

DISCIPLESHIP TABLES

**'A practical guide for making disciples
and disciple makers'**

Contents

- 1* WELCOME
- 2* OUTLINE
- 3* PLANNING A DISCIPLESHIP TABLE CHECKLIST
- 4* BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER
- 5* BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
- 6* BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
- 7* THE GOLDEN COMMAND
- 8* THE GREAT COMMISSION
- 9* THE GLORIOUS CHURCH
- 10* WHAT NOW?

Welcome & Introduction

You have just experienced the most bizarre event ever! As if the past three years haven't been crazy enough. You have just witnessed first hand a move of God upon your fledgling group of Jesus followers. There was a roaring sound, crazy looking flames over people's heads and then you found yourself boldly praying out aloud in a language you don't even understand. True story!

Then Peter gets up to address the growing crowd that heard the commotion and are running from everywhere. People are laughing, some jeering, but some desperate to find out more. Peter is like a new man, like Jesus! He preaches and even though you already are a believer in Jesus your heart is gripped again and everything inside you wants to give your all to your risen Saviour.

Peter's words are piercing hearts and tears are flowing as he challenges those ready to believe that the Jesus they had heard about really is the Christ. He commands them to turn from old religious ways and idol worship and join us in following this new Way of Jesus. At first I thought there may be a few hundred who respond but they just kept coming forward asking to be baptised. It was incredible. So much joy. So many tears of repentance.

Later Peter gathers the original group together, about 120 of us who had followed Jesus and witnessed his life, his teaching, his death and his glorious resurrection. We couldn't stop talking and sharing and rejoicing. But then Peter asks a heart stopping question. "Friends, what do we do with all of these new disciples now?"

Then, as if to answer his own question, he looks at all of us and says, "Remember what Jesus said just before going up to heaven? He said 'go and make disciples'. He said he would help us and be with us. I guess the work starts today! Jesus needs every one of us to take responsibility for the harvest. Are you in?"

And so the work began. Peter reminded us that Jesus did most of his disciple making around the dinner table over lunch or supper. He said that was where Jesus taught them and answered questions and explained the parables. Peter reminded us of their last supper before Jesus' crucifixion where Jesus introduced a new covenant meal of bread and wine instead of the Passover meal of lamb. And how he said that we are to do this as often as we eat it, not just on Passover or Sabbath meals. Would we be willing to have groups of people around our dinner tables every night? To break bread, to build community and to make disciples?

I was overwhelmed. I was afraid I wouldn't know what to do. I was scared that people would realise I didn't really know much more than they did. But night after night we watched a miracle unfold. We would listen to what Peter or John or one of the Apostles taught during the day and then our homes became gathering places and our dinner tables became Discipleship Tables where we broke bread together and discussed what they taught and tried to answer questions. And so the early church was born and it began to grow and grow and grow.

If only we had kept up that lifestyle forever. If only our simple dinner tables remained the primary place of discipleship. If only we kept trusting and empowering the new disciples to turn their dinner tables into Discipleship Tables. Who knows, maybe Jesus would be back already?

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Introduction

Welcome to 'Discipleship Tables', a simple manual designed to help make disciples. As you guessed, it is designed to be used as a workbook in groups from two to however many you can fit around your dinner table.

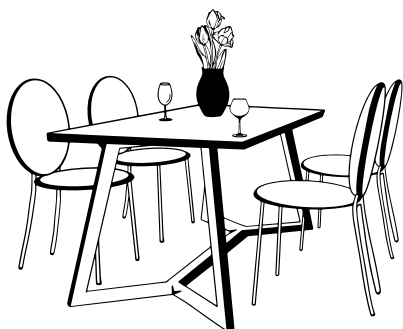
Jesus did so much of his ministry, especially discipleship, around the dinner table. There is something about eating a meal together that engages people and gets them leaning in. We suggest that you do the same. Eat together and build friendship. Then once the meal is done, take out the manual and work through this six week (or thirty six week!) journey together.

The manual itself is based directly on the Great Commission that Jesus gave his disciples just before ascending back to heaven. Here it is:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

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

If we strip everything away and get down to the most basic action words, then I think you will agree that it is "go and make disciples". This is Jesus' plan for his Church. This is God's will for your life and mine. This is what every single believer in the whole world should be giving their lives to do. Everything else is details - this is the main mission. Make disciples. This manual is intended to help with this task. There is no magic formula or silver bullet that will do the job for us. There are simply faithful disciples of Jesus who multiply themselves by making more disciples.



The biggest hurdle is confidence. Most disciples of Jesus were not intentionally discipled in a way that makes it easy for them to disciple others. This manual and the simple Bible process it teaches you, is primarily aimed at giving you a tool that can build your confidence to make disciples. The manual can't make disciples, only other disciples can make disciples. Our prayer is that this will become a tool in your hand to assist in the greatest task given to mankind.

So how do we do it? If we go back to the Great Commission and follow through with verse 19 and 20, I believe that we learn not just what to do (make disciples) but how. Jesus continues and says:

"baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

If we take this as the blueprint then the task consists of baptising new disciples in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to walk out Jesus' commands. Sounds simple enough. But what if baptising is more than a trip to the swimming pool and a simple ceremony? To be baptised means to be 'immersed'. And 'name' is not just a label but speaks of identity, nature and attributes. So I am convinced that we could rewrite this as "immersing them in the identity, nature and attributes of the Father, of Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit"

It's important to note that "teaching to obey" comes after immersing in the identity, nature and attributes of who our God is. When we really get to know our God then obedience should naturally follow. But what are the commands of Jesus? Very basically Jesus condensed them into the New Commandment of "love one another as I have loved you". We already saw that He gave us the Great Commission to multiply ourselves as disciples. And lastly we see that Jesus is building his Glorious Church and invites us to work with him.

So that brings us to the basic six parts of this manual:

1. Baptism in the Name of the Father
2. Baptism in the Name of Jesus
3. Baptism in the Name of the Holy Spirit
4. Obeying the Golden Command to Love
5. Obeying the Great Commission to Make Disciples
6. Obeying His plan for the Glorious Church to Reflect His Glory

Each of these main lessons consists of 5 additional lessons for the new disciple. Either they can be done at home during the week if you are running a six week program or you can work through them all as a group if you are running a thirty six week discipleship year. There are application challenges and journaling with each lesson which are good to review with the group at the start of the next meal together.

Our prayer is that you will dedicate your dining room table to the Lord as a ministry platform and devote an evening a week to inviting people around your Discipleship Table. The dream is to see ordinary disciples right around the world fulfilling the Great Commission so that we can see Jesus return!

Remember what Jesus promised:

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”



Outline

01

Baptised in the Name of the Father

- 1.2 Knowing the Father
- 1.3 Your identity comes from your Father
- 1.4. The glory of your Father
- 1.5. Your access to your Father
- 1.6. Time with your Father

02

Baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ

- 2.2. United in his death
- 2.3. Jesus our Shepherd
- 2.4. Your revelation of Jesus
- 2.5. The attitude of Jesus
- 2.6. The security of Jesus

03

Baptised in the Holy Spirit

- 3.2. The Big Day
- 3.3. The wind of the Spirit
- 3.4. Baptism of fire
- 3.5. The Spirit of unity
- 3.6. The Spirit of truth

04

The Golden Commandment

- 4.2. The source of love
- 4.3. Who we should love
- 4.4. The goal of love
- 4.5. Love as a compass
- 4.6. Love is spelt G.I.V.E

05

The Call to make disciples

- 5.2. Where do we start?
- 5.3. Friendship is the foundation
- 5.4. Setting the table
- 5.5. Hosting a group around a table
- 5.6. Be strong and courageous

06

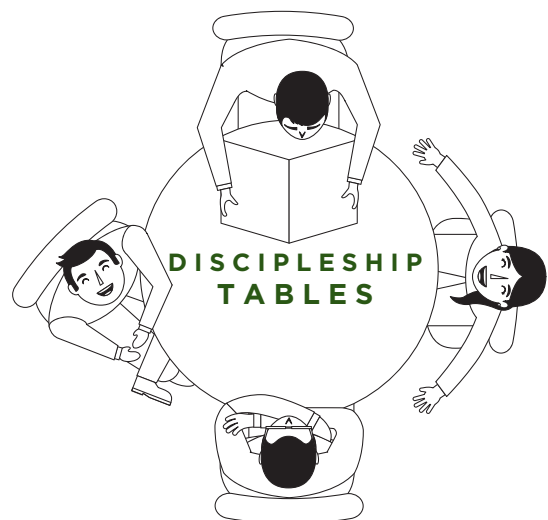
The Glorious Church

- 6.2. How do we do church?
- 6.3. The church roadmap
- 6.4. Use your superpowers
- 6.5. The call to lead
- 6.6. The end of all things

07

What now?

- 7.2. Using S.O.A.P
- 7.3. Helping others start new tables



Planning a discipleship table checklist

This section is designed for people who are new to making disciples and hosting people around their dining room table. They are simply guidelines aimed at getting you started. They include some basic and practical ideas to build your confidence.

PREPARATION CHECK LIST:

- Send invitations to the people you have asked to attend and ask them to confirm on the day that they are coming. Set a start and end time and stick to the time. Eg. 6-8pm. (When people trust you to end on time, they will come even if they have early morning commitments the next day)
- You need to have printed or have electronic copies of the manual for everybody who will be attending.
- You should be familiar with the material for each group lesson. Read through it twice and make some of your own notes. Give some thought to your answers to the challenges and journaling sections.
- Prepare your home and dining room table so that it is reasonably tidy and welcoming. Clear away the clutter, set the table and make sure there is a bathroom ready for guests.
- Prepare dinner for the number of people coming. Encourage anyone else who loves cooking to volunteer to take a turn in the future. Keep the meal simple - it does not have to be expensive and elaborate.
- If you plan on Breaking Bread together make sure you have some bread and grape juice ready as well.

SUGGESTED FORMAT OF AN EVENING:

- Welcome everyone for the first 10 minutes or so and then take seats at the table.
- Give thanks for the meal and invite everyone to serve dinner for themselves. Offer drinks while they are serving their meal.
- If the conversations are flowing then let them flow. If not then take the lead and ask some questions to get the conversation started. E.g. What brought you to our church for the first time? What do you do to keep fit? How long have you lived in the area?
- Once the meal is done, clear the plates and then go into Breaking Bread if you are wanting to. Hand out the bread and cups of juice, read a scripture that pertains to Breaking Bread (eg. 1 Cor 11:23-26). Then offer a prayer for the bread and juice and eat together. This is a great time to go deeper and as the group becomes more comfortable together, invite others to take a turn to lead the Breaking of Bread.
- Then proceed with the evening's lesson from the manual. The manual consists of 6 parts. Lesson one of each section is recommended as the group lesson (ie. 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 ...) if you only plan to use the manual for six weeks. Encourage the group to read the other five lessons as daily homework.
- For the first evening, it is suggested that the host read through the entire lesson slowly and carefully. (In later weeks ask others if they are happy to read) Then read the challenge and ask the group what challenged them most. Lastly read through the Journal section and use them as discussion questions. Try to get the quiet ones to share their opinions and not let the loud ones do all the talking.
- From week two, we suggest that before reading through the new material, you ask how the previous week's lessons have gone. e.g. Which lesson stood out to you most? What has changed in your thinking?
- Use the CHALLENGE and JOURNAL section to probe deeper and get the discussion going. The best way to get others to answer in a vulnerable way is for you to go first.

The first evening is the most difficult because every one is new and getting used to each other. But once you have been together for a few weeks the group will relax more and more and hopefully begin to get real in their contributions and questions.

01

Baptized in the Name of the Father

14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. 20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NLT)

Before reading the content below, look back over the verses you have read and try and pick out one thing, or one verse that caught your attention most. Even better - underline it or highlight it. What was it about this verse that stood out to you?

The first step to discipleship is to be introduced to your Heavenly Father. The further you walk this road of discipleship, the more you will discover that everything comes back to the supreme privilege of having a real relationship with the God of the Heavens that we get to call Father.

For this first lesson, the goal is to catch a glimpse of the enormous love that the Father has for you. Not a love deserved or earned, but given freely to those willing to trust in the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE WONDERS OF HIS LOVE:

Firstly, the Father's love is EXPERIENCED THROUGH A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST. What that means is that Jesus makes his home in a heart of trust. In other words, the stronger your trust in Jesus and His Word, the more at home Jesus is in your life. He comes and 'makes his home in our hearts' through the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the source of inner strength, the Holy Spirit who dwells in the home of our hearts through trust.

Secondly, the Father's love ROOTS us. Trusting God is like sinking roots into the soil of the Father's love. The power of a tree's roots are incredible. For example, they anchor a tree to give it strength and foundation. The deeper and stronger the roots, the taller and bigger the tree can grow. They nourish a tree as life giving sap is drawn up through the roots. Some trees weave their roots together with other trees' roots providing a community of strength for the trees around it. Additionally, roots bond the soil together to prevent erosion. The roots actually preserve that soil for future generations of soil. In the same way the Father's love anchors, nourishes, binds us together and preserves us.

Thirdly, the Father's love is our source of STRENGTH. Being rooted in the Father's love is the key to inner strength. It is consistent. It is unconditional. It is unending. Just like that tree, when we are rooted in the Father's love we are able to anchor ourselves in His unconditional love, draw from that love, build community in that love and share that love with others.

Fourthly, the Father's love is BEYOND UNDERSTANDING. We actually need supernatural help from God to grasp the supernatural extent of the Father's love. Paul describes the four dimensions of the Father's love: How wide - how inclusive. No one is excluded. No race, no religion, no gender, no background can exclude you from the Father's love.

How high - how thrilling. To know at an emotional level the wonder of being loved by God is exhilarating. I am loved. I am precious in the eyes of God. I am valuable.

How deep - how unending. Nothing I can do can separate me from the Father's love. The unending love of the Father is part of his glorious nature.

How long - how enduring. God's love never fails. It endures for all eternity.

Fifthly, the Father's love is to be EXPERIENCED. His love is not just known about academically but experienced emotionally. In fact Paul the apostle prayed for a revelation of the Father's love that would be so real that it would penetrate our hearts and fill us with joy.

And **lastly**, the Father's love COMPLETES us. In other words without a revelation of the Father's love you will always feel incomplete. There is a void or inner emptiness that only His love can satisfy. Many spend their entire lives searching for that something that would bring a sense of wholeness - money, fame, success. Only the Father's love brings true completeness. His love is experienced through fullness of life and power. That's how amazing the Father's love feels - fullness of life and power. What a revelation. What a joy. May God grant you a deep understanding of His supernatural love that is beyond understanding so that you would experience the power and fullness of it.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge today is to realise that our human minds are unable to comprehend the supernatural dimensions of the Father's love for us. Your first challenge is to ask the Father to help you grasp more of a revelation of His amazing love. Will you make that a daily prayer?

JOURNAL

(Writing down your thoughts and answers in a notebook really help you go deeper and gain more from the experience)

- 1. What is the biggest thought that you had as you studied today's lesson?
- 2. You may have heard about God's love before but have you ever really surrendered your heart to his love and experienced it? What might be stopping you?
- 3. Are you willing to open your heart right now and begin to trust and receive this love of your Father?

Knowing the Father

16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19 We love each other because he loved us first.

20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

1 John 4:16-21 (NLT)



Before you read on, learn to get into the habit of first asking which verse stood out to you and why? Now let's wrestle through this beautiful passage together with some questions that arise from these verses.

Do you know how much God loves you? The proof of knowing God's amazing love is TRUSTING in that love. We know his love because He demonstrated that love. In fact, Jesus coming to earth is the living proof of God's love. The Father was willing to send His Son to suffer and die for us to reconcile us to Himself. (See John 3:16)

Do you know God? God IS LOVE. It is not just that God loves but that God is love. God cannot not love. If He stopped loving He would stop being God. He cannot not love! So every action of God is primarily motivated by love.

Do you know if God is living in you? The proof is seen in how you love others. The more you let God love you and receive His love, the more God lives in you and loves through you. "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19)

Have you changed because of the love of God? The proof of knowing God's love is confidence. The perfect love of God drives out or expels fear. In other words, the more you know and experience God's love the more bold you become in your relationship with your Heavenly Father and so the more you have victory over fear. Victory over fear comes from knowing the closeness of your Heavenly Father:

Isaiah 41:13 (NLT)

*13 For I hold you by your right hand—
I, the LORD your God.*

And I say to you,

'Don't be afraid. I am here to help you.'

Do you know what God wants for your life? He wants you to become like Him. He wants you to love others with the love you receive from Him. The more your life is filled with the perfect love of your Father, the more that same love should naturally begin to overflow to all the people around you. The commands of God are summed up in the one new command Jesus gave us:

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

John 13:34-35 (NLT)

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to open your heart more to receive more of your Father’s love. The more you are open and receive His love, the more confident you will become to share His love with the people around you.

JOURNAL

- 1. Do you truly believe that your Heavenly Father loves you so much?
- 2. Do you find it easy or difficult to really open your heart to receive His love?
- 3. How much fear do you still live with? Do you now understand how to get rid of that fear?

Your Identity comes from your Father

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV)

These verses record what happened at Jesus' baptism. Jesus was baptized in water for righteousness. Then he was baptised in the Holy Spirit (as the dove came down and rested upon him) and then baptized in the Father by this amazing declaration:

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

THERE WERE THREE BIG COMPONENTS TO WHAT THE FATHER SPOKE OVER JESUS:

1. BELONGING

The first thing was the Father's claim of Jesus as "My Son". What an incredible sense of security this must have brought to Jesus. To be identified publicly as God's own son. Think of the effect on your identity and security to be called a son of God Most High. Remember that because of the work of Jesus we can now accept the invitation to sonship.

John 1:12 (NLT) *But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*

You are a child of God. That is your primary identity.

2. AFFIRMATION OF LOVE

The Father proclaims His love over His Son. What a joy to hear someone say that they love you. How much more when it is the God of the Heavens! Remember that God spoke and created the heavens and the earth. Imagine the effect of His words of love spoken over His Son. Imagine the effect on your life to fully receive these words from your Father in Heaven. Receive them now - you are loved!

THERE WERE THREE BIG COMPONENTS TO WHAT THE FATHER SPOKE OVER JESUS:

3. PLEASURE

Next the Father proclaims His pleasure over His Son. Jesus had done no ministry yet. Jesus had performed no miracles yet. This proclamation of pleasure was not about performance but purely about relationship. The Father is well pleased with relationship. This is so important because in this world it is performance and achievement that pleases people. In the Kingdom of God, the Father takes delight and great pleasure in relationship. For it is out of relationship that performance flows, not the other way round.

What is interesting is that straight after this encounter, Jesus is led into the desert for 40 days of tempting by the devil.

Matthew 4:1-3 (NIV)

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

The voice of the devil tries to attack Jesus' identity ("If you are the Son of God...") and tempt Him into sin. But it is the voice of His Father, still ringing in His ears and heart that sustains Him. This is why it is so important that we receive our identity and love and affirmation from our Father in Heaven. The devil and the world will try and attack your identity and make you prove yourself. But you don't have to prove anything when you have received it from your Father.

To know the BELONGING, the AFFIRMATION OF LOVE, and the PLEASURE of the Father is what shapes our IDENTITY and SECURITY and CONFIDENCE and helps ward off the lies and temptations of the world.

CHALLENGE:

These words of the Father were TO Jesus but not just FOR Jesus. They were for all the sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father to follow. The challenge today is to open your heart to fully receive them. Will you allow these affirmations of the Father to redefine your identity? Will you allow these words to become the foundation on which your self image is rebuilt? Will you open your heart and listen to the affirmation of your Heavenly Father?

JOURNAL

- 1. Of these three affirmations - BELONGING, LOVE and PLEASURE - which do you find easiest to believe and receive? Why?
- 2. Which do you find most difficult to believe and receive? Why?
- 3. Will you memorize and declare these words of affirmation over your life everyday for the next week? How do they make you feel?

1.4

The glory of your Father

5 Then the LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh. 6 The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. 7 I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected— even children in the third and fourth generations.”

Exodus 34:5-7 (NLT)

This encounter between God and Moses began in the previous chapter where Moses says:

Exodus 33:18 (NLT) Moses responded, “Then show me your glorious presence.”

Have you ever wondered what God’s glory looks like? What is glory? This passage shows us that **the Father’s glory is the expression of His glorious CHARACTER.**

Let’s take a look at the Father’s glory line by line:

- **Yahweh! The LORD!** - this means the Almighty One. The Great “I AM”. Your Father is the God of all power. The more you believe this the more safe you will feel.
- **Father of COMPASSION** - it is the Father’s glory to express kindness before judgement. Your Father is the God of compassion. The more you believe this the more you will surrender to God’s goodness.
- **Father of MERCY** - it is the Father’s glory not to treat us as our sins deserve. Your Father delights in showing mercy. The more you believe this, the more free you will feel and the more merciful you will begin to be to others.
- **Father who is SLOW TO ANGER** - it is the Father’s glory to be patient with us. Your Father is not angry with you. Your Father is patient with you. The more you believe this the more you will stop feeling like God is disappointed with you and the more patient you will be with others.
- **Father of UNFAILING LOVE** - it is the Father’s glory to love us unconditionally and eternally. God’s love never fails. Ever. It is our anchor and fortress. The more you believe this the more secure you will feel.

- **Father of FAITHFULNESS** - it is the Father's glory to be absolutely faithful regardless of how unfaithful we might be to Him. It is because He is faithful that we can have faith. He is unchanging and will never violate His word. The more you believe this the more confident you will feel.
- **Father of GENEROSITY** - it is the Father's glory to lavish His love, forgiveness and kindness to as many as possible. Your Father is the most generous Being in all the universe. The more you believe this the more open handed and open hearted you will be towards others.
- **Father of JUSTICE** - it is the Father's glory to hold man accountable for his choices. When you forgive others, you are giving them over to the God of justice. When you put your faith in Jesus, the justice of God is served upon Jesus on the Cross. The more you believe this the more you will release justice to God and 'let it go'.

This is our Heavenly Father's glory. His glorious character expressed to us. The more we build our lives upon His character, the more we receive and trust His character, the more we will begin to reflect His character to the world around us.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to realise that you were created FOR your Father's glory.

7 Bring all who claim me as their God,
for I have made them for my glory.
It was I who created them.'"
Isaiah 43:7 (NLT)

Our purpose in life is to REFLECT our Father's glory. The more we see it, the more we receive it. The more we live in it, the more we will reflect it.

My PURPOSE is HIS GLORY.

JOURNAL

1. Which aspect of your Father's glory do you need to receive the most? Why?
2. Choose an aspect of your Father's glory and write a few sentences describing how that makes you feel.
3. You were created to reflect His glory. What aspects of his glory might be lacking in the reflection of your life?

Your Access to your Father

1 "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am going." 5 "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

John 14:1-6 (NLT)



Jesus speaks to his disciples about peace, about how to live a life with an untroubled heart. Can you imagine living with an untroubled heart in such a stressful world? The disciples were about to face persecution, danger and incredible difficulty and Jesus was speaking about living with an untroubled heart!

The secret, He explains, is TRUST. The more we trust our Heavenly Father, the more at peace and untroubled our hearts will be.

Then Jesus describes the 'worst case scenario' - what if we die? And the 'worst case scenario' turns out to be a room in the Father's home, specially prepared for us by Jesus Himself!

But what I want to draw your attention to is something that recently caught my attention. I heard a preacher once say, "The final destination of a Christian is not heaven but the Father". Stop and think about this. Jesus didn't say, " .. nobody comes to HEAVEN except through me." but, " .. nobody comes to the FATHER except through me." The Father is the ultimate destination for a believer.

We don't however have to wait for death to enjoy access to our Heavenly Father. We can begin right now, through prayer, to enjoy the ultimate privilege of being with our Father.

Hebrews 4:16 (NLT) So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.



When Jesus is your Lord, you are granted full and free access to the Father's Presence at any and all times. And notice these four things:

1. Our attitude does not need to be fear and dread of His Awesome Presence and our own complete unworthiness but rather boldness because of what Jesus has done for us on the Cross.
2. His Throne is not the Throne of Judgement one would expect and deserve. His Throne is one of GRACE - the undeserved favour of God.
3. As you come before your Father in humble prayer you automatically receive mercy, no matter how far you have strayed or how badly you have fallen.
4. Humble prayer in the Presence of your Father is where you will find His grace, which feels like inner strength and answers to your deepest needs.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge today is to not let your heart be troubled. As you feel an uneasiness or anxiety trying to settle on your heart, trust your Father and go directly to Him in prayer. Whether the fault is yours or not. Go directly to your Father's Presence in prayer fully convinced you will find the strength and help you need.

JOURNAL

1. Have you tried coming into your Father's Presence in prayer? How did it go?
2. How settled or unsettled is your heart right now? Will you practice trust by going before your Father in prayer?
3. Sin made Adam & Eve run away from God. In Jesus we run to God even when we have sinned. Whose lead are you following?

1.6

Time with your Father

Based on all all you have learnt about your Heavenly Father, how do you live a life baptized in the Name of the Father?

It seems that Jesus' disciples noticed the source of his powerful life and ministry flowed from his times alone with his Father and so they asked him to teach them to pray. This is Jesus' reply:

6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

7 "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. 8 Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! 9 Pray like this:

*Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
10 May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.*

*11 Give us today the food we need,
12 and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.*

*13 And don't let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

Matthew 6:6-13 (NLT)



Prayer should be a time of **INTIMACY** with your Father and not an exhibition. It is not big theological words that please the Father. It is not outward expressions or religious ritual. The Father responds to humble relational times alone with His children.

Prayer should be about **HONESTY** with your Father and not formulas or techniques. It is relationship that the Father is looking for, not long winded shopping lists.

Prayer should be **FATHER FOCUSED** before it is 'me' focussed. It is good to ask the Father for things but better to start with loving worship and appreciation of who our Father is.

Prayer about **OUR NEEDS** should be the shortest part of the prayer. More focus should be on worshipping the Father and confessing anything in our hearts that would damage our relationship, than on presenting needs.

Prayer before the Father is where we **RECEIVE HIS MERCY** and extend mercy to others. Prayer before the Father is where we find the grace and strength to stand against temptation and fear.

02

Baptized in the Name of Jesus

Welcome to the second section of this manual. From focusing on our Heavenly Father, we turn our attention now to what it means to be Baptised in the Name of Jesus. Remember that 'baptism' means to be 'immersed' in. And 'the name of' means the nature, attributes and works of. Our prayer is that as you are immersed more and more into the revelation of Jesus, you will be powerfully transformed. Let's begin...

3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:3-11 (NLT)

When you read the passage on the previous page, what stands out most to you? What is your underline verse or phrase? Why do you think it stood out to you?

Baptism JOINS us. To be baptized in Jesus means we are joined to Christ. The best understanding of this for me is marriage. When a husband and wife are joined in marriage they are considered by God to be 'one flesh'.

When a couple are married their sense of 'mine' and 'yours' is replaced with 'ours'. What is yours becomes mine and mine becomes yours. (At least that is supposed to be what happens!) This is what a covenant relationship is about.

In this same way BAPTISM in Christ is like a marriage. Jesus is referred to as the husband in Ephesians 5:25-30. He is the head and we are his body.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body.

Ephesians 5:25-30 (NIV)

Think about what each brings into this marriage of baptism:

What do we bring to Jesus?

1. We bring our guilt, shame and sinfulness
2. We bring our death sentence because of our sin
3. We bring our separation from the Father and from Eternal Life.
4. We bring our darkness and spiritual death.

Compare that to what Jesus brings to the marriage:

1. **His death for sin becomes our death for sin to fulfil God's requirements.** His righteousness is ours! **Romans 6:23 (NIV)** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
2. **His burial becomes our burial of the old sinful nature.** The old has gone. His freedom is ours! **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*
3. **His resurrection becomes our resurrection, the promise of new life.** His victory is ours! **Romans 6:4 (NIV)** *4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

4. His seat at the right hand of the Father becomes our seat. His seat of authority is ours!

Ephesians 2:6 (NIV) *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*

What a glorious privilege to be baptized into Jesus Christ!

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to be like a bride who says “Yes!” to her groom, and in that moment is transferred from the old authority of her father, to the new authority of her husband. Have you said yes to Jesus Christ? Have you been joined in the covenant of baptism with Jesus?

JOURNAL

1. Have you been joined to Christ in baptism? This is not about water - this is about saying yes, like a bride giving herself in marriage to her husband.
2. Have you been baptized in water? This is like the wedding ceremony to celebrate the new marriage. If not, why not?
3. How does it make you feel knowing that you are in a relationship with Christ where ‘what’s yours is mine and what’s mine is yours’?

United in his death

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29 (NLT)

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

Romans 6:5-7 (NLT)



God spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden and said that if he ate of the fruit he was told not to eat of, he would surely die.

Genesis 3:3 (NIV) but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'

Adam and Eve did eat and they did die. Not physically straight away, but they were separated from God's presence, separated from God's favour and separated from eternal life. They died spiritually. That's what death really is - separation from Life. That's where Paul the apostle got the verse: "The wages (or payment) for sin is death"

The power of sin and Satan are in this command of God. If Satan can get us to sin, then we are under the sentence of death. Of course all of us have sinned and so all of us were separated from our Heavenly Father's love, presence, favour and life. And all of us were under the sentence of death.

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

But, Paul continued in Romans 6:23, "the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord". The love and wisdom of our Father sent Jesus the Son as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world". He was specifically sent to die as a sacrifice to fulfil what God Himself had said. But, and this is the BIG IDEA, Jesus paid the penalty of sin by dying but had never sinned personally. He personally was not under the sentence of death for his own sin. So Jesus could give his death away because He didn't need it to pay for his own sin! That is why it says:

Romans 6:23 (NIV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The result is, when we are “married” or joined to Christ in baptism, His death can be credited to our account. Our “wages of sin is death” is paid for by Jesus who didn’t need to pay his own wages. Therefore God is legally just in forgiving us, because His word is fulfilled AND Satan and sin no longer have power or authority over us because we have paid the wages of sin - we are debt free!

What an amazing gift! What an amazing plan! What an amazing Savior Jesus Christ; This is why being baptized into Jesus breaks the power of sin - we were crucified with Christ and we are no longer slaves under the sentence of death and control of sin.

CHALLENGE:

Are we still tempted? Yes. Do we still wrestle with sin? Yes. But, sin can no longer keep us from God. We no longer run away from our Father when we have sinned. The challenge for today is that when you are struggling with temptation, or when you have messed up, don’t run from your Father, run straight to Him in prayer to receive that mercy and find that grace to help you. **(Hebrews 4:16)**

JOURNAL

1. Are you still living under the power of sin - guilt, shame, separation and condemnation? If so, consider that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who died in your place to set you free. How does that make you feel?
2. Have you experienced the weight of guilt and shame being lifted from your shoulders? Your record of sin (past, present and future) has been paid in full! It is paid for. Eternal life is now yours!
3. Are there some struggles with sin that you don’t seem to be winning? Maybe you have an addiction of some sort. The secret is to not pull away from God even when sin is pulling you down. Keep talking to your Father, keep asking for his grace and keep believing in his love.

Jesus our Sheperd

1 "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! 2 But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. 5 They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

6 Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, 7 so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. 9 Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. 10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

John 10:1-11 (NLT)



In this parable (short story with a meaning), Jesus describes his disciples as SHEEP. Not exactly glamorous. But here is what we know about sheep. They are made to flock together for safety and community. They need a shepherd to watch over them and lead them.

Here Jesus describes our relationship with Him as exactly the same. And to be baptized in Christ means to see ourselves as becoming a sheep in his flock. Here is what that means:

1. Jesus is the GATE. The gatekeeper of the sheep is a position of authority. That authority keeps the sheep safe from thieves and wolves. We enter the sheep pen by coming to Christ. Only those who are submitted to the Lordship and authority of Jesus are true sheep of his flock.

2. Jesus is the SHEPHERD. He says that he will lead his sheep by a loving relationship. Have you ever seen how natural sheep respond to a loving shepherd? They trust his voice and when he calls they respond. Jesus speaks to us through his word, the Bible, that comes alive to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The more we love and trust Jesus, the more he will be able to lead us like a good shepherd.

3. Jesus said that his purpose is to give his sheep a RICH AND SATISFYING LIFE. Some other Bible translations say that he has come to give us ABUNDANT LIFE. In other words, the result of following Jesus like sheep follow a shepherd will be LIFE.

Take a look at Psalm 23 where David has this revelation:

Psalms 23:1 (NIV) *"The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing."*

This leads him to an even greater realisation:

Psalms 23:6 (NIV) Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life"

What a privilege to live as a sheep in Christ's flock.

4. You are **LOVED** by the shepherd. Not only does Jesus our Shepherd protect us and know us by name and lead us by his voice, but it says he lays down his life for his sheep. That of course is exactly what Jesus did do on the Cross. Jesus is not just our shepherd, He is the Good Shepherd.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge today is to wrestle this revelation from your head to your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a deep revelation understanding and belief of what it means to live with Jesus as your personal shepherd. What a security being a sheep in the flock of Jesus Christ. To be baptized into Christ means baptized into his flock and take on the identity of a sheep in the flock of the Great Shepherd. What a comfort. What peace. What a joy!

JOURNAL

1. How do you feel reading about your new identity as a sheep in the flock of Jesus?
2. What should change in your life as you receive this revelation of Jesus as your Shepherd?
3. Do you struggle with being more of a pessimist than an optimist? How would that change with a genuine revelation of "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life"?

2.4

Your revelation of Jesus

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

14 “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

15 Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. 18 Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”

Matthew 16:13-19 (NLT)



The answer to the question, “Who do you say that Jesus is?”, is without doubt the most important question there is. Your real answer to this will have a radical and eternal impact on your life.

Notice what Jesus said to Peter when Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, or Anointed One of God:

1. He called him BLESSED. There is amazing blessing that comes from your revelation of Jesus. Paul said it like this:

Colossians 2:3 (NLT) “In him [Jesus] lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

First we have revelation of who Jesus is and from that revelation flows great blessing. For example we looked at the revelation of Jesus as our Shepherd. David has this revelation of the Lord his shepherd and concluded:

Psalms 23:6 (NLT) “Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life”

In other words, first came revelation and then came blessing.

2. Jesus BUILDS on revelation. It was on the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah that Jesus said he would build his church. In the same way our lives are built on the revelation of who Jesus is. Just like the wise man who built his house on the rock, so our lives are established on the truth of Christ. (**Matthew 7:24-27**)

Our very IDENTITY is built on our revelation of Jesus. Notice how Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter (meaning ‘rock’) because of the revelation he had of Jesus. In the same way, our identity is formed around our understanding of who Jesus is.

3. Demonic powers cannot PREVAIL against your revelation of Jesus. Jesus declared that all the powers of hell cannot conquer a people built on the revelation of Christ. In Ephesians 6:16, our faith is described as a shield that can stop all the attacks of the enemy. Satan's weapon is doubt. Jesus' weapon is a revelation of Himself, the TRUTH. (John 14:6)

4 AUTHORITY is given to you. Jesus said to Peter that he would give him the keys to the Kingdom. Keys open and close doors. They represent authority. The more you grow in your revelation of Jesus the more authority is given to you. Soon after this Peter was healing sick people and opening chained prison doors.

The **BIG IDEA** is this - your revelation of Jesus is the greatest treasure you have. So the encouragement is to keep pursuing a greater revelation of Jesus just like a treasure hunter would keep pursuing lost gold.

CHALLENGE:

Do you see how powerful our revelation of Jesus is? This is why your revelation of Jesus is the most precious gift you have. This is why to be baptized in Jesus the Son means to immerse our lives into an ever growing revelation of who He truly is.

Notice, finally, that it says, this revelation of Jesus is not given by any human but is a gift from your Father in Heaven. Your Father wants to give you a greater revelation of Jesus if you will ask. He will open your heart to greater understanding and send the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Today's challenge is to make this a daily prayer, "Father, please reveal more of Jesus to me!"

JOURNAL

1. How would you describe the difference between head knowledge and heart revelation?
2. How do you think most people would describe who Jesus is?
3. Who is Jesus to you? What real heart revelation of Jesus do you currently have?

2.5

The attitude of Jesus

5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

*6 Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.*

*7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;
he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.*

*When he appeared in human form,
8 he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

*9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor
and gave him the name above all other names,*

*10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

*11 and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

Philippians 2:5-11 (NLT)



Your attitude is your way of thinking. To be baptized in Christ means to submit to His way of thinking. So what does the attitude of Jesus look like?

1.No ENTITLEMENT

“6 Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.”

If anyone had the right to feel entitled it was Jesus. The God of Heaven came as a man to the world He created. But instead of entitlement, he opened his hand and didn't cling to his divine privilege and power. He had an attitude of open handed giving, not closed handed taking.

2.Complete SERVANTHOOD

“7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;
he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.”

He was able to choose whatever station he wanted in life. He could have been born into royalty in a palace but chose instead to be born into poverty in a stable. He had an attitude of humble serving, not arrogant position.

WHAT DOES THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS LOOK LIKE?

3. Absolute **OBEDIENCE**

“When he appeared in human form,
8 he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal’s death on a cross.”

Instead of demanding that others obey him as the Son of God, He made Himself absolutely obedient to His Father in Heaven. Even at the expense of his life. He had an attitude of obedience to God, not demanding obedience from others.

The result? The complete opposite of what one may expect. Notice how his attitude really did impact on his altitude!

“9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor
and gave him the name above all other names,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.”

1. Greatest **HONOUR** - He was given the Name above every other name.
2. Greatest **AUTHORITY** - He was given authority that every knee should bow in His presence.
3. Greatest **GLORY** - He was given the highest glory that makes every tongue confess that He is Lord.

The BIG IDEA is this - God takes our attitude seriously and in the Kingdom of God your attitude really does determine your altitude.

CHALLENGE:

Most people strive towards building their own reputation, gaining authority for themselves or seeking praise for themselves. The attitude of Jesus was the opposite. He showed us that the path to significance is serving, humility and obedience to God. The result was that God GAVE honor, authority and glory, Jesus didn’t have to fight for them.

The challenge for today is an attitude adjustment. Are you willing to be baptized into the attitude of Christ?

JOURNAL

1. How do you feel about the attitude of Jesus? What caught your attention?
2. How does your attitude compare to that of Jesus?
3. Are you willing to trust God enough to change your attitude to that of Christ?

2.6

The security of Jesus

3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. 4 So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, 5 and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

John 13:3-5 (NLT)



Right at the start of verse four above is one of the biggest words in the Bible. It's the word 'So'. This simply means that whatever comes before the 'so', is the reason for whatever comes after the 'so'.

What comes after the 'so' is one of the most profound acts of humble service ever recorded. In a dry and dusty land like Israel, people wore sandals on their feet and the need to wash your feet was part of cultural life. It was the role of the slaves. There was no lower task than washing someone else's feet.

Yet this is the task Jesus chooses to do to demonstrate his love and teach his disciples to love. Which is why whatever came before the 'so' is so important. What motivated Jesus to take the place of a slave and serve his disciples in this way?

1. Jesus was SECURE IN HIS POSITION

"3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God."

If you are insecure you need people to serve you to feed your ego or show others your status. Jesus knew the boundaries of the authority given to him from above and so didn't need people's affirmation or the privileges of power to demonstrate his self worth. Jesus was SECURE IN HIS POSITION.

2. Jesus was SECURE IN HIS IDENTITY

"3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God."

Where you come from or who you come from defines your identity. Do you come from wealth or poverty? Do you come from royalty or lower class? What race, culture or class are questions the world uses to define people. Jesus came from the Heavenly Father. He didn't need people to affirm his identity and nobody had the power to undermine his identity. Jesus was SECURE IN HIS IDENTITY from his Father.

3. Jesus was SECURE IN HIS DESTINY

"3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God."

Most people are trying to climb ladders of success and either climb over people to get there or need people to promote them there. Not Jesus. He knew that his 'promotion' came from the Father. He was free of the need of people's approval and lived to please his Father alone. Jesus was SECURE IN HIS DESTINY.

CHALLENGE:

When you combine these three aspects of self awareness that Jesus had, you begin to understand this amazing truth. **IT TAKES GREAT SECURITY TO SERVE GREATLY.**

Jesus wants us to discover the blessing of serving:

John 13:14-17 (NIV)

*14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 **Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.***

And Jesus has called us to demonstrate his leadership of serving:

Matthew 20:26-27 (NIV)

26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave

Notice finally that each of these aspects are part of our identity RECEIVED not identity ACHIEVED.

1. We are given **AUTHORITY**. Matthew 10:1 (NIV) "Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness."
2. We are given the **IDENTITY** of sonship. **John 1:12 (NIV)** "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"
3. We are given the **DESTINY** of eternal life. **John 14:6 (NIV)** "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.""

If you don't know these things by revelation you will spend your life trying to achieve them. When you know you have received them you can spend your life serving because of them. The challenge for today is to take hold of the AUTHORITY, IDENTITY and DESTINY that come from being baptized into Christ.

03

Baptized in the Holy Spirit

32 Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. 33 I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God."

John 1:32-34 (NLT)

Today we start Part 3 of this manual and our journey of baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is not an 'it' or a 'force'. He is in every way equal with the Father and Jesus the Son in both character and attributes. Each member of the Trinity however, has a different function. The Father rules over all. Jesus is seated on the Throne at His right hand as saviour and conqueror of the world. The Holy Spirit is given to now dwell within and empower each disciple of Jesus.

Today we see that the sign that marked Jesus as the Chosen One of God was the Holy Spirit coming to rest upon him. John the Baptist knew that this is the One who will baptize us in the Holy Spirit. It is important to see that the Holy Spirit 'rests' on us and not 'wrestles' with us. He will not force his way into our lives.

Jesus didn't start his ministry until he had received this baptism in the Holy Spirit. In fact everything Jesus did from this point on was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. He wasn't acting in his own power but rather in full dependance on the power of the Holy Spirit. He said the same to his disciples:

Acts 1: 4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Remember that to be baptized means your whole life is fully immersed, joined or filled. In this case, filled with the Holy Spirit. Now the Gospel of Matthew picks up the story straight after Jesus' baptism in the Holy Spirit:

Matthew 4:1 (NLT) *1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil.*

Immediately we learn three important lessons about being baptized in the Holy Spirit:

1. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit means to be LED by the Holy Spirit. If you want to be baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit then you are going to have to trust the goodness of God enough to let him lead you. It starts with a full surrender of our will. Are you willing to surrender full control of your life to the Holy Spirit?

2. The Holy Spirit will not always lead you to where you want to go! The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. Are you willing to trust the goodness of God enough to keep following even when it feels like the Holy Spirit is leading you into times of trial or suffering?

3. The Holy Spirit will help us overcome temptation and spiritual attack. Only after being baptized in the Spirit did Jesus face and defeat the temptation of Satan. We can and will be victorious over sin when we are led by the Holy Spirit. Are you hungry for more of the power of God to work in and through you?

CHALLENGE:

Are you ready to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? Will you say YES to his leadership. Yes to follow him even when it's tough and yes to trusting him to overcome temptation? The challenge for today is literally to picture yourself jumping into a river. Once you are in, the river will carry you along with its own power. Are you willing to jump?

JOURNAL

- 1. How do you feel about inviting the Holy Spirit into your life as your leader?
- 2. Are you ready to say yes to the Holy Spirit in every area of your life?
- 3. Truly believing that God is good and faithful all the time is critical to surrendering all to Him. Have you reached that place?

The Big Day

Have you ever been introduced by someone you do know to someone you don't know? The job of the 'introducer' is to connect you who they know, to someone else they know but you don't. Did you get that?

Well, the Father knows us and He knows the Holy Spirit, but the world doesn't yet know the Holy Spirit. So the Father wants to introduce the Holy Spirit to the world. He does this by using various pictures and symbols. The first is the DAY that God chose to pour out the Holy Spirit

1 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Acts 2:1-4 (NLT)



So why the day of Pentecost? The Father could have chosen any day but He chose this specific day which would have been very symbolic to the Jews. This was the day, every year, that the Jews celebrated the Festival of Harvest.

Numbers 28: (NLT) 26 "At the Festival of Harvest, when you present the first of your new grain to the LORD, you must call an official day for holy assembly, and you may do no ordinary work on that day.

This was the day they celebrated **FRUITFULNESS**. The Holy Spirit was given by the Father as the first fruit of our salvation and as the Spirit of Fruitfulness. What that means is that if you want to live a fruitful or effective life for the Lord, then the Holy Spirit is the answer.

Firstly, it is the Holy Spirit who produces **FRUIT** in your life:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Secondly, the Holy Spirit brings **FREEDOM** to our lives:

2 Corinthians 3:17 (NLT)

17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

And thirdly, the Holy Spirit gives us special **FUNCTIONS** or gifts for service:

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NLT)

7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

As you can see, learning to depend on the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to lead you is the key to living a powerful, victorious and fruitful life!

CHALLENGE:

As you invite the Holy Spirit to fill your life, expect Him to begin to lead you through new, God given desires inside you. You should start noticing 'new' desires inside you. He is called the HOLY Spirit because he produces desires of holiness inside of us. This will come in the form of new desires to live a life of holiness, to turn away from sin, to want to serve God, to want to love people etc. The challenge for today is to begin to recognise these new desires and begin to obey them.

JOURNAL

1. Have you begun to sense the Holy Spirit wanting to lead you through new desires inside you?
2. Today's lesson mentioned three areas of the Holy Spirit's leadership - fruit of changed character, freedom from sin and addictions and functional gifts to serve God. Can you identify any change of desires in these three areas of your life?
3. To be led by the Holy Spirit is like a surfer who rides a wave - the wave carries the power to move the surfer forward. In the same way the Holy Spirit empowers us with grace when we align ourselves with him. Can you recognise a new strength in you as you start making adjustments in line with the Holy Spirit?

The wind of the Spirit

Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:2 (NLT)

To us this might sound a bit strange, but for the disciples of Jesus who knew all about the Old Testament, the sound of wind would have been very significant. God was using the sound of wind to describe what it will be like to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

First, the actual word for wind or breath or spirit are the same Greek word. So the first thing the disciples might have thought about was that this is the second time God “breathed” into man. Way back in Genesis when God first created Adam he fashioned him from the dust and then “breathed” into him and he came alive.

Genesis 2:7 (NLT)

7 Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

So the wind or “breath” of heaven brings new life. This is demonstrated in another famous example that the disciples would have been reminded of as well. The prophet Ezekiel was shown a vision from God of a valley of dry bones and God asked him in the vision if he thought the old bones could live again. God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind and look what happens:

Ezekiel 37:9-10 (NLT)

9 Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.’”

10 So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army.

Isn’t that amazing? The wind of God caused the bones to not only come back to life, but to stand up as a great army! Baptism in the Holy Spirit fills us with the breath of God that makes us come alive and become a force to be reckoned with!

Lastly, the disciples may have remembered the conversation Jesus had with a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Jesus spoke of the need of being ‘born again’ to be part of God’s Kingdom. Look how he described it:

John 3:8 (NLT)

8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

So to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to ask God to breathe the very life giving breath of Heaven into us. The wind of the Spirit revives us, turns areas of death into life and establishes us as an army of the Lord!

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to ask God to breathe the wind of the Spirit into your life right now. And trust Him to do just that. You may not hear the sound of a mighty storm, but if you believe you will begin to experience the effect of the wind of the Spirit in your life. This doesn't have to be a once off thing either, but rather we should constantly be asking the Holy Spirit to come and fill us afresh with God's life and power.

JOURNAL

- 1. Do you believe that areas of brokenness, death or failure in your life can be turned into victory by the Spirit of God? If so, then why not hand them over to God and ask him to come and breathe his life giving Spirit into them?
- 2. Take some time right now to pray, perhaps even write out a prayer, asking God to breathe the power of his Holy Spirit into your life.
- 3. Try asking the Holy Spirit what areas of your life he wants to come and breathe new life into. Did any sudden thoughts or ideas suddenly drop into your mind?

Baptism of Fire

3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.

Acts 2:3 (NLT)



The next remarkable characteristic of being baptized in the Holy Spirit came in the form of fire. Once again the disciples of Jesus would understand the powerful symbolism of what was happening. When the tabernacle or temple of the Old Testament was dedicated, God sent the fire of his Presence and Holiness to fill it:

2 Chronicles 7:1 (NLT)

1 When Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple.

Exodus 40:38 (NLT)

38 The cloud of the LORD hovered over the Tabernacle during the day, and at night fire glowed inside the cloud so the whole family of Israel could see it. This continued throughout all their journeys.

The fire represented God's Holy Presence. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit turns your body into a temple for the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 6:19 (NLT) Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?"

This is such an amazing thought - that the holy presence of God now dwells in us! I'm sure the disciples would have thought of another amazing demonstration of fire from the Lord when God met with Moses:

Exodus 3:2-5 (NLT)

2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. 3 "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

4 When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

5 "Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground."

This is such a beautiful prophetic picture of what God has done for us. We who are sinful and unholy should be 'burnt up' and consumed by the Holy Presence of God, and yet, just like this bush, we are on fire with His Presence but not consumed. Why? Because of the wonder of the Cross of Jesus! Jesus has made us holy and cleansed us with his blood so that we can now become temples of the Holy Spirit and not be consumed!

CHALLENGE:

Do you realise that to be baptized in the Holy Spirit means becoming a vessel for the very Presence of the Holy God! God lives in us! What an amazing thought. The challenge for today is to dedicate our bodies to the Holy Spirit as a temple for his Presence. Then to dedicate the rest of our lives to being led by his Presence.

JOURNAL

1. Fire burns up wood and straw but purifies gold and silver - to invite the fire of the Holy Spirit into your life will do the same. Are you willing to let the fire of God come and burn within you?
2. How do you feel about your body being a temple for the Presence of God? Are you currently using your body in a God honouring way or are there some things you do to your body or with your body that might not be appropriate for a temple?
3. Take a moment to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with the fire of His Presence right now.

The Spirit of Unity

4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

7 They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, 8 and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages!"

Acts 2:4-8 (NLT)



The next remarkable thing that happened when the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit is that they began to speak in other languages. This is a bit controversial for some - was it a heavenly language or real language of another nation? Does everyone who is baptized in the Holy Spirit need to speak in other languages or tongues?

Certainly when Paul prayed for a filling of the Holy Spirit in Ephesus they also spoke in tongues:

Acts 19:6 (NLT)

6 Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.

Yet when the apostles prayed for the new believers in Samaria there is no mention of it:

Acts 8:17 (NLT)

17 Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

So no, not everyone HAS to speak in tongues. But it is an amazing gift that Paul the apostle found so helpful and I encourage you to ask God for the release of this gift in your life!

1 Corinthians 14:4-5 (NLT)

4 A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.

5 I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened.

So speaking in tongues is helpful at a personal level to strengthen and build you up. But even better is another gift of the Holy Spirit, namely prophecy, which strengthens others.

So why is such a big thing made of speaking in tongues when the Holy Spirit was first given? Because the result was that all those in the city, no matter what their mother tongue, all got to hear the Good News in their own language. People who were divided by language were now united! That's the power of the Holy Spirit!

Way back in Genesis, when the people were trying to build a monument to their own glory, God divided the people by mixing up their languages because:

Genesis 11:6-7 (NIV)

6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

So now, the Holy Spirit has reversed this by giving us a common language of the Spirit so that in unity we can fulfil God's plan of making disciples of all the nations! (Matthew 28:18-20) Nothing will be impossible for a united church!

Personally, I have had the privilege of meeting many disciples of Jesus in many different countries that speak many different languages. But if they are Spirit filled believers, then it is as if we speak the same language of the heart, even when our tongues might be different. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of UNITY!

CHALLENGE:

If you have not yet received the gift of speaking in tongues, then ask God for that gift right now! God is good and God loves to give good gifts to His children. The challenge for today is to ask and believe and begin to trust that the strange words that drop into your thoughts are being sent by the Holy Spirit. Speak them out in faith and ask the Holy Spirit to keep giving you more words to say.

Remember what you read in the first scripture today, the Holy Spirit gave them the ability - He didn't do it for them but empowered them to speak.

JOURNAL

1. What has been your experience of speaking in tongues? How do you feel about this gift?
2. Take some time out by yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to unlock this gift inside you. Don't let fear hold you back. Step out in faith and begin to speak out the words that come to mind.
3. As you speak out these new words, ask the Holy Spirit what they mean. You might find that ideas suddenly come to mind or a scripture you read recently pops into your thoughts. This is one of the powerful ways the Holy Spirit speaks to us.

3.6

The Spirit of Truth

15 "If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you."

John 14:15-18 (NLT)



This is a beautiful passage of Scripture where Jesus is preparing his disciples to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let's take a closer look:

The REQUIREMENT for Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a true faith and trust in Jesus. "If you love me obey my commandments". This is similar to what Peter preached:

Acts 2:38 (NLT)

38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The requirement for Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a heart that has turned to God in genuine repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins and is now following Jesus.

Jesus then describes the Holy Spirit as the **ADVOCATE** (one who stands alongside you). Some translations use the word 'friend'. Jesus wants to emphasise that the Holy Spirit will never leave our side. An advocate is another name for a lawyer. If you are in trouble with the law and need to appear in court, then you are assigned an advocate to stand alongside you to defend you and fight for you. This is the description that Jesus gives the Holy Spirit.

Jesus points to his **FUNCTION**. He says the Holy Spirit will lead or guide you into all truth. Remember that He is the 'Holy' Spirit - that means He will lead and influence you into a life set apart from sin and for serving God. He does this by opening our eyes and hearts to the wonders of God's Word. You will begin to experience God's Word literally coming alive to you as you carefully read the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you.

John 14:26 (NLT)

26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you."

Lastly Jesus explains WHAT Baptism in the Holy Spirit is: "But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you." (Vs 17). In other words, Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not just the Holy Spirit WITH us, but living IN us. Quite literally our lives are joined or united with Him!

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to start living with an awareness that you are never alone. The Holy Spirit, the advocate, is always alongside you to help you and to lead you to live a God glorifying life. Start practicing silent prayer with the Holy Spirit throughout the day. Ask him for his help. Ask him for wisdom. Ask him for strength. Ask him to help you love and serve people. You will be amazed as you experience the life giving power of the Holy Spirit working in and through you.

JOURNAL

1. You have learnt all about Baptism in the Holy Spirit but have you truly been baptized in the Holy Spirit? What has been your experience so far?
2. What is holding you back from an even deeper surrender and filling of the Holy Spirit? Are there still fears or 'no entry' signs over parts of your life that haven't yet been given over to him?
3. What has been your experience of walking with an awareness of the Holy Spirit throughout the day? What can you do to grow in this area?

04

The Golden Command

1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7 (NLT)

The second half of the Great Commission is about how our baptism in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, affects the way we live our lives.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Before giving the Great Commission, Jesus had already given the Great Commandment:

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

We will see over the next few lessons that this command to love God and love one another literally sums up EVERYTHING about the way we live our lives. So before we go further we have to look at two big questions. Firstly, why is love so important? And secondly, what exactly is love?

The first 3 verses of 1 Corinthians 13 above reveal the importance of love. Quite literally, you can have great talent but talent without love is meaningless to God. You could carry great power. But power without love is meaningless to God. You could live a sacrificial life. But great sacrifice without love achieves nothing for God. In other words, if love is not the root motivation of EVERYTHING we do, then whatever we do is meaningless! Put another way, the new definition of sin is not comparing yourself to the LAW but comparing yourself to LOVE!

So what then is love? Is it a feeling or emotion? Yes and no. Love is a strong emotion which is a powerful motivation. But godly love is actually faith inspired and not just feeling driven:

Galatians 5:6 (NLT)

6b "What is important is faith expressing itself in love."

Loving actions should not just follow loving feelings, they should follow faith. My feelings are not my master, Jesus is. As we act in faith, that is, deliberately choosing to love one another even when we might not feel loving, that is when we discover joy. So make sure that faith is the master of your love and not just feelings.

So what do loving actions look like? Paul describes them beautifully in the next few verses of this famous passage:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT)

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Love is the way you treat people. Love is your character. Love is the way you handle conflict and deal with praise. Love is your attitude and love is your motivation. When you act lovingly towards God and one another you are fulfilling what Jesus has called you to. All the other commands of Jesus, and all the Law of the Old Testament are all fulfilled when we choose to express our faith by loving others. This the what following Jesus looks like.

CHALLENGE:

Don't focus on trying not to sin. Focus on loving God and others. When this is our single focus, we will be walking as true disciples of Jesus. The challenge for today is to embrace love as the new guideline for righteousness. Stop asking yourself if something is right or wrong and begin asking if it is loving or not.

JOURNAL

- 1. Write out 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 but instead of putting in the word 'love', put in your name. Eg. "Bob is patient and kind. Bob is not jealous or..."
- 2. That is your new identity. How does it feel? Remember that we can't do this alone but only as those loved by the Father, set free by the Son and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- 3. Are you struggling to stop sinning in a particular area of your life? If so, take a few minutes to work on this sentence: "In the area of ___(name your struggle)_____ in my life, I will change my thinking from 'Don't ___(name the action of sin)___' to 'Start loving by ___(describe how you could be loving God and others in this area)_____.' "




4.2

The source of love

We love each other because he loved us first."

1 John 4:19 (NLT)



In the previous lesson we saw why love is so important and what love looks like. Today's lesson is equally critical as we discover the source of love. This is the Good News - if you understand this lesson then loving others will not be hard work and effort but a natural extension of who you are.

The lesson is simply this: we REFLECT the REVELATION we have of God. In other words, **what you TRULY see and believe about God, is what you will naturally express to others.** Paul discovered this amazing secret:

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT) *"So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."*

SEE AND REFLECT. That's the power of God that changes us. When you truly see something about God - a revelation of His nature that comes alive to you, then you will be changed by it as you begin to reflect it.

So what does this mean practically? Remember our key verse today:

1 John 4:19 (NLT) *"We love each other because he loved us first."*

So why do we love others? BECAUSE He first loved us. In other words, when we get a revelation of God's amazing love for us then the most natural thing in the world is to begin to reflect that love to others. I will go so far as to say that your current level of love for others is a reflection of how much you have experienced God's love for you! And the more you begin to experience His great love, the more you will reflect it to others.

Sounds easy right? I have found that many disciples have an academic understanding of God's love but never experienced it. Sometimes it's because of fear - afraid to truly open your heart to God's love. Sometimes because of guilt and shame - without an understanding of the power of Jesus' blood you still feel dirty and ashamed and unworthy of His great love. Sometimes because of pride and religion - a sense of wanting to earn that love through good behaviour or performance.

The reality is that God loves us because of who HE IS and not because we are lovely. God is love. His love is unconditional. His love is demonstrated through the giving of Jesus.

1 John 4:10 (NLT) *"This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins."*

Our love for God is simply a reflection back to Him of His great love for us. God's love was poured out on us while we were still sinners, while we were ignoring Him, while we least deserved it. When you get a revelation of this love, you can't help but reflect it back to God and others.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to listen to these words that the Father spoke over Jesus and receive them as if the Father was speaking just to you:

Matthew 3:17 (NLT) "And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.""

JOURNAL

1. Three barriers to receiving God's love were mentioned: fear, shame and pride. Do you think any of these might be hindering you from receiving more of God's love?
2. How loving are you to the people around you? Not just to family and friends but to those you don't know or even those you don't particularly like. Meditate on how much God loves them and see how that begins to change you.
3. Can you recall a moment when you really experienced God's love? A moment when His love seemed so real or came alive for the first time. If you can, then meditate on that moment often as you thank Him for His love.

Who we should love

27 The man answered, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

28 “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!”

29 The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “**And who is my neighbor?**”

Luke 10:27-29 (NLT)



Now that we have established why love is so important, what love looks like and the source of our love, we need to tackle the next big question - exactly who should we be loving?

The Old Testament way of thinking, was that love is a response: ‘Love your friends and hate your enemies’. Jesus commands his disciples to be different. Jesus takes love from being a response to being a step of faith. He told this story to illustrate:

Luke 10:30-37 (NLT)

30 Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

31 “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. 32 A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

33 “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. 34 Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. 35 The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

36 “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

37 The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”
Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

This is such a convicting story and teaches us some powerful truths about who we should be loving. Here are a few examples:

Firstly, we should be loving those who **CAN’T HELP THEMSELVES**. It’s easy to love someone who can love you right back. The love of God calls us to love people who are unable to love us back.

Luke 14:12-14 (NLT)

12 Then he [Jesus] turned to his host. “When you put on a luncheon or a banquet,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. 13 Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”

Secondly, God's love calls us to love our **ENEMIES** and people who are different from us. The Samaritans and Jews were old enemies. They were from different cultural backgrounds who did not mix together. But the love of God overrides cultural barriers and prejudices.

Matthew 5:43-44 (NLT)

43 "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!"

Thirdly, we should love those who **INCONVENIENCE** us. The love of God is always sacrificial and genuine love always costs us. Just like the Samaritan gave up his donkey and gave up his money to help, just like the Father gave up his Son to help, so God's love is never convenient and always costs something.

John 3:16 (NLT)

16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

So what was Jesus basically saying? That no one is outside of Jesus' command to us to love. If they are alive, **LOVE THEM!** This is the New Command that Jesus gives his disciples and which covers all other requirements.

CHALLENGE:

The temptation is to cross to the other side of the road and find excuses why not to get involved in the mess of other people's lives. But Jesus commands us to love. The challenge for today is to begin to walk towards people in need and not away from them.

JOURNAL

1. What part of the Samaritan story challenges you the most and why?
2. Write a list of the people you struggle the most to love and begin to ask God to fill you with His love for them by the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. What scares you most about loving people? That they take advantage of you? That they hurt or abuse you? That you are inconvenienced? Try and be as honest as you can.

The goal of love

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

John 13:34-35 (NLT)



In this lesson to his disciples, Jesus reveals the BIG WHY. Why is loving others so important? The answer he gives is simply this:

“35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

The real proof that we are disciples of Jesus is seen in the way we treat people. It's easy to get this wrong. Sometimes we think the proof of being a Jesus follower is a bumper sticker of a fish on our car. Or a scripture on our profile picture. Or our radio tuned to gospel hits. It's not. The proof of being a Jesus follower is the way we love one another.

What Jesus reveals here is the way the WORLD thinks. The unbelievers in the world don't really care about our bumper stickers, profile pictures or any other religious trimmings in our lives. In fact the quoting of scripture, judgemental attitude and moralising drive unbelievers away. There is only one thing that will win the respect of the unbeliever and prove the power of Jesus to the world - it is when His disciples practice genuine love for others.

And this is not about words. This is about action. The way you treat people at work. The way you treat your spouse and children. The way you treat those who oppose you. The way you treat the homeless, the broken, the lonely, the bully. The way you forgive everyone. The way you serve everyone. The way you are kind to everyone. The way you speak to everyone.

Listen to the way Jesus describes what we should look like to the world around us:

Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

14 “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

Jesus compares our love for others to a light that shines out of us. Part of our responsibility as disciples of Jesus is to use this light to shine into the darkness so that others will discover the love of Jesus as well. At times you will find yourself in dark places - difficult work environments, challenging relationships, uncaring people around you - and these are the very times you are called to shine. Don't pray for God to take you out of the darkness, pray that He will help you to shine in the darkness!

4.5

Love as a Compass

9 *"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! 12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."*

John 15:9-13 (NLT)

Jesus summed up the call to discipleship in this single command:

"12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you."

What this means is that this commandment to love one another, not the Old Testament 10 Commandments, becomes our PRIMARY compass to guide the way we treat others. As you make hundreds of decisions each day about what to do and how to do it, the guiding truth is not: "Is this right or wrong?", but rather it should be: "Is this loving or not?"

When you learn to make decisions in this way, the fruit of your life is not a sense of moral righteousness or unrighteousness, but rather the fruit is JOY. Remember that joy follows loving actions.

Let's look at some practical examples:

1. Let's say you struggle with an addiction problem. It is amazing how your heart can come up with a justification to make it seem ok. But that is because you are measuring your actions by the question, "Is this right or wrong?". If we ask the question, "Is this loving to God, to my family, to others, to myself?", then the answer becomes easily apparent. Your addiction is damaging the body that God has given you, destroying the relationship you have with your family and sacrificing the inheritance God has called you to. When love is what guides you and not law, the answer to whether something is right or wrong is clear.

2. You are in a relationship but not married. You begin to wonder about the boundaries of how far you can push things sexually without it being 'wrong' or a sin. Wrong question. The right question is, "Is this loving towards God, towards the person I'm having the relationship with and towards my future spouse?". Once again the answer is suddenly clear.

3. A friend has said things about you that has really hurt and are untrue. You are considering your options of writing about it on social media so that the world knows the 'truth'. Or perhaps getting back at them in some way or possibly just ignoring them and finding a new friend. Wrong options because the question you are asking is wrong. The right question: "What is the most loving thing I could do in this situation towards God and this person?". Once again the answer is now quite clear - give them the benefit of the doubt, listen before you react, deal with it privately, have the courage to talk through the situation and not just leave it.

When we begin to live according to Jesus’ Great Command to us, we discover that it applies in every situation, all the time. This is what maturity in Christ looks like. It’s not about how long you have been following Jesus but about how obedient you are to this Great Command.

CHALLENGE:

By changing the compass you use to make decisions, you will discover God’s will in every situation that you face. The challenge today is to stop asking if something is right or wrong and start asking if it is loving.

JOURNAL

1. Choose an example in your life where you have been confused about what to do. Now ask the question: “What is the most loving thing I could do in this situation?” Do you have the answer now?
2. As an experiment, begin to note how you feel when you walk with the Great Commandment being your Great Compass. Are you starting to experience the joy that Jesus promised us?
3. When love becomes the measure of sin, there are no grey areas. And the standard becomes so much higher. The good news is that the Holy Spirit will always empower us to love if we ask. If you are really struggling to love someone, ask the Holy Spirit now to empower you with his grace to overcome your inner struggle.

4.6

Love is spelt G.I.V.E

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 (NLT)



The greatest example of love that the world has ever seen is by our Heavenly Father who gave Jesus to die on the Cross for our sins. Not because we deserved it, or were asking, or were in any way worthy, but simply because God is love.

Romans 5:8 (NLT) *“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”*

So the One who is love, showed us through this action what love really looks like. In a word, to love is to GIVE. God loved and so God gave. To be loving is to be giving.

Jesus didn't just demonstrate this once on the Cross but lived this in his daily life:

John 1:16 (NLT) *“From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.”*

So what that means for us as disciples of Jesus, is that to live a loving life means to live a giving life. I'm not just talking about finances, I'm talking about giving in every area of our lives. For example:

- Giving of your time as an act of love. Time is our most precious resource and so valuable.
- Giving of yourself. By that I mean opening your heart to people and letting them see the real you inside.
- Giving of your best. Not being a minimum person but being a maximum person who gives their all.
- Giving of your talents. Using the gifts God has given you to serve others with joy.
- Giving your resources. Being generous with your finances, your possessions and whatever else you have available to you.
- Giving respect. Treating others with dignity and honour is not so much about who they are but reveals who you are. You can show love by treating people with kindness and honour.
- Giving mercy and forgiveness. In just the same way that the Father has given us mercy and forgiveness, we can extend that same forgiveness to others.

As you can see, this list could go on and on. To love is to give. And this is what the life of a disciple of Jesus looks like. But remember this - we can only give what we have. Peter made this statement to a beggar once:

Acts 3:6 (NLT) *“But Peter said, “I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!”*

Remember what it said about Jesus: “From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.” Jesus gave from a full tank. To keep giving when our own tanks are empty means that we have learned how to give BUT NOT RECEIVE! That leads to burn out.

As disciples of Jesus it is crucial that we receive from the Father so that we can continue to give to others. We need to be daily receiving of His love, receiving His Word, receiving His gifts, receiving his help. This is so crucial! When you are no longer experiencing the JOY of loving and giving it is a sign that you are not RECEIVING enough from your Father. This is why a mature disciple puts disciplines in place to daily spend time in the Father’s Presence reading His Word, worshipping, praying and being filled again by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

CHALLENGE:

To love is to give. God’s plan is that we would be constantly receiving love from Him so that we can be pouring out love to others. The challenge for today is to ask God to so fill you with his love, that you cannot help but overflow that love to others.

JOURNAL

1. Take a moment to reflect on how generous you are in the areas that are listed above. Which areas do you think the Father wants you to grow in?
2. How full is your receiving tank? Do you need to prioritise receiving more of His love so that you can give more of that love away?
3. What is the most loving thing someone has done for you recently? How was giving part of that? What did they give? Why did they give it? What can this teach you about loving others?

05

The Great Commission

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

As you can see, we are back to the same scripture that started this journey - the Great Commission. By now I hope that you have experienced what it means to be baptized into the nature, the power and the wonder of your Heavenly Father's love, purpose and destiny for your life. I hope that you have been immersed in the Name of Jesus - the revelation of His life, his death, his resurrection and His Lordship. I hope that you have tasted of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit - the empowering, the revealing and the guiding. I hope that you have started to walk in the love that Jesus commanded us to walk in.

Because now you are ready for the next big step. You may not feel it, but it is not about feelings but about faith in Jesus. The next big step forward as a disciple is for you to start helping others take the same journey you are taking. Disciples are called to make disciples.

All the way back in the beginning, when God was creating the earth, He gave Adam and Eve their very first commandment.

Genesis 1:27-28 (NLT)

27 So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

28 Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

Did you notice the first command? '**Be fruitful and multiply.**' Just as the trees were to produce more trees and each animal species was to produce more of its kind, so too Jesus now gives His disciples the command to be fruitful and multiply. "Go and make disciples of all nations." What does that mean? It means that every disciple of Jesus should be producing more disciples of Jesus. Which means part of being a disciple of Jesus means helping make more disciples of Jesus.

For too long the church has got this wrong. We so often think that it is the role of the pastor, or the Sunday School class or the outreach team to go and make disciples. This was never Jesus' intention. His intention was that every disciple be making more disciples.

Let me give you a simple example of how powerful it would be if every disciple of Jesus understood and committed to this road of discipleship. The church I'm part of recently had its 20th birthday and has somewhere around 1000 members. Let's say for arguments sake it took 20 years to gather and make 1000 disciples.

Now, let's say the pastor chose a different strategy from the beginning. Let's say he and his wife committed to making just one disciple every year. So after the first year there would be the pastor, his wife and two disciples in the church. After the second year, each made a disciple of Jesus and the church now stood at 8. Then 16, then 32 by the 4th birthday. You get the idea. At the 20th birthday of the church, guess how many disciples in the church? 1000? 10 000. Nope.... try 2 097 152. That's right, over 2 MILLION DISCIPLES!

That's the power of multiplication. That's what it is going to take to make disciples of all the nations. [When each disciple commits to making more disciples as part of their lifestyle of following Jesus.] The way we currently do church is simply not enough. We need every disciple of Jesus ready and willing to dedicate their lives to making more disciples.

CHALLENGE:

Today's challenge is a big one. Will you say YES to the Lord to live out the Great Commission? Imagine for the rest of your life you were always discipling at least one other person. Imagine if your dinner table became a Discipleship Table and every week there was a group of people sitting around your table being disciplined. That would be a life extremely well lived.

JOURNAL

1. As you read through the CHALLENGE above, what were your immediate thoughts or excuses or feelings? Write them down.
2. What is your answer to the CHALLENGE? Yes or no?
3. When you consider the calculation at the start of this chapter - what are your thoughts? What is stopping you from dedicating the rest of your life to making disciples that can make disciples?

Where do we start?

And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NLT)



How would you go about making other disciples? The very thought might scare you. You may feel under prepared and incompetent. You may be desperately trying to find a reason why this doesn't apply to you. The fact of the matter is that there are other people just like you who need to be disciplined by someone just like you!

So let's start. How do you become a disciple maker when you feel you are just learning the basics?

DISCIPLE MAKERS LESSON #1: The more you are disciplined, the more you can disciple others.

You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to know all the answers. You just have to be one step ahead. Just like Paul the apostle said in the scripture above: "Imitate me as I imitate Christ". Some translations say: "Follow me as I follow Christ". That's the secret. The more you become a disciple of Jesus, the more you will be able to help disciple others.

You may still be doubting your ability, your age, your spiritual maturity or confidence. Take a look at what Paul said to one of his young disciples, Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:12 (NLT) Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.

The way that you can make a difference in other people's lives and begin to disciple them is by choosing to set a good example. It's not words that win respect and influence, it is the example of our lives. Take a look at the five areas Paul identifies:

1. What you say - learn to speak the truth in a loving way. Speak words that are kind, encouraging and clean.

2. The way you live - this means the decisions you make and the habits you form. Good spiritual habits include daily Bible reading, prayer, church attendance and serving others.

3. In your love - we studied this in the previous section. Loving unconditionally, by giving, serving and forgiving.

4. Your faith - this means that you make your life decisions not based on worldly experience or popular opinion but based on the Word of God.

5. Your purity - means a lifestyle of integrity, of truthfulness, of sexual purity and honest motives.

Maybe reading this list sounds daunting. Remember that you are not alone. You are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live like Jesus for the glory of the Father. This is not about trying to be perfect, each of these points is simply a demonstration of love to the people around us.

Your number one tool of discipleship is your personal example. As you follow Jesus, people will want to follow you.

CHALLENGE:

Maybe you have never realised how important and powerful your example to others is. The challenge for today is to make the decision to stop living for yourself and to truly begin to live for Jesus. Will you follow Jesus so that others will follow you?

JOURNAL

- 1. Think about the people in your life who have had the greatest influence. What was it about them that impacted you?
- 2. When you look at the 5 points of setting an example, which one might need the most work in your life and why?
- 3. Begin to list some actions in each of those five areas that you would love to set as an example to others.

Friendship is the foundation of discipleship

Take a look at these four interesting verses and see if you can work out the common link:

Genesis 4:1 (ESV) *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain*

Mark 3:14 (NIV) *He [Jesus] appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach*

John 15:5 (NIV) *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

Galatians 5:22 (NIV) *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness*

At first glance it might look like they have nothing in common. But here is what I want you to see. **Every example connects the intimacy of relationship with fruitfulness.** Let me take you through them:

- Adam 'knew' Eve and she had a baby - that's intimacy and the result is fruitfulness - they reproduced themselves in a child.
- Jesus called 12 men to 'be with him' and then to go out and preach. First was the call to friendship and relationship and then to fruitful ministry. Jesus knew that friendship leads to fruitfulness.
- Jesus then says to his disciples that if they 'remain in him and he in them' then they will produce much fruit. There it is again. The intimacy of close relationship leads to fruitfulness.
- And lastly the character of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. The more intimate the connection to the Holy Spirit the more He produces fruit in our lives.

I hope that you have seen the connection. Intimacy of friendship leads to fruitfulness of multiplication. That's the big idea! In the context of making disciples this points us to the next big lesson. You have to make friends to make disciples because friendship leads to fruitfulness.

DISCIPLE MAKERS LESSON #2: Friendship leads to fruitfulness. So disciple makers invest in making friends.

CHALLENGE:

Who are the people in your friendship circle right now? Are you being a good friend towards them? Are you investing yourself in friendships? Who do you feel the Holy Spirit might be drawing into your life that you can invest friendship into? What recreational groups, sports or clubs are you part of that can become an arena for building friendship? The challenge for today is to see friendship as both a gift and ministry and commit to start investing in them.

JOURNAL

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for the name of someone who is new to the faith that might need to be discipled.
2. What friendship arenas do you have in your life - groups, clubs, sports etc. - that you could invite them into?
3. Write down three ways you could improve as a friend.

5.4

Setting the table

*5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.
7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."
8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."
9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

Luke 19:5-10 (NIV)

◆

This is a strange little story but basically what happened is that Jesus invited himself for lunch at Zacchaeus' house! And it was around the dining room table that Zacchaeus committed his life to become a follower of Jesus. Jesus didn't even say anything. There is something powerful about meals around tables!

In fact so much of Jesus' ministry happened around tables. Every day Jesus would be out preaching and teaching with the disciples and then in the evening he would be around the table with friends, with his disciples or even with the Pharisees. The big idea is that a dining room table is a crucial element in the life of a discipler.

The early church were devoted to gathering around tables for meals and this is where discipleship was taking place:

Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)

46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

When you are relaxed around a dining room table, true connection takes place. People lean forward and tell stories and engage and listen and ask questions. One of the most important things you can do to take up your role in the Great Commission is to learn to host people around your table well.

You don't have to be rich, have a fancy table or even serve fancy food. What is needed is a welcoming heart and a desire to love and serve people. Learning to be comfortable with friends and even strangers around your table is part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. And when you commit your simple dining room table to Jesus as a ministry tool, then just like the story of Zacchaeus, you too will soon be telling stories of how Jesus changes people around the dining room table.

DISCIPLE MAKERS LESSON #3: Meals around a dining room table are the best environment for discipleship to happen.

CHALLENGE:

How comfortable (or uncomfortable) are you hosting people around your table? Would you be willing to dedicate your table to the Lord as a ministry tool? Are you willing to lay down your fear or pride and trust that Jesus is going to change the lives of the people who sit at your table? The challenge for today is to dedicate your dining room table (or commit to getting a dining room table!) to be used for making disciples.

JOURNAL

1. How would you rate yourself in the area of hosting people for dinner?
2. What are you afraid of when it comes to having people around your dining room table?
3. Will you make a list of people you could invite to dinner and start planning the adventure?



You don't have to be rich, have to have a fancy table or even serve fancy food. What is needed is a welcoming heart and a desire to love and serve people.

Hosting a group around a table

Can you notice a word that is common to all four of these verses that describes the attitude that Jesus had at the table:

Matthew 26:20 (NIV)

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

Mark 14:18 (NIV)

18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me —one who is eating with me."

John 12:2 (NIV)

2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.

John 13:23 (NIV)

23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.

You guessed it, it is the word 'reclining'. It means 'to lie at a table, eat together, dine'. The big idea that I want you to see is that Jesus didn't do formal dinners. Jesus did relaxed at the table dinners. Jesus relaxed at the table with his disciples, with friends and even with strangers. That is the attitude of hospitality that is most effective for discipleship.

Here are some practical thoughts to cultivate a 'reclining' atmosphere at the table:

- As the host, choose to be relaxed. It is your attitude and demeanour that will set the tone for others. The best attitude of hospitality is an attitude that says "I am delighted to have you in my home"
- Focus on loving people and not trying to impress them. The way you make people feel is more important than how perfect everything looks.
- Get people involved in helping and serving. People love to feel needed and want to belong and so include them in the setup and serving.
- Make the meal as interactive as possible. Having someone serve them a plate of food at the table is formal. Everyone serving themselves and passing things around breaks the ice and makes people feel relaxed and informal.
- Ask questions to get people talking. Ask them to tell stories of their faith journeys, their experiences in church, how married couples met etc.
- Always be sensitive to what people may need. Be on the lookout and anticipate what they might need before they have to ask.

Part of the normal Jesus lifestyle is time spent with others around dinner tables. This is a sacred space and where so much ministry takes place. Every new disciple of Jesus should be welcomed around a table of discipleship at least once a week until they have matured spiritually enough to start hosting new disciples around their table.

This might be new to you and even strange to the culture you are part of. Maybe you grew up in a family that regularly has your meals together around the table or maybe you didn't. But the more you study the life of Jesus the more you will see how important and powerful discipleship around a dining room table is. I pray that it will become part of your lifestyle as well.

DISCIPLE MAKERS LESSON #4: A relaxed, informal attitude of the disciple maker sets the atmosphere and opens people's hearts to receive.

CHALLENGE:

Are you sitting at someone's table at least once a week for discipleship? If so I hope that you are learning, not just about the Bible but about how to host people well around a table. If not I hope you will find a table to be part of soon. This was the lifestyle of Jesus, the lifestyle of the early church and the challenge for today is that it becomes part of your lifestyle as well.

JOURNAL

1. What are some questions you could ask new people as you sit down together for a meal?
2. How would you define 'reclining' as an attitude you want to practice?
3. How could you include people in the set up and serving of a meal to make them feel at home?

5.6

Be strong and courageous

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)



I remember talking to a lady in the church once. She had been in our church a long time, had been following Jesus more than 15 years. She had been on outreach mission trips and done plenty of Bible study courses and other training courses. I asked her to disciple a lady who was new to the church and new to the faith. Her response shocked me. She said that she wasn't qualified to disciple someone.

As I thought about it, I realised that this mature Christian lady is not alone in what she feels. But the problem is not being qualified or not. The problem is a lack of confidence. And the reason that so many people lack confidence to disciple others is that they were never disciplined well and in such a way that it would be easy to reproduce.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

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

Please listen to this carefully. You are not just qualified to make disciples but commissioned by Jesus to make disciples. Jesus has the authority and Jesus is with you. That is all the qualification you ever need. Do you believe this? But here is what you need to settle:

1. God's plan and purpose for your life is to make disciples. You will never feel that you are walking in your full God ordained destiny unless you are being intentional about making disciples.

2. You have the tools in your hand that you can use to make disciples. Jesus gave us the Great Commission as a blueprint and with your Bible in one hand and a manual like this in the other, you have the tools you can use to disciple others.

3. You have the ministry platform for discipleship. Your dining room table. You have learnt how powerful dinner tables are and how Jesus used them to make disciples.

4. You have the secret to fruitfulness - friendship. You can't change anyone but you can make friends with people. As you invest in friendship, God will do the transformation.

Will you still feel a bit nervous about getting started? Of course. All of us have the speed bump of fear that stands in front of us and tries to keep us from walking in the plans of God for our lives. So be strong and courageous and take the first step.

DISCIPLE MAKERS LESSON #5: To start making disciples requires a step of courage and confidence in God.

CHALLENGE:

Do you see yourself as a qualified disciple maker? Most don't because they know they are not perfect. Well, join the club. None of us are perfect. What is needed is someone who loves Jesus and is one step ahead of the people they are discipling. The challenge for today is to not compare yourself to others. Don't wait until you are perfect. Make a decision to step into the Great Commission and trust Jesus to do the rest!

JOURNAL

- 1. What are the biggest fears you face when you think of being used to make disciples?
- 2. Do you feel like you have the resources and training to make a start?
- 3. Make a list of a few people you know who need to be discipled. Would you consider inviting them to dinner to discuss a discipleship journey together?

06

The Glorious Church

In this section of learning to walk in obedience to all that Jesus has called us to, we are going to explore what it means to take up our role in the church. Many people have had all kinds of past experiences with church - some good and some not so good. For some the church is seen as old, boring and even irrelevant. Some were put off by church because they felt exploited for money or let down by a so called man of God. But what does the Bible say? And what is God's plan for the church and our role in it?

If I asked you to name some images that come to mind when you think of church, what comes to mind? Here are some common ones:

- Petrol or gas station - The church is a place to fill up my spiritual tank
- Cinema - The church is a place where I can sit back and receive some good Christian entertainment
- Pharmacy - The church is a place where I can receive healing and helpful things to help me cope with life
- Retail store - The church is a place where I can pick and choose what I want to help me on my Christian journey

While none of these pictures are completely wrong, they are definitely not right. The better question is, what pictures of the church do we see in the Bible? Let me briefly introduce you to five of them which we find in the Book of Ephesians:

1.The Body of Christ - The church is literally the extension of Jesus here on earth. He is the head and we are his hands and feet to do his will.

Ephesians 5:23 (NIV) *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*

2.The Bride of Christ - The church is the people of God who are chosen out of this world as an eternal treasure for His Son. Jesus paid for his bride with his blood to save her and will return to rescue her and take her to his eternal kingdom.

Ephesians 5:31-32 (NIV)

31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

3.The Family or Household of God - To all who receive Christ, God gives the right to become part of His family and be brothers and sisters together forever.

Ephesians 2:19-20 (NIV)

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

4.The Temple of God - The New Testament temple of God, the place where heaven meets earth, is not of physical stone made by human hands, rather it is a spiritual temple where we are the living stones and God dwells amongst us by his Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:21-22 (NIV)

21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

5.The Army of God - The people of God, the church, are now used by God to advance His Kingdom by driving back the forces of darkness and advancing the kingdom of light through prayer and acts of faith.

Ephesians 6:11-12 (NIV)

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

As you can see, the Church of Jesus is a glorious gathering of God's people on a holy mission. And you are now a part of the church - the universal church of Jesus right around the world. But also part of a local church where God's purposes and plans are worked out. In the next few lessons we will see what that looks like practically.

CHALLENGE:

Someone once said that it is more difficult to 'unlearn' something than to learn something. The challenge for today is stop carrying baggage of past experience with the church that has tainted your view of His Glorious Church. Are you ready to throw that off and take your place in his amazing Body?

JOURNAL

1. Look at the first pictures mentioned - the commonly held views of church. Do any of them ring true for you? Which ones and why?
2. Now look at the Biblical images of the church - which of them is your favourite and why?
3. Of those five Biblical pictures of the church, which one challenges you most to rise up and become active in?

6.2

How do we church?

How we do church is like asking how we do family. There is not a rule book but there are certain values that should shape our culture and decision making. These values shouldn't be based on what we want or even how we think church should be run. Rather these values should come directly from the Word of God because:

1. Jesus is the foundation

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 (NIV)

10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

2. Jesus, the Living Word, makes the church strong

Matthew 7:24-25 (NIV)

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

3. Jesus is the builder of the church

Matthew 16:18 (NIV)

18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

So if we are to build the church on the values Jesus has given us in his Word, then what are some of these values?

1. Keep the Main One, the Main Thing - this means that we will be Jesus centred in all that we do - preaching, singing, counselling etc. Jesus really must be the centre and focus of everything. Not the minister, not money, not music, but JESUS.

2. The Bible plus nothing, the Bible minus nothing - in other words, we should be as Word based as possible and make the Word of God the highest authority. Not past traditions or cultural preferences, but the Bible.

3. To be organic and not organisational - this means that we follow the Life of God by seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit and not allowing tradition, denominational policies or organisational procedures to dominate.

4. Friendship, not just function - this means valuing people and loving them for who they are and not just what they can do.

5. Priesthood of all believers - this means focussing on getting everyone involved somewhere and not just leaving the ministry to the 'professionals'

6. Supernaturally natural and naturally supernatural - this means trusting for the Holy Spirit to be working in all of our meetings without trying to manufacture anything but remaining authentic in all we do.

7. Building away from ourselves - this means that everyone should be empowering others in their role and function so that we are not dependent on the 'main guy' to make every decision and do everything.

I realise that there is a lot of information loaded into these statements and that in reality it takes a long time to fully grasp them and live them out. Many people also come from past church experiences and it takes time to 'unlearn' some things before being able to learn new ones. The goal however is to be true to Scripture as we work with Jesus in building His Church.

CHALLENGE:

What do you think church should be like? How does this compare with your past experience? How does this compare with what you have just read? The challenge for today is to dream of the kind of church that Jesus has in mind.

JOURNAL

1. What is it that you like most and least about your church experiences?
2. Look at each of the values and for each one write down something that you could do to put it into practice.
3. How committed are you to your church? Are you happy with your level of commitment?

6.3

The church roadmap

Just like a builder needs a set of plans from the architect, so the church that Jesus is building comes with plans as well. So today's lesson is to trace out those building plans in the hope that you will catch a glimpse of the big picture and how you can play your part.

The best way to trace out the plans is actually to start at the end and 'reverse engineer' our way to the start. In some ways the strategy for church could be compared to a train on a journey that has to pass through various stations to get to its final destination. So let's start at the final station and work our way backwards.

THE GREAT COMMISSION STRATEGY

1. THE END GOAL: Preparing the Bride of Jesus for His Return

Ephesians 5:25-27 (NIV)

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

This is the BIG WHY. This is what it is all about. A people who are prepared for the return of the King. The beautiful Bride. The point to all of history. Jesus is coming back for a people of every tribe and every nation as part of His glorious Bride.

Revelation 7:9 (NIV) After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

So what is needed to reach people of every tribe and nation?

2. THE BIG WIN: Establishing healthy churches in every town and city in every nation in every continent.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This is why you are being trained up and prepared because we need every church to get every disciple of Jesus ready to make more disciples. We need men and woman who will be willing to go to every nation to help establish churches. The church is God's Plan A to reach the world and there is no Plan B! There are still hundreds of people groups around the world that do not have access to a local church. We need thousands more churches started around the world!

THE GREAT COMMISSION STRATEGY

So what is needed to start so many churches in so many nations and cities?

3.THE GREATEST NEED: Strong servant hearted leaders who are willing to pay the price to lead churches and start new ones.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NIV)

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Elders are church leaders who are called to pastor the church of Jesus and direct the affairs of the church in a biblical way. But leadership in the church looks very different to leadership in the world (as you will see in a lesson soon). But the fact remains, thousands of churches will need thousands of leaders who are called, equipped and willing to be sent out.

Where are we going to find all these leaders?

4.THE CRUCIAL INGREDIENT: A mobilised priesthood of all believers who are fulfilling their roles in the church

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

You are a ROYAL PRIEST, chosen by God as His special possession to live a life of glorious service to Him. You have God given gifts and talents and carry the anointing of the Holy Spirit to minister to others. It is crucial that local churches dedicate themselves to mobilising the priesthood to walk in their gifting. As people walk in their gifting and grow in their character, leaders will arise.

So lastly then, where does the church find all these priests to train?

5.THE STARTING POINT: Seeking and saving the lost

Luke 19:9-10 (NIV)

9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

That's right, we are surrounded by people who don't yet have a relationship with Jesus and don't know that God has a plan and purpose for their lives. That is why you have been trained as a disciple maker. That is why you have the skills now to reach out to others and invite them to start a journey of discipleship.

Now does the strategy make sense? What is the purpose of the church?

- To preach the Gospel and see people come to Christ. Then...
- To train these new disciples to be priests in the service of God. Then...
- To develop leadership skills so that the priests can lead more churches. Then...
- To help establish new churches all over the world. Then...
- Jesus can return for his Beautiful Bride!

May we see this simple strategy working powerfully in more and more churches all over the world!

CHALLENGE:

Have you ever realised that there is a strategy to the way churches are run? The challenge for today is to say ‘Yes Lord!’ to playing your part in this strategy.

JOURNAL

1. Of these five steps in the strategy, which one do you see as the one that needs the most work and why?
2. Where would you put yourself in this strategy right now? Where would you like to be in a year from now?
3. What practical steps could you take to help advance the church in its strategy?

6.4

Use your superpowers

Part of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit is discovering and starting to use the spiritual gifts that God has given you. This is not an optional extra but critical for you if you are going to finish the race and complete the work God has given you. So let's answer some questions.

1. What exactly are spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NIV) *Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.*

Spiritual gifts are special abilities, empowered by the Holy Spirit and God's grace, to express God's love through you as a gift to others.

2. What type of gifts are there?

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NIV)

8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

- **Message of wisdom** is the ability to share God's wisdom with people to help them make a tough decision, like Solomon who knew who the real mother of a child was. (1 Kings 3:27)
- **Message of knowledge** is the ability to know something about a person that only God could know as a way of revealing the root of a problem to help them heal, like Jesus did for a woman at the well. (John 4:16)
- **The Gift Faith** is not just normal faith but rather super faith to confidently know what God wants to do and plan it. Like Abraham who knew God would rescue his son (Hebrews 11:17-19)
- **The Gift of healing** is the ability to lay hands on people and see them supernaturally healed, like Peter did for the lame man. (Acts 3:6)
- **The Gift of miracles** is the ability to overcome the laws of physics by the power of God, like Moses who parted the Red Sea. (Exodus 14:16)
- **The Gift of prophecy** is the ability to hear what God is saying to a person and share that message to encourage them. Like Agabus who predicted a famine and encouraged the church to prepare for it. (Acts 11:28)
- **The Gift of distinguishing between spirits** is the ability to sense what spirit is operating in a person - the Holy Spirit, a demonic spirit or just the person's own spirit. For example Peter saw through Annanias' lie and knew that this wasn't the Holy Spirit at work. (Acts 5:3)
- **The Gift of speaking in other tongues** is the ability to literally speak out the word of God in a language you have never learnt or to speak to God in a heavenly language - words of praise or prophecy. This happened to the disciples when they were first filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4)
- **The Gift of interpreting tongues** works with the gift of tongues and is the ability to understand a heavenly language so that you can share it with the people.

There are also gifts of grace which enable you to do things well with God inspired ability.

Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)

6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

3.What gifts do I have?

Firstly you must believe that God has given you spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV) *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

The way you discover the gifts is by asking the Holy Spirit and by asking the people who know you well. God can use anyone and give you any gift at any time but usually you will find two or three of the gifts that you are most passionate about, desire the most and are best at. Once you have identified those gifts then practice and develop them to grow them.

4.What is the purpose of the gifts?

Remember that these spiritual gifts are not gifts TO you but rather gifts THROUGH you. They are expressions of God's love used to love and serve people.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to settle that God has given you special spiritual gifts, which are like tools, to help love and serve and minister to people. The challenge is to identify what gifts God has given you and commit to putting them into practice.

JOURNAL

1. Of the list of gifts above, which are the two that stand out to you as the most important or the ones you would want most? Chances are that they are the gifts God has given you.
2. In what meetings or environments could you use those particular gifts? Not just in church but in everyday life.
3. Do you feel ready to start using them? No? Do you know anyone in church who does operate in those gifts that you can ask for some mentoring?

6.5

The call to lead

When some people hear the word leadership they think promotion and privilege and chase after it. Others hear the word and think responsibility and hard work and run from it. But leadership is something that is inside you as a disciple of Jesus. You are a child of God Most High. You have the King of kings and Lord of lords as your oldest brother. You have the Spirit of Jesus working inside you. You were created in the image of God, blessed by God and called by God.

Genesis 1:28 (NIV) "God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Leadership is part of your discipleship journey - that is God's will. But what about God's way of leadership?

Matthew 20:25-28 (NIV)

25 Jesus called them [his disciples] together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

A few things are clear from this passage. **FIRSTLY**, the leadership of the Kingdom of God should not be patterned after political and business leaders of the world. But rather Jesus is our example and model of leadership.

SECONDLY, the secret of biblical leadership is voluntary service. To serve when you are forced to does not make you a leader. But to serve when you choose to is the secret or great influence. People will stop and take note. People will respect you for your willingness. People will feel empowered and want to follow you if this is how you make them feel.

THIRDLY, ambition needs to be channeled into greater service. The more you want to lead and be used by God the deeper your commitment to service should go. Leaders never outgrow serving. Rather the greater their influence the greater their commitment to service should be.

John 13:12-17 (NIV)

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Kingdom leadership is empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is a gift of grace that you can grow through diligent practice and commitment. That means learning from leadership books, being mentored by godly leaders and volunteering to lead where you can help.

Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)

*6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; **if it is to lead, do it diligently**; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*

You don't need to wait for a title or position to start leading. Leadership is about influence that comes from service. In the church there are various leadership roles and the church is always looking for people who are called and willing to be used in these roles.

Philippians 1:1 (NIV)

*1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the **overseers and deacons***

In this little verse we can see Paul and Timothy in their leadership role of apostles to the churches. Note how they see themselves as 'servants of Christ Jesus'. Then he mentions two other leadership roles within the local church: "overseers and deacons"

Overseers is where we get the word 'bishop' from. Other words used to describe this role is 'pastors' or 'elders'. Their role as a team is to lead the church as Peter describes:

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NIV)

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Deacons are leaders in the church who have been given specific authority and responsibility from the elders to lead specific ministries or functions.

Acts 6:3-4 (NIV)

3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

The last thing I want to say in this brief overview of church leadership is that leaders are called by God and then recognised by existing leaders by their gifting and character. They don't choose themselves and kingdom leaders never try and promote themselves. It is the maturity of their character that is a non-negotiable.

1 Timothy 3:1-4 (NIV)

1 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.

As we saw two days ago, for the church to fulfil its strategy of the Great Commission, we need thousands of great biblical leaders. My prayer is that you will be one of them.

CHALLENGE:

The challenge for today is to grapple with the call of leadership on your life. Do you see yourself as a leader? Are you willing to say yes if this is something God is calling you to? Are you willing to change the way you think about leadership. From titles, power, privilege and positions, to servant hearted leaders who lead through influence.

JOURNAL

- 1. What has been your experience with leadership in the past? Positive or negative?
- 2. Do you sense a call of God to leadership on your life? Are you willing to avail yourself to that calling more and more?
- 3. How can you exercise and practice your leadership right now? Are you part of a team or ministry group (not just in church but at school, work etc.) where you can up your serve and begin to grow your influence?

6.6

The end of all things

As we come to the last lesson in this manual, it would be fitting to consider how all things come to an end. The Bible is not quiet but rather gives us glimpses of how all things find fulfilment at the end of the age. Obviously there is not space here to go into details, but here are some of the signs that we as disciples of Jesus can expect and prepare for.

Important note: There are as many interpretations of end time events and theories about the Book of Revelation as there are preachers out there. The purpose here is not to try and sell you on any of them but to rather give you the scriptures and let you decide. What is important is firstly to remember that the focus of the End Times is not WHEN and WHAT but WHO. The focus must always be on Jesus the King. Secondly the purpose is not for PREDICTION but PREPARATION. When Jesus spoke to his disciples about the end of all things he always emphasised readiness for his return.

The overview of the End Times.

1. The great shaking.

The Book of Revelation describes in Revelation chapters 6 to 19, the days leading up to the Return of Jesus like a woman in labour before giving birth. It will be a time of shaking as God releases various judgements on the earth. The purpose being to 'wake people up' to the coming final judgement.

Jesus alludes to this in Matthew chapter 24 and 25 by pointing his disciples towards various signs to look out for:

- Growing deception in the church as people teach false doctrines to lead people away from Jesus.
- International conflicts growing more frequent and intense.
- Natural disasters such as earthquakes, famines, volcanic activity etc. growing more frequent and intense.
- Persecution against Christians growing worse as true believers refuse to compromise the Word of God in the name of tolerance and political correctness.
- The proclamation of the Gospel reaching every nation around the world as a testimony to them.
- Growing ungodliness and blasphemous attacks against the church. It seems that there will be a world ruler who arises and deceives the world with plans of peace but is antichrist in his heart.

2. The Return of the King.

This season of judgements on the earth (sometimes referred to as the Great Tribulation) culminates in a possible international conflict centred around Israel. And when things look at their most desperate, the King returns to deal with his enemies. It is also a time when the followers of Jesus are reunited and receive an eternal body.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NIV)

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

3. Possible age of the rulership of Jesus on earth

What follows has been debated for centuries and there are various classic theories. Here is what it says:

Revelation 20:4-6 (NIV)

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

A literal understanding of this would entail the followers of Jesus who have been united with Jesus at his coming (that's you and me!) ruling here on planet earth for a thousand years as part of their reward for faithful service.

Luke 19:17 (NIV)

17 "Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. "Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities."

The same chapter speaks of Satan being bound for that thousand years and Jesus' followers ruling with him - possibly to finish the job the Father gave to Adam and Eve right at the beginning.

Genesis 1:28 (NIV) God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

4. Final judgement

What follows this thousand year reign is the final judgement of Satan, his demons and all human beings - believers and unbelievers.

Revelation 20:11-15 (NIV)

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The final Judgement is based on whether your name is written in the Book of Life. When we put our faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, our sins are forgiven and our names are added to His Book. Anyone whose name is not in the Book of Life will be cast from God's Presence into what is described as the 'lake of fire' or hell. The Bible says that this is the second death and this is final.

5. New heaven and new earth

What comes next is glorious. Judgement is over. The old heaven and earth is removed and then:

Revelation 21:1-4 (NIV)

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

And now for all eternity the dwelling of God is with man. The Bible then describes this new 'Jerusalem', the city of God and then describes a new Garden of Eden where man and God dwell together. Here there is no sin, no suffering and no temple and no sun, for the glory of Jesus is the only light we need!

CHALLENGE:

The final challenge is the challenge that Jesus gave his disciples when he spoke of the End Times.

Matthew 24:42-44 (NIV)

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

The challenge is to live ready. To live with an expectation that Jesus will return in our lifetime. To live with a desire to finish the race we are called to run so that we will hear the 'Well done good and faithful servant' when Jesus returns!

JOURNAL

1. When you read through this overview of End Time events, how does it make you feel? Fearful? Expectant? Remember that the reason Jesus gave us these glimpses was not to scare us, but to prepare us.
2. Based on what you have read today, are you living in a state of readiness for the Return of Jesus, or are there some adjustments that could be made?
3. Last and most important question - are you 100% certain that your name is written in the Book of Life? If not then make sure that you go to your Heavenly Father right now and fully surrender your life to Him as you put your faith in Jesus His Son.

What now?

Congratulations on finishing 'Discipleship Tables'. Of course the journey of discipleship is far from over. Growing as a disciple of Jesus is a never ending process. Here are some practical suggestions on how to continue your discipleship journey:

1. DAILY DISCIPLINES

Establish daily habits that continue to feed you spiritually. Now that you have finished the 'milk' of working through this manual, it is time for you to progress directly to the 'meat' of God's Word. The difference between drinking milk and eating meat is the need for teeth to chew! The Bible calls chewing on God's Word MEDITATION.

Psalms 1:2-3 (NIV)

*2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

*3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*

Meditation is focussing in on the specific verses, phrases and even words and asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you from His Word. The last section of this manual covers the S.O.A.P strategy for Bible meditation.

It is also suggested that you use a daily reading plan. Find a reading plan (you can Google 'Bible reading plans', or try a Bible app) that takes you through the New Testament. The key is not how much you read but how deeply you read it. Using a notebook to make notes is very helpful in going deeper.

2. SERVE IN CHURCH

We have discovered that disciples of Jesus only grow to a certain level of maturity through receiving. After that, if they want to keep growing, they need to switch from receiving mode to serving mode. One of the helpful ways of doing that is to volunteer for a serving team in your local church. It doesn't matter which team it is, just get involved and serve. Here is why:

Ephesians 4:16 (NIV) From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Do you notice what it is that makes the whole body [church] grow? It is when each part does its work.

3. MAKE DISCIPLES

You guessed it. The best way to keep growing as a disciple is to commit your life to making more disciples. Now that you have finished this manual you are ready to take others through it. Don't wait until you feel ready. Don't wait until you are 'perfect'. Just make a start. Devoting your life to the Great Commission of making disciples is the best thing you could possibly do with the rest of your life.

S.O.A.P

Ephesians 5:26 (NIV) "to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word"

What happens when you have finished working through the manual but people are not quite ready to go out and start their own tables yet? We encourage people to spend at least a year around someone else's table before starting their own Discipleship Table. So what should you talk about around the table now that the manual is finished?

It's time for the REAL MANUAL. The Bible. As a group it is recommended that you choose a book from the Bible (It is recommended that you choose a New Testament book first) and work through the book together. Below is a basic strategy on how to do it.

Welcome to S. O. A. P

S - SCRIPTURE to meditate on

- Select a portion of scripture to read through
- Not more than about 20 verses
- It is helpful to get each person to read a verse as you go around the table - getting people to read aloud will make it much easier for them to speak aloud to share their ideas later.

O - OBSERVE what it says

- The purpose of this step is to zoom in on the passage to teach people to meditate on scripture. Tell the group that you will give them a couple of minutes to ponder the following:
- Ask them what their highlight moment of the passage is - if they had to choose one verse from the passage to underline or highlight, which verse would it be?
- What phrase from the verse in particular?
- What word(s) from the phrase in particular?

A - APPLICATION to your life

- Next is to get each person to share when they are ready:
- What was their highlight moment (from above)?
- What do you think the Holy Spirit is trying to say to you?
- Why do you think the Holy Spirit is highlighting that verse to you at this point in your life?

P - PRAYER for yourself and others

- Once everyone has had a chance to share, close with a round of prayer.
- Ask each person to turn whatever stood out most to them from the passage, into a short prayer for the group.
- This is important because it really drives home the revelation when we take it to the Lord in prayer

Helping others start new tables

When Jesus was making his 12 Disciples here on earth, he knew that he was working to a deadline. He had three years to get them ready as Apostles before his death, resurrection and ascension back to heaven. Working to a deadline is a powerful principle.

The danger with small groups in many churches is that they start off with purpose but then drift towards maintenance. Where the vision was once to reach the city, now it seems to be just about keeping the saved, saved! They have lost the deadline. Introducing a deadline to disciple making gives you a very real sense of intentionality.

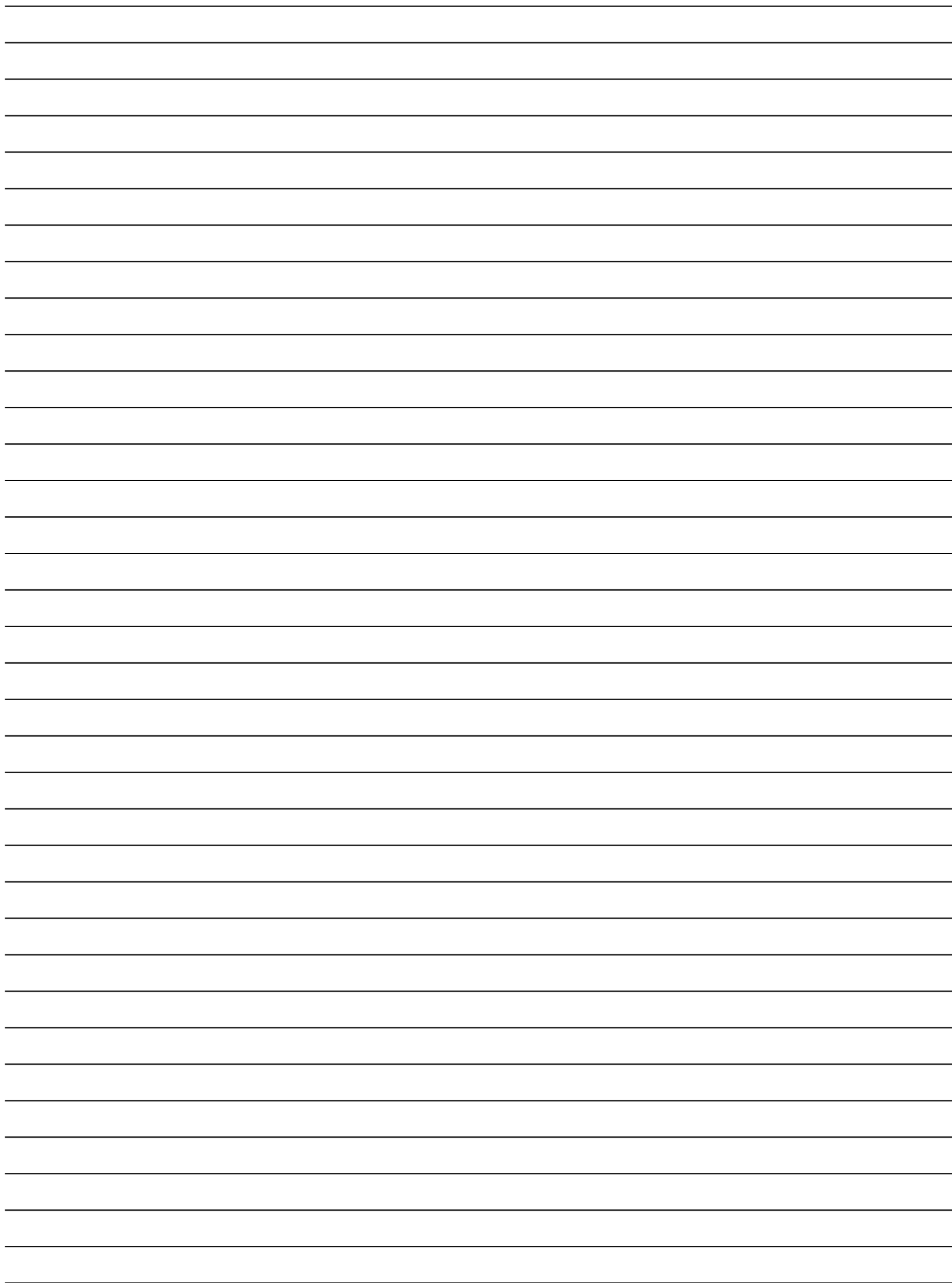
This is why it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you keep reminding the Discipleship Tables that the dream is **“To get everyone around a Discipleship Table once a week until they are ready to host people around theirs.”**

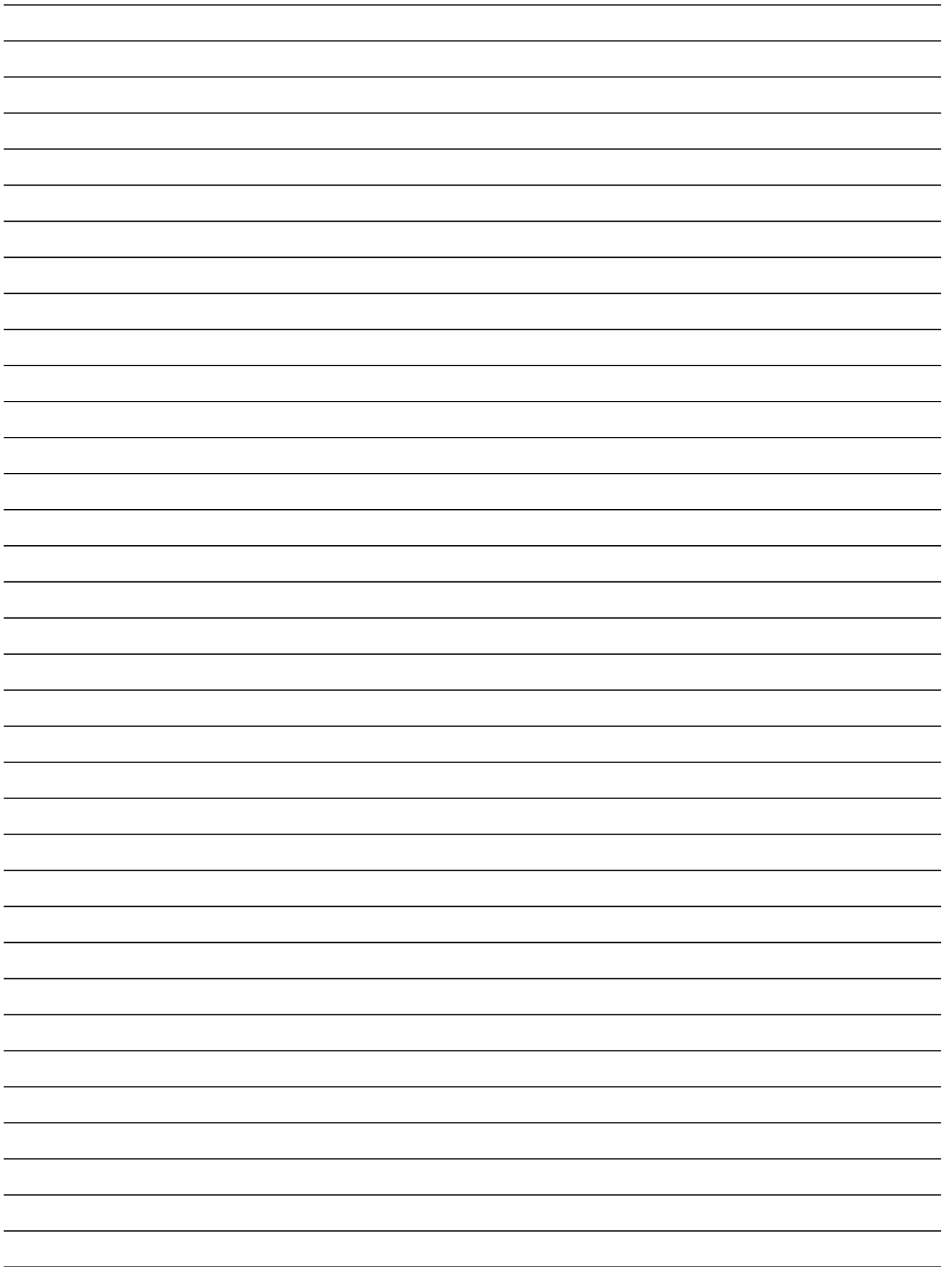
The goal is **NOT** just to make disciples but to **MAKE DISCIPLE MAKERS**. It might not be possible to set a specific time limit on how long a person could be part of your Table (some mature faster than others), but it is recommended that you keep pointing people towards the goal of starting their own Tables.

Here are some practical tips:

- Remind the table often of the goal of seeing them as disciple makers.
- As you teach through the manual, remind the group to make notes and comments because next time they go through the manual they will be teaching, not just learning.
- As soon as you think they are ready, encourage other members of the group to lead the discussion. To lead the Breaking of Bread. To start a roster of who is making meals.
- Try and move the group from time to time to other people's homes so that they can practise hosting people. Then give them some loving and gentle feedback on how they can improve as hosts.
- Encourage everyone to take turns making the meal for everyone. This prepares them for leading their own table. One strategy is to set a budget limit (keep it as low as possible) to prevent some people from making very elaborate meals which then intimidates others who can't keep up with that standard.
- Tell the group that you are restarting the manual at the start of the new year. If that sounds boring to some of them then that is the sign that they should be teaching it to others now.
- When someone is ready to start a new Table, celebrate it! It is also helpful to ask one or two of the existing members to go with them to help get things up and running.
- If possible, announce to the whole church that a new Discipleship Table is starting and that if anyone is not part of a table yet, then this is the perfect time to join.

May the God of Fruitfulness greatly multiply your efforts as you fulfil the Great Commission!





Welcome to 'Discipleship Tables', a simple manual designed to help make disciples. As you guessed, it is designed to be used as a workbook in groups from two to however many you can fit around your dinner table.

Jesus did so much of his ministry, especially discipleship, around the dinner table. There is something about eating a meal together that engages people and gets them leaning in. We suggest that you do the same. Eat together and build friendship. Then once the meal is done, take out the manual and work through this six week (or thirty six week!) journey together.

The manual itself is based directly on the Great Commission that Jesus gave his disciples just before ascending back to heaven. Here it is:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

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

*to download this resource
and to find others, visit our website, or contact us.*

scan this QR Code



 [OUTLOOKCHURCH.CO.ZA/RESOURCES](https://outlookchurch.co.za/resources)
 CONTACT@OUTLOOKCHURCH.CO.ZA
 +27 35 786 1968
 +27 68 761 0517