A photograph of a man and a young boy sitting outdoors, reading a book together. The man, on the right, is wearing a tan corduroy shirt and has a beard. The boy, on the left, is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. They are both looking down at an open book. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery. The entire image is framed by a thick orange border.

# COME AND SEE

A DISCIPLE-MAKING GUIDE



**bent tree**  
experience Life



# Preface

It was the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. The long-awaited Messiah of whom John had testified and the prophets foretold was now walking among them. The first disciples called by Jesus were fishermen. Jesus said to Peter, "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people" (Mark 1:17). The next day Jesus found Philip, and immediately Philip eagerly reached out to his friend Nathanael,

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

*"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.*

**"Come and see,"** said Philip. (*John 1:45-46 NIV, emphasis added*)

This is where discipleship begins. "Come and see Jesus!" Some, like Peter and Philip, follow immediately and enthusiastically. Others like Nathanael are skeptical, but willing to follow and learn more about this Jesus.

Who are the people within your *circle of influence* that you can invite to follow Jesus with you?

Disciple-making begins with simply calling others to follow Jesus along with us.

All of us are called by Jesus to make disciples, but not all of us have the confidence and experience to step into a discipling relationship. Some of us have been intentionally discipled; others have not. Either way, we often don't feel equipped or know how to get started or what to do next.

Maybe as a leader, your plate is already full and you don't feel you have the bandwidth to disciple others when you're already shepherding your group. Maybe you're serving in the body and feel called to begin a disciple-making relationship with someone. Maybe you've never discipled someone and you are thinking, "I'm the last person to disciple anybody. Who am I? What do I know? I sometimes feel like I am barely following Jesus myself. Why would anybody come with *me*?"

The good news is that God is already at work!

As disciples of Jesus, we are called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to participate in his transforming work in the lives of people all around us.

## **Disciple-making in the most basic sense is inviting people to trust and to follow Jesus along with you.**

When you step into a disciple-making relationship, your faith will be stretched in ways that it never has before. You'll get to see God work as he *transforms* the person that he has called you to disciple. This guide will help you to gain a renewed vision for how God wants to use you to make disciples right where God has already placed you — in your neighborhood, your workplace, sports community, within your current small group, or even your family — wherever Jesus has *already sent you* as his disciple.

### **The purpose of this guide is to:**

1. Inspire you to pray and look for people in your circle of influence whom you can invite to follow Jesus alongside you.
2. Equip you with the knowledge, tools, and resources for a lifestyle of disciple-making — helping people to trust and follow Jesus.  
It's the greatest cause on earth!

*Come and See* is intended to be a concise and practical guide to help you begin discipling others. As a supplement to this training guide, it is recommended that you read *The Disciple Maker's Handbook*. That book sets the tone and lays the foundation for being a disciple who discipled others. We've borrowed many of the main ideas for this guide from the *Disciple Maker's Handbook*. Also see chapter 4 for a list of additional suggested reading.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1: ESSENCE & EXPRESSION

*page 7*

## 2: THE EXPERIENCE

*page 17*

## 3: THE ESSENTIALS

*page 25*

## 4: RESOURCES & TOOLS

*page 33*

Appendix 1: Family Mission Statement

*page 43*

Appendix 2: Grace Arc

*page 45*

Appendix 3: Bible Verses on the Gospel

*page 47*

Appendix 4: Sharing Your Story

*page 51*



# 1: THE ESSENCE & EXPRESSION

*...go and make disciples of all nations...*

Shortly before Jesus ascended to heaven, he looked at his disciples and said, “...go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). Pretty tall order for a ragtag group of fishermen and a former tax-collector!

However, several days earlier, before his death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus taught his disciples about the source of their mission and ours:

“I am and the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love” (John 15:5, 8-9 NASB)

Jesus did not give us an assignment to perform under our own strength or by our own resources. Rather, he promised that his very Life would flow through us to others as we abide in the Vine. **This is the essence of discipleship: abiding in Christ’s love and loving others.** Through the Life of Christ in us, we are set free and empowered to be disciples who disciple others, to “love one another, even as I have loved you” (John 13:34 NASB)

Andrew Murray in his classic book, *Abide in Christ* wrote:

No less indispensable than the vine to the branch is the branch to the vine. Such is the wonderful condescension of the grace of Jesus that, just as His people are dependent on Him, He has made Himself dependent on them.

Almighty God is of course fully capable of displaying his glory and reaching the world any way that he chooses. However, he chooses to be dependent upon us, his church, to fulfill his purpose.

Murray goes on to say,

...this is the high honor to which He has called His redeemed ones, that as indispensable as He is to them in heaven, that from Him their fruit may be found, so indispensable also are they to Him on earth, that through them His fruit may be found. Believers, meditate on this until your soul bows to worship in the presence of the perfect union between Christ and the believer.

Think about the magnitude of this: God in his infinite wisdom chooses to use us — his church, his disciples — as an indispensable part of his plan to display his glory and grace to the world. Jesus placed his entire ministry and mission in the hands of twelve ordinary men. The growth of Christ’s church for generations has rested on this mission of making disciples, and we are each part of that! You are reading this guide right now because God’s people have been faithful to this calling, to make disciples of all nations.

### **The expression of discipleship is disciple-making!**

This is what it looks like:



Jesus has called you into a divine mystery giving you the privilege of abiding in Christ, bearing fruit, and making disciples. The natural outflow or *expression* of our own discipleship (abiding in Christ) is loving others as we make disciples.<sup>1</sup>

## **THE HEART AND MISSION OF A DISCIPLE-MAKER**

Let’s look at two passages of Scripture that speak to the heart of Jesus and his command to make disciples, and then we will land on a definition of a disciple.

### **The Heart**

In John 21, the disciples had been through several long and hard days. There was Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the expectation of a new kingdom, a trusted friend turned out to be a betrayer, they were nearly arrested, their leader Peter denied knowing Jesus, and then they watched all of their hopes and dreams beaten and hung on a cross. And now the tomb was empty. The resurrected Jesus had appeared to the disciples on more than one occasion, and then he disappeared again as suddenly as he had

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<sup>1</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of John 15 and abiding in Christ, see Pete Briscoe’s sermon from April 2018. <https://benttree.org/sermon/part-4-abide/>

appeared. There is no record of a direct post-resurrection interaction with Peter ...until now.

This is where we must engage our imagination. How were Peter and the other disciples feeling? What were they thinking? Were they tired, confused, still disillusioned even though they had seen Jesus with their own eyes?

It's nighttime. Imagine them sitting around a fire near the Sea of Galilee. They are uncertain of the future and too tired to talk. The night is silent except for the sound of waves gently lapping the shore. Finally Peter breaks the silence: "I'm going out to fish." So Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, and sons of Zebedee (James and John) launch their boat and go back to the only thing they know for certain — fishing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they answered.

He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?”

He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

There are two important observations from this passage:

First, **Jesus’ love and kindness toward Peter**. Imagine the range of emotion that Peter must have been feeling. Peter had failed greatly. Yet he was so excited to see that Lord that he jumped into the lake with his clothes on! But he had denied the Lord three times. What would he say to Jesus? What would Jesus say to Peter?

Yet Jesus in his wonderful mercy said, in essence, “I love you, I believe in you, I still I want to use you, and I have great plans for you.” This is a great message for us and for those we are inviting to follow Jesus! It doesn’t matter who you are, what you have done, or what you’ve been through, you are welcome at the table with Jesus. He has great plans for you and he wants to use you for his kingdom. Your fears, insecurities, or past failures do not disqualify you from being used by God as a disciple-maker.

Second, **Jesus’ tender love and deep concern for his sheep**. At the same time that Jesus was forgiving and restoring Peter, he was renewing and reaffirming his purpose to care for his sheep. The sheep are you and me and the people we rub shoulders with every day in our circle of influence.

We are here today because Peter and the other disciples were obedient to Jesus’ call to care for his sheep. It is in response to Jesus’ great mercy and love in us that we make disciples. We love Jesus by taking care of his sheep.

## **The Mission**

Mission statements drive everything. They are the “why” and the “how” behind a business or organization. One business that clearly displays its mission statement in each of their stores is Costco. The Costco mission is

to continually provide our members with quality goods and services at the lowest possible prices. In order to achieve our mission, we will conduct our business with the following five responsibilities in mind: 1) Obey the law, 2) Take care of our members, 3) Take care of our employees, 4) Respect our vendors, 5) Reward our shareholders.

It's no wonder that many people love shopping there! Since the mission is all about providing quality goods and services to its members and taking care of them, it's members certainly experience this every time they go to Costco.

Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission. It is the “why” and the “how” for the kingdom of God. It reveals his heart and explains his method. The best part is that the Great Commission is literally a co-mission — a mission that we're on with Jesus. He is the One who, by the power of his Spirit within us, will make disciples through us.

Here's how Jesus' co-mission is stated:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV)

Let's make some observations on this.

- **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”** Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus' authority was continually called into question by the religious leaders. Jesus demonstrated his authority by performing miracles of healing, raising the dead, casting out evil spirits, calming storms, and feeding thousands of hungry people with pieces of bread and a few fish. Now, the resurrected, victorious Jesus is boldly announcing that all authority in heaven and earth is his. There is no higher authority. Therefore...
- **“Go and make disciples...”** In the original language, “go” relates the idea of the present progressive — “as you are going” on the path of daily life. The going was assumed. Jesus had been sending out the disciples throughout his earthly ministry. But now Jesus was calling them (and now us) to something greater.
- **Disciple** was a normal word for the day that Jesus' followers knew. A disciple was a follower or learner. Early Jewish writings described a disciple's calling as following his rabbi so closely that he would “walk in his dust,” listening closely and drinking in his every word.

- **“...of all nations ...until the end of the age.”** Where and when — Jesus’ plan for reaching the world is still ongoing. It was not just for Israel, but also for the Gentile world, as we see in Acts 1:8, where Jesus tells the disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- As the disciples were going, there were two things Jesus commanded them to do:
  - **Baptize.** This signifies our new identity in Jesus. It is more than merely a salvation testimony; it is declaration to the world that we are now one with Jesus. (See also 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 2:20.)
  - **Teach.** “All that I commanded you” entailed the love of Jesus and the way of Jesus.
- **“I will be with you always...”** The co-mission was backed with a promise: Jesus promised that he, through the Holy Spirit, would indwell, lead, and empower them. The Apostle Paul later talked about the process like this: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

In summary, it is in response to Jesus’ great mercy and love in us and through us that we make disciples. Our motivation is love. The mission is reaching the world with the gospel. The method is making disciples of Christ.

When Jesus called his disciples, he said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19 NASB). Notice that Jesus said, “I will make you.” In those early of Jesus’ ministry, the disciples did not yet understand the indwelling and transforming work of the Holy Spirit. They were literally following this new rabbi who had captured their attention. Today, as believers in the resurrected Jesus, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and given a new identity and a new purpose. As we abide in Jesus, he transforms us, gives us his love for people, and uses us in his work of reaching the world with the gospel. It is his mission and his Life through us that changes the world.

**A disciple, then, is “someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.”<sup>2</sup>**

At Bent Tree, we base the journey of a disciple’s spiritual growth on Jesus’ New Covenant: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34).

Therefore, we summarize it in this way:

- **Christ in You: Loved.** Jesus is at work in you, and he wants to reveal to you through his Spirit just how beloved you are as a child of God.
- **Christ through You: Loving.** As an overflow of this understanding of your belovedness, you can yield to the ways Jesus wants to express his Life through you in loving others around you.

The essence of discipleship is abiding in Christ the Vine. The *expression* of our discipleship is loving others. There is no greater way to love our neighbor than to invite them to come and see our Jesus. He is love. He is forgiveness. He is hope. He is freedom. He is Life!

“O taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Psalm 34:8)



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Have you ever been discipled? Has someone walked alongside you intentionally and relationally in your spiritual journey? What did it look like?

Have you ever walked alongside someone else on their spiritual journey? What did it look like? What did you learn?

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<sup>2</sup> Based on “Disciple Maker’s Handbook,” p. 35.

What did you learn from this chapter that helps you on the journey of disciple-making?

What concerns do you have right now? Prayerfully, name them and express your trust in God's ability to solve them.





## 2: THE EXPERIENCE OF DISCIPLE-MAKING

*“A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.”*

Jesus didn't leave us with an instruction book for making disciples. He gave us more — he showed us how. Jesus chose twelve men to be with him throughout his earthly ministry. As we read the Gospels, we observe four elements that characterize his method: *intentional, relational, instructional and multiplying*.

Let's take a closer look at each of these.

### INTENTIONAL

Jesus began with an invitation to follow him. To Peter and Andrew he said, “Come follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people” (Matthew 4:19). Jesus called his disciples to a new and greater purpose. Disciple-making is more than just hanging out with people and having a good time. There is a purpose and a mission, and we should talk about that up front with our disciples as we are inviting them to follow Jesus with us. Together we will practice dependence on Jesus in our journey.

What are some of the intentional things we can do to begin a disciple-making journey with someone?

**Pray.** Jesus spent whole night in prayer prior to calling the Twelve. (Luke 6:12-16)

- Listen, be available, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Ask God, “Who?” — Jesus himself stated, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers” (Luke 10:2).
- Remember, God is already at work, preparing the hearts of people he wants you to disciple.

**Start where you are.** You are already sent. Where has God sovereignly and strategically planted you as his ambassador? (2 Corinthians 5:14-21)

- *Your Circle of Influence*: Think about proximity, affinity, and those whom you are naturally around or drawn toward. That is your circle of influence. We want to expand our idea of disciple-making outside the walls of the church to include family members, neighbors, co-workers, etc. The person could be a non-believer, a new believer, immature, stalled out, struggling, etc.
- *Faithful, Available, Teachable*: Look for people who display these qualities. For a new or non-believer<sup>3</sup> the order may change: *teachable, available, faithful* (this last attribute will come in time). These relationships could be one-on-one or a group of three or four.

**Start where *they* are.** If you are going to disciple a believer or a non-believer, use the 3 Ds:

- *Develop relationship/friendship*. Truly care for them. Love and serve them unconditionally, authentically, no strings attached. Notice the love and affection in Paul’s writing to the church at Thessalonica, “Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).
- *Discover their story*. The best way to show someone that you love them is to listen to them. We must learn to ask good questions. Here are some examples:
  - “Tell me your story.”
  - “What was growing up like?”
  - “Tell me about your spiritual journey.”
  - “That must be really difficult. How are you dealing with that?”
  - “What has been your experience with church?”

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<sup>3</sup>The “Disciple Making Handbook” makes an important point: “Sometimes people refer to discipling non-Christians as evangelism. We won’t take issue with that, but we find it easier and more biblical to think of disciple-making as something we do for both non-Christians and Christians. Discipleship isn’t just how we learn to be a Christian — and then it’s over. It begins before our conversion and continues for the rest of our life!” (DMH, p. 38) If you’re discipling a non-believer, just remember that it’s all about building the relationship, loving and caring for them right where they are, and helping them discover and begin to follow Jesus. At some point down the road, you will want to have a Gospel discussion with them so that you can clearly present the good news of salvation.

- *Discern next steps.* Where is this person in their spiritual journey? What does the Holy Spirit want you to do to love the person and help them take their next step of faith? In the next chapter, we'll talk specifically about some of the next steps.

## RELATIONAL

Jesus experienced life with his disciples. He appointed the Twelve “that they might be with him.” (Mark 3:14) They walked and lived together in community. His disciples were with him when he performed miracles and cast out demons. They celebrated together after returning from being sent out and more than likely laughed together. They shared meals together, prayed, and worshipped together. They experienced sorrow and loss together when Jesus’ dear friend Lazarus died. They saw Jesus weep. Through all of these instances, the disciples watched their master and mentor — the perfect Son of God — courageously and faithfully live in a fallen world.

At the same time, we can assume that Jesus certainly experienced the joy of friendship and watching his men grow in faith. In much the same way, there will be great joy and encouragement for both you and your disciple(s) as you experience life together. As Paul says in Romans 1:12, “you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”

## INSTRUCTIONAL: TEACHING AND MODELING

Jesus taught through parables and modeled a life of prayer, dependency, and humility. He spoke to the crowds on only a few occasions. Ninety percent of Jesus’ time in the Gospels is devoted to a smaller group of either twelve or three.<sup>4</sup>

- He taught and modeled dependency on the Father.
- He taught and modeled prayer.
- He involved the disciples in miracles — healings and feeding multitudes.
- He sent out in two’s to practice preaching and casting out demons.
- He taught and modeled humility and serving by washing their feet.
- He corrected and rebuked them (Peter); he spoke the truth in love.

Through it all, he was loving, full of grace, and embodied the heart of a shepherd.

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<sup>4</sup>Robby Gallaty, Replicate Ministries.

## MULTIPLYING

Remember Jesus' initial call to Peter was, "I will send you out to fish for people." The vision and the mission was stated up front: Multiplication is the natural expression of following Jesus. Robby Gallaty, of Replicate Ministries, states,

God has always been interested in reproduction. In fact His first command to Adam and Eve in the garden was not to be spiritual, productive, or upstanding citizens of earth. Rather, it was to 'be fruitful and multiply.'

During Jesus' earthly ministry, he taught and modeled this:

- He imparted vision, saying, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matt 9:37).
- He sent them out in pairs to proclaim the Kingdom and to heal the sick.
- He gave them specific instructions.
- Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy: "And the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

## SHEPHERDING, MENTORING, AND DISCIPLE-MAKING

We've learned that Jesus with his disciples was intentional, relational, instructional, and multiplying. Now that we have discovered how Jesus interacted with his disciples, it is important to make some distinctions. Often there is confusion about the difference between shepherding, mentoring, and disciple-making.

Let's take a look at the differences:

- *Shepherding*. Overseeing, gathering, protecting, encouraging, praying for, providing for, pointing flock to Jesus and his truth (i.e., small groups, life groups, church body, etc.)
- *Mentoring/Apprenticing*. Training or advising in an area of expertise or ministry (i.e., work skills, marriage, service roles within the body, etc.)
- *Disciple-making*. Walking alongside someone — knowing, intentionally thinking about, praying for them, and helping them take their next step in their spiritual journey. It could be one-on-one or a group, but men with men, women with women.

Here is a disciple-making story that took place in a local Carrollton high-school:

As a teacher at a local public high school, Daniel wanted to do more than impart academic knowledge. He had personally benefited from discipleship relationships and had served overseas mission on long-term mission trips. He wondered if this growing desire and call to something more was a call to full-time vocational ministry.

One day, Daniel was challenged and encouraged by his pastor to consider what role God might have him play within his current context or sphere of influence as a high school teacher. As Daniel began to pray, God showed him an opportunity for eternal impact right in the place God had already placed him — his Algebra I class.

This particular high school serves a lower-income demographic. Within this demographic kids are often raised by a single parent with no father in the picture. Loneliness, insecurity, hopelessness, violence, and thoughts of suicide are commonplace.

Daniel prayerfully began to reach out to a group of boys in his Algebra I class. He discovered their stories, showed genuine interest in them, and earned their trust. As summer approached, Daniel invited a group of boys to Young Life Camp in Colorado. During a fun-filled and bonding week in the beautiful mountains, each boy either placed his faith in Christ for the first time or renewed his commitment to Jesus. It was a life-changing week.

As the next school year began, Daniel was granted permission to meet weekly with the boys during lunch in his classroom. While eating lunch together they discuss life's ups and downs, how to apply biblical truth, and a Christian worldview. Through Daniel's discipleship group, these boys continue to grow and mature in their faith. Daniel is there for the boys through calls, texts, and conversations before and after school in his classroom.

His goal is to build up the young men in their faith, so that they will be real men instead of merely "boys with mustaches." He is encouraging the young men to realize that the Light of Christ in them is the light of the school. Especially exciting is how each young man desires to invite others join the group or a someday start their own discipleship group.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to prayerfully consider where God has already sent you. Jot down your circle of influence.

What might disciple-making look like in your circle of influence? (Think through your family, neighborhood, workplace, kid sports community, the coffee shop, carpool line, neighborhood park, PTA, etc.)





# 3: THE ESSENTIALS OF DISCIPLE-MAKING

*“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)*

As disciple-makers we want to help our disciple(s) to know and understand foundational Biblical truths so that they will not only experience and live out the Life of Christ, but also be able to teach others.

Notice the multiple generations in Paul’s instructions to Timothy:

Paul → Timothy → Reliable people → Others

**Our work as disciple-makers is not done until our disciple(s) is making disciples.**

## ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

As we experience life together with our disciple(s), we want to help everyone one of them to be grounded in these truths:

### The Gospel

First and foremost, it is important that a disciple of Jesus is grounded in the gospel. Even for someone who has been a believer for a long time, it is important to revisit the gospel often. Always assume that your disciple(s) has more room to grow in understanding the gospel. We should remind ourselves and our disciple(s) of the gospel daily.

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you have received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

The following verses summarize the gospel and our response to it:

- Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- Romans 10:9, “If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
- Ephesians 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.”

See Appendix 3 for a resource called “Bible Verses on the Gospel,” which is a great exercise to walk through with your disciple as you are seeking to both continue to be more and more grounded in the gospel message.

### **Assurance of Salvation**

Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ can be confident that they have eternal life with God, a life that begins at the moment of conversion and continues forever. Assurance is the realization that one possesses eternal life.

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Doubts and sin will come. We must arm our disciples with truth to combat the lies, to rest assured of our permanent place in God’s family. No matter what, children always remain sons and daughters. They are permanently children of their parents, permanently loved. This is not because of something they earned; it is simply given because of their parents’ heart. How much more so with our heavenly Father? Once we are saved through his grace, he keeps us there permanently. In our personal faith journeys,

the doctrine that we are eternally secure in Christ and forever God's children teaches us how we can truly rest and live.

## **Holy Spirit**

Another important truth to help disciples understand is the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, equal with God the Father and God the Son; he indwells every believer from the moment of salvation and empowers the Christian for a life that is honoring to God.

Before Christ departed he promised the presence and power of the Holy Spirit would be with his disciples:

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father,” (John 15:26, NASB)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

God the Holy Spirit is a person who dwells in all who believe in Jesus, and is present to continually fill (control and guide) his own (John 16:7-11; John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 13; John 14:16-17; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). The Holy Spirit always speaks in accordance with God's Word. Our main objective every day is to trust and depend on him (lean on him) moment by moment.

For a thorough understanding what it means to hear, discern, and depend on the Holy Spirit, please explore the Inside Voice sermon series: [benttree.org/inside-voice](http://benttree.org/inside-voice)

## **Identity: the Indwelling Christ**

If you are in Christ, you have his Life in you! But so often, we fail to experience that Life in a day-by-day basis. Many times, we forget who he has remade us to be, and we need to be reminded of our identity in Christ. Or maybe, we've become trapped in legalism, believing the lie that following the right rules/habits/disciplines in the right way will somehow bring us closer to God. But Christ has paid for every sin, he has made us new, and has brought us into union with himself. His grace is sufficient for you today!

Jesus is working through us in life circumstances. The Great Disciple Maker is at work in us, and we must depend on him moment by moment.

The following verses illustrate the truth of the indwelling Christ:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (The Apostle Paul, Galatians 2:20)

I have made you known to them, and I will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. (Jesus, John 17:26)

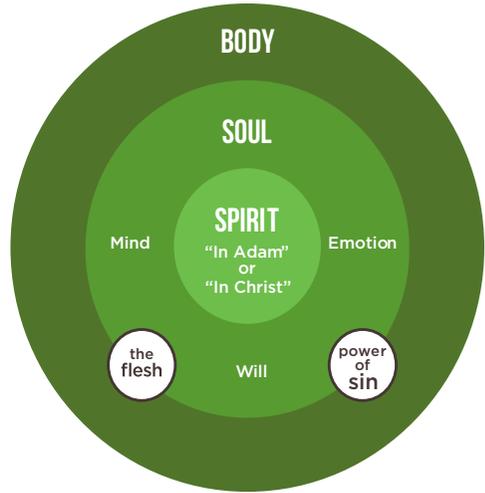
A simple way to understand the reality that Christ lives in each believer is this summary: We died with Christ, we are indwelt by Christ through the Holy Spirit, and we are depending on him by faith. (See also Pete Briscoe's sermon from Dance Lessons, part 11, 12, and 13: [benttree.org/dance-lessons](http://benttree.org/dance-lessons))

### **Justification and Sanctification**

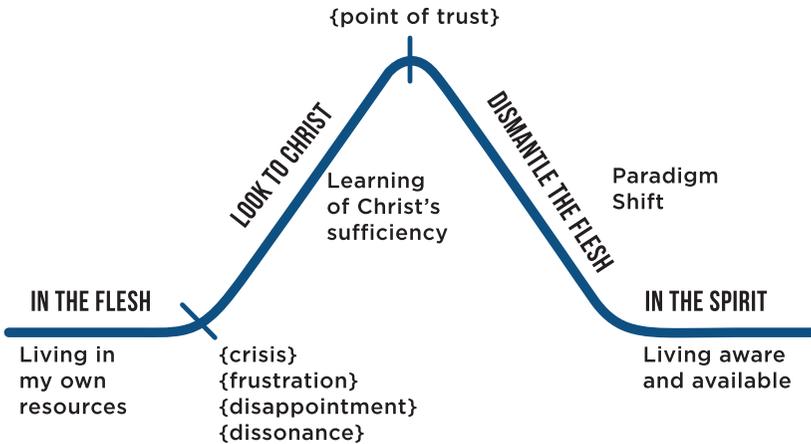
We must distinguish between justification and sanctification. It is important to know the difference, because often, especially in context of real life issues (marriage, sin struggles, addiction, or past wounds) we begin to think that we can add to our righteousness as we overcome or that we need to somehow earn God's favor. This is not true. Sanctification is not adding to our righteousness or earning God's favor; it is Christ expressing his righteousness through us as we abide in him.

While the world looks at externals and starts from the outside in, God made us to mature and grow (**sanctification**) from the inside out. When we were **justified**, we were made perfect in our spirits, in the core of who we are. That perfection is permanent. **Sanctification** comes through faith that is sourced in the work of Christ on our behalf. This process involves believing what is true of Christ and his work, and dispelling the lies we tend to believe. This is a work of the Holy Spirit. As we offer ourselves to God in our daily interactions and activities, he transforms us more and more into the image of his Son. His Life is then experienced in the soul (mind, will, and emotions) and expressed through the body.

John is the father of three small children. Every day, his children do things that push his patience. John struggles with anger and is often tempted to express it to his family in hurtful ways. As John learns to call out to God in prayer and lean on him amid the trying moments, more and more of Christ’s slowness to anger and abundance of love is expressed through him over time (sanctification). It’s not about getting closer to perfection; it’s about trusting Christ to express more and more of his perfection.



The Grace Arc illustrates what it looks like to live out of Christ’s sufficiency rather than depending on our own fleshly resources. This is a continual process throughout a disciple’s lifetime. (See more in Appendix 2.)



## PRAYER

Prayer is a never-ceasing intimate conversation with the One who loves us. Just as Jesus taught and modeled prayer for his disciples, we want to help our disciples develop a continual, intimate prayer life. Cultivating a daily prayer life will result in a deeper dependence on Christ and a life abounding in thanksgiving to him. As we grow in prayer, God uses it to develop a spirit of trust and expectation within us. We begin to see his unlimited power displayed in and around us.

See the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. Here are other verses that talk about prayer:

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

## SHARING THE GOSPEL

The heart of Jesus is that the gospel message be delivered to every person on the face of the earth. He died and rose for the sin of all mankind, and he has now passed on this wonderful news to us to share with others. If a disciple-maker's job is not finished until the disciple is making other disciples, it is imperative that our disciples know how to share the gospel.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died (...) And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (...) that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 19-20)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (Romans 1:16)

Knowing and living by the gospel every day will naturally lead to desiring to share the gospel with others. Can your disciple simply explain the good news of the gospel? (See the section "Three Foundational Principles: Sharing the Gospel" in Chapter 4 for resources on sharing the gospel, and Appendix 4: Sharing Your Story.)



## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Here are two questions to ask yourself continually while discipling someone:

1. How does God want to use you as he works in your disciple's life?
2. As you are praying and listening, ask what is the next step on the spiritual growth journey for your disciple?



# 4: EQUIPPING FOR DISCIPLE-MAKING

*“A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.”*

This last chapter is devoted to giving you practical tips for beginning a discipling relationship, and the tools and resources that are available to help your disciple take the next step in their spiritual journey. You can use these resources as you respond to the Holy Spirit’s leading, rather than trying to come up with materials on your own.

## BUILDING TRUST AND FRIENDSHIP

Though you may not know the person you’ll be discipling well, the good news is that Jesus does! He created them and knows everything about them, and since he lives in you through his Holy Spirit, he will guide you as you get to know and journey with your disciple. This is the abiding part of our journey with our disciple while relying on Jesus to guide us through the Spirit.

All great relationships are built on trust and friendship. Confidentiality is vital. Relationships take time, so establish a consistent, regular meeting time. Ideally, it should be weekly or every other week.

### Four key principles in developing relationships:

- **Care.** “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” (Anonymous) One of the main things people are looking for in a friend is to know you genuinely care about them, that you are interested in their life.
- **Listen.** The best way to show that you love someone is to listen to them. Listening is a strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward.” (Karl A. Menniger)
- **Encourage.** When we encourage someone we are giving them hope, support, and confidence. Affirm your disciple by telling them how much you appreciate a certain quality you see in them. Be the one that shares with them life-giving hope and support. “Pleasant words bring healing to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24).
- **Be transparent and authentic.** Transparent and authentic relationships are the most powerful; set the example early on. If you are going to ask them a question that might make them feel awkward, be the first to open up. Merriam Webster defines ‘authentic’ as “a quality of being genuine and worthy of belief.”

Hence, a person who is completely trustworthy is deemed to be authentic. Yet to be genuine requires a certain transparency, whereby others can witness the unfiltered personality, without any masking.

“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16a)

## **Getting to Know One Another**

Start by getting to know one another. Be light and fun, ask questions, listen closely, learn their story, and encourage them in who they are. Don't be in a rush. Friendships and trust take time. Here are some suggested “get to know you” questions. Be sure to share your own experiences with them as well. As Peter Drucker said, “The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.”

- Where were you born and raised?
- Tell me about your family... growing up, and now?
- What was life like growing up?
- What are some of your favorite childhood memories?
- What were you interested in growing up (sports, clubs, hobbies, etc.)?
- What are you interested in now?
- What was your exposure to faith growing up?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What has been your experience with church and the role various pastors have played in your life?
- Tell me about your faith and your relationship with God.
- What is your understanding of God's grace?
- Is there anything you want to tell me that will help me better know and understand your story, and be a better friend to you?
- What are you hoping to get out of our time spent together?

## Discerning Next Steps

As you are praying and getting to know your disciple, ask the Holy Spirit these questions:

- Where is he/she in their relationship with you, Lord?
- What are you doing in their life?
- Help me to join you in what you're doing and speak through me. Give me your wisdom and insight as to how to come alongside them on their journey with you. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)
- What are the first steps on their journey you want me to take?
- Are they reading your Word and spending time alone with you?
- How does he/she learn best? What is their learning style?
  - Visual (reading and visual illustrations)
  - Physical (learning by doing)
  - Audible (reading out loud and listening)
- What inspires and motivates them?
- What equipping tools do you want me to take them through?

## THREE FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICES

### 1. Spend Time Alone with God

Throughout Scripture, God is revealed as one who longs for relationship with his people. One of the greatest gifts you can give your disciple is helping them enjoy daily time in his presence through Bible reading and prayer. The realization that God is not far off, as they may have formerly thought, but now living within them (if they've received Christ as Savior), and that he wants them to depend on him, changes everything. Helping them realize that they are God's adopted children, his royal priests, his ambassadors, his saints, his brothers and sisters in Christ, and — maybe best of all — his friend. Wow!

Jesus taught and modeled for His disciples, as well as us, what dependency and intimacy with his heavenly Father looks like. Consider scheduling a time to have your “quiet time” together, or to read a devotional or book of the Bible together. Pray together through what God is teaching you and take steps of faith together. Celebrate answered prayer together.

“You will seek Me and find Me when you have searched for Me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13 NASB)

## **2. Encounter God through his Word**

A great way to help your disciple get into a habit of reading God’s Word is to read a book of the Bible together. The Gospel of John or the Psalms are two good places to start. You could also try reading one psalm a day, one chapter in Proverbs each day, or reading all of the Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Before reading, ask the Holy Spirit, “Show me what you want me to learn in your Word.” It’s a good idea to teach them the inductive Bible study method, such as this one: Observation, Interpretation, Application.

Some good questions for them to ask while they read are as follows:

- What is the meaning of this passage? (You’ll want to help them work through this question.)
- Pray, “What does this reveal to me about you, Lord?”
- Pray, “Is there anything in my life that you are prompting me to change in light of this passage?”

Encourage them to wrestle through and not skip over the challenging passages that deal with life application. Ask them to write down what impacted them and questions they might have for discussion the next time you’re together.

Another important discipline to consider is memorizing Scripture. As your disciple reads the Bible, encourage them to ask, “Was there a verse that jumped off the page and spoke loudly to me”?

- Write it on a 3”x 5” card.
- Begin reviewing the verse daily.
- Recite it out loud.

Encourage them to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to use this memorized Scripture to transform them.

Another good thing to do is to take them to passages in Scripture to help them understand the significance and power of the Bible:

- God’s Word is living and active and able to correct us when we are off in our attitudes and thoughts: Hebrews 4:12, 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
- God’s Word guides us day to day: Psalm 119:105.
- The Holy Spirit leads us to the truth: John 16:13.

The Bible encourages us to:

- Delight in God’s Word (Psalm 1:1-2).
- Meditate on God’s Word (Joshua 1:8, Hebrews 4:12, Mark 4:1-20).
- Grow in faith as we read and listen to God’s Word (Romans 10:17).

Other resources and ideas include:

- Navigators resource on having a daily quiet time: [navigators.org/resource/daily-quiet-time](http://navigators.org/resource/daily-quiet-time)
- The Hand Illustration (Navigators): [navigators.org/resource/the-word-hand](http://navigators.org/resource/the-word-hand)
- Topical Memory System (Navigators): [navigators.org/resource/topical-memory-system](http://navigators.org/resource/topical-memory-system)
- “Abiding in Christ: A Guided Manuscript Bible Study,” by John Reece ([wayquest.com/aic-bible-study](http://wayquest.com/aic-bible-study) and use the coupon code salt0219)
- Pete’s sermon series on reading the Bible: [benttree.org/its-not-greek-to-me](http://benttree.org/its-not-greek-to-me)

### **3. Share the Gospel**

There is sometimes confusion and misunderstanding in the broader church today regarding Christ’s good news of salvation and who is to deliver this good news. People often say, “I don’t have the gift of evangelism” as an excuse not to share the gospel with those who don’t yet know Christ. However, Scripture is clear that all believers are called and empowered to share the good news. Our faith grows as we take steps of courage to share the good news. It is exciting to think of how our lives change as we do.

Here are some practical suggestions for sharing the gospel:

- The 3Ds. The most effective way to share the gospel is through relationships.
  - Develop the relationship.
  - Discover their story.
  - Discern the Holy Spirit's leading for next steps.
- Romans 6:23 method ([benttree.org/gospel](http://benttree.org/gospel)). Listen to it together and discuss how to apply this message.
- Two-minute testimony (sharing your story): One of the most powerful methods of sharing the gospel is sharing your own personal story. Jesus changed our history, and now it is 'his-story.' Embrace your story. The following prompts will help you prepare your story (see full worksheet in Appendix 4).
  - Read Acts 26:4-23
    - "Life before I received Christ" (Acts 26:4-11).
    - "How I came to know Christ" (Acts 26:12-18).
    - "Life after I received Christ" (Acts 26:19-23).
- Time to Revive ([timetorevive.com](http://timetorevive.com)): Evangelism ministry using color-coded Bible and bracelet, allowing anyone to walk through the gospel by reading key Scriptures; great opportunity to take your disciple with you to go into the community and share the gospel.

## DISCIPLE-MAKING RESOURCE GUIDE

Here are some helpful resources and tools available to you at Bent Tree.

### **The Journey: "Let's Talk, Let's Walk"**

This is the basic framework for the disciple's journey at Bent Tree. People come to us from all walks of life, and from all kinds of personal situations. Sometimes they're hurting and need help. Sometimes they're ready to jump into serving. The "Let's Talk, Let's Walk" approach starts with a conversation that seeks to discover where a person is spiritually ("Let's Talk"), then explores the possible next steps ("Let's Walk").

## **LifeSigns and Lifesigns for Leaders**

Lifesigns is a good starting place for you and your disciple. It's like a spiritual check-up. The purpose is to engage you in a conversation with the Lord and then determine what is next in your relationship. God knows everything about you and your disciple(s). LifeSigns is a great tool to help understand areas where God is already at work, as well as areas for growth.

### **“Established in Christ” Study**

This study is for anyone who who has received Christ for salvation and has not had the opportunity to work through the basics of life in Christ with another believer.

### **“Christ in You: Alive & Free” Study**

This study helps believers understand their identity in Christ and how we live in light of this amazing reality. The more your disciple(s) understands their identity in Christ, the more they will grow in their relationship with the Lord as you journey with them.

## **Membership Process**

Membership at Bent Tree is for anyone who has professed faith in Christ. Through membership, you commit to participate in the life of the church. Encourage disciples to go through the membership process, discover their spiritual gifts, and find opportunities to get connected to Bent Tree and beyond.

### **“Counseling Through the Bible”**

This book by June Hunt serves as an accessible guide to Christian counseling, arranged by topic. “Providing Biblical hope and practical help for 50 everyday problems.” Topics include anger, critical spirit, depression, evil and suffering, fear, grief recovery, codependency, homosexuality, hope, manipulation, etc.

If you realize your disciple needs help beyond your ability, contact your Community Pastor or Michelle Harrell ([mharrell@benttree.org](mailto:mharrell@benttree.org)) for more information.

## **SHEPHERDING YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE**

What if you thought of your circle of influence — your family (see Appendix 1), workplace, neighborhood, sports community, small group, the local bar — as your “mini-church,” and you are the shepherd? It’s a mindset, but in fact, we are the church wherever we are! One of these contexts is not a substitution for the church at large, but rather an extension of the church and the life of Christ into your circle of influence. Expand your definition of church, and begin to see where you have been uniquely sent by God as your primary place to experience and express the life of Jesus.

As we abide in Jesus the Vine, he transforms us. His heart for the lost in the world becomes our heart. He sends us out into the harvest, and his call becomes our call. Jesus disciples others through us.

Finally, making disciples begins on our knees. Let’s ask the Lord to raise up disciples and disciple-makers. Ask the Lord to show you who. Ask the Lord to raise them up! Remember, we are in a battle. The victory was accomplished on the cross, but the battle for the hearts and minds of men and women rages on. The enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus came to give Life!





# APPENDIX 1: FAMILY MISSION STATEMENT

Disciple-making often begins in the home. By abiding in Christ and allowing him to love through us, we can begin by discipling those closest to us. Inspired by Jesus' Great Commission, one Bent Tree member developed a family mission statement. It goes something like this:

**Who are we?**

We are disciples of Jesus.

**What do we do?**

Receive Christ's love and offer it to others.

**How do we do it?**

We depend on Jesus to work in us and through us.

**Why do we do it?**

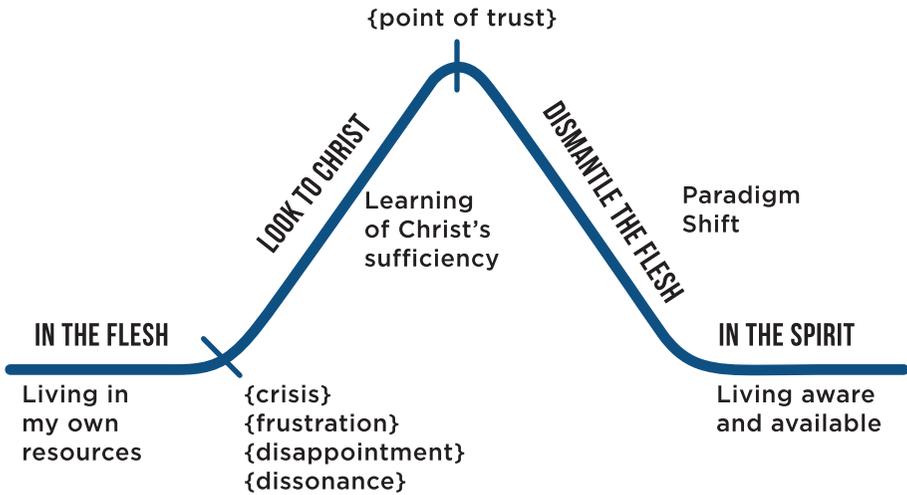
To make disciples of all nations, bringing glory to God.

The mission statement hangs in a frame near their dinner table and is a simple frame of reference about who the family is and why they do what they do. As the children in the family grow older, and as the parents disciple and discipline the children (notice the similarity between these words?), making disciples is the why behind loving others in action and in truth, and it constantly points back to their dependence on Jesus. Maybe this example of a family mission aligned with Jesus' Great Commission gets you thinking and dreaming about disciple-making in your home and in your sphere of influence.



# APPENDIX 2: THE GRACE ARC

The Grace Arc illustrates what it looks like to live out of Christ's sufficiency rather than depending on our own fleshly resources. This is a continual process throughout a disciple's lifetime.



Often, the entry point for this discussion is some form of **crisis**, disappointment, or disconnect with how your disciple is living. The pain point is an indicator that your disciple is attempting to work through an issue depending on their own resources — that is, they are operating “**in the flesh.**”

Encourage your disciple to **look to Christ**, and to understand the provision that he offers in that area of your disciple's life. Point them to verses in the Bible that speak to God's promises regarding the issue they are facing. This should lead them to a **decision point**: “Will I trust Jesus to be enough for me in this, or will I return to my own efforts and resources to try to resolve this?”

If your disciple chooses to trust in Christ's sufficiency in that area, they will likely begin to see a shift in how they perceive God, themselves, and others (**paradigm shift**). This will dismantle the flesh and the power of sin as they begin to rely on Christ. The result is that they are resting in the work of the Holy Spirit in them and through them — they are **aware** of Christ's sufficiency in that area, and they are **available** to his leading!



# APPENDIX 3: BIBLE VERSES ON THE GOSPEL

## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

- **John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
- **Romans 3:22-24:** “This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”
- **Romans 6:23:** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- **Ephesians 2:8-9:** “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”
- **Romans 5:8:** “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- **Romans 10:8-9:** “But what does it say? ‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,’ that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

## THE GOSPEL FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

“Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces



he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,

yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;

the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;

and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.”

(Isaiah 53:1-6)

## **THE MEANING OF “BORN AGAIN”**

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” (John 3:1-8)

## **THE MEANING OF “PREDESTINED”**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (. . .)

(Ephesians 1:3-11)



# APPENDIX 4: SHARING YOUR STORY

A powerful method of sharing the gospel is your own personal story. Jesus changed our history and now it is his story. For some, the changes in our lives may seem more dramatic than for others. Whatever the case may be, embrace your story.

The following worksheet will give you an opportunity to prepare a personal story that you can share with others.

Read **Acts 26:4-23**

Life before I received Christ—Acts 26:4-11

*Describe what you used to be like...*

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Conversion—Acts 26:12-18

*Describe how you came to know Christ (be specific) ...*

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Life after I received Christ—Acts 26:19-23

*Describe the changes he has made in your life and what he means to you now...*

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