



**growthtrack**

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# FOUNDATIONS



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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on beginning your Growth Track journey! This material has been prayerfully and thoughtfully curated to help you search the Scriptures yourself and see what God says about the various topics.

The common thread that you will see through all of this material is that the basis of a vibrant Christian walk begins and stems from a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. We believe that, and practice that, at Focal Point Church.

The design of this material was put together so you can sit down with a Disciplex and have conversations focused and centered on Jesus and His Word. Our prayer and belief are that if you give yourself to walking in this discipleship relationship, your life will indeed be on a Growth Track - leading you to the center of God's plans and will for your life.

WELCOME TO YOUR GROWTH TRACK!

**IMPORTANT TIPS** for using this manual--

1. Always have your Bible and this material with you whenever you meet with your Disciplex.
2. If you don't have a Bible, get one as soon as possible. We recommend choosing the English Standard Version (ESV) or the New International Version (NIV) when buying or receiving the Bible. If you prefer a different version than the one mentioned, that's OK.
3. Read each lesson carefully. There will be questions and Bible verses for you to interact with throughout the teaching. Stop for a moment and answer those the best that you can.
4. We always try to clarify that **"discipleship" is much more than filling in this material.** So while meeting together, feel free to interrupt the lesson at any time for prayer, sharing struggles and difficulties, asking for advice, talking about yourself, and so on. If you can't finish the lesson in one meeting, pick up where you left off the following week.
5. Direct quotes of Scripture have their titles bolded and are offset in the text. References to the Bible, that are not direct quotes, are noted by parentheses.

# SESSION 1

## A CHRIST-LED LIFE

### REFLECT

What are you looking forward to as we go through this discipleship material together?

What are you hoping happens during this time?

### INTRODUCTION

**J**ust as physical laws govern the physical universe - such as the law of gravity, thermodynamics, laws of motion, etc. - there are spiritual laws that govern our relationship with God. Throughout this study, we will look at what those laws are and how we should respond to them.

### GOD LOVES YOU

The first spiritual law is that God loves YOU, and He offers a beautiful plan for your life. The most famous of all verses is John 3:16, and it shows us the heart that God has for us as people.

**Read the following verses and answer the following question.**

**John 3:16** (NIV) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**John 10:10b** (NIV) [Jesus speaking] I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Why do you think most people are not experiencing the fullness of life the way the Bible talks about?

## PEOPLE ARE SINFUL

The second law is that we are sinful and separated from God because of our sin. Because of this separation, we cannot know and experience God's one and only plan for our life. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We were created to have fellowship with God, but because of our stubborn self-will - we as the human race have chosen to go on our independent way, and therefore that fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Read Romans 3:9-20. How would you describe humanity's desperate condition because of our sinful nature?

Read Romans 6:23. What is the penalty for our sin?

The death the Bible refers to is a spiritual separation from God that keeps us from experiencing the **abundant life** that Jesus came to give us.

# JESUS IS THE ANSWER

The third law explains the only way to bridge the impassable bridge that separates us as sinful people from a perfect, holy God. Jesus is God's only provision for man's sin. You can only know and experience God's love and plan for your life through Him. Jesus lived a completely sinless life and took on our sin so we could be free (2 Corinthians 5:21).

## How did God demonstrate His love for us?

**Romans 5:8** (NIV) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Not only did Jesus die for our sins, though, but He was also buried and raised to life on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4). Because of this amazing miracle and because of the sacrifice Jesus made to take our sins upon Him - we have access to God through Jesus. (John 14:6).

## What is the only name by which we can be saved?

**Acts 4:10-12** (NIV)

10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Only as we accept and receive Jesus - by believing in Him - can we have the assurance of eternal life in Heaven (1 John 5:10-12).

# WE MUST RECEIVE CHRIST

It is not enough that we know and acknowledge the first three laws. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. As we receive Christ, we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. And once we receive Jesus, we become children of God. (John 1:12)

## How do we receive Christ?

### **Ephesians 2:8-9** (NIV)

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

Jesus tells us that as we receive Him, we will experience a **new birth** (John 3:1-8) - it is a spiritual rebirth with a new nature, new desires, and new access to our Heavenly Father, God. The Bible assures you that when you have sincerely repented of your sins and put your faith in Jesus by giving Him complete control of your life, in that instant, you are born again.

## Read the verses below and circle some other things that happen as we receive Christ.

**John 1:12** (NIV) Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

### **Colossians 2:13-14** (NLT)

13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

**Romans 5:1** (ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we<sup>a</sup> have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** (ESV) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**John 3:36** (NIV) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.



**Ephesians 1:13** (NLT) And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.

The most amazing gift we can ever receive is the gift of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus. And it is not a gift that is given begrudgingly but rather a personal invitation from Jesus Himself (Revelations 3:20). Receiving Christ involves turning away from our self-led life and turning to God. We then trust Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and make us what He wants us to be. It is not enough to just agree intellectually that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died on the Cross for our sins. It is not just an emotional experience. We receive Jesus by faith as an act of our will.

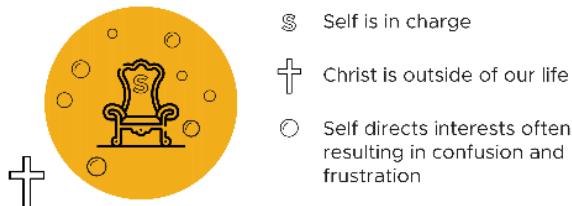
## SELF-LED LIFE VS CHRIST-LED LIFE

When we ask Jesus into our lives, He becomes our Lord and Savior. What does it mean for Him to be our Lord? Jesus is the Son of God. His wisdom and words are indeed God's words - and must be trusted and followed. When we come to Jesus, we say, I give my life to You. I follow You so that you can lead me to the life God created for me.

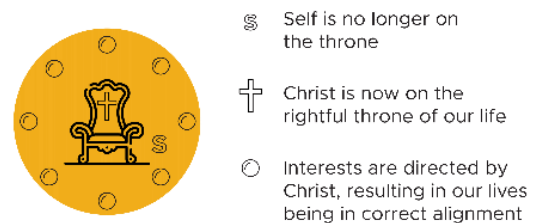
To say that we must trust and obey Christ does not mean that salvation depends on us being perfect. Instead, following Jesus as Lord is the attitude of complete surrender and trust to Christ as our leader and Lord.

**These two circles represent two kinds of lives. Looking at these pictures, what stands out to you the most?**

### Self-Led Life



### Christ-Led Life



## What did Jesus say was the result of obeying Him? What is the result of NOT obeying Him?

**Luke 6:46-49** (NLT)

46 "So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? 47 I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. 48 It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. 49 But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins."

Obedience is important. We are saved by grace, not by our trying to be good enough. We cannot obey God out of human effort or determination. We can walk in greater obedience as we walk with Christ in a surrendered and sincere faith. We are called to live a new way which is found in seeking Christ daily. As humans, we certainly won't be perfect. Still, because of Christ and His leading us, we are on a journey to more remarkable and more significant victories over sin and weaknesses that once dominated our lives. The process is called "sanctification" or "growing up in our salvation" as we follow Christ and walk out our salvation through discipleship.

## ACTION STEPS

**Are you confident that you have made the decision to give your life to the Lord and receive His salvation? If not, read Romans 10:9-10 and take a moment to pray and receive Jesus by faith.**

**What do you know God wants you to do that you are not presently doing?**

# SESSION 2

## OUR HELPER

### REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

### INTRODUCTION

**T**his session will look at who the Holy Spirit is, what He was sent to do, and how we can allow Him into our daily lives.

### WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Read the following Scriptures and do your best to write down - who is the Holy Spirit?

**Matthew 28:19** (ESV) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**Acts 1:8** (ESV) [Jesus talking] "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

**Acts 2:38** (ESV) And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

# WHO HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

In the verses below - circle to whom God gives the Holy Spirit.

**Galatians 4:6-7** (NLT)

6 And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." 7 Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

**Romans 8:14-16** (NIV)

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.[a] And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

## OUR HELPER

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told His disciples to go back to Jerusalem and wait for power from on high. They would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

A few days later, during Pentecost, the Spirit came, and He did not come quietly. He arrived in wind and fire. A large crowd gathered. Peter got up to speak. He reminded the crowd that the prophet Joel had predicted that God's Spirit would come hundreds of years later. Peter proclaimed Jesus' death and resurrection. Cut to the heart, the crowd responded, "What shall we do?"

Peter said the proper response would be to **repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. In other words, it is impossible to live the Christian life apart from the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. We need to develop a **daily dependency** upon the Spirit of God. One key to turning to Him is understanding the Holy Spirit's role in our life.

In the following verses, circle what God sent the Holy Spirit to do in and through us.

**John 14:26** (ESV) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

**John 16:13-14** (ESV)

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

**Luke 24:49** (NLT)

"And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

**John 16:8** (NLT) And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

**Romans 8:26-27** (NIV)

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

**2 Timothy 1:14** (NLT) Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

## THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Without the power of the Holy Spirit, no one can be free from the power of sin. Our flesh is weak, and we do wrong things unintentionally. At the same time, we don't do good things even though we want to (Romans 7:18-20).

When you allow the Holy Spirit to have complete control of your life, you are free from the bondage of sin (Romans 8:1-2, 9-11). It is only in this position of allowing the Holy Spirit to have control that you cannot satisfy the desires of the flesh.

### When a person is controlled by the flesh, what can they not do?

**Romans 8:6-8** (NLT)

6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

## What are the results of a life controlled by our sinful nature?

### **Galatians 5:19-21** (NLT)

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

## What are the results of a life controlled by the Holy Spirit?

### **Galatians 5:22-23** (ESV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The truth is that the only way we can fulfill the purposes of God is to be deeply connected and surrendered to the Holy Spirit. Even the Disciples, who spent three years with Jesus, had to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the work of God (Acts 1:8).

# THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## How did John the Baptist describe that Jesus would baptize us?

**Matthew 3:11** (ESV) "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

## How do you receive the Holy Spirit into your life?

**Luke 11:13** (ESV) If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

## ACTION POINTS

What is a way that you can rely more fully on the Holy Spirit this week?

**Take a moment to pray and choose to yield the leadership of your life to the Holy Spirit.**

**Make it personal, but it can look something like this:**

*Holy Spirit, I thank you that I can rely upon You. I thank You that You have all power, all authority, and You understand the direction for my life. I choose today to release the control of my life to You. I am no longer the one who is driving my life, but You are given Your rightful place in the driver's seat. I yield to You today. And I pray that as I yield to You, You will fill me with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That the fire of God will fill me. You will speak through me, have gifts flow through me, and love through me like never before. I receive all of this by faith. In Jesus' Name, amen.*

# SESSION 3

## THE NEW COVENANT

### REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

### INTRODUCTION

In this session, we will look at the New Covenant that was given to us. We will go through things to help us understand the Old Covenant and then also what Jesus established for us with the New Covenant.

The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before Jesus came into the world, and it talks about the **First Covenant** that God made with His people. Whereas the New Testament was written after Jesus came into the world, presenting the **New Covenant** between God and us.

The foundation of Christianity is a **covenant relationship** with God. This is where you and I come into covenant with the one true God and where all that He offers to us becomes ours. We give Him the **totality** of our lives, love, and trust. And in return, we receive the life that God guarantees us as believers.

### WHAT IS A COVENANT?

In its common usage, covenant means a sacred contract between two people. It is an agreement; a commitment made according to the terms of the covenant. You who accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior have entered into such a covenant with Him. God is faithful, and He never breaks the terms of His covenants (Hebrews 6:17-18).



## Circle the words the Bible uses to refer to the New Covenant in Hebrews 13:20?

**Hebrews 13:20** (NKJV) Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant

God is binding Himself to us and saying *All I have, I am committing to you. I will never leave you or forsake you. Your battles will be My battles. Your needs will be My needs.*

We are saying *my life is no longer my own; it belongs to Jesus Christ. He is my Covenant Partner. I am not living for my glory or my name. I am living to His name glorified. I will trust Him to be faithful and to be my God.*

In the New Covenant, Jesus left two ordinances that are symbols that represent His death and resurrection. When we participate in these ordinances, we remember all that Jesus has done for us with great gratitude. We announce that we are entirely trusting Jesus for our salvation, and we are appropriating, by faith, the benefits we have through Jesus' death and resurrection.

## BAPTISM

The first ordinance we are given through the New Covenant is for us to be baptized. But why should we be baptized? First and foremost, Jesus Himself was baptized (Matthew 3:13-15)! Even though Jesus never sinned, He was baptized. He did it to set an example for us. But beyond that, Jesus also commanded that all be baptized.

### In whose name(s) did Jesus command us to baptize people?

**Matthew 28:19** (ESV) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

### How do each of the following two Scriptures illustrate the meaning of baptism?

**Colossians 2:12** (NLT) For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

### **Romans 6:3-6 (NIV)**

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

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

When we are baptized, we proclaim our belief that Jesus Christ died for our sin, was buried, and rose again on the third day. In other words, it represents our spiritual burial and resurrection into a new life. When you receive Jesus, you die to your old self, your old ways of doing things, and you rise again with a new life and a whole new way of doing life.

The rising from the waters represents the resurrection of a new person—a person who wants to please God. As Jesus was resurrected from the dead, we are also resurrected to new life. With this new life, baptism represents the washing away of our sins (Acts 22:16), cleansing us of our wrongdoings.

### **What is the significance for you to be baptized into God's Kingdom?**

### **Who are the ones that are supposed to be baptized?**

**Acts 2:41** (NIV) Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

## **COMMUNION**

The second ordinance that Jesus gave us regarding His New Covenant is communion (sometimes referred to as the Lord's Supper). The night Jesus was crucified, He shared one last meal with His disciples.

## Read Matthew 26:26-28 and answer the following questions.

### **Matthew 26:26-28** (ESV)

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

### What does the bread represent?

### What does the wine/juice (the cup) represent?

### What role does the blood of Jesus play in the New Covenant?

### Circle what the believers of the Early Church devoted themselves to?

**Acts 2:42** (NLT) All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

### In the following two Scriptures, circle what Jesus has secured by His sacrifice?

**Hebrews 9:12** (NLT) With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

### **Hebrews 9:14-15** (NLT)

14 Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. 15 That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

## Circle what we are guilty of if we casually take communion.

**1 Corinthians 11:27** (NIV) So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

Because communion is a covenant meal, it means that we are coming to renew our covenant with the Lord. We are coming to remember what He has done by dying for us and rising again. We remind ourselves that He paid our debt, reconciled us to the Father, and gave us a new standing with God. He has brought us out of the Kingdom of Darkness and adopted us into God's family.

Communion reminds us that we are no longer our own, but we belong to Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:15). We renew our submission to Him. We entrust our battles to Him. We give our lives for His glory and His purposes. We want to see His will be accomplished on the Earth. It is a holy time and a time to renew the covenant made by Jesus' death and resurrection.

## ACTION POINTS

**Have you ever been baptized (full immersion - entirely underwater)? If yes, what did it represent for you? If not, would you like to be baptized? What would it mean for you to be baptized?**

## Take some time this week to take communion.

Whether it is by yourself, your family, friend, etc. Get some juice (we typically use grape juice) and a cracker/wafer. Take time to renew your covenant position with God. Make it your own - but you can pray something like this:

*Jesus, thank you for all You have done by dying on the Cross. Thank You for taking the punishment that I deserved to pay. Today I come to you and remember that my battles are no longer my own. But You have bound Yourself in a covenant relationship with me. God, I know I am undeserving of this, but I take hold of it by faith. You are my Defender, my Healer, my Covenant Partner. I renew my trust, my hope, and my confidence in who You are, and I submit my life to Your Lordship once again. In Jesus' name, amen.*

# SESSION 4

## SPIRITUAL HUNGER

### REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

### INTRODUCTION

**K**nowing God is the most significant experience a person can have. God is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He is the One who knew us before we were in our mother's womb and satisfies the deepest longings of our hearts. Only through Him can we live life to the fullest.

God has chosen to reveal Himself to us through the Living Word - the person of Jesus Christ - and through the Bible, His written Word. Yet, many people have doubts and questions about the Bible. Today we will look at the authority of the Bible, the benefits of the Word, and how to grow deeper in the Word.

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD

The Word of God is a big concept to grasp. There is no simple, one-line definition that will suffice. As you will see in this session, the Bible refers to God's Word as the driving force behind the world's creation. It is also a term used to describe the Bible.

**What claims does the Bible make in the following verses? (list below)**

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** (NLT)

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

**Hebrews 4:12** (ESV) For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

**Matthew 24:35** (ESV) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

God's Word is filled with powerful words and teachings that can change anybody's life. But the amazing and profound thing is that it has power beyond just words that we hear - it has the spiritual authority to open blind eyes and unlock deaf ears.

When Jesus and His disciples established the Early Church, you see that those they reached devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings as they presented the Word of God (Acts 2:42).

### What was the highest priority of the church leaders?

**Acts 6:4** (ESV) "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

### What happened as the Word of God spread?

**Acts 6:7** (NIV) So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

## Circle key words about God's Word in the following Scriptures.

**Psalm 119:89** (NIV) Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

**Psalm 119:160** (NIV) All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

**Isaiah 40:8** (ESV) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

**Isaiah 55:11** (NLT) It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

**John 17:17** (ESV) Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

**John 12:48** (ESV) The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

## THE BENEFITS OF THE WORD

Because of just how powerful the Word of God is, there are, of course, great benefits to our lives as we follow and listen to His words. Take a moment to read the following passages to see some other benefits that we receive from the Word of God.

### What was God's command to Joshua so that He might overcome?

**Joshua 1:8** (NIV) Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

**Read the following verses and circle the word(s) that best answers the question-**

### How does the Bible describe the person who meditates on God's Word?

**Psalm 1:1-3** (NIV)

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. 2 But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. 3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

## How does faith grow in us?

**Romans 10:17** (ESV) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.

## How did Jesus overcome temptation and defeat the devil?

**Matthew 4:1-4** (NLT)

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. 2 For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. 3 During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

As we live in accordance with God's Word and hide God's Word in our hearts, we can experience victory over sin (Psalm 119:9 & 11). Through the Scriptures, you receive wisdom (Psalm 119:98-100) and receive illumination before us so we can walk in clarity (Psalm 119:105). Jesus even shared that if we hold on to His teachings and His words, we will hold on to truth. And as we hold on to that truth, it has the power to set us free (John 8:31-32).

## In your own words, what is different from God's Word and teachings from anybody else?

## WALKING OUT GOD'S WORD

As we hear and read God's Word, there is a responsibility in our lives to walk out what God has called us to do. And as we are faithful in walking out those principles, truths, and teachings, we find incredible benefits. Of course, there is a battle over our lives that makes it challenging to truly walk His Word out perfectly. But there is also a simplicity to this truth. If God said it, then do it.

**Read over the following verses and follow the instructions to circle or highlight the keywords/phrases based on the presented question-**



## What happens to those who do what the Word of God says to do?

**James 1:25** (NIV) But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

## What is the evidence that we love Jesus?

**John 14:23** (NIV) Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

## What does Jesus say is evidence that we are His disciples?

**John 8:31-32** (NIV) 31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

## Read Luke 6:46-49 and answer the following questions.

**Luke 6:46-49** (NIV)

46 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? 47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. 48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

## If we call Jesus our Lord, what should we do?

## What happens to the person who hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice?

## What about the person who does not put them into practice?

## ACTION STEPS

What is something that you feel the Lord is asking you to do right now?

As you read your Bible this week, write down what you sense God is revealing about Himself. Bring it back and share it with your Discippler.

42-Day Bible Reading Plan



## SESSION 5

# THE POWER OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

## REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

## INTRODUCTION

**O**ver and over again, God invites us to come to Him and pray. He tells us that prayer invites Him into our situations and connects us to His resources of peace, wisdom, and power. We can release our burdens to Him through prayer as He gives us a higher perspective and insight. His power is demonstrated through prayer. As we worship, we draw near to God and develop our love relationship with Him.

## WHY ARE PRAYER AND WORSHIP IMPORTANT TO OUR LIVES?

Prayer is not just something that God tells us to do. It is something Jesus modeled for us (Mark 1:35). We catch Jesus consistently praying throughout the Gospels. Whether He was busy, tired, burdened, sad, or just in need of connection with His Father - we find Him praying.

**Read the following verses and circle/highlight the words and phrases that show the importance of prayer, guarantees we have as we pray, why we go before God in prayer, etc.**

**Matthew 6:6** (NIV) But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Matthew 7:7-8** (NIV) 7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

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

**Matthew 26:41** (NIV) “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

**1 Peter 5:7** (NIV) Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

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

**Philippians 4:6-7** (NIV) 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## HOW DO WE PRAY?

Many people can view prayer as a way to take our needs to God. Even if we spend time praising God, it is typically a precursor to our real reason of prayer, which focuses on my needs and my burdens.

On a trip to Uganda, Africa, our Lead Pastor Mark Daniel, was with people who took prayer to a whole new level for him. They would spend 30-45 minutes just praising God before ever mentioning a need or burden, and when they would bring requests to God, it would go back into praise of who God is. The atmosphere in the room became full of God's presence as people's faith was high, fears were silenced, hearts wide open, and people's wills submitted to the Lord. Prayer in this setting was much more impactful than just saying some prayers.

This is precisely the model of prayer that Jesus laid out for us.

## Read The Lord's Prayer below and answer the accompanying questions

### **Matthew 6:9-13** (ESV)

9 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

### What name does Jesus tell us to approach God with (verse 9)?

### What is Jesus' next focus in verse 10?

### What is Jesus' focus in verses 11-13?

#### **WHOM ARE WE PRAYING TO: Our Father**

We are not coming to the CEO of the Universe, King of all Creation. We are coming to **OUR Father**. The one who has chosen to care for us and watch over us. Our lives matter to Him. We can trust that His love for us is personal.

#### **WORSHIP GOD BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE: Hallowed be your name**

To hallow the Lord's name is to speak well of His name. It is to **bles**s His name, acknowledge His name, lift high His name, revere His name as holy, honor His name above all others, esteem His name, worship and praise His name, glorify His name, and so forth.

God inhabits the praise of His people (Psalm 22:3). We enter His **presence** with thanksgiving and praise. It takes time to get your heart to where it lifts His name above all the noise and battle that is around you. But it is as we lift up who He is, His presence begins to come in our prayer times in the most powerful ways.

part of the Lord's prayer is God-focused. If we really focus on God first, the rest becomes much easier.

**ASK FOR YOUR NEEDS: Give us this day our daily bread**

If we spend time hallowing the name of the Lord and giving ourselves to Him, then there is much more faith as we bring our needs to Him.

**CONFESS OUR STRUGGLES: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

In God's presence, releasing our struggles and sins is easy when we trust God's love and forgiveness for us. Then it is easy to give it to others.

**BRING YOUR BATTLES: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

We have areas where we feel attacked and tempted. We need to give our battles and concerns to the Lord because He cares for us.

## PRAYER AND WORSHIP WITH OTHERS

Prayer and worship are vital to keeping us close to God and spiritually alive. Our private prayers are not usually enough to keep the fire going in our hearts. We need to be with others seeking God if we want to keep our faith and focus strong.

**Read the following verses and circle the answer based on the questions.**

**What did Jesus say His house would be called?**

**Matthew 21:13** (NIV) "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

**What were the Disciples doing as they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?**

**Acts 1:13-14** (ESV) 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

**What did the Early Church do when they came under persecution?**

**Acts 4:23-24** (ESV) 23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to

them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them

### What happened in the prayer time in Acts 4:31?

**Acts 4:31** (NIV) After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

### What did Jesus promise as we gather in prayer together?

**Matthew 18:19-20** (NIV) 19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

### Why is our gathering together important?

**Hebrews 10:24-25** (NLT) 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

## ACTION POINTS

**Do you currently have a consistent personal time with the Lord? If yes, how is that going? If not, how can you begin to prioritize this in your life?**

**Set aside time this week to DAILY spend at least 20 minutes reading the Bible and 20 minutes in worship/prayer (we call this "20/20").**

# RESOURCES

Recommended Worship Songs



42-Day Bible Reading Plan





# SESSION 6

## UPON THIS ROCK

### REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

### INTRODUCTION

**B**efore Jesus ascended into Heaven, He said some compelling words that showed the kind of community He intended to establish.

**Based on the verse below, whose church was Jesus establishing, and what guarantee did He make about that church?**

**Matthew 16:18** (ESV) And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus founded a new community of people called the Church. He gave these people His mandate, authority, Spirit, and Gospel. Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came upon His people soon after He left. Peter preached the very first sermon of the New Testament Church. He called his listeners to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit. All who responded were then added to the local fellowship of believers - called the Church. Everyone who is saved, baptized, and filled with the Spirit should become a part of the Church - a local community of believers.

Jesus never intended for us to live the Christian life alone. We were not meant to follow God by ourselves. As you'll discover in this session, the early church did nearly everything in community. They did not just meet once a week; they shared life and walked out their salvation together. They taught one another, encouraged one another, and met each other's needs. We need each other to remain strong and grow up in our faith.

Just as God determines our parents and other family members, He has also chosen the spiritual family we are born into. The Church is God's instrument for advancing His Kingdom's purposes on earth. He has no plan B. The church is the only legitimate setting for living the Christian faith. If we are to grow up in our salvation, we need each other.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH

### Circle - What is the Church built upon?

#### **Ephesians 2:19-20** (NIV)

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

### To what does Paul compare the love Christ has for the Church?

#### **Ephesians 5:25-28** (ESV)

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

The Church is not LIKE a family - it IS a family. God has actually become our Heavenly Father. We really have been adopted into His family. Jesus is literally our elder brother. We are truly brothers and sisters in Christ.

## How will the world know that Jesus is real and the Church is His?

**John 13:34-35** (NLT)

34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

### Circle - How does Paul refer to the Church?

**1 Corinthians 12:27** (NIV) Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

We are the body of Christ, and each person is a different part of the body with something unique to offer. This is why belonging to a church community is vital to following Jesus. When we try to do life alone, we are hurting ourselves and hurting the body of Christ.

## ONE ANOTHER

We are told how to interact with 'one another' over 100 times throughout the Scriptures. Approximately 59 of those occurrences are specific commands teaching us how (and how not) to relate to one another. This is the culture that Biblical community establishes in how we grow in our faith and impact our community. This is truly where the Church becomes what God intended it to be.

### Read the following verses and circle how the authors told us we are to relate with others in the Church.

**John 13:34** (ESV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

**Romans 12:10** (NIV) Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

**Romans 12:16** (NIV) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

**Romans 14:19** (ESV) So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

**Romans 15:5** (NLT) May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.

**Romans 15:7** (NLT) Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

**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.

**1 Corinthians 12:25** (NIV) so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

**Galatians 5:13b** (NIV) rather, serve one another humbly in love.

**Galatians 6:2** (ESV) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ

**Ephesians 4:2** (NIV) Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

**Ephesians 4:32** (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Ephesians 5:19** (NIV) speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,

**Ephesians 5:21** (NIV) Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**Philippians 2:3** (ESV) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

**Philippians 2:4** (ESV) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

**Colossians 3:13** (NIV) Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

**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 4:18** (NIV) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

**Hebrews 3:13** (NIV) But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

**Hebrews 10:24** (NLT) Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

**1 Peter 4:9** (ESV) Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

**1 Peter 4:10** (NIV) Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

**1 Peter 5:5b** (NIV) All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another

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

**Of the above passages, what is something that sticks out to you the most?**

**How do those verses require us to be more intentional with one another?**

**Read the following verses and circle how the authors told us we are NOT to relate with others in the Church.**

**Colossians 3:9** (NIV) Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

**Romans 14:13** (NLT) So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

**Galatians 5:15** (NIV) If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

**Galatians 5:26** (NIV) Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

**James 4:11a** (ESV) Do not speak evil against one another...

**James 5:9** (ESV) Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

**Do you see anything on this list that needs to be removed from your life?**

**Circle - What are ways the first church grew in their faith and stayed connected to one another?**

**Acts 2:46** (NLT) They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.

The local church in Jerusalem met in two main settings.

- 1) **In the temple** - city churches/large meetings
- 2) **In homes** - small groups/house churches

The model, established very clearly here, is that every believer of Jesus must be faithful and committed to the **Sunday Service** and **Growth Groups**. The larger gathering is where the entire Church comes together to worship the Lord, hear His word, and celebrate what He is doing. Whereas, in the Growth Groups, we establish a Biblical community. This is where the "one another" statements come alive in us, and this is where we truly become a part of the church body.

## **ACTION POINTS**

**How is the Church important to your relationship with Jesus?**

**What is something you can do this week to be more intentional with one of the “one another” statements in your personal relationships?**

# SESSION 7

## SERVANT LEADERS

### REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

### INTRODUCTION

**W**hen we accept Jesus and become a part of a church body, the next clear step is that God is calling us to be participants and not just spectators. Today, we will talk about what it means to serve in the Kingdom of God.

**Who does Jesus call us to 'serve'?**

**Luke 4:8** (NIV) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Many of us know that we should serve God, but the real question is why should we serve Him? If you were to ask different believers, you would likely get a wide range of answers. Through a genuine relationship with God, we serve for the following reasons:

- Gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice - Because Jesus gave His life for me, I will serve Him with my life.
- Out of obedience to Scripture - Jesus told us to serve, so I serve.
- Following Jesus' example - Jesus was a servant leader, so I serve the way He did.
- Dedication to His mission - Serving is how we see Christ's mission advance.



## What do the following verses show us about the heart of serving?

**Matthew 23:11** (NLT) The greatest among you must be a servant.

**Matthew 20:28** (NLT) For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.



Serving at Focal Point Church may look different depending on where you would like to pour in your time and gifting. You can serve in a Growth Group, with the children, youth, or our homeless ministry. You can serve as an usher or with the Connection team. Some people use their gifts to serve on the Worship Team or the Tech team. It is incredible to see people, many of whom have full-time jobs, spend their time serving the Church Body.

Why is that? Why do people from all walks of life invest their time and energy into their church? In the following section, we will look at what Scripture says and some of the main reasons we have heard people say as to why they serve.

## WHY WE SERVE

### 1) I want to be a part of the story of Christ

The whole Bible is a long, interwoven love story between God and people. From the fall of humanity because of the sin of Adam and Eve to the return of Jesus Christ, there is a connected and cohesive story that we all have the opportunity to be a part of.

### 2) It is a blessing to use my gifts to serve God

When people can use their talents for the work of the Lord, it is a tremendous blessing.

## Do you believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Why or why not?

**Acts 20:35** (ESV) In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

### 3) I become more like Christ as I serve

God sent His Son to be the ultimate servant. Although He deserved the highest accolades, his disposition was to serve rather than be served.

### How does serving make us more like Christ?

#### Philippians 2:5-7 (NIV)

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

### 4) God created us to be a part of his Church

We all have gifts that can support and bless the local church. As we operate as a true body of believers, it edifies others.

### What gifts has God given you that can edify the local church?

## THE OWNERSHIP PRINCIPLE

We can serve God with our time and talents. And we can also serve God with our tithes and offerings. There are over 2300 verses in the Bible that deal with the subject of money. Money is a powerful tool. Like most things, it can be used for good or evil.

## What does God call people who fall into the destructive traps that money can become?

### **Luke 12:15, 20-21**

15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" 21 "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Since money is such a powerful and necessary tool in our lives, we need to understand the Ownership Principle. This examines the question: Am I the owner of everything I have, or am I simply entrusted with it by God?

## Based on the following Scriptures, who is the owner of our finances and resources?

**Psalms 24:1** (NIV) The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

### **Matthew 16:24-25** (NIV)

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."

One of the most liberating mindsets is when we transition from being the owner of what we have to be stewards. The paradigm of this change is freeing. God is the owner. He is responsible for taking care of my needs, challenges, and uncertainties. He will bring about the future I need. Our part is to trust Him and follow Him.

# FIRST FRUITS

God commands us to bring our first tenth of what we earn to God, specifically to the house of God. This is referred to as a "tithe." A tithe means the tenth part. For example, if you earn \$10, your tithe would be \$1.

**Read the following verses and circle/highlight the words that best answer the questions below.**

**What did the Israelites do with the first portion of all God provided for them?**

**2 Chronicles 31:5-6** (NIV) 5 As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the first fruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. 6 The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things dedicated to the Lord their God, and they piled them in heaps.

**What part should we give to God?**

**Proverbs 3:9** (NLT) Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce.

**What happens as a result of giving the first part to God?**

**Proverbs 3:10** (NLT) Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

**Why did Malachi tell God's people they were under a curse?**

**Malachi 3:9** (NIV) You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me.

**How did God tell His people to test Him?**

**Malachi 3:10** (NIV) Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

## What did God promise to do if His people would give Him the whole tithe?

**Malachi 3:11-12** (NIV) 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

## What does God promise to generous givers?

**2 Corinthians 9:6-8** (NIV) 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

God's promise is not to motivate us to give but rather to free us from fear and show us the reward of giving.

## ACTION POINTS

Have you found a place to serve at FPC yet? Where? If not, where would you like to begin serving?

God has entrusted us with many resources, opportunities, gifts, callings, etc. What does a good steward of these things look like?

# SESSION 8

## JOINING THE VISION

### REFLECT

Which of the action steps did you do this week? How did it go?

Do you have any questions before continuing?

### INTRODUCTION

**T**he section of Scripture we are about to look at is The Great Commission. It was the last recorded personal directive of the Savior to His disciples, and it holds great significance to all followers of Christ.

Springing from the heart of God, the Great Commission calls Christ's disciples to carry out the work God started by sending his Son into the world. This charge propelled the world upside down - not just by preaching the gospel but also by training the new believers. To be a Christian is to be a disciple - a lifelong learner and follower of Jesus.

Because the Lord gave final instructions for His followers to go to all nations and that He would be with them even until the very end of the age, Christians of all generations have embraced this command. The Lord commanded His followers from every generation to put their faith into action and to go make disciples.

### CALLED TO BE WITNESSES

Jesus delegated the task of witnessing and making disciples to all people who have already been born again and made Him the Lord of their lives. This certainly includes you. Our primary mission is to bring new people to Christ and train them to do the same for others.

## What are the basic commands that Jesus gives in verse 19?

**Matthew 28:18-20** (NIV)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

## Circle - Jesus said that we would receive power to be what?

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

This passage from Acts is one of the most important in the New Testament about our call to witness for Jesus. It is a commandment with a promise, to receive the power from the Holy Spirit.

Sharing the Gospel has to become a way of life for all of God's children. This was a characteristic of the early followers of Jesus, and it greatly impacted the city of Jerusalem and its surrounding areas.

## What is the task that we need to finish?

**Acts 20:24** (NIV) However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me —the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

## What power does the gospel have?

**Romans 1:16** (NIV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

One of the biggest lies the Devil tells us is that people don't want to hear about God. On the contrary, there are thousands of people hungry for God. And the Holy Spirit is working tirelessly in people's lives, preparing them for the Gospel message. John 4:35 tells us that the fields are ripe for the harvest. In other words, people are ready to hear.

### **What would it look like in your life to make the most of every opportunity?**

**Colossians 4:5** (NLT) Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.

One of the most effective ways of evangelism is to cultivate caring relationships. We need to learn to influence people we already know, those with whom we already have some kind of friendship or relational bond. It is much easier for a person to accept a message when they have already "accepted" the messenger - if they already have a bond of friendship with the messenger. So, the secret is to cultivate old friendships to reach people for Jesus while also striving to make new friendships as Christ works through your life.

A call to walk with Christ does not necessarily mean a call to leave your old friends behind. Abandoning sinful practices from your past does not always have to mean you can no longer associate with friends from your past. It may be that God wants to use your life-change to impact people around you. At the same time, when God calls you out of a lifestyle, he may ask you to reevaluate or even change the friendships you do have, so you do not fall back into the old habits. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. But with God's guidance and help from your Discippler, we believe God can show you the exact steps you need to take.

### **What friends or family around you still need to know the love of Christ in their lives?**

### **Are there any old habits that you need to lay down to continue to be a testimony to others?**



# YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

In this next section, we will work through what your personal testimony is so you are ready to share it with others. God will undoubtedly use your personal and genuine encounter with Jesus to reach the hearts of others.

## How to prepare your testimony

It is essential to have your personal witness organized and well prepared because of the many opportunities to share God's love. The best way to do this is to write down your conversion story and memorize it to be prepared to use it when the opportunity arises.

1. **Ask the Lord for wisdom** - Take a moment right now to pray and ask the Lord for guidance.
2. **Follow a specific theme**, the one that most resonates with you.  
For example, I was religious but without a real relationship with God. I was stuck with no way out. I had everything but no peace. I was on the verge of death, and I found life.
3. **Divide your testimony into three parts** (explained below)

### A. Before Meeting Jesus

In this part, you will talk about your past without Jesus. Share some experiences but be careful. Don't speak like you are proud of what you did, although not shameful. But with an attitude and heart that is thankful that God has cleansed you.

**What was your experience before meeting Jesus? What are some sin habits you may have had? How was your life affected?**

### B. How you met Jesus

In this next part, you will emphasize your encounter with Jesus, how it happened, where you were, what you did, etc.

**Read the following verses and circle key parts that stand out to you about salvation.**

**Romans 3:23** (NIV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**Acts 3:19** (NLT) Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.

**Revelation 3:19-20** (NIV) 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

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

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

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

### What was your experience when you accepted Jesus in your life?

#### C. After you gave your life to Jesus

In this last part, you will report how your life has changed after your decision, and how the power of Jesus transformed you. Speak of the victory over those sins you had and the assurance of eternal life you now have (1 John 5:11-13).

Explain that now Jesus is not only the Savior but also the Lord of your life and that your new life with Jesus is incomparably better than your old one. As you share your testimony, you need to present Jesus in a simple but compelling way.

### What has happened to you since accepting Jesus in your life?

# DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE

One of the most powerful ways to impact people is showing Christ's love with your actions. Often, intimidation keeps us from doing things the Holy Spirit prompts us to do. God wants to minister His love to someone - you are his hands and feet. When we listen, it is incredible how powerful it is. That could be by praying for someone in the store. Care for someone by taking them a meal, Taking someone a gift card, or cutting their grass. The list is endless. We can simply love people that are around us.

Finally, simple invitations to church or Growth Group are powerful ways to reach people. We often forget that people in the Bible were ordinary people like us. One such lady, an unlikely witness. There was a Samaritan woman that encountered Jesus in her town. She had some strikes against her. First - she was a woman. During this time, in this region, men typically would not converse with women or treat them with respect. Second, she had already had five husbands and lived with a man she was not married to. She had no theological training. She was unable to debate the skeptics.

## What do you notice about the simplicity of how this woman was able to reach her town for Jesus?

**John 4:28-29, 39** (NIV)

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."

## ACTION POINTS

**Take some time to write out your testimony. Try to make it something you can share in 3 minutes or less. And keep it on your phone or somewhere that you can access it if you need it.**

**Who is someone that you can approach this week and invite to church and/or Growth Group?**

# CONGRATULATIONS!!!

**YOU'VE COMPLETED YOUR FIRST STEPS ON THE ON-GOING JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP!**

## **NOW WHAT?**

1. Depending on when you complete this material, the eventual goal is to have a series of books that you will be able to go through to help your Growth Track continue. It is material as rich and as blessed as this, and you will continue to grow in Christ and in communion with other brothers and sisters.
2. If you are not already, begin serving in your Growth Group. Ask your Group Leader how you can help- if there is someone you can reach out to or if you can bring snacks. Begin serving others. As you do, talk to your Group Leader about the possibility of growing in Leadership. There may be opportunities to be trained as a Discipler yourself or eventually become a Co-Leader or Leader where you can launch a Growth Group yourself.

Whatever you decide to do, we are excited. This is just the beginning.

Welcome your new family!





**FOCAL POINT**  
CHURCH