

BEING CHANGED BY JESUS

This story-set follows the disciples on their journey with Jesus as they grow in their knowledge of, and love for, Him. Jesus had many things to teach them about the cost of discipleship and what it would look like to truly follow. His goal was for them to become like Him and be His sent ones (“apostles”) to the world.

Remember, for thousands of years God’s people have used *storytelling*—or the oral tradition of telling the Word of God—to better remember and understand the Bible. The benefit of telling a story is that people understand the big picture and can pass it on in a clearer way. In this guide we will ask two people in your group to read the story aloud, and then have someone else in the group retell it in their own words. Statistics show that the majority of us actually learn better by retelling a story. As the story is told, and retold, you will be amazed to see the number of people in your group who will be able to better understand and apply the heart of the story. Storytelling draws people deeper into God’s Word to discover what it ***actually says*** rather than what we ***want it to say***. We will ask one set of questions to reinforce the facts of the story and another set to discover God’s heart behind the story. Equally important to telling the story is asking good questions to hear where people are in their journey with God.

We have always told stories in our small groups. But often the stories were focused more on us than on God’s Word. Retelling a Bible story may feel a bit awkward at first. Our small groups are a place for us to learn and explore with mistakes being part of the process. ***It will be important to read the Scripture passage that will be storied in advance a few times and even practice telling it to someone aloud. The more you practice the easier it becomes to tell the story with flow and confidence.*** Our measure for success is when God’s people can pass God’s Word on to others accurately.

SMALL GROUP COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Start by helping new believers, visitors, and members feel valued and welcomed. This begins with your phone calls and continues as they enter your home and throughout the evening. A warm welcome establishes a foundation for relationships and brings focus to the group.

OPENING PRAYER

Invite God's Holy Spirit into your presence. This prepares your hearts for what God has for you and shifts your attention from individual fellowship to the group.

PURPOSE

Express your purpose behind meeting as a group to help prepare your hearts and minds for the discussion. Remind the group the purpose is to grow as disciples and disciple-makers by applying the Word to our lives.

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

Establish and agree upon boundaries for a healthy group. Establish a safe environment where everyone can share openly and honestly. This provides biblical guidance for healthy conflict and resolution. (*Review as needed with the group and when new people attend*)

ICEBREAKER

Do an activity that sets the stage for transparency and trust and helps create a safe environment. This may involve low-risk participation (e.g., small game, testimony, a "hook" question, or worship).

ACCOUNTABILITY

Check in on last week's application. Ask a few members in your group to share their follow through on their actionable next step from the previous week. Help your group grow in action-oriented growth from week to week.

STORY

This is the topic of the group. This section is where you will look at God's Word together. Refer to the "How to Use this story Guide" section of this handbook as a tool to help lead your group discussion.

APPLICATION

How can we apply what we learned to our lives? Individuals in your group name actionable items as next steps based on what they learned today. Write them down for use during the week when you follow-up with your group members. Ask group members to help other group members or assign tasks to group members to develop them spiritually as shepherds and disciple-makers. Designate or ask for a volunteer to facilitate the next group time.

CELEBRATION

Spend time recognizing what God accomplished in the group. Thank and praise God and encourage each other.

CLOSING PRAYER

Refocus your attention on God, share personal prayer requests, group needs, and praise.

BETWEEN GROUP TIMES

- Debrief with your co-leader
- Abide in Christ in prayer and personal Bible study.
- Pray for your group and each member by name.
- Use the check-in information, the application commitments and prayer requests you recorded to drive the conversation and discipleship you do with the group members outside of group.
- Read and pray through the Scripture passage for the coming week once per day.

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

THIS IS A SAFE GROUP

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

NO CROSSTALK

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting, etc.

LISTEN

Value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

NO RESCUING OR FIXING

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

USE "I" STATEMENTS

It's easy to talk about the issues of others or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," But for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we need to use "I" statements.

DON'T OVER-TALK

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

FIGHT FOR RELATIONSHIP

It's not *if* conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

BIBLE STORYING: HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The “storying” time of the group consists of the first 4 parts, followed by 4 discipleship questions, lifestyle application questions, and discipleship leader tips to practice throughout the week.



TRANSITION: Briefly summarize last week’s story and ask if it had any impact in their lives over the past week—this is a good share time. Then set up the scene for the scripture passage you are going to read today. **Note: we give you ideas or bullet points for the transition each week but these are not meant to be read but only to guide you.*



READ THE STORY: Read the scripture passage through twice using different translations if available and having two different group members read.



TELL THE STORY: Tell the story the best as you can. Don’t stop and teach and try not to make points—just tell the story. The objective is not to memorize it but to learn it and be able to just share it.



REBUILD THE STORY: Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions and having the group look for what was added or left out.



QUESTIONS: You will have four discipleship questions you will use to start the conversation time each week. Be willing to ask multiple questions within each question. You may find that as you start to become adept at asking follow-up questions, you only get through one or two of these in your group time, and that is great! This question time is the primary method of finding out where your people are in their journey with Christ. Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION: As the water and seed interact, growth starts to take place as we apply the principles we have learned from God’s Word into our lives. You may not always have time to ask these application questions in your group time, so we suggest that you use them in your personal growth time, or as take-home questions for the group.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP: Use these questions and tips as you prepare to lead your group. Ask yourself how you can apply these when you facilitate and ask questions. When you see a “next week is review week” box, be sure to assign story telling for next week at the end of that week’s meeting time. This will be a time that you can use to review the last few stories.

Week 1: Jesus' Invitation – Mark 1:9-20



TRANSITION:

After his baptism and forty days of temptation in the desert, Jesus began his earthly ministry. He approached four men who were working and invited them to follow Him. All four made the decision to walk away from what they were doing to become "fishers of men." Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Mark 1:9-20):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

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2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
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LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Are there temptations in your life you give in to? If so, what is one step you can take this week to resist?
2. How would you explain to someone what it means to "repent and believe the good news" v.15?
3. Is there anything Jesus is asking of you that you are unwilling to give or do? If so, why?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Sometimes we try to live the Christian life in our own strength. Often our spirit is willing, but our flesh is weak. Christ has given us the gift of community with other believers who can encourage us and hold us accountable when we need to make changes in our lives. Take a risk and tell someone you trust something you struggle with and let them pray with you and walk with you as you follow Christ.

Week 2: Abiding – John 15:1-9



TRANSITION:

Jesus gave his disciples a word picture to help them understand their proper place in relationship to him and the Father. Using the analogy of a vine, Jesus describes our part, his part and God's part. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (John 15:1-9):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. If someone looked at your life and how you spend your time, talents and treasures, what would they say is most important to you?
2. Is there anything that needs to be pruned in order to produce more/better fruit?
3. If we need to remain in Christ to bear fruit for his kingdom, how are you remaining in him? What does that look like in your life?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Jesus said "apart from me you can do nothing." **Be intentional** about spending regular, **daily** time with Jesus in prayer and Bible study, and gathering with your church family to worship and learn in community.

Week 3: The Greatest Commandments – Mark 12:28-34



TRANSITION:

The religious leaders in Jesus' day often asked questions to try and trick him into saying something they could use to accuse him of wrongdoing. In this passage, a sincere question is asked about which of the commandments is the most important. Here is Jesus' reply from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Mark 12:28-34):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. If the greatest commandment is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength," what are some practical ways you could love God in each of these areas – heart, soul, mind, strength?
2. When have you asked Jesus a question and found that you didn't want to accept His answer?
3. What's the difference between being nice and showing love?
4. Is it possible to show love to people if you don't know anything about them?
5. What is one thing you could do this week to show love for a neighbor or co-worker?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Loving people, especially those we don't like, is often difficult and may even require sacrifice on our part. Remember... "you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you!" Phil 4:13

Week 4: Pick Up Your Cross – Luke 9:23-27



TRANSITION:

Jesus demonstrated his power through many miracles and healings. One day Jesus asked his followers who people thought he was. Many believed he was someone great, who would no doubt do great things. But Jesus wanted his disciples to know that instead of being honored, he would lose his life. And if they truly wanted to follow him, they would be asked to do the same. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Luke 9:23-27):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What is one area of your life in which you are unwilling to "deny yourself?" What would it cost you to change that?
2. Name one thing in your life that is hard that Jesus is asking you to walk through. What does it look like for you to follow him in that situation?
3. Are there any ways you try to hide that you are a follower of Jesus?
4. Who is one person you would be willing to tell about Jesus?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Salvation is only the beginning of a life-long process called "sanctification." Part of the sanctification process includes giving up our own desires so that we can make room for God's desires. Pray for a willingness to cooperate with whatever God may be asking you to change, knowing that he wants what's best for you.

Week 5: The Fullness of God – Ephesians 3:14-21



TRANSITION:

From his prison cell, Paul prays for his fellow believers in Ephesus to experience God's power and His abounding love. Paul's prayer applies to us as well. Here is the passage from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Ephesians 3:14-21):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Paul was kneeling, praising God, and encouraging fellow believers from a prison cell. How can you apply his example to a difficult circumstance in your life?
2. What does it look like on the outside to have "Christ dwell in your hearts through faith" on the inside?
3. What are some practical ways you are being rooted and established in love?
4. Using the truths in this passage about God and His power, how would you reframe something you have been praying for?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

What is one thing that God has done or provided that is more than you could have ever hoped or dreamed for? Spend a few minutes thanking Him for it.

Week 6: Feed My Sheep – John 21:15-19



TRANSITION:

After Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter and some of the other disciples went fishing. Someone from shore told them where to cast their nets and they caught so many fish they knew it was something unusual. When they got to shore, Jesus spoke to Peter about love and feeding His sheep. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (John 21:15-19):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Tell the group about a time when you blew it with God, and he gave you the opportunity to redeem yourself.
2. How does caring for sheep in this passage compare with how to care for someone you are discipling?
3. Are there practical ways you are currently feeding and caring for other believers? If not, why not? What would need to change so you could?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Following Jesus often involves doing things we don't want to do, or things that make us uncomfortable. How may he be asking you to move out of your comfort zone to serve him? Will you? Tell someone about it and pray for willingness to do what he's asking.

Week 7: Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit – John 14:14-27



TRANSITION:

Jesus was celebrating the Passover with his disciples and telling them many things about the future. Some things must have been hard to hear – like his betrayal and Peter’s denial. But some things were meant to encourage – like those we will read about in this story from God’s Word...



READ THE STORY (John 14:14-27):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don’t stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What does it mean to ask for something in Jesus’ name? Give an example.
2. If Jesus said we could ask for anything in his name and he would do it, why do some prayers seem to go unanswered?
3. Name some ways that you love Jesus by your obedience.
4. If a non-believer looked at your life, how would they know you are a Christ-follower?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

What causes your heart to be troubled and afraid? If Jesus has commanded you not to be troubled or afraid, what are some practical ways he has provided for you to obey this command?

Week 8: Wait on the Holy Spirit – Acts 1:4-14



TRANSITION:

In his Gospel, Luke wrote to a man named Theophilus about what Jesus had done and taught prior to His resurrection. In the book of Acts, Luke continues the story to Theophilus. Here is a portion of it from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Acts 1:4-14):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
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LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Are you waiting for something the Lord has promised? What helps you while you wait?
2. How do you know if something is from the Holy Spirit? Can you back that up with Scripture?
3. Is prayer important to you? If so, why?
4. How does your daily routine reflect your answer to number 3? Is there anything you would like to do differently? If so, tell someone in the group and ask them to hold you accountable.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Often, we limit our prayers to our family, our friends, and our circumstances. Please consider praying for your church leaders, your government, an unreached people group and/or a ministry organization on a regular basis. If you don't know where to start, the CTR Reach Team can help you connect to the organizations the church supports and their prayer needs.

Week 9: Pentecost (Part 1) – Acts 2:1-11



TRANSITION:

Before Jesus was taken up to heaven, he told the apostles to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. He also said that the Holy Spirit would give them power to be his witnesses. This is the story of what happened that day from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Acts 2:1-11):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Share a time when you felt like God, or the Holy Spirit, enabled you to do something out of the ordinary. Who eventually got the credit for what happened?
2. Is there a difference between believing in God and being "God-fearing?" Explain your answer.
3. If a skeptic challenged your belief in this story, how would you respond?
4. How would you disciple a new believer whose friends may be skeptical about Biblical truths?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Following Jesus involves believing and trusting in things that sometimes don't make sense to non-believers because "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing." 1 Cor 1:18 Help those you disciple learn where and how to find answers in the Bible for themselves so they are better able to defend their faith.

Week 10: Pentecost (Part 2) Acts 2:32-40



TRANSITION:

The Holy Spirit came powerfully on the disciples and they began declaring the wonders of God in many different languages. The people didn't know what to make of it until Peter addressed the crowd and explained who Jesus was and what they needed to do next. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Acts 2:32-40):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

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3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. The disciples had witnessed Jesus being raised to life. What have you witnessed God do in your life or the life of someone else?
2. What does it mean to repent and why did Peter connect that with baptism?
3. Describe a time when you warned or pleaded with someone on behalf of Jesus.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that a person can repent and be saved. Since we never know who will respond to the good news about Jesus, don't weed anyone out - tell everyone!

Week 11: The Church – Acts 2:41-47



TRANSITION:

The Holy Spirit had been poured out on many people during Pentecost. Peter explained clearly who Jesus was and warned, pleaded with, and invited people to repent and be baptized. Here is the story from God's Word of what happened to those who accepted Peter's invitation...



READ THE STORY (Acts 2:41-47):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
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LIFE APPLICATION:

1. This chapter says, "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Is that happening now? If not, why?
2. Which of the activities that the early disciples engaged in do you engage in on a regular basis?
3. Describe what you think the atmosphere was like when these believers got together. What do you experience when you are with other believers?
4. If your interactions with another believer tend to be unpleasant, what could you do to impact the relationship in a positive way?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

The early church was characterized by fellowship, teaching, prayer, miracles, generosity, praise, and joy. As a follower of Jesus, may your interactions be guided more by their example than by your opinions, your political views, or what you consume on social media.

Week 12: The Gifts of the Spirit – 1 Cor 12:4-14



TRANSITION:

Paul's letter to the Corinthian church contained many instructions for the believers. With many so new to their faith, he wanted them to understand that the Holy Spirit had given each one of them gifts that were to be used for the good of all. This story from God's Word tells us about those gifts.



READ THE STORY (1 Corinthians 12:4-14):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Why do you think God gave different gifts to different people?
2. Which of the gifts listed do you have?
3. How are you using your gifts to serve others?
4. How are you observing others in the group using their gifts?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Church is a team sport and everyone on the team has been given at least one gift to be used in service to others. Help spiritual children see beyond themselves – that they are saved for kingdom purposes. The transition to service is a critical link to becoming a spiritual young adult.

Week 13: Faith Working Through Love – Gal 5:1-9



TRANSITION:

In the early church some Jewish Christians believed that a number of the ceremonial practices in the Old Testament laws, like circumcision, were still binding on them as new believers. Paul responds clearly in his letter to the Galatians that Christ has set us free from the law. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Galatians 5:1-9):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

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LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Can you name any activities you engage in that you feel may be trying to "earn" God's favor? If so, what is the Truth about how those activities impact your relationship with God?
2. Can you name any activities that you feel you would be judged for by others if you did, or didn't, continue? Explain your answer.
3. How does your faith express itself through love?
4. What is one way you could express your faith through love this week?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

New believers often come from religious backgrounds that include a lot of rules. Help them discern whether they are persisting in beliefs and activities that are based on other people's opinions rather than on Scripture.

Week 14: Fruits of the Spirit – Galatians 5:16-25



TRANSITION:

Paul has just finished explaining to the Galatians that Christ has set them (and us) free from sin. However, while we are free from the power of sin, we are not necessarily free from desires that are sinful. In this passage from God's Word, Paul explains how to identify desires of the flesh and live in the fruit of the Spirit.



READ THE STORY (Galatians 5:16-25):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What are some practical ways to live by the Spirit?
2. Name some ways you have, or are currently, crucifying your sinful desires.
3. Why did Paul tell them not to become conceited, provoke, or envy each other?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Pick one fruit of the Spirit you sense God is putting his finger on and ask the Holy Spirit to grow that kind of fruit in your life.

Week 15: Being of One Accord – Phil 2:1-8



TRANSITION:

Paul writes to the Philippian church from his prison cell. He longs for followers of Jesus to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of Christ's calling, and explains what that looks like in practical ways. Here is a portion of Paul's letter found in God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Philippians 2:1-8):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Describe a time when you have been comforted by Christ's love.
2. What does humility look like? What would it look like for you to grow in this area?
3. How can you be one in spirit and purpose with another believer if you disagree strongly with them?
4. What are some ways you can put the needs of others before your own?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Sometimes it's hard to get along with other believers, especially when we disagree with their political views. But God calls us to be like-minded and to have unity in spirit and purpose when it comes to the things He values. How you treat your brothers and sisters in Christ matters because people inside and outside the church are watching your example.

Week 16: The Elect of God – Col 3:12-17



TRANSITION:

In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he encourages his readers to shift their focus from satisfying the desires of their physical bodies to growing in the image and likeness of Christ. Here is a beautiful picture of what that looks like from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Colossians 3:12-17):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Name some behaviors that demonstrate compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
2. Who is someone you have a grievance with or grudge against? What does this passage tell you to do about it? Why are you given those instructions?
3. How can you let the peace of Christ rule in your heart when you experience anxiety?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Whatever you do, in word or deed, do it ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus. You are his ambassador and represent him to those around you. Will they think highly of him by your example?

Week 17: Hypocrisy - Matthew 7:1-6



TRANSITION:

Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching and preaching the good news of the kingdom. One day, he went up on a mountainside and began to teach the crowds. In this story from God's Word, we will hear his thoughts on hypocrisy.



READ THE STORY:

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What does it mean to judge someone? In what areas do you judge others?
2. What happens to YOU when you judge others? Give an example of how this has been illustrated in your life.
3. Name one thing that really bugs you about someone else, or that you have concerns about for someone else. How can you apply v. 4-5 to this situation?
4. What is Jesus talking about in v. 6 and why is it important?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

It is often easier to see how others need to change, than how we need to change. Be careful what you think and say about others because with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Focus more attention on how you need to change, and let God change those around you.

Week 18: Ministering to One Another – James 5:13-20



TRANSITION:

In his letter to Jewish believers, James wrote to instruct and encourage his dispersed people in the face of their difficulties. In this passage from God's Word, James explains how prayer can minister to others.



READ THE STORY:

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What are your thoughts on praying over people? What is Biblical support for your perspective?
2. Name someone in your life you could confess a sin to. Is there anything you need to tell them or be accountable to them for?
3. Explain the difference between James 5:20 and what we learned last time in Matthew 7:3.
4. Name one person who needs your prayers. Will you commit to praying for this person for the next month?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Our transparency encourages other people in our group to stop hiding. We need people to hold us accountable to do the right thing, to share our burdens when we fail, and to encourage us. Authenticity and accountability are both necessary for growth. *From the Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual, p. 98*

Week 19: Be Transformed (Part 1) – Romans 12:1-8



TRANSITION:

In the opening of Paul's letter to the church in Rome, Paul said he was called to be "set apart for the gospel of God". Being set apart to be used and transformed by God is a choice we make that is lived out in our daily thoughts and actions. In this story from God's Word, Paul explains our part in this transformation process.



READ THE STORY:

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways you are conforming to the pattern of this world and what you could do to change that.
2. Ask one person to hold you accountable for changing what has been revealed. If you are choosing not to participate, can you identify why?
3. Give an example of how you think more highly of yourself than others. What Truth from God's Word could be applied to transform your thinking?
4. Encourage someone by telling them how you see them using their gifts.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Only God's power can transform us into the image and likeness of Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you become willing to follow Jesus and be changed in any areas that were revealed this week.

Week 20: Be Transformed (Part 2) – Romans 12:9-21



TRANSITION:

In his letter to the Romans, Paul mentions several ways we can follow Jesus' example in showing love to others. Since many of the things Paul tells us to do run contrary to our human nature, we will need the power of the Holy Spirit to transform us and help us obey these principles from God's Word.



READ THE STORY:

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Name something that feels hopeless. How can you cultivate joy regarding that situation?
2. Think of someone who irritates you. What would it look like to live in harmony with him/her?
3. How is it possible to do what is right in the eyes of everybody (v. 17)?
4. What are some practical ways you can cling to what is good?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

The transformation process takes time. Be gentle with yourself and others as the Holy Spirit transforms you into the image of Christ. Sometimes the process can be painful, but it is always worth it.

Week 21: Daily Exhortation – Hebrews 3:7-14



TRANSITION:

The writer of Hebrews just finished telling his readers that Jesus is not only superior to angels, but also to Moses. He is superior in all things, and He is faithful, yet the writer cautions us about unbelief. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Hebrews 3:7-14):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Describe a difficult season or trial in your life.
 - a. What was the condition of your heart during that time and is there anything you would like to be different next time?
 - b. If so, what could you do now to prepare to handle it differently next time?
2. Name 5 ways you have seen God at work in your life or someone else's.
3. How can you encourage someone this week?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Sometimes it is hard to follow Jesus. Make sure you have believers in your life who encourage you and help you stay focused on the mission of making disciples. AND be someone who encourages others and helps them stay focused too!

Week 22: Gather – Hebrews 10:19-27



TRANSITION:

The author just finished telling his readers that Jesus died once for all and there are no more sacrifices required to atone for sin. This was very new teaching, so he stresses the importance of encouraging one another daily with the Truth from God's Word.



READ THE STORY (Hebrews 10:19-27):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas you are not acting in line with God's Word and what you need to do about what is revealed.
2. When are you tempted to lose hope? Name someone, or something, that could provide encouragement when you feel hopeless.
3. What prevents you from attending church every week? What impact does your church attendance have on others?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Disciple-makers lead by example. Whether you are intentionally leading or not, be conscious of how your actions impact those around you.

Week 23: Brotherly Love – 1 John 2:1-11



TRANSITION:

The writer testifies that he has seen and heard and touched Jesus and that it is possible for us to have a relationship with Jesus too. But our fellowship with Jesus, and with other believers, is greatly impacted by our obedience to Jesus' commands and how we treat each other. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (1 John 2:1-11):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Why is obedience to God's commands important?
2. How do hatred and unforgiveness impact your testimony?
3. How could hatred and unforgiveness on your part impact another believer? Give an example.
4. How would you explain what it means to "live in the light" or "live in the darkness" to a new believer?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

This passage tells us that how well we know Jesus is made plain to others by our obedience and our love for each other. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas you are being disobedient or unloving and for help to make any necessary changes.

Week 24: Unity – Ephesians 4:11-16



TRANSITION:

Paul's letter to the Ephesians tells us that through Christ, God has reconciled individuals to Himself, to each other, and then into the church. As part of one body, Paul urges the followers of Jesus to use their gifts for God's honor and glory. Here is the reason why that's important from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Ephesians 4:11-16):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Name the gifts you observe in members of your small group.
2. How would you explain v. 12-13 in your own words?
3. What does unity in the church look like and why is it important? Include an example to illustrate your point.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Sometimes we forget that our gifts have been given to us for the benefit of others. How are you stewarding the gifts you have been given?

Week 25: The First Will Be Last – Matthew 20:1-16



TRANSITION:

Jesus spent a great deal of time telling his followers what the kingdom of heaven is like. Some refer to it as “the upside-down kingdom” where the things we normally place value on are actually the opposite of what God values. Here is the story from God’s Word...



READ THE STORY (Matthew 20:1-16):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don’t stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Describe a time when you felt you had been treated unfairly. Have these verses changed how you view the situation? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think those who were hired last were paid first?
3. What makes you envious?
4. What principles from this story can be applied to a current situation in your life?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Philippians 2:14 says we are to “do everything without complaining or arguing.” Ask the Holy Spirit to help you cooperate with these instructions as you disciple others.

Week 26: Serving – Matthew 20:20-28



TRANSITION:

Jesus' closest followers sometimes argued over who was the most important and who should hold positions of authority when His kingdom would come into power. While they didn't understand the significance of what they were asking, Jesus' reply was always the same – that it is better to serve than be served. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Matthew 20:20-28):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Why do you think the mother of Zebedee's sons made the request on their behalf?
2. Is there anyone in a position of authority that you do not respect or feel is qualified? How do you think Jesus would want you to treat, or talk about, that person?
3. If someone asked, "How could I serve you?", how would you respond?
4. What is one thing you could do this week to serve someone else?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

If there are tasks at work, or in your home, that feel "beneath you", ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow in your willingness and ability to do them with a smile...for the glory of God.

Week 27: Handling Mockers – Jude 17-25



TRANSITION:

Jude wrote to Christians to warn them about certain immoral men in their midst who were perverting the grace of God. It seems these false teachers were trying to convince believers that being saved by grace gave them license to sin since their sins would no longer be held against them. Jude wanted his readers to be on guard against such teachings and to know the Truth. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Jude 17-25):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. How can a new believer determine whether a teaching is true or false?
2. Think of someone who causes division. Are there things you could do when you are around that person to prevent yourself from being influenced in a negative way?
3. Describe a time you confronted someone about something you would like them to change. What made it a positive or negative experience?
4. What does it mean in verse 23 to "show mercy mixed with fear?" Give an example.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

As followers of Jesus, we need to be on guard against those who pursue ungodly desires, divide others, and follow mere natural instincts rather than the Word of God. Make sure that as you reach out to those people in love that you do not get sucked into their way of thinking and acting too!

Week 28: Armor of God – Ephesians 6:10-20



TRANSITION:

Paul spent most of his letter to the Ephesians encouraging them to live their lives worthy of their calling in Christ, and what that should look like in their speech, thoughts, and actions. He also reminded them that there are spiritual forces at work in the heavenly realms that will try to prevent them from living and loving in the ways he just outlined. But thanks be to God who has provided spiritual armor we can use to defend ourselves against the enemy of our souls! Here is the armor as described in God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Ephesians 6:10-20):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. How do the spiritual forces of evil manifest themselves in your life?
2. Which piece of armor do you rely on most and why?
3. How might you explain to a new believer what it means to "pray in the Spirit?"
4. Describe a time you used (or could have used) God's Word to help you fight a spiritual battle.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

While God has provided spiritual armor to protect you from the enemy, he does not intend for you to fight your spiritual battles alone. Make sure you have others who can encourage you and help you fight when the battles feel too overwhelming for you to handle on your own.

Week 29: Handling Trials – James 1:1-12



TRANSITION:

This letter is believed to be written by James, the brother of Jesus. He was writing to the Jews who were living in other countries to encourage them in the trials they were experiencing by changing their focus. Here is the story from God's word...



READ THE STORY (James 1:1-12):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. From a biblical perspective, what do you think James means by the word "trial"?
2. Describe a trial you are currently facing. What would it mean to experience joy in that situation?
3. Name a difficult circumstance that required your perseverance or patience. What did you learn from the experience?
4. Think of someone you know who is humble. Describe that person. Now describe someone who lacks humility.
 - a. What are the differences between the two?
 - b. How would someone describe you in regard to humility?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

If you are someone who struggles with humility, you may not know it. By asking someone you trust to suggest one thing you could do to grow in that area, you would not only demonstrate humility, but you could also learn valuable information that could help you grow in that area.

Week 30: Doers of the Word – James 1:13-25



TRANSITION:

This letter is believed to be written by James, the brother of Jesus. He was writing to fellow believers who were living in other countries to strongly encourage them to honor God in their lives by their obedience. His encouragement is just as important to us today...



READ THE STORY (James 1:13-25):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Think of a time when you had a "desire that gave birth to sin" (v. 15). In hindsight, how could you have handled the temptation differently? If this is an area of continual struggle, would you consider talking to someone about it?
2. Which of these is most difficult for you: being quick to listen, slow to speak, or slow to become angry? How could you make progress in that area?
3. Make a list of the media you consume on a regular basis (music, TV, movies, video games, YouTube, etc.). Is there anything on your list you would not be comfortable watching or listening to if Jesus or a close friend were with you?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Knowing what God's word says and doing it are sometimes two different things. And sometimes, when our choices aren't in line with God's word, it may be more evident to those around us than it is to us. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you willingness to obey in any areas you may struggle.

Week 31: Perseverance – 2 Corinthians 6:3-10



TRANSITION:

Paul's personal integrity and his authority as an apostle were being challenged by false teachers. In this excerpt, Paul asks the Corinthian church to consider the way he responded to his suffering for Christ as evidence that he is trustworthy and credible. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (2 Corinthians 6:3-10):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Think of a time when you observed a Christian responding to a difficult situation in an ungodly manner. How did that impact you and those around you?
2. Now think of a time when you observed a Christian responding to a difficult situation in a godly manner. How did that impact you and those around you?
3. Is it possible to be honest and rejoice during difficult times? Why would God ask us to do this?
4. Name two people you could turn to if you needed encouragement.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Remember that your responses to unpleasant circumstances impact those around you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow in responding to circumstances in ways that honor Jesus.

Week 32: Worry – Matthew 6:25-34



TRANSITION:

Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching and preaching the good news of the kingdom. On one occasion, when he saw the crowds gathering, he went up on a mountainside and began to teach them. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Matthew 6:25-34):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What are some things you worry about?
2. How have you experienced God providing for you?
3. What is something you worried would happen that, in fact, didn't happen?
4. Read Romans 8:28. How this passage help you have a new outlook on one of the things you worry about?



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

As followers of Jesus, the more we get to know him, the more we begin to trust that he will take care of our needs. Spending time with people who trust him can encourage you and help you grow in trusting him too.

Week 33: Producing Fruit – John 15:1-8



TRANSITION:

John chapters 14-17 contain Jesus' last words to his disciples before he was crucified. His words comforted them, gave them hope, and told them how they could produce fruit that would bring glory to his Father. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (John 15:1-8):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. How would you define "fruit" according to these verses?
2. Have you ever felt "pruned" by God? What did that involve?
 - a. If so, has the experience produced fruit as you defined it above?
3. What does it mean to you to "remain in" Jesus? How do you personally do that?
4. How does bearing fruit show that you are a disciple of Jesus?
5. Is it possible to bear imitation fruit? Explain.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

According to Jesus, remaining in him is the prerequisite for accomplishing anything in God's kingdom. Ask the Holy Spirit for the willingness, and ability, to spend more time with Jesus.

Week 34: Peace & Joy – Philippians 4:4-9



TRANSITION:

Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison. It served as an exhortation to believers then, and to believers now, to rejoice in the Lord regardless of circumstances. It is filled with practical suggestions on what to do when we are anxious and how to train our minds to focus on thoughts that bring peace. Here is the story from God's Word...



READ THE STORY (Philippians 4:4-9):

Have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations if available.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story the best you can. Don't stop and teach and try not to make points – just tell the story.



REBUILD THE STORY:

Ask the storyteller how they learned the story and what stuck out to them personally as they read and practiced sharing the story. Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story.



QUESTIONS:

Here are the four discipleship questions to ask after you have told the story:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
2. What is Jesus teaching the disciples?
3. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
4. What will you do with what Jesus is teaching you?



LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Name 5 things that bring you joy.
2. Name something specifically about Jesus, or your relationship with him, that brings you joy.
3. Give an example of one thing in each of these categories that you could think about instead of worrying: true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy*.



DISCIPLESHIP TIP:

Whether we experience peace or joy in any given moment is greatly impacted by our thought life. The next time you find yourself worrying, consider thinking about things that are worthy of praise.

**Different Bible translations may use slightly different words for each concept.*