



a six week study  
on new life discipleship

Here in Northeast Ohio we have the benefit of enjoying miles and miles of beautiful lush greenery featuring tall mature trees in the Cleveland Metroparks. When you gaze up at one of the tall oaks, remember that it started out as a small seed. When that seed first sprouted, most of its energy was spent on root development, especially the initial root—the taproot—that shot down as deep into the soil as it could before spreading out and developing a more extensive root system that would sustain the necessary growth, nourishment, and strength needed by the tree.

In contrast to tall mature trees, horticulturists have learned the art of shaping dwarf or “bonsai” trees out of the same seed that would normally root and then begin its journey upward into the sky. They do so by cutting or trimming the taproot. If the initial taproot is prevented from sprouting deep into the soil, then the growth of the tree is stunted.

Similar principles apply when you receive Christ as your Savior. The spiritual “taproot” of faith needs to sprout deep into the soil of God’s Word and develop that initial abiding relationship with Christ that will bring growth, nourishment, and strength while helping to produce fruit for the Lord.

At Cuyahoga Valley Church, we are passionate about helping people grow in the “Fruit of New Life” in Christ. Our hope is that this booklet will be a useful tool for those who are newer in their faith, and will help you develop solid roots upon which you can grow in your walk with Christ.

This 6-week study was designed to be used within the context of what we call a discipleship huddle, where one person meets with two to three others on a weekly basis and works through the material together in a conversational environment so that you can grow together and learn more about what it means to live new in Christ and develop new life habits along the way.

May God bless you as you take your next steps in following Him!

LIVENEW.

Chad Allen | Lead Pastor  
Cuyahoga Valley Church



# TAPROOT: NEW LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

The material in this booklet has been designed for ease of use.

The material would be best used by a leader with one, two, or three others. Each lesson is comprised of three sections: Connect, Coach, and Care.

Simple questions are used in each section along with some content that will help the leader guide the meeting. The Coach section includes a short Bible passage and a short reading.

Set aside about an hour for a meeting. Meet at a coffee shop, a home, or somewhere at church. Open the booklet, examine the Scriptures, read the material, ask and answer the questions, and watch the Holy Spirit work in everyone's life.

This study will be most effective if done in *advance* by each group member and then reviewed together as a group.

The Biblical content in this booklet, coupled with encouraging and Spirit-filled conversations, will invite people to grow in their new life in Christ.

# TAPROOT: NEW LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

6 brief sessions to grow in the Fruit of New Life

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## LESSON 1 –

### Connecting with God as a Beloved Child: Prayer

#### CONNECT:

How are you... really?

What is something you are celebrating right now in your life?

What challenges are you facing?

Pray.

#### CONTEXT | LESSON 1 | PRAYER:

As we grow spiritually, it is important to understand who God is and how we live our lives in the light of our understanding of the one true God and His character. For example, when it comes to prayer, we do not pray because it's a spiritual thing to do, or because it's a way to upload our wish list to God. God is perfect, holy, all-powerful, and sovereign over all of creation. He is also our Heavenly Father and He invites us to experience intimate and regular relationship with Him through prayer. Prayer is silently or audibly sharing our thoughts, feelings, and desires with God and also listening to see how God may lead us. Prayer can be personal and private or communal and public.

#### COACH:

Read through Philippians 4:6 and then write it in the space provided below.

- *Circle words or phrases that stood out to you from this passage.*
- *What are some principles for "living new" that you see in this passage?*
- *What adjustments do you need to make in order to live more faithfully as a Beloved Child who prays to the Heavenly Father?*

## WHO SHOULD PRAY?

Everyone should pray, of course. And anyone can. But prevailing prayer is a special privilege for those who have become Beloved Children of God through faith in Jesus. We have a Father in heaven who loves to give good gifts to His children.

*“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 7:11)*

“We can pray with perfect confidence to the Father as one who will never fail us. Human fathers may let us down, but not God. We can know with certainty that our praying will be heard and responded to in the way that is not only wisest in terms of God’s own total purposes, but also is best in the long run for us as the individuals we are. Thus we see that it is a truly wonderful thing to be in God’s paternal hands” (*Praying*, by J.I. Packer, p. 31).

## WHY PRAY?

Prayer changes things. God has created a world in which the actions of humans affect history. One human action that changes things is prayer—asking God to act. God chooses to weave our requests into His divine purposes. Through prayer, God may choose to change my circumstances or God may choose to change me despite my circumstances.

God uses the means of prayer to accomplish His ends. C.S. Lewis explains: “[God] could, if He chose, repair our bodies miraculously without food; or give us food without the aid of farmers, bakers, and butchers; or knowledge without the aid of learned men... Instead, He allows soils and weather and animals and the muscles, minds, and wills of men to co-operate in the execution of His will. It is not really stranger, nor less strange, that my prayers should affect the course of events than that my other actions should do so” (*The World’s Last Night and Other Essays*, by C.S. Lewis, pp.8-9).

So, why pray? Again, it’s because prayer changes things.

## HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

It is possible for us to jam our line of communication with God. We call these hindrances to prayer. Below is a list of five obstacles we can build that will impede our progress in prayer.

## 1. Cherished sin.

*“If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”* (Psalm 66:18, see also Isaiah 59:1-2)

We will always struggle with ongoing sin until we reach heaven. Therefore, it would be a misinterpretation to read this as implying that absolute sinlessness is a condition for answered prayer. But make no mistake about it: unconfessed, unrepented of, and unforsaken sin hinders prayer.

## 2. Wrong motives.

*“You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”* (James 4:3)

Our motives must be to seek to honor God and advance His kingdom purposes. Selfish prayers are always those that are intended to gratify our own selfish desires. We should not expect God to respond to such prayers.

## 3. Unreconciled relationships.

*“If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”* (Matthew 5:23–24)

Reconciliation with the person who has something against you must take precedence even over offering your gift, including prayer, in worship. We cannot be wrong with man and right with God.

## 4. Practical unbelief.

*“Let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”* (James 1:6-8)

Praying without doubting means praying in the secure belief and understanding of God's character, nature, and wisdom. Some have not because they ask not; others have not because they believe not.

## 5. Neglecting scripture.

*"If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination."*  
(Proverbs 28:9)

Indifference to the Word of God hinders effective praying. We must learn to pray according to God's will. Reading the Bible is the way we make sure our prayers align with God's purposes and priorities.

How tragic it would be to allow any of these things to hinder our prayers from the answers our Heavenly Father delights to give His beloved children.

Fortunately, all these prayer hindrances can be overcome immediately when we come to God in confession and repentance. We are assured in 1 John 1:9 that *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Once we have done that, we will enjoy a clear and open channel of communication with God, and our prayers will be heard and answered according to His will.

## A NEW LIFE HABIT CHALLENGE

When we are filled with God's Spirit, we are empowered to be effective. Empowered people are effective people. Part of what it means to be effective is developing new habits. What habits do you need to MAKE and what habits do you need to BREAK to be more effective in your prayer life?

Here's a habit to help you grow as a Beloved Child of God: Spend time in prayer daily.

Don't know how to pray? Use the P.R.A.Y acronym:

Praise: Find something to praise God about.

Repent: Confess your sins to God.

Ask: Make your requests to God.

Yield: Surrender your agenda to God's. Do it all in Jesus' name.

## NEW LIFE QUESTIONS...

- *What stood out to you the most?*
- *What challenged you the most?*
- *What questions did this reading/study raise for you?*
- *What strength did this affirm in you?*
- *What growth areas did this reveal for you?*
- *What are 2-3 action steps that you need to take?*
- *What accountability question would you like for me to ask you the next time we meet?*

## CARE:

- *How can I help you?*
- *How can I pray for you?*
- *Here's something ICNU (I see in you)...*

## LESSON 2 –

### Growing as a Self-Feeder: Bible Intake

#### CONNECT:

How are you... really?

What is something you are celebrating right now in your life?

What challenges are you facing?

Pray.

#### CONTEXT | LESSON 2 | BIBLE INTAKE

The Bible is a book that God authored using human writers. The main character of the Bible is God Himself. The Bible should be seen not as one book of many stories but of one story comprised of different books. It is God's perfect and divine narrative of the creation, fall, redemption, and restoration of man. The Bible is the Word of God communicating the will of God.

#### COACH:

Read through 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and then write it in the space provided below.

- *Circle words or phrases that stood out to you from this passage.*
- *What are some principles for "living new" that you see in this passage?*
- *What adjustments do you need to make in order to live more faithfully as a Self-Feeder?*

## OBEYING GOD'S WORD

We must resist the temptation to see the Bible as a mere moral code of ethics or a book of rules to obey. To be sure, morality is in the Scriptures. After all, we are to be people who practice the Golden Rule: *"Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them"* (Matthew 7:12).

But the Bible is not primarily a book that teaches us rules, regulations, and techniques on various topics like how to have a happy marriage or how to be a nicer person.

Instead, the Bible is a book that points us to Christ and to His gospel. And when we learn to see Jesus on every page of the Bible, we begin to increasingly believe the gospel. We are set free. That's when we find we have the desire and the ability to be obedient.

Bible intake helps us come to believe that in spite of our sins, doubts, failings, and shortcomings, we are still beloved. In the Bible, we see the deceitfulness of our sin. We see the beauty of Christ and His unfailing love for us. We see the sacrifice that Jesus made to forgive us. We see that Jesus has risen and sent His Spirit to live in us.

And because we know that we are beloved, forgiven, and empowered, we have a supernatural ability to Live New.

We can actually become holy. We can actually become conformed to the image of Christ. We actually have a new life that enables us to be obedient to Scripture.

Being obedient to the Bible—doing the will of God, becoming conformed to the image of Christ—is important. But we don't accomplish obedience through sheer willpower—by doing more and trying harder.

Instead, we become obedient when we do the hard work of believing the good news that Christ loved us enough to die for us and forgive us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). It's our faith in the gospel that fuels our obedience.

With that as our foundation, let's turn our attention to some simple truths about the importance of obeying the Word of God.

## THE BENEFITS OF OBEDIENCE

The point that our obedience is proof that we really love Jesus cannot be emphasized enough. Jesus made this crystal clear.

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* (John 14:15)

*“Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”*  
(John 14:21)

*“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words.”* (John 14:23-24a)

Because God wants us to obey His Word, every time we take in the Bible we can expect to find an application for our lives. “Open the Book expectantly. Anticipate the discovery of a practical response to the truth of God. It makes a big difference to come to the Bible with the faith that you will find an application for it as opposed to believing you won’t” (*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, by Donald Whitney, p.57).

Read the Bible while thinking that every word is expressly applicable in some way to you. When the Bible speaks out against sin, think this way: “God means *my* sins!” When a duty is commanded, say to yourself, “God wants *me* to do this thing!”

When you spend time in God’s Word, determine at least one specific application you will live out before you go your way. “There are times when a verse of Scripture will have such evident application for your life that it will virtually jump off the page and plead with you to do what it says. More often than not, however, you must interview the verse, patiently asking questions of it until a down-to-earth response becomes clear” (*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, by Donald Whitney, p.60).

Consider the following formulas:

*Information + Application = Transformation*

*Information – Application = Stagnation*

Which do you want to be true for you? Obey the Bible. Apply the Scriptures. *“Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”* (James 1:22)

## A NEW LIFE HABIT CHALLENGE

When we are filled with God’s Spirit, we are empowered to be effective. Empowered people are effective people. Part of what it means to be effective is developing new habits. What habits do you need to MAKE and what habits do you need to BREAK to be more effective in your time in God’s Word?

Here’s a habit to help you grow as a Self-Feeder: Spend time in God’s Word daily.

It’s very helpful to ask questions about a Bible passage in order to learn how God wants us to make application of the truth to our lives. Here are some application-oriented questions.

Put on your SPECS! In the Scripture I have read today, is there a . . .

Sin to avoid?

Promise to claim?

Example to follow?

Command to obey?

Service to perform?

Take some time right now to write these questions in the front or back of your Bible or journal so you will have them at your fingertips each time you spend time in God’s Word.

## NEW LIFE QUESTIONS...

- *What stood out to you the most?*
- *What challenged you the most?*
- *What questions did this reading/study raise for you?*
- *What strength did this affirm in you?*
- *What growth areas did this reveal for you?*
- *What are 2-3 action steps that you need to take?*
- *What accountability question would you like for me to ask you the next time we meet?*

## CARE:

- *How can I help you?*
  - *How can I pray for you?*
  - *Here's something ICNU (I see in you)...*
-

## LESSON 3 –

### Taking SHAPE as a Servant: Spiritual Gifts

#### CONNECT:

How are you... really?

What is something you are celebrating right now in your life?

What challenges are you facing?

Pray.

#### CONTEXT | LESSON 3 | SPIRITUAL GIFTS

God has placed inside each person talents and gifts for the purpose of expressing their love for God and for the benefit of others. These spiritual gifts become active once we place our faith in Christ and we become an equipped and empowered part of the body of Christ, using our gifts to glorify God and minister to others inside and outside the church.

#### COACH:

Read through 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and then write it in the space provided below.

- *Circle words or phrases that stood out to you from this passage.*
- *What are some principles for “living new” that you see in this passage?*
- *What adjustments do you need to make in order to live more faithfully as a Servant?*

## GIFTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE BODY

Sometimes, people call those on the pastoral staff their “ministers.” A wise staff member won’t let anyone introduce “the” minister. Staff members are ministers, but not “the” minister. We’re all ministers. Every follower of Jesus is supposed to use his/her gifts to minister to others in the body of Christ.

Some of us choose a church like we choose a cruise line, “What’s comfortable for me?” We look for a church and ask, “How can this church serve me and my family?” That’s understandable. And our leaders pray and serve so that there is something good at CVC for you.

But we have to ask another question that’s even more important. We need to choose a church like it’s a battleship. We agree on the mission, the vision, the values, and the strategy. And then everyone plays his/her part.

We must learn to ask, “What can I do to serve others at this church?” We have to move from a consumer-centered faith to a Christ-centered faith.

We ask, “How can I serve?” and “How can I help?” That’s what makes us like Jesus.

*“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 20:26-28*

You want to be like Jesus? Serve others.

You might be thinking, “I’ve tried serving. I served until I was drained dry. I’ll never do that again.” That’s not how it should be. We don’t want the few serving the many. We want the many serving the many.

If every person serves, then the burden won’t be overwhelming for anyone. No one person has all the gifts. No one has no gift. We need each other.

One of the most unloving things we can do as believers is to neglect the use of our gift. It cripples the church when people say, “It seems like they don’t really need me. Everything is getting done pretty well.”

You might be failing to realize that some people are doing too much and they are on the edge of burnout. When you fail to live out your responsibility, then you aren’t loving the person who has to fill in for you while you sit and soak it in.

No one should have too much to do. No one should have nothing to do.

## YOUR GIFTS AND GOD'S COMMUNITY

We Americans tend to be individualists. Our typical western heroes are usually lone wolves. We are the champions of individual rights. We own personal computers. And when we read the Bible we think in very individual terms. But often the “you” in the Bible is plural.

You are gifted. But the gifting is not primarily for you. The subject of spiritual gifts must be understood in the context of the Christian community or the Body of Christ.

1. Gifts are given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7)
2. Gifts are to be used to serve one another. (1 Peter 4:10)
3. Gifts are given to equip the saints for ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

We are to use our gifts to serve God in ministry and to serve each other so we will mature. Gifts are given so we can build each other up rather than tear each other down.

What is your “SHAPE”?

Your personal ministry will be most effective, and fulfilling (and fun!) when you are using your . . .

Spiritual gift in the area of your

Heart's desire, and using your

Abilities in a way that best expresses your

Personality and

Experiences.

Imagine yourself investing your SHAPE in powerful ways as you minister. Imagine yourself standing before the Lord giving an account of your life after a lifetime of faithful service. This is good news for those who have been transformed by the gospel!

One day Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.”* (Mark 8:34-35)

In Jesus' economy, keepers are weepers and losers are finders.

## DISCOVERING YOUR GIFTS

Every believer has at least one spiritual gift (1 Peter 4:10-11). A list of gifts can be compiled from Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4. As you read through the following list, place a check by several gifts that you think you might have.

Prophecy	Wisdom	Tongues
Service	Knowledge	Interpretation
Teaching	Faith	Apostleship
Exhortation	Hospitality	Helps
Giving	Healing	Administration
Leadership	Miracles	Evangelism
Mercy	Discernment	Pastoring

## A NEW LIFE HABIT CHALLENGE

When we are filled with God's Spirit, we are empowered to be effective. Empowered people are effective people. Part of what it means to be effective is developing new habits. What habits do you need to MAKE and what habits do you need to BREAK to be more effective with your spiritual gifts?

Here's a habit to help you grow as a Servant: Bless 2 people a week (one inside the faith and one outside the faith) through acts of kindness, words of encouragement, or a gift/provision of some kind.

## NEW LIFE QUESTIONS...

- *What stood out to you the most?*
- *What challenged you the most?*
- *What questions did this reading/study raise for you?*
- *What strength did this affirm in you?*
- *What growth areas did this reveal for you?*
- *What are 2-3 action steps that you need to take?*
- *What accountability question would you like for me to ask you the next time we meet?*

## CARE:

- *How can I help you?*
  - *How can I pray for you?*
  - *Here's something ICNU (I see in you)...*
-

## LESSON 4–

### Increasing as an Investor: Generosity

#### CONNECT:

How are you... really?

What is something you are celebrating right now in your life?

What challenges are you facing?

Pray.

#### CONTEXT | LESSON 4 | GENEROSITY

God is generous. God loves to give. God provides for us daily and abundantly. He gives us food, drink, clothing, and shelter. The Lord gives us strength, hope, peace, and joy. God so loved us that He gave His only Son to die on the cross for our sins. Since we are called to imitate God, we too then, will grow in our desire and ability to give and be generous. One who receives much learns to give much.

#### COACH:

Read through Matthew 6:19-21 and then write it in the space provided below.

- *Circle words or phrases that stood out to you from this passage.*
- *What are some principles for “living new” that you see in this passage?*
- *What adjustments do you need to make in order to become a more generous giver?*

## TREASURE IN HEAVEN

In Matthew 6:20, Jesus says, “*Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*” But exactly how do we do that?

Jesus gives us insights about becoming eternally rich in Luke 16:1-9.

A manager is in charge of all the rich man’s possessions. He’s a trusted servant who transacts the business for the rich man, taking care of the house, the bank account, and the property.

In Jesus’ story, the manager is getting fired. His boss says, “Before I give you your last check, finish a few things you’ve started.” The manager is probably used to a pretty good lifestyle. He’s not used to physical work. So after he loses his job, he wonders, “What am I going to do?”

He figures out a way to make sure he has friends who will help him make a living after he’s no longer working. So, in his last few moments as manager, he designs a plan to gain the favor of a few people who owe his boss. He comes up with a scheme to protect himself in the future.

His plan is to reduce the amount of money that two debtors owed the boss. He goes to the best customers and gives them deep discounts on what they owed his boss.

Why would he do this? After he’s fired, he wants to go to those customers who “owe him a favor” so they will pay him back. It’s an “I’ll-scratch-your-back-today-and-you-can-scratch-mine-someday” scheme.

The manager figures out how to end up with a golden parachute. Even his boss smiles at how shrewd he is. When it’s time to settle accounts, his boss laughs, “You still lost your job. But I’ve got to hand it to you, you figured out a way to leverage the past and the present for your future. Now, get out of here!”

The last part of verse 8 contains a key point in Jesus’ story, “*For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.*”

The word “*shrewd*” in the Greek New Testament means astute, clever, and cunning. Jesus is *not* saying, “Be dishonest.” What He *is* saying is that we ought to be clever—that we can learn something from the astute way this man operated. The crooked manager had great foresight to anticipate his financial needs after he was fired. He used his financial leverage now to make friends for himself later.

Jesus is saying that every believer ought to be as shrewd as that guy! Jesus is saying, “Don’t let the sons of this age—those who are not Christ-followers—‘out-shrewd’ you. After all, you are sons of light.”

The master praised the clever, cunning manager. Why? Because he knew how to look after his future self.

What can we learn from this shrewd manager? Pastor Andy Stanley once said, “He knew he was facing a deadline; he formulated a plan, and he acted before the opportunity was gone” (“God’s Kingdom, Our Stuff,” message preached at Northpoint Community Church, by Andy Stanley, 1997).

We are also facing a deadline. It’s death. Do you have a creative plan to gain treasure in heaven before that deadline? Are you acting before the opportunity is gone?

## SO HOW DO WE LEVERAGE THIS OPPORTUNITY?

Giving our wealth to kingdom causes is an investment that will be used to reach people for Christ who will become our friends for all eternity.

Christian music artist Ray Boltz once wrote a song entitled “Thank You.” It starts out with him having a dream of being in heaven and you are standing beside him. One of the verses says, “Then another man stood before you; He said, ‘Remember the time a missionary came to church? His pictures made you cry. You didn’t have much money, but you gave it anyway. Jesus took that gift you gave and that’s why I’m in heaven today.’ Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am a life that was changed. Thank you for giving to the Lord. I am so glad you gave.”

We’re either leveraging our finances for God’s purposes or not. We’ve either made the most of our money or not. We’ve either laid up treasure in heaven or not. Whether we have or haven’t actually boils down to our character. We have made the choice.

Do you want to lay up treasure in heaven? Give a portion of your resources away. Write some checks to kingdom causes! Never squelch a generous impulse. God commands us to use our money to win the lost (Luke 16:9), to care for those in need (Galatians 2:10; 1 John 3:16-18), and to support leaders in ministry (1 Corinthians 9:4-14, Galatians 6:6).

When we do that, we are laying up treasure in heaven.

## THE LINE OR THE DOT?

Imagine a clothesline stretched all the way out into infinity and beyond. That represents eternity. Now, imagine holding a sharpie and placing a little dot on the line. That

represents your life on this earth.

Randy Alcorn, author of *The Treasure Principle* says, “Our lives have two phases: one, a dot, the other a line extending out from that dot. Right now, we are living in the dot. But what are we living for? The short-sighted person lives for the dot. The person with perspective lives for the line. The person who lives for the dot lives for treasure on earth that ends up in junkyards. The person who lives for the line lives for treasure in heaven that will never end” (*The Treasure Principle*, by Randy Alcorn, pp.48-49).

Alcorn encourages us to ask ourselves a question, “Am I living for the dot or living for the line?”

## A NEW LIFE HABIT CHALLENGE

When we are filled with God’s Spirit, we are empowered to be effective. Empowered people are effective people. Part of what it means to be effective is developing new habits. What habits do you need to MAKE and what habits do you need to BREAK to be more effective in your giving and generosity?

Here’s a habit to help you grow as an Investor: Continue to bless 2 people a week (one inside the faith and one outside the faith) through acts of kindness, words of encouragement, or a gift/provision of some kind. Be creative!

## NEW LIFE QUESTIONS...

- *What stood out to you the most?*
- *What challenged you the most?*
- *What questions did this reading/study raise for you?*
- *What strength did this affirm in you?*
- *What growth areas did this reveal for you?*
- *What are 2-3 action steps that you need to take?*
- *What accountability question would you like for me to ask you the next time we meet?*

## CARE:

- *How can I help you?*
  - *How can I pray for you?*
  - *Here's something ICNU (I see in you)...*
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## LESSON 5 –

### Reproducing as a Disciplex: Spiritual Multiplication

#### CONNECT:

How are you... really?

What is something you are celebrating right now in your life?

What challenges are you facing?

Pray.

#### CONTEXT | LESSON 5 | SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

God created all organic life with the ability to multiply. He also created man to not only multiply physically, but also spiritually. Jesus commanded and commissioned us to go and make other disciples for Him. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we can't help but want others to come to know and learn what we have, so we step out courageously, enthusiastically, and obediently to help others come to Jesus and grow in Jesus.

#### COACH:

Read through Matthew 28:19-20 and then write it in the space provided below.

- *Circle words or phrases that stood out to you from this passage.*
- *What are some principles for "living new" that you see in this passage?*
- *What adjustments do you need to make in order to live more faithfully as a Disciplex?*

## MEASURING THE RIGHT THING

It's tempting for leaders to measure the effectiveness of church the old fashioned way: the ABCs—Attendance, Buildings, and Cash. As long as attendance is strong, the buildings are in good shape (or new ones are being built), and cash is in the bank, then leaders can feel like they are winning.

But if you hang around church for awhile, you will notice that some of the people who show up at all these meetings and activities can be as mean as snakes. Some of the most faithful attenders are the people who cause others in the church the most sleepless nights. The so-called pillars of the church can often be immature, petty, selfish, loveless, joyless, angry, and divisive.

Going to church a lot doesn't necessarily make anyone a mature follower of Jesus. We can multiply the number of our meetings and events as a church. We can enlarge and modernize our buildings. We can congratulate ourselves that we are meeting and exceeding the budget. But if people are not growing as disciples, then we have missed the mark! Organizational growth is not necessarily an indicator of spiritual growth. (Organizational decline is not necessarily an indicator of spiritual growth, either!)

Therefore, our goal must be to help people grow to be more like Jesus. Our ultimate goal is not to build attendance, get more people into our LifeGroups, or expand the budget (as important as these things might be). These can be means to our ultimate goal. But they can't replace the ultimate goal: To make disciples—to develop people to be mature in Christ, who then develop others to be mature in Christ.

When the spiritual leader, Paul, prays for the Colossians, he prays that they may be *“walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”* (Colossians 1:10).

So, what does a disciple—a person who is bearing the fruit of New Life in Christ—look like? One way to describe a disciple living a new life in Christ is that they see themselves as a:

1. Beloved Child
2. Self-feeder
3. Servant
4. Investor
5. Discipler
6. Missionary

## WHO ME? A DISCIPLER?

Yes, you! You might be thinking, “God couldn't use me. I'm too young in the faith. My past sins are too ugly. I'm not holy enough yet. I've wasted too much time.”

Please don't disqualify yourself. Read about Peter's failure and restoration in John 18:25-27 and John 21:15-17 and you will see that after Peter denied Christ, Jesus restored him and said, "Feed My sheep." If Jesus restored and used a person like Peter, then He can restore and use you, too.

How might you get started?

What if you took 1, 2, or 3 people through this same curriculum you are currently using? All you need to be is a few steps ahead of the people you are discipling. Who in your family, in your neighborhood, in your church, or in your workplace also needs to know what you have been learning?

How do you ask? Ask one-on-one, face-to-face, "You know, I've been encouraged and helped in my relationship with Christ through a study I've done at church. It takes a one-hour conversation each week for six weeks. I've been encouraged to help others grow. I would love the privilege of helping you grow in your relationship with Christ, too. Are you interested?"

It's that simple. If you disciple others using this material, please let our staff at CVC know. Additional copies of this booklet will be available at the information desk at CVC, or you can email your request for a digital copy to [connect@cvconline.org](mailto:connect@cvconline.org).

## MULTIPLICATION

2 Timothy 2:2 says, "*What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*"

Do you see in this verse a progression—from (1) Paul, to (2) Timothy, to (3) faithful men, to (4) others? That's four generations.

Paul introduces the concept of multiplication in this verse rather than mere addition. He's encouraging Timothy to impact men (not one man) who will, in turn, impact others.

Do the math. If you were to lead one person to Christ every day for 30 years you would end up with 10,950 people who were on their way to heaven because of your evangelistic efforts. But how many of us lead someone to Christ every day?

But what happens if you lead someone to Christ and then disciple that person for a year? What if you help that person become a mature follower of Jesus and teach him/her to lead others to Christ? At the end of the year, there would be 2 of you. That may not sound like much. But keep reading.

Suppose the two of you each win one person to Christ and take them through a discipleship process? At the end of the next year, there would be 4. Do it again the following year and there would be 8. Then 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1,024 . . . You get the idea. What if the process went on and on and on? In 30 years, the number of disciples would be 536,870,912. Those are amazing numbers.

What if you became the first in a multiplying chain of discipleship in your family, in your neighborhood, or at your workplace? Imagine what God might be able to do in, through, with, and for you? What if God literally changed the world through you?

## A NEW LIFE HABIT CHALLENGE

When we are filled with God's Spirit, we are empowered to be effective. Empowered people are effective people. Part of what it means to be effective is developing new habits. What habits do you need to MAKE and what habits do you need to BREAK to be more effective in your efforts to disciple others?

Here's a habit to help you grow as a Discipeler: Eat with 2 people a week (one inside the faith and one outside the faith). Have a bagel and coffee with someone. Meet with someone for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Have someone over to your house. Go out with someone. This helps us intentionally create space and opportunity for conversation in which we can disciple others and help them grow.

## NEW LIFE QUESTIONS...

- *What stood out to you the most?*
- *What challenged you the most?*
- *What questions did this reading/study raise for you?*
- *What strength did this affirm in you?*
- *What growth areas did this reveal for you?*
- *What are 2-3 action steps that you need to take?*
- *What accountability question would you like for me to ask you the next time we meet?*

## CARE:

- *How can I help you?*
  - *How can I pray for you?*
  - *Here's something ICNU (I see in you)...*
-

## LESSON 6 –

### Living as a Missionary: Witness

#### CONNECT:

How are you... really?

What is something you are celebrating right now in your life?

What challenges are you facing?

Pray.

#### CONTEXT | LESSON 6 | MISSIONARY

God is a missionary God. He saw us in brokenness and sin and personally entered into our pain to redeem us from sin. Jesus came, died, and was resurrected to seek and save those who were lost. As followers of Christ, we share Christ's heart for the lost and broken in the world. And out of our love for God and our awareness of eternity, an urgency to reach lost souls compels us to boldly and lovingly go out and engage the world around us as missionaries for Jesus.

#### COACH:

Read through 1 Peter 3:15 and then write it in the space provided below.

- *Circle words or phrases that stood out to you from this passage.*
- *What are some principles for "living new" that you see in this passage?*
- *What adjustments do you need to make in order to live more faithfully as a Missionary?*

## WHY LIVE MISSIONALLY?

The short answer? Because Jesus is the only way.

Jesus taught that there is a real heaven and a real hell. Everyone we know, love, and care about will spend eternity in one place or the other (Matthew 25:34, 46; Hebrews 9:27). And Jesus made an audacious claim about Himself. He said, “*I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6).

Jesus boldly claims to be the only way to heaven. This is why we must be on mission to share with others the good news that Jesus saves.

## THE WAY. THE TRUTH. THE LIFE.

It’s significant that in the Greek language the definite article for the word “the” in John 14:6 precedes each word—“way,” “truth,” and “life.” Jesus is not claiming to be *a* way, *a* truth, or *a* life. He’s claiming to be *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life.

Imagine that you have a life-threatening illness. You know you need to get to a hospital. But you are in a strange town. You ask for directions. Suppose a person says, “Take the first right here, then go left at the next intersection. Veer right at the 3<sup>rd</sup> street you cross. When you come to a Y in the road, turn left. Go through an intersection with a 4-way stop sign . . .” Chances are you’d get lost halfway there.

But suppose a person says, “Get in my car. I’ll take you to the hospital. You can trust me. I know the way and the truth about the medicine you need. See, I am the only doctor in town. No one else can prescribe the meds for you. Only me.” In that case, the person is, temporally speaking, the way, the truth, and the life.

And that’s precisely the case with Jesus. He doesn’t point the way or draw some impersonal map. He *is* the way, the truth, and the life. The *only* way, truth, and life. For everyone.

## ARROGANT? NARROW-MINDED? INTOLERANT? JUDGMENTAL? DOGMATIC?

Many people in the Western world consider Jesus' words in John 14:6 to be arrogant and narrow-minded. They find it difficult to believe there is only one way to God because they know kind, respectable people who do not believe in Jesus.

Skeptics say that believing the only way for anyone to be saved is through Jesus is intolerant, judgmental, and dogmatic. In fact, many of our friends believe the opposite—namely, there are many ways to God, a view called religious pluralism. Because our culture values tolerance, cynics say, “Who do these Christians think they are? How dare they say that Jesus is the only way?” They believe there are many ways to God because it seems more enlightened, humble, and tolerant.

But Christ-followers did not invent this claim that Jesus is the only way. According to John 14:6, it's Christ's claim. Believers are merely relating His claim and the claim of the writers of the New Testament.

*“Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:11-12.*

Let's bring this close to home—close to your home. You have family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbors who don't know Christ. Because all people are born sinful and without a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, they will experience an eternity separated from Him.

Why should we be passionate about Missional Living—about sharing our faith with others? Consider the following 4 reasons.

1. The cry from without. (Acts 16:31)
2. The cry from within. (2 Corinthians 5:14, 20)
3. The cry from beneath. (Luke 16:27-28)
4. The cry from above. (Matthew 28:19)

If we listen carefully, we'll hear the cry from without – the heart cries of those who are lost around us. Deep down, they know something is wrong. They know their lives are not right. But they don't know why. They don't know how to be restored. They don't know how to gain new life. They would listen if we would lovingly build bridges and share the good news.

If we will listen to our hearts, we'll hear the cry from within – the motivation because of our love for Jesus. See, we live on mission because we have come to know and love Jesus. We just naturally talk about what we love. When we fall in love with Jesus, nobody will have to twist our arms to get us to share Christ with others. We'll want everybody to know and love Him just like we know and love Him.

If our spiritual ears are open, we'll hear the cry from beneath – the cries of those who are in hell, "This torment is unbearable. This agony is awful. Can someone dip his finger in water and cool my tongue? Please warn my family members and my friends! Warn them so they won't end up here in this place of torment!" (Luke 16:24, 27-28)

If we are listening to the Lord, we'll hear the cry from above – the command from Jesus to share our faith in Christ. That's really all we need to know. If we've surrendered to Him and if He is our Lord, then when He says witness, we should witness. Jesus literally, personally tells us to go make disciples, to go win the lost. Why witness? It's not because we feel like it. It's because we've been commanded by God to share Christ.

Refer to our webpage from the "Three Circles" training for a reminder of how to share your faith in Christ:

[www.cvconline.org/3-circles](http://www.cvconline.org/3-circles)

## A NEW LIFE HABIT CHALLENGE

When we are filled with God's Spirit, we are empowered to be effective. Empowered people are effective people. Part of what it means to be effective is developing new habits. What habits do you need to MAKE and what habits do you need to BREAK to be more effective in your witnessing for Christ?

Here's a habit to help you grow as a Missionary: Continue to eat with 2 people a week (one inside the faith and one outside the faith) in order to intentionally create space and opportunity for conversation in which you can disciple others and help them grow.

## NEW LIFE QUESTIONS...

- *What stood out to you the most?*
- *What challenged you the most?*
- *What questions did this reading/study raise for you?*
- *What strength did this affirm in you?*
- *What growth areas did this reveal for you?*
- *What are 2-3 action steps that you need to take?*
- *What accountability question would you like for me to ask you the next time we meet?*

## CARE:

- *How can I help you?*
  - *How can I pray for you?*
  - *Here's something ICNU (I see in you)...*
-

## New Life Habit Challenge: Recap and Summary

The Habit Challenge helps us more faithfully bear the Fruit of New Life. You can read Acts 2:42-47 for an example. When you condense the habits from the earlier lessons into one list, you will see three habits we implemented in order to grow in the Fruit of New Life:

1. Daily be in the Word and prayer to grow spiritually as a Beloved Child and Self Feeder.

Self-evaluation question: "Have I been in the Word and prayer daily this week?"

When meeting with others, ask, "Have you been in the Word and prayer daily this week?"

2. Bless two people a week (one inside the faith and one outside the faith) to grow as a Servant and an Investor.

Self-evaluation question: "Who have I blessed this last week?"

When meeting with others, ask, "Who have you blessed this past week?"

3. Eat with two people a week (one inside the faith and one outside the faith) to grow as a Discippler and a Missionary.

Self-evaluation question: "Who have I eaten with this week?"

When meeting with others, ask, "Who have you eaten with this week?"



5055 E. Wallings Rd. Broadview Heights, OH | [cvonline.org](http://cvonline.org)