



Discipleship Group Training

Session One

Key Question: *Are You a Disciple?*

JESUS IS OUR SAVIOR

John 3:16, Colossians 1:13, 1 John 4:7-12 (read these passages as a group)

We are going to talk a lot about disciple making in the next few weeks, but don't miss this: the ultimate focus of our lives is not making disciples, it's Jesus. Our relationship with him forms the foundation for disciple making.

• **Share your name, background, and when you surrendered your life to Jesus, crossing over from death to life.**

JESUS IS OUR LORD

Galatians 2:20, Romans 14:8, Acts 2:36 (read these passages as a group)

Jesus saved us from eternal separation from God, saved us from hell, and saved us from judgment. However, he didn't only save us FROM something, he also saved us FOR something. He saved us for a mission and purpose in the kingdom of God. We are called to be holy as we follow the ways of Christ and live in love toward others. Jesus isn't simply our Savior, he is also our Lord. He didn't just save us from hell. He saved us from sin. He is our leader.

• **Share a 60-second story of a transformative event or time in your walk with God when you were faced with obedience or disobedience and chose to follow Him.**

Being a disciple of Christ means surrendering to Jesus as Savior and obeying him as Lord. We must learn to trust and obey. But in order to follow him, we need to know how to hear his voice.

Key Practice: *How Do You Hear From God?*

TENT OF MEETING

Exodus 33:7-11 (read this passage as a group)

- **Walk through the SOAP process in the Journal (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer) and use the above passage as an example.**

Listening doesn't happen by default; it happens by design. You need to build a tent of meeting. The goal of hearing from God is intimacy with him and it's one of the most important skills to learn as a disciple. Quiet is the think tank of the soul and chronic noise may be the greatest impediment to our spiritual growth.

- **Where and when is your "tent of meeting"? When are you at your best? When will you commit to spending focused time with God each day this week?**

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

John 10:3-5 (read this passage as a group)

The Word of God. This is the primary way to hear from God. Get into God's Word so His Word gets into you. Someone once said, "A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't". However, we must read intentionally and finding a good reading plan is a great place to start.

- **Walk through the Reading Plan in the Journal.**

The Spirit of God. While we are reading the Word of God, we must listen to the Holy Spirit and how he "quickens" a word, phrase, or verse of Scripture.

- **How do you know the Spirit is speaking to you through God's Word?**

When you read the Word of God, take time to listen. Write. Pray. When you wake up at a strange hour for a strange reason, take it as a prompting to pray. When your conscience isn't clear, pause and listen. When you lack peace, pause and listen. When life circumstances happen, pause and listen. The Holy Spirit

will speak through pain, struggle, victory, and desires.

- **Walk through the five step process in the section *How To Use This Journal* in the Journal.**

The People of God. Give others permission to speak into your life and make sure it's someone you trust. And when they say something that convicts you, listen very carefully.

- **Why is it important to share in community how the Spirit of God is speaking? Do you have an example or story of how God spoke to you through another person?**

NEXT STEPS

- Determine a "Tent of Meeting" time and location and share with the group
- Read Matthew 1-7 and begin to use the SOAP process
- Read *Banding Together Introduction and Part One*

Discipleship Group Training

Session Two

Key Question: *Are You a Disciple Maker?*

REVIEW

Are you a disciple? How do you hear from God? How many days of reading did you get through this week?

- **What insights did you have from the reading of *Banding Together Intro* and *Part One*? What questions did you have?**

FISHING AND FISHERMEN

Matthew 4:18-20 (read the passage as a group and then use the SOAP method)

In Matthew 4 Jesus finds Peter and Andrew fishing and tells them to follow him because he is going to help them fish for people. He called them to be disciple makers. Deep down, most people want to make a difference in this world. Unfortunately, most Christians get distracted from their primary purpose and the call of Christ to make disciples.

- **Read the “Fishless Fishermen’s Fellowship” (pages 6 & 7) What is the point of the story? Why is it so easy to get caught up in everything BUT the main thing?**

Key Practice: *How to Select Disciples?*

Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 6:12-16 (read these passages as a group)

- **Have you ever been discipled? Who discipled you and how were you selected?**

The Great Commission is a command to “go and make disciples”. But where should we go? Who should we select as disciples? Here are a few thoughts to consider when it comes to selecting disciples.

1. Are they hungry for God.
2. Are they F.A.T. (Faithful/Available/Teachable)?
3. Are they emotionally healthy?
4. Are they committed?

Create your list of names and begin praying over each one. Then prioritize your list and invite your top 3-4 potential disciples together with the following question. *“I’m starting a discipleship group, and I want to invite you to join me. Would you have time this week to get together and talk about it? I can walk you through the process and answer any questions you might have.”*

MODELING THE GROUP PROCESS

Take the remaining time in this training session and model the interactive Bible reading portion of the D-Group agenda. (See inside cover of journal).

NEXT STEPS

- Make a list of possible disciples.
- Read Matthew 8-14 and begin to use the SOAP process
- Read *Banding Together Part Two*

FISHLESS FISHERMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

There was a group called The Fishermen's Fellowship. They were surrounded by streams and lakes swarming with hungry fish. They met regularly to discuss the call to fish, the abundance of fish, and the thrill of catching fish. They got all excited about fishing! The only problem was, they really weren't fishing. One member suggested that they needed a fishing philosophy, so they carefully defined and redefined fishing, and the purpose of fishing. They developed fishing strategies and tactics.

Then they realized that they had been going at it backwards. They had approached fishing from the point of view of the fisherman, and not from the point of view of the fish. How do fish view the world? How does the fisherman appear to the fish? What do fish eat, and when? These are all good things to know. So, they began research studies, and attended conferences on fishing. Some traveled to far away places to study different kinds of fish, with different habits. Some got PhD's in fishology.

They did assessment surveys to see if future fishermen had the competency to fish. They planted new Fishermen Fellowship communities and continued to launch additional campuses. They had droves of weekly small groups made up of fishermen. But still no one had yet gone fishing. So a committee was formed to send out fishermen. As prospective fishing places outnumbered fishermen, the committee needed to determine priorities. A priority list of fishing places was posted on bulletin boards in all the fellowship halls. But still, no one was fishing.

A survey was launched, to find out why. Most did not answer the survey, but from those that did, it was discovered that some felt called to study fish, others to furnish fishing equipment, and several to go around encouraging the fishermen. With meetings, conferences, and seminars to attend, they just simply didn't have time to fish.

Now, Jake was a newcomer to the Fishermen's Fellowship. After one stirring meeting of the Fellowship, he went fishing and caught a large fish. At the next meeting, he told his story, and he was honored for his big catch. He

was told that he had a special "gift of fishing." He was then scheduled to speak at all the Fellowship chapters and tell how he did it. With all the speaking invitations and his election to the board of directors for the Fishermen's Fellowship, Jake no longer had time to go fishing. But soon he began to feel restless and empty. He longed to feel the tug on the line once again. So, he cut the speaking, he resigned from the board, and he said to a friend, "Let's go fishing." They did, just the two of them, and they caught fish.

Discipleship Group Training

Session Three

Key Question: *How to Make Accountability Work?*

REVIEW

Are you following Jesus as Savior and Lord? Do you have a tent of meeting? How many days did you get through the reading this week? Who is God beginning to lead you to disciple?

- **What insights did you have from the reading of *Banding Together Part Two*? What questions did you have?**

FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

James 5:16, 1 John 1:5-9 (read the passage as a group and then use the SOAP method)

There are many people in this world that claim to have fellowship with Christ and yet walk in the darkness. But both can't exist at the same time. The prescription for walking in the light is confession. Confessing your sin to God paves the way for forgiveness and fellowship with others. However, as one person said, "alcoholics need more than forgiveness. They need healing". True healing is only found in community, through prayer and accountability.

Read the document "Waiting to Exhale" (page 11) How is unconfessed sin similar to holding your breath?

Discuss the Johari window (page 9) and give examples of each of the four quadrants (Ex: Open Self: Facebook, Blind Self: Food in teeth, Hidden Self: Singing in Shower, Unknown Self: Untapped Capacity)

- **Why is confession and accountability so vital to spiritual growth? What holds people back? Why are we often afraid to confess sin (hidden self) or point out areas of weakness or improvement in others (blind self)?**



Key Practice: *How to Make Accountability Work?*
Hebrews 10:23-25 (Read the passage as a group)



Discuss the following statements in reference to the above image.

- Meeting together regularly is the foundation of accountability. We must meet every week.
- Confession is the central pillar. Without confession there is no accountability.
- Prayer and encouragement are the walls. When someone confesses sin, be sure to acknowledge their sin (don't minimize it), encourage them, and thank them for sharing. Also, be sure to pray for their healing.
- The Gospel is the covering. In other words, this isn't purely about human effort, but partnering with the Spirit of God to bring transformation.

- **Read through the 10 accountability questions on the inside of the journals and familiarize yourself with each.**

These questions are simply designed as “prompts” to get you thinking about different areas of accountability. During your Discipleship Group, you can ask a general question, “How has the Holy Spirit been speaking to you or convicting you this week?” or you can select one or two of the questions to read.

MODELING THE GROUP PROCESS

Take the remaining time in this training session and model the interactive Bible reading portion of the D-Group agenda as well as the accountability questions (See inside cover of journal). Simply read each question so people are familiar with what is being asked.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to Make a List of Possible Disciples
- Read Matthew 15-21 and incorporate the 10 accountability questions in your time with God.
- Read *Banding Together Conclusion*

WAITING TO EXHALE

Quick! Take a breath and try to hold it. For most of us, the ability to hold our breath lasts 30 seconds, maybe even 1 or 2 minutes. Much longer than that and the sensation that your lungs are bursting becomes too painful to endure. Our inhalations bring oxygen into the lungs, which gets absorbed into the blood and carried throughout the body. The oxygen is used or made into the energy we need to break down food, maintain bodily functions and do all physical activity. What then remains becomes carbon dioxide or CO₂, a waste product. CO₂ is released when you exhale. However, when you hold your breath, the carbon dioxide accumulates inside you with nowhere to go triggering impulses from the brain. Soon, the signals your body gets from your brain will increase. When your CO₂ levels are too high, strong, painful, and involuntary contractions or spasms of the diaphragm and the muscles in between your ribs will occur.

In an April 2008 episode of the *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, magician David Blaine attempted to break the Guinness Book of World Records for breath-holding. After inhaling pure oxygen for more than 20 minutes, he submerged himself inside a bulbous tank, resembling a life-size snow globe filled with 1,800 gallons of water. He held his breath for seventeen minutes and 4 seconds and successfully broke the prior record by 32 seconds. “I thought I wasn’t going to make it”, he said right afterwards. “At minute 12, I felt the pain coming, and by minute 14 it was overwhelming. This was a whole other level of pain. I still feel as if somebody hit me in the stomach with the hardest punch they could.”

In our discipleship groups, we inhale the pure Word of God. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read that “all Scripture is God-breathed”. In the same way that God breathed life into Adam, He breathes life into us through His Word. However, as we go through life, we fall into sin. Breathing in the oxygen of the Word is not enough for spiritual life change. We need to exhale. We need to confess when we fall short. Without confession, our spiritual growth is stunted. Is it possible that in waiting to exhale, your spiritual growth has stalled?

Discipleship Group Training

Session Four

Key Question: *Why Do We Pray for the Lost?*

REVIEW

Are you following Jesus as Savior and Lord? Do you have a tent of meeting? How many days did you get through the reading this week? Who are you selecting to disciple? Do you understand the accountability process?

- **What insights did you have from the reading of *Banding Together Conclusion*? What questions do you have?**

Take a few minutes to discuss the Five Convictions, Five Steps, and Five Moves from *Banding Together* and review *Appendix D: Ten Frequently Asked Question*.

PRAYING FOR THE LOST

Luke 15:1-7 (read the passage as a group and then use the SOAP method)

There are those who might ask, “Why pray for the lost in a D-Group? I thought this process was for believers.” True. Our desire is to make disciples that love God and love one another. However, you can’t be like Jesus and not do what Jesus did. Jesus came to “seek and to save the lost”. He didn’t come for the healthy but the sick. We must cultivate a heart in our D-Groups that always looks outward.

Make a list of people and names that might not know Christ in each of the following areas...

- Immediate family
- Extended family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Children’s friends
- Co-workers
- Teachers/Coaches
- Merchants/Business Owners
- Church attenders
- Others

Take some time to share your lists with the group. Describe the people in your circles and notice your sphere of influence.

Key Practice: *Putting it All Together*

Walk through the journal one last time and make sure everyone is familiar with the Reading Plan, SOAP process, Table of Contents, and Prayer Section.

MODELING THE GROUP PROCESS

Take the remaining time in this training session and model the entire D-Group process (Bible Reading, Accountability, and Prayer for the Lost) from the inside cover of the journal.

NEXT STEPS

- Are there any final questions?
- When do you hope to select disciples and invite them to your group?
- E-mail your facilitator when you are ready to start your group!

