: 2-4
Titus 1: 5-9 o
Exodus 18:21-22
Acts 6:1-6

Leading Like Jesus:

Once Jesus began His public ministry, He faced constant criticism and scrutiny, so Jesus knows what we are going through! The only difference is that He was without sin, and the religious leaders could not find any fault in Him (even though they accused Him of many things).

Criticism of Jesus:

Criticism of His Good Works:

- Jesus was criticized for healing people (how, when, and by what power). People were always watching Him, and many did not approve of all He did!

Criticism of His Character:

- They attacked not only His actions but also His character, which was displayed by His actions. Jesus was criticized for eating with and keeping company with sinners.

Criticism of His Teachings:

- Jesus taught the true meaning of the Old Testament, but the religious leaders were critical of His teachings and His redefinition of righteousness!

Jesus Responded to Criticism

Jesus Responded in Love and Truth:

- Even though His critics wanted to trap Him, find fault with Him or stop His ministry, they couldn't. Out of love, Jesus brought people to the knowledge of the truth and corrected their false beliefs (Matthew 22:23-33).

Jesus Sometimes Chose to be Silent:

- Jesus did not always answer His accusers. An example is when the only fault they could find in Him was that He claimed to be the King of the Jews (Matthew 27:11).
- He affirmed that He was, but would not respond to other criticisms (Matthew 27:12-14). He knew it was His time to die, and there was no benefit to correcting accusations.
- There are times we as leaders have to accept criticism and accusations, choosing to be silent rather than engaging in self-defence or arguments.

Managing Criticism as a Spiritual Leader

Since criticism is inevitable, _____, and how to manage ourselves so that our ministry is uninterrupted.

The following steps are vital in order to survive in a position of leadership.

Conduct _____

- Make sure you are doing what you tell others to do – this is integrity. The validity of your ministry and your testimony rely on your integrity. We should aim to be people who keep our word and who do what we say we will, not only because of people but because it is right before God.

1 Peter 3:16

Matthew 23:2-4

2 Corinthians 8:21

Make _____

- Once you are in a position of leadership and responsibility, you have to consider others in every choice you make.
- Who is watching you? What if they follow your example?
- How will your decisions impact the example you are setting or the authority you have been entrusted with?
- It is a falsehood that what we do on our own time or in our private lives has no bearing on our leadership.
Luke 16:10
1 Corinthians 11:1
Philippians 3:17
Titus 2:7

Deal _____

- Every leader has personal problems, temptations, and struggles that can be a hindrance to leadership.
- It is important to know your own weaknesses, deal with them, and get help when necessary. Everyone has a dark side. Be willing to admit shortcomings.
- Some problems that plague leaders specifically are:
 - Anger
 - Insecurity
 - Pleasing people
 - Manipulating others
 - Putting their image first
 - Immorality
 - Too much confidence in
 - Pride self

Every person in ministry should expect some criticism because we all have weaknesses that cannot be entirely covered up. In fact, listening to critics can be part of God's process of sanctification in us. We should follow the instruction of 1 John 1:9 by regularly confessing our sins and accepting God's gracious forgiveness. We are all proud, and heeding correction helps us become humble.

Expect _____

- If you never hear any criticism, you might not be listening! Good leaders are humble, willing to accept correction, and make changes when necessary.

- Surround yourself with wise people and invite them to give honest feedback and suggestions. This does not have to diminish your position of authority!
- If you are open to people giving feedback on your leadership, they are more likely to address the issues with you face-to-face, even rumours and false accusations.
Proverbs 15:31-32

Don't _____

- It is of utmost importance as a leader to put your identity in what God says about you, not what people say about you! Leaders are often criticized not just for how they do their job, but also for *who they are*, which can cause harm. Remember that who you are is not what you do.
- God identifies who we are:
 - We are His children (John 1:12).
 - We are accepted (Romans 15:7).
 - We are made in His image (Genesis 1:27).
 - We are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
 - We are a part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27).
 - We are chosen and holy (1 Peter 2:9).
 - We are loved (Ephesians 2:4-9).
 - We are of great worth (Matthew 10:31).

We must limit the impact that personal attacks have on us. We need to constantly remind ourselves of who we are in Christ (listed above). We will not always be in agreement with one another, but different perspectives enrich the body of Christ. Do not let criticism stop you from doing what God has called you to do.

Don't _____

- We must exercise caution not to criticize others when they criticize us. When we are patient with others, we demonstrate the love of God. A leader should aspire to forgive, be merciful, and patient rather than responding with vengeance and anger. When we learn to pray for those who torment us, we are becoming more like Christ!
Romans 12:17-21
1Peter 3:9
Leviticus 19:18

Conclusion:

Criticism and correction

The following charts may help you see the various ways God can meet your spiritual needs. They provide a brief overview of the disciplines, but enough to get you started. Much has been written on these topics, so further research may be helpful.

TO CONNECT WITH GOD			
If we desire a deeper connection with God, it requires some action. Learning to pay attention to God's presence during the discipline will help us throughout the day.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Retreat	• To get away temporarily from the distractions of life • To spend some personal time alone with God	• Schedule a time away from regular activities. • Select a quiet location where you can be uninterrupted. • While on retreat, pray and practise other disciplines.	• provides uninterrupted time. • allows us to calm our thoughts and be free of distractions. • allows time to reflect on God's direction for us.
Practising the Presence of God	• To cultivate a constant awareness of God's presence	• Start each day with God, and be aware that He is always near. • Turn ordinary moments at work into holy ones through constant prayer and gratitude.	• Acknowledgement of Jesus' presence all day long. • an increased awareness of God's work in our lives. • seeing ordinary tasks as sacred appointments.

Journaling	• To keep an ongoing account of our journey with God • To track the hand of God in our circumstances and spiritual progress	• Use a journal or notebook, or a computer. • Choose a time each day to write. • Write about what God is teaching you in the struggles of life. • Include a place for prayer requests and answers.	• recognizing God at work in the midst of our struggles • seeing God's faithfulness in the ordinary routines of our life • reflecting on God's blessings and gifts
Silence	• To block out the distractions around us • To achieve total quietness inside and out, in order to listen to God	• Set a time limit – start with a short time. • Find a place where you can be quiet – no TV, radio, electronic devices, or even books that could distract. • Close your eyes, do not talk or pray – just be still and listen.	• detachment from the chaos of life • freedom from addiction to noise • achieving control of our thoughts and environment
God's Word:	<i>Luke 5:16, 1 Kings 19:12, John 5:39-40, Psalm 23:2-3, Mark 6:31, Psalm 46:10</i>		

TO HEAR FROM GOD

If we desire to hear God speaking to us, the primary means is through His Word. Listening to Him is different than merely reading to absorb facts and information. It is relational. As we approach God and His Word with questions, it is through His Word He answers!

Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Bible Study	• To give us a deeper understanding of God's Word through careful reading and studying entire books, individual topics, or a survey of the whole Bible • To help us grow spiritually – not only to prepare us to teach others	• Study carefully and write down what God is teaching you. • Read the Gospels and investigate who Jesus is as a person and how to follow Him. • Ask questions and find out the answers through doing a word study, topical study or historical background study.	• increased understanding of His truth through expressing our love for God with our mind • allowing God to correct, rebuke or instruct us • receiving direction, encouragement and vision • being aware of God's story throughout history
Devotional Reading	• To discover what God is saying to you through reading specific passages of Scripture	• Prepare yourself to receive God's Word by quieting your mind. • Then, read a passage slowly and carefully. You may read aloud or in silence. • When a word or phrase catches your attention, write it down and pray about it. • Read the passage again, and a third time	• hearing personally from God • looking carefully at not just the content, but the meaning of God's Word • discovering the value of praying through Scripture • increased sense of God's presence and direction

		listening to what God says to you.	• deepening of your faith and love for God's Word
Memorization	• To have specific parts of God's Word committed to memory for instant recall and application	• Start with one verse that means a lot to you. • Write it on a piece of paper and place in a prominent place. • Recite it or write it out until you know it perfectly without looking. • Continue to review each day. • After mastering short passages, move on to memorization of entire chapters or books of the Bible. Some people put verses to song, or rhythm.	• having God's Word with you constantly • having your head filled with life-giving, God breathed words instead of destructive or worldly thoughts • being able to recall memorized verses when you need them
Meditation	• To allow specific Scripture to change the way we think and live as we dwell on it over a period of time • To fill our mind with God's Word rather than	• In stillness of heart and mind, consider a word or short phrase from God's Word and think on it. • Consider its meaning, purpose, application. What	• learning to focus and calm the mind • being captivated in mind and heart by God's nature and His Word

	emptying it (as some religions suggest)	does it reveal about God? You? Life? • Talk to God about what you think and feel about it.	• learning to direct our thoughts to God and free ourselves from distractions
God's Word:	<i>Psalm 119:11, Hebrews 4:12-13, Deuteronomy 30:14, Psalm 119:97, Joshua 1:8</i>		
TO PURGE SIN IN OUR LIVES			
We are easily distracted and deceived, and without coming face to face with our sin, we may never acknowledge it. The spiritual disciplines can reveal sin and allow God to convict us, forgive us, and change us . The Spirit gives us power to live a changed live – but it will require work on our part.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Self-Examination	• To acknowledge any unconfessed sin in my life or conscience. and confess the sin to God • To lead me to confession, repentance and reconciliation	• At day's end consider how you acted throughout the day. When was I loving? When was I selfish? Did I display the fruit of the Spirit? Did I keep my commitments? – Was God honoured by my thoughts and actions? – Is there unconfessed sin?	• increased awareness of my need for God's grace and forgiveness • not allowing sin to take hold and destroy my life • becoming more accountable for my actions • celebrating God's grace and forgiveness
Detachment	• To distance myself from anything that hinders my relationship with the Lord • To strengthen my spiritual life by getting rid of things or	• Ask God to reveal to you anything that is hindering your Christian growth. • Consider stopping unhelpful behaviours, relationships, attitudes or	• freedom from bondage to worldly attachments and desires. • honesty with ourselves and others. • improved relationships

	relationships that are counter-productive	reactions (anger, sarcasm, etc.) • Give away something you hold tightly. • Turn off or unplug electronic devices, TV or computer if they are becoming addictive.	• less reliance on our image or standing before others. • increased reliance on God for ability to put Him first in our lives.
Confession	• To have a clean and open heart before God through acknowledging our sin • To heal broken relationships with people we have wronged	• Admit your sin before God every day. • Accept God's forgiveness. • Resolve not to return to past sins, and live in the freedom offered in Jesus.	• seeing yourself as God's forgiven child • not allowing guilt or shame to control you • receiving God's power to live a holy life • celebrating God's incredible grace and forgiveness.
Accountability	• To be held responsible for our actions • To develop close friends or mentors who support us, pray for us, and keep us on track in our Christian life and ministry	• Find a person willing to hold you accountable. • Let them know your struggles, confess to them your fears, doubts and sins. Be honest. • The relationship works best if it is mutual. Pray for one another.	• Increased humility before others • ability to keep commitments and resist temptations • not having to stand alone if falsely accused
God's Word:	<i>1 John 1:9, James 5:16, Galatians 6:1-2, Luke 12:15, Galatians 2:20</i>		

TO LOVE OTHERS

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are not alone. We belong to the family of God. Relationships are very important in the Church, and Jesus emphasized that we are to love one another even as He loves us. Maintaining a loving relationship takes time and effort.

Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Humility	• To honour others before ourselves – secretly, rather than to gain applause and prestige • To avoid manipulating others by trying to control • Note: Humility is not thinking very little of ourselves, but rather thinking of ourselves very little!	• Refrain from boasting. • Remain silent about your own abilities, accomplishments and talents. • Elevate others before yourself. • Allow God to define who you are and your value to the Christian community.	• relationships with less tension and competition • letting go of the need to control others or gain recognition • following Jesus' example of humility • Jesus will increase in us as we decrease • seeing His power made perfect in our weakness • focused on loving others
Serving	• To intentionally love others by putting our hands, money, time, energy and talents to work on their behalf • To honour God with our gifts and abilities, not for praise, but to practise love • To help others, even when it is hard, or behind the scenes rather	• Choose someone to serve and ask them what you can do for them today. Then do it. • Do menial tasks (yes – even as a leader!) that no one wants to do. • Practise hospitality. • Consider caring long-term for an orphan or widow, those who are ill,	• learning to love others by taking care of their needs • freedom from selfish thinking as you put others first • needs are met through your generosity and wise stewardship of resources • people are drawn to Jesus

	than in the spotlight	or those in prison. • Talk to God about how this makes you feel, and your struggles in serving.	by your example of love
Giving	• To meet the practical needs of others with resources God has given us • To demonstrate to others that God supplies all our needs • To be reminded of our dependence on Jesus Christ, and be freed from anchoring our security in things	• Ask God to direct you specifically to a need, and then respond with a generous heart to the best of your ability and resources. • Choose to give time or resources beyond what you normally would.	• reduced dependence on material things • increased joy in seeing God work through your obedience • others are blessed • increased connection with God and His Kingdom work
Mentoring	• To encourage, strengthen and teach someone younger in the faith	• Choose a disciple and offer to meet with them as a mentor for a period of time. • Meet them on a regular basis to pray and study together. • Help them to reach their God-given potential.	• builds the Body of Christ and strengthens the Church • our focus is on others rather than self • seeing others grow in their faith
God's Word:	<i>John 3:30, Matthew 22:37-39, Acts 20:35, Matthew 6:1-4, Titus 2:3-5, 2 Timothy 2:2</i>		

TO WORSHIP GOD			
We worship God by living every moment of our day with gratitude towards Him. Acknowledging Him constantly in our thoughts, actions and attitudes takes discipline, but brings abundant joy because we serve a great, holy, loving and perfect God!			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Gratitude	• To express deep appreciation to God for who He is and His bountiful blessings • To acknowledge God's help even in our trials and difficulties • To recognize how God has worked through the sacrifices others have made and the love they have shared	• Count your blessings – write down the good things God has done. • Practise thanking God for all things – even that which hurts us for a time but are ultimately good. • Practise a thankful heart by writing notes of encouragement to people who receive little thanks or recognition. • Choose thankful thoughts.	• freedom from want as we practice being satisfied with God alone • being grateful to others • choosing to be thankful rather than critical • recognizing that what you have comes from God and is a gift, not an entitlement • increased value for others and who they are • less comparing yourself with others, or coveting
Celebration	• To exalt God with joy and praise by bringing attention to what God is doing in our lives, the Church and the world • To express happiness as a community for answers to	• Look for opportunities to praise God. • Celebrate God's greatness when you are alone observing nature, or reading His Word. • Celebrate in the company of others	• focuses our mind on God's greatness, faithfulness and love • turns everyday occurrences into opportunities to praise God • keeps life focused less on self, and

	prayer, births and marriages, special holidays or milestones • To boast about what God has done, and the gifts He has given His people	by organizing a feast with music, dance, and art. • Include regular prayers of celebration and hymns. • Keep celebrations with friends and family members. • Choose joy even when trials come.	more on God and the celebration of others • brings the Church together in joyful praise
Worship	• To glorify God and enjoy Him forever, and to put Him first in our life • To exalt and praise God together as a Church	• Participate regularly in corporate worship with other believers. • Set aside times to worship God privately. This may include praising God through words, poems, psalms, reading scripture aloud, singing, playing instruments, or movement.	• learning to rejoice in God • learning that everything else should be secondary to God in our life • drawing closer to God as we worship Him from our deepest spirit
Sabbath and Rest	• To set aside one day in seven for worship and rest from our work • To remember that God rested after creation, that Israel was given rest from slavery, and that there is perfect	• Honour one day a week. From New Testament times, the Church has honoured Sunday as "the Lord's Day." • Choose time to refrain from business, work, stresses and burdens of life and	• refreshing and renewal • freedom from rush and hurry • allowing God to speak about what is most important • realizing that there will be enough time for the work to be done

	rest in Christ who frees us from the bondage of sin	choose to rest in God. • Read His word, enjoy God's gifts of family, friends, community, church and nature.	
God's Word:	1 Thessalonians 5:18, Romans 12:1, Psalm 29:2, Exodus 33:14, Mark 2:27		
TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY			
Prayer is at the heart of our relationship with God. Sometimes our prayers become repetitive and unfocused. There are many ways to pray – prayer walking, praying scripture, reading liturgical prayers. Here are a few ways you can pray as a spiritual discipline.			
Discipline:	Purpose	Action	Benefits
Prayer Partners	• To be accountable and disciplined in our prayers by designating a time and place to meet with another person to pray on a regular basis • To have the prayer support of a trusted friend during a special time of need	• Choose one person to meet with regularly for times of prayer. • Pray for requests that you share, and for one another. • Keep requests for your prayer partner handy so you can pray for them daily even when you cannot meet. • Intercede together for world concerns, missions projects or other shared concerns.	• increased time in prayer • shared celebration of answers to prayer • strengthened prayer life by praying with others • developed friendships

Fasting	• To abstain from food, drink (or other activities) in order to focus on an extended time of prayer • To train ourselves to be satisfied in God • To temporarily detach from dependence on worldly things Note: Those with health conditions should not fast from food for long periods of time – fast in other ways.	• If fasting from food, start by omitting one meal. • Drink water if fasting from all food, or fast instead from one category of food, such as meat. • Pray and read God's word during the time you would normally eat. When you feel hungry, ask God to give you a hunger for Him instead. • You may also choose other attachments to abstain from – shopping, sweets, media, internet, activities, etc.	• a more focused time spent with God • increased desire for Him and decreased attachment to the world • practising self-control so that you are more able to obey God • through small deprivations being reminded of Christ's sacrifice for you • repenting of indulgent, addictive or distracting behaviours
Watching	• To refrain from sleeping in order to pray for a heavy concern • To have an extended uninterrupted time to pray to God • To eagerly await God's answer, knowing it could come at any time	• Set an alarm to wake at a fixed time in order to pray. • Have your Bible and prayer list ready. • Practise self-control while tired. • Rely on God to sustain you in spite of missed sleep. • Pray expectantly for God to provide and answer.	• uninterrupted prayer • intimacy with God in the privacy of the quiet night • finding comfort and strength in communion with God • developing self-control

Fixed Prayer	• To set aside a specific period of time each day for extended prayer to ensure that it happens • To interrupt work or other activities for the more important work of prayer	• Choose a specific time or times to pray. • Set an alarm or write it into your daily schedule to remind you. • Develop a prayer list of current needs including church, family and unsaved friends. • You may want to include Biblical prayers or Scripture, or use liturgical prayer guides.	• develops a regular prayer habit • places a priority on our prayer life • the rhythm of day is based on our communication with God
God's Word:	<i>Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 26:38-40, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Deuteronomy 4:7</i>		

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP

LESSON 3: LEADERSHIP CHARACTER AND SERVANTHOOD

LEADERSHIP CHARACTER AND SERVANTHOOD

1. The Character of a Godly Leader
2. The Attitude of a Godly Leader

THE CHARACTER OF A GODLY LEADER

When Christians fail and ministries fall apart, it is often due to a lack of character development in the leader. A Christian leader must take _____

What is Godly Character?

- Godly Character is evident when our attitudes, our thoughts, our actions, our intentions, and our desires are Christ-like.
- Godly character is more than knowing right from wrong and having a sense of ethics or morality. It is choosing good over evil, even when it is inconvenient.
- Godly character puts God first, others second, and ourselves third.
- Godly character embodies the praiseworthy traits mentioned in the Bible, including the fruit of the Spirit, which displays the nature of Jesus Christ to the unbelieving world.
- Christians must work to develop Godly character; _____

Being _____

- As we undergo the process of sanctification, we are becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.
Romans 8:29
2 Corinthians 3:18
Romans 12:2
Colossians 3:9-10
Romans 13:14

Abiding _____

- God wants all of us to abide in Him – to stay close to Him in our thoughts, words, deeds, and attitudes. Awareness of His presence with us should impact the way we

think and the things we do. The Holy Spirit will enable us to produce spiritual fruit when we abide in Him.

John 15:4-5

Colossians 3:12-15

1 John 4:8

Galatians 5:22-23

1 Corinthians 13:4-13

Why Godly Character Matters

Godly _____

- Just as we work hard at learning a new language, acquiring a new skill, or training our body for a specific task, we must work at building our character. Our character has eternal value! We were made to serve God forever as 'royal priests'.

1 Peter 2:4-12

Revelation 5:10

Godly _____

- When God wants someone to serve Him in a specific way, He calls the person whose heart is close to His (or a person "after God's own heart", like David in the Old Testament). Good character ensures the work will continue, that it will not be undone by sin or selfish decisions. Our character reveals whether we are willing to live our lives God's way or our own.

1 Samuel 16:7

Acts 13:22

Godly _____

- God holds each of us accountable not only for our actions, but for our inner life as well. We may easily fool people, but not God. Because our heart is laid bare before Him, nothing is hidden from His sight. Jesus frequently rebuked people who posed as holy but whose hearts were far from God. Jesus pronounced woe on them; they expected a blessing!

Luke 12:2

Matthew 23:25-26

Our _____

- We become what we habitually do.
- We prove to be truthful by always being honest.
- We prove to be joyful not only when times are good, but when we endure hardships with an attitude of thankfulness to God.
- Character reveals what we are likely to do in the future.
- Decisions, choices, thoughts, and words flow from our hearts.
- To be used by God, our character must be like that of Christ.

Matthew 12:35
Proverbs 4:23

Our _____

- We can either put God and His desires first in our lives, or we can elevate ourselves.
- Selfishness is the root of many vices and character flaws. It reveals that we love ourselves more than God; this is disobedience and idolatry.

Proverbs 11:20
John 14:15

Character _____

_____. It requires intentional action, deliberate choices, and discipline. When we are evaluating our actions, we must ask ourselves if what we are doing is right and good. We may use questions to evaluate our motivations, such as:

- Is it done out of love for God first?
- Is it done out of love for others second?
- Is it done with self-control, or rooted in selfishness?

How Character is Built:

C _____:

- We make a hundred small decisions every day – how to respond to someone who is aggravating us, how we behave in traffic or at the market, how we think and how we speak.
- God gives us many opportunities to choose virtuous behaviour and an attitude in keeping with His character. This may take a period of time before we have any level of comfort in doing so. We learn to be virtuous by our choices.

Luke 16:10
Joshua 24:15
Proverbs 16:9

C _____:

- It is through our struggles and challenges that God hones our character. If we never faced adversity, our character would never be challenged!
- It is easier to be generous out of abundance than when our possessions are scarce.
- It is easier to be truthful and courageous when we are not threatened than when we are in danger!
- Practising virtue in difficult circumstances is how our good character is proven.

James 1:2-4
1 Corinthians 10:13
Jeremiah 12:5

C _____:

- God uses other people to continually help us become more like Christ.
- Our friends can improve our character or hinder it – depending on the company we keep!
- While we must always look to Jesus alone as our perfect example, we can learn much from Christian men and women who have been following Jesus longer than we have.
- In addition, our character is often developed through people who test and try us, more than through our circumstances.
- It is easy to think of how patient and compassionate a person we are, until we meet someone who is in need at an inconvenient time!
1 John 4:19-21
Philippians 2:3-4
James 2:14-17

C _____: Having good character is mandatory for every Christian – especially leaders. Developing Godly character is a commitment to the heart of Jesus Christ. It is putting God's ways and the best interests of others before our own.

THE ATTITUDE OF A SERVANT LEADER

The original language of the Bible uses the word 'slave' 130 times to refer to the Christian's new position in God's Kingdom. We are His sons and daughters, but we are also His servants and slaves. Slavery and servanthood are concepts that many may not like; however, as believers, we must come to accept this truth: a leader with Christ-like character will, above all, aspire to be a humble servant.

All Christian _____

- When people take a position of leadership, it is often without a desire to serve. Many are willing to bear with the difficulties and stress in exchange for the rewards of power, honour, and wealth. However, this is a picture of worldly leadership. It isn't the leadership Jesus Christ displayed or called us to!

Servanthood _____

- Christian servant-leaders contribute to the lives they lead, inspire their followers, and help them work hard to be successful.
- It puts pride aside and does what is necessary so others can attain their goals.
- Servants give, love, and set a good example, rather than ruling through fear or feelings of insecurity.

Servanthood _____

- We must be careful not to manipulate others by what we do, instilling a sense of guilt or debt in them as they watch us serving.

- Much of our work as leaders will not be seen by others. We must be focused on accomplishing God's mission, and in the process honour others as we work together.
- Leaders do not see people just as tools, but lead in the right direction, and people can be useful.

Servanthood _____

- Being a servant doesn't mean we put ourselves down by self-criticism or self-hatred. Neither does it mean we exalt ourselves or boast about our servant actions – rather, it is selflessness.
- Instead of thinking about ourselves, we think about God's love for us, and how we can care for others and lead them in joyful acts of service.

Servanthood _____

- We find our definition for servant leadership in Matthew 20:26-28, where Jesus Himself said: "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Servant Leadership in the Life of Jesus:

- Jesus' life confused many people because they were expecting something different from the Messiah, the promised Saviour from God!
- They expected a leader who would take power from the Romans, amass an army, and seek the world's glory.
- Instead, He ate and drank with ordinary people, bent down to heal lepers, and stooped to wash His disciples' feet. His style of servant leadership was completely unexpected!

Jesus Taught Servanthood:

- Jesus' parables were often marked by the words, "you have learned... but I tell you," correcting thoughts, beliefs, and understanding of Scripture.
- Jesus taught that those who are greatest in the Kingdom of God are children, slaves, the weak and the humble.
- He taught that the Kingdom of God is not about us struggling for power and prestige, but about God's power and glory and honour.
- In all His parables, He did not teach how to control others, but how to love them.

Matthew 20:16

Luke 9:46-48

Matthew 19:30

Jesus Used His Power to Serve Others:

- Jesus demonstrated great power in His actions and His speech.
- He possessed all wisdom and exercised authority over creation. But He did not use this power to save Himself when in danger, nor to draw attention to Himself. He brought glory to God the Father by serving others.
- Jesus refused personal glory, knowing His Kingdom was not of this world. He served to the point of exhaustion.
- He was moved by love when someone was sick, lost, apart from God, or unclean.

Luke 8:24

Matthew 4:1-11

Matthew 14:14

Mark 10:45

Jesus Washed His Disciples' Feet:

- Jesus had established Himself as a powerful leader who drew crowds of fans and disciples from the least of society. This angered other leaders. Jesus washed the dust and dirt from His disciples' feet before they ate. This was a regular ritual before taking a meal together, but it would be the responsibility of the lowest servant (John 13:1-20, Luke 22:27).
- Jesus demonstrated to His disciples love in action.

Jesus Submitted Himself to the Will of God:

- Even though Jesus is equal with God the Father, He submitted Himself to the Father's will.
- Jesus paid the ultimate price in sacrificially laying down His own life for us.
- Jesus experienced humility and scorn as part of God's plan for Him.

Philippians 2:1-8,

Matthew 26:36-39)

Jesus Taught Us to be Servants Too:

- Jesus did not need to take the position of a servant or slave – it was voluntary on his part.
- If there was ever a leader who was above those He led, it would be Jesus! But Jesus came to teach us how to serve and love one another.
- He said that a servant is not above his teacher; therefore, we should not think we are above serving His people! He modelled servant leadership for us.

(Luke 22:26, Luke 14:12-14, Mark 10:42-45)

Biblical Examples of Servant Leadership:

Many of the individuals who were called to lead the people of God were servant leaders. They did not strive to be in power for glory or personal gain. Their sights were not on their own prestige and comfort, but on God's will and the needs of others.

- **Deborah, Judge of Israel:** Judges 4:4-10, Judges 5:3-5
- **Nehemiah:** Nehemiah 4:22-23, Nehemiah 5:14-19
- **Paul, the Apostle:** 1 Corinthians 4:1, 9:19, Philippians 1:1
- **Peter, the Apostle:** Acts 3:12, 1 Peter 5:1-11, 2 Peter 1:1

Evaluate Your Own Servant Leadership:

- Servant leadership does not seek selfish gain, power, or control through intimidation, but rather inspires, guides, and encourages others to obey God through love.
- It may be firm at times, but it is always for the good of the followers.
- It may often look as though a servant leader is doing tasks that are beneath his or her position, but no task is too small or menial if it is done for God.
- Servant leadership positively impacts followers and does not give in to the temptation for personal pride and power.
- In short, it is modelling our lives after the life of Jesus Himself.

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP

LESSON 4: WHAT A HEALTHY CHURCH LOOKS LIKE

Church leaders need to be grounded in their understanding of why Jesus Christ established the Church to function as His Body after He ascended into heaven. The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, has been instructed to spread the Gospel around the world and to serve in its local community. It also meets regularly to worship God, be instructed in His Word, and to support and encourage one another. While there are no perfect churches, some are healthier than others! A healthy church requires committed and faithful members, and humble, wise leadership. It also requires work!

The Church is described as:

- **The** _____ (1 Corinthians 12:12,27, Ephesians 4:12-16)
- **The** _____ (Luke 12:32, John 10:16, 1 Peter 5:2)
- **The** _____ (1 Peter 4:17, 1 Timothy 3:15)
- **The** _____ (Ephesians 5:22-32, Revelation 19:7-8)

Jesus is described as:

- **The** _____ (Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 2:19)
- **The** _____ (Ephesians 2:20-22, Matthew 16:18, 1 Peter 2:4-6)
- **The** _____ (John 3:29, Mark 2:19-20)

Jesus' involvement with the Church:

- **He** _____ (Ephesians 5:25).
- **He** _____ (Revelation 7:17).
- **He** _____ (Colossians 2:19).
- **He** _____ (John 17:20-26).
- **He** _____ (2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians 11:32).
- **He** _____ (Ephesians 5:27).

Because the Church belongs to Jesus and exists for Him, He will protect and care for her. God will help the Church to endure to the end of time and to fulfill her mission. The Church is comprised of people whose true citizenship is heaven. They are holy, set apart, purchased, and redeemed by Jesus Christ for Himself.

Disagreement and Dissent within the Church

- Even though we have been redeemed, we are still sinners. Inevitably, there will be dissent and discord within the body of believers. Many of the epistles written to early churches include instructions for dealing with this problem.

Philippians 1:27

2 Corinthians 13:11

Romans 15:5

2 Timothy 2:22-26

An Example of How to Handle Disagreement:

- The early Church was not immune to disagreements, quarrels, gossip, or power struggles. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church has survived these obstacles.

Read Acts 6:1-7

We learn a few things from this example:

- They dealt with the issue immediately (vs. 1-2).
- They involved the whole congregation in choosing overseers (vs. 2-5).
- They appointed new leadership to share responsibility (vs. 6).
- They addressed the issue in a peaceful, respectful manner (vs. 7).

The result of these actions was that God's work continued to increase because enough leaders were in place to address different concerns. In addition, outsiders would have seen the peaceful way that disagreements were handled. The way we deal with difficulties today is a powerful witness to others.

Fifteen Characteristics of a Healthy Church: (A healthy church is the sum of spiritually healthy members)

1. **Teaches** _____: A church must be primarily concerned with teaching the Word of God.
 - This will include reading the Word of God together.
 - Preaching from the Word of God during worship services.
 - Providing Bible Studies and classes.
 - Encouraging personal study by members.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Timothy 4:13

Acts 17:11

Acts 2:42

2. **Exalts** _____: A church must be engaged in worshipping and praying together.

- Worship should be focused on exalting God.
- The lyrics of worship songs and hymns should be directed towards God, proclaiming His greatness.
- Corporate prayers should demonstrate trust in God and expectancy of His answers.
- Faith-filled prayers and passionate worship are signs of a group of devoted believers who know and love their God.

Isaiah 12:5

Hebrews 13:15

Psalms 29:2

Philippians 4:6

3. **Observes** _____: Both sacraments of Communion and Baptism were commanded to all believers by Jesus Himself.

- They were to be carried out in community with one another and must therefore be vital and regular practices in the Church.
- New converts to Christianity should be baptized as an act of obedience to Christ.
- The Lord's Supper, or Communion, should be practised regularly.
- Individuals who do not practise one or both sacraments must examine whether they are a true Church.

Mark 16:16

Acts 2:41

1 Corinthians 11:26

Luke 22:19-20

4. **Engages** _____: The mandate given to all believers by Jesus was to go and make disciples.

- A healthy church will not only seek to evangelize its community, but also financially support and send missionaries to other places in the world, or support organizations that exist for that purpose.

Mark 16:15

Acts 13:47

Psalm 96:3
Romans 10:13-15

5. **Is Committed** _____: The goal of the church is for every member to grow in the fullness of their faith.
- This requires intentional discipleship of every believer. Whether this happens in small groups, mentor relationships, or by other means.
 - The church must be committed to nurturing spiritual growth and Christlikeness in every believer. Discipleship requires commitment from the whole Church.
Matthew 28:18-20
2 Timothy 2:2
John 15:1-17
Titus 2:1-8
6. **Demonstrates** _____: The love the people of God have for one another will be visible when you enter a church.
- A church that is loving will enjoy the company of one another.
 - It will seek to meet the needs of one another.
 - Jesus said the world would know us by our love, and a healthy church will display this love for all to see. People who visit will sense this love.
John 13:34-35
1 John 4:8
Colossians 3:14
1 John 4:7-21
7. **Impacts** _____: A church that has no impact on their community is not fulfilling their role in the world, which is to be salt and light and a visible presence of God.
- When a community has a positive view of a church group, they are more likely to listen to their message.
Matthew 5:13-16
Acts 2:44-47
Hebrews 13:16
Luke 14:12-14
8. **Joyful**, _____: When we gather together as a Church, our joy should be evident.
- When we display genuine gratitude for all God has done for us and all we do for one another, it will show in the way we worship, serve, and fellowship with one another.

- Where there is grumbling, criticism, complaining, and gossip, there is no joy or gratitude.
Galatians 5:22
Romans 14:17
1 Thessalonians 5:18
Philippians 2:12-18
9. **Humble**, _____: All churches must have appointed leaders to keep order.
- These may be officially designated pastors (even paid positions), or they may simply be individuals chosen as elders or overseers.
 - If leaders abuse their authority and are harsh to their followers, they will not have a healthy church.
 - Biblical guidance for who is fit to lead should be followed, and leaders must be held to that Biblical standard.
Philippians 2:3
Matthew 20:25-28
1 Timothy 3:1-7
1 Peter 5:5
10. **Biblical** _____: In addition to the Biblical guidance about who is fit to lead, the Bible also instructs us about how to deal with sin in the Church, and those who do not submit to leadership. This is known as Church Discipline.
- Every healthy church must exercise it when needed.
 - Correction is to be done in love. However, willful repeated sin is not to be tolerated among God's people.
 - It is the responsibility of the elders, pastors, and overseers to deal with problems as they arise, to seek God's wisdom, and to lead their congregation accordingly.
Matthew 18:15-20
Titus 3:10
Galatians 6:1
Romans 16:17-18
11. **Members** _____: In every healthy church, most of the members are actively serving in some way.
- There should be enough ministries, programs, and work for everyone to get involved.
 - The ministry of the Church is not only for appointed pastors, paid staff, or those who appear most spiritual! There is work for everyone to do.
Ephesians 4:28

Galatians 6:2-5

James 2:26

1 Peter 4:10

12. **Diverse** _____: It may be a sign of an unhealthy church if everyone in it looks the same!

- A Church that welcomes all people will be made up of such representatives.
- In the body of Christ, children, youth, the elderly, disabled, those of different nationalities, classes, and backgrounds are all welcome.
- The Church should reflect the type of diversity in the community in which it meets racially and economically.

Matthew 19:13-15

Romans 12:16

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Revelation 7:9

13. **Good** _____: When a church owns property, the way that property is taken care of can speak volumes about the people who meet there.

- They are grateful for what God has given them.
- They give to the work of God.
- Each member should look after what belongs to the Church collectively and give cheerfully.

Titus 1:7

1 Timothy 6:7-19

Proverbs 3:9

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

14. **Has** _____: While all church assemblies share a common mission, each one is unique in its areas of service, opportunities, and gifts.

- Healthy churches know their specific mission and purpose and mobilize their members with that vision and plan.
- They seek to ensure every member carries out the unique role God has for them.

Proverbs 29:18

Proverbs 21:5

Proverbs 16:3

Matthew 6:33

15. **Spiritual** _____: Churches that faithfully teach the Word of God should see spiritual growth in their members, and churches that are diligent in evangelism should see their numbers increase. A healthy church will naturally grow.

- Do not be discouraged if numerical growth doesn't happen at the rate you desire – that is in God's hands.

2 Peter 3:18

2 Corinthians 9:10

Galatians 6:9

Acts 2:47

Conclusion

No assembly of believers will be perfect, but we can be a healthy church that seeks the Kingdom of God and His will for our lives. It is the responsibility of every believer to nurture a healthy church, refusing to allow a critical spirit, grumbling, complaining, and discord among the congregation. These markers of a healthy church can be used to assess where you can help your own church grow stronger.

EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 5: DISCIPLESHIP REVIEW AND FEED-BACK

For four years, North Park Worship Centre has committed to implementing a strategic and intentional discipleship process to grow its members. Many members have committed to the journey from the inception, while many others have joined along the way.

- First, we want to thank you for your faithful commitment over the eight semesters to journey with us as we studied various topics that are essential to building a solid biblical foundation and fostering spiritual growth.
- The fact that you have remained faithful to the series of studies is an indication of your commitment to your spiritual growth.
- We want to use this closing session to:
 - review our journey
 - Hear from you as to how the sessions were beneficial to you.
 - Gain your feedback on the entire experience
 - Answer any questions, concerns, or any other comments you may have.

Again, thank you, North Park, for your four-year commitment to discipleship. We believe we have laid a solid foundation upon which to continue to build mature disciples of Christ to advance the kingdom of God.

NPWC CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

“Discipleship is not an event but a lifelong process.”
(Evan Doyle)