

FOLLOW JESUS

*The Life of a
Disciple-Making Disciple*



Follow Jesus: The Life of a Disciple-Making Disciple
© 2023 Pillar Church of Washington DC

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

FOLLOW JESUS

*The Life of a
Disciple-Making Disciple*



PillarDC.com

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
1. Know God	6
2. Trust God	10
3. Share Your Faith	14
4. Help Others Follow Jesus	18
5. Pray to God	22
6. Love God's Church	26
7. Fight Sin	30
8. Work	36
9. Love the Nations	40
10. Give to Others	44

INTRODUCTION

Follow Jesus is a Bible study for Christians to deepen their understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Whether you've been a Christian for many years or just recently began to follow Jesus, we hope and pray that this study will help you along the way.

If you're not a follower of Jesus or interested in learning more about who Jesus is and what he has done to save us, check out our first Bible study, *Know Jesus*.

DISCIPLESHIP DEFINITIONS

At Pillar Church, we value Intentional Discipleship. What does this mean?

- **Disciple** simply means a student or a follower. Every Christian is a disciple.
- **Discipleship** is becoming more like Christ by knowing God more truthfully, loving God more sincerely, and obeying God more faithfully.
- **Discipling someone** is helping them become more like Christ by knowing God more truthfully, loving God more sincerely, and obeying God more faithfully.
- **One-on-One Discipleship** refers to formal meet-ups on a clearly-defined pathway with clearly-defined goals. This study is part of our discipleship pathway.

This discipleship material is designed to be used one-on-one or in a small group.

FORMAT

Before Meeting Up...

- **Pre-Reading.** This short read will give you some background about the topic you'll discuss during the meetup.
- **Reflection Questions.** After doing the pre-reading, you'll answer a few questions to start to apply it to your own life.

While Meeting Up...

- **Accountability.** You'll end each meet-up by identifying a single action step. We'll start the next meet-up by keeping one another accountable to do those action steps.
- **Review the Pre-Reading.** Does anyone have any questions about it? We'll also answer 3–4 questions together to make sure everyone understands.
- **Read a Passage of Scripture.** Each session of the study will focus on one passage of Scripture. Don't skip over it and jump right to the questions — read it slowly and carefully.
- **Study the Passage of Scripture.** The study will provide a few questions to help you understand and apply the passage.
- **Create an Action Step.** The study will guide you to create a specific action step and share it with one another. We want you to be really specific when you set these goals. Don't be vague (e.g., "I should evangelize more."), but specific (e.g., "I'm going to share my faith with my co-worker, Bob, at lunch on Tuesday.")
- **Pray Together.** We will be unable to follow Jesus unless he helps us and strengthens us. So let's pray that he will help us.

After Meeting Up...

- **Do the Action Step.** Whatever goal you identified, do it! If you need help, ask your disciple-maker to do it with you before your next meet-up.

1. KNOW GOD

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.
It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”
— A. W. Tozer

“No man can understand himself without first turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves.” — John Calvin

What we believe about God matters.

- How can we truthfully praise him if we don't know what he is like?
- How can we be like him if we don't know what he is like?
- How can we tell others about him if we don't know what he is like?
- How can we trust him if we don't know what he is like?
- How can we follow him if we don't know what he is like?

You believe in God, but do you believe the truth about him? We must all work to deepen our knowledge of who God is and what he has done. Because it's not enough to merely believe in a god, we need to believe in the *true* God.

Studying who God is and what he has done is called “theology.” While some people think theology is just a boring task for Bible nerds or seminary students, everyone is a theologian. Everyone believes *something* about God. But do you believe the *truth* about God?

There's a famous, ancient, non-Christian parable about a group of blind men finding an elephant and groping around to figure out what it is. One of them grabbed its trunk and thought it was a snake, one of them grabbed the ear and thought it was a fan, one of them grabbed its leg and thought it was a tree trunk. Today, people tell that story to describe how all religions are equal as if none of us really know the truth about God and we're all just blind men trying to describe an elephant.

On our own, we *are* blind and unable to know the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4), but God has not left us on our own! He has revealed himself to us. He has told us what he is like in the pages of Scripture. We're not randomly guessing or pridefully asserting that we've got it all figured out — we're humbly trusting that God has truthfully revealed himself to us.

So what is God like, anyway?

- **He is holy.** The word “holy” means set apart or distinct. God's perfect holiness means that he is completely distinct from creation (he alone is uncreated) and completely distinct from sin (he alone is perfect). (See Isaiah 6:1–7)
- **He is eternal.** God has always been. He has no beginning and he will never have an end. He existed before time began. (See Psalm 90:2)
- **He is infinite.** He is everywhere-present and all-knowing. He has no needs or weaknesses. (See Romans 11:33–36)
- **He is the creator.** God is the uncreated one who created all things out of nothing. (See Genesis 1–2)
- **He is the Lord.** The God who created all things has the right to rule over all things and us. He is the supreme judge of all. (See Job 38–42)
- **He is Trinity.** There is only one God (the creator of heaven and earth) and he has eternally existed in three persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three persons are all distinct, but there is only one God. (See John 1, 2 Corinthians 13:14)
- **He is gracious.** He mercifully helps people who don't deserve it. (See Exodus 34:6–7)

This is just a small sampling of the many attributes of God revealed in Scripture.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God's unfailing kindness.

God has revealed himself to us. He hasn't left us alone to figure it out (we couldn't). He hasn't abandoned us to seek him on our own (we wouldn't). We were lost in the dark without him, and he has graciously turned on the light. And now he calls us to know him, not just know about him. He's invited us into personal relationship — like a rebellious peasant invited to eat at the king's table. Our God has made himself known and knowable.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

Did any of the attributes of God listed above surprise you?

Which of these attributes of God do you want to learn more about?

What are some ways you have grown your knowledge of God in the past?

What challenges have you faced while seeking to learn more about God?

What is one question that you have about who God is?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. The reading started with a quote from A. W. Tozer, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” Do you think this is true? Why or why not?
2. What challenges have you faced while seeking to learn more about God?
3. What have you thought about “learning theology” in the past? Why is learning theology important?

Read Ephesians 3:14–21.

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- Read the passage again slowly, and circle every reference to God (including any member of the Trinity or pronouns referring to God).
- Paul is describing his prayers for the Ephesians here. What are some of the requests that he prays for?
- What does Paul pray that the Ephesians will know? And what does he say about it?
- What does Paul say will happen when they know that?
- Put verse 20 into your own words. What does Paul say that God is able to do?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- How does this passage help you to trust God?
- How does this passage help you to praise God?
- In verse 18, Paul prays that the Ephesians, “may have strength to comprehend,” or that God would help them to know himself. Why do we need God’s help to learn about him?
- Does this passage help you desire to learn more about God? Why or why not?

Create an Action Step together.

- The Bible is the best place to learn about God. What are your current Bible reading habits?
- The Bible is about God, not about you. Is it hard for you to focus on God in your Bible reading?

ACTION STEP: Each day this week, while reading the Bible, I will make a list of THREE THINGS that the passages I read teach about God.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Pray that God would help you to know him and increase your love for his Word.

2. TRUST GOD

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

It is important that we know the truth about God, but it's also crucial that we respond to that truth with faith. In other words, it's not enough to mentally believe the right facts about God, we also have to trust God himself (See James 2:19).

Faith is the beginning of the Christian life. We came to God when we “were dead in the trespasses and sins in which [we] once walked” (Ephesians 2:1) and he “made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5). This is salvation: we are sinners, but we are forgiven; we were dead, but we are resurrected. This salvation comes only by God's grace (Ephesians 2:5) but it is applied to our lives through faith (Ephesians 2:8, “by grace you have been saved through faith”). Grace is the free love of God which has purchased our salvation; faith is the vehicle by which our salvation is delivered to our own lives. This is why we must believe in Christ (Acts 16:30–31).

Faith is the vehicle of our salvation because, trusting God to provide it all, we don't contribute anything. We simply come to God with the open, empty hands of faith, saying “I trust YOU to save me.” He is strong, we are weak. He is wise, we are foolish. He is the hero, we are not. And so we trust him.

This kind of saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, which is turning away from sin and turning towards God (Acts 2:38). Repentance is an act of faith, because we trust God to guide us rather than our sin; we trust God to satisfy us, rather than our sin; we trust God's Word to teach us what is right and what is wrong.

Saving faith is shown in the ordinance of baptism, which is an act of “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4). Baptism doesn't wash our sin away or make us clean in itself (1 Peter 3:21), but is a crucial act of faith for Christians to take after their conversion. When Christians are baptized, they become a living picture: Just as Jesus died for sins and was buried under the ground, we testify that our old self has died and we are buried under

the waters; and just as Jesus rose victoriously, we are pulled up out of the waters to live with him. (Romans 6:4–11).

Faith is not just the beginning of our lives, we also live by faith every day:

- We trust God to **provide** for us, and this enables us to give generously of ourselves (Philippians 4:10–19).
- We trust God to **power** us, and this enables us to obey his commands (1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11).
- We trust God to **protect** us, and this enables us to hope confidently (2 Corinthians 5:6–7).

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6, Romans 14:23). We must seek to do everything by faith — trusting that God is real, and personally providing for, guiding, and protecting us.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God's unfailing kindness.

God calls us to come to him with our empty hands, not based on our worthiness or anything we could bring to him. He doesn't just demand our trust; he has shown himself to be trustworthy. Moreover, God himself gives us the faith that he requires (Ephesians 2:8–9, Philippians 1:29), not because we've shown ourselves worthy, but because God is full of grace.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

What is the difference between faith and grace?

Do you know when God gave you saving faith for the first time?

What is repentance?

What is an area of your life where it is difficult to trust God right now?

What is one question that you have about baptism?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- Were you able to read the Bible and consider what it taught you about God? Why or why not?
- Did this plan help you focus on God (rather than yourself) in your Bible reading?
- What were some of the things you learned or enjoyed about God in your Bible reading this week?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. What does it mean for faith to be the vehicle of salvation?
2. We trust God to provide, guide, and protect us. Which of these areas comes the easiest to you right now? Which is the most difficult?
3. What is an area of your life where it is difficult to trust God right now?

Read Hebrews 11:1–6.

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- Read verse one several times and define each word. Use an English dictionary or another Bible translation to help you.
- Who is Abel (v. 4)? Read his story in Genesis 4. Why did God accept his offering? How does this story point us to Jesus?
- Who is Enoch (v. 5)? Read his story in Genesis 5:21–24. What happened as a result of Enoch's faith? How does this story point us to Jesus?
- The word "for" often shows reason or grounds — it explains why something took place. What is being described in verse six and what reasons are given for it?
- What does this passage promise for our faith?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What are some areas of your life that are difficult to trust God in? Why? How do you think you can grow your faith in these areas?
- What things about the future/eternity are you personally looking forward to with confidence? (See verse one)
- Why is it important to remember that faith is a gift?

Create an Action Step together.

- Make a list of things in your life you struggle to trust God with.

ACTION STEP: At least three times before your next meet-up, pray over the list you just wrote, asking God to strengthen your faith.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Thank God for giving you faith and pray that he would strengthen it.

3. SHARE YOUR FAITH

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

Often when we hear or read about evangelism, we're overwhelmed with guilt: it's something that we all know we should do, but we so often fall short.

While God has commanded us to share our faith with people that don't know Christ and our failure to obey that command is sin, guilt is rarely the best motivator for sustained life change. Instead, we should aim to see that the privilege of evangelism is a much greater reward than the worldly comforts that hold us back.

Evangelism is a privilege for two very important reasons: it expresses love for God and love for others, which Jesus said are the two greatest commands (see Matthew 22:36–40). Evangelism expresses love for God because it is him that we speak of in evangelism. In evangelism, our message to non-Christians is not the value of community, the importance of Judeo-Christian values, or any other social, political, scientific, or cultural message. We are seeking to win souls, not arguments, so our message is, “Be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). In evangelism, we get to tell people about the greatness of God. We get to tell people about his strength and holiness, displayed in creation (Romans 1:18–20).

In evangelism, we are speaking about God. And we speak about him like this because we love him.

Evangelism also expresses love for others, because we know that non-Christians are “separated from Christ... strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). Because Jesus is the only path to salvation, anyone that doesn't know him is stuck in sin, “condemned already” (John 3:18), and heading towards a just eternal torment.

In evangelism, we are offering a solution to the most urgent problem in someone's life. And we share it with them because we love them.

While we can always approach strangers and share the hope of Christ, we must share Christ

with people we know and interact with every day. What does it actually look like to live an evangelistic lifestyle? Here are seven steps:¹

- **Think About it.** Think often about the call that God has placed on your life to share the hope of Christ.
- **Pray About it.** Pray for yourself and for the lost. Ask for opportunities and boldness to share the Word (Colossians 4:3–4).
- **See Opportunities.** Before you can seize opportunities for evangelism, you have to see them. Throughout your day, think about all of the non-Christians you have interacted with. What friends and coworkers did you talk to? Who helped you at a store or restaurant? How many people did you pass on the street? What neighbors did you smile and nod at? We all have a lot of opportunities to share Christ!
- **Start Any Conversation.** Seriously. Any conversation. Tell someone hi and ask about their life. You can't talk about Jesus with someone if you can't talk to them at all. This is a hard step for some people.
- **Get into Spiritual Conversations.** Use simple questions to ask about someone else's faith or share about your own. (e.g., Are you religious? Did you grow up going to church? Is there any way I can pray for you? I gathered with my church this weekend.)
- **Share the Gospel.** Tell the story about Jesus and what he did, “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).
- **Follow Up.** Typically our friends will not come to Christ the first time we share with them. This requires perseverance. So if someone seems interested or even indifferent, ask them to meet up with you to read the Bible together. (Use the Know Jesus Bible study to guide your conversation).

We have the hope of Christ because someone shared it with us. And now we have the incredible privilege of sharing it with others.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God’s unfailing kindness.

When writing about the ministry that Christians have to “persuade others” (1 Corinthians 4:11), Paul wrote that “[we have] this ministry by the mercy of God” (4:1). God has involved us in the work of evangelism as a gift of his mercy. He doesn’t need us to accomplish his purposes or save his people, but he has chosen to involve us.

¹ Credit to Johnathan O. for conceptualizing these seven steps.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

What fears have prevented you from sharing your faith in the past?

What specific promises of God from Scripture could help you overcome those fears? *(If you can’t think of any, ask your disciple-maker during your meet-up. If you can think of any, then memorize them!)*

Where in Scripture has God commanded you to share your faith?

Which of the seven steps has been the hardest for you to apply?

Who is one non-Christian that you can ask to read the Bible with you? (Or who are you currently reading with?)

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- Were you able to pray for God to increase your faith?
- What opportunities did God bring you for exercising your increased faith?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.
2. What fears have prevented you from sharing your faith in the past? (After sharing, encourage one another with specific promises from God's Word)
3. How does our evangelism show our love for God and love for others?
4. How can 1 Corinthians 4:1 encourage you in evangelism?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11–21

¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. ¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- Read verses 14–15 again. How has Christ shown his love for us? How should we respond? How can these verses motivate us in evangelism?
- Verse 18 says “All this is from God.” What is “this” referring to?
- What does this passage say that God has given us? (See verse 18)
- What is “reconciliation?” Who is being reconciled in this passage and what is our role in bringing this reconciliation about? (You may want to take time to underline the word “reconciliation” every time it appears in this passage.)
- According to this passage, what has God done to “reconcile” us to himself?
- Put verse 21 into your own words.

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- In verse 15, Paul calls us to no longer live for [ourselves], but for Jesus. What are some ways that selfishness (living for ourselves) would stop us in evangelism?
- Verse 20 calls us “ambassadors for Christ.” What is an ambassador? How could seeing yourself as an ambassador help you in evangelism?
- Are there any parts of the gospel message that you want to understand more to better share your faith?
- What are some tools for sharing the gospel with others? (e.g., The Three Circles)

Create an Action Step together.

- In the middle of a blank sheet of paper, write your name a circle.
- Think of five non-Christians that you know and put their names in other circles, surrounding your circle, but connected to your circle by lines (like a web). Think about your neighbors, co-workers, family members, friends, etc.
- Draw more lines and circles connected to those people — people that they know. You may not know names, but you can be general here (e.g., “Co-Workers” or “Girlfriend”)
- Take a minute to marvel at the incredible things God can do. If you share with these people, so many more could hear the hope of Christ.
- Choose one person on your map. Commit to pray for that person every day until our next meet-up and make a specific plan for sharing with them.

ACTION STEP: I will share my faith with _____(name)_____ on _____(day/time/place)_____. I will start the conversation by _____. I will end the conversation by inviting them to do the *Know Jesus* Bible study with me.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Pray for the people that you’ve committed to share with, that God would save them by his grace.

4. HELP OTHERS FOLLOW

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

When Jesus called his first disciples, he wasn't just inviting them to an event or religious experience; he was calling them to take part in his work to reach the lost. Jesus' first words to his disciples was "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Jesus calls every one of his disciples to be a disciple-maker.

In the introduction to this study, we shared some simple definitions for discipleship:

- **Disciple** simply means a student or a follower. Every Christian is a disciple.
- **Discipleship** is becoming more like Christ by knowing God more truthfully, loving God more sincerely, and obeying God more faithfully.
- **Discipling someone** is helping them become more like Christ by knowing God more truthfully, loving God more sincerely, and obeying God more faithfully.
- **One-on-One Discipleship** refers to formal meet-ups on a clearly-defined pathway with clearly-defined goals. This study is part of our discipleship pathway.

These definitions make clear that discipleship isn't just hanging out — discipleship has a goal, for the disciple to become more like Jesus himself. This should be our goal for everyone we know; we should be working to help them become more like Jesus. This includes non-Christians (we want to make them disciples) and Christians (we want to help them grow as disciples). These definitions also make clear that discipleship doesn't just take place in formal settings. You can disciple anyone, anytime you interact with them.

What does it look like to disciple non-Christians? The journey to becoming more like Jesus begins with saving faith. We don't just want them to be conformed to Jesus on the outside; we want them to be born again and truly know God on the inside. It doesn't matter if non-Christians

clean their lives up and obey God a little bit more — they need to be saved, forgiven, and raised to new life in Christ. As we said in the last session, We are seeking to win souls, not arguments, so our message is, "Be reconciled to God" (1 Corinthians 5:20).

What does it look like to disciple Christians? We want to help our brothers and sisters continue becoming more like Jesus. The definitions above give three areas that every Christian needs to grow in Christlikeness:

- **Head** — Knowing God more truthfully (Jesus knew the Father perfectly, Matthew 11:27)
- **Heart** — Loving God more sincerely (Jesus loved the Father perfectly, John 14:31)
- **Hands** — Obeying God more faithfully (Jesus obeyed the Father perfectly, John 15:10)

If every Christian is a disciple-maker, that means that you have a responsibility to help the other Christians in our church grow.

Here are some practical steps every Christian can take to help others grow:

- **Pray for people.** Your brothers and sisters in Christ are battling against the world, the flesh, and the devil. They will stumble without God's help. They need your prayers. When you pray for others, be as specific as possible, asking God to help them with particular sins and trials they are experiencing.
- **Ask people real questions.** Move beyond the surface level in your conversations with others. Ask them what they have been reading in the Bible, what they have been praying for, what non-Christians they have been sharing with, and what sins they have been struggling with.
- **Share the Word generally.** Human wisdom is useful sometimes, but God's Word will never fail or fade away. Share with other people what you are learning from God's Word.

- **Share the Word specifically.** Every Christian is a counselor, but are you a biblical counselor? When someone shares about a situation in their life, speak truth from Scripture that could help them. That might be a promise to comfort them, a command to rebuke them, guidance to help them, or a biblical truth that they are forgetting. When someone tells you about a sin or trial in their lives, ask yourself what Scripture has to say about that issue.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God’s unfailing kindness.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus’ ministry begins and ends with a call to make disciples (Matthew 4:19, quoted above; Matthew 28:18–20). In this final, climactic call to make disciples, Jesus encourages his hearers: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). You are not alone as you seek to make disciples — Christ is with you. You don’t have to have it all together. If only perfect Christians could make disciples, then none of us would make disciples.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

What does it mean to be a disciple? Have you ever been discipled?

Do you feel ready to disciple someone else in a formal setting? Why or why not?

Can you think of a time that you spoke God’s Word to another Christian? What happened?

What are some things that keep you from speaking God’s Word to other Christians more often?

Who is one non-Christian that you can ask to read the Bible with you? (Or who are you currently reading with?)

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- Were you able to pray every day for the non-Christian you listed?
- What did you learn as you prayed for the non-Christian you listed? How did God change you through this simple act of prayer?
- Did you have a chance to share with them? If not, when will you?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. What is a disciple? What are other definitions you have heard about discipleship? How is this definition different from others you have heard?
2. In discipleship, we aim to become more like Christ in three areas (heads, hearts, and hands). Which of these three comes easiest to you? Which comes most difficult to you?
3. The reading shared four steps every Christian can take to help others grow. Which of these four things is a habit for you? Which of these four things do you want to work on doing more often?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit. ⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What words do you see repeated in this passage? What do they mean?
- What gifts are listed in this text? Define each of these gifts.
- Who has given the gifts mentioned in this passage?
- Who has been given the gifts mentioned in this passage?
- What purpose are the gifts given? (See verse 7)
- How would you put verse seven in your own words?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- If you are a Christian, you **HAVE** been given gifts for the good of the church. What gifts do you have?
- How can you use your gifts to help others fight sin?
- How can you use your gifts to share Christ with non-Christians?
- What has prevented you from sharing God's Word with other Christians in the past? How could this passage help you have boldness in the future?

Create an Action Step together.

ACTION STEP: In three conversations this week, share a truth from the Bible with another Christian.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Pray that God would help you to encourage one another.

5. PRAY TO GOD

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

At the most basic level, prayer is speaking with God. That sounds like a wonderful activity, but for many Christians, prayer can be a frustrating experience. We know that we should pray, and most of us want to pray more, but we're often stuck, distracted, or bored.

So how do we pray? You can use the acronym P.R.A.Y. to help keep your prayers focused and fresh.

Praise God

The most important thing to pray about is God himself. He is worthy of endless praise and he delights in our simple, private worship.

- What is something incredible about God himself that you can celebrate?
- Has God done anything that you can thank him for?

Repent of Your Sins

We can bring our sins to God with great confidence, because God promises that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

- How have you lived to serve yourself instead of serving God or others?
- Is there a command from Scripture that you are struggling to obey?
- Ask God to help you follow him.

Ask God

God invites us to cast all of our cares on him, because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). God cares about the things that burden you and longs for you to bring them to him.

- Do you have any needs? God is able to provide for you. Ask for his help.
- Who do you know that is suffering now? Ask God to help them.

- What needs have our missionaries shared? Ask God to support them.
- Who are you sharing your faith with? Ask God to save them.

Yield to God

We pray, not because we are in control, but because God is. We trust his plan to answer our prayers however he sees fit.

- Is there an area of your life that you are struggling to trust God? Ask him to help you.
- Be willing to follow God wherever, saying “not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:39).

Even with a framework like P.R.A.Y., prayer can still be challenging. Here are a few more practical tips to aid your prayer life:

- **Make a plan.** Winston Churchill said, “He who fails to plan is planning to fail.” Make a plan about when, where, and how you will pray. For example, “I will wake up 30 minutes early every day this week and spend 30 minutes in prayer, using the P.R.A.Y. framework.”
- **Pray Scripture.** Often, we get bored in prayer, because we pray the same things about the same things. Instead of intimate communication with God, we feel like we are trudging through a rut. You can bring freshness to your prayer life by praying Scripture. The best place to get started with this is in the Psalms, which are a collection of 150 prayers. Simply read the psalm, phrase-by-phrase, stopping after each phrase and praying whatever comes to your mind.
- **Pray Specifically.** Sometimes we try to be vague with our prayers, because we don't really believe he's going to act and we want to let him off the hook. But God invites us to bring specific requests before him. This can bring vibrancy and focus to our prayer lives.

Jesus said in John 15:4–5, “Abide in me, and I

in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

We can't do anything without God. And so we pray.

God is mighty and invites us close through the death and resurrection of his Son. And so we pray.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus

34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God's unfailing kindness.

God invites us to pray. He promises to hear. We don't need to earn his ear, he freely invites us to cast all of our cares onto him.

Every command to pray in Scripture is an invitation from God (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 7:7, Philippians 4:16, Colossians 4:2, Luke 18:1). Why would God give us these commands if he didn't want us to obey? Instead of hearing commands to pray with guilt, we should see the wonder of God's grace. He is not rebuking your foolishness for neglecting prayer, he is gently inviting you to come to him with all of your burdens, fears, worries, and sins.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

Look at the four components of P.R.A.Y. Which of these four come the easiest to you? Which is the most difficult?

What are some obstacles that you have faced in your prayer life?

Why is it important to praise God in our prayer life and not just rush to ask for his help?

What are 1–2 things that you are currently praying for? Are these requests specific or vague?

Who is one non-Christian that you are reading the Bible with? (Or who could you ask to read the Bible with you?) Write a short prayer for them here:

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- Were you able to share God's Word with other Christians? What happened?
- What was challenging about sharing God's Word with other Christians? Was it rewarding?
- What non-Christian are you discipling (or hope to disciple)? How is it going?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. How can a framework like P.R.A.Y. be helpful for your prayer life?
2. Look at the four components of P.R.A.Y. Which of these four come the easiest to you? Which is the most difficult?
3. Why is it important to remember that God invites us to pray?

Read Matthew 6:5–15

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷ “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 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.

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What do you know about the context of this passage? Who is speaking? Where?
- What does this passage teach about how NOT to pray?
- What does this passage teach about how we should pray?
- Why should prayer be private, according to this passage?
- Read the prayer slowly, phrase-by-phrase. What do each of these phrases mean?
- What are some examples of how we can pray for these requests today? (Remember to be specific!)
- How does this prayer express complete dependence on God?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- We don't need to heap up a lot of words, because God loves to hear our prayers. Why does feeling guilty keep us from prayer? What is the right response to that feeling?
- The Lord's Prayer starts with several requests related to God's glory. Why should God's glory be the center of our prayer life?
- What are some specific requests for God's glory that you can pray about?
- The Lord's Prayer expresses complete dependence on God. What keeps you from depending on God fully? How can prayer help you?
- What are 2–3 specific requests that came to your mind while studying this passage, that you hope to start regularly praying for?

Create an Action Step together.

- Praying more frequently (if you are praying three days each week, start praying every day; if you aren't praying at all, start praying for five minutes each day).
- Praying more (if you typically pray for five minutes each day, set a timer and challenge yourself to pray for 15 minutes each day).
- Praying for others (if you don't have a habit of praying for others, choose one person in our church to pray for three times each week).
- Praying Scripture (if you often don't know what to say when praying, try to pray one psalm each day).

ACTION STEP: I will pray _____.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Try praying Psalm 23 together so that the disciple(s) can see what it is like.

6. LOVE GOD'S CHURCH

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up. It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

Jesus loves the church (Ephesians 5:25). Jesus has promised to build the church (Matthew 16:18). Jesus is always with the church (Matthew 18:20, Revelation 1:13). The church is so close to Jesus that it's described throughout the New Testament as his body (1 Corinthians 12, Colossians 1:24) and he purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28). Jesus cares a lot about the church, so living as his followers means that we must care a lot about the church too.

The church is not just an event that Jesus attends (although he is present when we gather). The church is not just an organization that Jesus leads (although he is its head). The church is a family, the people of God, purchased with Jesus' own blood (See Ephesians 2:13–22).

To love the church like Jesus does, we must love God's design for the church. "Church" isn't something that pastors have pragmatically invented, it's been birthed and built by God himself. The New Testament describes the church as the people of God, who have become his adopted sons by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and his saving work. This family of God includes believers all over the world and outside of the world (those who have already died and are present with Christ in heaven). This universal church finds expression in local congregations, which are led by elders (also called pastors, bishops; see 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, Acts 20:17–35), served by deacons and deaconesses (1 Timothy 3, Romans 16:1–2), and governed by the congregation (1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:6). Local churches gather weekly (1 Corinthians 16:2, Hebrews 10:23–25) to hear the preaching of the Word, encourage one another, and practice the ordinances. The church practices two ordinances (baptism, Romans 6:3–4; the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:17–26), church discipline (Matthew 18:15–35; 1 Corinthians 5), and take part in missions (Matthew 28:16–20, Romans 15:20–24) and

evangelism (1 Corinthians 14:23–25). These are not just cultural expressions of Christianity — this is God's design for the church, created in God's wisdom, and revealed in God's word for our good. We must learn to cherish this wonderful design.

To love the church like Jesus does, we must love God's church. It's not enough to have an accurate definition of "church," we have to actually love the church that God has placed us in. Since the church is a family, we are all brothers and sisters and have responsibilities to one another. We must actively serve one another, meeting one another's needs (Galatians 6:2, 1 Corinthians 11:33, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 1 Peter 4:8). When wronged, we must be quick to forgive one another (Mark 9:50, Romans 12:16, Galatians 5:15). When another is weak, sinful, or discouraged, we must teach one another (Romans 15:13, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:24). We guard the unity of the church and refuse to complain or speak ill of one another (Romans 12:10, Galatians 5:26, Colossians 3:13, James 4:11, James 5:9). May God help us learn to love the church and, to say with the Psalmist, "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight" (Psalm 16:3).

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God's unfailing kindness.

God has not left you alone. You were an orphan, and now you are a son, purely by grace. And God has not only brought you into relationship with himself, but with his entire family.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

What is the church?

How can you know that Jesus loves the church?

Did anything surprise you about God's design for the church? Do you have any doubts or questions about God's design for the church?

How have you received love from God's church?

How is God leading you to love his church more?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- What non-Christian are you discipling (or hope to disciple)? How is it going?
- How did you do in creating new prayer habits?
- How have you seen your prayer life deepen as a result of these new habits?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. What is the church?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to love the church?
3. How has God blessed you as you have loved the church?
4. What questions do you have about God's design for the church?

Read Hebrews 10:19–29

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What are “the holy places” and why are we able to enter them?
- Read Hebrews 9:1–10 and Isaiah 6:1–7. What do these passages teach us about entering the holy places?
- Look for all of the commands in this passage (Hint: look for the phrase “Let us”).

Draw a star next to each command and re-phrase it in your own words.

- What is the goal of gathering together?
- What happens to those who go on sinning? How does the church gathering help prevent this?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- Do you have a habit of “neglecting the gathering?” Why or why not?
- What does it mean to “stir up one another to love and good works” (v. 24)?
- How can you “stir up” our church in this way?
- Why is God’s Word a powerful tool for stirring up others?
- Do you feel confident to share God’s Word with other Christians now?
- How could you be better equipped to share God’s Word in the future?

Create an Action Step together.

- Gather with the church every Sunday.
- At the church’s regular gathering, intentionally have at least one conversation each week with someone in the church you don’t know very well.
- Invite someone in the church that you don’t know very well to spend time with you outside of the church’s regular activities.
- Are there any regular habits, chores, or activities you can do with another Christian (e.g., grocery shopping, working out, cooking, eating, running errands)? Invite someone in our church to do these things with you.

ACTION STEP: Throughout the next month, I will _____.

(Remember, be specific! List out some particular people you want to engage or spend time with.)

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Thank God for his wonderful design for the church and pray he would strengthen you to love and serve our church.

7. FIGHT SIN

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

Before becoming Christians, we were “dead in... sins” (Ephesians 2:1) and “enslaved to sin” (Romans 6:6), meaning that we were unable to stop sinning — everything that we did was touched and tainted by sin. When we came to Christ, we weren’t only forgiven of our sins, we were also set free from its slavery. Because of God’s grace, we are able to not sin. It’s possible to not sin. Because Jesus rose again and raised us up with him, we are able to resist and fight sin.

This is an important starting point — we don’t fight sin to earn God’s love. The only reason we’re able to fight sin is because God has already loved us. We fight sin because, as God shapes us into the image, we love what he loves and we hate what he hates. We fight sin, because God has commanded us. He is the king, we are his people, and we must obey (not just offer lip service). This is a real demonstration of our faith. How can we say that we trust God if we don’t trust him to guide our thoughts, actions, and feelings each day?

Most importantly, we fight sin because it interrupts our relationship with God (1 John 1:8–9). We are grieved by our sin, because we know it grieves our God. We hate our sin, because we love Jesus, and our sin nailed him to the cross.

Throughout the Bible, especially in the writings of Paul, we are given a clear battle plan for fighting sin that includes putting off sin and putting on godliness (Ephesians 4:24–25, Colossians 3:9–10). The Puritans called this the mortification of sin (killing) and the vivification of righteousness (bringing-to-life). Both of these steps are important. We can’t just stop sinning — we need to replace it with positive development.

Here are **six steps to putting off sin**:

- **Confess your sin.** Throughout the Bible, there is a clear connection between our confession of sin and God’s forgiveness of our sins (e.g., Psalm 32:3–5, Proverbs

28:13, 1 John 1:8–9). Our battle against sin begins by admitting we have sin, both to God and to other Christians (James 5:16).

- **Have confidence in the work of Jesus.** Always remember that we don’t fight sin to earn God’s love — Jesus (and Jesus ALONE) have earned God’s love. There is nothing left to prove. Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection are objective realities that prove your forgiveness.
- **Confront the lies of Satan.** From almost the very beginning of the Bible, Satan has been telling the same lies to trick God’s people into sinning: God’s Word isn’t trustworthy, sin isn’t that big of a deal, and you need sin to be truly happy. The truth is that God’s Word ALONE is trustworthy, sin is deadly and separates us from God, and that righteousness, not sin, is what we truly need. Recognizing these lies in your own temptations will help you see the foolishness of sin.
- **Consider your own motivations.** The Bible uses the word “heart” to refer to the core of each individual person. Your heart is the source of everything you do, feel, think, desire, and love (Luke 6:45). We don’t just want to modify our behavior, we want to love God with our whole hearts. In the midst of temptation, ask yourself what you are trusting in to make you happy and safe. Ask yourself what your actions show about what you truly value.
- **Collaborate with the Spirit of God.** Romans 8:13 commands us to put our sin to death, but it makes clear that we can only put sin to death “by the Spirit.” You are unable to fight sin on your own, but God has sent his Spirit to help you. Depend on God to strengthen you and empower you. Pray that God would help you resist temptation.
- **Commit to stop sin.** Whatever it takes, we are going to slay our sin.

Here are **four steps to putting on**

righteousness:

- **Perpetual prayer.** Again, you can't do this without God. Thankfully, you don't have to, because "the grace of God has appeared... training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12).
- **Dependent discipline.** While we can only fight sin by the power of the Spirit, we need to work hard. You must "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7, NASB).
- **Actual accountability.** We aren't made to live alone. We need our brothers and sisters in Christ to know what we really struggle with and really keep us accountable. This means they will commit to ask us difficult questions, not accept (or make) excuses, pray and fast for us, and assure us of God's forgiveness.

- **Serious application of Scripture.** Believe promises from God's Word about the cost of sin and the rewards of righteousness. Follow principles from God's Word about the steps God has commanded us to take in our pursuit of righteousness.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

God invites us to pray. He promises to hear. We don't need to earn his ear, he freely invites us to cast all of our cares onto him.

God has not abandoned us in our sin. He isn't giving up on us; he's committed to helping you grow and change, because he loves you.

Before Christ, we were not able to not sin. In Christ, we are able to not sin. And when Christ returns, we will be like him (1 John 3:2) and we will not be able to sin. We fight sin with great hope that the battle is already won.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

Why should we fight sin if we are already forgiven?

What are some pressing sins in your life right now? Are there any hidden sins in your life that no one in our church is aware of?

Look again at the six steps for putting off sin. Which of these is the most difficult for you?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- What non-Christian are you discipling (or hope to disciple)? How is it going?
- How are you doing in your commitment to love the church more deeply?
- How has God blessed your obedience as you have loved the church?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. Why should we fight sin if we are already forgiven?
2. How have you seen the lies of Satan come up in your own life?
3. Why do we need to trust the Holy Spirit to help us fight sin?

Read Colossians 3:1–17

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What does this passage say about Christians? What is true about everyone who is in Christ?
- What does this passage say about Christ? What will always be true about him?
- Read verses three and four again. What do these verses mean? What does it mean for Christians to have died? (See Romans 6:1–14 for help)
- What does this passage say about putting off and putting on? What do these verses teach us about fighting sin?
- What commands does this passage give? Put each in your own words to help you understand them.

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What reasons does this passage give for fighting sin?
- What promises does this passage give to help you fight sin?
- Look at the list of sins to “put off.” Which of these sins stands out to you as something that you want to grow in? (Remember, confessing your sin will lead to life and freedom!)
- Which item in the list of things to “put on” could replace the sin you want to “put off?”

Create an Action Step together.

- Use the Sin Battle Plan worksheet to create a real plan for fighting sin.

ACTION STEP: I will fight the sin of _____ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

_____ will help me and keep me accountable.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Pray for one another, specifically, that God would help you fight sin.

SIN BATTLE PLAN WORKSHEET

The sin I will battle: _____.

Confess your sin.

Have you confessed this sin to God? Who can you confess your sin to?

Have confidence in the work of Jesus.

Copy down a verse of Scripture that reminds you of God's love for sinners.

(Examples: Romans 6:4–5, Romans 8:1–2, Romans 8:12–15)

Confront the lies of Satan.

What lies are you tempted to believe about this sin: God's Word isn't trustworthy, sin isn't that big of a deal, or you need sin to be truly happy?

Consider your own motivations.

What reward do you think this sin will bring you? (Happiness, pleasure, safety)

Collaborate with the Spirit of God.

Write a short prayer, asking God to help you fight this sin.

Commit to stop sin.

What practical steps will you take to fight this sin? Who will keep you accountable?

What questions do you want them to ask you?

8. WORK

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up. It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

Christianity is not just something that we do on Sunday mornings. Jesus is Lord of our entire lives, including 9–5 on Monday–Friday. Whatever work the Lord has planned for us, we should do it in a distinctly Christian way.

Here are four ways that Jesus will transform your work.

- **1. Jesus will change the way you see the purpose of your work.** Jesus said that the second greatest commandment is to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). We work, not merely to make a lot of money or accumulate power for ourselves, but to alleviate suffering and serve others. Your work is for the love of your neighbor.
- **2. Jesus will change the way you see the practice of your work.** We have to work hard, because Christ has called us to work with excellence (Colossians 3:23). Because our work is for the love of our neighbor, we should work hard at it. We do not seek the path of least-resistance, but the path of most-glory-to-God.
- **3. Jesus will change the way you see the place of your work.** No matter where you work in DC, it is likely that there are many non-Christians in your workplace. These image bearers are not merely your co-workers; they are lost people heading to hell. God has placed you in their lives to share the truth of Christ with them.
- **4. Jesus will change the way you see the possibilities of your work.** Today there are hundreds of countries where Christianity is prohibited and Christian workers cannot enter. For example, there are 5.5 million people in Afghanistan who have no access to the gospel. Vocational missionaries cannot get into Afghanistan, the government will not let them. But

Afghanistan is clamoring for healthcare professionals, lawyers, English teachers, and more. Christians can use their marketable skills to gain creative access to closed countries, bringing the gospel with them. JD Greear says, “Whatever you do for work, do it well for the glory of God, and do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God.”

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God’s unfailing kindness.

As Christians, we recognize that we cannot do anything without Jesus (John 15:5). Even our ability to work is a gift of God’s grace.

Moses warned the Israelites to resist arrogance in their work, recognizing that they could only work with God’s help: “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth...” (Deuteronomy 8:17–18). God has given you unique gifts and skills, enabling us to work and exercise dominion over the face of the earth.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

How does your work serve others? How are you "loving your neighbor" as you work?

Why is it important to remember that God enables us to work?

Who is one non-Christian in your workplace? How can you start a conversation with them about your faith?

Have you ever considered using your job to move overseas? What skills do you have that might be attractive to a closed country?

What is one opportunity that you have to do your work with excellence?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- What non-Christian are you discipling (or hope to disciple)? How is it going?
- How did fighting temptation go this week? What was helpful? What wasn't?
- What lies are you tempted to believe about this sin? What is the truth?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. Why is it important to remember that God enables us to work?
2. What do you think about Christians using their jobs to creatively access closed countries? Why is this important? Why could it be challenging? What opportunities might your skills give you?
3. Why is it challenging to share your faith in your workplace? Why is it easy?

Read Colossians 3:22–4:1

^{3:22} Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. ^{4:1} Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What commands are given in this passage?
- What two kinds of obedience are described in 3:22? What are the differences? What would this look like in your life?
- Put 3:25 in your own words. How does this verse fit into the rest of the passage?
- What reason is given for servants to work hard? What does this mean?
- What reasons are given for servants to obey?
- What reasons are given to masters to be fair?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What's the difference between working "as a people-pleaser" and working with a sincere heart? Are you tempted to work "as a people-pleaser?" How have you seen this temptation in your own work?
- What opportunities do you have to work with excellence in your job?
- Do you have anyone who reports to you in your work? How can you apply 4:1 in your workplace?
- No matter your job, "you are serving the Lord Christ" (3:34). How can this fact change the way you view your work?

Create an Action Step together.

Choose two of the following to do before your next meet-up:

- Refuse to complain about your job. Anytime you feel yourself tempted to complain about work, thank God for your job and the ability to work.
- What are some areas of your job that you aren't motivated to do with excellence (whether because of difficulty, monotony, or something else)? What steps can you take to serve better in these areas?
- Start a spiritual conversation with a coworker.
- Search online to find other countries where you could find a job (based on your education, career, skillset, etc.). Then look at websites like JoshuaProject.net or PeopleGroups.org to see what needs are in that country.

ACTION STEP: This week, I will _____.

(Remember, be specific!)

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Thank God for enabling you to work and pray that he would strengthen you to serve him with excellence.

9. LOVE THE NATIONS

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

The entire story of the Bible centers on God’s heart for the nations. Missions is not a topic scattered in a few places throughout the Bible; it is central to the heartbeat of Scripture:

- When God first called Abraham, he promised that “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” through Israel (Genesis 12:3, 18:8).
- God’s judgment of the nations throughout the Old Testament shows that he is not a tribal deity, but the God of all the earth (e.g., Exodus 15:11, 13–18).
- God blessed Israel so that God’s “way may be known on earth, [his] saving power among all nations” (Psalm 67:2).
- The prophets look forward to a future day when all nations will praise God (Isaiah 42:10, Jeremiah 3:17) and find salvation in his name (Isaiah 45:22, Daniel 7:14, Zephaniah 3:9).
- The Israelites were anticipating a day when their king would reign in Jerusalem, not just over Israel, but over all of the earth (Genesis 49:10, Psalm 2). Jesus is that king.
- Jesus’ life began with the nations worshipping him as the newborn king (Matthew 2:1–12).
- Jesus made clear throughout his ministry that he did not just come to save Israel (Luke 4:24–30).
- Jesus sent his followers to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19).
- All of the apostles knew that Jesus was the Savior of all nations (1 John 2:2)
- Paul made clear that his mission was to preach Jesus “among all the nations” (Romans 1:5, 15:22–25; Galatians 3:8–9).
- Christians look forward to a day when Jesus will be worshiped by every tribe,

tongue, and nation (Romans 15:11; Philippians 2:10–11; Revelation 5:9, 7:9, 12:15, 14:6, 15:4).

Our God will be praised by every tribe, tongue, and nation. This is central to the heart of God and must be central to the heart of every Christian. When the Bible uses the word “nation,” it does not refer to geopolitical nation-states (political entities where a legitimate government exercises authority over a territory), but people groups (a community of people formed around shared features like language, history, ethnicity, and culture). With this definition, there are over 17,000 nations in the world today, speaking over 7,100 languages. God being worshiped by every tribe, tongue, and nation means that at least one individual from each of these groups will hear and believe the gospel and live around the throne of Jesus. Unfortunately, there are thousands of nations where the name of Jesus has never been uttered. They cannot believe in Jesus because they have never heard of him.

The 17,000 nations (or people groups) in the world today should be split into three categories:

- **Gospel Access (GA) — 47.5% of world**
Example: Washington DC
These places have the Bible in their language, multiple churches in their vicinity, Christians in their culture, and a history of Christian witness.
Not every individual in these places is a Christian, but Christians are present and working.
- **Little Gospel Access (LGA) — 26.4%**
Example: Thailand
These places have some Bible in their language, the beginnings of a church in their vicinity, very few Christians in their culture (less than 2%), and no history of Christian influence (the gospel is being presented for the first time)
The gospel is beginning to spread in these places, but they need help from the outside.
- **Zero Gospel Access (ZGA) — 26.1%**
Example: Zaza People of Turkey
These places have no Bible in their

language, no churches in their vicinity, no Christians in their culture, and no history of Christian influence (the gospel has never been presented)

If one of these people wanted to follow Jesus, they would be completely unable to, because they have absolutely no way of hearing about him. There is no Bible or book they can read, no church they can attend, no Christians they can meet.

We are living in a GA place and we must keep working to reach the lost where we are, but we also have an obligation to use our resources for the good of those who have less or no resources. Jesus has died to save people from every tribe (Revelation 5:9), we need to lay our lives down to send missionaries to carry the good news of Jesus to them.

Everyone has a role to play in this global work.

- **Some Go — Crossing cultures for the spread of the gospel.**

These people are trained, supported, and sent by our church to cross cultures, acquire a language and culture, and

then work towards evangelism, making disciples, planting the first churches, translating the Bible, and training the first leaders.

- **Some Send — Staying behind, but still living your life strategically and sacrificially for the spread of the gospel to all nations.**

These people pray for the unreached and missionaries, encourage missionaries, and support missionaries financially.

Every Christian should be open to going, because Christ is worthy of it and the nations need to hear the hope of Christ.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

God does not need our help to accomplish his mission, but, by his grace, he has involved us. God has invited you to play a crucial role on his winning-team. No prayer for the unreached, email to a missionary, or dollar given to missions will ever be spent in vain. You are not giving yourself to a lost cause, but a certain victory.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

Do you believe that global missions is central to the story of Scripture? Why or why not?

What are some reasons every church and each Christian should prioritize the spread of the gospel among the unreached?

Have you considered going overseas long-term for missions? What would stop you from doing this?

What questions do you have about missions generally? What questions do you have about your role in missions?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- What non-Christian are you discipling (or hope to disciple)? How is it going?
- Were you able to do the action steps you committed to? How did they change your outlook on work?
- Who is a non-Christian co-worker in your office that we can pray for?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. Were you surprised to see that God's heart for the nations is such a dominant theme in Scripture?
2. What are some reasons every church and each Christian should prioritize the spread of the gospel among the unreached?
3. What does it look like for you to send missionaries?

Read Romans 15:20–24

²⁰ My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but, as it is written, "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." ²² That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you. ²³ But now I no longer have any work to do in these regions, and I have strongly desired for many years to come to you ²⁴ whenever I travel to Spain. For I hope to see you when I pass through and to be assisted by you for my journey there, once I have first enjoyed your company for a while.

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- What do you know about the rest of Paul's letter to the Romans?
- What does Paul say his goal is? How can you put this in your own words?
- What reasons does Paul give for his goal?
- Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15. What does this verse mean?
- Read Isaiah 52:13–15. Put this verse in your own words?
- Where does Paul want to go? Why?
- What does he ask the Romans to do? Why?

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- Why is it important for Christ to be preached anywhere?
- Why is it important for Christ to be preached where he “has not been named” (v. 20)?
- If it is crucial for Christ to be preached where he has not been named, have you ever considered moving overseas to strategically proclaim Christ?
- The church in Rome had a crucial role to assist Paul in his work in Spain. What kind of support do missionaries need? What are some ways that you can support missionaries in this crucial way?

Create an Action Step together.

Some Christians are called to go, some are called to send, but every Christian is called to pray for the unreached. A good resource to help you pray for the unreached is the Unreached of the Day, which you can see at UnreachedOfTheDay.org (there is also an app available for most phones, which can give you a daily notification to remind you to pray).

ACTION STEP: Commit to pray daily for the unreached.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Pray for an unreached people group together — a nation where the gospel has never been proclaimed.

10. GIVE TO OTHERS

PRE-READING

Read this before your meet-up.

It will give you some great background information to help make the most of your time together.

The Christian life is a life of self-sacrifice. We follow the example of “Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5–6, cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9) when we give ourselves to others. We can give generously of our money or resources (Matthew 6:1–4, Luke 12:33–34, 2 Corinthians 9:7) and our time (Romans 12:13, 1 Peter 4:10).

Why should we give?

- Because everything you have is a gift from God (James 1:17). God has given freely to you, so you ought to give freely to others. This is why God blesses us.
- If everything you have comes from God, then it isn’t yours to hang on to. James 5:1–6 describes a horrific scene where, on the last day, the wealth we have stored up for ourselves will testify against us, proving our neglect of generosity.

Who can we give to?

- **The Poor.** This is a huge priority throughout the New Testament. Most of the time that generosity is commanded in the New Testament, it is describing giving to the poor (e.g., Matthew 6:2–3, 19:21; Mark 10:21; Galatians 2:10; James 1:27). Paul even devoted much of his ministry to taking up a collection for impoverished Christians in Jerusalem (e.g., 1 Corinthians 16:1).
- **The Church.** The church is a family, and families help one another, even when it isn’t convenient (Acts 4:34). We should be quick to give our time and money to support the needy among us and the ministry of the Word. Paul described churches giving as a part of their weekly gathering (1 Corinthians 16:2) and made clear that his ministry was only possible because of the support of churches (Romans 15:24; 2 Corinthians 11:8;

Philippians 1:5). Many Christians give 10% of their income to the church. While this is not commanded in Scripture, it can be a helpful tool for determining how you can give sacrificially to the church.

- **The Lost.** Sharing with your co-workers will be costly — it will require you to give of your time and (maybe) sacrifice the respect of your neighbors, but this is a far greater gift than anything else you could give them (Acts 3:6).

Many people believe that we don’t have enough margin in our schedule or budget to give generously to others. It is important to know that God does not call us to give comfortably out of our surplus, but to be radically generous and sacrificial. Paul described his own life as being “poor, yet making many rich” (2 Corinthians 6:10) and praised the Philippians for giving in “their extreme poverty” (2 Corinthians 8:1–5). We may not have much, but God is calling all of us to deny ourselves in order to better serve others.

Paul’s letter to the Philippians is, in some ways, a big “Thank You” letter, expressing gratitude for that church’s support of his ministry. They gave with radical generosity to Paul and God promised to give with radical generosity to them: “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). This same promise is available to you in Christ Jesus; if you give your time and money to others, God will provide everything you need.

SEEING THE KINDNESS OF GOD

The center of the Christian worldview is the kindness and mercy of God, which is seen supremely in the work of Christ (Exodus 34:6–7, 1 Corinthians 2:2), so every session will include a reminder of how this topic points us to God’s unfailing kindness.

We are free to give generously, because God has given us something better to live for than “the uncertainty of riches” (1 Timothy 6:17). By giving, we are “storing up treasure” and “tak[ing] hold of that which is truly life” (1 Timothy

1:19). God's invitation to give yourself away is an invitation to truly live.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Answer these before your meet-up.

Which is easier for you to give, your time or your money? Why?

Think about your giving to the local church. What percentage of your income is given to the church? How do you feel about that number?

What opportunities do you have to become more generous with your money?

What opportunities do you have to become more generous with your time?

Sharing your faith with a non-Christian will be costly, but we must give generously. What "cost" associated with evangelism is the most daunting to you?

MEET-UP GUIDE

Review your Action Step from your last meetup.

- What non-Christian are you discipling (or hope to disciple)? How is it going?
- Were you able to pray for the unreached this week?
- What did you learn as you prayed for the unreached?

Review the Pre-Reading by discussing these questions.

1. Which is easier for you to give, your time or your money? Why?
2. Why is it important to give to the local church?
3. Sharing your faith with a non-Christian will be costly, but we must give generously. What "cost" associated with evangelism is the most daunting to you?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–15, 9:5–15

^{8:1} We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶ Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. ⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰ And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵ As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack...”” ^{9:5} So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction ⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ 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. ⁹ As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness

endures forever.”¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Study Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- How does Paul describe the Macedonians’ giving in 8:1–5? What stands out to you about this description?
- What does it mean that the Macedonians “gave themselves... to the Lord” (8:5)?
- How is giving described in 8:7? Why is this important?
- What does Paul say about “fairness” in 8:13–15? Why is this important?
- How does Paul describe giving (and givers) throughout this passage?
- What promises are in this passage? (And what do they mean?)
- What commands are in this passage? (And what do they mean?)

Application Questions to answer together in your meet-up.

- How is God an example for our own giving in this passage? (See 8:9, 9:8–9, 9:13)
- In what areas do you have “cheerfully?” In what areas do you give “reluctantly or under compulsion?” Why do these attitudes help or harm our giving?
- 9:6 promises that our giving will lead to blessing. How have you seen this principle in your own life?
- What excuses do you give yourself for not giving? How could this passage correct

Create an Action Step together. Choose one of the three areas in the pre-reading (The Poor, the Church, the Lost) that you want to give more generously to. Then, make a specific plan to give generously this week.

ACTION STEP: I will _____.

Pray together to close your meet-up.

Thank God for giving you so many blessings so that you can give to bless others.