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# D-GROUP MANUAL

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*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*  
*Matthew 18:19-20*

*“Sin demands to have a man by himself.  
It withdraws him from the community.  
The more isolated a person is, the more  
destructive will be the power of sin over him.”*

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DIETRICH BONHOEFFER<sup>1</sup>

*Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.*

*John 4:35*

*After this the Lord... sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.*

*Luke 10:1*

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*Matthew 28:18-20*

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# D-GROUPS INTRODUCED

## A D-Group is...

- 3-5 people, of the same gender, who are being equipped to be disciple makers.
- Led by a D-Group leader.
- Committed to meeting on a regular basis (weekly or 3x a month) for approximately 60-90 minutes each meeting.
- Committed to being vulnerable and sharing with others who they truly are (good and bad).
- For a season. D-Groups do not meet forever. Typically between 6-12 months.
- Committed to spiritual reproduction. When your D-Group is over you will be expected to help lead a new D-Group.

## Why be a part of a D-Group?

While being a part of a **Life Group**\* is important and we strongly encourage all of those who call New Life their home church to join one, there's something special about gathering with two to three others who are committed to becoming mature disciples. Jesus modeled this for us when He chose three guys from His larger group of twelve. We clearly see in Scripture that Jesus disciplined twelve men for three years. But we also see in God's Word that Jesus had an inner circle that he spent time with (Peter, James and John). D-Groups are modeled on this inner circle. In these groups the clear intention is to be helping others to become more like Jesus and for members to be equipped to start, and lead, their own D-Groups.

## Before your group begins...

- Prayerfully ask God to direct you to who you should ask to be a part of your D-Group. Look for people who are open to you, listen to you, and have a genuine desire to grow spiritually. Maybe begin with those already in your circle of influence.
- Make sure the people you invite know that the expectation is that they will help lead a group in the future.
- Don't pursue a person who has serious reservations about being a part of D-Group. If they are hesitant, and have reservations, pray that God prepares them for a future group.

## Structure of each meeting (based on a 1 hour meeting)

- Open with prayer (1-3 minutes)
- Have a time of conversation, catching up about everyday life. One way to do this would be for each person to share one high and one low from their week. (10 minutes)
- Share HEAR with each other. Each person will share what God was saying to them through their HEAR reading. This will be the centerpiece of each gathering. (20-25 minutes)
- Go over the accountability questions that are located in the back of the D-Group Manual (10 minutes).
- Share prayer requests and pray for each other (10 minutes).
- Only go through any other material if you have time left over.

## Don't rush this process!

Please keep in mind, it may take you more than one meeting to discuss each character and competency trait of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Don't rush through the material just to get it done. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you even if it means going slowly and methodically. From the life of Christ it is easy to discern that making disciples is not a process that can be rushed.

\*Life Group: a mixed-gender group of approximately 12 people meeting for a sense of community and mutual edification.

## ***DISCIPLE DEFINED***

*"A mature disciple is someone who is helping others  
to become more like Jesus Christ."*

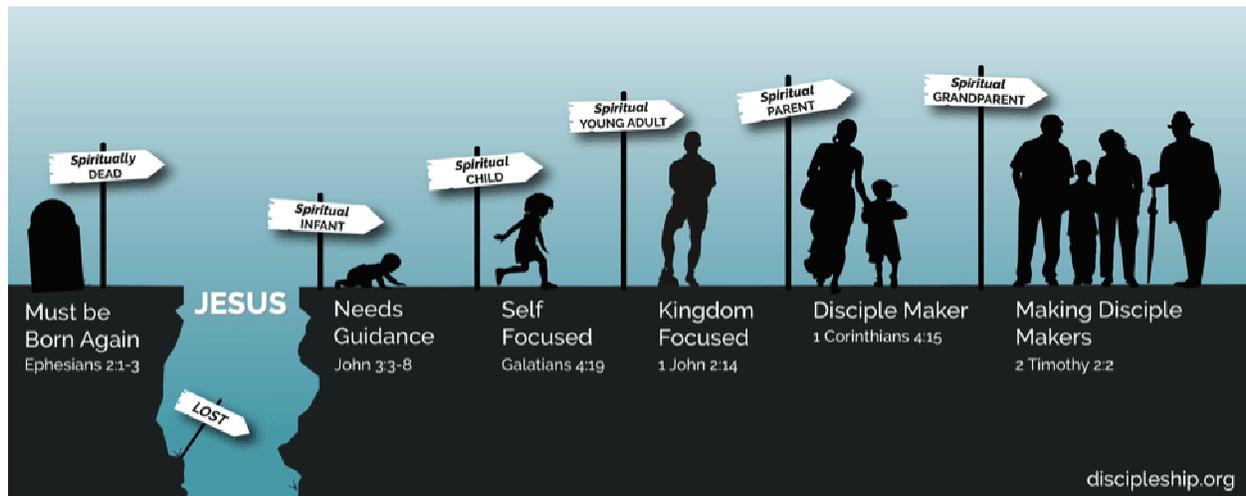
### **ALERT! IMPORTANT INFORMATION HERE!**

Forgive us if we are being redundant at this point. But we must pause here for a moment and reflect how critical it is that we understand that a disciple is someone who is like Jesus Christ.

So, yes, we are going to talk about the primary characteristics and competencies of a disciple of Jesus. But one aspect that is usually missing from discipleship training these days is helping and training people to go out and make other disciples. This discipleship material is designed with that purpose (spiritual reproduction) in mind. We want each person who goes through this material to grow spiritually. But equally important is the idea that each person, when the discipleship training is completed, is ready to go and make disciples themselves.

# THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

The picture below<sup>2</sup> is meant to do one thing, visually demonstrate what it looks like to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Spend a little time looking over the picture with the others in your D-Group and then answer the questions.



- Where would you say you are at on “The Discipleship Process?”

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- Why do you think so many Christians never make it to the last phase, “Making Disciple Makers?”

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- How would you define spiritual consumerism? How does spiritual consumerism keep people from taking the idea of making disciples seriously?

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- What would be the impact on your city if everyone in your church took seriously the idea of becoming a disciple who makes disciples?

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# THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF HEAR

It is critical that you come to your D-Group each week with answers from HEAR<sup>3</sup>. During the time that you gather discussion over HEAR will be a central part of the discipleship process.

Furthermore, we believe this is a great process for reading and studying God's word even outside of your D-Group assignments.

## **H** | highlight

This exercise will remind you to read with a purpose. In the course of your reading, one or two verses will usually stand out and speak to you. After reading the passage of Scripture, Highlight each verse that speaks to you by copying it under the letter "H".

Write out the following:

- The name of the book
- The passage of Scripture
- The chapter and verse numbers that especially speak to you
- A title to describe the passage

## **E** | explain

At this stage you will EXPLAIN what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Why was it written?

To whom was it originally written?

How does it fit with the verses before and after it?

Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?

What is He intending to communicate through this text?

At this point, you are beginning the process of discovering the specific and personal word that God has for you from His Word. What is important is that you are engaging the text and wrestling with its meaning.

## **A** | apply

This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

How can this help me?

What does this mean today?

What would the application of this verse look like in my life?

What does this mean to me? What is God saying to me?

These questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and your world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you from the specific passage or verse. Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

## **R** | respond

Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you will be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing out a prayer to God.

For example, you may ask God to help you to be more loving, or to give you a desire to be more generous in your giving. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you have just read.

## ***D-GROUP COVENANT<sup>3</sup>***

Over the next 12 months, I will do my best to...

- Give myself fully to the Lord during this time as I anticipate a season of accelerated spiritual transformation.
- Commit to this group and consider how I may best spur others on in their relationship with Jesus.
- Meet weekly with my D-Group (60-90 minutes). When unable, I will stay involved through sharing H.E.A.R. journals and prayer requests.
- Contribute to a group atmosphere of confidentiality, honesty, and transparency.
- Pray every week for the other members of my group and those in my life who don't know Jesus.
- Pray and look for others in my life who I can invite into a new group when my current group decides to multiply.

Signed Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***WHAT IF THIS D-GROUP MATERIAL DOES NOT “WORK” FOR YOU?***

*What if you look at this material and come to the conclusion that it is not quite right for you?*

*Or... what if after working through this material for a few weeks you begin to feel that it is not having the spiritual impact you would like in your life?*

*I would like to make a few suggestions BEFORE you get too far down the D-group road.*

## **1. Make sure that you are not merely attempting to get the homework “done.”**

*It is possible to do the work, week in and week out, and not really be spiritually transformed by it. It will require that as you do the work you earnestly pray and ask the Holy Spirit to refresh, renew, and shape you into the image of Jesus Christ. Meditate on the scripture passages. Pray over the passages. Ask God to do a brand new work in your life. Your heart must be engaged or the D-Group material, and the meetings, will not accomplish all that God desires.*

## **2. Instead of just coming to the conclusion that the D-Group material does not work, write down and think about what needs to be added so that it is a better fit for you.**

*It is easy to simply come to the conclusion that something is not working, it requires more work to be specific and to name what needs to change. Once you have identified what needs to change, go ahead and implement the changes into your weekly study of the material. Your leader will not have any problem with this! Maybe you want to add scripture memory. Maybe you want to be more intentional about building relationships within your group. These are great ideas. You have the freedom to be creative and do what is necessary to make this as beneficial as possible.*

## **3. Feel free, early on, to talk to your leader about changes you would like to make or incorporate.**

*Each D-Group will be a little different (and that is great!) based on the people that make up the group.*

## Characteristics of a Disciple

# 1. A DISCIPLE WORSHIPS AND LOVES GOD

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- 1 John 2:4-6
- Luke 10:25-28
- Matthew 6:24

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- 1 John 2:4-6
- Luke 10:25-28
- Matthew 6:24

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## Characteristics of a Disciple

# 2. A DISCIPLE LOVES OTHERS

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Luke 10:25-37
- Matthew 5:43-48
- Ephesians 4:32
- I John 3:11-18

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Luke 10:25-37
- Matthew 5:43-48
- Ephesians 4:32
- I John 3:11-18

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## Characteristics of a Disciple

### **3. A DISCIPLE IS RELATIONAL**

#### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Romans 12:1-21
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- Galatians 5:13-26
- Acts 2:42-47

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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#### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Romans 12:1-21
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- Galatians 5:13-26

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## Characteristics of a Disciple

# 4. **A DISCIPLE IS HUMBLE**

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Matthew 20:20-28
- Philippians 2:3-11

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Matthew 20:20-28
- Philippians 2:3-11

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## Characteristics of a Disciple

# 5. A DISCIPLE IS GRACIOUS

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Colossians 3:13
- Colossians 4:6
- Titus 2:11-14

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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Read the article on the next page entitled, “What is Grace” by RC Sproul

### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Colossians 3:13
- Colossians 4:6
- Titus 2:11-14

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

Read out loud together the article, “What is Grace” by RC Sproul

*What is the definition of grace? How do you think you can grow when it comes to becoming a gracious person?*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## What is Grace?<sup>4</sup>

By R.C. Sproul

A number of decades ago at the Ligonier Valley Study Center, we sent out a Thanksgiving card with this simple statement: “The essence of theology is grace; the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude.” In all the debates about our role versus God’s role in sanctification—our growth in holiness—we’d stay on the right track if we’d remember this grace-gratitude dynamic. The more we understand how kind God has been to us and the more we are overcome by His mercy, the more we are inclined to love Him and to serve Him.

Yet we can’t get the grace-gratitude dynamic right if we aren’t clear on what grace means. What is grace? The catechisms many of us learned as children give us the answer: “Grace is the unmerited favor of God.” The first thing that we understand about grace is what it’s not—it’s not something we merit. In fact, if that is all we ever understand about grace, I’m sure God will rejoice that we know His grace is unmerited. So, here’s our working definition of grace—it is *unmerit*.

Paul’s epistle to the Romans sheds light on what we mean when we say that grace is *unmerit*. In 1:18–3:20, the Apostle explains that on the final day, for the first time in our lives, we will be judged in total perfection, in total fairness, in absolute righteousness. Thus, every mouth will be stopped when we stand before the tribunal of God. This should provoke fear in the hearts of fallen people, as condemnation is the only possible sentence for sinful men and women: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23).

But those who trust in Christ Jesus have hope, for if we are in Him by faith, we have been “justified freely by His grace.” Note that justification is accomplished not by obligation, but freely through grace on account of the redemption purchased by Jesus alone. There’s no room for boasting, for we are justified not by our works but by grace alone through faith alone. Paul goes on to cite Abraham as the preeminent example of one who was justified by faith alone and therefore free from God’s sentence of condemnation. If the basis for Abraham’s salvation, his justification, was something that Abraham did—some good deed, some meritorious service that he performed, some obligation that he performed—if it were on the basis of works, Paul says, he would have had something about which to boast. But Abraham had no such merit. All he had was faith, and that faith itself was a gift: “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” (4:3; see Eph. 2:8–10).

Romans 4:4–8 is a key passage here:

*Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*

That’s grace. Paul couldn’t say it any other way. To him who works, it’s debt; if you merit something, it means that someone is obligated to pay you. If I hire you as an employee and promise to pay you one hundred dollars if you work eight hours, I must pay you for working the eight hours. I’m not doing you a favor or giving you grace. You’ve earned your pay. You’ve fulfilled the contract, and I’m morally obliged to give you your wages.

With respect to the Lord, we are debtors who cannot pay. That’s why the Bible speaks of redemption in economic language—we were bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). Only someone else—Christ—can pay our debt. That’s grace. It’s not our good works that secure our rescue but only the works of Christ. It’s His merit, not ours. We don’t merit anything. He grants us His merit by grace, and we receive it only by faith. The essence of grace is its voluntary free bestowal. As soon as it’s a requirement, it’s no longer grace.

Grace should never cease to amaze us. God has an absolute, pure, holy standard of justice. That’s why we cling with all our might to the merit of Jesus Christ. He alone has the merit to satisfy the demands of God’s justice, and He gives it freely to us. We haven’t merited it. There’s nothing in us that elicits the Lord’s favor that leads to our justification. It’s pure grace.

And the more we understand what God has done for us as sinners, the more willing we are to do whatever He requires. The great teachers of the church say the first point of genuine sanctification is an increasing awareness of our own sinfulness. With that comes, at the same time, an increasing awareness of God’s grace. And with that, again, increasing love and increasing willingness to obey Him.

When we truly understand grace—when we see that God only owes us wrath but has provided Christ’s merit to cover our demerit—then everything changes. The Christian motivation for ethics is not merely to obey some abstract law or a list of rules; rather, our response is provoked by gratitude. Jesus understood that when He said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” If I may have the liberty to paraphrase: “Keep My commandments not because you want to be just, but because you love Me.” A true understanding of grace—of God’s unmerited favor—always provokes a life of gratitude and obedience.

## Characteristics of a Disciple

# 6. A DISCIPLE IS PEACEFUL

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Matthew 5:9
- Philippians 4:4-7
- Ephesians 2:11-16
- Romans 12:14-21
- Romans 15:8-13

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Matthew 5:9
- Philippians 4:7
- Ephesians 2:14
- Romans 12:18
- Romans 15:13

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## Characteristics of a Disciple

# 7. A DISCIPLE IS JOYFUL

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- John 15:1-11
- Luke 2:8-14
- 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Galatians 5:16-26

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- John 15:1-11
- Luke 2:10
- 1 Peter 1:8
- Galatians 5:16-26

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## 8. **A DISCIPLE HAS INTEGRITY**

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read this explanation of integrity by Pastor Ray Ortlund.

The word “integrity” is the key word in Proverbs 10:9. A secure walk is not a matter of clever politics but of personal integrity. But what is integrity? This Hebrew word suggests completeness, wholeness, fullness. So, no compromises, and no breaches or gaps or refusals in the face of duty, but rather, saying yes to the Lord moment by moment. There is a completeness to our life in Christ, with no compartmentalization. The Lord gives all, and he claims all. When we yield all, we walk securely.

How would you explain, in your own words, what integrity means?

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Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Psalm 101
- Psalm 26:1-4

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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*continue>>>*

## DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages of Scripture

- Psalm 101
- Psalm 26:1-4

*What are some characteristics of integrity that you see in this passage of Scripture?*

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*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## ***SCHEDULING A SOCIAL TIME TOGETHER***

One of the key aspects of making disciples  
is building deep relationships.

*So, with that said, we want to encourage you to plan  
one social event that everyone in the D-Group can attend.  
It could be dinner at someone's house, it could be fishing,  
hunting, grabbing coffee, going to a Arrows football game, etc.*

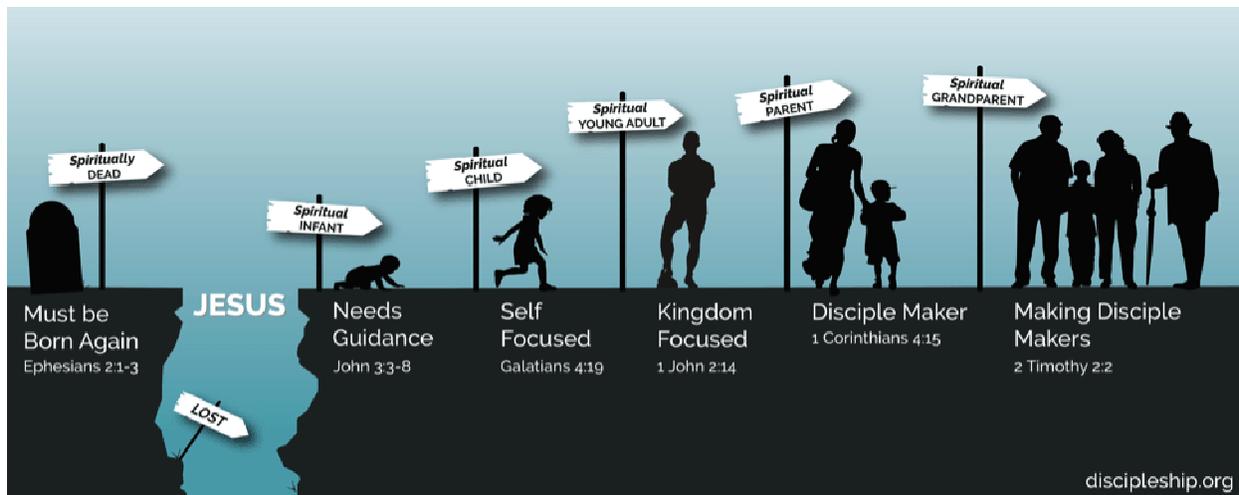
*What will you do?*

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*Date and time?*

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# IMPORTANT DISCIPLESHIP REMINDER



We want to take the time to remind you that one of the primary goals of meeting together is that at the end of this study we would go on to lead our own D-Group. Through past experience we know that there are a number of factors that might hinder the disciple making process.

Read through the following issues that arise that keep people from making disciples:

- I don't feel ready or qualified
- I am too busy
- I don't know who to ask to be in a D-Group
- What other hindrances keep us from making disciples? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you personally resonate with any of the above hindrances to making disciples? If so, which one?

\_\_\_\_\_

Take some time to talk through these issues. Remember, you have an enemy that wants to keep you from living out the commands of the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

At this time we would encourage each person to recommit to the idea of leading a D-Group at the end of this study.

# ***DISCIPLESHIP ASSESSMENT TEST***

Take a few minutes to fill in the blanks in the diagram below.

*Three people you are deeply accountable to*

A diagram consisting of three light blue rectangular boxes. One box is positioned at the top center. Below it, two boxes are positioned side-by-side, one on the left and one on the right.

*Two people who intentionally disciplined you*

A diagram consisting of two light blue rectangular boxes stacked vertically on the left side of the central figure.

*Two lost people you are currently reaching out to*

A diagram consisting of two light blue rectangular boxes stacked vertically on the right side of the central figure.



A diagram consisting of three light blue rectangular boxes. Two boxes are positioned side-by-side at the bottom left and bottom right. A third box is positioned at the bottom center, below the space between the other two.

*Three people you are reproducing yourself in so that they go and make disciples*

*Discuss this exercise with your D-Group. Talk about your strengths and weaknesses.*

Competencies of a Disciple

# 1. ***A DISCIPLE IS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT***

**BEFORE YOU MEET**

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Acts 6:3
- Ephesians 5:15-18

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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**DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER**

You are going to be discussing the difference between being baptized with the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3).

Take time to read through and discuss the article<sup>5</sup> on the next page by author and Pastor Sam Storms (lightly edited).

*We must begin by distinguishing between baptism in the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit. Spirit-baptism is a metaphor that describes our reception of the HS at the moment of our conversion to Jesus in faith and repentance. When we believe and are justified, we are, as it were, deluged and engulfed by the HS; we are, as it were, immersed in and saturated by the Spirit. Results: a) we are made members of the body of Christ, incorporated into the spiritual organism called the church (1 Cor. 12:13); and b) the HS comes to indwell us permanently.*

**Spirit-baptism is:**

- instantaneous (i.e., it is not a process)
- coincident or simultaneous with conversion
- universal (i.e., all Christians are recipients)
- unrepeatable (one is only baptized in the Spirit once)
- permanent (it cannot be lost or forfeited)

**Spirit-filling is:**

- a metaphor describing our continuous, on-going experience and appropriation of the HS. To be filled with the Spirit is to come under progressively more intense and intimate influence of the Spirit.
  - The results of being filled by the Spirit:
    - power
    - purity
    - proclamation
    - praise
- Spirit-filling can be forfeited and subsequently experienced yet again, on multiple occasions, throughout the course of the Christian life.

Questions to discuss

- What is the difference between being baptized in the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?
- Why do you think it is important for a Christian to seek after and to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What are some ways that we keep from being filled with the Holy Spirit?
  
- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## **2. A DISCIPLE KNOWS AND CAN TEACH THE WORD OF GOD**

### BEFORE YOU MEET

- Read Matthew 28:16-20 and go through the HEAR process

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

- Read out loud Matthew 28:16-20.

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

### 3. A DISCIPLE OBEYS GOD'S WORD

#### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- 1 John 5:1-5
- James 1:22-25
- 1 John 3:24
- Luke 6:46-48

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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#### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- 1 John 5:3
- James 1:22-25
- 1 John 3:24
- Luke 6:46-48

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## 4. **A DISCIPLE KEEPS THE GOSPEL CENTRAL IN ALL THAT THEY DO**

### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

*The gospel is what saves a person. There is no question about that. But we should not think that we leave the gospel behind once we are saved. The gospel is also what helps us grow in our faith. In the bible this is called our sanctification. Slowly read through the following excerpt from Tim Keller's article<sup>6</sup>, "The Centrality of the Gospel."*

"We never "get beyond the gospel" in our Christian life to something more "advanced." The gospel is not the first "step" in a "stairway" of truths, rather, it is more like the "hub" in a "wheel" of truth. The gospel is not just the A-B-C's but the A-Z of Christianity. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make progress in the kingdom.

We are not justified by the gospel and then sanctified by obedience, but the gospel is the way we grow (Gal. 3:1-3) and are renewed (Col. 1:6). It is the solution to each problem, the key to each closed door, the power through every barrier (Rom. 1:16-17). It is very common in the church to think as follows. "The gospel is for non-Christians. One needs it to be saved. But once saved, you grow through hard work and obedience." But Col. 1:6 shows that this is a mistake. Both confession and "hard work" that is not arising from and "in line" with the gospel will not sanctify you-it will strangle you. All our problems come from a failure to apply the gospel. Thus when Paul left the Ephesians he committed them "to the word of his grace, which can build you up" (Acts 20:32).

The main problem, then, in the Christian life is that we have not thought out the deep implications of the gospel, we have not "used" the gospel in and on all parts of our life. Richard Lovelace says that most people's problems are just a failure to be oriented to the gospel-a failure to grasp and believe it through and through. Luther says, "The truth of the Gospel is the principle article of all Christian doctrine. . . . Most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others, and beat it into their heads continually." The gospel is not easily comprehended. Paul says that the gospel only does its renewing work in us as we understand it in all its truth. All of us, to some degree live around the truth of the gospel but do not "get" it. So the key to continual and deeper spiritual renewal and revival is the continual re-discovery of the gospel. A stage of renewal is always the discovery of a new implication or application of the gospel-seeing more of its truth. This is true for either an individual or a church."

Read out loud John 15:1-11

- **Answer the following questions based on this article**

- What is the connection between John 15:1-11 and the article by Tim Keller?

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- What stands out to you from this article?

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- What does it mean that we are justified by the gospel?

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- What does it mean that we are sanctified by the gospel?

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- **What is critical for Christian growth is that we understand how the gospel helps us grow spiritually in our everyday lives.**

- How does the gospel help you become more generous?

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- How does the gospel help you overcome lust?

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- How does the gospel help you forgive people and let go of bitterness?

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- How does the gospel impact the kind of person you are in the workplace?

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- Take time and think about one area of temptation that you face on a regular basis. How does the gospel help you overcome and have victory in this area of temptation?

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- **Two great resources for applying the gospel to everyday life:**

- A Gospel Primer For Christians: Learning To See The Glories of God's Love*, by Milton Vincent

- The Gospel For Real Life*, by Jerry Bridges

## 5. A DISCIPLE SERVES OTHERS

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Mark 10:35-45
- Philippians 2:4-11

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Mark 10:35-45
- Philippians 2:4-11

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## 6. A DISCIPLE IS EVANGELISTIC

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Matthew 9:35-38
- Matthew 28:16-20
- Acts 1:6-11
- Romans 10:11-17

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Matthew 9:35-38
- Matthew 28:16-20
- Acts 1:6-11
- Romans 10:11-17

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## 7. A DISCIPLE IS PRAYERFUL

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and choose one to go through the HEAR process:

- Psalm 1
- Matthew 7:7-11
- Ephesians 6:18-20
- Philippians 4:4-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Psalm 1
- Matthew 7:7-11
- Ephesians 6:18-20
- Philippians 4:4-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

## 8. A DISCIPLE IS A DISCIPLE MAKER

### BEFORE YOU MEET

Read the following passages of Scripture and go through the HEAR process with the Matthew 4 passage:

- Matthew 4:18-22                       Matthew 28:16-20

H | highlight

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E | explain

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A | apply

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R | respond

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### DURING YOUR TIME TOGETHER

Read out loud the following passages:

- Matthew 4:18-22                       Matthew 28:16-20

Jesus told his disciples that he was going to make them fishers of men. What did he mean by this? What does it mean for you and me to be fishers of men?

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All disciples are to be disciple makers. Why do you think it is so easy for Christians to think about personal spiritual growth but fail to help disciple others?

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*Share what God is saying to you through each passage. Share what your response will be to what God is saying.*

- Share prayer requests and pray for each other
- Ask and answer accountability questions (see appendix)

# THE BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

The following diagram<sup>7</sup> does a great job of showing what a balanced Christian life looks like. If a person, or a church, is not growing spiritually it is due to neglect in one of the three areas below. Spend some time discussing this with your D-Group and then answer the questions.



Most people are better and one or two of the dimensions rather than at all three. What about you?

- Where are your strengths? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about weaknesses? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you think that is? \_\_\_\_\_

What steps can you take to be more intentional about incorporating each dimension into your life?

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Churches and ministries can be or become unbalanced. What about the churches or Christian groups with which you are familiar?

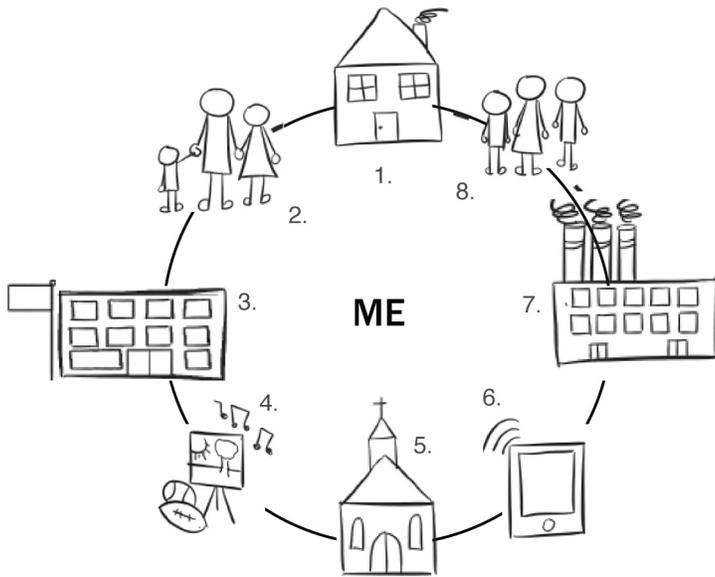
- What are their strengths and weaknesses in terms of Up, In, and Out?

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# ***THE RELATIONAL SPHERE OF INFLUENCE***

It is critical that we realize that God has strategically placed us where we live so that we can fulfill the Great Commission (making disciples). The picture below<sup>8</sup> is a powerful tool to help you think through who is in your daily life that you can begin investing in and pointing them to Jesus.



1. Immediate & Extended Family
2. Neighbors
3. School (yours or your kids)
4. Recreation/Hobbies
5. Church
6. Virtual & Social Media
7. Work
8. Others (places you eat, volunteer, etc.)

Prayerfully consider (individually and cooperatively) how He would like you to get more time with these friends with increased gospel intentionality. As you listen, write down the things that the Lord brings to mind. Then, create an action plan naming how you will specifically step out in obedience.

WHO	WHAT	WHEN

## ***DOES YOUR D-GROUP NEED MORE TIME TOGETHER?***

Every D-Group is different. Now that you are near the end of this study some groups may sense that they need more time together to pray, read scripture, and build their relationships. If that is your group that is fine!

There will be other groups that sense at this time that they are ready to move on and start their own group. If you sense that you need more time together here is our suggestion.

1. Pick a book of the bible that you want to study together. One of the gospels would be ideal because you will have the opportunity to learn from the world's greatest disciple maker, Jesus Christ!
2. Each person reads one chapter on their own each week. If it is helpful, use the HEAR plan (page 9) for reading through the bible.
3. Each week that you get together read the chapter out loud and discuss it. Make sure you ask questions about how it applies to your personal life.
4. Finish your time together each week by asking and answering the Accountability questions.

# ***THE CRITICAL LAST STEP***

As it has become clear by now one of the main purposes of the D-Group is to equip you, and others, to make disciples. Jesus established the pattern for us in Luke 10:1 when He sent them out “two by two.” Before you end your group you need to prayerfully consider who the individuals are that you and another member of your group will start a new D-Group with.

Take a moment as a group to watch the short video by Pastor Michael and Pastor Glenn to help you prepare to launch a new D-Group. You can find the video at [www.newlifefree.org/d-groups](http://www.newlifefree.org/d-groups)

Here are four things to consider when it comes to choosing who should be in your D-Group:

- **Choose your family first.** If you are a mom or a dad the place to begin is in your own family.
- **Choose someone who is teachable.** Will this person be willing to listen and learn?
- **Choose someone who is available.** Is their lifestyle so busy that they will have a hard time meeting on a weekly basis?
- **Choose someone who is the same gender.**

Who do you think you should ask to be in a D-Group? Write their names down here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

This week spend time in prayer and then ask one person above if they would like to be a part of a D-Group. Remember, there needs to be an openness on their part when it comes to being discipled. The last thing you want to do is to pressure them. Make sure they know that this is a BIG commitment but the benefits more than make up for it.

Once you have received a commitment from enough people (1-2 people) then you are ready to conclude the current D-Group and move on to starting a new one. You may be tempted to just stop meeting once you have worked through this material. We want to strongly encourage you to keep meeting until each person in your D-Group has commitments from others who want to join their new D-Group. This is a very important step if we want to see a movement of disciples making disciples.

# APPENDIX

## ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

- Is there any unconfessed or unrepented sin in your life?
- Have you spent adequate time in Bible study and prayer?
- Who have you talked with about Christ this week?
- Have you flirted, or had lustful attitudes, tempting thoughts, or exposed yourself to any explicit materials which would not glorify God?
- Have you been spending good quantity and quality time with your spouse, children, mother or father? What have you done since we last met to enhance relationships? Are you praying together?
- Is there anything you are hiding or something else you need to be accountable for which I did not ask you?

## WORKS CITED

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3. Page 9 & 11, HEAR method and the Covenant are from Replicate Ministries (replicate.org)
4. Page 17, “What is Grace?” by R.C. Sproul was first published in *Tabletalk Magazine*, an outreach of Ligonier. It can be found here: [www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-grace/](http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-grace/)
5. Page 25, “Filling and Baptism of the Holy Spirit” by samstorms.com
6. Page 28, “The Centrality of the Gospel” by Tim Keller
7. Page 35, The Balanced Christian Life Triangle, adapted from 3DM
8. Page 36, The Relational Sphere of Influence, from The Discipleship Cohort (EFCA)



Free electronic copy available at [www.newlifeefree.org/d-groups](http://www.newlifeefree.org/d-groups)



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