



LOVE

WHO YOU LEAD

Community Group Training Course

COMMUNITY GROUPS

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This workbook belongs to:_____

Welcome

▶ Watch the **Welcome Video**

Hello Community Group Leaders. Welcome to the *Love Who You Lead* training course! We are excited to have you join us as we journey through this curriculum and discover how to love and lead community groups. We hope and pray this experience and content will encourage your growth as a leader, invigorate your love for Christ, and provide the knowledge and skills you need to effectively shepherd a group of people.

We also want to thank you for your participation in the mission of Grace Community Church by growing our gospel reach into the community. Your leadership of community groups creates more and more space for people to be welcomed into Christian community and experience the love of Christ. Your home will serve as a gospel bridge for people to connect with their heavenly Father, experience the love and sacrifice of a community united in Christ, and participate in God's mission to love and serve the lost.

We pray that God will do abundantly more than we ask or think according to his power that is at work in us. To the glory and praise of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, amen (Ephesians 3:20-21, paraphrase).

Seth Rumsey

Pastor of Community Groups
Grace Community Church



How to use this Workbook

— [▶ Watch the Orientation Video](#)

Love Who You Lead is a community group leader training course divided into thirteen lessons. The following explanation and outline will help guide you on how to navigate the course and work through the material.

WHO WILL YOU WORK THROUGH THE COURSE WITH?

This course is meant to be experienced with other people. A community group coach will guide you through the course, either with a group or one-on-one. In addition, you will use this curriculum in the future to train a co-leader.

In A Group: These are groups designed to train and deploy leaders who will go on to lead their own community group. We recommend a group meets once a week for thirteen weeks.

One-on-one: This context provides an opportunity for a current group leader to receive training from a coach in a one-on-one setting. We recommend the leader meets with the coach once a month for a year to complete the training.

With a Co-leader: A community group leader can use this curriculum to train a co-leader before sending them to lead a community group of their own. We recommend a CG leader meets with their co-leader once a month for a year to complete the training with the support and accountability of a coach.

BREAKDOWN OF LESSONS

Each lesson is designed around four primary components: reading, lesson, discussion, and self reflection.

1. **Reading** will be a short article meant to inform and accelerate your learning around each topic.
2. **Lesson** will be a video teaching that you will watch.
3. **Discussion** will be questions to answer and discuss.
4. **Self Reflection** will be a tool for recognizing your gifts, story, and passions and how you will use these qualities to lead others.

ORDER OF LESSONS

Before Your Meeting:

Read: Read the article in preparation for the lesson.

(Approximately 20 minutes)

During Your Meeting:

Discuss: Discuss the reading using the questions provided.

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Watch: Watch the video and use the lesson notes as an outline and guide.

(Approximately 25 minutes)

Discuss: Discuss the video using the questions provided.

(Approximately 30 minutes)

After Your Meeting:

Personal Reflection: As you reflect on the lesson, use the self reflection to better understand how God is shaping you as a leader.

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Additional Resources: Additional content and book suggestions are provided as a toolbox for future learning and growth.

Toolbox: The Toolbox will provide you with a number of tools and tips for practically implementing what you are learning in your community group. Each resource will guide you on a variety of ways you can learn, grow, and apply specific skills and practices to encourage the growth and development of your group and group members. You will find the Toolbox under each lesson on the *Love Who You Lead* web page.





What is a **Community Group**

LESSON 1

Before you begin: Lesson 1

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the purpose and nature of a community group at Grace Community Church. “Community Groups” is our new title for “Small Groups”, and describes our purpose and mission to celebrate Jesus, love one another, and live on mission where we work, play, live, and learn.

As you read, watch, and discuss, pay careful attention to how a community group is similar to and different from a traditional small group. Understanding the differences will help you align your current or future group with the purpose and mission of groups at GCC.

Use this lesson to get a jump start on thinking through your leadership of a community group. What aspects of leadership will you need to give special attention as you work through the *Love Who You Lead* training course? Discuss what you are learning and what questions you have with your coach in order to better navigate the content and information.

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LET YOUR DREAM SMALL GROUP DIE

FIVE WAYS TO MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY

Scott Hubbard • Editor • desiringGod.org

You don't have to be a Christian long to feel disappointed by Christian community.

Our high expectations are understandable. The church is the body and bride of Christ (*Ephesians 1:22–23; 5:25–27*), heaven's earthly outpost (*1 Peter 2:9*), God's cosmic stage for showcasing His wisdom (*Ephesians 3:10*). But when we look at our own community — our local church or small group — the reality can seem to fall so short. We expected the friendships would be deeper. We hoped the people would be more welcoming. We thought the pastor would remember our name.

Sometimes, to be sure, we feel disappointed with our community because something is fundamentally wrong. We attached ourselves to a sick body, and then we caught the virus. Now, it's time for us to recover somewhere else. But often, my own disappointments with Christian community have sprung from my unrealistic expectations. I walked into a church expecting to find an unblemished bride, and instead I found a wife-in-progress.

Jesus's Bride-to-Be

Some of us take our community's flaws as a license to flee. We flit from church to church, small group to small group, in search of a bride with fewer blemishes. Others of us may stay with our communities, but we've traded warm affection for mere tolerance, like a spouse whose love has cooled.

God has a harder but happier way forward for us when we feel disappointed by our community: we honestly admit our grievances, acknowledge our own deep flaws, and let our dream community die. Then, with a dose of hopeful realism, we labor to love the real community God has given us. We join Jesus as he removes every spot and wrinkle from his bride-to-be (*Ephesians 5:27*).

In my own small-group life, I have needed consistent reminders to reform my faulty expectations and send me back to my group with fresh resolves for good. And that's what the apostle Peter gave me recently with these five callings to every member of a flawed community: "All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a



tender heart, and a humble mind" (1 Peter 3:8).

1. Lay Aside Personal Preferences

The first quality Peter lists is unity of mind. As much as possible, Peter says, the members of this patchwork called the church should share the same mind and attitude. Despite all their differences of culture and personality, they should carry the same vision into their gatherings each week.

As we think of the people in our small groups, the call to have unity of mind may sound like telling a field of wildflowers to all be yellow. How does a hipster college student have unity of mind with a middle-aged mechanic? How does an older black woman from south Chicago have unity of mind with a teenage boy from the white suburbs?

We can have unity of mind with one another because we have all been captured by Jesus Christ. Our communities, diverse as they often are, have one identity: sojourners and exiles (1 Peter 2:11). We have one calling: proclaim God's excellencies (1 Peter 2:9). And we have one grand ambition: to so speak and act that "in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4:11). Every small group is a family of exiles who live for heaven's King.

Often, disappointment settles over us because we have lost sight of this controlling vision and have smuggled in our own. So we begin to evaluate our small group based on how well it meets our perceived needs rather than how well it glorifies Christ, and we inevitably walk away feeling neglected. But as we remind ourselves of God's vision for our community, we will lay aside a host of personal preferences in order to glorify Him with one voice.

2. Enter the Emotions of Others

Second, Peter tells the church to show sympathy toward one another. Contrary to some modern definitions, biblical sympathy is not detached or merely cerebral. Sympathy is the ability to enter another's emotional house, make your way to the living room, and sit with them for a while in their joys or sorrows.

Sympathy is what the Lord Jesus feels toward his people's weaknesses, and what fellow Christians should feel when they see a brother or sister in prison (Hebrews 4:15; 10:34). In both cases, sympathy stirs up the emotions so powerfully that action follows: Jesus gives his tempted people mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16), and fellow Christians gladly associate with their imprisoned friends (Hebrews 10:34). Sympathy moves us to weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice, and then do what we can to soothe the sorrow or swell the joy (Romans 12:15).

Deep, sincere sympathy does not come naturally to most of us. We may listen for a time to someone's story of sorrow or joy, but seldom do we linger there, put aside the impulse to tell our own tale, and allow their emotions to sink down into



our own. Such tender care comes from God Himself as He shapes us into Jesus's image. As he does, we will gather more often with our communities on the lookout for people to listen to, and we will find that it is more blessed to show sympathy than to receive it (Acts 20:35).

3. Treat the Church Like Your Family

Next, Peter tells his readers to embrace brotherly love. The first-century world restricted the term brotherly love to blood relatives. But here, Peter takes that family affection and applies it to God's family — all those who have been “born again to a living hope” and now have the same Father (1 Peter 1:3).

As with our biological families, we don't get to choose the members of God's family. God just welcomes us into this wonderful, unusual, and sometimes frustrating collection of mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and children, and then tells each of us, “Love each other.” Apart from the blood of Jesus that binds us together, many of us have little in common. But these are our family members, and like Jesus, we should not be ashamed to call any one of them brother (Hebrews 2:11).

Brotherly love, like all family love, will hurt. These family members will annoy us, offend us, and even wound us deeply. We will feel tempted at times to find a more normal family, one more like us. But precisely at that point, we have the opportunity to press into the glory of brotherly love — a love that stretches across seemingly insurmountable differences for Jesus's sake, and finds on the other side a richer affection than any we could have formed in an affinity group. We were born again for this kind of love (1 Peter 1:22).

4. Move Toward the Hurting

The fourth quality Peter lists is tenderheartedness. Similar to sympathy, tenderheartedness is sensitive to others' emotions. The tenderhearted are willing to put their own lives on pause while they enter into another's emotions and linger there for a while. But more specifically than sympathy, the tenderhearted are particularly touched by pain.

When the tenderhearted meet the pain of suffering, they extend mercy, as when Jesus “had compassion” (the same word for tenderheartedness) on the harassed, the helpless, the hungry, and the sick (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; Luke 7:13).

And when the tenderhearted meet the pain of sin, they extend forgiveness. Keenly aware of their own failings, these people are “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). You don't have to take a battering ram to reach the compassion of the tenderhearted; a slight touch of another's pain will prick them.

Many of our small groups include people who carry two tons of sorrow on their



shoulders. Bent down beneath their own pain, they can appear cold, aloof, and anti-social. We can wonder why they aren't more friendly and welcoming, not realizing that they lack the strength to move toward us. As our hearts grow more tender, we will feel less disappointed with these bruised reeds, and more prone to move toward them, praying that God would use us to bind them up.

5. Go Low to Lift Others Up

Finally, Peter tells the church to adopt a humble mind. Humility was a despised quality in the Greco-Roman world, the lot of slaves rather than self-respecting citizens. But Jesus Christ — the King who carried a cross — shows us a new way to be human. We go low to lift others up.

When Christians walk into our communities, we should want humility to be as characteristic as the clothes we wear (1 Peter 5:5). We believe the best about each other. We are slow to speak and quick to listen. We are more ready to cover over a sin than to expose it. We dream of how we might do our brothers and sisters good. We hold our rights loosely and we never think anyone is too low for us to love, serve, and honor.

The people we go low for may be no one special in the world's eyes; they may be weak, awkward, and poor — perhaps just like us. But if we will go low for them, God can give us glimpses of who they really are: Jesus's beloved sheep, God's own possession, heirs of the grace of life (1 Peter 2:9, 25; 3:7). One day soon, God himself will lift them up to become something new, something resplendent, something beautiful beyond imagination (1 Peter 5:6, 10).

These are the people in our community. They may disappoint us at times now, but they are destined for glory. And we have the privilege of helping them get there.

QUESTIONS: READING

1. Where have you experienced disappointment in Christain community?
2. How do you define "hopeful realism" for a community group?
3. What personal preferences do you have to lay aside?
4. What does it look like to treat a group of believers like family?
5. What did you learn that you hope to apply to your community group?



What is a Community Group?

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Idea: Community groups practice up, in, and out, through the rhythms of life on life, life in community, and live on mission.

UP. IN. OUT.



Definition:

Community groups celebrate Jesus, care for one another, and live on mission by displaying and declaring the gospel where they work, play, live, and learn.

UP - Encountering God, Anticipating, and Celebrating

Encountering God through His Word. Community groups are more than just social gatherings. They are communities of transformation. God is the only One who can change hearts and lives. More than just knowing about God, Scripture leads us to know God: His character, His will, and His mission. Since God's Word is living and active (Heb 4:12), when his Word intersects with our lives, we will not be the same.

Anticipating and Celebrating the fruit of the Gospel. We never outgrow our need for the Gospel. (Gal 3:1-5) In fact, God will use our group relationships to show us the places where we are looking to something/one else for what only Christ can give. We will listen and look for the ways that God desires to change our hearts, not just our circumstances, and we will celebrate any fruit of believing in the Gospel.

IN - Bearing Each Other's Burdens

Bearing each other's burdens. With compassion and courage, we walk with each other through hard times: encouraging, praying, serving, restoring, visiting, and simply being present. (Gal 6:2) This is the job of every person in the group, not just the leader. As we intentionally seek to know one another and be known, we give permission for our group members to be God's instruments of change, healing, and care in our lives. When a crisis comes, our Community group is the group of people who will come alongside us first.



OUT - Blessing and Inviting Others

Blessing Others. We best live out our identity in Jesus when we serve others and “do the good things He planned for us long ago.” (Eph. 2:10) Blessing others is a way of sharing what we experience in God with others. It gives Community groups the sense that they are part of the bigger mission of God in making all things new. It also allows us to affirm one another’s giftedness outside the context of a living room. This can accelerate a group’s sense of identity and togetherness.

Inviting Others into Christian community. Our Community groups are not fortresses, but embassies. The longing of every human soul is deep relationship both with God and with others. Therefore, we are willing to give what we have freely received. As a community, we take seriously Jesus’ commission to go and make disciples. We will live out our life together in front of our neighbors and other seekers (Matt 5:14-16), inviting them into our groups to share and experience our life in Christ.

Rhythms of a Community Group

Life in Community: Gather as a family

Life on Life: Grow in discipleship

Life on Mission: Go make disciples

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. What caught your attention in this lesson?
2. How is a community group similar to or different from other small groups and Bible studies you have been a part of?
3. What excites you about leading a community group?
4. What do you feel unsure about or challenged by in leading a community group?
5. In what ways will you need guidance and help as you lead people up, in, and out?



Self Reflection

Personal Development

Leaders are examples in communities of people who are walking in repentance and faith. They are growing in their knowledge of the gospel, belief in the gospel, and obedience to the gospel.

One helpful way to think about this transformation is in terms of our head, heart, and hands being conformed to the image of Christ. As you work through this section, look for themes and connections across each area

HEAD: Growing in Knowledge

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."
— Romans 12:2

1. Where do you need to grow in knowledge? Are there things you need to know? Is there an issue you need to press into, an issue of scripture to grow in deeper understanding of? Are there pieces of theology you need to learn? Are there aspects of gospel communities on mission you still need to know?
2. How will you learn? (i.e. Is there a book or article to read, equipping session you need to attend, commentaries or studies to do, scripture to memorize, etc.?)

**HEART: Growing in Belief**

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."
— Ephesians 1:18

1. What areas of life do you need to grow in belief in the gospel? What areas do you need to see repentance in? What bondage are you volunteering for in your heart? What forgiveness needs to happen?
2. How will you grow in belief (i.e. shepherding conversations to have, questions and issues to bring up in discipleship and accountability groups, material you need to walk through, redemption immersion, prayer, fasting, retreats, etc.)?

HANDS: Growing in Obedience, Skill, and Practice

"Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded." —Matthew 28:20

"Being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts." —James 1:22–25

"Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the work he gave him to do." —John 17:4

1. What skills do you need practice? Where are you excelling and where do you need to keep growing? Where are you failing to live what you believe? What skills do you need to develop? What things is God calling you to that you need to step into in obedience?
2. How will you grow in obedience, skill, and practice? (i.e. Are there trainings to attend? Do you need to shadow someone? Do you need to schedule some specific coaching to help you? Are there opportunities for practice and feedback you need to pursue?)



See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on what makes a community group.

Additional Resources

Life in Community: Joining Together to Display the Gospel

Dustin Willis



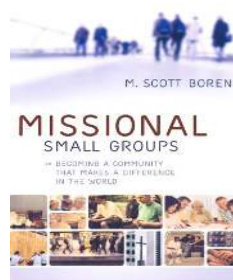
Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life

Jeff Vanderstelt



Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community that Makes a Difference in the World

M. Scott Boren





Definition **of a Leader**

LESSON 2

Before you begin: Lesson 2

This section begins a three lesson series on the foundations of leadership. Weeks two, three, and four will cover the topic of Christian leadership. Take a look at this video to hear more

 Watch Section Introduction: **Leadership**

Summary:

In this lesson you will discover the definition of a Biblical leader. Jesus is the supreme example of how to love, serve, and lead others. We aspire to lead like Jesus and depend on His strength and grace to do so. As you explore this lesson pay special attention to the nature of service and sacrifice in leadership. Listen for the distinctives of Christian leadership and reflect on how God has gifted you. Also pay attention to the distinctives that will require more effort and growth. This is not meant to be an exhaustive or burdensome list but rather provide a framework and pathway for your ongoing growth as a Christian leader.

The self reflection will help you identify your leadership style. Understanding your leadership style will be essential to how you shepherd your group. You can also use the leadership assessment with the other members of your group in order to share leadership and lean into the different giftings that compliment your own.

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TRUE LEADERSHIP IS SACRIFICE, NOT PRIVILEGE

FIVE WAYS TO MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY

David Mathis · Executive Editor · desiringGod.org

It is one of the filthiest lies Satan whispers in the ear of our comfortable and entitled generation.

From before we can even remember, we have been indoctrinated, at nearly every turn, with the idea that being “a leader” means getting the gold star. Leadership is a form of recognition, a kind of accomplishment, the path to privilege. Being declared a leader is like winning an award or being identified among the gifted.

Leadership is a form of success. And since you can do whatever you dream, and can achieve whatever you set your mind to, you too can be a leader — at home, at work, in the community, in the church. Why would you settle for anything less? Leadership means privilege, and no generation has considered itself more entitled to privilege than ours.

The Lie About Leadership

The world's spin on leadership is in the air of our society, felt in the subtext of our adolescence, and reinforced in our public elections. We are swimming in it everywhere we turn. Why follow when you can lead? Why contribute to the glory of another when you can be the chief beneficiary instead?

As novel and inspiring as it may seem, it's a very old deception. From the garden, to the history of Israel, to the Middle Ages, to our innate notions about leadership today, the natural, human, sinful way to think about leadership is to be king of the hill. To view leadership as the ascent to honor and privilege, rather than the descent to attend to the needs of others.

One of the distinct marks of Satan's influence in a society — evidence that the god of this world is blinding unbelievers en masse — is that leaders lord their leadership over those for whom they are supposed to care. The lie may be as prominent (and embraced) today as it's ever been, but by no means is it new.



Not Lording It Over

The voice that calls most clearly for the true path of leadership — leadership as sacrifice, not privilege — is Jesus himself. He warned sharply against both the pagan and religious leaders of His day who sought to use their people for their own benefit, rather than serve.

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25–28; also Mark 10:42–45)

Jesus summons us to have a distinctly Christian perspective on leadership. And if these words from Jesus on the nature of true leadership weren't enough, he made it unforgettable, on the night before His death, on his knees with a washbowl and towel in his hand.

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you." (John 13:14–15)

Sacrifice for Their Joy

The apostle Peter, who led the apostles as first among equals, strikes the same clear note for a distinct vision in the church. Christian pastor-elders are to serve "not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2–3).

For a follower of Jesus, greatness in leadership is not defined by how many you have beneath you, but how consistently and significantly you are led by the Holy Spirit to make personal sacrifices to serve the true needs of others. Christian leadership, as captured by John Piper, is "knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God's methods to get them there in reliance on God's power." And taking such initiative is typically another way of saying "sacrifice." Initiative is personally costly.

What specifically is the good for which faithful leaders will take initiative and make sacrifices? According to the apostle Paul, it is laboring for the joy of those in our charge. "Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith" (2 Corinthians 1:24).



Leadership as Sacrifice

Christian leadership, then, is fundamentally about giving, not taking. Christian leaders are not empty, immature individuals looking to prop themselves up with new privilege. Rather, they are men and women who are secure enough, and mature enough, to empty themselves for the good of others.

Mark this, husbands and dads, pastors and presidents, the very essence and heart of leadership is taking initiative we otherwise wouldn't take and making sacrifices we otherwise wouldn't make, to guide our people somewhere good they otherwise would not have gone. We embrace short-term personal difficulties for long-term corporate gains. We are among those who are learning that life's greatest joys come not in private comfort and ease, but in choosing what is uncomfortable and hard for the sake of others' joy. We are learning to find our joy not in the ease of attending to self, but in the toughness of attending to others.

Christian leadership — in the home, the church, and elsewhere — is not for those clawing for honor and recognition, but for those most ready to fall to their knees and be inconvenienced by the needs of others.

They are those who, in a sense, have their house sufficiently in order to be able to turn their attention to serving others. Instead of pursuing their own immediate benefit, they are willing to sacrifice for others' benefit.

Like the Son of Man, we lead not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). We die to self so that others might live.

QUESTIONS: READING

1. How is leadership misunderstood or misused in our culture and world?
2. How is leadership misunderstood in the church?
3. What lies about leadership have you been tempted to adopt in your own leadership positions?
4. In what ways is God challenging you to grow as a leader?
5. How can your coach be praying for you as you seek to serve with joy those you lead?



Definition of a Leader

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Loving who you lead pours out of who you are as a leader.

DISTINCTIVE 1

Mark 1:11 *And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

Christian Leadership is about leading from your **IDENTITY**

DISTINCTIVE 2

Mark 1:17: *And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Christian Leadership is about leading with a clear **MISSION**

DISTINCTIVE 3

Mark 3:13-14 ¹³*And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach.*

Jesus shows us that Christian Leadership is about building a **TEAM**

DISTINCTIVE 4

Mark 1:12 *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.*

Jesus shows us that Christian Leadership is about leading in the face of **CONFLICT** and **ADVERSITY**.

DISTINCTIVE 5

Mark 1:32-37 *That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many*



demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you."

Jesus shows us that Christian Leadership is about leading with **BALANCE**.

"Every need is not a call." Listening to the Father's voice brings clarity when you need to say NO to good opportunities, so you can say YES to the best opportunities.

DISTINCTIVE 6

Matthew 20:26-28 *²⁶But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Jesus shows us that Christian Leadership is about **INFLUENCE**, not authority.

Christian Leadership Is...

- a servant/servant oriented relational process
- whereby those who lead,
- under God's leadership,
- using their God-given capacity,
- seek to influence others
- towards a kingdom-honoring goal

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. Kathy talked about the distinctives of Christian leadership drawn from the example of Jesus. Which distinctive stood out to you most and why?
2. Which distinctive is your strength? How will you lead out of this strength?
3. Which distinctive is difficult for you? How will you work to grow in this area?
4. Kathy mentioned, "Every need is not a call." Where in your life do you need to say "no" in order to choose the better "yes"?
5. In your opinion, what's the difference between influence and authority? How does someone lead with influence?
6. How can your coach be praying for your growth as a leader?



Self Reflection

Leadership Styles Questionnaire

Identifying your leadership style

Each area below contains a series of paired statements. Each pair is separated by a row of numbers, 1 to 5. So, if you agree strongly with the left-hand statement, draw a circle around 1. If the right-hand statement appeals strongly, circle 5. Agree with both of them? Circle 3 (but try not to do this too much). Please don't ponder too long - the exercise works best if you go for quick 'gut' responses.

Area 1

I like to achieve things with clear goals.	1	2	3	4	5	I am more concerned about the needs and feelings of others than about achieving things.
If I worry, it tends to be about deadlines/completing tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	If I worry, it tends to be about people and their needs.
I prefer a task to be well defined.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to help people.
I think about whether people are fully contributing to the task.	1	2	3	4	5	I think about how people are feeling.
I feel happiest when completing worthwhile task.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel happy when those around me are happy.

Area 2

I like to plan, decide, control.	1	2	3	4	5	I like to keep things open, see where they might go, keep options open.
If I worry, it tends to be about losing control of a situation.	1	2	3	4	5	If I worry, it tends to be about whether I've made the right decision.
I prefer not to give people too much control over things.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to trust people to achieve the things asked of them.
I think it is important to be able to predict outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5	I think it is important to see how things work out.
I feel that my contribution to those I lead is vitally important.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel those I lead could get on fine without me.



Area 3

I like to do something rather than nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	I like to consider things carefully.
If I worry, it tends to be about being reckless.	1	2	3	4	5	If I worry, it tends to be about not identifying the best way forward.
I prefer new possibilities, to consider what might be.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to consolidate what already is.
I think people who avoid risks are dull.	1	2	3	4	5	I think risk-takers are reckless.
I feel happiest when involved in new things.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel happiest when things are in a good place.

Area 4

I like ideas and vision.	1	2	3	4	5	I like everything to be clear and sorted.
I prefer talking about concepts.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer analyzing things carefully.
If I worry, it tends to be about whether we are going to 'get there'.	1	2	3	4	5	If I worry, it tends to be about making a small mistake that may have a large consequence.
I think in pictures.	1	2	3	4	5	I think in practicalities.
I feel excited about the future and about where we could go.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel excited about making things work.

Area 5

I like to persuade people and see them change.	1	2	3	4	5	I like to work out where people want to go.
I prefer to lead from the front.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to lead with others.
If I worry, it tends to be about whether people are motivated enough.	1	2	3	4	5	If I worry, it tends to be about whether anyone is left out.
I think about how I can influence people.	1	2	3	4	5	I think about how to help everyone play their part.
I often feel excited about many things.	1	2	3	4	5	I often feel responsible for many things.



Leadership Styles Scoring Sheet

This handout links to the Leadership Styles Questionnaire (Handout 1.1). The grid below will help you to identify your preferred leadership style. It may also suggest other styles that are appropriate for you. Complete the grid as follows:

For each Area write the sum of the circled numbers in the 'total score' box in the left-hand column. Divide each 'total score' by five. Record each result in its 'mean score' box, rounding up/down as appropriate. Record each 'mean score' with an 'x' in the corresponding column.

Understanding the results

Scores in the 1 and 5 zones indicate a preference that you are likely to exercise. A score in the 'neutral' zone 3 indicates you may be able to move fairly freely along the continuum in any given situation.

	1	2	3	4	5
AREA 1: task/people Total score = Divide by 5. Mean score = <i>Mark this score on the box on the right.</i>					
AREA 2: directing/open Total score = Divide by 5. Mean score = <i>Mark this score on the box on the right.</i>					
AREA 3: risk-taking/considered Total score = Divide by 5. Mean score = <i>Mark this score on the box on the right.</i>					
AREA 4: big picture/detailed Total score = Divide by 5. Mean score = <i>Mark this score on the box on the right.</i>					
AREA 5: inspiring/participative Total score = Divide by 5. Mean score = <i>Mark this score on the box on the right.</i>					



Leadership Styles Scoring Sheet

Reflection on Leadership Styles

No leadership style is effective in all situations and with all people. Contingency or situational studies of leadership have repeatedly shown that effective leadership is the art of using the appropriate leadership style to deal with specific people in specific team situations.

Therefore, in reading the descriptions of the leadership styles, you should try to avoid placing positive or negative values on any one of these styles. The purpose of the questionnaire is not to label styles or people as good or bad, but to stimulate your thinking about which leadership style(s) you use, and which leadership styles can be used most effectively to deal with different situations.

Brief description of leadership styles

- **Task/people** - This continuum measures our preference for focusing on getting a task done or ensuring people are cared for.
- **Directing/open** - This continuum measures our preference for telling people what to do/being in control, or giving space to others to make their own decisions/going with the flow.
- **Risk-taking/considered** - This continuum measures our preference for acting before thinking or thinking before acting.
- **Big picture/detailed** - This continuum measures our preference for concepts and dreams or detail and analysis.
- **Inspiring/participative** - This continuum measures our preference for persuasion/influence or consultation/listening.

For Reflection

"The point to note about leadership styles is that there is no single style which is always right or always best. Christ used various leadership styles in the course of his ministry."

- James Dunn, *The Effective Leader*, page 120.

What insights does thinking about leadership styles in this way bring to your own leadership?



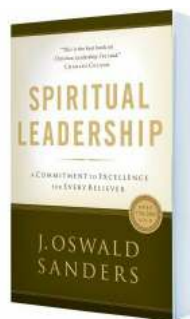
See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on the definition of a leader.

Additional Resources

Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence For Every Believer,

J. Oswald Sanders

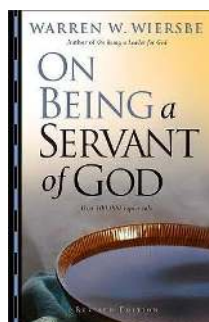
For more on speaking living out the gospel I would encourage you to walk through an eight-week study.



On Being a Servant of God,

Warren W. Wiersbe

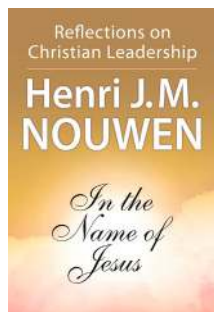
For more on bearing one another's burdens we recommend reading.



In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership,

Henri Nouwen

For more on blessing others and inviting others into Christian community





Identity of **a Leader**

LESSON 3

Before you begin: Lesson 3

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the identity of a leader. It's essential that we operate out of our gospel identity and lead from a place of acceptance and approval founded on our relationship with the Father through Christ. When we depart from our gospel identity we will find ourselves frustrated, tired, and discouraged as we try and find meaning and purpose from things that cannot fulfill the longings and desires of our hearts. Value, purpose, and acceptance are found first and foremost in Christ and His redemptive work on our behalf. It is from our identity as children of God that we live, love, and lead out of a place of security, freedom, peace and joy.

As you watch the video lesson, reflect on the ways you forget, neglect, or confuse who you are Christ. Our gospel identity is something we grow in everyday by believing and claiming the truths of the gospel with greater faith and assurance. Listen for how God is challenging you to grow in your gospel identity.

Furthermore, the Cycle of Grief and Grace exercise will act as a guide for identifying areas you are operating out a false sense of worth and accomplishment. Watch the instruction video before you begin to help explain and guide you through the process.

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THE INCALCULABLE WONDER OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

John Piper · desiringGod.org

Being a Christian means experiencing the supernatural every day. Living as new creatures in Christ is amazing beyond calculation (Galatians 6:15).

The fact that many believers do not know this, and do not feel as if it were true, does not surprise us, because Paul prayed for believers that we “may know the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe” (Ephesians 1:18–19). Evidently, he thought the Ephesian believers needed God to teach them the wonders of what they had experienced. He was praying for God to show them who they were. God must show us, by his word, who we are by his work.

It may seem strange, but we have to be taught that we are walking miracles. “You were dead in trespasses and sins. . . . But God made you alive” (Ephesians 2:1, 5). You may not feel like a walking resurrection, but you are.

The reason I said that this is amazing beyond calculation is that our life and its affections are not merely gifts of Christ but acts of Christ. That is, our love and joy and peace and strength are not merely gifts from Christ. They are the very love and joy and peace and strength of Christ himself.

Rejoice with His Joy

Consider joy first. Jesus said, “*These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full*” (John 15:11).

Don’t miss this: His joy is in us. We don’t just have new joy as a gift from him. We have new joy because our new joy is Christ rejoicing in us. We are rejoicing with his joy.

When Jesus said, “*These things I have spoken to you,*” he meant all those instructions in the preceding verses about abiding in Christ like a branch in a vine. “*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*” (John 15:4).



The sap-joy of the branch is the sap-joy of the vine. They are not different joys. New creatures in Christ no longer experience joy simply with their own joy. We now have Christ's joy in us, and our enjoying is his enjoying.

Abide in His Love

Similarly, we love with his love. In the same passage, Jesus says,

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (John 15:9–10)

What is the Father's commandment? Verse 12: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* All the Father's commandments are summed up in this: Love each other.

So Jesus is saying, *"If you love each other, you are abiding in my love."* And what is that — that abiding in his love? It's the same as abiding in His joy. Keep on loving with my love. Welcome my love as your love. To abide in the love of Jesus and of the Father is to keep on enjoying being loved and loving with their love.

His Peace, His Strength

And what about peace? Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid"* (John 14:27).

Peace is not a gift that passes from Christ the giver to us the receivers. His peace is ours because he is ours, and the peace He is experiencing we are experiencing. Our experience of peace is his peace in us because he is in us.

Similarly His strength. Paul says, *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might"* (Ephesians 6:10). Being "in the Lord" is the same as the branch being in the vine. The strength of the Lord is not merely a gift from him to us. When we are strong against the devil and sin, our strength is his strength. He is being strong in us. We are being strong "in the strength of his might."

Jesus Lives In Us

All this miraculous experience of Christ's supernatural joy and peace and love and strength is rooted (grafted!) in the reality that the life of Christ in us. That is, the living Christ in us. *"You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory"* (Colossians 3:3–4).

Christ is our life — not only the guarantee of it in heaven, but the down payment of it by the Spirit now, as He lives in us. His joy our joy, His love our love, His peace our peace, his strength our strength. These are not gifts moving from him to us. They



are His life experienced as our life.

The closest Paul comes to giving us an explanation of how this happens hour by hour is Galatians 2:20:

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Profoundly, miraculously, amazingly beyond calculation, "It is no longer I who live." Rather, Christ is doing my living. Christ is rejoicing. Christ is loving. Christ is being peaceful, and strong. Not I.

Trust Him

And I? What do I do? "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." Faith. That is what I do. Don't be vague here. Be specific. This means: When I am moved to rejoice, I trust that it is Christ rejoicing. When I am moved to love, I trust that it is Christ loving. When I am moved to peace and strength, I trust that this is Christ's own peace and strength welling up in me.

So now, as You leave this article, say to the Lord Jesus, "Thank you for saving me. Thank you for making me a new creation. Thank you for becoming my life. Thank you for rejoicing, and loving, and being peaceful and strong in me. I trust you now to shape my emotions more and more after your image, for they are yours. And you are my life."

QUESTIONS: READING

1. Where do you need to be reminded of the life in Christ that is available to you today?
2. What aspect is the most difficult for you to grasp and experience? (Joy, Love, Peace, Strength)
3. How will leading a community group stretch you to grow in joy, peace, love, and strength?



Identity of a Leader

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Our identity is defined by who God says we are in Christ.

Our being (identity) must always come before our doing (work).

Jeff Vanderstelt in his book, "Gospel Fluency" gives us four questions to help us maintain a healthy sense of identity.

- Who is God?
- What Has God Done?
- Who Are We?
- What Do We Do?

Genesis 3:5

"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Matthew 28:18-20

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



Who is God? Creator, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

What Has God Done? The Father has sent the Son, Jesus, to pay the price that you and I could never pay to bring us back into right relationship with the Father and enjoy life with him now and for eternity. He has given us his Holy Spirit to work in us, around us, and through us. THE GOSPEL.

Who Are We? We are forgiven, we are bought with the blood of Jesus. We have been saved by Grace through faith, NOT from our own efforts but as a gift of God. We are disciples of Jesus Christ.

What Do We Do? As disciples we follow Jesus, we are transformed by Jesus, and we are committed to the mission of Jesus.

PITFALLS:

BURNOUT:

DIVISION:

Remember:

1. Who is God?
2. What Has God Done?
3. Who Are We?
4. What Do We Do?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. Factors in your life that define you?
2. How would you explain gospel identity to someone?
3. What causes you to forget your gospel identity?
4. Where in your life do you reverse the order of the questions and begin by finding your worth and value in your accomplishments rather than in what Christ has accomplished for you?
5. Where have you experienced burnout in serving others?
6. Where do you experience joy in serving others?



Self Reflection

▶ Watch the **Instructional Video**

Cycles of Grief and Grace

Cycle of Grief

Many people experience the cycle of grief in today's busy, fragmented world. The cycle erodes confidence in our position as children of God and fuels unhealthy addictive patterns of living, to the extent that we often become 'driven beyond the call of God'.

- What most strikes you about this cycle?
- What might be some of the behaviors a leader might show if his or her life is driven by this cycle?
- If you feel comfortable, share with others the most difficult aspects of your walk with God.
- How might we avoid this cycle?



For Reflection:

Are any parts of my life affected by the cycle of grief?

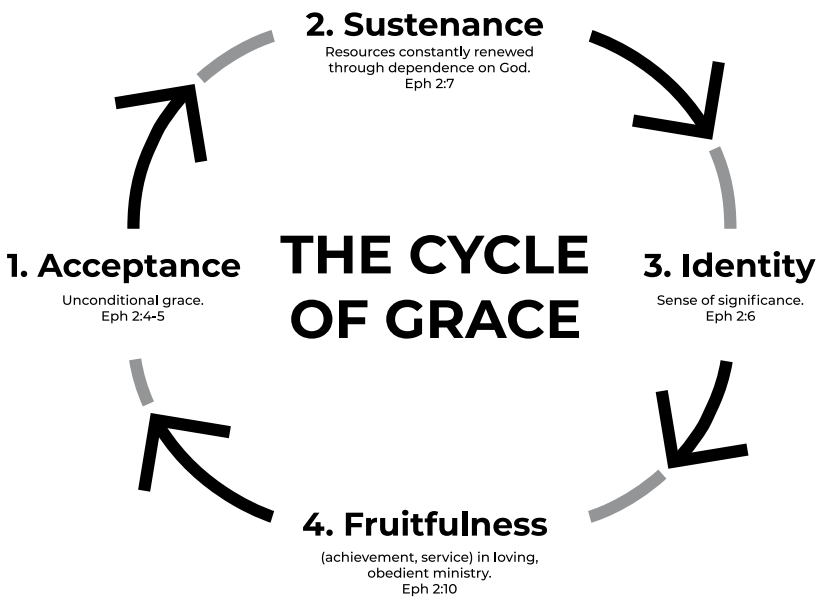
Are there any areas of my life in which I yearn for greater freedom in my relationship with God?

Cycle of Grief and Grace by Frank Lake author of Clinical Theology: A Theological and Psychiatric Basis to Clinical Pastoral Care.



Cycle of Grace

In contrast to the cycle of grief, the cycle of grace describes the effect of living in God's grace and love. The cycle begins with God's acceptance. We are loved, because God loves us, not because of anything we do or achieve.



"The identity of Jesus is related to the identity of his Father. The initiative and execution of the whole salvation event was in conversation with his Father. If we are to lead well, our identity has to be shaped by similar forces; otherwise we will become victims of our own gifting, a liability to others and ourselves" -Viv Thomas

For Reflection:

Where have you experienced the cycle of grace in your life?

How could I make sure that God's unconditional acceptance of me is central to my life?

Cycle of Grief and Grace by Frank Lake author of Clinical Theology: A Theological and Psychiatric Basis to Clinical Pastoral Care.

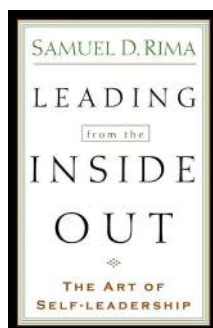


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on the identity of a leader.

Additional Resources

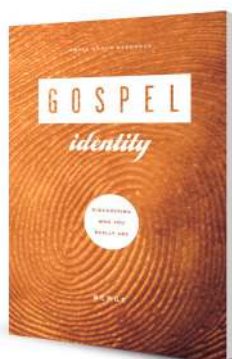
Leading from the Inside Out: The Art of Self-Leadership

by Samuel D. Rima



Gospel Identity: Discovering Who You Really Are

by Serge



The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness: The Path to True Christian Joy

by Timothy Keller



Practices of **a Leader**

LESSON 4

Before you begin: Lesson 4

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the practices of a leader. Healthy leaders are connected to Christ and develop regular habits to cultivate their love and devotion to him. The strength of a Christian flows from the fountain of God's daily grace and love.

In the reading, David Mathis describes spiritual disciplines as “means of grace.” Our job is to intentionally put ourselves in the way of God's grace and receive the blessing and joy of being in relationship with him. As you read, reflect on how you can more effectively drink from the faucet of God's grace and grow as a spiritually healthy leader.

As you watch the lesson video, listen for how Jesus describes what it means to abide and reflect on how you will grow in the abiding life. What practical steps you need to take to grow in your love for Jesus, your commitment to obedience, and your service to love the people God has given you to serve, bless, and share the gospel with?

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HABITS OF GRACE

ENJOYING JESUS THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

David Mathis • Excerpt from *Grace Gone Wild* • Crossway

Put Yourself in the Path of God's Grace

It is in this endless sea of His grace that we walk the path of the Christian life and take steps of grace-empowered effort and initiative. It works something like this.

I can flip a switch, but I don't provide the electricity. I can turn on a faucet, but I don't make the water flow. There will be no light and no liquid refreshment without someone else providing it. And so it is for the Christian with the ongoing grace of God. His grace is essential for our spiritual lives, but we don't control the supply. We can't make the favor of God flow, but He has given us circuits to connect and pipes to open expectantly. There are paths along which He has promised His favor.

As we have celebrated above, our God is lavish in his grace; He is free to liberally dispense his goodness without even the least bit of cooperation and preparation on our part, and often he does. But He also has His regular channels. And we can routinely avail ourselves of these revealed paths of blessing—or neglect them to our detriment.

Where the Grace Keeps Passing

"The essence of the Christian life," writes John Piper, "is learning to fight for joy in a way that does not replace grace." We cannot earn God's grace or make it flow apart from his free gift. But we can position ourselves to go on getting as he keeps on giving. We can "fight to walk in the paths where he has promised his blessings." We can ready ourselves to remain receivers along his regular routes, sometimes called "the spiritual disciplines," or even better, "the means of grace."

Such practices need not be fancy or highfalutin. They are the stuff of everyday, basic Christianity—unimpressively mundane, but spectacularly potent by the Spirit. While there's no final and complete list of such practices, the long tally of helpful habits can be clustered underneath three main principles: hearing God's voice, having His ear, and belonging to His body. Or simply: word, prayer, and fellowship.

In the last generation, we have seen some resurgence of interest among Christians



in the spiritual disciplines, many of which were considered “means of grace” by our spiritual ancestors. “The doctrine of the disciplines,” says J. I. Packer, “is really a restatement and extension of classical Protestant teaching on the means of grace.” Whatever the term, the key is that God has revealed certain channels through which He regularly pours out his favor. And we’re foolish not to take His word on them and build habits of spiritual life around them.

What Means of Grace Means and Doesn’t

To put means with grace might endanger the free nature of grace. But it need not do so—not if the means are coordinate with receiving and the exertions of effort are graciously supplied. This is emphatically the case for the Christian. Here there is no ground for boasting.

The One on whom we lean is “*the God of all grace*” (1 Pet. 5:10). He not only elects the undeserving without condition (Rom. 8:29–33; Eph. 1:4) and works in them the miracle of new birth and the gift of faith, but he also freely declares them righteous by that faith (“justification”) and begins supplying the flow of spiritual life and energy to experience the joy of increasing Christlikeness.

As we have seen, God’s immense flood of grace not only sees us as holy in Christ but also progressively produces holy desires in us (“sanctification”). It is grace to be forgiven of sinful acts, and grace to be supplied the heart for righteous ones. It is grace that we are increasingly “*conformed to the image of his Son*” (Rom. 8:29), and grace that He doesn’t leave us in the misery of our sin but pledges to bring to completion the good work he has begun in us (Phil. 1:6).

For the glory of God, the good of others, and the satisfaction of our souls, the aim of the Christian life is our coming to share in such Christlikeness or godliness—which is “holiness” rightly understood. And all our exertions of effort toward that goal are gifts of grace.

Train Yourself for Godliness

Yes, it is grace, and yes, we expend effort. And so the apostle Paul says to his protégé, “*Train yourself for godliness*” (1 Tim. 4:7). Discipline yourself for growth. Take regular action to get more of God in your mind and your heart, and echo his ways in your life—which will make you increasingly like him (“godliness”). It’s a gift, and we receive it as we become it.

Paul’s own reliance on God for ongoing grace is a powerful testimony to this Christian dynamic of the means of grace and the habits of life we cultivate. He says in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “*By the grace of God I am what I am. . . . I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*” God’s grace didn’t make Paul passive but supplied the energy for discipline and effort, and every ounce of energy expended was all of grace.



And Paul says in Romans 15:18, *“I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me.”* Jesus’s grace, in this instance, didn’t mean accomplishing his purpose despite Paul, or apart from him, but through him. Where does the apostle get the power to labor and expend such spiritual effort? *“I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me”* (Col. 1:29).

How to Receive the Gift of Effort

This dynamic is true not just because Paul is an apostle, but because he is a Christian. So he says to every believer, *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,”* because of this great promise: *“For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure”* (Phil. 2:12–13). And so the majestic epistle to the Hebrews closes with a prayer for God’s *“working in us that which is pleasing in his sight”* (Heb. 13:20–21).

The way to receive the gift of God’s empowering our actions is to do the actions. If he gives the gift of effort, we receive that gift by expending the effort. When he gives the grace of growing in holiness, we don’t receive that gift apart from becoming more holy. When he gives us the desire to get more of him in the Scriptures, or in prayer, or among his people, we don’t receive that gift without experiencing the desire and living out the pursuits that flow from it.

Lay Yourself in the Way of Allurement

Zacchaeus may have been a wee little man, but he modeled this big reality by positioning himself along the path of grace. He couldn’t force Jesus’s hand, he couldn’t make grace flow automatically, but he could put himself by faith along the path where Grace was coming (Luke 19:1–10). The same was true of blind Bartimaeus (Luke 18:35–43). He couldn’t earn the restoration of his sight, but he could station himself along the route of grace where Jesus might give the gift as he passed that way.

“Think of the Spiritual Disciplines,” says Donald S. Whitney, “as ways we can place ourselves in the path of God’s grace and seek him as Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus placed themselves in Jesus’s path and sought him.” Or as Jonathan Edwards put it, you can “endeavor to promote spiritual appetites by laying yourself in the way of allurement.” We cannot force Jesus’s hand, but we can put ourselves along the paths of grace where we can be expectant of his blessing.

God’s regular channels of grace, as we will see, are his voice, his ear, and his body. He often showers his people with unexpected favor. But typically the grace that sends our roots deepest, truly grows us up in Christ, prepares our soul for a new day, produces lasting spiritual maturity, and increases the current of our joy streams from the ordinary and unspectacular paths of fellowship, prayer, and Bible intake given practical expression in countless forms and habits.

While these simple habits of grace may seem as unimpressive as everyday switches



and faucets, through them God regularly stands ready to give his true light and the water of life.

The Great End of the Means

Before we begin to say more about Jesus's word, his ear, and his church in the pages ahead, we need to make clear what is the greatest grace along these paths: Jesus himself. The great end of the means is knowing and enjoying him. The final joy in any truly Christian discipline or practice or rhythm of life is, in the words of the apostle, *"the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"* (Phil. 3:8). "This is eternal life," and this is the goal of the means of grace: *"that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"* (John 17:3).

When all is said and done, our hope is not to be a skilled Bible reader, practiced prayer, and faithful churchman, but to be the one who *"understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth"* (Jer. 9:23–24). And so our heartbeat in the habits we develop for hearing every word, speaking every prayer, and participating in every act of fellowship is Hosea 6:3: "Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord." Knowing and enjoying Jesus is the final end of hearing his voice, having his ear, and belonging to his body. The means of grace, and their many good expressions, will serve to make us more like him, but only as our focus returns continually to Christ himself, not our own Christlikeness. It is in *"beholding the glory of the Lord"* that we *"are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another"* (2 Cor. 3:18). Spiritual growth is a marvelous effect of such practices, but in a sense it is only a side effect. The heart is knowing and enjoying Jesus.

Your Habits, God's Grace

The means of grace are God's promised channels of continuing grace, received by faith. Infinite grace is behind us, and infinite grace lies ahead, and through his appointed means of grace, God is pleased to supply ongoing life and energy and health and strength to our souls. The means of grace fill our tank for the pursuit of joy, for the good of others, and for the glory of God. They are spiritual blessings, not the gravely mistimed material blessings promised prematurely in the so-called "prosperity gospel." And they are blessings—not mere disciplines, but channels through which God gives us spiritual food for our survival, growth, and flourishing in the mission.

For more than a generation now, we have seen a renewal of interest among Christians in the spiritual disciplines. There has been much good in this renewal. But too many have emphasized technique and skill, with the unfortunate diminishing, or neglect, of God's role as supplier and provider. Too often the stress has been on the individual's initiative and effort, with little said about the place of the church and the corporate nature of God's plan. Much has been said in terms of duty, and too little said about joy. And the seeming proliferation of long lists of disciplines can leave young Christians overwhelmed by what they're not practicing, and in some



cases contribute to a low-grade sense of guilt which threatens to keep us from fully engaging with the rest of our everyday lives for which these practices should be preparing us.

My hope in reshifting the focus from the spiritual disciplines to the means of grace—and then the various personal habits of grace that we develop in light of them—is to keep the gospel and the energy of God at the center, to draw in the essential (and often neglected) corporate aspect, and to simplify the way we think about these practices (as hearing God’s voice, having his ear, and belonging to his body). My prayer is that this approach will help to make the means of grace, and your own habits that develop around them, not just accessible and realistic but truly God’s means of your knowing and enjoying Jesus.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. What stood out to you in the article?

2. How does the conversation about “means of grace” change your perception of spiritual disciplines?

3. How does the author explain our effort in relationship to receiving the free gift of God’s grace?

4. What steps can you take to put yourself in the way of receiving more of God and his many spiritual blessings?



Practices of a Leader

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Spiritually healthy leaders abide in Christ and serve others out of the overflow of the Spirit filled life.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ABIDE?

- To be connected to Jesus in a life-giving, life-determining way.
- To adopt Jesus way of thinking, feeling, and acting.
- To be aware of, and allow Jesus to be the dominant perspective in my life.

HOW DO WE ABIDE?

"If my words abide in you..."

John 15:7 *"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."*

"Abide in my love."

John 15:9 *"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love."*

"That my joy may abide in you..."

John 15:11 *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."*



PRACTICES OF ABIDING

- I will regularly invite God's word to change me.
- I will allow the love Christ to define me.
- I will extend the grace I have received to the believers and unbelievers in my life.
- I will surrender and rest in God's plan for me with joy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. Have you ever abided in anything? If so, what did you abide in and how did you abide in it?
2. In what ways does someone's spiritual health (good or bad) affect their leadership?
3. What are the habits or practices you engage in to grow in your love for Jesus?
4. What spiritual practice do you find most difficult and why?
5. What are realistic goals you can set to cultivate a deeper love and worship of Jesus?



Self Reflection

Spiritual Disciplines Individual Activity

There are many ways of describing the disciplines. They generally fall into two categories, abstinence and engagement, and it helps to exercise both types. Take some time to work through the following chart and assess where you are in each spiritual practice. It is a discipline, habit, rhythm, or regular part of your life?

D=Discipline > H=Habit > R=Rhythm > L=Life

Disciplines begin as duty. Duty becomes a habit. Habits become regular rhythms that feel natural and integrated into your life. Rhythms then become a means of experiencing full and abundant life.

Abstinence	D	H	R	L		D	H	R	L	Engagement
Solitude										Study
Silence										Worship
Fasting										Celebration
Simplicity										Service
Frugality										Prayer
Chastity										Fellowship
Secrecy										Confession
Sacrifice										Submission
										Meditation
										Guidance

Abstinence

"Abstain from sinful desires which War against your soul." 1 Peter 2:11

Engagement

"Persevere...because if you do, you will save both yourselves And your hearers." 1 Timothy 4:16

The disciplines of **abstinence** help us appropriately control areas of our life that can easily "take over." They do not imply that the issue at hand is wrong (food, sex, etc.) Rather, that in our obsessive and addictive world our enjoyment of them becomes distorted. We abstain to ensure that our focus and dependence in all things is on God.

The disciplines of engagement help us build positive activities that deepen our relationship with God.

**For Reflection/Coach:**

What would I find it hardest to abstain from and why?

Is there space in my life to practice any new disciplines of engagement? If not, why not?

Spiritual Disciplines Descriptions

From the "Spiritual Disciplines Index" at renovare.org (Excerpted from The Life with God Bible)

Abstinence

SOLITUDE: The creation of an open, empty space in our lives by purposefully abstaining from interaction with other human beings, so that, freed from competing loyalties, we can be found by God.

SILENCE: Closing off our souls from "sounds," whether noise, music, or words, so that we may better still the inner chatter and clatter of our noisy hearts and be increasingly attentive to God.

FASTING: The voluntary abstention from an otherwise normal function—most often eating—for the sake of intense spiritual activity.

SIMPLICITY/FRUGALITY: The inward reality of single-hearted focus upon God and his kingdom, which results in an outward lifestyle of modesty, openness, and unpretentiousness and which disciplines our hunger for status, glamour, and luxury.

CHASTITY: Purposefully turning away for a time from dwelling upon or engaging in the sexual dimension of our relationship to others—even our husband or wife—and thus learning how not to be governed by this powerful aspect of our life.

SECRECY: Consciously refraining from having our good deeds and qualities generally known, which, in turn, rightly disciplines our longing for recognition.

SACRIFICE: Deliberately forsaking the security of satisfying our own needs with our resources in the faith and hope that God will sustain us.



Engagement

STUDY: The intentional process of engaging the mind with the written and spoken Word of God and the world God has created in such a way that the mind takes on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates.

WORSHIP: Expressing in words, music, rituals, and silent adoration the greatness, beauty, and goodness of God, by means of which we enter the supernatural reality of the shekinah, or glory, of God.

CELEBRATION: Utter delight and joy in ourselves, our life, and our world as a result of our faith and confidence in God's greatness, beauty, and goodness.

SERVICE: Loving, thoughtful, active promotion of the good of others and the causes of God in our world, through which we experience the many little deaths of going beyond ourselves.

PRAYER: Interactive conversation with God about what we and God are thinking and doing together.

FELLOWSHIP: Engaging with other disciples in the common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service, which sustain our life together and enlarge our capacity to experience more of God.

CONFESSION: Sharing our deepest weaknesses and failures with God and trusted others, so that we may enter into God's grace and mercy and experience his ready forgiveness and healing.

SUBMISSION: Subordination to the guidance of God; within the Christian fellowship, a constant mutual subordination out of reverence for Christ, which opens the way for particular subordination to those who are qualified to direct our efforts toward Christlikeness and who then add the weight of their wise authority on the side of our willing spirit to help us do the things we would like to do and refrain from doing the things we don't want to do.

MEDITATION: Prayerful rumination upon God, his Word, and his world.

GUIDANCE: Experiencing an interactive friendship with God that gives direction and purpose to daily life.

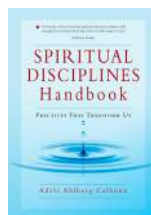


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on the practices of a leader.

Additional Resources

Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us

by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun



Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus Through the Spiritual Disciplines

by David Mathis

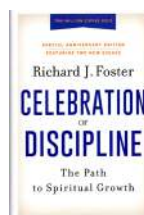
Free download at:

desiringgod.org/books/habits-of-grace



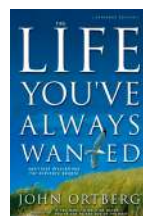
The Celebration of Discipline

by Richard Foster



The Life You've Always Wanted

by John Ortberg

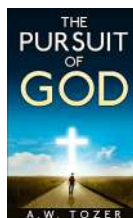


IF:Equip – Enjoying Jesus

ifequip.com/content/why-practice-spiritual-disciplines

The Pursuit of God

by A.W. Tozer





Priority of **the Gospel**

LESSON 5

Before you begin: Lesson 5

Here we begin part two of *Love Who You Lead* looking at the upward nature of community groups. Over the next three weeks you will explore the priority of the gospel, God’s Word, and prayer. Watch this video to hear more.

 Watch Section Introduction: **UP**

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the priority of the gospel. Our desire for all our groups at Grace is for them to be centered on the good news of Jesus Christ. As the leader it is your responsibility to help guide the group in ways that lead them to Jesus and all that he has done to rescue and redeem us. A group should constantly be looking for ways the gospel informs their everyday life and helping each other to live out of their gospel identity. The term “gospel fluency” is the term we have adopted to describe the nature and frequency of how we speak the gospel to ourselves and others in the everyday stuff of life. May this lesson help encourage and guide you to become more gospel fluent with your family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and group members.

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THE MOST TRANSFORMATIONAL WORD

Paul Tripp · Crossway

You are always preaching some kind of gospel to yourself. Every day you preach to yourself a gospel of your loneliness, inability, and lack of resources or you faithfully preach to yourself the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel you preach to yourself will have an enormous effect on what you desire, think, say, and do in your ministry.

If your ministry is to be all that God has ordained for it to be, you must live and minister out of a sure grasp of your identity as a child of God's freely given and personally transforming grace. That grace must stay fresh and exciting to you. It must be personally celebrated. It must never be allowed to be distant, technical, and merely academic. Grace must not only be something you consider theologically, it must also be something you live practically. In nurturing your own soul for ministry, you must considering and reconsider again and again the nature of the grace you have been given.

Unilateral and Radical

Grace is the most transformational word in Scripture. The entire Bible is a narrative of God's grace, a story of undeserved redemption. By the transformational power of his grace, God unilaterally reaches into the muck of this fallen world, through the presence of his Son, and radically transforms his children from what we are (sinners) into what we are becoming by his power (Christ-like). The famous John Newton hymn uses the best word possible for that grace: amazing.

So grace is a story, and grace is a gift. It is God's character, and it is your hope. Grace is a transforming tool and a state of relationship. Grace is a theology and an invitation. Grace is an experience and a calling. Grace will turn your life upside down while giving you a rest you have never known. Grace will convince you of your unworthiness without ever making you feel unloved.

Grace will make you acknowledge that you cannot earn God's favor, and it will remove your fear of not measuring up to his standards. Grace will confront you with the fact that you are much less than you thought you were, even as it assures you



that you can be far more than you had ever imagined. Grace will put you in your place without ever putting you down.

Grace will enable you to face truths about yourself that you have hesitated to consider, while freeing you from being self-consciously introspective. Grace will confront you with profound weaknesses, and at the same time introduce you to new-found strength. Grace will tell you what you aren't, while welcoming you to what you can now be. Grace will make you as uncomfortable as you have ever been, while offering you more comfort than you have ever known. Grace will drive you to the end of yourself, while it invites you to fresh starts and new beginnings. Grace will dash your hopes but never leave you hopeless. Grace will decimate your kingdom as it introduces you to a better King. Grace will expose your blindness as it gives you eyes to see. Grace will make you sadder than you have ever been, while it gives you greater cause for celebration than you have ever known.

Grace enters your life in a moment and will occupy you for eternity. You simply cannot live a productive life or have a productive ministry in this broken-down world unless you have a practical grasp of the grace you have been given.

So faithfully preach the gospel of grace to the people under your care, but start by preaching it daily to yourself, for the sake of your own soul and the ministry to which God has called you.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. What statement about grace most stood out to you?
2. How can you apply this statement to an area of your life where you need to experience God's grace?
3. What aspect of grace would be beneficial for someone you know and love to hear?
4. Are there any truths about yourself that you have hesitated to consider?
5. In what specific ways does the gospel of God's undeserved grace through Christ bring you comfort in your present circumstances?



Priority of the Gospel

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Believing the gospel with greater clarity and faith is the ongoing work of every follower of Jesus.

Gospel Power: The Power of God for Salvation

GOD | SAVES | SINNERS

"God—the Triune Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit; three Persons working together in sovereign wisdom, power and love to achieve the salvation of a chosen people, the Father electing, the Son fulfilling the Father's will by redeeming, the Spirit executing the purpose of Father and Son by renewing. Saves—does everything, first to last, that is involved in bringing men from death in sin to life in glory; plans, achieves and communicates redemption, calls and keeps, justifies, sanctifies, glorifies. Sinners—men as God finds them, guilty, vile, helpless, powerless, unable to lift a finger to do God's will or better their spiritual lot." -J.I. Packer

God's saving work transforms sinners in three ways:

1. Past: We have been saved from the penalty of sin
2. Present: We are being saved from the power of sin
3. Future: We will be saved from the presence of sin



Gospel People:

Gospel Purposes:

Gospel Practices:

Becoming Gospel Fluent

One: The Heart is the Target

Two: Everyone is an Unbeliever

Three: Lasting Fruit Comes from a Transformed Root

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. Explain the gospel in your own words.
2. Why is it significant that the gospel is first and foremost a message? What do you do with a message?
3. What aspect of the gospel are you most likely to forget or neglect--gospel power, people, purposes, or practices?
4. What is gospel fluency and how should this practice of speaking the gospel incorporate itself into your community group?
5. What is the difference between heart transformation and behavior modification? How do we lead people to heart transformation?



Self Reflection

Your Story

Write your story and practice it.

Origin

How was your family life? What shaped your life growing up (good or bad)?

Rebellion

Was there shame or guilt in your life because of how you grew up? Did you strive for perfection? What lie did you believe? What did you struggle with? Addictions to substance, approval, power, lust, etc.?



Jesus

Who shared with you about Jesus? Were you open to this information? If not, why? If yes, how did you respond? When did you know that you needed Jesus to forgive you of your sin and restore you to a right relationship with God?

Restoration

What does your life look like now because of Jesus? This can be challenges and celebrations. As sinners, every day is a struggle for obedience. Be real with that! Understand there is power for today, hope for tomorrow, and the promise of Jesus to bring to completion the work he began in you.



See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on the priority of the gospel.

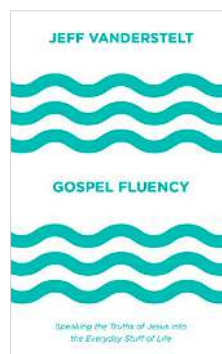
Additional Resources

Gospel Fluency

by Jeff Vanderstelt

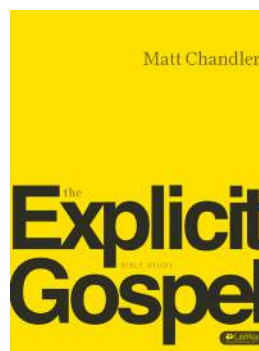
*For more on speaking and living out the gospel we encourage you to walk through an eight-week study on Gospel Fluency by Jeff Vanderstelt.

saturatetheworld.com/resource/gospel-fluency-handbook



The Explicit Gospel

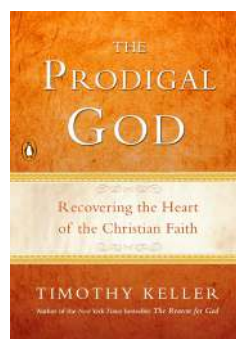
by Matt Chandler



The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart

of the Christian Faith

by Timothy Keller







Priority of **God's Word**

LESSON 6

Before you begin: Lesson 6

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the priority of God's Word. As groups gather they study the Word of God in order to know, worship, and respond in obedience to Christ. Scripture is central to the formation and identity of community groups. It is the way you will grow in your knowledge and love of God. It is the means by which you will experience transformation in your group as you encounter God by his Spirit and through his Word. God's Word is true, it is right, and it is good. Take the time to reaffirm these truths and apply the principles to your reading of Scripture.

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3 THINGS WE MUST BELIEVE ABOUT GOD'S WORD

Kevin DeYoung

Essentials

In Psalm 119 we see at least three essential, irreducible characteristics we should believe about God's word.

1. God's word says what is true.

Like the psalmist, we can trust in the word (v. 42), knowing that it is altogether true (v. 142). We can't trust everything we read on the Internet. We can't trust everything we hear from our professors. We certainly can't trust all the facts given by our politicians. We can't even trust the fact-checkers who check those facts! Statistics can be manipulated. Photographs can be faked. Magazine covers can be airbrushed. Our teachers, our friends, our science, our studies, even our eyes can deceive us. But the word of God is entirely true and always true:

God's word is firmly fixed in the heavens (v. 89); it doesn't change. There is no limit to its perfection (v. 96); it contains nothing corrupt. All God's righteous rules endure forever (v. 160); they never get old and never wear out.

If you ever think to yourself, "I need to know what is true— what is true about me, true about people, true about the world, true about the future, true about the past, true about the good life, and true about God," then come to God's word. It teaches only what is true: "*Sanctify them in the truth*," Jesus said; "*your word is truth*" (John 17:17).

2. God's word demands what is right.

The psalmist gladly acknowledges God's right to issue commands and humbly accepts that all these commands are right. "*I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous*," he says (Ps. 119:75). All God's commandments are sure (v. 86). All his precepts are right (v. 128). I sometimes hear Christians admit that they don't like what the Bible says, but since it's the Bible they have to obey it. On one level, this is an admirable example of submitting oneself to the word of God.

And yet, we should go one step further and learn to see the goodness and rightness



in all that God commands. We should love what God loves and delight in whatever he says. God does not lay down arbitrary rules. He does not give orders so that we might be restricted and miserable. He never requires what is impure, unloving, or unwise. His demands are always noble, always just, and always righteous.

3. God's word provides what is good.

According to Psalm 119, the word of God is the way of happiness (vv. 1–2), the way to avoid shame (v. 6), the way of safety (v. 9), and the way of good counsel (v. 24). The word gives us strength (v. 28) and hope (v. 43). It provides wisdom (vv. 98–100, 130) and shows us the way we should go (v. 105). God's verbal revelation, whether in spoken form in redemptive history or in the covenantal documents of redemptive history (i.e., the Bible), is unfailingly perfect. As the people of God, we believe the word of God can be trusted in every way to speak what is true, command what is right, and provide us with what is good.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. What aspects of God's Word do you have trouble trusting?
2. What do you need to study to better understand what is right and good about some of the more difficult teachings of God's Word?
3. How has God's Word led you to experience joy, peace, hope, and wisdom?
4. What scripture have you memorized or return to regularly for help and comfort?

This article is adapted from *Taking God At His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me* by Kevin DeYoung.



Priority of God's Word

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: God's Word is essential to knowing Him and growing in Christ.

What is God's Word?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21

²⁰... that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:12

¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God.



Why is God's Word important in my community group?

Four Reasons:

1. God's Word reveals His character, nature, and will.
2. God's word is our primary tool for growing in faith, for discipleship, and for equipping others to do the same.
3. God's word is the source for wisdom and guidance.
4. God's Word is the basis for fellowship and accountability.

What Do I Need to Do?

James 1:22

²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. In your experience, what components contribute to a healthy Bible study?
2. What about God's word is difficult for you to grasp or understand?
3. What intimidates you about leading others to study Scripture? What are ways you can work to overcome those obstacles?
4. What are some ways to help group members engage with a Bible study if they are intimidated or hesitant to participate?
5. How will you lead your group to be doers of the word and not hearers only? How will you help encourage your group time to be more than just the accumulation of Biblical knowledge?



Self Reflection

How Well Do You Know God's Word?

Our study of God's Word is a lifelong discipline. God's Word is living and active, and is a very relevant and present word for us today. We need to do all we can to study, understand, and hide God's Word in our hearts. Here are three strategies to reflect on and implement this year to become a better student of the Bible and worshiper of Jesus.

Know the Story:

The Bible is one story of God's mission to rescue people from sin, restore them to proper relationship with himself, and establish his glory on earth as it is in heaven.

The following resources will help you capture a better picture for God's redemptive plan in Scripture:

The Jesus Storybook Bible

by Sally Lloyd-Jones

The Story-Formed Way

saturatetheworld.com/resource/story-formed-way

Understand the Books:

Each book of the Bible is unique but part of the larger whole. The Bible is a collection of 66 books that form an entire story. Understanding each book and letter in its context is a significant part of understanding the Bible as a whole.

The Bible Project

thebibleproject.com

Read Scripture App:

This app provides you with a Bible reading plan in partnership with the Bible Project videos. Every time you begin a new book of the Bible you will be provided with a short video that will explain the overarching themes of the book and how it fits into the entire story of Scripture.



Memorize Scripture:

Memorizing Scripture and “hiding God’s Word in your heart” (Psalm 119:11), is central to our formation as followers of Jesus. Use the following suggestions to continue or begin a scripture memory plan.

1. Start small. Something is better than nothing — even if it’s spending just sixty seconds a day memorizing. You may not be able to run a marathon today, but could you walk a lap around the track — just a quarter-mile?
2. Choose a feasible plan. Here are three plans to consider.

First, you can memorize passages that others have helpfully collected, such as the Topical Memory System by the Navigators or Fighter Verses by Truth78. (My wife and children memorize Fighter Verses with our church. Some of our friends recorded the passages as songs to make them more memorable.)

Second, you can memorize a small book of the Bible (such as Ephesians, Philippians, or James) or a small portion of the Bible (such as Psalms 1–2, Matthew 5–7, Romans 8, or Revelation 21–22).

Third, you can memorize a collection of passages that produce delight, comfort, and awe or that help you fight a particular sin (such as anger, anxiety, bitterness, covetousness, impatience, joylessness, judgmentalism, laziness, lust, pride, or worldliness).

3. Stick with it. Set aside a small block of time every day to memorize the Bible, and don’t miss a day for 100 straight days. Be consistent. On average it takes about 66 days for a behavior to become automatic.
4. Memorize with someone else in your church. Team up with a friend or a group of friends in your church, and be accountable to each other as you memorize

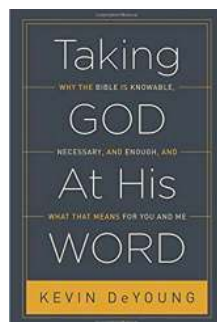


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on the priority of God's Word.

Additional Resources

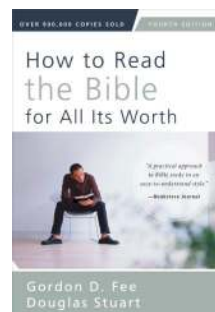
Taking God At His Word: Why the Bible is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me

Kevin DeYoung



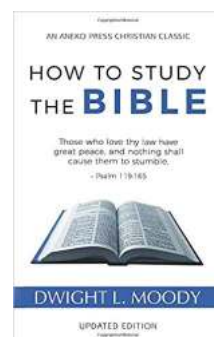
How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart



How to Study the Bible

Dwight L. Moody





Priority of **Prayer**

LESSON 7

Before you begin: Lesson 7

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the priority of prayer. As a community group leader your personal prayer life as well as your groups' engagement in prayer is critical to the health and vitality of your group. Prayer serves as the fuel for knowing God, loving each other, and engaging in mission. As you grow in prayer and make prayer a priority may you experience the presence and intimacy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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PRAYER FOR BEGINNERS

Marshall Segal · Staff Writer · desiringGod.org

How's your prayer life?

It's a simple question, but it can be tough to answer. Literally it sounds like, "How has your talking to God been lately?" Emotionally it might feel like, "Sum up your relationship with God at this point in your life." Bible reading, by comparison, is clearer and more "objective." How many pages? How far along in your plan? Which books have you been reading? What have you learned? Prayer doesn't fit into an Excel sheet quite as easily.

God means for your life — married or unmarried, student or employee, young or old — to run on the power of prayer. Prayer fuels the engine of your heart and mind. It's not coffee, or Chipotle, or social media buzz; it's prayer. You need God in and through prayer more than you need anything else. We will not do anything of any real and lasting value without God, which means we will not do anything of any real and lasting value without prayer.

And yet you probably feel as insecure about your prayer life as you feel about anything. Prayer might be, at the same time, the most pivotal and most puzzling activity in the Christian life. It is the lifeline and life-mystery for believers. We know we need to pray, but we know we don't pray enough. And we're not always sure we're even doing it right when we do pray. Should I even be asking God for this? Should I still be asking God for this? Do I even know what I need?

Conscious, Personal Communion

The Bible refuses to give us one small, simple picture or pattern for prayer. Jesus never intended for his model prayer (what we call "the Lord's Prayer") to be our only guide or counsel for prayer. It is a great place to start, but God's word gives us so much more material for our prayer lives.

Prayer is objectively real — a real God, real communication, real work, real answers. But it also comes in a million shapes and forms. Prayer happens in seconds — short moments in the cracks of our day — and it can happen for hours at a time, even throughout a whole night.



Prayer is conscious, personal communication with the God of the universe. A better question than “How’s your prayer life?” might be, “Have you been enjoying conscious communication with God — over his word, in your daily needs, throughout your day?” Has your relationship with him been real — not a box to check, not just a hurried place for help, not a vague abstract idea hovering over your head and life? Has your faith been tying you to him in your heart? Have you been leaning on him, and not yourself?

So how is your prayer life? If you (like me) are not happy or content with your answer, here are seven ways to grow in your time alone with our God.

1. Pick a time and place.

You can pray anytime and anywhere. Jesus met a woman beside a well who thought we all had to go to a particular place to pray and worship, as God’s people had prayed in the Old Testament (John 4:20). But Jesus says to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:21–23). No longer in a place, but in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).

The freedom to pray anywhere, though, often leads to praying nowhere. We should absolutely pray spontaneously whenever and wherever prayers arise in our hearts — during a break at work, before a test, in line with our groceries. But our lives are fueled by prayer, so we shouldn’t leave it up to spontaneity (we wouldn’t do that with fuel for our cars). Pick a consistent time and place when you can be alone. It might be in the morning at home, or during a long commute, or over your lunch break, or at a convenient time in the evening. The times and places can be different for different people — one of the stunning blessings Jesus bought — but it should still be consistent for you. And Jesus is clear that it should be consistently alone (Matthew 6:6) — not exclusively, but consistently.

2. Listen before you speak.

For some people, setting aside time to be alone with God is intimidating. In fact, for many today, any time alone at all — no friends, no television, no phones — is unnerving. We are speaking to almighty God here. He already knows everything we need and everything we are going to say. So what can we even say?

One important thing to learn early on about prayer is that it truly is a conversation. Just as God really does speak to us in his word, he is also really listening when we pray. It may just feel like journaling out loud at times, but there is always someone on the other side of prayer. Jesus promises, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7–8). A real Giver, a real Guide, a real Host.

On any given day, God may choose to move or “speak” in some unexpected way through his Spirit — bringing something to our mind, altering some circumstance,



saying something through a friend. But God has told us how he speaks, the only truly trustworthy way we hear his voice. “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (2 Timothy 3:16). Read something from the Bible (even just a verse) before you pray. Those words from God are “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” (Hebrews 4:12).

John Piper writes,

Oh, how precious is the Bible. It is the very word of God. In it God speaks in the twenty-first century. This is the very voice of God. By this voice, he speaks with absolute truth and personal force. By this voice, he reveals his all-surpassing beauty. By this voice, he reveals the deepest secrets of our hearts. No voice anywhere anytime can reach as deep or lift as high or carry as far as the voice of God that we hear in the Bible. (“The Morning I Heard the Voice of God”)

When you sit down to pray, let God speak first. Let him have the first word. Put his living and active words into your ears, and let them shape and inspire what you say back to him. If you learn something new about him and his ways, tell him. If the verses raise questions, ask him. Eventually, you can move on to today’s burdens, but begin by worshiping him over and through his word. Enjoy the relationship. With reverence and awe, be a son or a daughter, and listen well.

3. Prioritize the spiritual over the circumstantial.

Often when people ask how they can pray for me, I immediately try to assess if I have any unusual needs right now (like, this minute). If I don’t, I start to think about people close to me that do. “Pray for my co-worker whose dad passed away last week.” Or, “Pray for my grandmother who’s back in the hospital, again.” It’s not wrong by any means (we should be praying for these things, and asking others to pray, too). But if we take that mentality into prayer, we may only ever pray for physical or circumstantial needs. Physical needs are important, but they pale in comparison to our spiritual-emotional and eternal needs.

Paul says, “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Does that mean we will never have to worry about or spend time on our physical needs — food, work, cancer? Absolutely not. “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). It means life is mainly about unseen realities. At the end of each day, what matters most happens at the spiritual and emotional level, not the physical and circumstantial.

That reality should be lived out in our prayer lives. We should spend as much time praying for our souls, for the salvation of our loved ones, for the spread of the gospel, and for the establishment of God’s glory and his kingdom as we pray about anything. Those prayers shouldn’t be tacked on to the end of our “real” needs. They are our deepest and most enduring needs.



4. Don't be afraid to stop and pray now.

Prayer should be prioritized and scheduled, but the beauty of our newfound freedom and mercy in Christ is that prayer can happen anywhere. It should start alone with God in your prayer closet, but it never needs to stay there. It must not stay there. Bring prayer into the cracks of your day. And I don't just mean before meals. When you feel the impulse to pray, seize it. Take it as the prompting of the Spirit (Satan certainly won't encourage you to pray).

A few years ago, I saw a friend in passing. We caught up for a few minutes. At the end, I asked him if he would pray for something I had shared with him, assuming he would just take that request home with him. To my surprise, he responded, "Sure! Can we pray right now?" It felt awkward the first time, but I learned an important lesson. One way to ensure you do pray for someone and their need is to pray right there in the moment. It only takes a minute or two, and more than meeting a need, it draws you both Godward in the middle of a day. It can be a brief and unexpected (and needed) meeting with the Almighty.

5. Identify your prayer circles.

When I say "prayer circles," I'm not talking about circles of people that pray in a group, but concentric circles of people in your life. When it comes to praying for the needs around you, you will have to prioritize some people over others (at least consistently). Otherwise, you will do nothing but pray.

I pray outward in circles, beginning with my own soul, then for my wife, then for our families, then for our small group and our church, then for our nation, and lastly for the nations, especially the unreached in the world. I don't hit every ring every time, but the circles lead me as I pray each morning.

The rings should not keep us from praying for the random stranger we met yesterday. They're just meant to keep the consistent people in our life consistently before us in prayer. If prayer is the most important thing we can do for someone, shouldn't we structure our schedules to do that for the most important people in our lives?

Try praying through your circles. And be willing to pray for someone or something that doesn't quite fit.

6. Ask whatever you wish — literally anything.

If we're honest, many of us lack courage and imagination in our prayer lives. We have a tiny little box of routine things we're willing to ask God for, and we take on everything else — our questions, our frustrations, our dreams — on our own. We assume God's not interested in or doesn't have time for the small details of our day. And we can't even imagine him conquering global crises like 27 million in slavery and millions more enslaved to sin and headed to hell. And so we settle for middle-of-the-road mediocre requests. We wait to pray about something until it becomes



“serious enough” for God to care about, and we don’t pray for something unless we expect him to do something in the next 24 hours. And so we deprive ourselves of his mercy and power in massive areas of our life and world.

Do we have enough courage to pray that God would save the 136 million men and women in the Shaikh people group in Bangladesh? 0.00% Christian. Is that too big for God? “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (Genesis 18:14).

Do we have enough imagination to ask God to end sex-trafficking in India (and in Minneapolis)? We pray to a God “who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). Jesus says, “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain” — the sex-trafficking slave trade or an unreached people group of 120 million in Japan — “‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20). Will we believe Jesus and pray for big things?

Do we have enough faith to think God cares about another Monday morning at work or with the kids? God cares about everything in your heart and life, down to the very smallest things. Paul says, “Do not be anxious about anything” — your random conversation with that friend, your sleep tonight, this month’s budget — “but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). Anything and everything, every day. Don’t be afraid to pray big prayers, and small ones.

7. Be willing to ask one more time.

Jesus knew we would lose heart in prayer, specifically that we would pray for things for long enough that we would start to question if God was listening or might ever answer. But he didn’t want us to lose heart or give up. He wanted us to keep asking, keep pleading, keep praying. He tells his disciples a story about a widow seeking justice from a judge, “who neither feared God nor respected man.” She pled and pled with him.

Luke writes, For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, “Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.” And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?” (Luke 18:4–8)

The widow was rewarded for her persistence by an unrighteous judge. How much more will God listen to his precious sons and daughters who ask and ask and ask? If the unrighteous judge could not ignore her, how much more will our heavenly Father hear us?



Don't think now about praying for that need or desire for decades. Just focus on today. If God has given you a burden or a desire for another day, and you really believe that burden or desire might be from him, be willing to ask him one more time — one more prayer for relief, for reconciliation, for provision, for a breakthrough, for salvation. He's still listening. Are we still believing?

Jesus says, "Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:9–11)

He won't give you a stone. He won't give you a serpent. He loves you. He knows what's best for you. And he's listening. Don't be afraid to ask, again.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. How's your prayer life?
2. In what ways have you experienced satisfaction in your prayers?
3. In what ways have you experienced disappointment in your prayers?
4. What aspect of prayer do you tend to avoid?
5. In what ways do you hope to see your community group become more proficient in prayer?



Priority of Prayer

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Prayer is the fuel for our spiritual growth, communal unity, and missional engagement.

God's heart is that we have agreement and unity in our prayers. (Matt 18:20-21)

Pray with a clean heart (John 9:31)

Pray with the Holy Spirit's direction (1 Peter 3:8)

Pray in agreement with honesty and love - Ask God for love for those you pray with.



Pray God's will according to Scripture - Know the power of praying God's Word together. See James 4:3 and John 15:7.

Pray one subject at a time - You may want to pray back and forth on one topic until you are finished. Remember to stay

Pray with faith and confidence - Believe together that God hears and will answer your prayers. God can do anything. *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* (Genesis 18:14) (Hebrews 11:6).

Pray with perseverance and urgency (Matthew 15:21-28)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. How would you describe your prayer life?
2. What has been your experience praying in groups? What has been enjoyable and what do you find difficult?
3. What topics or subjects in the videos challenged your outlook on prayer?
4. What's one way you hope to grow your current or future group in corporate prayer?
5. How will you seek to grow in personal prayer?



Self Reflection

PERSONAL PRAYER ASSESSMENT

Take some time to reflect on how and what you pray for. Using the Lord’s Prayer as a guide, work through the following questions and identify areas of strength and areas of growth.

Matthew 6:5-13

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. ⁶But 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. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. ⁹Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Praise: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”

How often do you take time to praise God for who he is, not because of what he has done for you?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5

Do my prayers carry a tone of reverence and honor for God?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5



Mission: “...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

How often do I pray that God's kingdom would be more visible in our neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and churches?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5

How often do you pray for friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to come to saving faith in Jesus?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5

Provision and Thanks: “Give us this day our daily bread...”

When you make requests to God, how many of them could rightly be described as your daily needs?				
None		Some		All
1	2	3	4	5

How much of your prayer time is devoted to thanking God for the good things he has provided?				
None		Some		All
1	2	3	4	5



Confession and Repentance: “...and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”

What role does the confession of sin play in your prayer times?				
Minor		Medium		Major
1	2	3	4	5

How often do you seek to forgive others in your prayers?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5

Protection: “And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”

How often do you talk to God about areas of temptation?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5

How often do you pray against the powers of evil in the world?				
Never		Sometimes		Often
1	2	3	4	5



See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on the priority of prayer.

Additional Resources

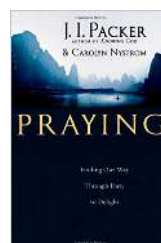
How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People

by Pete Greig



Praying: Finding Our Way Through Duty to Delight

by J. I. Packer and Carol Nystrom



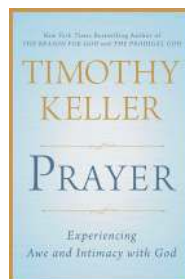
A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World

by Paul E. Miller



Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God

by Timothy Keller





Compelling **Community**

LESSON 8

Before you begin: Lesson 8

This lesson begins a three week study on the inward nature of community groups. Week's eight, nine, and ten discuss how a group grows in unity, belonging, and care for one another. It is the inward love between brothers and sisters in Christ that communicates to the world that we belong to Jesus.

 Watch Section Introduction: **IN**

Summary:

In this lesson you will learn about the power and beauty of Christian community. Every group should strive to achieve the type of love and unity in Christ that is attractive and compelling to those who are not yet a part of the family of faith. When we grow as a community that is committed, captured, and contagious, we will discover the purpose and beauty for which God created the family of faith.

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CAPTURED. COMMITTED. CONTAGIOUS

MARKS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Marshall Segal · Staff Writer · desiringGod.org

A new year is a unique time to stop and assess our community — our church, our small [community] group, our circle of friends. Have I found the believers I need to help me believe (Hebrews 3:12–13)? Am I making the most of those relationships (Hebrews 10:24)? Do unbelievers see us living together for something beyond this world (John 13:35)?

Six verses have shaped my vision for community in the local church more than most. They paint a vivid picture of what marked the very first church — what held those believers together after Jesus left them here on earth, what inspired them to leave everything behind for his sake, and what sustained them in the face of horrible opposition and persecution.

Acts 2:42–47 describes this community of faith for the sake of our Christian communities today. The passage is short enough to memorize, and yet big enough to shape years, even decades, of life in the local church, and captures for us at least four markings of true Christian community.

1. Relentless Devotion, Not Casual Indifference

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. . . . And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts. (Acts 2:42, 46)

Devoted. Perhaps it is easy for you to find churches meeting weekly or more, even within a couple miles of your home, but how many of our churches are marked by this kind of passionate devotion to God's word and to one another? This was not just faithful attendance or reliable, spiritual routine. It was relentless joy and love — together.

What were they devoted to? To the Scriptures and to their fellowship (Acts 2:42). Not devoted like we might be devoted to a New Year's resolution, but like we are devoted to eating food and drinking water each day. They were daily devoted to



God's word and to each other like their lives depended on it, because they did depend on it.

Is your community committed like theirs?

2. Heartfelt Affection, Not Bored Formality

What happened as they devoted themselves to the Bible and to one another? *"Awe came upon every soul"* (Acts 2:43). Do you think of evangelism like it's an academic lecture or marketing pitch, trying desperately to persuade a nonbeliever to surrender and agree with us? Something different was happening in this tiny and fragile church: awe.

Awe overwhelms the mind to get to the heart. It must take the mind first. No feeling or emotion leads to real life or joy if it is not based on the truth about you and about God (Romans 10:2). Christianity, though, is not simply about getting the truth right, but about having the truth capture our hearts. If we are not fascinated with this Christ, we can hardly claim to know him.

Too many of us in too many of our churches settle for rehearsing the same truths over and over again — in singing and preaching and discussing — without expecting to be moved by God again. But awe is not only the experience of conversion, but of day-in, day-out faith in community. As we watch God move over and over — for one another and in one another — our hearts awaken in wonder again.

Is your community still moved by God?

3. Sacrificial Generosity, Not Selfish Ambition

The Christians in that first church were captured by a vibrant, dynamic, and personal vision of God, but that did not keep them from focusing on one another. They did not have to choose between being a church going hard after the God seated in heaven and a church dedicated to the needs around them here on earth. *"All who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need"* (Acts 2:44–45).

Christianity did not isolate believers to focus exclusively on their own relationship with Jesus, but made each believer another vital vein in the body of Christ — each of them carrying what others need from God to the one in need.

God promises to meet our every need (Matthew 6:25–33), and many times (if not most often) he meets our needs through another believer. He gifts each of us, not for self-expression or self-fulfillment, but to fill what is lacking in someone else by meeting genuine needs. God has given each of us grace that was not meant to end with us, but to extend to someone else (1 Peter 4:10). But without selfless and sacrificial compassion, grace ends up in storage, not in action.



The first Christians felt so secure in God's promises that they let go of all they had to help one another. To the watching world, it was unexplainably selfless and foolishly generous. As happened later in Macedonia, "*in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity*" (2 Corinthians 8:2). Joy faced with need always looks like compassion and sacrifice. In short, it looks like the cross (Hebrews 12:2; 1 John 4:9–11).

Is your community radically selfless and generous toward one another?

4. Contagious Joy, Not Secluded Cliques

When I think about my church and my small group, though, the sentence that haunts and inspires me most is the last one in this paragraph: "*And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved*" (Acts 2:47). All the devotion and affection and compassion became irresistibly contagious.

We do not measure our community strictly in numbers, because only God gives the growth, not us (1 Corinthians 3:7). But we should measure ourselves in part by whether he's giving the growth at all. If our Christian community is committed, but not compelling to anyone, we should be asking serious questions about what we're committed to.

Every single church in the world has a mission statement direct from our Lord himself: "*Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*" (Matthew 28:19–20). God didn't mean for some of us to make disciples and others to do other kinds of ministry. Every Christian and every Christian community is called to win the lost and build into Christian maturity. God intends to make every genuine expression of true love, joy, and worship contagious. Is your community consistently making disciples?

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. How will you help your group become more devoted to God's Word?
2. In what ways can you help your community group meet each other's needs?
3. How will your group seek to make disciples and reach the lost?



Compelling Community

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: God's community is compelling when His adopted children function as the extended and diverse family of God, loving one another as they have been loved by Christ

"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. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." -John 13:34-35

"We've been given the covenant community because we need each other, and together we'll be more mature, experience more life, and know more joy than we ever would apart from each other" -"The Explicit Gospel" Matt Chandler

"⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." -Acts 2:42-47



"Such drawing people in does not replace the church--it brings the church to the people. It meets people with gospel grace where they are. It leaves them yearning for more." -**Rosaria Butterfield**

Ideas for Cultivating Compelling Community

- **Keep Your House Built on the Rock** – as a leader and as a group, be in the Word, speak the gospel and be in prayer for and with each other.
- **Go Beyond the Ordinary** – the type of inwardly compelling community that God desires is one that is intimate and filled with authentic love.
 - Share your stories with each other
 - Care for each other (understanding needs and being there in times of need)
 - Get to know the less known things (hopes/dreams/struggles/fun stuff)
 - Enjoy being together (always talking about the group, enjoying sharing a meal)
- **Be Creatively Visible**
 - Serving others together
 - Reaching out to others (including those who are different)
 - Location – try something new or unexpected.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. What's the most authentic Christian community you have experienced? What qualities made it feel genuine?
2. What makes Christian community compelling?
3. What tends to be the biggest obstacle to experiencing compelling Christian community?
4. What does it look like to treat other believers like family?
5. How do you position your community group to welcome others and be a visible gospel community to non-Christians?



Self Reflection

How are Your Listening Skills?

11 Ways That Active Listening Can Help Your Relationships

Put active listening together with empathy to improve your relationships

AEL: Active Empathetic Listening Measure has 11 key items that indicate how well you sense, process, and respond when you listen to a communication partner.

(Active listening is only part of the skills. **Active empathetic listening** shows that you also understand what's going on inside the mind of the speaker as if you were that person. When you're empathically listening, you do more than hear, you show that you know how the other person feels. (Being an empathic listener means you never drift off into la-la land, and your face doesn't assume that of a computer in sleep mode.)

The 3 stages of AEL involve sensing, processing and responding in empathic ways.

Sensing stage: taking in outward and inward features of other person's communication. You understand not only what is said, but how it is said.

Processing stage: You put the pieces of the conversation together to construct a "narrative whole".

Responding stage: You ask questions to make sure you understand what the person is saying. You show verbally and non verbally that you are paying attention to the speaker.

Sensing:

1. How sensitive are you to what others are saying?
2. Are you aware of what others imply but do not say?
3. Do you understand how others feel?
4. Do you listen for more than the spoken words?

Processing:

1. Do you assure that you'll remember what they say?
2. Do you summarize points of agreement and disagreement when appropriate?
3. Do you keep track of the points that others make?

Responding:

1. Do you assure others that you're listening by verbal acknowledgements?
2. Do you assure others that you're receptive to their ideas?
3. Do you ask questions that show you understand others' positions?
4. Do you show others that you're listening by your body language?

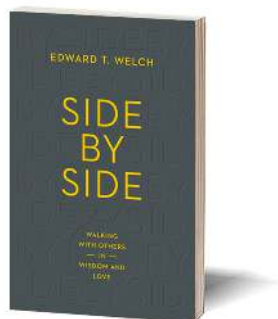


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on compelling community.

Additional Resources

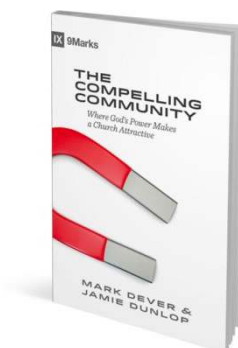
Side by Side: Walking With Others in Wisdom and Love

by Edward Welch



The Compelling Community: Where God's Power Makes a Church Attractive

by Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop



Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life

by Jeff Vanderstelt





Conflicted **Community**

LESSON 9

Before you begin: Lesson 9

Summary:

There is no perfect community. In this lesson you will learn about the conflicted community and how the only path to true community is one that traverses conflict and relational difficulty. Although compelling community is the goal, a conflicted community is the reality that must be acknowledged and embraced in order to reach greater levels of unity and love in Christ.

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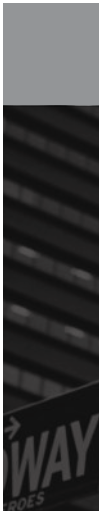
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CONFLICT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GRACE

David Mathis · Executive Editor · desiringGod.org

You know the feeling. The sour taste in your mouth. The heavy feeling in your heart. That unpleasant aura of conflict that everything in you wants to avoid.

It's so much easier to talk about nice things, and comment on the weather and the playoffs, than to embrace the awkward moment and actually address the elephant in the room.

We're quick to believe the lie that if we just avoid the conflict, or at least minimize it, then it will diminish over time and eventually go away. But wisdom speaks a different word. Sure, there are offenses we can forebear and personal frustrations we can get over, but interpersonal conflict doesn't go away with inattention. It festers. It deepens. It curdles.

Conflict Is Inevitable

Relational conflict is not something that should surprise us as Christians. We need not be ashamed that it exists, and that we're involved. We should expect it. The world is complicated and fallen, and we are complicated creatures, and fallen. Conflicts will come. They are unavoidable.

And yes, conflict is inevitable in the church as well. Christians often have conflict with each other — true, genuine, faithful Christians. The question is not whether conflicts will come, but how we will handle them.

In the healthiest churches, the leadership doesn't announce, "There will be no conflicts here; that's not how we do things." Rather, the message will be that when conflicts do arise, we won't run from them. We won't neglect to address them head-on. We can't afford not to.

Occasion for Grace

One reason that avoiding conflict is such a problem is precisely because it worsens with negligence. It doesn't just go away.



But another reason is that it cuts us off from the most significant opportunities for grace. This is the way God does his deepest work in a world like ours. Not when things are peachy keen, not when all seems right with the world, not when times are easy. It's the toughest times, the hardest conversations, the most painful relational tensions, when the light of his grace shines brightest, and transforms us most into his Son's likeness.

The highpoints of the history of God's people are accounts not of fleeing conflict, but moving toward it in hope, believing God will be at work in the tension, pain, and mess. Such is the story of the prophets — Moses with the stubborn people he refused to give up on; Elijah at Carmel squaring off against Baal; the embattled Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel brought into increasing conflict, seemingly at every oracle, with a hard-hearted people they were commissioned to serve.

And so it was with the apostles. When tensions emerged in the fledgling church between Hebrews and Greeks, they dealt with disunity quickly and did not let it fester. God had a gift to give these young believers in Acts 6 — seven newly appointed leaders to serve the people's needs — and it came not through shying away from conflict, but through straightforwardly tackling their troubles. And when conflict arose again along the same fault lines, this time over circumcision, the apostle Paul didn't avoid or neglect it, but traveled to Jerusalem to address it in person (Acts 15:2).

For Gospel Advance

Then, when Peter's lapse in judgment at Antioch separated him from Gentile believers, "fearing the circumcision party" (Galatians 2:12), again Paul moved toward the conflict, not away. "I opposed him to his face," he said (Galatians 2:11), and with it, Peter and the gospel witness in Antioch were restored.

The life of Paul, we might say, became a series of one conflict after another — and each one a catalyst for the ongoing progress of grace. He wrote to the Philippians about *"the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have"* (Philippians 1:30) — a conflict, which he says, *"really served to advance the gospel"* (Philippians 1:12).

And he recounted to the Thessalonians how not cowering from conflict was essential to the gospel coming to them. *"Though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict"* (1 Thessalonians 2:2). His thirteen letters are a tribute to the fact that he wasn't afraid to address emerging conflict and see what good God had in store for his people in it.

The Pattern of Christ

And of course, our most compelling emblem of not shying away from conflict, but turning to take it head-on, is the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy



that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2).

The trajectory of Jesus's life was toward need, and inevitably toward conflict, not away. He set his face like flint to go to Jerusalem, to the great conflict at Calvary, to rescue us from our greatest conflict, eternal separation from God because of the rebellion of our sin against him.

And so being saved by him, we Christians, “little christs,” learn increasingly to follow in his steps, empowered by his Spirit, to move toward conflict, toward need, toward pain, toward tension, looking past the imposing awkwardness and difficulty that lies before us to the promise of joy on the other side.

The Lord's Servant in Conflict

Which doesn't mean we become bull-headed and pugnacious and develop a penchant for a good fight. Rather, our gospel-thickened skin frees us to lean in — with kindness, patience, and gentleness — to the caldrons of conflict that would otherwise send us running. We take on the heart and posture of “*the Lord's servant*” who “*must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness*” (2 Timothy 2:24–25).

And as we consider that hard and scary conversation that needs to happen — to gently remove the speck from our brother's eye, to address the elephant in the room — we acknowledge our weakness. In ourselves, we are unable to address this conflict with intentionality and kindness. But this we couple with a prayer for his strength. And we move forward in faith, knowing that if tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword cannot separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35), then neither can conflict. No matter how tense. No matter how intimidating.

For the Christian, conflict is not something to avoid or ignore. It is an opportunity for the triumph of grace.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. Describe a time when you found conflict to be an occasion for grace.
2. What are your fears when confronting conflict?
3. When, as a result of ignoring conflict, did the problem escalate?
4. What are the ingredients to healthy conflict resolution?



Conflicted Community

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Relationships are a mess worth making.

Four Stages of Community, Scott Peck

One: Pseudocommunity

Two: Chaos

Three: Emptiness

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 *"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 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."*

Four: True Community

**Practical ways to navigate and rebuild damaged relationships:**

1. Sometimes, you need to let the small things go.
2. Start with a prayer. Ask God for humility, an open spirit, and to reveal the blind spots in others as well as yourself.
3. You need to know what to address and how to address it:
 - Timing is everything; don't react in the heat of the moment, but don't let too much time pass either.
 - Approach the situation with an open mind, asking questions to see perspective.
 - Listen. Listen without agenda or motive. Just listen.
 - Admit and own your part in the conflict.
 - Don't rush. Sometimes, things take time. You cannot force resolution.
 - Encourage people to not give up
 - Know that you can't change a person
 - Avoid actions or words that will escalate the situation.
 - Be open to an alternative resolution

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. How do you typically deal with conflict?
2. Describe a time where you engaged relational conflict and experienced a positive outcome. What were the factors that led to a healthy result?
3. Share about a time when you were not able to resolve conflict?
4. Sylvia offered some advice on how to enter into a difficult conversation with wisdom and love. What step will be the most difficult for you?
5. What will it take as a leader to lead your community group from pseudocommunity to true community?



Self Reflection

Who are you in conflict?

Are you a peace-breaker? A peace-faker? Or a peace-maker? Is your pattern fight, flight or face it for the sake of relationship?¹

A peace-breaker attacks. The goal: to win at all costs. He must win to be OK. Finger-pointing, fists, accusation, assault – whatever it takes. "I'll slander you, sue you, smack you down if need be."

In what ways have you been or continue to be a peace-breaker?

A peace-faker avoids. The goal: escape at all costs. She must escape to be OK. She ignores, denies and runs. "Problem? What problem? I'm fine!" "Don't bring it up. I don't want any trouble. I just won't go back." Sometimes the peace-faker, when backed into a corner, moves from flight to fight. Peace-fakers are often skilled at 'sniping from the bushes': the cold shoulder, the subtle, snide comment, followed by, "Everything's fine!".

In what ways have you been or continue to be a peace-faker?



A peace-maker engages conflict with love and humble boldness. The goal: relationship. The peace-maker understands that things may get worse before they get better as we get real about our issues, as we address our problems in relationship. Things may get scary and messy. But the peace-making heart says, "My passion is to defeat the problem, not you, to restore and deepen relationship."

In what ways are you seeking to grow as a peace-maker?

Jesus is the ultimate peace-maker. He did not come to earth to destroy us but to destroy the barriers to our relationship with God – our sin, self-centeredness and Satan. His goal: relationship at ultimate cost – His life. Jesus also addresses our barriers to relationship – self-centeredness, idolatry and destructive patterns. He calls us to confess them and turn from them to Him. His goal: relationship.

We can trust Him to guide and empower us as we navigate the hard, rewarding path of the peacemaker.

¹Credit goes to Peacemaker Ministries (peacemaker.net) for many of the concepts in this article.

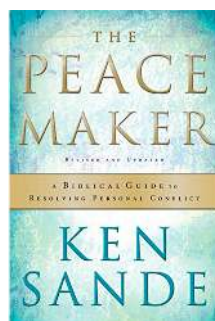


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on conflicted community.

Additional Resources

The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict

by Ken Sande



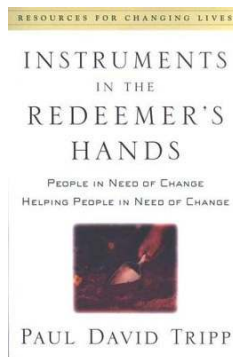
Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling Our Conflicts

by Robert D. Jones



Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change

by Paul David Tripp





Competent **Community**

LESSON 10

Before you begin: Lesson 10

Summary:

Every community works best when all the members are committed and contributing to the health and success of the group. In this lesson you will learn about the nature and function of the five-fold gifts outlined in Ephesians 4:11-12. The goal is to work toward a community that functions as a cohesive whole with all the members contributing, using their gifts, and sharing leadership.

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THE BEST WAY TO FIND GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR GIFTS

Jon Bloom · Staff Writer · desiringGod.org

Let's imagine, for the sake of illustration, that you're not very familiar with fish (perhaps you don't have to imagine). And you've agreed to participate in an experiment where you're asked to identify whatever is placed before you. You don't know it, but you're about to view anatomical parts of a largemouth bass.

First comes the translucent green pectoral fin in a petri dish. You look at it and answer, "Is it some kind of leaf?" Next comes the slimy swim bladder. "Gross! I'm guessing it's some small animal's intestine or something." Next comes a red piece of gill tissue. "I have no idea what that is!"

Now, had you viewed these parts in the context of the fish's body, you'd grasp to some degree their importance in helping the fish function properly. But taken out of the context of the body, the parts make little sense. It takes the fish's body to understand the function of a part and it takes all the parts to make a fish function. "*So it is with Christ*" (1 Corinthians 12:12). Each of us is a part of the body of Christ and has a particular function. But it takes the body of Christ to understand the function of a part and it takes all the parts to make the body function.

Designed to Depend

If you're struggling to figure out how God wants to use you, one possibility is that you're examining yourself out of context, isolated in a petri dish, so to speak.

This is essentially the way we in the West (especially in the United States) are trained to see ourselves. Perhaps more than at any other time in history, our culture understands individuals as autonomous units rather than interdependent parts of a larger social organism.

Today, we largely view interdependence on others as optional, not necessary — partly due to our nearly sacred cultural value of individual liberty, and partly due to all the technological advancements that enable us to pursue it in unprecedented ways. We're free to voluntarily associate, and free to go it alone. Interdependence on others is only really necessary on the meta-scale, where we need large-scale



systems to distribute things like food, clothing, and energy, or facilitate things like mass communication, mass transportation, government, and finance.

As a result, when it comes to determining how each of us should use our time, abilities, resources, and relationships, we primarily assess them based on how these things will advance our individual goals and dreams or cater to our individual preferences. In the abstract, we think working toward the common good is a good thing. But in the concrete world of day-to-day life, we see ourselves as independent, autonomous bodies, and so the individual good is the best thing.

But there's a problem: we aren't designed to be billions of independent, autonomous bodies primarily doing our own thing. God designed us to be interdependent body parts that contribute to the healthy functioning of a larger social body.

So if we conceive of the purpose of our lives as primarily an individual pursuit of happiness, it's no wonder we can find discerning where God wants us to invest our lives illusive and perplexing. It's like a pectoral fin or swim bladder or gill tissue trying to figure out in the petri dish what it should do. Body parts don't make sense, much less function right, apart from the body.

Where Your Life Is Meant to Make Sense

That's what 1 Corinthians 12 (and 13 and 14) is all about. Paul writes,

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

We aren't each individual bodies of Christ. We collectively "*are the body of Christ and individually members of it*" (1 Corinthians 12:27). Our lives are meant to make sense in the context of the body of Christ because each of us has a God-given function to perform — a function that is interdependent on other functioning parts.

Christ's body is the primary context in which God intends for our unique gifts and kingdom callings to be revealed, confirmed, and engaged. And what Paul primarily has in mind by "*Christ's body*" in 1 Corinthians 12 is our local church.

Millennia before there were tests for profiling our personalities, finding our strengths, or identifying our spiritual gifts, there was the local church, where each member was "*given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*" (1 Corinthians 12:7). That's what the spiritual gifts — both more supernatural gifts (like miracles and healing) and more constitutional gifts (like administrating and helps) — are for: the common good of the expression of Christ's body we belong to. God eventually calls a few of us to serve broader portions of Christ's body in various ways. And he calls some of us to isolated situations, like remote church planting, frontier missions, and imprisonment — where "body life," at least for a while, doesn't look or feel typical. But like Paul and the church in Antioch, such callings are meant



to be confirmed in, commissioned by, and accountable to our local church body, if at all possible.

Like every thing else in our defective world, there are exceptions — diseased local churches that aren't facilitating a healthy body made up of interdependent members. Sometimes God calls us to be agents of improved health for such a body, and sometimes he directs us to find a healthier body.

And, of course, no church does "body life" perfectly because they're all comprised of imperfect people, like us. But nonetheless, the local church is God's bodily provision for us, the context where our lives are meant to make sense.

Where Do You Look for God's Direction?

Understanding ourselves and each other as interdependent members of a corporate body is very different from what we've learned from our culture. And even though we might be very familiar with 1 Corinthians 12, and abstractly admire Paul's "body" analogy as a theological concept, it does not mean we've internalized it and that it's shaping and governing us.

We can tell what understanding of ourselves and others shapes and governs us by how we answer this question: Where do we look for God's direction on how we should use our giftings? Do we see this as primarily an individual quest for self-actualization, or are we looking for it in the context of Christ's body as we seek to meet the needs of others? Most of us Americans naturally gravitate to the former, and we must relearn to seek for it in the latter.

And there is no neat-and-clean formula. It's not fast, like a test. It happens in the messiness of the life of the body. But if we fixate less on our particular part and more on the good of others and the common good of the larger body, God will faithfully show us what members we are. That's God's design. Pursue love (1 Corinthians 14:1), and we will discover his will for us. Seek first the kingdom, and all we need will be provided (Matthew 6:33).

It takes the body of Christ to understand the function of a part, and it takes all the parts to make the body function.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. In what ways has God used you to contribute to the building up of the body of Christ?
2. Where have you received direction or affirmation from other Christians when using or discovering your gifts?
3. How can you help others within your community group to identify their gifts and use them for the benefit of your group?



Competent Community

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: The Competent Community recognizes the giftedness of its members and seeks to honor the unique contribution that each member makes toward unity and strength within the group.

"¹¹And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," -Ephesians 4:11-12

- **Apostle:** Innovate and Inspire: Catalysts who start new works and invite others to join God's redemptive work. They are pioneers, helping cultivate a thriving environment and helping people discover and live out their calling.
- **Prophet:** Expose and Embody: Expose what is false and help people live under God's authority. They often have a passion for social justice and helping people find freedom from sin.
- **Evangelist:** Invite and Excite: Have a passion to share God's story and invite people into His kingdom.
- **Shepherd:** Guard and Guide: Seek to nurture others, protect people from harm, and cultivate healing among the hurting and broken
- **Teacher:** Interpret and Inform: Gather knowledge, pass on wisdom, and help people understand and apply God's Word.

"A competent community builds on the gifts of its people. It knows that a gift is not a gift until it is given. Before it is given, it is only a beautifully wrapped box in a drawer. It is a capacity held in exile. Gifts need to be named and exchanged, not only to create a competent community, but also to create a functioning family."

-John McKnight and Peter Block



COMPONENTS TO A COMPETENT COMMUNITY

A Common Mission: Group Covenant and Mission Statement

Openness and Vulnerability: Unity built on honesty and vulnerability

Consistent Gatherings:

Hebrews 10:24-25: ²⁴*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not 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*

Remember the Rhythms of a Community group

- Life on Life
- Life in Community
- Life on Mission

Time and Patience: No group arrives at these things overnight.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. Which expression of gifts do you most identify with and why? Apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, or teacher?
2. What are some ways you can share leadership in your community group?
3. In what specific ways do you sense God's leading you and your group on mission? What next steps can you take to communicate this to your group?
4. How can you create a culture of vulnerability and honesty in your group?
5. What rhythms have you established or hope to establish in your gatherings as a group? How are you integrating life on life, life in community, and life on mission in your community group?



Self Reflection

The APEST Vocational Assessment

Take the APEST Vocational Assessment and learn your area of motivation and expression of the 5 fold model of ministry.

APEST is a ministry assessment emerging from the most comprehensive statement of ministry structure, that of Ephesians 4:7,11-12. Within this passage we find the fivefold ministry of APEST: apostolic, prophetic, evangelist, shepherd and teacher; But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it is he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherd and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

You can find the assessment at: <https://5qcentral.com/product/apest-vocational-assessment>

Email cynthia.considine@gcconline.org for an access code to take the assessment.

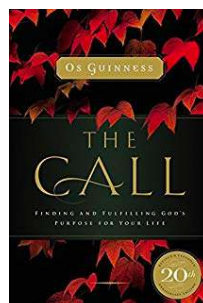
When you have finished the assessment discuss the results with your coach.



See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on competent community.

Additional Resources

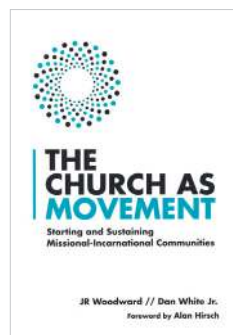
The Call: Finding and Fulfilling God's Purpose For Your Life
by Os Guinness



More: Find Your Personal Calling and Live Life to the Fullest Measure
by Todd Wilson



The Church as Movement: Starting and Sustaining Missional-Incarnational Communities
by JR Woodward







Discipleship and **Disciple Making**

LESSON 11

Before you begin: Lesson 11

This lesson begins the section on the outward nature of community groups. Lessons eleven, twelve, and thirteen will explore how a community group makes disciples, moves toward the lost, and seeks to grow and multiply as a group. *Out* is about joining God's mission with a group of other believers.

 Watch Section Introduction: **OUT**

Summary:

Community Groups are a primary vehicle for discipleship. The rhythms of your group will provide the context for discipleship as you engage in life of life, life in community, and life on mission. All three areas are central to our calling as disciples and disciple makers. You will grow as you learn from others and work toward teaching, serving and giving to others as well. May you continue to grow as a disciple and a disciple maker.

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MAKE DISCIPLES

LIFE-CHANGING MINISTRY OF WHY

Marshall Segal · Staff Writer · desiringGod.org

Following Christ means making disciples. His words echo in the back of our minds, “*Go therefore and make disciples . . .*” (Matthew 28:19). Not first and foremost “have daily devotions” or “give to the poor,” but make disciples. We don’t become a Christian by making disciples, but once we are in Christ, few things come closer to capturing the heart of our calling while we’re still here on earth.

The reality, though, is that we have always been involved in disciple-making, even from birth — just not always disciple-making for Jesus. You are a disciple. The question is: Who are you following? You have disciples. The question is: How are you influencing the people watching you?

Every one of us — young or old, American, African, or Asian, believer or unbeliever — is engaged in some form of discipleship. Every one of us follows someone, and every one of us carries significant influence over someone else. As Mark Dever writes in his book on disciple-making, “To be human is to be a disciple. God didn’t present Adam and Eve with a choice between discipleship and independence, but between following him and following Satan. We are all disciples; the only question is, of whom?” (44).

Christian disciple-making — or “discipling,” as Dever refers to it — wields the universal human patterns of influence, modeling, and formation for the fame of Jesus.

Not All Teachers, But All Teach

What is discipling? Dever says, “At its core, discipling is teaching.” He goes on, “Your discipling should help people understand more. . . . Through discipling, you want people to know why Christians pray, why we share the gospel, why we join the church, why knowledge of God’s sovereignty impacts how we live, and more” (83).

Discipling is a ministry of how, but it should be even more so a ministry of why. Discipling others absolutely involves modeling faith and godliness with our lives (Philippians 3:17), but effective discipling also imparts the reasons for believing in



and living for Jesus (2 Timothy 2:2).

Anyone can imitate Christianity for a while without any real conviction, but that kind of “faith” won’t last, and won’t save. The younger men and women looking up to us need the truths we believe — the truths behind how we live — far more than they need a good example to follow. You can never teach anyone all the how’s, but when you teach them the why’s, you prepare them to exercise wisdom and generate their own how’s long into the future.

To be clear, it matters how our disciples live (Hebrews 12:14), and we should be training them to live rightly before God (Matthew 28:20), but it will not matter how they live if their lives are not shaped and motivated by the word of God and his gospel. All discipling should involve teaching — stopping to tell those over whom we have influence why we believe what we believe and why we live like we live. Discipling doesn’t just walk them around the car; it pops the hood and shows them the engine.

Five Things Love Does

In discipling, we model and teach toward a deeper love for and obedience to Christ. The engine of our discipling, though, runs on love. Without love, all our effort, intentionality, and strategies are as nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). Attempting to disciple others apart from growing and overflowing love may look virtuous, even heroic, but it will eventually wear thin and run out. If we try to disciple without love, we may help others look like Christians, but we’ll lack what they need most: a new heart filled with real affection and devotion.

I’m not mainly thinking of our love for the various people in our lives. Dever warns, “Ultimately, our toil and labor cannot root in our love for them or their love for us. It must root in our love for Christ, his love for us, and his love for them” (33). We won’t find the well we need in discipling somewhere deep inside ourselves. We must draw from a deeper, fuller, living well of grace, truth, and love.

Are your discipling relationships — with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and so on — marked by real, genuine love? Dever offers five characteristics of true love in these relationships. I’ve added questions to help them serve as ways to test our own hearts in our efforts to disciple others.

1. “Love initiates a discipling relationship.”

- Am I willing to initiate intentional time together with this person?
- Beyond starting the relationship, will I bring up the hard conversation we need to have?
- Am I bold enough to consistently move our conversation to spiritual things?



2. “Love perseveres in a discipling relationship.”

- Am I ready to keep calling after months of seeing little fruit or progress?
- Will I give up if this person falls back into an old pattern of sin?
- How will I respond to the inconveniences in this relationship?

3. “Love humbly receives criticism that often comes in a discipling relationship.”

- How do I respond to criticism or opposition in general — with humility or pride?
- Specifically, what will I feel or say when this person pushes back on what I’m teaching them?
- What healthy ways am I encouraging give-and-take in this relationship?

4. “Love humbly gives of itself in a discipling relationship.”

- What sacrifices am I making to spend time discipling this person?
- Do I tend to feel bitter or prideful about the sacrifices I make for others?
- Jesus says, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). Can I say the same?

5. “Love allows us to end discipling relationships.”

Dever helpfully unpacks this last statement about love, “We need a love that humbles us enough to recognize that what they need is not us, but God, and that God can use us for a while, and then use someone else” (91).

- Do I think of myself as savior or as one instrument among many in the Savior’s hands?
- How do I think about my role in this particular person’s life — as essential and irreplaceable, or as complementary and temporary?
- Am I willing to help move this person on to other disciplers when their needs or circumstances suggest it’s time? To that end, it may be wise to establish a clear time frame up front (e.g. a month, a year, two years), so that neither person assumes the discipling relationship is indefinite.

What Will We Leave Behind?

You will follow, and you will lead and teach. What will be the legacy of your life and example among the people in your life who outlive you? Again, Dever writes, “The people around you will influence you, for better or worse. And for better or worse you in turn will affect the people around you. . . . None of us is an island.”

A sea of seven billion people, and no islands. We may feel like we live on an island



most days, like our decisions mainly affect us and only us. But the reality is that others will notice what we do and how we do it, what we say and how say it. What they notice will either inspire them to follow Jesus, or comfort their animosity or disinterest. We disciple in everything we do, so we should be intentional in everything we do to model joy in Jesus — and as often as we can, to teach them how to find that joy for themselves.

Dever asks, “When you step out of the hallway of this life into the room of eternity, what will you have left behind in the lives of others?” (26). Will we leave behind a bright, but fading image of ourselves — our gifts, our interests, our successes — or a bold and lasting image of Christ leading to eternal life?

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. If discipleship means influence, who have you been influenced by and who are you currently influencing?
2. What's the difference between teaching someone “how” and teaching someone “why”? Why is the “why” so important?
3. What area of the five things love does is enjoyable for you? What area is difficult for you?
4. How can your coach help equip you to be a better disciple maker?



Discipleship and Disciple Making

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Jesus commands and welcomes us into his mission of making disciples.

Our Commission as Disciple-Makers

Matthew 28:19-20: *"¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Acts 1:8 *"⁸But 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."*

Ephesians 4:11-12 *"¹¹And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,"*

Disciple Maker: Showing people how to be a disciple of Jesus

**Discipleship in the Context of:**

Life on Life:

1 Thessalonians 2:12 *"we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory."*

Encourage:

Comfort:

Urge:

Life in Community:

Life on Mission:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. What has been your experience with discipleship? Who has discipled you?
2. How are you experiencing each aspect of discipleship?
 - following Jesus?
 - being transformed by Jesus?
 - and committed to the mission of Jesus?
3. How will you create a culture of discipleship in your community group through the following rhythms?
 - Life on Life:
 - Life in Community:
 - Life on Mission:
4. What stood out to you in Amita, Donnita, or Pablo's story?
5. What's one next step you take in your personal discipleship and in your effort to disciple others?



Self Reflection

Disciple Making Assessment

This assessment is a tool to better understand where you are in your disciple making process. By understanding where you are you can work toward where God wants to take you. Answer each question honestly and think about how God may be leading you to grow as a disciple maker.

I practice making disciples by intentionally helping others become like Christ and helping them grow spiritually				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

I invite the Holy Spirit to use me help others grow spiritually				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

I am personally committed to making disciples that make disciples				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

My relationships are centered around helping others become more like Jesus				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:



I know how to make disciples who can repeat the process with others				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

I intentionally change my priorities to make disciples who make disciples of others				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

I am able to name individuals the Spirit is transforming through my intentional efforts				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

I make consistent time to help others grow spiritually				
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Growth Step:

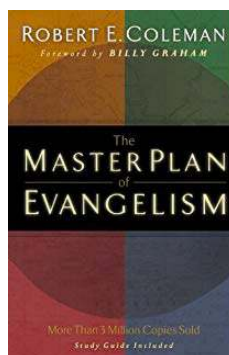


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on discipleship and disciple making.

Additional Resources

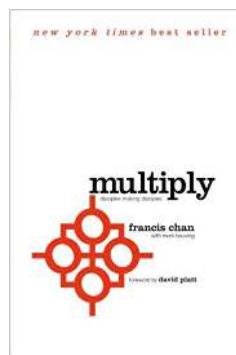
The Master Plan of Evangelism

by Robert Coleman



Multiply

By Francis Chan and Mark Beuving



Woven: The Art of Making Disciples

2016 IF:Gathering



Declare **and Display**

LESSON 12

Before you begin: Lesson 12

Summary:

As followers of Jesus we have the privilege of communicating the good news of Jesus Christ through our words and actions to the people that God has sent us to love and serve. We are called to declare and display the gospel by being on mission where we work, play, live, and learn and everyday we are given opportunity to alert people to the grace of God.

This lesson offers both a personal and communal challenge. You will be challenged personally to discover and engage your mission field. This may be in your workplace, your neighborhood, or in your social circles. You will also be challenged to lead your group to be on mission together. In what ways can your group help reach the lost? What can you do to serve together and bless those God has called you to?

Much of this will take time to discover as you pray, read scripture, and engage with the people and communities God has you to. So take the time to listen. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Listen to the stories and experiences of your group members, and listen to the stories, needs, hopes, and dreams of the non-Christians God has called you to love and bless.

May God bless you as you declare and display his amazing grace!

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SENT INTO THE WORLD

JESUS' MISSION AND OURS

David Mathis · Executive Editor · desiringGod.org

A danger lurks in our endeavors to live incarnationally. Danger, yes, but not deterrent. It is a risk worth taking, though not treating lightly.

The danger is that we can subtly begin to key on ourselves, rather than Jesus, when we think of what Christian mission is and what incarnation means. Over time we start to function as if Christian mission begins with, and centers on, our intentionality and relationality. What really excites us is not the old, old story, but our new strategies for kingdom advance. Almost imperceptibly we've slowly become more keen how we can copy Jesus than the glorious ways in which we can't.

But thankfully the Advent season, and its annual buildup to Christmas Day, serves as an important periodic reminder that the most important part of the Christian mission isn't the Christian, but the Christ.

Our little efforts at incarnational living, courageous and self-sacrificial as they may be, are only faint echoes of the world-altering, one-of-a-kind Incarnation of the very Son of God. And if Christian mission doesn't flow from and toward the worship of the Incarnate One, we're really just running round the hamster wheel.

Jesus Sends Us

Make no mistake about it, Christians are sent. Jesus prays to his Father in John 17:18, *"As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."* In identifying with Jesus, we are not only *"not of this world,"* but also sent right back into it on redemptive mission.

The classic text is Jesus' commission at the end of John's Gospel: *"As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you"* (John 20:21). Those whom Jesus calls, he also sends — a sending so significant that receiving his *"sent ones"* amounts to receiving him. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me"* (John 13:20).

Such a sending should be awe-inspiring, whether our particular sending includes



a change in geography and culture, or simply a fresh realization and missional orientation on our lives and labors among our native people.

But what are we “sent ones” sent for? What is this sending about anyways?

Why We’re Sent

This is where the Advent reminder is so essential. We are sent as representatives of the one born in Bethlehem and crucified at Calvary. We are sent to announce with all we are — with mouth and mind and heart and hands — that the Father sent the Son.

We are sent to say and show that Jesus was sent into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus and the good news about him (2 Corinthians 4:5). We are not the message, but mere messengers.

Which means that Jesus’ sent status is in a class by itself. He was not only sent as the preeminent Messenger, but sent as the Message himself. Jesus’ “sentness” is primary and ultimate. Our sentness is at best secondary and derivative. [The Incarnation] is a reminder of the primacy of Jesus as the Sent One.

His Ultimate and Utterly Unique Sending

That the Father sent his Son to share fully in our humanity is no mere model for mission. It is at the very heart of the gospel which our mission aims to spread. Christian mission exists only because the Message still needs to be told.

Jesus’ mission is unrepeatable. His Incarnation is utterly unique. We are meager delegates, unworthy servants. The more attention we give to the ultimately inimitable condescension of the Son of God, the less the language of “incarnation” seems to apply to our measly missional efforts.

Whatever condescensions and sacrifices we embrace along the path of gospel advance, they simply will not hold a candle to the Light of the world and his divine stooping to take our humanity and endure the excruciating death on our behalf.

Incarnation Inimitable

Because he was in the very form of God, Jesus *“did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”* (Philippians 2:6–8).

Is there something here to mimic? Yes, in some distant sense. But in the main, this Incarnation is not about what we are to do, but about what has been done for us. So before going on too long about our mission as Christians, let’s give due attention — the attention of worship — to the Jesus whose mission showed us God and



accomplished our eternal salvation. The great *missio Dei* (mission of God) finds its most significant meaning in the Father sending of his own Son not only as the high point and center of the universe and all history, but also the very focus of eternal worship. Our sending, then, empowered by his Spirit, is to communicate and embody that central message, and so rally fellow worshipers.

Our Mission Echoes His

What is the place then, if any, for the talk and tactics of Christians living incarnationally? So far our plea has been that we not obscure the important distinction between Jesus' matchless Incarnation as Message, and our little incarnational attempts at being his faithful messengers in word and deed.

But are there any applications to make?

Donald Macleod is perhaps as zealous as anyone that the unparalleled condescension of Jesus in the Incarnation not be obscured. Macleod's book *The Person of Christ* (InterVarsity, 1998) is a Christological masterpiece, and his sixth chapter, simply called "The Incarnation," is about as good as it gets. And while his record of uncompromising Christological reflection speaks for itself, this same author would have us imitate Jesus' incarnational self-condescension. Macleod writes elsewhere:

- [Jesus] did not, as incarnate, live a life of detachment. He lived a life of involvement.
- He lived where he could see human sin, hear human swearing and blasphemy, see human diseases and observe human mortality, poverty and squalor.
- His mission was fully incarnational because he taught men by coming alongside them, becoming one of them and sharing their environment and their problems.
- For us, as individuals and churches in an affluent society, this is a great embarrassment. How can we effectively minister to a lost world if we are not in it? How can we reach the ignorant and the poor if we are not with them? How can our churches understand deprived areas if the church is not incarnate in the deprived areas? How can we be salt and light in the darkened ghettos of our cities if we ourselves don't have any effective contacts and relationships with the Nazareths of [our day]?
- We are profoundly unfaithful to this great principle of incarnational mission.
- The great Prophet came right alongside the people and shared their experience at every level.
- He became flesh and dwelt among us.

(A Faith to Live By: Understanding Christian Doctrine, 139, paragraphing added)

Macleod believes the language stretches sufficiently. There's enough elasticity to talk of our incarnational mission without obscuring Jesus'. But to do so, we need Advent's reminder again and again.



The Centrality of Worship

Christmas reminds us that our life's dominant note must not be our witness for Jesus, but our worship of Jesus.

Mission is a critical rhythm of the Christian life, an essential season of redemptive history. Our mission of extending Jesus-worship to others, local and global, should be a frequent check on the health of our own Jesus-worship. But mission for Jesus must never take the place of our worship of Jesus, lest the very mission become crudely distorted along with our own souls.

Our Eternal Theme: Worship, Not Mission

If the chief theme of our lives is not worshipping Jesus, enjoying God in him, and being freshly astounded by his grace toward us sinners, we have no good business endeavoring to bring others into an experience that we ourselves aren't enjoying. And so it is not only the most missional among us, but all of us, who need reminding again and again, that mission "is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is."

May Jesus, the Great Sent One, ever be central — mission included — and may the worship of the Incarnate One continually be the fuel and goal of our faint incarnational echoes.

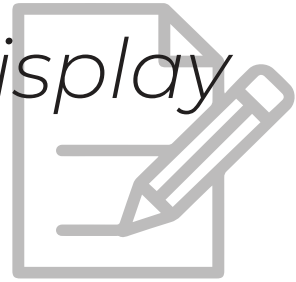
QUESTIONS: Reading

1. What does it mean to be "incarnational" in our ministry to others?
2. How does Jesus' incarnation relate and differ from our incarnational ministry?
3. What are steps you can take to "be with" those who need to know Jesus most?



Declare and Display

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Idea: As disciples of Jesus, we are called to declare and display the gospel where we work, play, live, and learn

Community group Definition: Community groups celebrate Jesus, care for one another, and live on mission by displaying and declaring the gospel where they work, play, live, and learn.

The Seven P's of Living on Mission:

PRAYER:

PRIESTHOOD:

1 Peter 2: 9-10 ⁹*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* ¹⁰*Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."*

PROXIMITY:

**PRESENCE:****POSTURE:****PROCLAMATION:****POWER:****DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson**

1. What everyday opportunities has God given you to be on mission where you work, play, live, and learn?
2. In what ways are you engaged in prayer for the people and places that need to know Jesus and experience the kingdom of God?
3. Do you think of yourself as a priest? Why or why not? What would it look like to adopt the position of a priest in your home, workplace, social circles and neighborhood?
4. How can you help lead and encourage your group to be present and engaged in the places and spaces God has them to declare and display the gospel to others?
5. What can you do or plan to do as a group to be a blessing to those around you?



Self Reflection

To Whom Have I Been Sent?

One of the most important questions we can answer as we think about being on mission is: **To whom have I been sent?** Who has God sent you to love, serve, bless, and share the message of the good news of Jesus Christ?

Take some time to write out their names and spend some time praying for them:

How can you be more incarnational in you ministry with those individuals?

- Which of your 21 meals this week can you share with this person?
- Everyone has skills and stuff. What skills can you share or what skills can they share with you (gardening, home repair, car repair, painting, language learning...)?
- What activities are you already doing that you can invite someone into (walking pets in the neighborhood, grocery shopping, kids play dates, golfing, hobbies or special interests...)?

Are there any specific verses that you want claim for these individuals and pray for them?

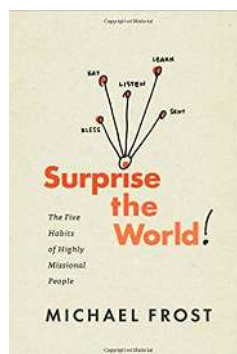


See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on declaring and displaying..

Additional Resources

Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People

by Michael Frost



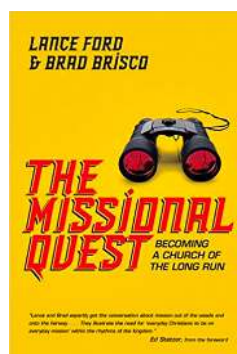
The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door

By Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon



The Missional Quest: Becoming a Church of the Long Run

By Lance Ford and Brad Brisco





Develop **and Deploy**

LESSON 13

Before you begin: Lesson 13

Summary:

Group multiplication is about reaching more people with the gospel. Our desire is that more and more people will be welcomed into gospel community where they can be known, loved, and experience the grace of God through His Word, His Spirit, and his people. One of the primary responsibilities of a community group leader is to help foster a culture of multiplication within their group by raising up future leaders and sending them to lead groups of their own.

Keep in mind that this process takes time and will be different for every group. The key will be having this conversation early with your community group and setting the expectation from the start that at some point the group will multiply. For some groups they may multiply after a year, others after eighteen months, and others after two or three years, but all groups should be working toward multiplication as you make disciples who make disciples.

In the Toolbox section of this lesson you will find various tips and guides for how to identify a co-leader, how to equip a co-leader to share leadership of the group, and how to ultimately multiply your group.

May God bless you as you build leaders, grow your group, and multiply gospel community!

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HOW TO MULTIPLY YOUR SMALL GROUP TO MAKE ROOM FOR GROWTH

Natalie Nace

Last night, sitting in the living room of my friend's rowhome, it hit me—my small group is reaching maximum capacity. Two people were sitting on the floor and five people were squished onto a small sofa. We are a familiar, friendly bunch so we're OK getting a little cozy, but what would happen if a new person walked through the front door? Where would they sit? How would we make them feel welcome?

Over the next few months we will need to coordinate with our leaders-in-training to take on a group for themselves, find a host, and prepare everyone for the transition to two independent groups. This process will involve loss and growing pains. We will feel grief and discomfort at not meeting as the same group anymore. We will miss accompanying one another on our spiritual journeys and eating each other's foods.

But I also know this process is necessary, and biblical. To walk through this process, it is important to be intentional and unified. Leaders should lay the scriptural foundation for multiplication and ask members to commit to being present and continue contributing during the remaining time with one another. Here are some guidelines to follow as you face such a challenge, and new beginning, together.

Why Multiply?

The biblical call to make new disciples

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus commands his disciples to go forth and make more disciples—not merely converts. We see the realization of this command in Acts 2, which describes the conversion of 3,000 souls and the church in its earliest form. Acts 2:46-47 describes these disciples as meeting “as a group in the Temple,” and also having “meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, praising God, and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.”

The church described in Acts 2 is a community that is attractive to new believers and that creates a space for them to have friendship and support in their new faith.



I share these verses with my small group frequently to remind us all why we meet together: to praise God, to talk through what we are being taught at church and how to apply it to our lives, and to enjoy friendship with each other. As the Lord adds new believers to our group, we need to ensure that they are able to connect with people who can support and disciple them, which can be difficult when the group gets larger.

Space for new people to join and keep coming

When a small group is as big as mine it can be overwhelming for a newcomer. Maybe there are not enough seats. Maybe other group members have become too familiar with each other and the newcomer does not feel like he or she can fit in. Maybe they feel like their presence, or lack thereof, won't be noticed. When you sense this feeling in your group, it is time to lean into the temporary discomfort of multiplication for the long-term health of the group.

How to Multiply

Get support from your church's leadership

My church has a clear protocol for multiplying small groups that makes the logistics easier for group leaders. Start by speaking with your pastors to find out their priorities and vision for small groups. Are your groups centered around geographic locations? Common interests or life stages? Service or outreach? Try to match the makeup of your two new groups with your church's priorities while leaving space for newcomers to engage. This is also the time to support your leaders-in-training by giving them more opportunities to lead. Let them lead portions of the group time that involve the deepest Scripture engagement and prayer to give them opportunities to practice facilitating discussions.

Commit to pray on your own and as a group

Jesus frequently set aside quiet time to pray for his ministry. He prayed before preaching (Mark 1:35), before choosing his apostles (Luke 6:12), before walking on water (Mark 6:46), and, most notably, before giving himself to be crucified (Mark 14:32-41; Luke 22:39-46). As we anticipate this change in our ministry, we can imitate Jesus in dedicated prayer for God's guidance and continued protection over our group. This includes praying during our own quiet times, as well as praying as a group for the multiplication process. Consider using a group text or a collaborative prayer app, like PrayerMate, to remind people to be praying for the group throughout the process of multiplication.

Read God's Word together

Remind your group of Jesus's command to make disciples. As a group, read through Acts 2 and discuss how your group looks like the early church, as well as ways you can be growing in love for God, one another, and the communities you are in. This is a step that can often be overlooked in the week-to-week rhythm of your small group. In my group, we often spend our time in the text covered in



that week's sermon and forget to look at the biblical support for communities and discipleship. Remind your group that the fellowship of believers is designed by God for our benefit, that we would encourage each other in the faith (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Prepare for goodbyes

Don't gloss over the reality that some group members will see each other less after multiplication. Some people in my group see each other outside of church-related activities, but others only interact with group members on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. While there is a greater purpose behind these goodbyes—welcoming more people into loving community—it can be sad to see people less often. Prepare your group for both of these realities by talking openly about it. Allow time for questions and encourage group members to meet up outside of the small group.

Multiplication is ultimately an act of faith: faith that God will provide a location and leaders, faith that God will bring new people to the group, and faith that God will work in people's hearts and impress upon them the importance of committing to each other. While forming new groups is a very minor "trial," James 1:2-3 reminds us that we should "consider ourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure." This endurance deepens our relationships with God and is a testimony to God's greatness, for God's glory.

In the midst of all of the to-dos and chaos of multiplication, don't forget that your community can be transformed through the groups of which you're a part. Making this space could make room for your neighbor, your coworker, or your friend who doesn't yet have a relationship with Christ. "All nations" includes the community around you, and when we pray to God for opportunities to share his love, he delivers them.

QUESTIONS: Reading

1. What has been your experience with group multiplication in the past?
2. What convictions do you hold for multiplying a group?
3. What challenges can you anticipate when multiplying a group? What blessings do you hope to experience?
4. How will you introduce group multiplication into your current group or plan for group multiplication in your future group?



Develop and Deploy

LESSON NOTES



▶ Watch the **Lesson Video**

Main Point: Christian community grows as it welcomes others, builds leaders, grows disciples, and multiplies groups.

Step One: Multiplication Thinking

Multiplication is first and foremost about God's mission and kingdom.

Gain for God's kingdom must outweigh loss within your community.

Eph. 4:11-12 *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and the teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."*

Application:

Start the conversation early

Pray about multiplication as a regular part of group prayer

Step Two: Permission Giving

Matthew 4:19 *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

I-C-N-U

Application:

Spend time praying about who could potentially lead a future community group

After identifying that person or take them out for lunch or coffee and speak words of affirmation and encouragement to them.



Step Three: Disciple Multiplying

Diatribes. Dia means “against,” and tribo means, “to rub.” So diatribes literally means “to spend time together rubbing off on each other.”

Five Steps of Apprenticeship

1. I do. You watch. We talk.
2. You do. I help. We talk.
3. You do. I help. We talk.
4. You do. I watch. We talk.
5. You do. Someone else watches.

Step Four: Kingdom Building

Three Primary Ingredients for Launching a new group:

1. Healthy Leadership
2. Committed Core
3. Clear Mission

Application:

- Identify a co-leader
- Develop a timeline for working through the *Love Who You Lead* training course with them

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Video Lesson

1. Why is multiplication thinking so important? What needs to shift in your thinking to better anticipate and encourage the multiplication process for your group?
2. Have you ever had an “I see in you” (I-C-N-U) moment where someone called you to something greater? If so, what was that conversation like and where did it lead?
3. Describe a time where you were able to have an I-C-N-U conversation with someone else. What did you see in them and how were you able to encourage that person?
4. How can you begin to introduce the five steps of apprenticeship with someone in your group? If you don't have a group yet, what are some practical ways you can go about implementing the five steps of apprenticeship with someone in the future?
5. What other information and guidance you need to help multiply your group or future group?



Self Reflection

Personal Hopes and Dreams for My Community Group

Now that you have come to the end of the *Love Who You Lead* training course take some time to reflect on your journey. Hopefully you feel more equipped and better prepared to shepherd, lead, and love God's people in the context of community groups. Use the following questions to reflect on what God has taught you and how he is continuing to shape you as a leader of a community group.

Personal Hope & Dream for Community Group

A community group exists because of the gospel. We are growing up into a deeper understanding and application of the gospel as we love Jesus and love one another. We are taking the gospel to the neighborhood, city, and world through intentional missional engagement.

1. What would your community group look like if it was thriving?
2. What would the community around you look like if it knew Jesus? What if they saw the transformation Jesus brings to a community of people?
3. What would you like to see happen this year in your community group?
4. What are goals that would move your community to take a few steps forward toward your community group vision?

Leading a Community Group

In light of those hopes, dreams, and goals, use this section to explore what your role is in leading your community group.

1. What is your role in leading your community group?
2. What areas do you feel like you need to grow in to lead your community?
3. What steps will you take to learn and grow as a leader in the next year?

A Prayer for Your Community Group

In light of all that God has done and will do, write a prayer to God expressing your hopes, dreams, and dependence on the Holy Spirit to accomplish what only God can do.



See the **Toolbox** at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox for more tools, tips, and guides on developing co-leaders and multiplying groups.

Additional Resources

The Essential Guide for Small Group Leaders

by Bill Search and Amy Jackson



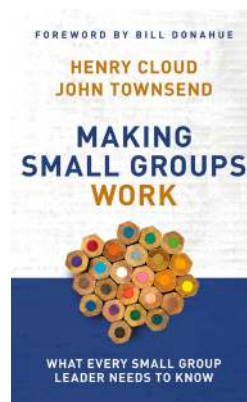
Leading Small Groups: How to Gather, Launch, Lead, and Multiply Your Small Group

By Chris Surratt



Making Small Group Work: What Every Small Group Leader Needs to Know

by Henry Cloud and John Townsend



APPENDIX: See the Tool Box at grace.community/who-you-lead/toolbox

- Community Group Leader Job Description
- Volunteer Application
- Leader Agreement and Statement of Conduct and Belief
- Membership Pathway
- Group Covenant
- Coaching Relationships
- How To Use the Group Finder
- How To Use the Resource Library
- Adopting a Focus Area
- Counseling Ministry Resources
- Partnering with the Mercy Team
- Using Realm
 - Communication
 - Attendance



COMMUNITY GROUPS



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