



the Glory
of a Heart
fully alive

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

- ➡ This Manual consists of theology, information, instruction and teaching on the topic of discipleship. The Manual also includes a unique model and vision for creating a dynamic discipleship culture at CBC.

Introductory Question

- ➡ What is your definition of a Disciple?
How would you describe the Discipleship Process?

➡ Definition of a Disciple

In Greek the word disciple is the noun Mathetes which is found 269 times in the New Testament and means “a student, a pupil, an apprentice”. The verb form, Matheteuo occurs 4 times in the Gospels and once in Acts. It means “to be or become a pupil or student”.

Mission of the Church ➡ to make Disciples.

“Therefore, go and make disciples (make students, pupils, apprentices of Jesus) of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (NIV)

Matthew 28:19-20

- ➡ **Ultimate goal of Discipleship**, no matter how it's done should be measured by what Jesus taught in Matthew 22:37-40.

- 1) Love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind.
Are we loving Him more?
- 2) Love others as yourself.
Are we loving people more?

The greatest evidence of our spiritual maturity is how we relate to one another. A major portion of Discipleship must emphasize and deal with our relationship with God, with others and with ourselves.

 **Our Approach to Discipleship**

- 1) Making Disciples is the lifeblood of the Church.
- 2) We must have a written definition of Discipleship known by everyone that serves as a reference point for every decision, program and strategy.
- 3) Discipleship is holistic and should address the spiritual, intellectual, relational and emotional parts of our soul and who we are.

 **We must give the Church a fuller understanding of Discipleship — four components of the soul must be discipled separately and together.**

(Spiritual Component)	We live as if these four components have no intersection.
(Intellectual Component)	The image of God in us includes all of these dimensions.
(Relational Component)	The Bible does not overlook the emotional component of the soul
(Emotional Component)	

4) Discipleship is a spiritual journey – systems should be set in place to guide the journey, but not be the journey itself.

5) Discipleship is an individual and community experience.

6) Discipleship is spiritual formation.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”. (KJV) Romans 12:2

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”. (KJV) Galatians 4:19

**Spiritual Formation is the renewing and redoing
of your mind and heart. It is a renovation of the mind and heart
(Big Part of Discipleship)**

7) Discipleship includes much more than just learning and practicing the Spiritual disciplines.

This Manual is divided into four sections:

Section 1 Discipleship and the Gospel

Section 2 Discipleship and Biblical Community

Section 3 Discipleship and Relational-Emotional Health and Maturity

Section 4 Discipleship and the Spiritual Disciplines

➡ The Spiritual Disciplines are a significant part of our Spiritual Maturity, but it is only ¼ of the whole and cannot mature us alone. Many people have come to the realization that the intensity of their engagement in spiritual disciplines did not produce spiritual maturity in their lives and the reason it did not produce spiritual maturity in their lives is because they had ignored the other three major areas of Discipleship.

➡ What passes as Discipleship in the church today is relatively low level. A discipleship process that results in people learning how to read and memorize scripture, pray and witness is a good start, but you need to go much deeper if you plan on developing leaders and role models in the church who can be trusted to care for groups of people.

8) A Discipleship Paradigm, model, or strategy must develop spiritual self-feeders instead of Spiritual consumers.

“In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” (NIV)

Hebrews 5:12-14

We have mistakenly trained people to come to the worship service for their weekly feeding. Discipleship involves spending more time and effort teaching people how to feed themselves.

FOUR VALUES OF A DISCIPLESHIP CULTURE

1st Value — Reconciliation

“Therefore if anyone be in Christ, He is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors. As though God were making his appeal through us.” (NIV)
II Corinthians 5:18-20

THE FALL	MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION
Disconnected from the source of life	Connect people again to God being their source of life
Loss of relationship	Relationships and connection become primary
Hiding behind fig leaves	Taking off the fig leaves
We became our own bosses	God as the ultimate authority
Lost knowledge of God’s ways and design for life	Move back to God’s ways and design for life

➡ 2nd Value — Reflection (biblical and personal combined)

What is Reflection?

It is giving thought to the ways we are living our lives – the actions we chose, the emotions we feel, the thoughts we think, and the passions we pursue.

“A simple man believes anything but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.” (NIV)
Proverbs 14:15

“A wicked man puts up a bold front but an upright man gives thought to his ways.” (NIV)
Proverbs 21:29

- ➡ Guiding others to reflect means helping them recognize and understand how certain forces in their hearts control and direct their responses to life.
- ➡ Reflection is wrestling with the realities of life in light of what the scriptures say and reveal. It is really putting people back in the Psalms.

Psalms fall into three major categories:

- 1) Psalms of Praise (orientation)
- 2) Psalms of lament-complaint (disorientation)
- 3) Psalms of Thanksgiving (reorientation)



Understanding the Psalms reflective nature

- A) The Psalms was the hymnbook of the Old Testament.
- B) The Psalms are about intimate, personal communion with God whether it's praise, lament or thanksgiving.
- C) The Psalms are a mirror and window to the soul.
- D) The Psalms minister to our emotions and express every emotion imagined or experienced by us.
- E) The Psalms are the cry of the soul.
- F) The Psalms are a book of worship and reflection that involve every human emotion.

More on Reflection as a Spiritual Discipline in Section 4.

➡ 3rd Value — Relationship

- ➡ Developing supportive and sharpening relationships that will help us continue to mature in our walk with God.
- ➡ Learning a new way to relate to each other where we move into each other's lives, not by giving advice but with compassionate sensitivity (grace) and courageous strength (truth).
- ➡ Relating through our stories or parts of our stories, illustrations and penetrating questions – using stories, illustrations and penetrating questions to draw out the heart of another person and to connect with the heart of another person (this is the way Jesus ministered).
- ➡ Entering another person's world (more on this in Section 3).

Discipleship involves you and I effectively and meaningfully ministering to each other's joys and sorrows, praises and laments, stories of trauma and grief and stories of triumph, peace and contentment. We must learn to minister to each other's wholehearted love for Christ, search for truth, and our struggle to understand a God that doesn't always make sense to us.

➡ 4th Value — Repentance

- ➡ To repent (metanoeo) means to think differently, to change your mind, your intellect, your thinking, your perception. Repentance is renewing and redoing the mind. It is a renovation of the mind and heart.
- ➡ In a discipleship culture we are attempting to lead people toward deeper intimacy with God and more authentic involvement in other people's lives. Is there movement in my soul that wants to know God better and love other people better? (True repentance)

Root of Repentance ➡ Moving toward Christ

Fruit of Repentance ➡ Moving toward others

➡ The mark of a Disciple (love)

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this all men know that ye are my disciples, if we have love one to another.” (KJV)

John 13:34-35

The Lord did not say that people will know that you are his disciples by the number of verses you memorize or by the frequency of your church attendance, etc. People will know you are Christ's disciples by your love for one another (by your deep involvement with other people).

➡ Two core issues of discipleship.

There are two core issues that discipleship must embrace. The Pharisees tenaciously avoided these two core issues but Jesus constantly addressed them:

- 1) **Issues of the Heart** – which are the essence (essential part, inmost substance, vital element lifeblood) of our spiritual maturity.

Discussion Question: What would it look like for our hearts to be fully alive toward God and fully alive toward others?

The subject of the heart is addressed in the Bible more than any other topic, more than works or service, more than belief or obedience, even more than worship.

Examples of the numerous scriptures about the heart:

*“Love the Lord your God with all your **Heart**.” (NIV) Matthew 22:37*

*"Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the Heart." (NIV)
1 Samuel 16:7*

*"Where your treasure is, there your **Heart** will be also." (NIV)
Luke 12:34*

*"Trust in the Lord with all your **Heart** and lean not to your own understanding."
(NIV)
Proverbs 3:5*

*"Your word have I hid in my **Heart** that I may not sin
against God." (NIV)
Psalm 119:11*

*"These people honor me with their lips, but their **Hearts** are far
from me." (NIV)
Matthew 15:8*

*"For the eyes of the Lord go to and fro to strengthen those whose **Hearts**
are fully committed to Him." (NIV)
2 Chronicles 16:9*

*"All man's ways seem right to him but the Lord weighs the **Heart**." (NIV)
Proverbs 21:2*

*"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged
sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow: it
judges the thoughts and attitudes of the **Heart**." (NIV)
Hebrews 4:12*

➡ *"The **Heart** is where we do our deepest thinking "Jesus knowing what they
were thinking in their **Hearts**" is a common phrase in the Gospels.*

➡ *"When God invites Solomon to ask for anything in all the world,
1 Kings 3:9 says that Solomon asked for a wise and discerning **Heart**."*

*"As a man thinketh in his Heart, so is he." (NIV)
Proverbs 23:7*

According to the scriptures the **Heart** can be:

Troubled	Cheerful	Whole	True
Wounded	Glad	Divided	Upright
Pierced	Merry	Wise	Frightened
Grieved	Joyful	Foolish	Faint
Broken	Rejoicing	Steadfast	Cowardly
Wandering	Hardened		
Forgetful	Wicked		
Dull	Perverse		
Stubborn			
Proud			

➡ According to Jesus the **Heart** can also be pure.

*“Blessed are the pure in **Heart**, for they will see God.” (NIV)*
Matthew 5:8

➡ The **Heart** can be noble as in the story about the sower.

*“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good **Heart**, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” (NIV)*
Luke 8:15

➡ The Bible sees the Heart as the source of all creativity, courage and conviction. It is the source of Faith, Hope and Love.

Proverbs 4:23 says: “Above all else (No. 1 priority) guard your Heart for it is the wellspring of life (it’s the very essence of your existence).”

THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE CENTRALITY OF THE HEART!

**Disciples, leaders, people who want to spiritually mature
must deal with issues of the Heart.**

- 2) **Issues in Relationships** – How we relate to one another is the greatest evidence (proof, confirmation, verification, validation) of our spiritual maturity.

Two types of people Jesus deals with:

- A. **Religious** — self-righteous people — Jesus' response to them was rebuke.
- B. **Regular people** — who are needy and know they are not all that good — Jesus response to them is he invites them into relationship.

CBC DEFINITION OF DISCIPLESHIP INCLUDES TEN PARADIGM STATEMENTS

- 1. Discipleship is teaching a believer (new or old) how to live/love free from the Law of Moses. People need to be discipled in freedom from the Law. (There is no true Discipleship without this component).
- 2. Discipleship is breaking out of religion and our religious – Pharisee thinking and attitudes and breaking through to a deeper, more fulfilling, more intimate, authentic honest, transparent, loving relationship with Christ and with others or anyone who comes in my area of influence.
- 3. Discipleship is growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, experiencing true connection and community with God and with other believers, and daily discovering the depths and dimensions of the Gospel of Grace.

CBC Definition of Discipleship includes Ten Paradigm Statements (*continued*)

4. Discipleship is moving toward authentic Biblical Community, participating in a transformational small group experience, realizing that we were created for community, and exploring the meaning and reality of the fact that the most convincing witness to the truth of the Gospel is the recognizable Oneness of Christ's followers.
5. Discipleship is often misunderstood as primarily a one to one adventure, but in the New Testament, making disciples has always been a group event. Discipleship is growing in Christ by experiencing the teaching, mentoring, love, encouragement, exhortation and giftedness of many brothers and sisters in Christ.
6. Discipleship involves telling and exploring our stories and some of those untapped, unidentified places in our hearts. The process goes like this: Me sharing my story, you sharing your story, and together we look at God's story in the Word of God and over time (Grace + Truth + Time). Our stories begin to look more like Christ's story.
7. Discipleship includes all aspects of the human soul: Spiritual, Intellectual Relational, Emotional. Relational and Emotional Health has largely been ignored in our discipleship models but we cannot separate Relational and Emotional health from spiritual maturity and the discipleship process.
8. Discipleship is discovering your calling, who you are, what you were meant to be and where you belong in life. It is also being real and honest with yourself and God and allowing others to see Christ in you in the midst of your brokenness and flaws.
9. Discipleship is Relational Evangelism – Evangelism is more than telling people the steps of how to be saved. Evangelism is connecting with people's longings.

CBC Definition of Discipleship includes Ten Paradigm Statements (*continued*)

10. Discipleship is celebrating the Spiritual disciplines of:

- a. Solitude – regular quiet time with God (prayer)
- b. Meditating on scripture (regular time in God's Word, contextual Bible study)
- c. Discovering your spiritual gifts (servanthood)
- d. Worship (corporate and private)
- e. Stewardship of resources (giving)
- f. Learning how to explain the Gospel to someone (witnessing)
- g. The value of being in small group and Biblical Community (fellowship - includes training in leading a small group)
- h. The spiritual discipline of Reflection (introspection) – examining, developing, and maturing your internal life) so we can become fully alive in our hearts and aid us in personally and practically living out the great commandment of loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and loving your neighbor as yourself.

How do we create a Discipleship culture at CBC?



A Discipleship culture consists of four major components:

1. A Christian Education structure
2. A creative and diverse small group culture
3. A servant leadership culture
4. A soulcare – body life culture

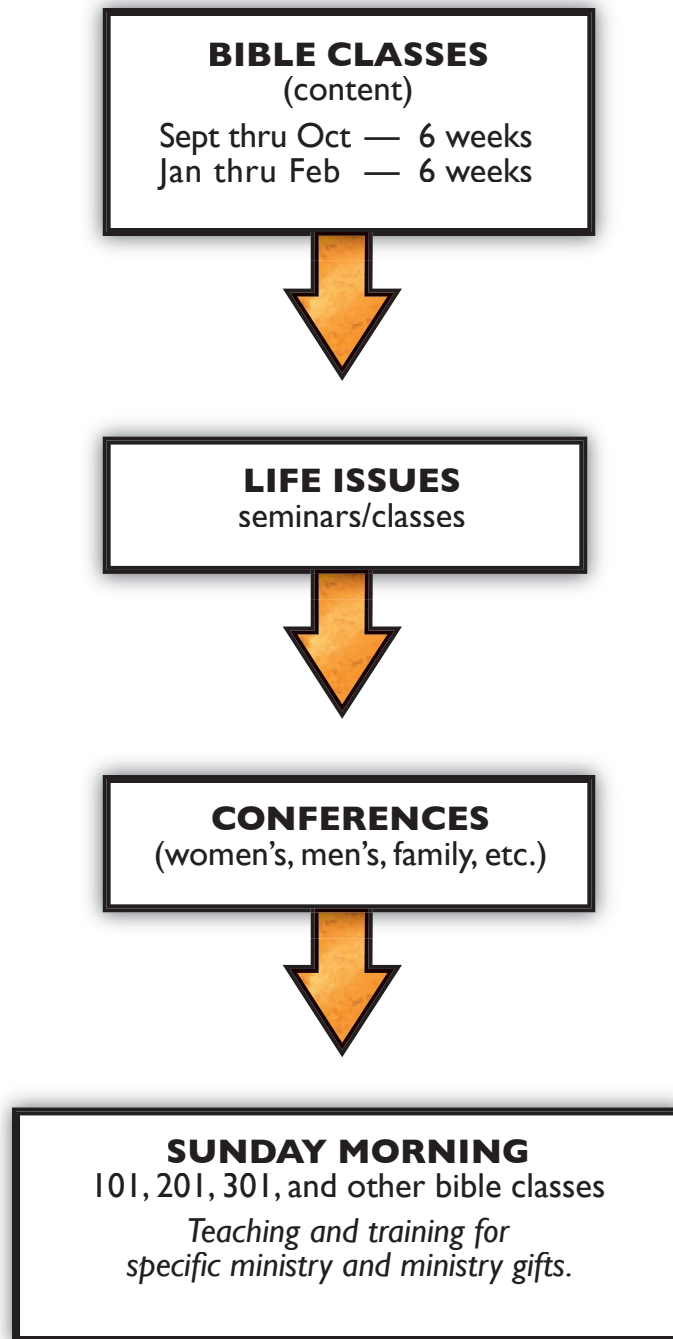


Although these four components are listed separately they are all also interconnected in a true Discipleship culture.

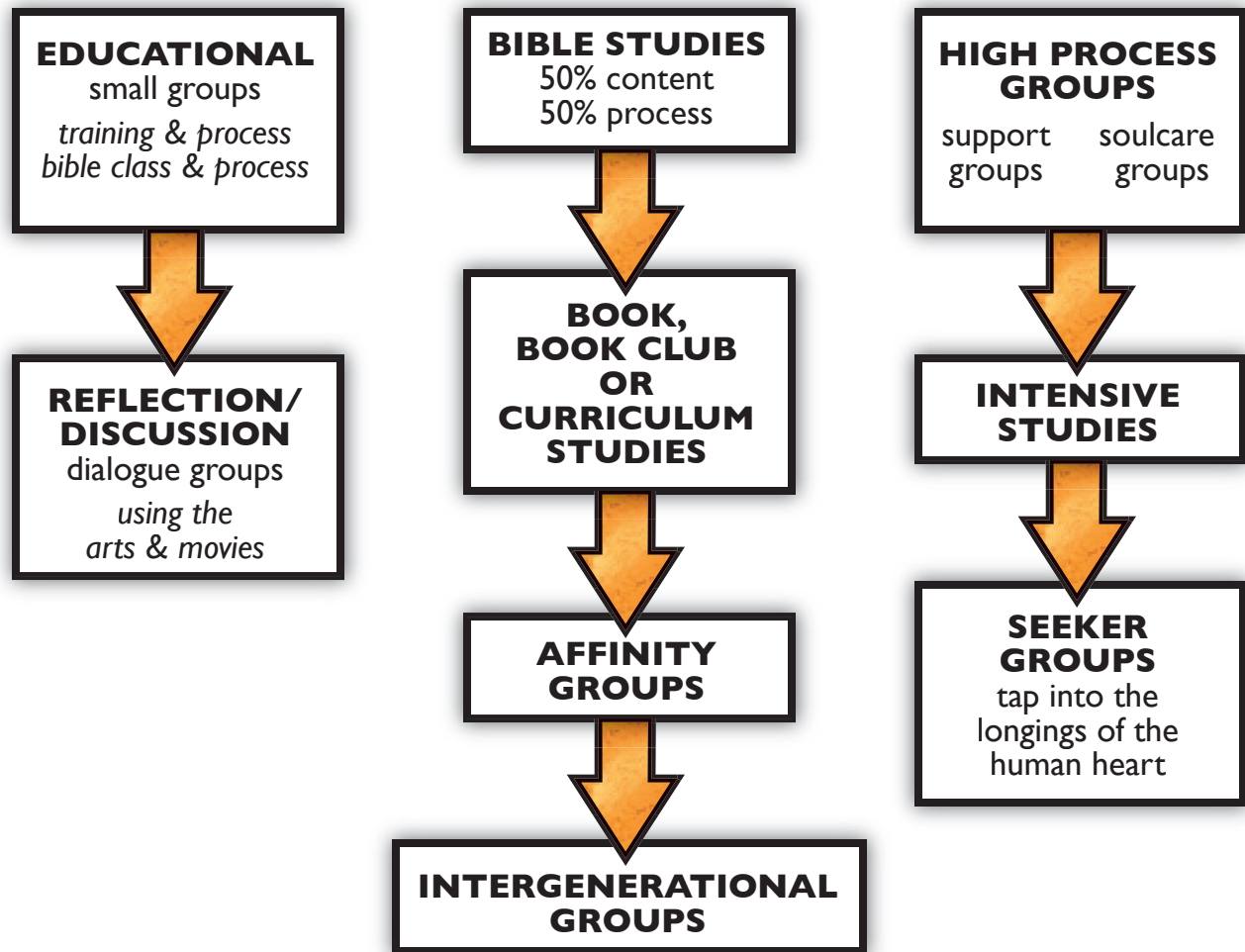
A true functioning Discipleship culture always results in a revival in the heart, a restoration of church life and community, a reflective re-examination of what we believe and have been taught, and a richer fuller understanding of the scriptures.

1. REVIVAL in the Heart
2. RESTORATION of church life and community
3. RE-EXAMINATION and REFLECTION
4. RICHER understanding of the scriptures

COMPONENT NO. I — A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION STRUCTURE



COMPONENT #2 — A CREATIVE & DIVERSE SMALL GROUP CULTURE

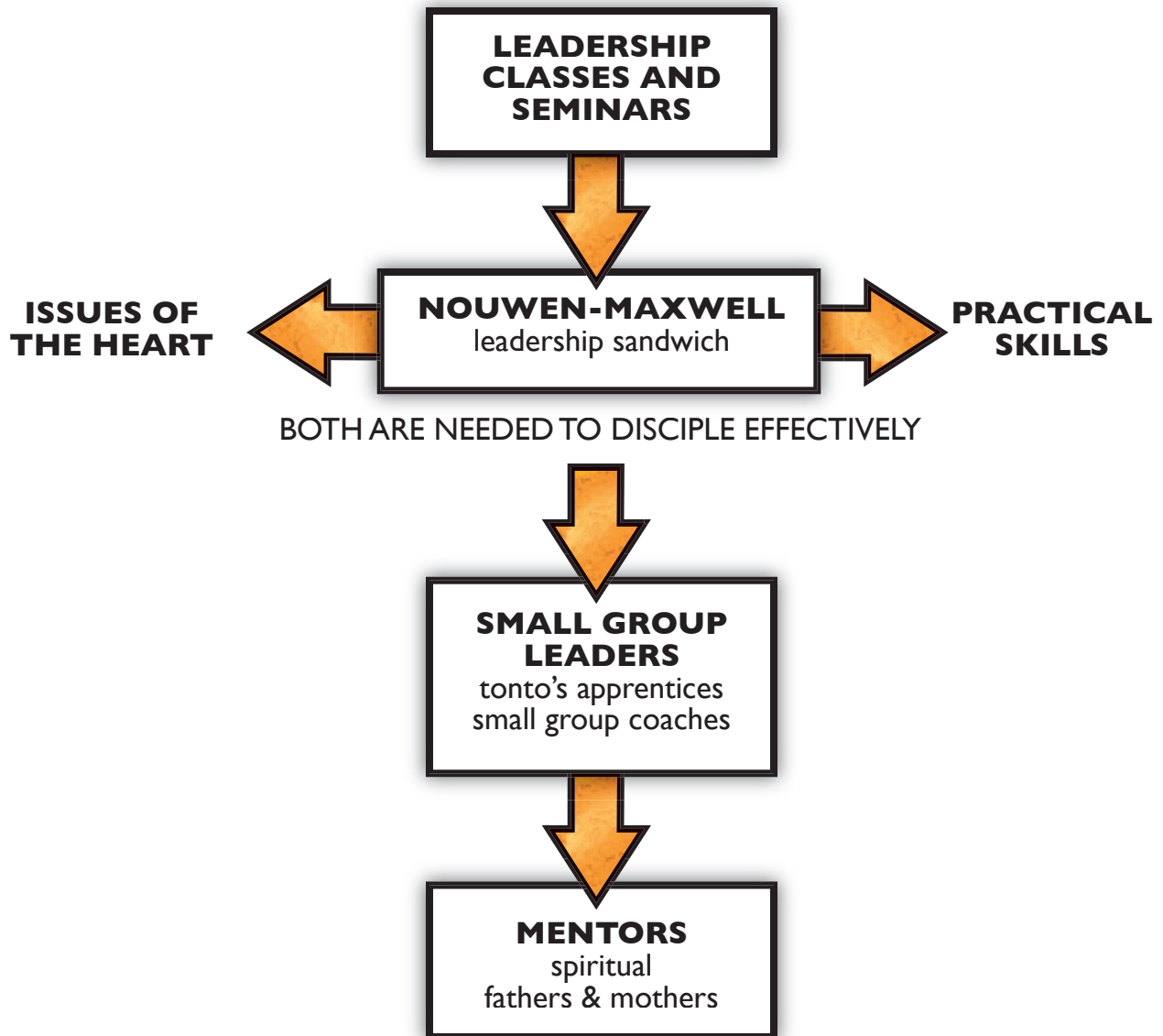


All these types of Small Groups on some level must deal with issues of the heart and issues in relationships — the two very issues that pharisee type people don't want to deal with but the two issues that are a major part of discipleship.

Offer groups than run weekly, bi-weekly, monthly,
3 to 4 month group experience, 6 to 8 week group experience

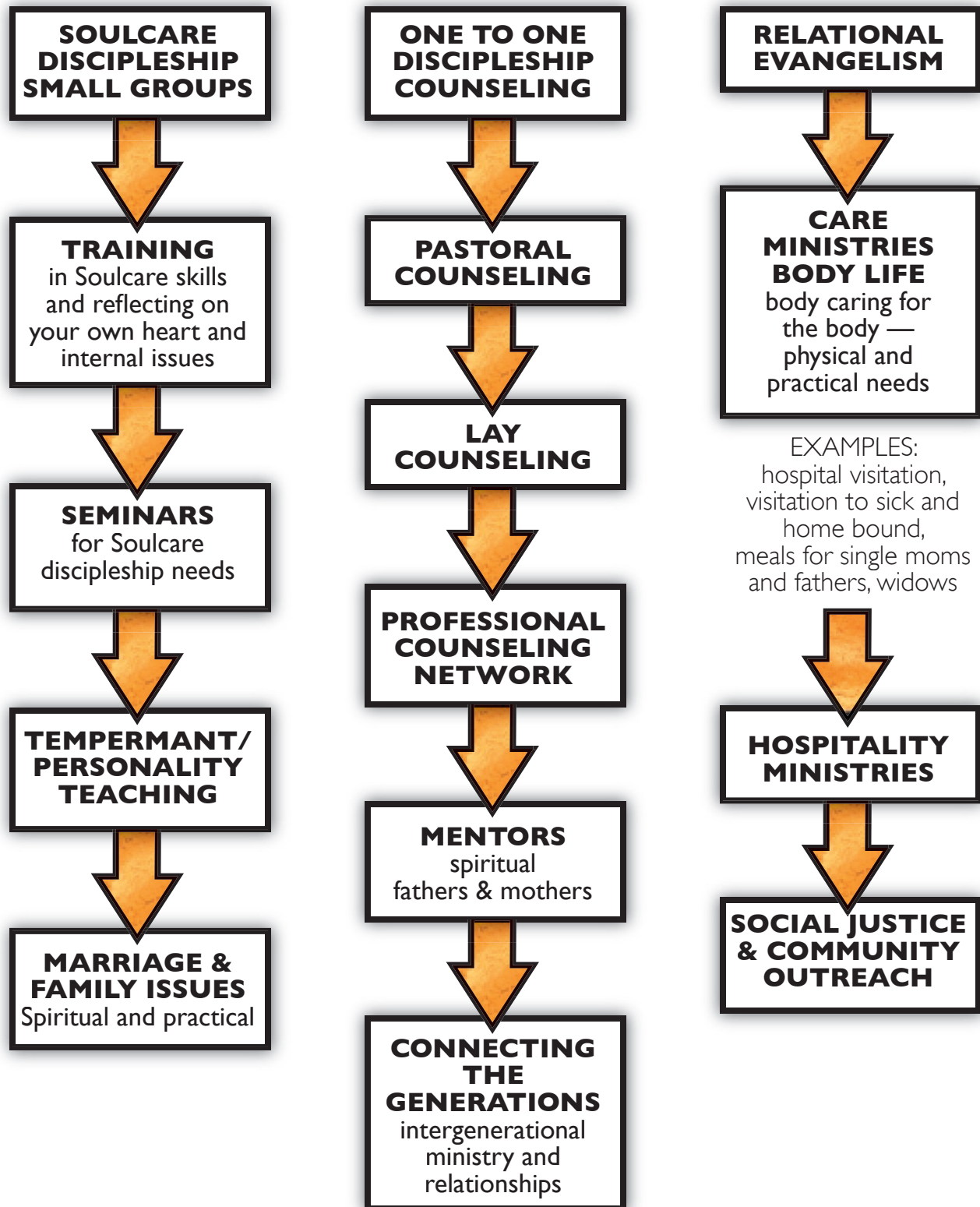
2 major small group periods:
October to mid December and February to June

COMPONENT NO. 3 — A SERVANT LEADERSHIP CULTURE



If a major part of discipleship is dealing with issues of the heart, we must not only deal with issues of the heart in our small group culture, we must deal with issues of the heart in our leadership and leadership culture.

COMPONENT NO. 4 — A SOULCARE-BODY LIFE CULTURE



Our Approach to Leadership in a Discipleship Culture

1. Compassion must be at the core of leadership

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” (NIV)

Matthew 9:36

Splagchna – Greek word for compassion which means “the bowels”. It describes compassion which moves a person to the deepest depths of his being.

2. Leaders must have the heart of a shepherd not the CEO or corporate mentality. Leaders are spiritual guides and fellow journeyers.
3. The great tension of leadership in a discipleship culture is how do we lead well, yet keep our hearts soft.

Leadership Diet = Nouwen – Maxwell Sandwich
4. Leadership is more relationship driven (loving people, promoting and participating in community) than goals driven.
5. Position and role don't give you the right to lead; trust, integrity and relationship give you the right to lead.
6. In a Discipleship culture you lead more by listening than talking. (This is where we really miss it in discipling people and creating a discipleship culture).

➡ In a Discipleship culture listening involves:

- A. Finding out who a person is
- B. Finding out where people are in their journey
- C. Where they are coming from
- D. How they think and reason (we may be surprised at what we learn)

More on listening in Section 3

7. Leadership in a Discipleship culture is about the nurturing and care of your own soul and the souls of others.

Discipleship = Leadership + Soulcare
(Two shall become one)

8. In a Discipleship culture, as the leaders go, so goes the church. In fact, the key to successful leadership has much more to do with the leader's internal life than with the leader's expertise, gifts or experience.
9. Leadership in a Discipleship Culture continues to discover together more and more of the depths and dimensions of God's grace, the inexhaustible riches of the scriptures, and the person of Christ.

Discipleship (Relational) Evangelism

QUESTION: Is evangelism presenting a short message on the fact Jesus died for your sins to get you into heaven or is it presenting a life altering, soul changing message that invites people through Jesus' death and resurrection to be participants in the kingdom of God now?

What is Relationship Evangelism?

- 1) It is a process that occurs through relationship, trust and example.
- 2) It is not just a message, it is a conversation.
- 3) It requires relationship, dialogue and a willingness to journey together.
- 4) It is question based rather than didactic.
- 5) It is long term rather than hit and run.
- 6) It is conversational rather than confrontational.

- 7) It is backed up by personal modeling rather than institutional traditions and dogma.
- 8) It is being prepared to lovingly but intellectually speak about what we believe rather than just throw out a quick verse.
- 9) It is providing people opportunities for discussion and dialogue that promote conversation about Jesus Christ.

QUESTION: What are some specific ways that the church could build the trust of non-Christians through dialogue and community?

Discipleship (Relational) Evangelism also includes social action. Beyond the inward process of Discipleship (Christ being formed in me) our faith also includes kingdom living, part of which includes the responsibility to fight for social justice on behalf of the poor and needy (locally and globally). Our example is Jesus who spent time among the lepers, the poor and the needy.

The Apostle Paul instructs his favorite disciple, Timothy, to carry on the work of discipleship.



*“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (KJV)
2 Timothy 2:1-2*

Commit – suggests transmitting something from one person to another (personal mentoring).

Teach others also – teaching others cannot be done solely through a classroom situation. It includes the imparting of life in small groups, educational small groups and one to one soulcare.

SECTION 1

discipleship and
the Gospel



THE GOSPEL COMPONENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

1) Being discipled in the depths and dimensions of the Gospel.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God”.
(KJV) *Ephesians 3:17-19*

Three Components of the Gospel

Gospel of Grace — You are going to get what you do not deserve.

Gospel of Peace — You are not going to get what you do deserve.

Gospel of the Kingdom —

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, lo here! Or lo there! For, behold the Kingdom of God is within you” (KJV)

Luke 17:20-21

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost”. (KJV)

Romans 14:17



When you find out that because of Christ our righteousness or our right standing with God is now based on our relationship with God and what Christ has done, not on our performance for God and what we have done and that God initiated a reconciliation between Himself and man by pouring out his wrath and anger over sin on Christ on the cross and you know you have peace with God because God is not angry with you and you don't get from God what you deserve, YOU CAN HAVE GREAT JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST!

The Gospel of the Kingdom includes bringing the internal (The Kingdom of God is within you) to the external (Kingdom living).
What does this statement mean?

Remember this about the Gospel



Jesus and the Gospel are always bigger and better than what I think. No matter how good somebody presents the Gospel to you, you can rejoice in it, but understand that it's even better and more magnificent than we can fully comprehend and we must continue to gain a fuller understanding of its depths and dimensions.

2) Being discipled in "Rightly dividing the word of truth".



Disciples need a theology of law and the role it has played in redemptive history and in becoming our tutor to lead us to Christ. Disciples must understand salvation history and how progressive revelation affects the interpretation of the text in the old and new testaments.

3) Being discipled in freedom from the law and how to live free apart from the law.



Discipleship is about escaping the snares of Judgmentalism and Legalism whether directed toward others or toward ourselves.

- 4) Being disciplined in living in the New Covenant.
- 5) Being disciplined out of self-righteousness into a righteousness by faith.
- 6) Being disciplined out of the Pharisee in me.
- 7) Being disciplined out of religion and into relationship.



Discipleship is discovering the results, effects, implications and fruit of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For example:

- What does this imply about my identity and who I am?
- What does it mean to be in Christ or in Him?
- How do I live out of this new heart that God has given me?
- What is this New Covenant that was established that makes the Old Covenant obsolete?
- What did Christ mean when he said “It is finished”.
- How do I live in freedom? (We need to provide some discipleship context for this question)

Jesus Definition of Discipleship

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed (pisteuo) on Him. If you continue (maneo) in my word (logos), then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know (ginosko) the truth and the truth shall make you free (eleutheroo)”. (KJV)

John 8:31-32

Meaning of Greek Words

Pisteuo – to have faith in, faith for, faith toward or to give mental assent.

Maneo – to stay with, abide, reside, remain, evolve, grow, make progress, hold to.

Ginosko – recognize, become aware, identify, perceive.

Eleutheroo – to be exempt from mortal and moral liability to the law.

Belief ➡ continue with the logic
➡ become disciples
➡ know truth
➡ freedom.

➡ A disciple (student, pupil) is always learning. We just don't believe in him and follow him, we study him just like you have to study your husband or wife or kids or the people you minister too so you can learn how to function among them and minister to them. If you continue or hold to my teaching – you are really my disciples – then once you become a student – not once you become a believer- once you become a student – then you begin to know or recognize, identify or perceive truth and that truth will make you free.

➡ Jesus says, if you follow this to the end (the cross) the truth will set you free. I'm going to show you how strict following me through the law really is. But if you continue, you will see the truth about the law and the truth about the law as you have no hope to be righteous.

➡ Discipleship is not teaching someone to obey the law of Moses, it is teaching someone to live free from the law of Moses.

QUESTION: What was the response Jesus got when he told them this?

“They answered Him, we be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, you shall be made free” (KJV)

John 8:33

To get any believer to understand they need to be set free from law and that they are in bondage to self-righteousness is one of the greatest hurdles you will ever leap, to convince that person who just became a believer that they are self-righteousness legalists who need to be set free. They will at first be offended (verse 33).

The rest of Chapter 8 is new believers class and look how it turns out.



“They took up stones to cast at Him”. (KJV)

John 8:59

CONCLUSION: There is no true Discipleship without the component of freedom from the law.

Note: This does not mean the Bible gives us no instruction or exhortation on how to live in a healthy way in community and towards each other. Let me give you one example.

⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices. ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator. ¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹²Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” (KJV)

Colossians 3:8-14

The fruit of being Discipled in the depths and dimensions of the Gospel.

“¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, all of the love which you have to all the saints, ⁵For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; ⁶which is come unto you, as it is in all the world and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: ⁷As you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; ⁸who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. ⁹For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being faithful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (KJV)

Colossians 1:1-10

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15



There is something about the word of God that divides truth because the word of God talks about the truth contained in the law and the truth contained in the Gospel. The truth contained in the law is not the truth contained in the Gospel and the truth contained in the Gospel is not the truth contained in the law.

➡ Because we don't know the word of truth is to be divided in this way, we try to mix law and grace and mix the Old Covenant with the New Covenant. The Apostle Paul made it clear that the Old Covenant is old and therefore ready to be folded up and put away as far as covenant, not put away as far as study. People think when you separate law and grace you are throwing out the Old Testament. The Old Covenant is to be done away with as far as a means of relating to God. You are not relating to God through an Old Covenant, you are relating to God through a new and living way.

- The Old Covenant is based on your righteousness.
- The New Covenant is based on Christ's righteousness which leaves you no room to glory before God.

We need the Old Testament just as much as we need the New Testament.

**Just the first three chapters of Genesis are the foundation
for all human living and how we interpret life.**

**The Old Testament is an account of God working in history
through His people. The Psalms is a book of prayer and worship
and gives tremendous insight into the soul of man.**

Proverbs and Ecclesiastes gives us practical wisdom and insights for life.

**The Old Testament is filled with types and shadows
that point us to Christ and the Old Testament is a place
where you find out marvelous things about Christ.**

Remember this ➡ The old testament is the new testament concealed.
The new testament is the old testament revealed.

➡ Discipleship is about resolving the issue of the law in your mind.

- What role does the law play since the cross?
- Does the law play any role or have any purpose? If it does, we need to find out what role it plays; if it doesn't play any role at all, we need to find out why it doesn't play any role at all.
- How do we use God's law properly?
- How do we use God's law improperly?

C. I. Scofield writes in *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, a comparison between law and grace.

LAW	GRACE
God prohibiting and requiring	God beseeching and bestowing
Ministry of condemnation	Ministry of forgiveness
Curses	Redeems from the curse
Kills	Makes alive
Shuts every mouth before God	Opens every mouth to praise Him
Puts a guilty distance between God and man	Makes a guilty man draw nigh to God
Hate thine enemy	Love your enemies, bless those that use you despitefully
Do and live	Believe and live
Utterly condemns the best man	Freely justifies the worst
System of probation	System of favor
Stones an adulteress	Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more
Sheep dies for the shepherd	The shepherd dies for the sheep

➡ **Grace invites us to return, over and over and over to the surprising reality of being loved in the midst of failure, and weakness and sin.**

The Apostle Paul Rightly Divides the Word of Truth

⁶He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life. ⁷Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, ⁸will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! ¹²Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away ¹⁴But their minds were dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the Old Covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (NIV)
2 Corinthians 3:6-18

➡ The Apostle Paul is comparing in this passage law and grace, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant Paul is saying that if the law which brought **condemnation** and **death** came in **glory**, how much more will the message of **grace** come in **glory**.

Remember this ➡ **When Jesus came on the scene, He didn't raise the standard or qualification of the law, HE FULLY DEFINED IT! Jesus defined the qualification of the law for the first time since Moses gave the law. This is the first time the law was properly and precisely defined.**

For example ↓

"You have heard that it was said, do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."

Matthew 5:27-29

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother Raca is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says you fool! will be in danger of the fire of hell". (NIV)

Matthew 5:21-22

- Under the Old Covenant, Forgiveness was Ongoing and Conditional – based on what you do.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (NIV)

Matthew 6:12-15

- Under the New Covenant, Forgiveness is Final – Based upon what He did.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (NIV)

Ephesians 4:32

Food for Thought

The understanding of law and grace in the life of a believer is one of the most important subjects that we have to deal with.

If you do not get a handle on this subject of law and grace, you will not have a handle on your Christian experience.

An understanding of law and grace is going to determine whether you are going to learn to enjoy your faith or whether you are going to continue to endure your faith. No matter where you land on this issue, it is a major part of your discipleship.

THE PHARISEE IN ME (A DISCIPLESHIP ISSUE)

➡ Discipleship is entering a recovery program for Pharisees.

Pharisee – Our natural inclination to love the praise of men more than the praise of God and our natural inclination to substitute knowledge about God and godliness for truly knowing God. A Pharisee has no spiritual reality in his heart. They can defend the truths of the gospel but often fail to experience its transforming power in their life.

➡ Don't make the mistake of seeing the Pharisees as the comical characters depicted by church bulletin cartoons. They were well respected men of their day, they were theologians and revered leaders to whom many people looked to for spiritual guidance. They were super committed, super devoted and super serious about God's law. We have assigned to them such a ridiculous reputation that it is hard for some of us to identify with some of their characteristics, but the truth is that they were not all that different from some of us today and the Pharisees may live inside us.

Three Major Marks of a Pharisee

1) Spiritual Blindness

2) Preoccupation With the External While Ignoring the Internal

3) Always Displaying A Dominant Religious Spirit

➡ Looking down on everybody else, spiritual blindness, and a preoccupation with the external define the self-righteousness mindset and we are all vulnerable to this way of thinking and God is calling each one of us to examine ourselves to see if any of this mindset is in us and to breakout of self-righteousness and move into a righteousness by faith.

The Religious Hypocrites Checklist (For self-examination purposes only)

➡ Many of us have been called hypocrites for various reasons, some of those reasons right and some of those reasons wrong. Let's look at what Jesus meant when He used the word hypocrite and examine ourselves accordingly.

- 1) A religious hypocrite claims to have an exclusive corner on the truth even among God's people (John 9:28-29).

- 2) A religious hypocrite is self-righteousness (Luke 16:15; 18:9-14, Matthew 9:13).

- 3) A religious hypocrite is a slave to human praise and criticism (John 12:37, 42-43).

- 4) A religious hypocrite is jealous, envious and competitive (Matthew 27:18, Acts 5:12-18; 13:44-45,, James 3:14-16, John 11:47-48).

- 5) A religious hypocrite is highly critical (Matthew 11:18-19).

- 6) A religious hypocrite wants his spirituality to be seen (Matthew 23:5-7).

- 7) A religious hypocrite is cynical and skeptical (Mark 15:31-32).

- 8) A religious hypocrite produces bondage instead of freedom (Matthew 11:28-30, 12:1-2).

- 9) A religious hypocrite is more concerned with outward forms and traditions than with the power of God, mercy and compassion (Mark 7:6-9, John 18:28, Matthew 23:23-24).

- 10) A religious hypocrite is narrowly nationalistic and dangerously denominational (Acts 22:21-23, John 7:48-49, Matthew 12:10-14, John 12:9-11).

Final Thought: Discipleship includes searching our hearts to see if there is even a trace of any of these ten on this checklist in us.

SECTION 2



discipleship and
biblical Community

THE GOD OF COMMUNITY

*"Then God said, Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, in **Our** likeness...(NIV).
Genesis 1:26*

*"Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is **one**." (NIV)
Deuteronomy 6:4*

➡ Genesis 1:26 has three references to God's unique nature. Note the references to "us" and "our" which is an expression of **plurality** that proclaims the core doctrine of the Trinity. At the same time, God's **singularity** is expressed in Deuteronomy 6:4. God begins scripture and the creation story with the theological idea of **plurality within oneness**.

➡ The Trinitarian doctrine begins with the creation account, where all three persons of the Trinity are present. When God created the world, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2). John describes Jesus as the agent of creation: "Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:3). Since God Himself lives and works in community and since we are created in God's image, then we too are created in and for community.

- ➡ Community is both vertical and horizontal, just like the bars on a cross. They meet in the center, and true community is born when we experience God and all His fullness and His people in all of their fullness.

- ➡ God chose to deposit in us a distinct kind of relational DNA. God created us all with a “community gene,” an **inborn, intentional, inescapable** part of what it means to be human. We are internally wired with a desire for connection and the hunger for togetherness is an inescapable mark of humanity.

**Jesus has existed from all time in the community of Three in One.
It was inevitable, because of his nature and identity,
that when Jesus became incarnate as a human being, like us bearing the
created image of the triune God, He gathered a few into community.**

**DISCIPLESHIP AS WE HAVE STATED IS BOTH AN INDIVIDUAL AND
COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE JUST AS GOD IS ONE, YET A COMMUNITY.**

DISCIPLESHIP AND ONENESS

- ➡ In John 17, as Jesus moves toward the cross with His earthly life almost over, He disclosed in a prayer what’s closest to His heart and what’s foremost on His mind and that was His concern for the oneness of His followers.

“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name, the name You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one.” (NIV)
John 17:11

- ➡ In the book *Building a Church of Small Groups*, Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson provide some helpful insight on Jesus' prayer in John 17: "It is sometimes said that when someone faces death, one's conversation reveals his or her deepest passions, hopes and dreams. That's why we go out of our way to honor dying wishes. In His final hours, Jesus gives us clues to His chief concerns."

²⁰"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. ²²I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one: ²³I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me." (NIV)

John 17:20-23

- ➡ Jesus was asking for the restoration of a oneness among humans modeled after the oneness of the Trinity. Life within the Trinity was to be the pattern for our lives together (Christ's dream for community).

- ➡ In the Scriptures the Father, Son and Holy Spirit constantly defer to one another, concentrate their attention on one another and live in a state of other centeredness and love toward one another in their divine community. Here are a few examples among the many:

➡ **The Holy Spirit**

In John's writings the Holy Spirit never draws attention to Himself but always draws attention to the Son, Jesus Christ.

Holy Spirit comes in the Son's name, bears witness to the Son, and glorifies the Son.

Holy Spirit says this about Jesus:

Look at Him

Listen to Him

Learn from Him

Follow Him

Worship Him

Be devoted to Him

Serve Him

Love Him

Be preoccupied with Him

Christ (The Son)

He **said**, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. I came not to be served but to serve.”

He **submitted** to the Spirit, who according to Mark drove Him in the wilderness.

He **told** the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, “not My will but Thine be done.”

God (The Father)

Two different occasions He said, “This is my priceless beloved Son, I am deeply pleased with Him, listen to Him, hear ye Him.”

God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a community of greater humility, servant hood, mutual submission and delight than we could imagine and Christ's prayer in John 17:11 is I want My disciples to experience the same oneness with one another that I experience with the Father God.

➡ God's passion is for us to experience this unique kind of relational life for ourselves and for the purpose of influencing a watching world. Notice Jesus concluding words in John 17:21: "so that the world may believe You have sent me."

QUESTION: Do you feel the weight of that statement?

Is Jesus saying that the credibility of His life and message in the eyes of unbelievers is dependent upon the way we as His disciples relate with one another?

Remember these earlier words from Jesus in John:

"A new command I give you: love one another, as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (NIV)

John 13:34-35


Francis Schaeffer said: "Our relationship with each other is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful. Christian community is the final apologetic."

Conclusion: According to Jesus' prayer, the most convincing witness to the truth of the Gospel is the recognizable oneness of Christ' followers.


God's Mathematics

In the Trinity God is three – yet one. God creates human beings male and female and the two become one. Everything equals one. Jesus Christ passionately prays that His followers would experience the same oneness that He experienced with the Father God. Jesus Christ's dream of oneness and how critical that is to our witness to the world is the reason why we must move toward Biblical Community.

QUESTION: Do you agree that one of God's dreams for His people is community? What role has community played in your faith journey?

 **Foundational definition of Biblical Community comes from the great commandment** – Biblical Community is a network of Christian believers who are devoted to:

1. **Genuinely** loving God **with** all their hearts.
2. **Authentically** loving one another **from** their hearts.
3. **Cultivating** spiritual and **relational** health.

 **Foundational Mission** of Biblical Community is seeing Christ **formed** in individuals and seeing individuals become **fully devoted disciples**. (Matthew 28:19-20)

➡ **Foundational Ministry** of Biblical Community is the **Ministry of Reconciliation**. (Romans 6:8-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

➡ **Vision** and **Values** of Biblical Community

⁴²“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (NIV)

Acts 2:42-47

Six characteristics of a healthy functioning Biblical Community (you can substitute disciple, ministry leader, small group leader for Biblical Community).

- 1) A Biblical Community must first and foremost be relational.
- 2) A Biblical Community must truly **love** people.
- 3) A Biblical Community must be **reflective**.
- 4) A Biblical Community believes in the **dignity** and **depravity** of every individual.
- 5) A Biblical Community believes strongly in **Grace**.
- 6) A Biblical Community must believe that the path to **recovery** and **healing** is a journey and a process.

➡ Two Major Tasks of Biblical Community

- 1) Our **primary task** in Biblical Community is to cultivate spiritual and relational health. We will call this **relational spirituality** which focuses on how we are relating to God and others in the midst of our ministries and our lives.
- 2) Our **secondary task** in Biblical Community is all the **functional and organizational** tasks of ministry. We will call this **functional productivity** which focuses on how we are performing and what we are producing.

➡ If we are going to help people **love God** with all their heart and **love others** from their heart, we will need to substantially shift our ministry focus from **functional productivity** to **relational spirituality**.

➡ We must shift our attention from **accomplishing projects** to **loving God and people**.

The Four Areas of Biblical Community

- 1) Public Ministries
- 2) Leadership Teams and Small Groups
- 3) Family and Friendships
- 4) Relationship with Jesus Christ

ALL FOUR AREAS ARE VITALLY IMPORTANT TO BIBILICAL COMMUNITY
BUT THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE IN OUR LIVES SHOULD BE:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

The Story of Mary and Martha

³⁸“As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what He said. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’ ⁴¹“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” (NIV)

Luke 10:38-42

➡ In Biblical Community task is not wrong, we need to get things done, we need to be productive, but in Biblical Community **task** and **relationship** go together. Relationship **governs** task and task **flows out** of relationship.

QUESTION: What is the attitude of your heart while doing the task?
What kind of people are we in the midst of the task?
(This is a part of our Discipleship process).

Instructions to a Biblical Community

⁹*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.* ¹⁰*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

¹¹*Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.*

¹²*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* ¹³*Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.* ¹⁴*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* ¹⁵***Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*** ¹⁶*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

¹⁷*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.* ¹⁸*If it is possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* ¹⁹*Do not take revenge my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.* ²⁰*On the contrary:*

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Romans 12:9-21

QUESTION: What makes it hard for you to mourn (weep) and rejoice with others?
What is the role of a Biblical Community in comforting the bereaved?

MEANINGLESS CLICHÉ	POSITIVE STATEMENT
Time will heal	You must feel as if this pain will never end
It's a blessing	I'm sorry this had to happen
God never gives us more than we can handle	This must seem like more than you can handle
You must be strong	Some things just don't make sense
This is God's will	I just don't know what to say
I know how you feel	Don't feel you need to be strong for me
Let me know if I can do anything	I'll call tomorrow to see how I can help
Your holding up so well	It's okay to cry

Ten Commandments for Comforters

- 1) Go to those who are bereaved as soon as possible, even if it is inconvenient for you.
- 2) Be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to react to words and feelings that may appear “unchristian”.
- 3) Do not try to explain everything.
- 4) Share the promises of God.
- 5) Avoid saying “I know just how you feel”. Nobody will believe you and the statement accomplishes nothing.
- 6) Words often fail, so express yourself through a loving hug, a handshake, even a simple touch. Just being there is a ministry.
- 7) Do not be afraid to “weep with those who weep”.
- 8) Remember that grieving is a difficult process that takes time. Be patient with those who mourn and try not to say “aren’t you over it yet?”
- 9) Visit regularly during the weeks after the funeral.
- 10) Keep confidence. Don’t turn the experience into a sermon illustration, unless the family gives you permission.



The following “one anothers” of the New Testament reveal the heart of God and his desire for his people to develop deep caring relationships with one another. As you read them, reflect upon how you might incorporate them into your life and your small group life.

- Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
- Love one another (John 13:34)
- Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Honor one another (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Stop passing judgment on one another (Romans 14:13)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Instruct one another (Romans 15:14)
- Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Carry each other’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Forgive each other (Ephesians 4:32)
- Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)
- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21)
- In humility consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- Teach one another (Colossians 3:16)
- Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
- Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

- ➡ Romans 12:9-21 and the one anothers of Scripture represent a quality of life that God is inviting each and every one of us to participate in.

Discipleship takes place in community around the one anothers and small groups provide the optimal environment for this to happen. Small groups are the foundation for a healthy Biblical community. Biblical community is built, nourished and nurtured in the Small Group setting.

DISCIPLESHIP AND SMALL GROUPS

- ➡ One of the most ideal settings to make disciples is the small group. The purpose of small groups is life change, not **information** but **transformation**.

Three Pillars Biblical Community in a Discipleship Culture must be built upon

- 1) The depths and dimensions of the Gospel of Grace – produces the most healthy environment for community.
- 2) A discipleship paradigm that includes the spiritual, intellectual, relational and emotional parts of the soul.
- 3) A creative and diverse small group culture that has the ability to connect people at different places in their journey of faith.

QUESTION: Where do small groups fit in the overall vision and strategy of CBC?

ANSWER: Small groups are central to our practice of community life and our primary method for accomplishing ministry. Small groups are the major expression of our local church community life but not the full expression.

THREE MAJOR SMALL GROUP MODELS (see chart)

1) Church **WITH** Small Groups

2) Church **OF** Small Groups

3) Church **IS** Small Groups

➡ We have chosen to move toward becoming a church of small groups who implements when appropriate some of the characteristics of the church is small groups model – let's discuss the meaning and implications of this model (see chart).

	CHURCH WITH GROUPS	CHURCH OF GROUPS	CHURCH IS GROUPS
PURPOSE →	Help people find a place in the church	A means of building the church as community	The primary expression of the church
ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE →	Someone wants to start a group	Strategy using affinity with geography considered	Strategy using geography with affinity considered
GETTING IN A GROUP →	Placement system	Group invitation or assimilation event	Assigned by geography
GROUP MEMBERSHIP →	Optional for growth	Encouraged and essential for growth	Essential for growth — required for church membership
ROLE OF GROUP LEADERS →	Mostly reactive leader	Proactive shepherd/leader	Pastoral shepherd authority
USE OF CURRICULUM →	Chosen by leader	Recommended by staff or chosen by leader	Designated by staff
GROUP MEETING FORMAT →	Designed by leader or curriculum	Designed by leader and ministry strategy	Designed by leader and designated pattern
CHURCH AUTHORITY OVER GROUP →	low	low	high
CHURCH MONITORING OF GROUPS →	low	high	high
GROUP BASED EVANGELISTIC ACTIVITY →	possible	encouraged	expected

The most common sin of small group ministry



Narrow definition of a small group, using a “one size fits all” approach to group life, and failing to provide a range of entry points into groups.

- ➡ Narrow limits the potential for innovation and creativity – don’t confuse “narrow” with “good”.

Examples: Worship wars used to erupt when congregations narrowly interpreted what was musically permissible, but now most churches vary styles, lyrics, and instruments. For decades Christians defined “personal devotions” only as prayer and study. Only recently have many accepted spiritual practices such as silence, solitude, journaling and reflection.

- ➡ For too long the term “small group” implied a home based Bible study with some prayer and dessert. The definition of small group life was often limited to several people at a table, Bible in one hand and fill-in-the-blank curriculum in the other. Other groups or church gatherings were viewed as not as spiritual.
- ➡ Small groups are needed at every level to connect people throughout the congregation and any ministry that starts to value certain levels of groups more than others will be less effective with their target audience.

DEFINITION OF SMALL GROUP

Small Group: A group of people who come together on a regular basis for a common purpose and are led by an identified leader who is assisting them in their discipleship process by intentionally providing an environment for connection, community and spiritual formation. The environment provided should be a place where each individual experiences a sense of identify and belonging and where the life of Christ in me touches the life of Christ in you and vice versa.

➡ Decide on Purpose and Type of Group



Group leader is the Barometer on this scale
of where the group will go at a certain time.

➡ Small groups incorporate **two threads** that intertwine during meeting times.

- 1) How it imparts truth to its members (content).
- 2) How much emotional closeness and experiences are right for the group (process).

Definition of Process: An unfolding discovery of God, ourselves and each other in connected moments of just going with the flow of the group.

Key Point: For a group to be a group, you need some amount of both **content** and **process**.

There is no right or wrong. You must decide what kind of group you will lead or participate in.

- 1) Highly structured or process oriented.
- 2) Group that depends mostly on the materials and the videos and the questions.
- 3) Group that depends more on the facilitator and group skills to talk, open up, get things going.
- 4) Open or closed group – open ended – runs for a period of time then starts a different topic.

Elements that happen in a small group that create growth, healing and maturity (discipleship).

1. A Second Family Experience.

- In a good group, you are **reparented** by the family of God – the group is like a second family.
- The group asks members to be open to learning new **life patterns**.
- Some people need to learn to receive **grace** and **love** instead of pushing it away. Others need to be **honest** about how **defensive** they can be when confronted. Some need to learn to embrace and listen to their **emotions**. Still others must learn how to be **angry** and sin not.
- If conflict were to arise, the group would hopefully model a family where conflict can be processed without members feeling **rejected** or **abused**.

2. Connection

➡ Elements that bring emotional connection to a group.

- 1) The Presence of **Grace**.
- 2) **Nonjudgmentalism**.
- 3) **Interest** and **curiosity**.
- 4) **Telling our story**.

➡ The power of stories in the small group process.

- 1) The Bible is 70% story and the stories of God are meant to change our perceptions and thinking about ourselves, others, life and God.
- 2) Stories are the **connective tissue** that holds small groups together.
- 3) Stories express a person's individuality, but at the same time people find **community** and **connection** in the similarities between their stories and those told by other group members.
- 4) We become less **judgmental** and see others with a different perspective because of story.

- 5) Stories disclose something about a person's **private** life to the group.
- 6) Telling your story gives you a basis to find **similarities** in Biblical stories. Groups in which stories are told can play a powerful role in bringing to life the stories we read in scripture.
- 7) We tell our own stories in order to elicit feedback and to prompt our peers to disclose who they want to be and who they want us to be. It helps you get a spirit-led vision for another person.
- 8) One of the reasons why stories about personal feelings promote a sense of groupness or community or connection is that these stories are often told in the same way children tell secrets. The message communicated is that the listeners are **privileged**. They share a **common bond** because they know something others do not know.
- 9) When people expose areas of brokenness in their lives through their story, it gives other group members **permission** and a feeling of legitimacy to expose their brokenness.

QUESTION: What does life changing discussion in a small group have to do with discipleship?

Definition of Discipleship ➡ **me sharing my story, you sharing your story, together looking at God's story and the story of Christ in the scriptures and gently over time (grace + truth + time) our stories begin to look more like Christ's story.**

3. Prayer

- When you are connected to each other's hearts and you know something about another person's weaknesses, failures, hopes, dreams and desires, prayer is your most **powerful tool** for growth.

4. Accountability

- Usually focuses on behavior but in good groups, accountability involves the **whole person** – behavior, attitudes, insides, externals.
- Make **grace-filled** accountability a group norm.
- Definition – accountability is **voluntary submission** to another group member or members for support, encouragement, and help in a particular area of life, giving them some responsibility for assisting you in that area.

5. Forgiveness and Grace

- Healthy groups powerfully administer grace and forgiveness.
- Grace speaks to our **weakness** and **inability**, forgiveness to our many **failures**.
- Truth comes out in an **atmosphere** of grace and forgiveness. This could be the truth members need to admit to themselves, the truth they need to confess to others, the truth they need to receive from others, or the truth they need to confront others with.
- Grace and forgiveness operate when group members lovingly show equal interest in someone's failure as in their victories, when compassion is waiting for the person who finally opens up about a weakness.

6. Support and Strengthening

➡ Three ways we can support and strengthen:

- 1) Active listening
- 2) Validation – confirming a person's emotional reality
- 3) Identification – “I have been there” – “I can relate” – “I’m in the same place” – “I’m experiencing the same thing”.

“And we urge you brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.” (NIV)

2 Thessalonians 5:14

7. Mentoring

- We teach each other how to do life.
- The group can help a member develop experience, competency and wisdom in some specific area of life.

8. Grieving

“Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted”.

Matthew 5:4

- Grief is the **most important** pain there is in life.
- Grief is the only pain that **cures** all the other pains.
- God has wired us to grieve which basically means to **finish something**. When you grieve something it is a letting go process.
- Grief is not just about when someone dies but about when anything is lost (Relationships, career, health, opportunities).
- Hard to do on Sunday morning – easier to do in small group – small groups can be both a hospital and a training center.

9. Healing

- The need for **validation**, often, the extent to which people heal from injuries is the extent to which others validate the injuries.
- There are times when a person’s wounds need more structure, safety, intensity, or experience than the group can provide.

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life”.

Proverbs 13:12

10. Confrontation

- Confront means to turn your face towards – it doesn’t have to be negative or adversarial.
- Best model of confrontation (Romans 8:1) – **No condemnation**.
- Confront **patterns** instead of **behaviors**.

11. Modeling

“Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus.” (NIV)

I Corinthians 4:16-17

WE CAN'T DO WHAT WE'VE NEVER SEEN DONE.

Here are a few things a good group will model for its members:

- Transparency
- Vulnerability
- Interdependence
- Support
- Listening Well
- Confessing faults so as to be restored
- Giving and receiving truth
- Resolving conflict without ruining relationships
- Forgiveness
- These aspects of life are not just taught they are caught through modeling.

12. Acceptance of Weakness

- In a good group **struggle** is normalized.

External life – what we show the world

Internal life – what is behind the fig leaf



Real discipleship is these two become one.

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

The most strategic people in the church are the small group leaders because they are the “**front line**” agents of life change and have the greatest opportunity to affect the most people over the longest period of time.

QUESTION: You might be asking yourself – Do I have what it takes to be a small group leader? Consider these four questions.

- 1) Do you have a desire to shepherd people?
- 2) Do you have a heart for people?
- 3) Do you have a desire to build relationships?
- 4) Do you have the desire to develop facilitator skills?

➡ Jesus model as a small group leader.

- 1) Jesus began his ministry by forming and establishing a small group (Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 6:13-16). Jesus elected to minister within the framework of interpersonal relationships.
- 2) Jesus spent the majority of his time with the small group.
- 3) From Jesus example, we see that **relationships** not **organizations** were central to his method of discipleship.
- 4) Having formed his group, Jesus taught and modeled spiritual truth by simply drawing them close to Himself. Discipleship happened in the context of life and being together, it wasn't an **academic experience** it was a life experience. It was a living learning laboratory.

FINAL POINT ➡ Small groups are built upon the effectiveness of the leader.

Final Word on Biblical Community

QUESTION: Why does it seem so hard to cultivate and develop Biblical Community?

- 1) No sense today that Christianity really transforms a person.
- 2) Depravity – I will not need anyone (the essence of depravity).
- 3) The consequences of the fall and our responses to the consequences of the fall.
- 4) Business and lack of value for authentic relationship.
- 5) Ignoring our self protective strategies.
- 6) Technology redefining the way we communicate and connect.
- 7) Lack of centering on Christ.
- 8) Lack of reflection.
- 9) Trying to force everybody to think the same way (cult mentality).
- 10) Lack of cultivating relationship among leadership.
- 11) Substituting social community for Biblical community.
- 12) Not dealing with hurt, loss, and brokenness.

**We must battle, deal with, and face these issues
in order to have an authentic Biblical Community and in order to create a
dynamic, fruitful discipleship culture.**

SECTION 3



discipleship and
relational-emotional Health

DISCIPLESHIP'S MISSING LINK

Basic Premise: Relational and Emotional health and Biblical Spiritual Maturity are inseparable and they are critical to a fuller understanding of Discipleship.

➡ **IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE SPIRITUALLY MATURE AND BE
RELATIONALLY AND EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE**

Many Christians today live as if these two concepts have no intersection. Our standards of what it means to be “spiritual” totally bypass many glaring inconsistencies. For example, we have learned to accept that:

- You can be a dynamic, gifted speaker for God in public and be an unloving spouse and parent at home.
- You can function as a church board member or pastor and be unteachable, insecure, and defensive.
- You can memorize entire books of the New Testament and still be unaware of your depression and anger, even displacing it on other people.
- You can fast and pray a half-day a week for years as a spiritual discipline and constantly be critical of others, justifying it as discernment.
- You can lead hundreds of people in a Christian ministry while being driven by a deep personal need to compensate for a nagging sense of failure.
- You can pray for deliverance from the demonic realm when in reality you are simply avoiding conflict, repeating an unhealthy pattern of behavior traced back to the home in which you grew up.
- You can be outwardly cooperative at church while secretly undermining people, ignoring the real issue behind why you are hurt and angry.
- The overall health of any church or ministry depends primarily on the relational, emotional and spiritual health of its leadership.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Did you ever wonder why there seems to be so much pathology in the church that is covered over by a veneer of spirituality?

- 2) Did you ever wonder how it is that so many people who have been Christians for years are so judgmental and critical?

- 3) Did you ever wonder that for all our Bible studies, prayer meetings, church services and service – with all that background – why there are still large relational and emotional layers that exist in many peoples' lives that they have not allowed God to touch?

➡ **When our inner world is not in sync with our external behavior – Jesus called that hypocrisy – so would you think that a major part of discipleship is dealing with our inner world?**

If the great commandment is all about relationship and loving well, what makes us think that we can separate relational and emotional health from spiritual maturity and the discipleship process? If we are going to love well, it requires us to not only know God, but it requires us to understand the nature of our own heart, soul and mind – understanding our world of feelings, thoughts, desires, hopes, and dreams in all their richness and complexity.

- ➡ It takes energy, inconvenience, time, courage, solitude, and a solid understanding of the depth and dimensions of the grace of God to grow into a spiritually mature disciple and this is why relational and emotional health has largely been ignored in most discipleship, spiritual formation and mentoring models in our churches, and because of that we are paying the heavy price of stunted growth and shallow disciples in our churches.
- ➡ We must integrate emotional maturity into our discipleship strategy with a focus on loving well or we will be in danger of missing God's point completely – LOVE.

The Discipleship process includes learning to **model a relationally and emotionally mature life which includes:**

- 1) Learning to love well under stress
- 2) Becoming a good and responsive listener
- 3) Learning to live in brokenness and vulnerability
- 4) Grieving losses without becoming permanently crippled

- 5) Being open and honest about your emotions and taking responsibility for your feelings
- 6) Learning how to handle and resolve conflict in a mature manner
- 7) Dealing with anger in a way that leads to growth in myself and others
- 8) Honest reflection on the positive and negative impact of your family of origin as well as major influences in your life and how they affect your relationships
- 9) Discovering the balance between a healthy integration of self reflection and service to Christ.

UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN SOUL

➡ If our souls need to be **discipled, renewed, restored** then we must gain some understanding of the human soul. Also, if you are going to disciple others by **moving into each other's lives** and **entering each other's story** in a meaningful and significant way, (Biblical Community) we must first get some understanding of the human soul.

"May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (NIV)

1 Thessalonians 5:23

This scripture reveals to us the makeup of man. You are a three part being – spirit, soul and body. You are a spirit, you have a soul, you live in a physical body.

SOUL = Mind, Intellect, Will, Emotions.

“Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (NIV)

Romans 12:1-2

➡ **Two dynamics that are important to understanding the soul:**

- 1) People are made in the image of God.
- 2) People are fallen so the image of God in us has been tarnished.

Basic definition of the image of God

In order to have a basic definition of what the image of God is in us, we must come up with some elements that define our personhood that are similar to elements that define God's personhood.

When we can list the distinctions of personality that God and human beings share, then we will have a basic definition of the image of God.

 Elements that define personhood (See four circles).

1. Deep longings – Both God and man have the capacity to long deeply.

- In Hosea 11:8 God laments the waywardness of His children in moving terms. God uses rich passionate language as He longs for the restoration of relationship with His children – “How can I give you up?...My heart is turned over within me”.
- The psalmist describes himself as a personal being who deeply longs. His desire for God is similar to the intense panting of a thirsty deer for water (Psalm 42:1). In another place the Psalmist says, “My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee”. (Psalm 63:1)

2. Evaluate thinking – Both God and man think. They arrive at conclusions that determine their intentions.

- We're told in Genesis 6:5 that “...the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” God thought about mankind and formed his conclusions.

3. Active Choosing: Both God and man can choose particular goals to pursue and they can choose specific actions designed to reach these goals.

- God “purposes” to do certain things. Whatever He does is according to His purpose, which is directed by the...”council of His own will.” (Ephesians 1:9-11)
- In Philippians 2:12-13 we are instructed to live in consistency with the truth of our salvation by both “willing” (setting a direction) and “working” (pursuing that direction) knowing that whatever good choices we make are empowered by God.

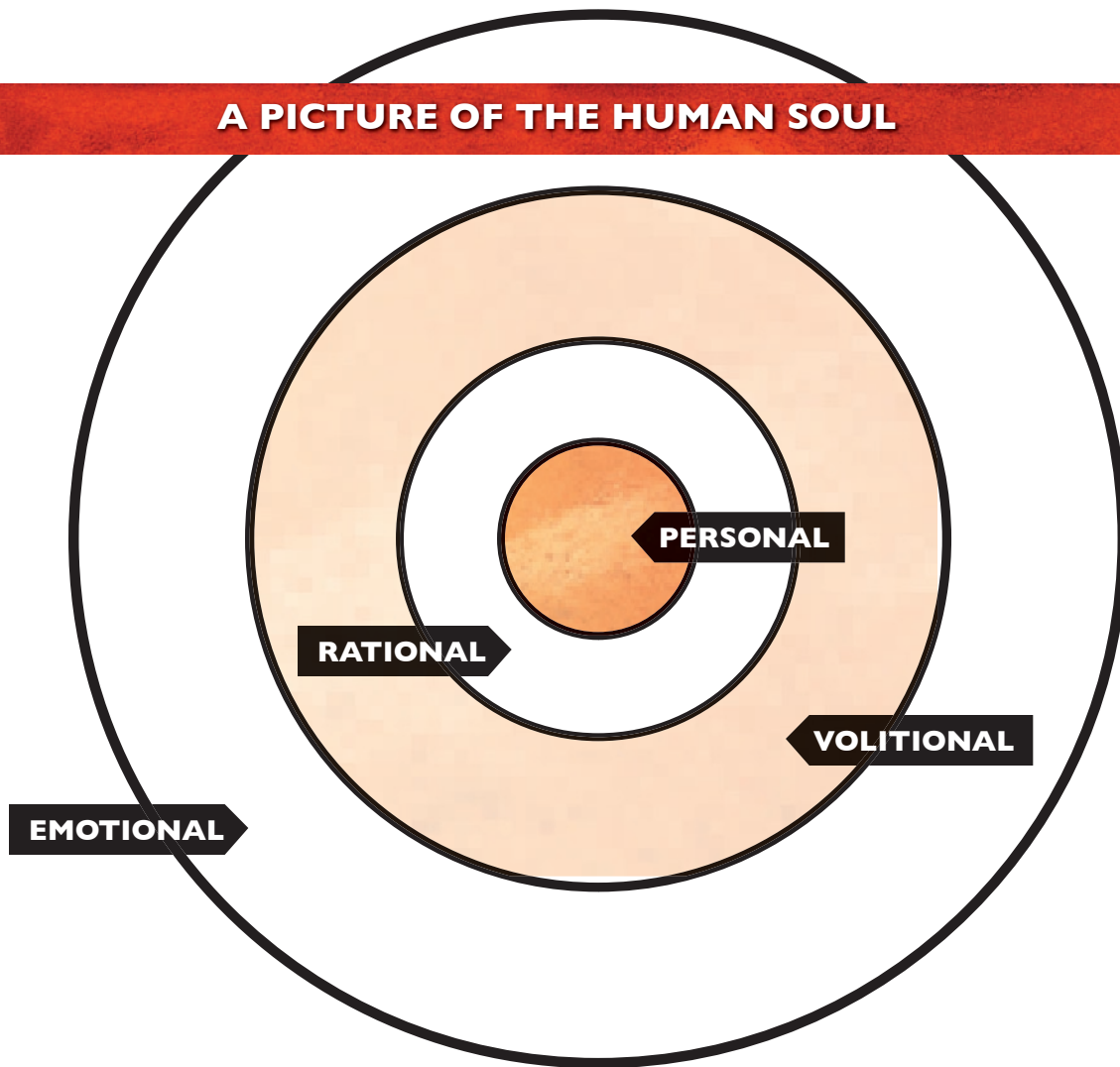
4. Experiencing Emotions – God and man both feel emotions as they interact with the world.

- Our Lord felt sadness when Lazarus died (John 11:33-36). He felt anger when the temple became a commercial sideshow (John 2:14-17). Nehemiah sat down and wept when he heard Jerusalem’s walls were in ruins (Nehemiah 1:4). In the middle of his struggles, Job was “seething within” (Job 30:27). Paul spoke of himself as perplexed (2 Corinthians 4:8)

Summary: The image of God can be defined in terms of four capabilities:

- 1) Deeply longing for something personal.
- 2) Rationally evaluating what is happening.
- 3) Willfully pursuing a chosen direction.
- 4) Experiencing one’s world emotionally.

A PICTURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL



- 1. Emotional** What are you feeling? Capacity to feel
- 2. Volitional** What are you doing? Capacity to set directions and pursue them — capacity to choose.
- 3. Rational** What are you thinking? Capacity to think in pictures and words.
- 4. Personal** Longings (deep longings) pain, disappointments — capacity to love and enjoy purpose — capacity for relationship and impact
 - we long for relationship — the thing we most long for seems to bring us a lot of pain and disappointment.
 - we long for impact — to make a difference, we long for purpose

A discipleship culture must minister to all four elements of the soul.

➡ God is an independent person with the capacity to long, think, choose and feel. A human being is a dependent person with the same four capabilities. Each one of us is:

- A personal being who longs deeply.
- A rational being who thinks.
- A volitional being who chooses.
- An emotional being who feels.

QUESTION: What does it mean for Jesus Christ to transform the emotional aspect of who you are?

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF EMOTIONS

Emotions for the most part have not been a topic of exploration in the Christian community. Much of the Christian community believes emotions are troublesome, distracting and therefore should be ignored.

Basic Premise: Emotional wholeness (or the saving of the soul) cannot be achieved through ignoring or denying deep emotions.

God and Christ showed intense emotion. Here are some examples:

Genesis 6:6 – God is grieved, remorse

Isaiah 1:11-14 – God is burdened, weary of hypocrisy

John 11:35 – Expressed sorrow (He wept)

Mark 3:5 – Anger

Luke 7:9 – Amazement

Luke 9:41 – Frustration

Luke 22:15 – Emotional longing to be with the apostles

Hebrews 12:2 – Joy

Many places in scripture God and Jesus had and felt compassion.

QUESTION: If God and Christ showed emotion then why are emotions viewed as such a pain in the neck, why are emotions viewed to some degree as something to be controlled, to be distanced from, rather than to be explored, to be pondered?

➡ Could it be that instead of laboring so hard to change our emotions or master them or be in control of them that we should allow our emotions to change us. Could it be that we are to treat our emotions as a discipleship issue and not a distraction or something to be ignored.

EMOTIONS ARE REVELATORY

- 1) Emotions reveal something about our own hearts that we do not want to see.
- 2) Emotions reveal something about the nature of life and this fallen world that we do not want to see.
- 3) Emotions reveal our deepest questions about God so we would rather banish emotions, live in denial, distort them, ignore them or theologically imprison them so we don't have to face what our emotions reveal.

EVERY EMOTION IS A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

- All **anger** is related to the core question: Is life just? Is God just?
- All **jealousy** is related to the question: Is God fair?
- All **despair** is related to the question: Will God leave me in isolation? Will he offer His presence to others and leave me alone?
- All **contempt** is related to the question: Does God love me or will He turn away in disgust?
- All **shame** is related to the question: Does God love me or will He hate me if He sees me as I really am?

QUESTION: Are all souls similar or are our souls so vastly different that we don't have anything in common?

ANSWER: Because we are created in the image of God human souls share an essential likeness, no matter what race, color or culture, no matter what environment you were raised in. There are four characteristics or four realities that are universal to all human souls and because of these characteristics or realities we can relate to other human beings of all cultures. (This is why we only need one gospel).

The four characteristics or realities are:

- 1) The reality of **dependency** – we are all dependent beings born with needs and longings we cannot meet on our own.

- 2) The reality of **duty** – We have been created with the duty and responsibility to serve Someone larger than ourselves.

- 3) The reality of **dignity** – We are all born with the privilege and freedom to determine and choose for ourselves the nature of our own behaviors, goals, values and character.

4) The reality of **depravity** – We are all born with an addiction to a sinful nature bent on living life independent from God.

- Resist embracing **dependency** – you become self-sufficient and refuse to talk about your longings.
- Resist embracing **duty** – We don't want to be reminded that we have a duty to love.
- Resist embracing **dignity** – I have to be this way or I will be walked all over – no hope for change.
- Resist embracing **depravity** – You don't want to look beneath the surface.

Spiritual growth and spiritual health cannot be attained apart from these four truths. If you are pretending about anyone of the four, you are not growing. It is impossible to embrace these four truths about yourself without being motivated to move into a deeper relationship with God. As soon as you embrace these four things, the only thing that makes sense is to jump into the Father's arms. Never help people pretend that one of these things is not true or you will be part of the problem.

The Goal of Discipleship is that you would become a more loving, authentic human being toward God, others, and yourself. In order to reach this goal, it will require you on some level to understand and apply the following six principles.

1. Look Beneath the Surface

- Becoming aware that the ways I respond, relate, and react in my daily life often involve a lot more than my first glance thoughts and intentions of the moment.
- It takes the grace of God to go beneath the surface. Thankfully, there are “disciplines of reflection” to help us in walking in that grace. One of these is the why? or what’s going on question. As we notice patterns in our feelings, situations, and relationships that emerge in our lives, God desires that we ask ourselves the why? question in the safety of His Presence.

Examples

Rage/Anger – “How was I hurt?”

Frustration – “What did I feel helpless about?”

Shame – “What was I hiding?”

Resentment – What did I expect or hope for?”

Depression – “What did I lose?”

Jealousy – “Where did I feel inadequate?”

- ➡ It takes courage to ask yourself: What am I really feeling in this situation? What's really going on here – especially when we are experiencing emotions such as anger, shame, bitterness, hate, grief, jealousy, fear, depression. Ask yourself this question: How might God be speaking or coming to you through these emotions?

2. Break the Power of the Past

- In a discipleship culture people begin to understand how their past affects their present ability to love Christ and others and how the family they have grown up in, except in rare instances, is the primary and most powerful system that will shape and influence who they are.

The Church as “New First Family”

Our family of origin is the single most powerful and formative influence that has shaped the person we are today. Therefore, it makes sense that Christian discipleship is ultimately about transplanting someone from their family of origin and rooting them into the new family of Christ. Just as there were established ways of handling anger, money, conflict, sex, feelings, etc., in our family of origin, so likewise there are new ways of thinking and acting about those things in the family of God. Discipleship is a process of unlearning and relearning, because through Christ, we've been birthed into a new family tree!

Family Generational themes in two Biblical Families.

King David and his family

1. Character erosion
2. Sexual sin
3. Family division and sibling rivalry

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and family

1. Pattern of lying
2. The way at least one parent in each generation has a “favorite child”.
3. Sibling rivalry (tension between brothers)

➡ Sin is passed from generation to generation. God allows these family stories and others to be recorded to sober us to take a deep, hard look inside. The implication for Discipleship is clear: It is impossible to help people break free from their past apart from understanding the families in which they grew up. Unless we grasp the power of the past and how it affects who we are in the present, we will inevitably replicate those patterns in relationships inside and outside the church.

“Ten Commandments” of our Family of Origin

Growing up, everyone of our families operated under a set of commandments or precepts. Take a few minutes to jot down any rules, attitudes, and underlying assumptions your family had in two or three of the ten areas listed below – spoken or unspoken:

- 1) Money _____
- 2) Success _____
- 3) God _____
- 4) Gender Roles _____
- 5) Marriage _____
- 6) Complimenting/Praising _____
- 7) Sex _____
- 8) Play and Recreation _____
- 9) Expressing Anger _____
- 10) Loss and Grief _____

- ➡ Outside of our family of origin, it is important to consider what have been other major influences in your life. The question to ask is, “What are a few events or people that have impacted who I am today, that will help me understand ‘what makes me tick’?”
- ➡ Discipleship must include honest reflection on the positive and negative impact of my family of origin as well as other major influences in my life. The extent to which we can go back and understand how it has shaped us will determine, to a large degree, our level of awareness and our ability to break destructive patterns, pass on constructive legacies, and grow in love toward God and people.
- ➡ We must commit to reflect seriously on our family history in light of the values of the Gospel.

Remember This

**God commands us to honor our parents.
This means we respect and thank God for them.
We can broaden that to include thanking God for our story,
for our past, and for the place, time and family into which we were born.
God’s intention is for you to come to the place where you can thank Him
for the good and the bad. People may have harmed you.
You may have made some bad choices. Remember what Joseph learned,
after being betrayed by his brothers for most of his adult life:
“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish
what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Genesis 50:20)**

Final Point: Maturity comes as a result of having taken a deep look at how our past has impacted the present.

3. Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability

- Living in brokenness and vulnerability means that, in all my relationships, I realize that we are all very broken people and I carry with me the profound awareness and humility that I'm not perfect, that I fall short, and not by a little and that we all need to be profoundly retrained, retaught, reworked, and reshaped under the grace and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

➡ Evaluate your style of relating and leadership style (see list on next page). What changes is God leading you to make so that your life would be more characterized by brokenness and vulnerability?

- One of the scariest things in the world is to be ourselves. Only by God's grace, and by a deep intimate knowledge of his love and affection, can we find the courage to live out the broken and vulnerable life Christ revealed to us. Pray that God will replace your fears with a surrender to His perfect love.

On a scale of 1-4 (1 = not true, 2 = sometimes true, 3 = mostly true, 4 = very true) rate yourself on the following:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | I often admit when I'm wrong, readily asking forgiveness from others (Matthew 5:23-24) |
| _____ | I am able to speak freely about my weaknesses, failures, and mistakes (2 Corinthians 12:7-12) |
| _____ | Others would easily describe me as approachable, gentle, open, and transparent (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:1-6) |
| _____ | Those close to me would say that I am not easily offended or hurt (Matthew 5:39-42; 1 Corinthians 13:5) |
| _____ | I am consistently open to hearing and applying constructive criticism and feedback that others might have for me (Proverbs 10:17; 17:10; 25:12) |
| _____ | I am rarely judgmental or critical of others (Matthew 7:1-5) |
| _____ | Others would say that I am slow to speak, quick to listen, and good at seeing things from their perspective (James 1:19-20). |

PROUD & DEFENSIVE

BROKEN & VULNERABLE

I am guarded and protective about my imperfections and flaws.	1	I am transparent and weak; I disclose myself to appropriate others.
I focus on the "positive," strong, successful parts of myself.	2	I am aware of the weak, needy, limited parts of who I am, and I freely admit failure.
I am highly "offendable" and defensive.	3	I am approachable and open to input.
I naturally focus first on the flaws, mistakes and sins of others.	4	I am aware of my own brokenness. I have compassion and am slow to judge others.
I give my opinion a lot, even when I am not asked.	5	I am slow to speak and quick to listen.
I don't get close to people.	6	I am open, soft and curious about others.
I keep people from really seeing what is going on inside of me.	7	I delight in showing vulnerability and weakness, that Christ's power may be seen.
I like to control most situations.	8	I can let go and give people opportunity to earn my trust.
I have to be right in order to feel strong and good.	9	I understand that God's strength reveals itself in admitting mistakes, weakness and statements that "I was wrong."
I blame others.	10	I take responsibility for myself and speak mostly in the "I," not the "you" or "they."
I often hold grudges and rarely ask forgiveness.	11	I don't hold people in debt to me, and am able to ask others for forgiveness as needed.
When I'm offended, I write people off.	12	When I'm offended, I ask questions to explore what happened.
I deny, avoid, or withdraw from painful realities.	13	I honestly look at the truth underneath the surface, even when it hurts.
I give answers and explanations to those in pain, hoping to fix or change them.	14	I am present with people in their pain, am comfortable with mystery and with saying, "I don't know."
I have to prove I am right when wronged.	15	I can let things go.
I am demanding.	16	I assert myself respectfully and kindly.
I am highly self-conscious and concerned about how others perceive me.	17	I am more aware of God and others than the impression I am making.
I see people as resources to be used for God.	18	I see people as gifts to be loved and enjoyed.

REMEMBER: The great fruit of choosing the unpopular counter-cultural path of brokenness and weakness is that people will be drawn to us, just as they were drawn to Jesus.

4. Receive the Gift of Limits

➡ As I begin to live in brokenness and vulnerability, I become increasingly aware of my limits. This becomes one of the most difficult lessons to learn in life, that each of us is profoundly limited in who we can be and what we can do. You have **great gifts** and **potential** but you also have **limits** given to you by God as a gift.

On a scale of 1-4 (1 = not true, 2 = sometimes true, 3 = mostly true, 4 = very true), rate yourself on the following:

- _____ too little time and too much to do
- _____ constantly feeling pressured or restless
- _____ feeling inflexible or trapped in your schedule
- _____ endlessly rushing from deadline to deadline
- _____ breaking promises of quality time with family or friends
- _____ never feeling “finished” with work
- _____ resenting some of your commitments and projects
- _____ trying to live beyond who you are, or what you can do with the limits God has given you

QUESTION: How does this impact your inner joy in the Lord, your close relationships and your service for Christ?

Jesus models a life lived within His Father's limits.
He fully accepted His humanity and graciously received all the limitations that came with it. He bought food the human way. He rested and slept the human way. Furthermore, although his heart was for the world, Jesus honored the God-given limits of His mission and ministry. As a result, he did not fulfill every need during His short earthy life. He disappointed the crowd's expectations of who He should be. Yet He lived a full life true and faithful to who He was. He was able to say to His Father "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4) **That is God's call for each of us.**

³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was. ³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for Him, ³⁷and when they found Him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" ³⁸Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons." (NIV)

Mark 1:32-39

QUESTION: The next morning, needy people were already looking for Jesus. What do you think the disciples thought when Jesus told them they were going to move on to other villages?

➡ Jesus left a town in great need and in the midst of a revival. Often we feel very un-Christlike when we turn away hurting people. But here, Jesus Christ does just that. In what situations is it difficult for you to say No? Why?

Ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Does how I am living my life fit my God-given nature?
- 2) Am I being faithful to my God-given talents, my unique story, my weaknesses?

➡ Maturity in life is when someone is living joyfully within their God given limits.

5. Embrace Grieving and Loss

➡ Embracing grieving and loss is a major theme of scripture and a central discipleship issue.

God understands that, as His image-bearers, learning to grieve is a part of maturing in Christ. God Himself grieved:
“God was grieved that He made man on earth and His heart was filled with pain” (Genesis 6:6).
Jesus modeled for us the offering up of “prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears” (Hebrews 5:7). In addition, God has given us an entire book in the Bible called Lamentations. Two-thirds of the Psalms are laments and songs of struggle over loss. The entire book of Job is a classic struggle with grief and loss.

➡ A Discipleship culture understands that grieving our losses is a critical component of Discipleship. Why? It is the only pathway to becoming a compassionate person like our Lord Jesus. The degree to which I learn to grieve my own losses is in direct proportion to the depth and quality of my relationship with God and the compassion I can offer to others.

6. Make Incarnation Your Model for Loving Well

- What it means to be a disciple can best be understood around the mystery of the Incarnation. God took on human flesh. The infinite creator and sustainer of the universe limited himself to the confines of history and a human body. “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (John 1:14). Or as The Message translates it, “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes”. God, physically and emotionally fully entered our world.

Jesus modeled incarnating love when He took on flesh, entered our world, and walked in our shoes. His love compelled Him to cross two worlds, heaven and earth, and live among us. In order for us to love others, we too need to cross into other people’s worlds, enter life in their shoes, while holding on to our own world as well.

- To the extent you are maturing in the first five principles (Look Beneath the Surface, Break the Power of the Past, Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability, Receive the Gift of Limits, Embrace Grieving and Loss) is the degree to which you will be able to incarnate in another person’s world.

QUESTION: What is the most indispensable element to loving people?

ANSWER: LISTENING

QUESTION: Do you know how to listen in such a way as to be able to feel what someone else was feeling? Do you only hear parts of what someone says because you are too busy framing your reply rather than entering their world? Are you too busy contradicting, correcting, judging, or rebutting to really understand what someone is saying?

➡ Give yourself this short listening test. Circle all statements you can affirm.

- 1) I make a great effort to enter other people's experience of life.
- 2) I do not presume to know what the other person is trying to communicate.
- 3) My close friends would say I listen more than I speak.
- 4) When people are angry with me, I am able to listen to their side without getting upset.
- 5) People share freely with me because they know I listen well.
- 6) I listen not only to what people say but also for their nonverbal cues, body language, tone of voice and the like.
- 7) I give people my individual attention when they are talking to me.
- 8) I am able to reflect back and validate another person's feelings with empathy.
- 9) I am aware of my primary defensive mechanisms when I am under stress, such as placating, blaming, problem solving prematurely, or becoming distracted.
- 10) I am aware of how the family in which I was raised has influenced my present listening style.
- 11) I ask for clarification when I am not clear on something another person is saying, rather than attempting to fill in the blanks.
- 12) I ask questions when listening rather than mind-reading or making assumptions.
- 13) I don't interrupt or listen for openings to get my point across when another is speaking.
- 14) I am aware, when I am listening, of my own personal "hot buttons" that cause me to get angry, upset, fearful or nervous.

If you circled 12 or more you are an outstanding listener: 8-11, very good; 5-7, good; 4 or fewer, poor. If you want to be really brave after you score yourself, ask your spouse or closest friend to rate you as a listener.

QUESTION: What did you learn about yourself from this test?

- We must teach people intentionally how to listen because listening does not come naturally. Few of us have ever had the experience of being truly listened to. Most Christians, especially those of us in leadership, talk much more than we listen.
- When we choose to incarnate, we hang between our own world and the world of another person. We are called to remain faithful to who we are, not losing our essence, while at the same time entering into the world of another.

**OUR MOST EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP IS TO BE
AN INCARNATIONAL PRESENCE TO ANOTHER PERSON.**

SECTION 4



discipleship and
the spiritual Disciplines

THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

QUESTION: What makes something a spiritual disciple?



- Disciplines that are spiritual are simply those that aid us personally and practically in living out the great commandment of loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and loving your neighbor as yourself.
- Disciplines are not about trying to get God's attention but about training ourselves to pay attention to him.
- A disciplined follower of Jesus (a disciple) is not someone who has "mastered the disciplines" and never misses a daily regimen of spiritual exercise. A disciplined follower of Jesus is someone who can rejoice with those who rejoice, grieve with those who grieve and someone who discerns when laughter, gentleness, silence, prayer and healing words are called for and offers them in a loving way.

Spiritual Disciplines and Discipleship

- We must not teach people that discipleship is simply a set of things to do, otherwise discipleship becomes works oriented and leads to legalism. While memorizing verses or going through study booklets can be good and necessary, we can miss the whole point that the disciplines of a student, pupil, apprentice, are only a means to an end. The Holy Spirit is the one who changes us and grows us and transforms us into people who love God with all our being and who continually grow in their love for people.
- Many churches embrace a one-size fits all approach to discipleship. They teach that if we fill in these blanks, memorize these verses, go through this booklet, then we will be disciples. Structured systems aren't always bad and some people thrive in them, but it leaves no room for diversity. Expecting all Christians to have a certain type of quiet time is unrealistic and can wreck havoc in a church where people are made to feel guilty or less than or that something is wrong with them if they don't experience the same thing you do. Trying to force people with different temperaments to become disciples primarily through the same method or training will only frustrate them.



Without the other nine paradigms of our definition of discipleship, the Spiritual Disciplines are dead practices and have no life.

Let's consider a few things spiritual disciplines are not:

1) Spiritual disciplines are not a barometer of spirituality.

- Many people become burdened because they think God measures their spiritual performance on the basis of certain disciplines.
- The true indicator of spiritual well being is growth in the ability to relate to other people.
- It is possible to spend every waking moment “practicing spiritual disciplines” but doing them in such a way as to make us less than more loving.

2) Spiritual disciplines are not a way to earn favor with God.

- We do not engage in disciplines to gain God's favor or approval but because we have His favor and approval in Jesus Christ and we want to enjoy the gift of sweet fellowship with Him. No discipline will make you more righteous or holy and no spiritual discipline can add one thing to what Christ has done.
- Spiritual disciplines are not ways to get extra credit, or to demonstrate to God how deeply we are committed to Him. They exist for our sake, not God's.
- Until we are convinced that we don't have to perform to make ourselves right before God, we cannot joyfully enter into the spiritual disciplines. Once we are utterly convinced that there is nothing we can do to increase God's love for us, we are ready to embrace the spiritual disciplines with freedom and joy.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL

Giving

¹*“Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴So that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (NIV)*

Matthew 6:1-4

Prayer

⁵*“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen of men. I tell you the truth, they have their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” (NIV)*

Matthew 6:5-8

Fasting

¹⁶*“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (NIV)*

Matthew 6:16-18

The Practice of Prayer

- Prayer is simply conversation with God. We may pray spontaneously; we may pray in words that others have composed and that express our thoughts well. We may pray silently or aloud or even in song. We may also pray wordlessly, lifting up to God a naked sense of awe or gratitude, fear or grief, doubt or confusion, joy or exultation.
- Of all the spiritual disciplines, prayer is the one that people feel most guilty about. Somehow it seems that if we really love God prayer should flow out of us without effort or discipline. In fact, this was not the case, even with Jesus' first followers.

The disciples noticed Jesus looked forward to prayer and actually hungered for it. They saw that somehow prayer fed Jesus soul the way food fed their stomachs. They observed a richly interactive life between Jesus and his Father. They noticed that at crisis points, when Jesus was grieving over the death of John the Baptist, when He experienced need, when He was tired from ministry, His consistent response was to pray. They wanted to be nourished by prayer the way Jesus was. So they asked Him to teach them.

QUESTION: What should I pray about?

ANSWER: Pray about what is really on your heart, not what you wish was on your heart.

It's **time to be honest:** Does your mind wander when you pray?



It may well be that when your mind wanders, it is wandering to what your heart most needs to speak to God about. This is part of learning to be fully present when praying. We all know what it is like to have a conversation with someone when they are distracted or preoccupied and are with us in body only. The same thing can happen in prayer. So we have to learn to become aware of and speak with God about what is actually happening within us during prayer.



To be aware of what is happening within you when you pray, whether you are tired, bored, excited or distracted, and then talking to God directly about what is happening can make prayer become a much more lively experience in your life.

Prayer as Relationship

Prayer, perhaps more than any other activity, is the concrete expression of the fact that we are invited into a relationship with God.

Prayer is “talking with God about what we are doing together”.

In addition to all the other fruitful things that can happen through prayer, the greatest fruit of prayer is the knitting of the human heart together with the heart of God.

THE PRACTICE OF SERVANTHOOD

“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (KJV)

John 15:5

“⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (KJV)

Philippians 2:5-8



Jesus did not take on the “outward form” of a servant. Paul uses the same term to describe both Jesus’ servanthood and His Godhood. (It is the word *morphe*). When Jesus came in the form of a servant, he was not disguising who God is. He was revealing who God is.

Pride: The Enemy of Servanthood

➡ Nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh (our self-righteousness) screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.

➡ **Pride is:** When I try to do something good, I am intensely aware of it, and I tend to be aware of other people who aren't putting forth the same effort. Then I tend to think they should: I start to compare my effort with their sloth. The result is comparison, judgmentalism, and a lack of love.

Pride destroys our capacity to love.

Pride moves us to exclude instead of to embrace.

Pride moves us to judge rather than to serve.

ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS IN THE WORLD IS TO STOP BEING THE PRODIGAL SON WITHOUT TURNING INTO THE ELDER BROTHER

Authentic community is characterized perhaps more than anything else by mutual servanthood and submission. When Jesus said the last shall be first, and the least shall be great, and the slave the greatest of all, he wasn't giving orders. He was simply describing the truth about God's kind of community and how different it looks from the way things generally work in our world.

THE PRACTICE OF BIBLE STUDY

“¹Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous but for you it is safe. ²Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. ³For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. ⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law. A Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. ⁹And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹²Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus” (KJV)

Philippians 3:1-14

Let's explore the context of this passage!

Final Statement: Inward transformation of thought, feeling and character takes place in us when we truly disciple people through the depths and dimensions of the Gospel of Grace and Peace, through Authentic, Transparent Biblical community and Small Groups, through Honestly and reflectively dealing with the Relational and Emotional aspects of our human makeup, and through viewing and practicing the Spiritual Disciplines from a relationship point of view and not a works point of view.