

GETTING STARTED WITH

DISCIPLINESHIP

THE ESSENTIALS FOR
INVESTING YOUR TIME
TO HELP OTHERS GROW.

**BELIEVERS OF ME,
JUST AS I ALSO AM
OF CHRIST.**

— 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Jesus' chosen method for engaging the world with the Gospel and growing them to maturity in their faith is to use faithful believers like yourself who invest themselves in the lives of others.

This training is designed to help you get started on the great journey of making disciples. Christ Himself has called you to this, and He promises to do this with you. You won't find a more eternally significant or rewarding endeavor than helping someone know Christ better and live out His incredible plan for their lives.

If this feels daunting, take comfort! In these five sessions, we'll cover the following areas to help you step into this with confidence and clarity.

- The what, why and how of discipleship
- How to start well and with clear expectations
- Best practices to adopt and pitfalls to avoid
- How to make the most of your time
- Helping someone through questions, struggles and hardship

As you embark on this journey, our prayer is that your time will prove fruitful in the following three ways:

1. You will grow closer to your Creator
2. You will grow closer to the Purpose you were created for
3. You will be equipped to pass on to others what has been passed on to you

**Do not work for the food that
perishes, but for the food that
endures to eternal life.**

— JOHN 6:27



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP	2
• What it means to be a disciple	4
• The process of making disciples	5
• The motivation behind discipleship	6
• How to make disciples	7
• Goals of disciple-making	7
SESSION 2: STARTING WELL WITH CLEAR EXPECTATIONS	12
• The qualities of a good disciple	14
• Making the time count	15
• How long the discipleship relationship should last	16
SESSION 3: BEST PRACTICES AND PITFALLS	20
• The 3 components of quality discipleship	22
• Common pitfalls	26
• Other tips and best practices	27
SESSION 4: STRUCTURING YOUR TIME	30
• Creating the right environment	32
• Allocating your time	32
• How long the relationship should last	34
SESSION 5: HELPING THROUGH QUESTIONS, STRUGGLE AND HARDSHIP	38
• How to help when they're going through crisis	40
• Those questions you don't know the answer to	41
• When to refer to a professional counselor	42
APPENDIX A: WHEEL OF LIFE	46
APPENDIX B: WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY'RE HURTING	47
APPENDIX C: SPIRITUAL MATURITY PROCESS	48
APPENDIX D: SMART GOALS	50



SESSION ONE: UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP

SESSION TOPICS

- What it means to be a disciple
- The process of making disciples
- The motivation behind discipleship
- Goals of disciple-making
- How to make disciples



IT STARTS WITH YOU

Before we discuss how to mentor or disciple someone, let's first agree on a biblical definition of what a disciple is. For obvious reasons, you must first be a disciple of Christ before you can reproduce disciples. After all, you can't teach what you don't know, and you can't lead where you don't go.

Definition

A disciple is a learner who follows another's teaching and seeks to imitate another's life. *The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.* (LUKE 6:40) To be Christ's disciple, then, is to strive to be like Him.

Marks of a disciple

- A diligent student of the teachings of Christ, applying them to their life - **JOHN 8:31**
- Loves others - **JOHN 13:34-35**
- Bears much fruit - **JOHN 15:8**
- Places nothing above their relationship with Christ - **LUKE 14:33**
- Engaged in the mission of Christ - **1 JOHN 3:16-18**

Discipleship is a process, not a program

Discipleship is, at its core, a very personal journey. Because every person has a different faith background and any number of different struggles and temptations, discipleship cannot be easily packaged into a program that lasts only for a period of time. Instead, it is a process of intentionally helping other Christians grow in the knowledge and application of God's truth.

Depending on where the person is spiritually, what they need from you will vary.

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	WHAT THEY NEED
New Believer	Unsure. Vulnerable. Can easily get themselves into trouble without someone looking out for them	Help understanding scripture; how to pray; encouragement; a safe environment for growth
Growing	Disciplined but impressionable. Taking in God's word in for themselves; developing spiritual disciplines; curious and inquisitive	Solid teaching; new identity; how to discern God's will; how to identify false teaching; how to resist temptation
Mature	Serving. Leading. Disciplined; engaged; serving; teaching; community is important	Encouragement to keep growing; leadership examples/ opportunities; evangelism training
Reproducing	Developing disciples/ disciple-makers. See others' spiritual needs and come alongside them to help	Someone to disciple and someone to encourage and help them as they disciple others

Now don't get nervous about having to figure everything out on your own. In Session 2, we will talk about how to determine where to begin when discipling someone, and later we'll introduce some tools to help guide your conversations.

Remember, the goal of discipleship is to help others exhibit the marks of a disciple we discussed earlier in this session. To help someone know and follow Jesus is not only eternally significant, it is tremendously rewarding.

'Go and make disciples' was not a suggestion



The **common reasons** people don't come alongside others to help them grow in Christ are:

- I don't have time
- They will ask questions I can't answer
- I'm not as far along in my spiritual walk as I think I should be

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He wasn't talking to revered, retired pastors with seminary degrees. He was talking to men with different backgrounds, levels of education and standing in the community. The only qualification you need is a personal walk with Christ yourself and a desire to help others know Him as well. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, *"Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ."* He wasn't standing on the summit as he pointed others to Christ. He was on the trail himself, bringing others along behind him.

If you wait for life to calm down or your battle with temptation to finally be won, you'll never start. Consider this: one of the ways God transforms and matures our faith is through our obedience to what He's asked of us.

How to make disciples

First, let's be clear: *you can do nothing apart from Christ.*

As already discussed, disciple-making is a spiritual relationship. Because it is a relational process, there is no script or timeline. It should challenge the other person beyond their current knowledge and comfort zone, but it must also be sensitive to what's happening in their lives throughout the journey.

A disciple-maker is one who listens well and seeks to understand the person. They believe in the person and encourage them in all seasons of life – in victory as well as failure and sin. It is this relational investment in the lives of others – helping them understand and apply the word of God, extending grace to them, working through the hard stuff – that helps them experience the abundant life Christ promises us.

The goal of discipleship

The goal of discipleship is helping each other become more like Christ. It is a putting to death of our sinful nature in the process of conforming to the image of Jesus (see Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:5; and Romans 8:29). Disciples are growing, loving, self-denying, and soul-winning.

Discipleship is not a private matter between the individual and God.

One-on-one or small group?

There are pros and cons to both one-on-one and small group discipleship. One-on-one typically provides the most flexibility when the person you're discipling is working through a struggle or needs to spend more time on a certain topic. Small groups, however, can provide a group accountability and momentum that is hard to match with one-on-one. So the answer is really this: whatever feels most comfortable for you and the person(s) you're meeting with.

If you choose to disciple more than one person in a group setting, consider these 2 best-practices:

- **Keep it small, as in no more than 2-3 people at a time. The more you have in the group, the easier it will be for certain members to 'hide' in the group and the harder it will be to have consistent attendance from every member**
- **Be willing to work one-on-one with a member who is not able to keep up with the pace of the group or may be working through some life struggle.**

The principle of reproduction

Paul told his protégé Timothy, *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."* (2 TIMOTHY 2:2) Discipleship should develop others in such a way that they are then equipped to do the same with others. For this reason, we recommend using a discipleship study like CBMC's Operation Timothy to give them first-hand experience with a proven resource they can one day use with others.

It is important that you cast this vision for reproduction from the very beginning. Re-cast this vision every time you meet and pray together for the people they will one day disciple. This missional purpose can fade into the background if it's not communicated clearly and frequently. Your person may initially dismiss the idea of discipling someone else because they don't feel ready or qualified, but remind them that it's the Spirit who does the work and He has commissioned each of us to join Him!

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

—2 TIMOTHY 2:22

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What thoughts or feelings do you have about discipling someone else?

2. How has your understanding of Matthew 28:19-20 developed as you have matured in your faith?

HOMEWORK

1. Memorize: Matthew 28:19-20
2. Ask God for someone to disciple



SESSION TWO: STARTING WELL WITH CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

SESSION TOPICS

- The qualities of a good disciple
- Making the time count
- How long the discipleship relationship should last



The qualities of a good disciple

Here are 4 qualities to look for in someone you are considering discipling.

- 1 Spiritual.** Jesus was not interested in helping leaders lead better. He was looking for those who would follow Him and follow His example of leadership. The most important quality of a disciple is their willingness to follow Jesus and make their relationship and pursuit of Him their highest priority.
- 2 Faithful.** They come prepared each week, having done whatever reading or homework you agreed to in the prior meeting. They arrive on time and give you their full attention during your meeting.
- 3 Teachable.** They are willing to take direct feedback without being defensive. They are willing to look at themselves in the mirror and make changes to improve. They are humble and have an expressed hunger for personal growth.
- 4 Missional.** The person worthy of your time is one who recognizes their responsibility to then pay it forward and do the same with someone else. Though they might not initially see themselves as qualified, they should understand that God has called all His children to The Great Commission, making disciples and passing on what they've learned.

Making the time count

When you have someone interested in a discipleship relationship, the temptation is to jump in right away and start working through some material. This often results in 'discipleship fizzle' caused by mismatched expectations, a lack of established trust, poor commitment on their part, or simply having different ideas about the process. To prevent this, consider a slower start that looks something like this:

MEETING 1: GET TO KNOW THEM.

- **Their story.** Learn about their career, their family, hobbies, etc. Be sure to share your story as well to model the kind of transparency and honesty that will be important as you continue forward. Look for common interests and experiences.
- **Their goals.** Find out what drives them, where their passions are, where they see themselves in 10 years and what's on their 'bucket list'.
- **Their expectations.** Ask what they're looking for in a discipleship relationship. Many will come thinking they want a business mentor or a marriage counselor, so be prepared to explain that your interest is to help them grow in their relationship with Christ, not to advise on business matters or provide focused marriage counsel.
- **Their experience.** Ask whether they've ever had someone work with them personally to help them grow in their faith. Explain that you've been through this process with someone else and would be willing to do the same with them if they are interested.

Even if they respond favorably and express a desire to start meeting regularly, ask them to read a short book like *My Heart Christ's Home* before your next meeting and be prepared to talk about it when you come back together. Suggest that you both pray between now and then about whether to move forward. This establishes early on that your time is important and you are entering into this commitment prayerfully and seriously.

Establish a time and place for the next meeting and try to meet in person if possible. Choose a place with few distractions and enough privacy to discuss sensitive topics.

*See <https://cbmc.live/myheart>

MEETING 2: OBSERVE THEIR FOLLOW-THROUGH AND AGREE ON THE PATH FORWARD.

- **Discuss.** Talk through the assignment from your first meeting and let them explain what stood out to them and why. Pay attention to the clues they give regarding their challenges, what inspires them, and most importantly, their understanding of God.
- **Observe.** Did they do the assignment and come ready to discuss? Are they thinking critically about the application to their lives? Ask, “What do you think would best help you get where you want to be in your Christian life?” At this point, people will generally fall into one of two buckets:
 - A. A small group where they can find encouragement and fellowship, or
 - B. Someone to lead and challenge them personally and intentionally
- **Direct.** If they don’t seem interested or committed in working one-on-one (bucket A), refer them to a small group and offer to meet occasionally. If, however, they show themselves committed and engaged, offer to meet regularly for a few months and then re-evaluate.
- **Agree.** Explain that they’ll have some light homework to do between meetings, like reading, answering questions, listening to a podcast or sermon, and even some scripture memory. Their faithfulness to be on time and prepared is both important for them and a sign of respect to you, so make it clear that you’re in this only if they are fully committed. Agree on a checkpoint after six to eight weeks to review your progress and decide whether to continue.
- **Share.** Give them access to the discipleship material you will use to guide your meetings going forward. CBMC’s Operation Timothy is a fantastic resource to start with and will take 6-12 months to get through from start to finish. Not only is it practical and biblically sound, it provides a path that they can use when they begin discipling someone else. Operation Timothy can be purchased in book form on Amazon or can be accessed free online at advance.cbmc.com.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important that we set clear expectations about what we are looking for in a discipling relationship?

2. What are the pros and cons of using some discipleship material versus just letting the conversation go where it will?



SESSION THREE: BEST PRACTICES AND PITFALLS

SESSION TOPICS

- The 3 components of quality discipleship
- Common pitfalls
- Other tips and best practices



The three components of quality discipleship

In Session 2, we looked at the qualities of a good disciple. Now let's look for a moment at your role. There are 3 essential ingredients for successful disciple-making:

- 1 A strong relationship**
- 2 The word of God**
- 3 Doing ministry together**

Let's look at these in a little detail.

INGREDIENT #1: A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

When you disciple someone, you aren't taking on a project, you're investing in a person. To do this well, you will need to:

- **Learn to ask questions** – “What’s been consuming your thoughts lately?” “How are you doing in your walk with God?” “What are you learning from the Lord?” Ask questions about the whole person, not just their jobs or spiritual disciplines.
- **Learn to listen** – Respond to what you hear before you move into the discussion you planned for the session. They may need help processing an issue or acting on truth rather than emotion. Remember, to help them grow spiritually, you have to meet them where they are and work from there. Listening well and asking good questions is essential.
- **Spend relational time together** – The deepest bonds are made both face-to-face and shoulder-to-shoulder. In other words, find things to do together outside (but not in place of) your weekly meeting. Have them over for dinner, attend a sporting event, or do a service project in your community. Let them see your life outside a discipleship setting.

- **Be an encourager** – In 2005, the National Science Foundation published an article noting 80% of our thoughts in any given day are negative. We need people who help us identify the good things in life and who will praise and affirm us in a healthy way. Make it a point to remind them who God says they are. Point them to the promises, strength and grace God offers to empower a life that brings Him glory.
- **Be transparent** – If you're vulnerable and open about what's going on in your life, it's going to be easier for the person you're discipling to be open. If you come across as a perfect disciple who doesn't have any issues or problems, they won't find you relatable and may struggle with seeing themselves in a disciple-maker role.
- **Advocate for** – As you get to know the person you're discipling, it's natural for you to want to help them. Make available your resources, your bookshelf, your network of contacts, ... whatever God has given you, use it to help them.
- **Coach them** – Train them with the diligence and perseverance of a coach expecting changes and results, but be careful about dispensing advice. Try to ask questions that will help them think through the issue and lead them to search God for direction. Coach them on how to get to the answer rather than giving them the answer yourself. (CBMC offers an excellent Leadership Coach Training seminar that you might consider.)
- **Love them** – Even when they disappoint you and especially when they fail, show patience and encouragement as you help them identify what went wrong and establish a different path forward. When you listen, forgive and encourage, you are demonstrating that they have value in God's eyes and in yours, and that you still believe in them. This speaks volumes.

INGREDIENT #2: THE WORD OF GOD

Quality discipleship involves getting the Word of God into someone's life. Here are three reasons why the Word of God is key to discipleship:

- **God's Word produces life transformation** – People don't change unless the Word of God changes their thinking and changes their perspective on life. Life transformation comes from the Word.
- **God's Word builds convictions for a lifetime** – You may only be in their lives for a season, so help them build a deep, internalized conviction to live out biblical discipleship for the rest of their lives.
- **God's Word is the truth** – What seems good and right is sometimes a distraction or lie from the enemy. (See Proverbs 14:12) This is only revealed as we digest the truth of God's Word.

Keep in mind that helping someone mature in their faith is not completely up to you. Encourage them to be active in their church small group or a ministry like Bible Study Fellowship or CBMC that also puts them in God's word and helps them apply it to their lives.

INGREDIENT #3: DOING MINISTRY TOGETHER

The Christ-filled life is attained by faith and through obedience. When we put into practice those things we know and believe, our knowledge becomes experience which then becomes our witness. This is where apprenticing comes in.

Effective discipleship involves doing ministry together. When the apostle Paul invited Timothy in Acts 16 to be his disciple, he didn't say, "Hey, let's go through this material together and I'll teach you everything I know, then you'll be ready for ministry." Instead, Paul said, "Timothy, come with me," and Timothy joined Paul on his journeys. He learned by going with Paul.

It could look like:

- Talking with others at the gym or some local hangout
- Showing them how to initiate a conversation, build rapport, and transition into the gospel
- Serving together in a way that allows you to give encouragement to those being served
- Tag-team a devotional or co-facilitate a small group meeting

The **MAWL model** is so important for the growth from disciple to disciple-maker.

M
A
W
L

Model (they watch you)

Assist (you do things together)

Watch (you watch them)

Launch (they become the disciple-maker)

Healthy discipleship involves the three components we've discussed in this session – building relationships, studying the Word of God, and doing ministry together. The challenge is to balance all three and periodically evaluate which components need more attention.

For most people, discipleship doesn't come naturally. It's learned by doing it. Building relationships and studying God's Word may be easy for you. Ministry is usually the most difficult because it means stepping out in faith and bringing another person along with you. But if we do not embrace all three of these essential ingredients, we rob people of the joy of discovery, of personal growth, and of seeing God work in the people and situations around them.



Potholes to look out for

Here are a few common issues that will lead to discipleship fizzle:

- **Self-importance** – We take pride in our effort to influence a younger Christian. We are tempted to think that through our time, knowledge, and experience, we have changed the life of another person. *For I have worked harder ... yet it was not I but God who was working through me by His grace.* (1 Corinthians 15:10b NLT)
- **Self-reliance** – We lean so heavily on our materials that we forget to turn to God for insight and direction. We give answers instead of leading them to God in prayer. We forget to ask, “What is God doing in their life?”
- **Program-minded** – We place too much emphasis on completing a workbook or study, overlooking some of the immediate and general struggles they may have. Be flexible and remember the goal is spiritual maturity – helping them establish a firm knowledge and application of God’s Word to their lives.
- **Sense of failure** – Discouragement when we don’t see growth or freedom from a particular sin. Or perhaps when they seem to lose their appetite for discipleship and your meetings become sporadic. Remember, you are only one means of God’s work in their life.
- **Business consultant** – Your meetings become focused on issues with their work rather than helping them grow in Christlikeness. *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.* (Matthew 6:33 NLT)
- **Personal counselor** – If the issues are deep and old, and if it’s clear that they need help beyond your level of experience, then help them connect to a counselor and hold them accountable for following through.
- **Dependency on you** – The person you are discipling does everything you ask, but nothing on their own. They eat your fish rather than learning to fish. The MAWL model is the cure for this.

Practical hints when discipling someone

- Pray before each meeting
- Prepare – review notes from your prior discussions; organize what you plan to cover this time
- Repeat all things – have them summarize to you the key points from your discussion
- Assign them reasonable work to do between meetings
- Take them with you as much as possible – let them see you apply your faith to everyday life
- Inspect their follow-through – hold them accountable for their goals and commitments
- Use as many pass-on’able illustrations as possible – a picture is worth a thousand words
- Be transparent – share your failures and your victories, your confidence and your insecurity
- Encourage them as a friend, don’t instruct them like a professor
- Meet them where they are – tailor your time to meet their need
- Keep pointing them to Christ and His Word

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the 3 components is the easiest for you to wrap your arms around? Which do you find the most intimidating?

2. Who has helped you grow the most as a Christian? What do you remember most about your time together?

A person is sitting on metal bleachers. The image is partially covered by a large yellow rectangular overlay on the left side. The person's leg, wearing a grey sneaker and white sock, is visible on the right side of the frame.

SESSION FOUR: STRUCTURING YOUR TIME

SESSION TOPICS

- Creating the right environment
- Allocating your time
- How long the relationship should last



A background image of a man with a beard and short hair, smiling and looking to his right. He is wearing a dark sweater over a collared shirt. In front of him on a table are several white coffee cups. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or meeting environment.


Creating the environment

Where you meet can greatly impact the quality of your meetings. An office or home offers the ideal environment, but many discipleship meetings also occur during a mealtime. Things to consider when selecting your location:

- **Interruptions (like wait staff)**
- **Noise level**
- **Internet connection**
- **Privacy**
- **Availability each week**

Allocating the time

We've talked about focusing on the person and not a program, but a common pitfall is spending most of a meeting talking through life updates and leaving little time to explore new content, prayer or application and goal-setting. However you decide to structure your meetings, discuss it with the person you're discipling and gain agreement so they won't be surprised when you put a bookmark in your discussion and move on.



Here is a simple 4-part model you might find helpful for allocating your time. Simply divide your time into four equal periods, and spend each as follows:

PART 1 - UPDATE.

Get an update on what's happened since you last met. Use discernment about how much time or detail to go into, knowing that this can easily take up a full meeting. You'll want to be sure to ask

- **how their time with the Lord has been**
- **what they feel God has been showing them**
- **how did they do with their action-items from the prior meeting**
- **joys/victories**
- **setbacks/failures**

PART 2 - LEARN.

Discuss the assignment they've completed for this session. Take time sharing your answers with each other, but keep the pace moving forward so they feel a sense of accomplishment with each meeting. Remember that the goal here is to help them establish a firm grasp on knowing and applying God's Word to their lives.

PART 3 - PRAY.

When left to the end of a meeting, prayer time is often rushed. Move it into the middle of your meeting to give ample time to pray over the needs already shared and the topic discussed. Incorporate gratitude, intercession and personal requests. Make sure each person prays.

PART 4 - APPLY.

Encourage them to identify at least one action item based on your discussion and set a measurable goal for the upcoming week. These goals should not only be for their personal walk, but for investing in helping others know and follow Christ as well. Constantly re-cast the vision for them bringing someone else along the same path that you are leading them on.

How long the discipleship relationship should last

How often you meet will be up to you, but it will be tough to maintain momentum if you aren't meeting at least every other week. Ideally, you will meet weekly for an hour in a location that is free from distraction and affords for very personal conversations and prayer time.

It is recommended that you continue meeting consistently until you have at least completed the discipleship curriculum that you are working through. (Highly recommended: CBMC's Operation Timothy) The reasons are:

- 1. You want to make sure they have a firm foundation in their own spiritual walk**
- 2. You want them to have firsthand experience with a discipleship tool that they can use with someone else. (There's a difference between knowing how a tool works and having actually used the tool!)**

Typically, you should have already established a trust bond and seen evidence of spiritual discovery and life change within the first six months. At that point, you should be encouraging them to pray about whom they might start working with, even as you continue your meetings with them. It is important that they understand that a critical part of their spiritual maturity is them discipling someone else. Just as there's a difference between a 30-year-old adult and a 30-year-old parent, there's a difference between a disciple and a disciple-maker. Jesus has called all believers to be disciple-makers!

Once firmly established, a discipleship relationship never really ends. It will, however, reach a point where you agree to meet less frequently to allow time in their schedule to disciple someone else.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Of the 4 parts of a discipleship meeting (update, learn, pray, apply), which one do you think will present the greatest challenge for you?

2. Why is it important that we have an ending in mind when you start meeting?



SESSION FIVE: HELPING THROUGH QUESTIONS, STRUGGLE AND HARDSHIP

SESSION TOPICS

- How to help when they're going through crisis
- Those questions you don't know the answer to
- When to refer to a professional counselor



One of the most common concerns people have about discipling someone is the feeling of inadequacy to help someone who's struggling. Make no mistake, there will be times when the person you meet with brings up a hardship or crisis. This session will share some best-practices and resources that can help you guide someone through their challenge, offering support, encouragement and prayer along the way.

How to help through hardship

When someone shares an issue that is causing disruption in their lives, they're most likely not expecting you to rescue them. What they need is a friend who is present, grounded and comforting.

- **Listen.** Limit your own opinions and advice. Let them grieve and talk through their feelings.
- **Reaffirm God's character.** Remind them of God's presence in their suffering, His love for them, His goodness to them in Christ, and His grace and mercy in their time of need.
- **Don't try to explain what you do not know.** Don't feel compelled to answer their 'why' questions. It's okay to say, "I don't know." Focus instead on the foundational truths you do know.
- **Pray with and for them.** Often when we're overwhelmed, we don't know how to pray or we lack the strength. Pray for comfort, wisdom and for the strength to persevere.
- **Think practically about how to serve them.** Ask them how you can help them. Anticipate tasks and responsibilities you might handle for them, but ask their permission first.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for outside help.** Seek wisdom from others with more knowledge on how best to help them. If needed, refer them to a pastor, counselor or support group.
- **Take the detour.** Be willing to set aside your current study to go through a resource that directly addresses their issue. (See recommendations at end of this session.)

Those questions you don't know the answer to

It's inevitable – at some point you will be asked to explain something that you don't have a ready answer for. Fear not! This actually presents a fantastic teachable moment for them, and can even help address the 'dependency on you' pothole that we talked about in Session 3.

Rather than make up an answer or share your uninformed opinion, the safest way to handle these moments is to say, "I'm glad that you're thinking about these matters and want to understand them better. That's a great question that I don't have a ready answer for. Let's both research that this week and see what we come back with. For now, let's move on, but we'll pick up there next week." Before your next meeting, spend time praying for God to clarify this for you.

Read some commentary or ask someone you trust for biblical wisdom. It's important that you come the next week having investigated the subject yourself, and it's equally as important that they have done the same.

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Resources for life struggles

When you need to take a detour from your discipleship material to explore a topical study that addresses a need or struggle, use prayerful discernment about which resources to use. Here are some trusted sources with a rich library of topics you might find helpful:

CBMC Advancement System

- Click the LIBRARY tab at the top of the screen and search for your topic
- Some are short, scripture-based exercises to help you explore what the Bible says on the topic
- Others are videos or segments from a study that speak to the subject

advance.cbmc.com

Our Daily Bread – Discovery Series

- Use the drop-down menu to find studies in various categories
- These topical studies can be used in personal, discipleship or small group study
- There are over 150 topics ranging from relationships, job loss, depression, parenting, finances, fear, anger, grief and more

discoveryseries.org

When to refer to a professional counselor

There might be times when the person you're meeting with needs counsel or expertise beyond what you can offer. It's time to refer when ...

1. you do not have the skills to counsel in this particular situation
2. you do not have the time to counsel properly
3. extra attention is given by you to the hurting person in a way that is increasingly at the expense of your own family
4. it begins to feel uncomfortable for either of you
5. you begin to over-identify with the hurting person's problem
6. you find it increasingly difficult to maintain confidentiality
7. you have no backup or support system to help with troubling situations
8. there are serious threats or risks to the health, safety or welfare of the hurting person, others, or yourself

If you refer someone to a pastor or counselor, ask the counselor what level of involvement you should have while they're counseling the person. It's important that your empathy and well-intentioned support doesn't contradict anything they're hearing from the counselor. They might prefer that you discontinue your regular meetings during that period.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

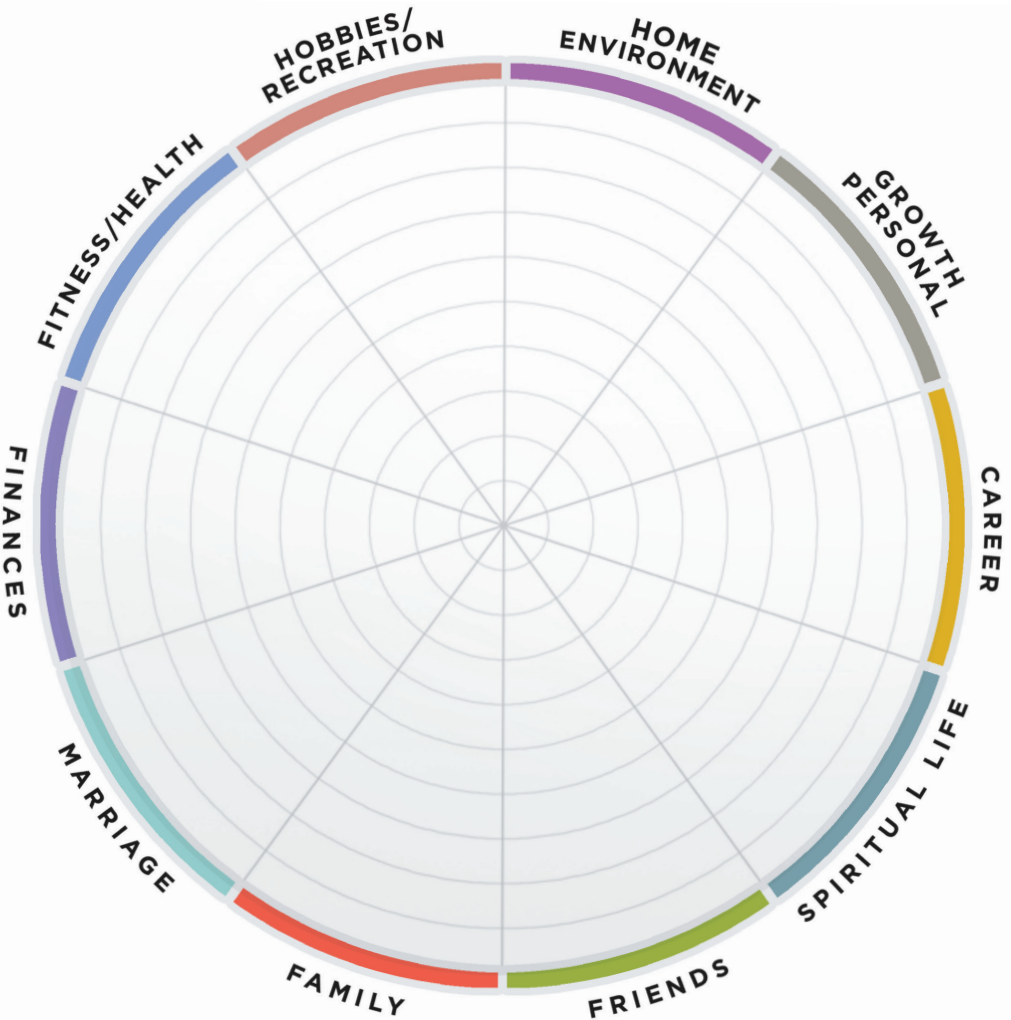
1. Why should we refrain from giving advice when people are struggling and going through a tough time? What could we do instead?

2. What promises of God do you hold tightly to when you are going through hardship?



APPENDIX A: WHEEL OF LIFE

This simple self-assessment can be used at any time throughout the discipleship relationship to help identify areas that need focused discussion, prayer and even goal setting.



APPENDIX B: WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY'RE HURTING

What do you say to someone who is in the middle of a crisis? It is just as important to know what not to say, because saying the wrong thing at the wrong time could sever the possibility for ministry and cause more pain.

What Not to Say:

- I know how you feel
- How are you doing? Are you okay?
- You'll feel better before you know it
- You'll get through it
- Don't cry. Be strong
- God must have needed them
- The Lord gives and the Lord takes away
- Don't let it rob your joy
- Anything that tells the person how to feel
- Any personal stories that compare this grief or loss to some other grief or loss

What to Say Instead:

- I'm sorry this has happened
- I cannot imagine how difficult this is for you
- I'm here for you
- How are you holding up?
- May I take a moment to pray for you?
- Is there some way I can help you?
- Assurances from scripture
- Open-ended questions (What was it like?)

APPENDIX C: SPIRITUAL MATURITY PROCESS

	DISINTERESTED	AWARE	INTERESTED	DECIDED	CONNECTED
DESCRIPTION	You have no awareness or acceptance of God's word	You accept that there is a God and it is not you	You become a willing learner of God's word	You accept Christ into your heart and believe on Him as Lord	You are involved with a community of believers for growth, fellowship and service
EVIDENCED BY	No willingness to know God or engage in open-minded discussion about Him	You are willing to hear His word	You intentionally talk about and/or study God's word, but still don't have a personal relationship with Christ	You believe, confess your sin, and profess Jesus as Lord of your life	You attend a church, CBMC team or other group to study the Bible

DISCIPLED	DISCIPLINED	DISCIPLING	MULTIPLYING	CO-LABORING
You are being disciplined in a one-on-one relationship with regularity and accountability	You have developed a regular pattern of daily quiet time, prayer, study and scripture memory	You are discipling other people in a one-on-one model with regularity and intentionality	The men you disciple are now also discipling others, even as you continue to work with them	You invest your time, resources and experience to engage more men in the cause of the gospel
You meet consistently with a spiritual mentor to learn and grow in your faith	You spend time each day reading the Bible and are committed to studying and memorizing scripture	You meet individually with others to coach, counsel, encourage and equip them to develop a lifestyle of worship, obedience, discipline and stewardship	You support and stay engaged with those you've disciplined who are now discipling other men, offering guidance and keeping them on mission	You lead teams, outreaches and other initiatives with the purpose of spreading the gospel and equipping others to carry out the Great Commission

He is the one we proclaim,
admonishing and teaching everyone
with all wisdom, so that we may
present everyone fully mature in
Christ.

— COLOSSIANS 1:28

APPENDIX D: SMART GOALS

S

When drafting your goal, try to answer the five “w” questions:

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why is this goal important?
- Who is involved?
- Where is it located?
- Which resources or limits are involved?

M

A measurable goal should address questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

A

An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How can I accomplish this goal?
- How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?

R

A relevant goal can answer “yes” to these questions:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts/needs?
- Am I the right person to reach this goal?
- Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

T

A time-bound goal will usually answer these questions:

- When?
- What can I do six months from now?
- What can I do six weeks from now?
- What can I do today?

**GOD CHOSE YOU.
JESUS COMMISSIONED YOU.
AND SOMEWHERE NEARBY,
THERE'S SOMEONE WHO NEEDS YOU.
SO WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE?
ARE YOU READY
FOR WHAT GOD WANTS TO DO
IN YOU AND THROUGH YOU?**

