

A photograph of three runners from behind, jogging on a paved path. The runner on the left is wearing a grey and black jacket and black shorts. The runner in the middle is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and black leggings. The runner on the right is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt with red accents and black leggings with a pink waistband. The background shows trees with autumn foliage. The image is overlaid with a teal geometric pattern.

LET'S RUN

TOGETHER

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

NATHAN PETERSON

FORWARD BY DR. LEE PEOPLES

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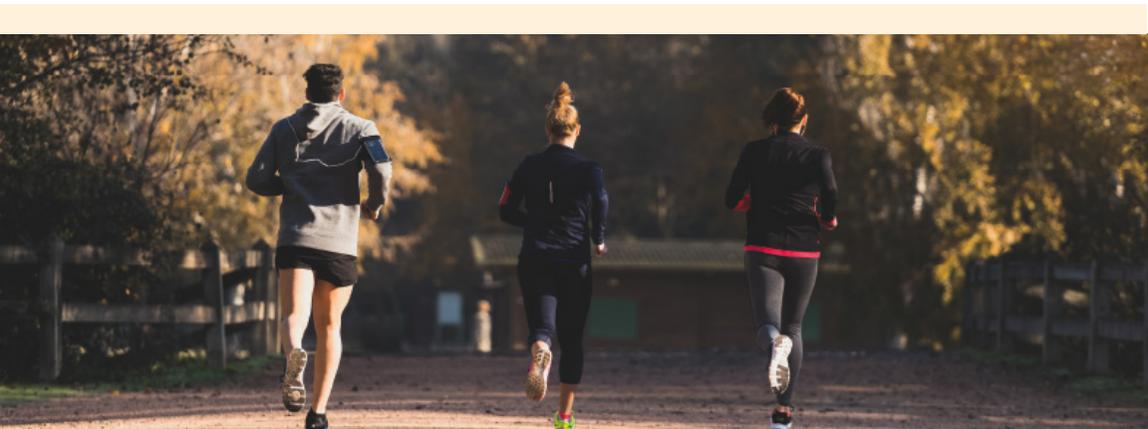
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FORWARD

BY DR. LEE PEOPLES

Christianity is a relationship religion; we are not meant to do it alone. You must personally trust Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life to be saved; but living as a Christian is to be done in community with others. Christianity is described throughout the New Testament by using a body metaphor. As individual Christians, we are made into one body, each part of the body needing each piece to function properly.

“Let’s Run Together” is designed to help you live as a Christian in community with others. Whether you are a new or seasoned Christian, this guide is for you. The challenge for you is to do this guide with a disciple-maker and then take someone else through the guide yourself.

Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV says, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

*This book is dedicated to
Heights Baptist Church
in Alvin, Texas, and its members.*

All proceeds of book sales will support the church’s Love and Lead Vision.

INTRODUCTION

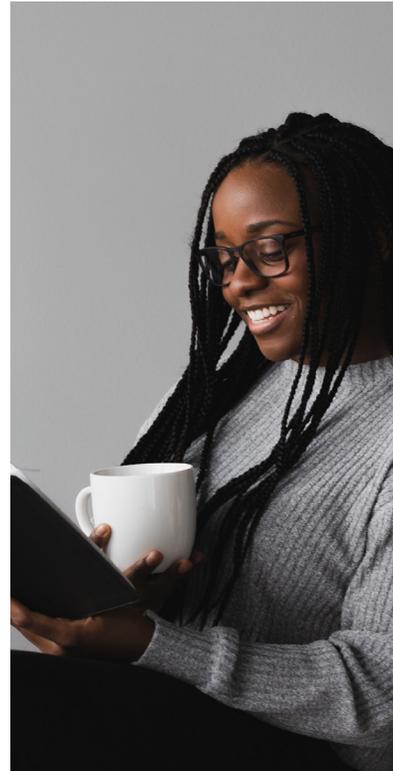
How to Use This Discipleship Guide

It is suggested that you study God's Word and meet with your disciple-maker four times over an eight-week period (every other week). This guide employs a reverse classroom model, where you may be asked to read and watch the provided section and videos before meeting with your disciple-maker. Videos are provided by Heights Baptist Church in Alvin, Texas, and Student and Leader Guides are in the back of this guide. Also, we encourage you to meet outside of this Bible study setting a couple of times: go to lunch together after church, invite each other over to meet your families, go to a ball game together, whatever you would enjoy.

Mentorship is “come and meet with me;” discipleship is “Let’s Run Together.”

the high hurdles, training helps us. Athletes like Bannister and

“Let’s Run Together” is based on Philippians 3:12-14 and Hebrews 12:1: forgetting what is behind and reaching forward toward what is ahead, running the heavenly race toward the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Just as Roger Bannister trained in preparation to run a mile under four minutes, and Renaldo Nehemiah trained to set a world record in



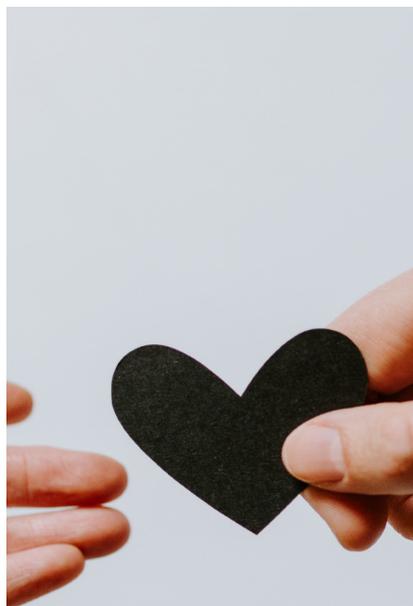
Nehemiah certainly faced setbacks like illness and injury, but they continued working toward their goals. You as a Christian will face setbacks like sin and difficulties in life, but you must continue working toward your goal. The intent of this guide is not that your partner mentor you, because a mentor is more like a coach who stands to the side with a whistle and tells you what to do. The intent is that your disciple-maker is beside you in your training and says, “Let’s Run Together.” The process of holiness is becoming less like our sinful selves each day and becoming more like Christ.

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A Message to Your Pastor

If you stood up in front of your church on Sunday morning and asked church members to raise their hand if they have ever been intentionally disciplined, very few hands would be raised. However, if you asked “Who would like to be intentionally disciplined?” you would have a line following service. Here is the problem that I have discovered. We have a desire, but we don’t know how to disciple each other.

“Let’s Run Together” is designed to be an easy-to-use guide to equip churches with the resources needed to make disciples. This resource has been developed by Heights Baptist Church in Alvin, Texas, by its staff and church members. If you would like an editable version of this discipleship guide, please email our publisher, at friends@4.church to adapt this resource for your local congregation.



ENCOURAGEMENT TO NEW-BELIEVER

A Message to Disciples

“Let’s Run Together” is designed to be a small conversation guide between you and a “disciple-maker” whom either you pick or your church connects you with.

Watch This:



Although you can read this guide by yourself, if you don’t have a disciple-maker already, it may be helpful to text your friend and ask if they can hold you accountable over the next few weeks as you grow together in your faith. Maybe you can share this guide with your local church and ask them to connect you with a disciple-maker.

This guide provides a resource for you as you grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It would be beneficial for the disciple-maker to also have a copy so that they will know what you are studying, as well as for accountability.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO DISCIPLE-MAKERS

A Message to Disciple-Makers

As a disciple-maker, you have been given an incredible task to make disciples of all nations. This mandate, known as The Great Commission, was given by Jesus Christ to His disciples before He ascended into Heaven. In this commission, Jesus gave His followers



the authority and the responsibility to spread the message of salvation to the ends of the earth.

The Great Commission is a task you can accomplish with others. It requires the cooperation of other believers, the support of your church, and, most importantly, the help of the Lord. He will be with you every step of the way as you make disciples. It is possible

that conversations could come up that require professional counseling - that's a good thing!

So, be encouraged, dear disciple-maker. Your work is not in vain. The Lord is using you to fulfill His great plan of salvation for all people. Keep pressing on, sharing the message of Christ's love, and making disciples. In doing so, you are fulfilling The Great Commission and bringing glory to God.

As disciple-makers, we should remember that we are not alone in this process. We have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will lead us and empower us as we make disciples. We also have the example of Jesus Christ, who modeled discipleship for us and gave us The Great Commission and the Holy Spirit as our guide.

So, let us approach discipleship with a simple and humble heart, focusing on the basics of the faith and helping others to grow in their relationship with God. Let us remember the importance of teaching others to observe all that Jesus has commanded and trust in the Lord to guide us every step.

Let's run together!

A Big Thank You

Thank you to the staff and church members of Heights Baptist Church for making this guide a valuable resource for our church and many others who want to take discipleship seriously again. I would also like to thank the nonprofit board of 4Church and their staff for supporting the design and content of this book, especially Dr. Lee Peoples and Margaret Agnew.



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SESSION 1:
WHAT DO I BELIEVE?

Maybe you started your spiritual race a few moments ago, or what feels like a century ago. You have probably asked yourself, “What do I believe?” I remember when, growing up in the faith, I always had questions but never really felt comfortable asking them. Questions like, “If Satan’s punishment was to crawl on his belly, what did a snake look like before the fall of man-kind? Wait, was it even a snake in the garden with Adam and Eve?” Your disciple-maker will be able to meet soon and discuss some questions that you have. But, know this: there are core beliefs that make you a Christian, and there may be spiritual convictions that differ from those of your closest friends. Ask your disciple-maker the craziest questions you can think of. I know I have asked some off-the-wall questions before.



You need to believe a couple things in order to make you a Christian; other beliefs you will learn will change over time depending on your personal experiences, church background, and your theology of things as God reveals His Word to you. But listen closely: it’s okay to not know. In fact, I hope that your disciple-maker is looking at you with a deer-in-the-headlights look when you ask them your deep theological questions and that the only thing they can mumble under their breath is “I don’t know.” That may be the most comforting thing to hear.

You may think, “What do you mean? My pastor, Sunday school teacher, small group leader, disciple-maker doesn’t know?” Even the angels in Heaven do not know all that there is to know or understand about God. In fact, maybe that’s why what we believe is called faith. Faith, As Hebrews 11:1 tells us, is believing in what you can not see or fully understand. Maybe your disciple-maker and you can look at Bible verses together and talk about some deep truths, but it’s okay to also just look at each other and say, “I don’t know if satan was a snake or not. I don’t know if it was an apple that Adam and Eve ate. I don’t know the date God is coming back or if dinosaurs are real. But this is what I do know: I was lost, without hope, purpose, or comfort. I was introduced to a man who knew all of my sin and pursued a relationship with me anyways. I ran away from Him, and He kept knocking on the door of my heart. I was lost, and now I am found. I was guilty, and now I am forgiven, I was broken, and now I have purpose. To make King Jesus known. I want to give others the hope of everlasting life through Jesus, that someone else gave to me.”

There are some core beliefs of the Christian faith. These things are important and fundamental to our belief as a Christian. It will require faith and the conviction of the Holy Spirit for you to believe these things. These beliefs are outlined in a document called The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (BFM2000), which is a document that highlights the core beliefs of our faith. Please understand that this document is a man-made document. It does have errors and there may even be things throughout the document that you disagree with. Regardless, whether you’re Baptist or not, it’s a helpful guide when it comes to our evangelical beliefs about God’s relationship with man. The BFM2000 is written in a way that many who do not identify as Southern Baptists agree with these core doctrines.

What you believe matters, but maybe nothing is more important in the world than what you believe about God.

As a Christian, your faith is centered on your belief in God, so let's look at the foundations of our faith together. You can read more about these beliefs in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, Article II. God¹

Who is God the Father?

He reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, and all-wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Watch This:



Who is Jesus?

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person has effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Watch This:



Who is The Holy Spirit?

Watch This:

The Spirit of God is fully divine and inspired holy men of old to write the Holy scriptures. Through illumination, He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration.



At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

What Is Salvation?

Watch This:

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man. It is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who obtained eternal redemption for the believer by His blood. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.



There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. But what does all of this mean for you as a Christian? It means you have a relationship with God, who created you for a purpose and loves you unconditionally. It means you have hope for the future, knowing you are forgiven and have eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

As a Christian, you're called to live out your faith daily, seeking to love God and others. You are called to share the Good News of the Gospel with those around you, pointing them to the love and grace of God. And you are called to grow in your faith, study the Bible, and deepen your understanding of God and what He has done for you.

So, as you continue on your journey as a Christian, hold fast to these beliefs, trusting in the love and grace of God and seeking to live out your faith in all that you do.



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SESSION 2:
CHURCH ORDINANCES

Have you ever been in church and had no clue what was happening? “Why is the pastor having a pool party on stage before the service?” “What is the purpose of baptism?” “Why are they drinking grape juice and eating stale bread?”

We will share with you the two church ordinances we practice – baptism and the Lord’s Supper – and what they mean.

As you study this section, talk with your disciple-maker about scriptural answers to your questions. Remember, our foundation of belief is the Holy Scriptures.



What is Baptism?

Watch This:

Baptism is a fundamental practice in the Christian faith. It is an outward symbol of an inward change and an act of obedience to Jesus Christ. In Matthew 3:15-17, we see how important baptism was to Jesus Himself, as He was baptized by John the Baptist. Although baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is essential for believers to demonstrate their commitment to Christ publicly.



When we are baptized, we are affirming our union with Christ and committing ourselves to His people. It is a celebration of our faithfulness to the Great Commission given to us by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. As Bobby Jamieson writes in his book,

Understanding Baptism, “Baptism is a church’s act of affirming and portraying a believer’s union with Christ by immersing him or her in water, and a believer’s act of publicly committing him or herself to Christ and his people, thereby uniting a believer to the church and marking off him or her from the world.”²

When I was in 7th grade, I accepted Christ. I wasn’t baptized until my 10th grade year. I went to a church summer camp, because the girl I liked invited me. I was the kid in the youth ministry that you didn’t want your Christian kids to be around. I was always in trouble at school, with the law, and didn’t care much about church outside of the games. Ashley invited me to her youth group. After game time was over, I went to the back of the gym and sat against the wall. Everyone else walked to chairs set up next to a stage. A band began to play, and I took out my phone and played Snake (only the old people will know what that is). Some guy came up to me and handed me a brochure for “church camp.” I spit in his face and told him to go away. If I did that today, I would be put in handcuffs by the church’s security team and asked to leave. He just walked away, put his hand out in the air, and started singing with the band. When the band was done, this man went on stage and started to talk about Jesus. I don’t remember anything he said. But I do remember the brochure he handed me: paintball, water slides, ziplines. No joke, I went home that night and asked my parents if I could go on vacation with my “girlfriend” and the church. The church would even pay for it! Little did I know at the time, but the way that this believer acted towards my sinful actions helped me understand the mercy of God.

About two weeks later, we got to camp. Walked into the cabin, and the teacher named Matthew went over some rules, one of which was that we couldn’t have phones. I had just upgraded from a Nokia Brick to a bright silver Motorola Razr! Plus, how was I going to text my “girlfriend” on where to meet up? Regardless, he took our phones and put them in his pillow case.

That night, I came up with a plan with a couple of my friends to

steal back our phones. I was going to ask Matthew in the hallway to talk about Jesus, and while we were out there, they would steal the phones back for us. After talking with Matthew for a few minutes, I told him, "I think they got out our phones by now. So I don't want to talk anymore." As a 13-year-old boy, I cared more about my phone than Jesus.

I would look at these same friends at the end of our camp pastor Craig's sermon and tell them that I needed to talk to Matthew again about Jesus. If I recall correctly, Matthew was a little bit hesitant to talk this time, but it had clicked for me: I knew my sins were great and I needed the forgiveness God offers through Jesus dying on the cross. Our youth pastor was baptizing people in the river the next morning, and Matthew asked me if I wanted to go. I was 100% sincere about my faith, but I was still growing. After all the years of pain I caused my family, I wanted them to be there when I got baptized. Three years later, I got baptized. I invited my parents and family to attend, but they couldn't make it in time. I was at a new church, attending by myself and didn't know anyone but the janitor I did court-mandated community service with. Right before I was baptized, Pastor Paul asked my family, Sunday school teachers, and friends to stand. He and I both realized that I knew no one in the church, and my family was running late to church.

It was then that I realized that I was getting baptized for other people, not for God. With time, I continued to grow in my faith, and I now realize that my baptism (when I went under the water) was a representation of the funeral for my old life that took place when God saved me and a public commitment and celebration of my new life in Christ (when I came up out of the water).



What is The Lord's Supper?

Also known as **Watch This:** communion, the Lord's Supper is a significant time of worship for Christians. It is a time for believers to remember and reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made for them when he was crucified. The Bible guides us in how to partake in the Lord's Supper, and it is essential to understand its significance.



Jesus led the first Lord's Supper, knowing that He was about to be taken away and crucified. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." He also took the cup, gave thanks, and said, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:19-20 ESV).

The bread (or cracker) and the juice represent Christ's body and blood, respectively, and we partake in them to remember the sacrifice He made for us. The bread represents His beaten and scourged body, which He gave up for our sins, and the juice represents His blood, which was shed on the cross. Jesus bled from head to toe that day, and His hands and feet were nailed to the cross. The crown of thorns was pressed into His head, and He was whipped until His flesh was



torn beyond recognition. The guards even pierced His side with a sword to ensure He was dead. We drink the juice to remember the new covenant that Jesus made with us – that those who believe in Him will be saved from eternal death – with His blood as a sacrifice to God for our sins.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:27-31, warns against partaking in an unworthy manner, which includes being divisive, or having unconfessed sins, and taking the elements without reverence for one another. Therefore, before partaking in the Lord's Supper, we must work out any disagreements or hard feelings with anyone in the church, confess all our sins to God and ask for forgiveness, and in some churches they will ask you to wait until everyone has the elements before taking them so that we may partake together.

A good friend of mine named Alex says, "When we get more excited and rigid about the frequency of business meetings than we do the Lord's Supper, we could have a problem." He points out that at most churches, we have more business meetings than opportunities to take the Lord's Supper.

There are different convictions of the frequency of when we should take the Lord's Supper, for example: There are biblical scholars who will tell us that we need to take communion each time we come together, but most churches take the Lord's Supper every fifth Sunday so that it doesn't become just another religious habit, as God's Word says to partake with reverence.

Remembering that we should not partake in the Lord's Supper with an unrepentant heart is crucial. If we have disagreements or hard feelings with someone in the church or have unconfessed sin, we should not partake of the Lord's Supper when offered to us.



Our priority should be to honor God and not worry about what others think or say about us taking or not taking the Lord's Supper on any given Sunday. As Galatians 1:10 ESV says, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ." It is more spiritual to not partake in the Lord's Supper than to take the Lord's Supper in vain.



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SESSION 3:
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Discipleship of the Believer

Watch This:

Prayer is an essential component of the Christian faith, and it is crucial for anyone seeking to deepen their relationship with God. I remember serving as a student and discipleship pastor at a church in Sherman, Texas. I got called into the family pastor's office. I was in trouble but I didn't know why. He asked me to sit down, and asked me, "How do you pray?" I explained in detail what we will be learning together in this section. He looked at me with relief, and asked, "Why did I get a phone call from a parent that said you needed to count to three, clap your hands, bow your head, and close your eyes everytime you pray?" I laughed a little but was relieved. I explained that when you have 60 kids playing games before the youth group starts, it is loud.



Before we prayed for the fellowship meal – you can picture it yourself – I would count to three. "1! 2! 3!," the whole youth group would clap their hands, and I would start praying. Well, when you're at the dinner table with your teenage son and he yells, "1! 2! 3!" and claps, let's be honest, you would have called the family pastor, too. There are a lot of ways to pray, and unless you're yelling "1! 2! 3!" at the dinner table or are praying selfish prayers, it is hard to pray incorrectly. Prayer is aligning the will of God with the path in front of you. Seek His will and His path for you through



the power of prayer.

The Lord's Prayer, which Jesus taught us, provides an excellent framework for praying. However, don't overthink prayer. God's Word tells us that He hears us. Even when we don't know what to pray, he hears the cry of our hearts. Pray with respect and honor. You can start just by telling God what is on your mind, what you think of Him, and what is going on in your personal spiritual journey. Learning how to pray is a process that requires patience, consistency, and a willingness to open your heart to God. Let's run together in learning how to pray and developing a more meaningful prayer life!

Jesus prayed, and if the Son of God needed to pray, then how much more do we? Our prayers are an act of humility that acknowledges our dependence on God. Jesus relied on the strength of His Father and the Spirit to sustain Him throughout His ministry. We must also recognize our need for divine strength to accomplish anything in life.

Leonard Ravenhill said in one of his sermons, "No man or church is greater than its prayer life."³ The effectiveness of our ministries, whether personal or corporate, depends on our prayer life. Without prayer we are powerless, but when we pray, God empowers us to do great things in His name.



James 5:16 can give us comfort and boldness that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. This verse reassures us that God answers our prayers when we pray according to His will. In James 4:2, we are reminded that we do not have because we do not ask. We must ask God for what we need and trust Him to provide for us. Matthew 6:9-13, also known as the Lord's Prayer, will guide us in how to pray. This guide provides a structure that is easy to follow, making it a helpful prayer guide for both beginners and seasoned Christians alike.

The Lord's Prayer can be broken down into four main sections, each of which has significance. In your student guide, you will be asked to write out your own prayer to God.

1 The first section is *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."* This line emphasizes the importance of honoring and respecting God when we pray. We acknowledge His greatness, His holiness, and His power.

2 The second section is *"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."* In this section, we are encouraged to pray for God's will, not our desires. We should seek to align our will with His will and pray that His Kingdom comes to Earth.

3 The third section is *"Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."* In this section, we ask God to provide for our needs and to forgive us of our sins. It also reminds us of the importance of forgiving others.

4 The fourth section is *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* In this section, we ask God to protect us from temptation and evil. We recognize our weakness and ask for His strength to guide us on our spiritual journey.



Although the Lord's Prayer is a guide, prayer is more than reciting a set of words. It is a conversation with God, and we should feel free to speak to Him in our own words. We should approach Him with honesty, transparency, and vulnerability. He already knows what we need, even before we ask Him.

Sometimes, we may feel unworthy to speak to God. We may be overwhelmed by our sins or feel that our problems are too insignificant to bring to Him. However, we must remember that God loves us, and He wants to hear from us just as a father should want to hear from his children. Romans 8:26 tells us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, and He intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Even when we don't know what to say, the Holy Spirit is with us, and God hears the cry of our hearts.

Still today one of my many most embarrassing moments is the first time I ever prayed publicly. I didn't grow up in church but was always at the church. Long story for another day. I happened to go to my church's youth group, which met at a home, based on the school and grade you were in. The cool thing was I knew people in the Bible study; the bad part was I didn't know how to pray. Before we went into the house, we

all gathered outside at the local park and, together in a circle, we held hands. We shared prayer requests and the teacher asked each youth to pray for another. I remember, I was asked to pray for Rachel's grandma. She was sick. Outside of me thinking Rachel and every other girl in my group was cute, I knew nothing about Rachel or her grandma. Everyone took turns praying. One by one, praying for each other. Two people away, now I am next. It's my turn to pray. I opened my mouth to pray and these were the words I prayed for Rachel's grandma: "Dear Father, please bless this food into our bodies. Amen." I didn't know that you don't say "Amen" if people are going to pray after you, and I didn't know that I did anything wrong. I was so proud of myself! I talked to God! Middle school laughter began to break out, and the prayer stopped for a moment. Ryan (my friend) looked at me and said, "You were meant to pray for Rachel's grandma." With a proud look on my face, I softly said, "I did." The teacher finished the prayer for us as I passed gas and more laughter broke out.

My face was as bright red as my hair. I did not go to Bible study that night. I called my dad and asked him to pick me up because I wasn't "feeling well."

The only time we prayed in my house growing up was at the dinner table. That was the only time I was modeled on how to pray. I find myself making this same mistake even now with my own children and wife, and I can't go without thinking that in most Christian homes, the only time we talk to God is at the dinner table. Parents, would you pray over your children tonight at their bedside? Teenagers, would you walk into the living room, put your hand on your parents' back, and pray for them? Husbands and wives, would you go out of your way today and pray for your spouse? When was the last time you and your family sat down in the living room and prayed for your church? Maybe tonight is the night to do that.

Prayer is a vital part of our spiritual growth. Learning how to pray takes time and effort, but more importantly it takes a willingness to depend on God. The Lord's response to our prayers may not

always be what we expect or desire, but we can trust that He has our best interests at heart and that His plan for us is perfect. Prayer provides us with a way to communicate with God and seek His guidance and wisdom in our lives. It can help us to deepen our faith, find peace in difficult situations, and build a stronger relationship with our Creator. Through prayer, we can express our gratitude, ask for forgiveness, and share our hopes and fears. Moreover, prayer is not limited to a particular time or place. We can pray anywhere and at any time, whether we are alone or with others. We can pray through words, thoughts, or even silent meditation.

Prayer is not so much about the method but the intention behind it.



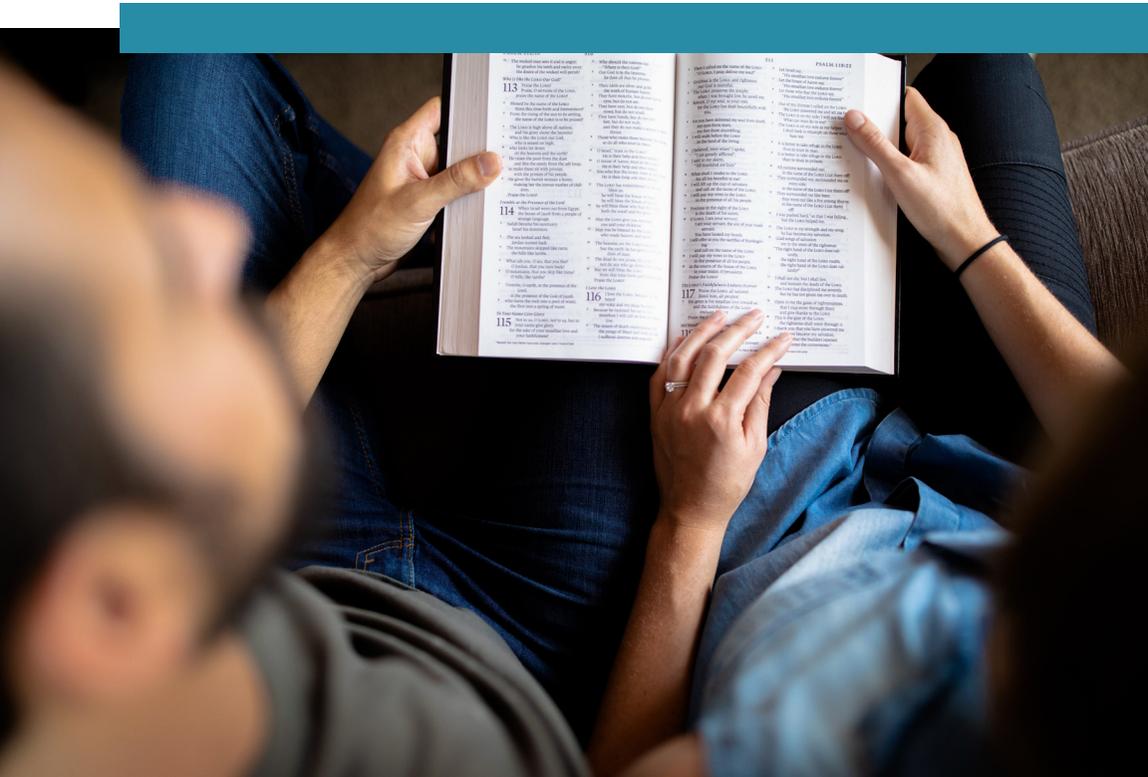
How To Read Your Bible?

Watch This:

Committing to read scripture daily can seem like an impossible task, but with discipline and a desire, it is achievable. There may be days when you don't feel like reading God's Word, or you are too busy, but you must fight to spend time with God daily. Nothing else matters or will function according to God's Word if we don't go to God's Word first. Psalm 119:105 ESV states, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."



Many people may ask the question, "Should I read in the morning or at night?" The truth is God is not concerned with when we study the Bible as much as He is with our desire to do so and that we meditate on it throughout the day, allowing the Word of God to change our theology and, therefore, our day-to-day lives.



Here are some ways you can prioritize time in God's Word:



A Time: Set a time that you are going to read God's Word. It could be before you start your day or as you end it, but schedule time in your calendar to spend time with God.



A Place: Choose a place where you can study God's Word with little to no distractions. It could be the kitchen table, your favorite chair in the living room, or your office at work. Just make sure it's a quiet and peaceful place.



A Text: Have a text that you are reading. One of the hardest things to figure out is, "What am I going to read today?" Don't settle with picking up your Bible and turning to a random page, asking God what your fortune is for that day. If you ever need help finding a place to start reading, ask your Sunday school teacher, pastor, or disciple-maker.

Here are some other ideas:

- Read a chapter from Proverbs a day, matching the calendar date with the Proverb chapter.
- Read five Psalms a day and you could finish the Book of Psalms in one month.
- Read through a book of the Bible throughout the month.
- Choose a book and read a couple of chapters a day. Start with the Gospel of Mark or John and then keep moving through the New Testament.

The most important thing is that you don't neglect time together with your Heavenly Father. Your relationship with God will grow as you spend more time in His Holy Word.

Don't feel shame if you miss a day. It's okay to miss a day. In fact, if you are following a dated devotional plan, skip that day entirely; don't feel as if you need to play catch up. Read what Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV says about this: *"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they*

are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

God is faithful, even if we are not. He is faithful even if we miss a day, a week, or even a year. Just pick up a copy of God’s Word and rest in His faithfulness. His mercies are new each morning!

How To Share Your Faith?

Watch This:

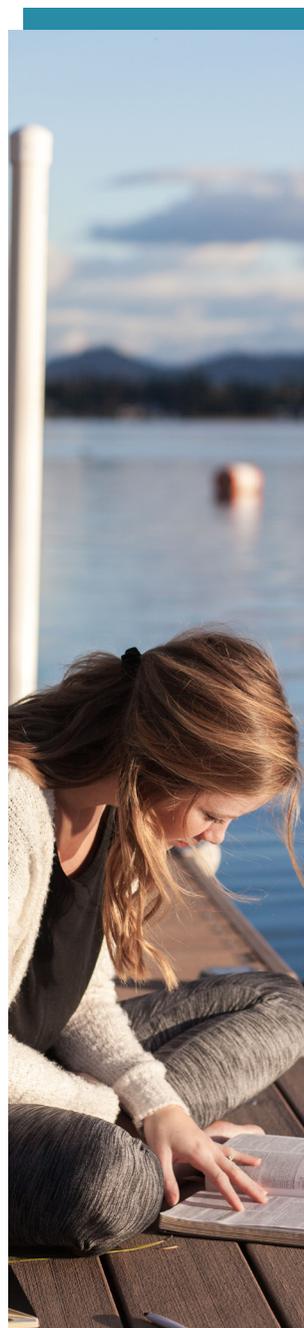
Sharing your faith can be a daunting task, but using the “Your story, their story, God’s story” method can help make it easier and more effective. Here’s how:



 **Your story:** Start by sharing your personal story. Explain who you were before you knew Christ, how you came to realize your need for Him, and what changes He has brought into your life since then. Be honest and vulnerable, sharing both your struggles and your victories. This will help your listener to relate to you and see that you are a real person, just like them.

 **Their story:** After sharing your story, ask your listener about their story. Ask them about their background, struggles, and experiences. Listen actively and attentively, without interrupting or judging. This will help them to feel valued and heard.

 **God’s story:** Finally, share the story of God’s love and salvation through Jesus Christ. Explain the Gospel message in a clear and concise way, emphasizing God’s love and grace. Use Bible verses to support your points and answer any



questions your listener may have. End by inviting them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Remember to pray before and during your conversation, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and speak through you. Also, be respectful of your listener's beliefs and viewpoints, and avoid being pushy or argumentative. **The goal is not to win an argument but to share God's love and truth in a way that is compelling and life-changing.**

If you want to grow in your faith and become more comfortable sharing it with others, one of the best things you can do is actively look for people to share with. This can include family members, friends, coworkers, and even strangers you meet in everyday life.

Make it a habit to look for opportunities to share your story and God's story with others. This might mean striking up conversations with people you meet, asking them about their spiritual beliefs and sharing your own in turn. It might also mean actively seeking out opportunities to serve and love others in your community and using those opportunities as a way to share your faith.

As you practice sharing your faith with others, you will likely become more comfortable and confident in doing so. Remember that sharing your story doesn't have to be a big, intimidating event; sometimes it's as simple as sharing a kind word or listening ear with someone who is going through a tough time.

Ultimately, the goal is not just to share your faith, but to live it out in your everyday life. As you grow in your faith and share it with others, you can be a powerful witness to the love and grace of God. So be bold, be open, and be willing to share your story with those around you!



**LET'S
RUN
RUN**
TOGETHER

SESSION 4:
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Why Join a Church?:

Watch This:

Discipleship is a basic aspect of the Christian faith. A disciple is a person who has accepted Jesus Christ and is committed to sharing His message with others. The first disciples were the men whom Jesus Christ called to walk with and assist Him during His ministry on Earth.



A disciple is a follower of Christ, and discipleship is following Him. Jesus told His disciples in Luke 9:23 that following Him is dying to our old ways of living and resting in our new life in Christ. This may be a figurative expression, but it is a fact that many people have died so that we may have the opportunity to accept Christ. Most of the apostles died because of their faith, and even today there are stories of believers who have died because they would not renounce their faith. We, too, should strive to have that kind of faith in our Savior. We may not physically die for our faith, but as disciples of Jesus, we die to our passions and desires and begin to live a life with a purpose bigger than ourselves. We begin to live for Him.

One of the reasons why I felt led to write this guide is that over my course of ministry, we have baptized hundreds of people and discipled very few. If that is true for my own ministry, maybe it is true for other churches and church leaders. May we get back to



the basics of what God asked us to do: make disciples. My prayer is that this guide will help you and your disciple-makers have gospel conversations that help you grow in your faith. At the end of your time together, we are going to ask you to return the favor your discipleship partner showed to you and disciple someone else. Maybe right now, you can start praying for that person. Maybe you already know them by name, or possibly your church can help connect you with them after your study.

Discipleship is not just about following Jesus but also about leading others to Him. As we see in Matthew 28:19-20, we are called to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Discipleship is not just a personal relationship with Christ but a shared one. We are called to share the message of Christ with others and help them to become disciples as well.



You may have heard the term “tithe” and wondered what it means. The word “tithe” comes from Greek and Hebrew words that mean “ten percent.” In the Old Testament, giving ten percent of one’s income was a requirement for believers. However, in the New Testament, we are called to live by a new standard of grace.



When churches talk about money, sometimes we close our ears, and our bitter hearts begin to grumble. Let me assure you, **your financial giving to your church is an indication of your spiritual health.** If you have seen the grace of God, you should be led by the Holy Spirit to join His work through the ministry of your local church.

That chair that you sit on week after week? It costs money. Running the A/C, turning on the lights, and painting the walls every so often cost money. Do we want to reach out to our community with events, send our youth to summer camps, host VBS for the kids? It costs money. Do we want to support other mission organizations and plant more churches? I think you get my point. Ministry costs money. By giving to the local church and its ministries, you are a partner in gospel work!

I pastored a church that had a plaque in the lobby with a beloved church member’s name on it. When I asked why it was on the wall, a church member said to me, “If you give the church two million dollars, we will get you a plaque, too.” What a kind gesture, but here is the problem. God does not recognize the size of your gift; he sees the size of your heart. Our giving should be a sacrifice. In the Old Testament, we see that farmers would give their first-born, strongest animal to be slaughtered as an offering to God. In Mark 12:41-42, we see a story of a woman who gave very little in value, but God saw her gift and valued it. **Often the most generous don’t give the most considerable amount - but they have made the most significant sacrifice in their budgets.**

Ask yourself these questions about your giving habits:

- Do you support the church's efforts of making disciples?
- Are you giving God your leftovers or the first fruits of what He has given to you?
- Is your giving a sacrifice to your family out of reverence and dependence on God?

While we are not required to give ten percent to the church, it is a good starting point for those who want to sacrifice for the Gospel's furtherance through their local church (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Remember, everything we own is God's, and we are simply returning to Him a portion of what He has given us. I understand that for some of us this may mean re-working our family budgets. You have to ask yourself a simple question: are you willing to partner with your local church in Kingdom efforts?

But giving goes beyond just tithing. Offerings are another way we can support the work of the church and other important ministries. Offerings are any monies given to support other church ministries or groups the church supports. This could include youth or children's programs, homeless shelters, food pantries, pregnancy centers, or other organizations doing Kingdom work.

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus spoke of the importance of helping the poor and needy. When we give to these types of ministries, we are following in Jesus' footsteps and making a difference in the lives of those in need.



So how can we give and serve beyond our tithe? Pray and ask God to reveal to you ways you can use your resources to support the work of the church and other ministries. Look for opportunities to serve in these ministries as well. When we give and serve with a cheerful heart, we are storing up treasures in Heaven and making a difference in the lives of others (Matthew 6:19-21).

Why Serve in the Church?

Watch This:

You may wonder how to get involved in your church community and make a difference. One of the best ways to do this is by using your spiritual gifts to serve the church!



What are spiritual gifts? They are special abilities that God gives to His followers to use for His glory and for the benefit of others (1 Corinthians 12:7). Each of us has at least one spiritual gift, and it's important to discover what ours are so that we can use them to serve others.

I have the privilege of talking with many pastors across many contexts. I remember one pastor venting about the struggles he was having getting the church to use their spiritual gifts to serve the church. The Bible talks about us being the body of Christ and the body working together to do the work God has called us to. Somehow the conversation headed south, and he said, "I don't have hands and feet in my church, I have a body of Christ that has three butts and no hands." Yes, the pastor was calling his church members "butts." Let me tell you, even if you are a butthead, there is a place for you to use your gifts in the body of Christ.

Another pastor couldn't get anyone to volunteer in the nursery, so one week his sermon was preached via a baby monitor as he served in the nursery.

Why is using our spiritual gifts to serve the church so important? First of all, it helps to make the church stronger. Just like a physically healthy body needs all its parts to work together, the church needs all its members to use their spiritual gifts to contribute to its growth and health (Ephesians 4:16).

Using our spiritual gifts to serve the church is also a way to glorify God. When we use the gifts He has given us to help others, we are honoring Him and showing our love for Him (1 Peter 4:10-11). Using our spiritual gifts to serve the church helps us to grow in our faith. **As we step out in faith and use our gifts, we learn to trust God more and develop a deeper relationship with Him.**

So how can you discover and use your spiritual gifts to serve the church? Start by praying and asking God to reveal your gifts to you. You can also take a spiritual gifts assessment, talk to your pastor or church leaders, and try out different areas of ministry to see where you feel most fulfilled and effective. Maybe ask your disciple-maker if you can serve with them in their area of ministry this next week.

Remember, God has given you unique spiritual gifts for a reason - to use them for His glory and for the benefit of others. Don't be afraid to step out in faith and try new things! When you use your gifts to serve the church, you are making a Kingdom impact that will last for eternity.



**LET'S
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TOGETHER**

RESOURCES

Key Terms

Apostles - the term “apostle” is used in scripture by those who walked with and lived during Jesus’ ministry on Earth. In its simplest form, it’s one who has been sent by Christ. So although we haven’t walked the Earth at the same time as Jesus during his earthly ministry, we are all sent by God to do His work.

Ascension - going up into Heaven.

Brother/Sister/Father - in the Family of God, you may hear Christians refer to each other as brothers and sisters. This is because we are all in the “Family of Faith.” Although less common, those more mature in their faith may be referred to as spiritual fathers or fathers of the faith.

Denomination - a religious group of Christian believers composed of all church congregations of the same kind; with similar names, history, and ways of “doing church.” Some examples would be Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian.

Discipleship - a disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ. The process of discipleship starts with the believer’s salvation and is followed by observing and practicing a life committed to Christ. Every believer is called to make disciples and to never stop growing in their relationship with Christ: practicing not just religious life but stretching our spiritual muscles, trusting in ourselves less, depending on this world less, and making much more of Jesus today than we did yesterday. Discipleship is the act of following Christ and leading others to Him. As believers, we must strive to be committed to discipleship, for it is crucial to our relationship with Christ and fulfilling His mission on earth.

Doctrine - a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by the church.

Glorification - is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. Glorification is the

ultimate stage of salvation, where the believer is transformed into the image of Christ and is given a glorified body. This stage occurs at the end of time when Jesus Christ returns to earth. Philippians 3:20-21 ESV says, *“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”*

Grace - the undeserved love and favor that God alone gives - through Christ alone.

Intercede - intervene on behalf of another.

Justification - the act of declaring or making righteous in the sight of God. It is God’s gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God. It is the stage of salvation which refers to the legal pardon of sins granted to the believer through faith in Jesus Christ. This justification is a gift from God, and it cannot be earned or deserved. Romans 3:23-24 ESV says, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

LORD - in all capital letters means “Jehovah,” which is the Jewish national name for God.

Offering - when speaking of money to God, an offering is typically any amount you give over ten percent of your income.

Regeneration - is the stage of salvation referring to the spiritual rebirth that occurs when a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This rebirth is necessary because all humans are born sinful and need spiritual renewal. The Bible says in John 3:3 ESV, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

Righteous - morally right or justifiable; virtuous.

Sanctification - the action or process of being freed from sin or purified. It is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerated person's life. Sanctification is the ongoing process of being made holy, which is achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit. This process involves the transformation of the believer's heart and mind as they are conformed to the image of Christ. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV, *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."*

Spiritual Gifts - special abilities that God gives to His followers to use for His glory and for the benefit of others (1 Corinthians 12:7). Each of us has at least one spiritual gift, and it's important to discover what ours are so that we can use them to serve others.

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:19-20 ESV:

"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".

The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13 ESV:

"Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil".

The Lord's Supper - is sometimes called Holy Communion. It is the Christian ordinance which Jesus Christ instructed that His followers do in Luke 22:14-20.

Theology - the study of the nature of God and religious belief.

Tithe - the word “tithe” comes from Greek and Hebrew words that are translated as “ten percent.” Although this is a requirement for Old Testament believers, today we live by a new standard of grace. Even though we are not required by the church to give ten percent, it is a good starting point for those who want to sacrifice for the furtherance of the gospel through the ministry entrusted to your local church.

H.E.A.R Method

Watch This:

The H.E.A.R method of Bible reading is an acronym that stands for



H - Highlight: This involves highlighting or underlining key words, phrases, or verses that stand out to you as you read through the passage.

E - Explain: After highlighting, you take a moment to explain what you think those keywords or verses mean, either to yourself or to someone else.

A - Apply: Next, you consider how the passage applies to your life and circumstances. What is God teaching you through this passage? What action should you take as a result of what you have learned?

R - Respond: Finally, you respond to God in prayer, thanking Him for what you have learned and asking Him to help you apply what you have learned to your life.

The H.E.A.R method is a practical and useful tool for engaging with scripture and allowing it to shape our lives.

ACTIVITY

How to Write A Testimony?

Watch This:

Everyone has a unique story, and sharing it can have a tremendous impact on the lives of others. Your story has the power to change someone's life, to offer them hope and encouragement, and to lead them to Christ. But why is telling your story so important? We will explore the significance of your testimony and offer a helpful guide to writing it out so that you can share it with others.



- 1 Part One - "My Life Before Jesus Saved Me":** Your story starts with your life before you met Christ. This section should give the reader a glimpse into your geographical and social situation, your family, and the role that church or the Bible played in your life. You can also touch on the positive or negative experiences you had with Christians and highlight the most significant people or events in your life. Finally, you can ponder where life would have taken you if you had never turned to Christ.

Conclusion

Your testimony is a powerful tool that can help you reach others for Christ. By sharing your story, you can offer hope and encouragement to those who are going through similar struggles. Remember to be brief, precise, and natural as you write out your story so you can share it in about two minutes as you use the "Your Story, Their Story, God's Story" method of sharing the Gospel. Be sure to avoid "churchy" words and always keep Jesus as the hero of your story. So what are you waiting for? Write out your story and see how God can use it to impact the lives of others! Your disciple-maker may share their story with you this week, and you will have the opportunity to share your story with them.



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LET'S RUN TOGETHER

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE DISCIPLES?

Pastor, if you stood up in front of your church on Sunday morning and asked church members to raise their hand if they have ever been intentionally disciplined, very few hands would be raised. However, if you asked “Who would like to be intentionally disciplined?” we would have a line following service. Here is the problem that I have discovered. We have the desire, but we don't know how to disciple each other. “Let's Run Together” is designed to be an easy-to-use discipleship guide to equip churches with the resources needed to make disciples.

HOW TO USE THIS DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

It is suggested that you study God's Word and meet with your disciple-maker four times over an eight-week period (every other week). This guide employs a reverse classroom model, where you are asked to read and watch the provided section and videos before meeting with your disciple-maker. Videos are on RightNow Media, provided by Heights Baptist Church in Alvin, Texas and student and leader guides are in the back of this guide. Also, we challenge you to meet outside of this Bible study setting: go to lunch together after church, invite each other over to meet your families, go to a ball game together, whatever you would enjoy.