

Thrive

to grow or develop vigorously; flourish

1. Secure

2. Trust

3. New

4. Empowered

5. Unveiled

6. Grow

7. Hear

8. Speak

9. Connect

10. Community

11. Share

Secure *safe, firmly in place, certain.*

What's an example of a secure relationship in your life? Unsecure?

Clarifying the Gospel

Read John 3:16

What two possible destinies are described in this verse?

Read Romans 6:23

What have we earned? How?

What does God desire to give us?

Read Romans 5:8

What did we do to earn God's love?

Revelation 3:20

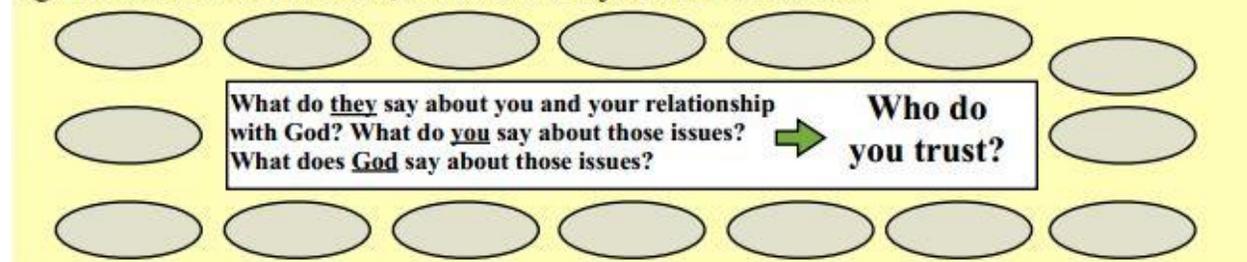
What is our part in salvation?

Have you turned from your sin, and put your trust in Christ to save you?

The Committee Truth Diagram

To see a video of this go to www.MasterPlanMinistries.net/diagram-video-tutorials

THE COMMITTEE TRUTH DIAGRAM: Several friends, family and other influential people are discussing what is most true about you and your relationship with God. After a significant amount of debate, Jesus Himself joins the discussion.



1. Which opinion would you believe to be most true about you? Why?
2. Do you with think God's opinion of you would be truer than all the others combined?

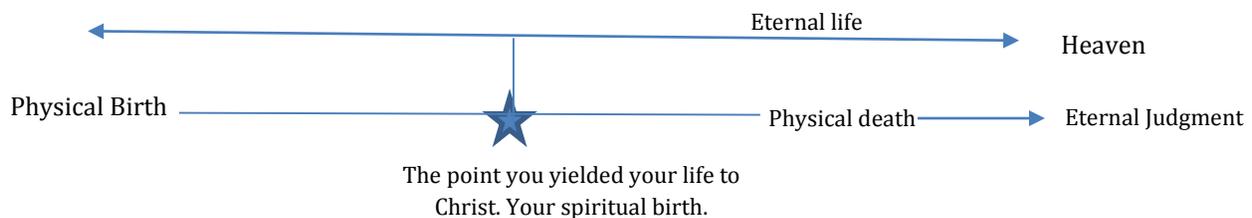
3. What if someone, or everyone, disagreed with what God said about you? Is God still right or is He now wrong? What if you disagree with God? Who is right?
4. In a relationship with God, why is it important to know what He believes about you?
5. If God says something is true about you, can you believe that as fact?
6. Can you think of anywhere you can find “clear-cut” facts about what God says about you?

Read **John 10:27-30** which talks about what God’s says is true about you.

1. Who do the sheep refer to?
2. What does Jesus give His sheep?
3. Who does no one include when Gods says no one can snatch you from His hands?
4. What is the definition of “eternal”?
5. How secure is this eternal life?

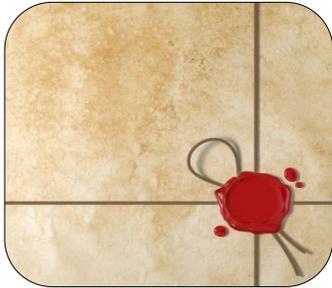
Eternal Life Diagram

To see a video of this go to www.MasterPlanMinistries.net/diagram-video-tutorials



Eternal life in heaven isn’t something you earn based on what you did during life, it is something that begins here on earth the second you put your trust in Christ, trusting His perfection instead of your own and receiving His forgiveness. This free gift of salvation continues into eternity in heaven. You have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

Which picture do you think best describes the intended meaning of **Ephesians 1:13-14**?
Why?
What does the seal guarantee?



Read and summarize **Romans 8:38-39**.

1. Can you think of anything that is not included in this list? Are you included in this list? (Are you a created thing?)
2. What about anything you might do in the future?

Read and summarize **1 John 5:11-13**.

1. What has God given you?
2. What is the requirement for eternal life?
3. Why do you think God wants you to know for sure that you have eternal life?
4. Where is eternal life found?
5. Why were these things written?
6. Why would God want us to know for sure that you have eternal life?

Next Step:

Begin reading the gospel of John since it is all about Jesus, the Author and Finisher and foundation of your faith. Write down any questions you have and bring them next week.

For further study: 1 John 4:18, Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 13:5, 2 Tim. 2:13

Trust

a person on whom or thing on which one relies

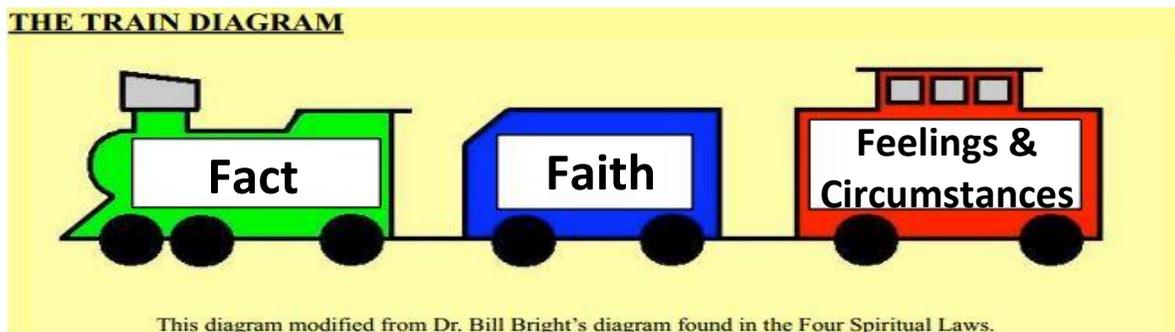
What are one or two things you've placed your faith in in the past?

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". But what do Christians put their faith in? As a child of God, it is important to know your faith is based on the Word of God, the Bible, and not on feelings and experiences that arise out of the circumstances of life. Sometimes feelings can be in conflict with sound reasoning, which actually hinders the growth of a Christian who may be basing his faith in feelings rather than the infallible truth of the Bible.

Also, there are many believers who are striving for an emotional experience to validate their faith, rather than building their faith on Christ. For example, immature Christians want to "feel" that God is in their life. Feelings come and go and can be activated by the flesh and circumstances. Usually valid feelings come from the result of our faith and obedience. It has been said, "Don't feel your way into action, act your way into feeling."

Faith is the ability to trust Christ with every detail of our life. Our trust develops over time as we get to know God better and better, and act on the faith we do have. The bottom line will always be, can I trust God with this decision, issue or circumstance? The ability to trust deeply regardless of how things look comes from the Bible and the Holy Spirit. As we trust God with the details, He transforms our minds and guides us into His perfect will.

THE TRAIN DIAGRAM



To see a video of this go to www.MasterPlanMinistries.net/diagram-video-tutorials

1. If you experience a really good circumstance, like winning a free car, how would you feel? How would that feeling affect your faith in Christ? Would it go up or down?
2. Conversely, if a bad situation occurred like losing your driver's license, how would you feel? How would that feeling affect your faith? Would your faith in Christ go down?
3. Why should feelings and circumstances be the caboose and not the engine?
4. Why is it important to put your faith in God's Word, the Bible?

Share a real life example of a time you either put your faith in your feelings and circumstances and a time you put your faith in the truth of God's Word.

The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, as Christians we do not depend on feelings or emotions but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9**

What role did faith play in your salvation?

Read **Hebrews 11:6**

1. What are we to put our faith in?
2. What are two things about God we must believe if we want to please God?

Read **Romans 10:17**

1. Where does faith come from?
2. If you wanted to grow in your faith what would you do?

James 1:22

Why must we apply what God's Word says?

2 Corinthians 5:7

Can you think of a life example where it would be beneficial to trust God and His Word even if it went against what your eyes and heart told you to do?

Galatians 2:20

1. Who is to be the object of our faith?
2. What did Jesus do for us?

Next Step:

Continue reading John and make note of things you see to be true about God. Continue to write down questions that come up and bring them up next week.

New *of a kind now existing or appearing for the first time*

Describe what would happen if you believed things were true about yourself that were in fact not true. Share a personal example.

When you let God forgive you, He gave you a new identity. The following verses highlight some of the things that are now true about you. Read each of the verses, summarize and discuss which verses you have the hardest time believing.

Isaiah 43:10

John 15:15-16

Romans 5:9-11

Romans 8:1, 28, 31-39

2 Corinthians 3:5, 5:17-20

1 Peter 2:9-10

1 John 3:1-2

Why do these things not always seem or feel true about us?

Read the following verses regarding sin and put them in your own words.

Mark 7:20-23

Romans 3:19-20, 14:23

James 4:17

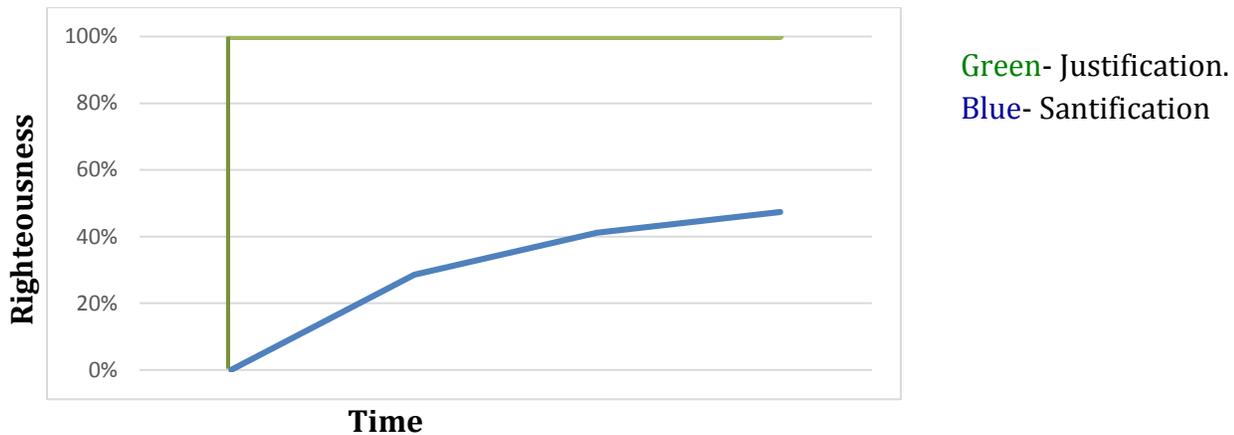
Exodus 20:3-17

Galatians 5:19-21

What does **Romans 7:19-8:4** say about why we still sin after Christ is in our lives? What is the climax of this section of Scripture? Why?

When we are standing in the place of failure of where God's holiness and perfection far outweigh our sufficiency, we need to look to Jesus, remembering His sufficiency is what bridges the gap making us right with God. Practically this means admitting we are not sufficient confessing Jesus is, and surrendering our life to Him and His work in our lives.

Justification vs. Sanctification Chart



Justification means just-as-if-I'd lived a perfectly righteous life. We stand perfect before the Father because Jesus' perfection is reflected onto us. Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Jesus in thought and behavior. The moment you yielded your life to God, He saw you as perfect, righteous and holy. He sees you now just as if you'd never sinned. But your actions are not always going to match that reality. Philippians 1:6 tells us that your lifetime will be a process of becoming more like Christ and becoming the man and woman of God that the Father declares you to be.

The difference between relationship and fellowship

Your relationship with God is your connection to Him. You're His child and all the identity truths you read earlier are true about you not because of anything you did, but because of what Jesus did. His perfection is reflected onto you. God is your Father and your relationship with Him is secure based on what He did at the cross. When you sin, you don't cease to be his child. Your relationship with God is dependent on Christ alone and therefore is constant regardless of your attitudes or actions.

Your fellowship with God is different than your relationship with God. Fellowship is your interaction, your communication and intimacy with God. This is dependent on what you do. When you sin, your interaction, your communication and intimacy with God are hindered. If you sin willfully or if God makes you aware of sin and you refuse to confess and change your attitude about it, then your fellowship or friendship with God is temporarily broken until you confess it.

In a friendship with a close friend, when you do something to hurt your friend, you want to say sorry and ask forgiveness to make your friendship right. When you confess your sin to God to restore your friendship, or fellowship, you're not asking to receive more forgiveness because all your sin, past, present and future was forgiven at the point you yielded your life to Christ. Rather you thank Him for the cross to make your fellowship with God right again.

If you do not confess your sin, then you do not in your conscious feel clean before God, and there is no longer the power and sometimes even the desire to live the Christian life. When I do confess my sin to God, regardless of how I feel, I am completely forgiven and clean.

1 John 1:9 is a promise from God regarding this.

Read **Psalm 103:12**

If you started walking east, at what point would you start going west?



What is this verse saying about your sin?

Even though you have sinned since accepting Christ and will no doubt sin again in the future, your relationship with God is secure and your fellowship with Him is restored as soon as you confess that sin to Him; He removes it infinitely far from you and fellowship with Him is restored completely. Over time you will begin to notice that God changes you from the inside out and little by little He is making you more and more like Jesus.

To see another video illustrating this principle go to www.MasterPlanMinistries.net/diagram-video-tutorials and watch the Garbage Dump Diagram.

What stands out most to you this week? Who in your life can you share it with?

Empowered *to give power or authority to, to enable*

Describe a time you thought you could do something but later found out you were not able. What is the danger of thinking you can do something you can't?

Living the Christian life is what God desires of us but we can't do it in and of ourselves by trying hard. What God expects of us is so impossible that only He can do it. And only by yielding to Him can He do it through us.

Read the following excerpt of a conversation between a student and his discipler.

"If Jesus were here physically and were your discipler this semester instead of me, do you think you would have a better shot at growing spiritually than you do now with me as your discipler and His Spirit living inside you?"

Casey smirked and asked, "What do you mean 'here physically'?"

"I mean here, physically. He could be right by your side as much as you wanted him to be."

"Well, then I'd take that," said Casey. "Why?"

"Because he would be straight with me, you know. He could see into my heart and just tell it like it is. There wouldn't be any question about what I'm supposed to do."

"So this seems like a no-brainer to you?" I asked.

"I guess," responded Casey, confident but suspicious. I turned to Michael, "What about you?"

"Well, I know the right answer is the Holy Spirit but since that is what I have had all along, and that hasn't worked out so well, I would honestly say Jesus just to try something new."

"If you would be better off having Jesus with you instead of in you, why didn't God establish life that way?" "I mean, the disciples wanted Jesus to stay and He told them at least twice that it was better for them if He left."

"Okay, Casey, you said you would like it because Jesus would shoot straight with you. He could look in your heart and tell you that you are full of crap. Then what would you do about it?"

"What do you mean?" Casey asked.

"Think about it this way. If LeBron James was your personal coach in basketball, could you play in the NBA?"

“No.”

“Why not? You would have one of the best players in the world teaching you.”

“But that doesn’t mean I could play like him.”

“What if somehow LeBron could live inside you and play through you? Then could you play in the NBA?”

Casey gets an epiphany, “I get it. If I didn’t have His Spirit in me, I couldn’t do what he tells me I need to do. It wouldn’t matter that Jesus was here telling me to do it.”

“Okay. We’re saying that God has given us everything we need to walk with Him,”

I said. “Everything you need to be courageous, kind, humble, unselfish, etc., is in you. So why isn’t our life characterized by those things?”

Michael spoke up, “To use your analogy, I think it’s because we don’t let God play through us.”

“So what keeps us from letting God play in our lives?”

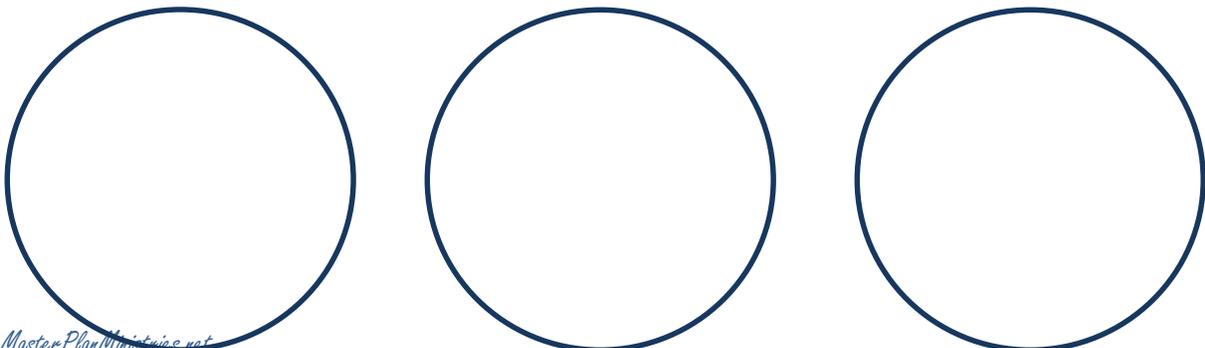
“For me, like even if LeBron lived in me, and even though I am not as good, I might not let him play because I want to be the one playing. It’s like I’d rather play badly than let someone else play for me.”

I asked them what they wanted out of today. I said, “Do you typically just think about getting through the day with as much happiness and as little pain as possible?” They gave a nod of concession. I asked, “Is it safe to say that if you didn’t want much of anything today that you also didn’t want God to play in your life?”

I explained that I thought a major dilemma in Christian life is that we often have general desires that do not find their way into our day-to-day life. Then I said, “It seems to me that letting God play in our lives has a lot to do with simply wanting him to.”

3 Circles Diagram

To see a video of this go to www.MasterPlanMinistries.net/diagram-video-tutorials



Read **1 Corinthians 2:12-3:3**

What are the three types of people described?

Read **Galatians 5:19-23**

What are characteristics of the self-centered life? Holy Spirit/Christ-centered life?

Faith (trust in God and His promises) is the only way a Christian can live by the Spirit.

We cannot experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us if we fail to depend on His Spirit. People who trust their own efforts and strength to live the Christian life will experience failure and frustration. By walking in the Spirit, we increasingly experience intimacy with God and enjoy all He has for us.

What does **Galatians 3:3** and **5:16-17** say about living the Christian's life in our own strength?

Spiritual breathing is a powerful word picture which can help you experience moment-by-moment dependence upon the Spirit. It is how you get to the circle with Christ on the throne.

Exhale: Confess your sin the moment you become aware of it - agree with God concerning it and thank Him for His forgiveness, according to 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1-25. Confession requires repentance - a change in attitude and action.

Inhale: Surrender control of your life to Christ, and rely upon the Holy Spirit to fill you with His presence and power by faith, according to His command (Ephesians 5:18) and promise (1 John 5:14-15).

Read **Galatians 3:3**

How did you move from the left circle to the center circle?

How do you move from the right circle back to the center circle?

How does someone move from the center circle to the right circle?

When can you move from the right circle to the center circle?

Read **Galatians 5:16-23**

How can you tell what circle you're in?

What if you don't feel like Christ is on the throne of your heart?

Getting Christ on the throne is a very simple concept, confess and surrender. You don't earn Christ on the throne by having a quiet time or doing other Christian things. It's simply a heart condition of saying no to our flesh and yielding to the Lord. It's much like a little kid asking his dad to tie his shoe, "I can't, will you". Confess and Surrender.

How to pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone. Sincere prayer is one way of expressing our faith. The following is a suggested prayer:

Dear Father, I need you. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as you commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this is the name of Jesus. I now thank you for filling me with the Holy Spirit and directing my life.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If so, you can pray right now and trust God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

How do each of these pictures convey the spirit-filled life?



How does yielding or surrender relate to the Spirit-filled life?

What would this yielding/surrender look like practically in your life?

How often do believers need to yield to the Holy Spirit? Why?

How can we develop a lifestyle of depending on the Spirit?

What would happen if doing throne checks became a part of your daily life?

What stood out most to you about this week? Who can you share it with this week?

Unveiled

revealed to public knowledge; made evident or manifest

What is your understanding of the Holy Spirit?

Which picture would you choose to describe Him and why?



Write down what these verses say about who the Holy Spirit is and what He does.

Matthew 3:16-17

John 7:37-39

John 14:16-17, 26

John 15:26

John 16:7-8, 13-14

Acts 1:8

Romans 8:15-16

1 Corinthians 6:19

1 Corinthians 12:13

Galatians 5:16-17, 22-23

Ephesians 1:13-14

Ephesians 5:18

All Christians desperately need to know who the Holy Spirit is and cooperate with what He is doing in and through their lives. The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. He is not an impersonal force, a mystical feeling or emotion, a dove, the symbol of God, a spooky ghost, a hijacking tyrant, an unbridled lunatic, your conscience or sensationalistic experience.

What truth about the Holy Spirit stood out to you?

What was something you learned about the Holy Spirit that you would like to see happen in your life?

Grow to increase gradually in size, amount, etc.; become greater or larger; expand.

Spiritual growth is positive and continued development in a person's relationship with God, becoming who He desires them to be. Just like any other relationship, development and progress involves two-way communication and time. Intentional, spiritual growth must be a high priority.

Spiritual growth has a goal.

Read **2 Peter 1:3-9**

Where does His divine power for your growth come from?

Verse 5 says "make every effort" to grow in your walk with God; what does that mean?

What does verse 8 say is the result of this growth?

Read the following verses and share what your spiritual growth is dependent on.

Philippians 1:6

John 14:26, 16:13

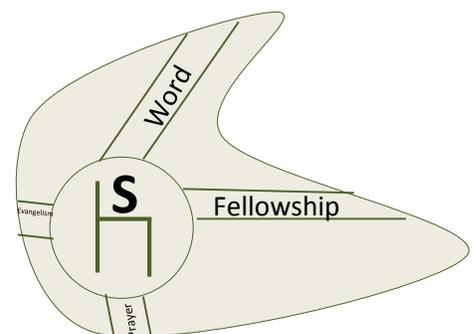
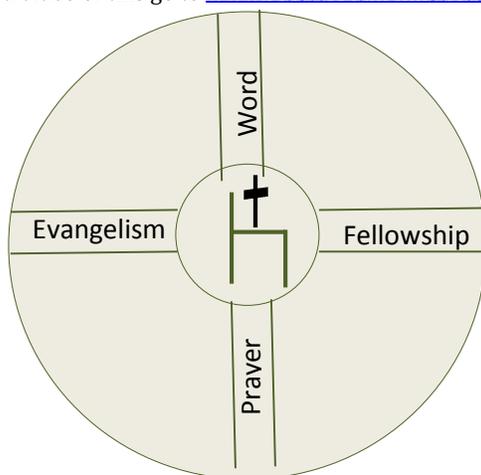
1 Peter 2:2

James 1:21-22

Hebrews 3:13

Growth Circle Diagram

To see a video of this go to www.MasterPlanMinistries.net/diagram-video-tutorials



When Christ is on the throne of our life, empowering us in these godly activities, we will grow in our relationship with God, in our relationships with others as well as grow emotionally. Just as a snowball rolls down a hill because its round, we will continue to grow as we are filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit and give our time and energy to these godly activities. However we can do the activities of spending time in God's Word, pray, share our faith and encourage other believers to love and serve God more, but if Christ is not on the throne of our heart, enabling us, the fruit will not be of the Spirit and therefore our growth will be distorted.

In the coming weeks, we will talk more about each individual spoke of the wheel but as a foundation, it's helpful to know growth happens as we take initiative in the power of the Holy Spirit to obey God and leave the results up to God. It's also helpful to recognize our vertical relationship (time spent with the Lord in prayer and His Word) determine our horizontal relationships with others (in fellowship and evangelism).

Read the following verses and discuss the results of the growth that takes place in our lives.

Psalm 84:11

Romans 5:3-5

1 Corinthians 10:31

2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 12:1-2

Galatians 5:22-23

1 Thessalonians 5:11

James 1:5

Growth in your walk with God will continue till the day you go home to be with Jesus. He is the One who is in charge of your growth (Phil 1:6) but it is vitally important that you intentionally submit to that process on a regular basis. Time in God's Word, prayer, sharing your faith and being committed to a community of believers will promote growth in your relationship with God and others.

What stood out to you from this week? Why do you think it stood out to you?

What is one way you can apply something from this week?

Hear *to listen to; give or pay attention to*

What picture best represents how you view the Bible?



Read the following verses and discuss what God says about the Bible and why it's significant.

Hebrews 4:12

2 Tim. 3:16-17

Everything a Christian believes should rest on the truth and authority of Scripture. The Bible is incredibly and uniquely different from any other book on earth and it alone is the inspired and infallible Word of God. The Christian's identity, confidence, conscience, and lifestyle are developed by the Bible. The Bible is the Christians' greatest resource to combat the temptations of the "flesh" and the world, and it is the foundation of our faith which shields us from the "fiery darts" of Satan. Any believer can speak with clarity, purpose, direction, hope and authority because of the written Word of God

The Holy Spirit enters the process of our learning by turning the Scriptures into the Living Word (Heb. 4:12). Through the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination, the believer can now understand and apply the truth of the Scriptures to his or her life, or current situation. He leads the believer in making decisions that only reflect God's will and plan for life. The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to transform our lives, to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to encourage, to comfort, to re-direct our thinking, to give us wisdom, to sensitize our conscience of right and wrong, and to draw us into godliness, righteousness, and a holy lifestyle. He builds our faith with the Scriptures (Rom.10:17)

The Holy Spirit's role is to guide, teach and illuminate our minds to understand, and then to empower the believer to apply by faith the Biblical truth to his or her life.

The Christian's role is to be faithful to read and study the Bible. *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."* 2 Tim 2:15

What do you know about the Bible?

What would you say if someone said it was full of errors?

1. It is **scientifically accurate** - The Bible makes accurate scientific claims about radioactivity, hydrology, astronomy, biology, physics and other areas of science. (Radioactive decay, in 2 Peter 3:10. Hydrologic cycles, in Ps.135:7, Ec.1:7 and Job 36:27-29. Atmospheric jet streams, in Ecc. 1:6. Clouds and condensation, in Job 26:8, 37:11. Earth's spherical shape, Is. 40:22. The expansion of the universe, in Job 26:7. Earth's foundation – hung on nothing, Job 26:7. That air has weight, Job 28:25. Hydrothermic vents, Gen. 7:11 and Job. 38:16.)
2. It is **historically accurate** - Real people, places and events corroborated by archeology (here are just a couple of examples). Hitites – critics condemned the Bible's description of this group; archeological digs have since proven their existence. Caesar Augustus' census at the time of Christ's birth (Luke 2:1).
3. It is **prophetically accurate** - There are hundreds of prophetic claims in the Bible which have been fulfilled with dramatic accuracy. Jesus alone fulfilled over 300 (odds of just $8 = 1 \text{ in } 10^{17}$). i.e. Jesus' crucifixion prophesied 1000 years before crucifixion was even invented (Ps. 22:16).
4. It is **textually authentic** - There are many thousands of copies of the Biblical manuscripts that no text is in question. A quick comparison with Homer's Iliad: NT has copies from as early as AD 125 (~25-70 years after written, within life-spans of Jesus' contemporaries). The Iliad's earliest copy is from 400 BC (500 yrs after written). NT has 24,000 early copies (~300 yrs) vs. Iliad's 643
5. It's **continuity** is staggering - 60 generations over 1600 years produced this book. 40 authors including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physicians, poets, statesmen, and scholars. There is perfect agreement with prophesy and fulfillment, historical facts and sequence. The Bible is printed in over 2200 languages, and is the best seller every year.

What do the following verses say some benefits of reading God's Word are? Which do you appreciate the most? Why?

Joshua 1:8

Psalms 119:9-11, 99, 105, 130

Matthew 4:1-11

What does God tell us about reading the Bible? Why is it significant?

Deuteronomy 17:19

Psalms 1:2-3

2 Timothy 2:15

James 1:22-25

What does the Bible claim about itself?

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

2 Peter 1:20-21

Getting into God's word

Read it.

How important is it to read God's word according to Jesus in Matthew 4:4?

Study and meditate on it.

What are the results of these in Psalm 1:2-3 and Psalm 119:130?

Memorize it.

What is a result of memorizing God's word according to Psalm 119:11?

Apply it.

What will happen to us if we understand but do not apply God's word in James 1:22?

The Point

Read Luke 6:46-49

What is the result of hearing God's word and acting on it?

What are some storms of life (current or future) that you want to be able to survive?

What scriptural truth can you and your discipler find that applies to that situation?

What will it take for you to act on it?

Keep going in this discipleship packet to learn more about getting regularly into God's word. You will learn how to do this the "Connect" lesson.

Speak

to communicate vocally; mention

What has been your experience with prayer?
Have you ever seen God answer a prayer?

What picture best represents your view of prayer?



Prayer is quite simply, communication with God. The point of prayer is not what you can get from God but developing close fellowship with Him. Cultivating a habit of constant prayer will develop your walk with God and enable you to see Him working in every area of your life. It has been said that, "Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees."

Read the following verses on prayer and jot down something beside it that will remind you what it says.

Jeremiah 33:3

Matthew 7:7-11

Mark 1:35

Luke 5:16

John 15:7

Philippians 4:6-7

Colossians 4:2-6

Hebrews 4:16

1 Peter 4:7

1 John 5:14-15

Which verse best relates to where you are right now in life.

What makes it difficult for you to pray?

Which verse inspires you to pray?

Which verse clarifies something for you about prayer?

Read **Philippians 4:6-7**

What is the command?

What is the promise?

Read **1 John 5:14-15**

How can we know that God hears our prayers?

How can we be sure He will answer?

Read 1 or 2 the following examples of prayer and talk about what stands out to you.

1 Kings 3:3-14

Psalms 51:1-12

John 17

Colossians 1:9-12

There should be intentional time set aside to pray during our quiet time each day. The Bible also encourages us to pray continually or literally throughout the day, anywhere at any time.

Tools that help us stay strong in prayer

- **Keep with it.** It isn't natural at first, but we to pray by praying, make it a habit.
- **Schedule time to pray every day** and continue that attitude of prayer throughout the day.
- **Keep a prayer list.** As God directs, write down prayer request and concerns. Put together a "10 Most" Wanted list of the people you would like to see become Christians.
- **Find a prayer partner.** Find someone you can pray with on a consistent basis.
- **Prayer Meetings.** These are great places for encouragement to pray with a number of other believers. You can learn a lot from listening and agreeing in prayer with others.
- **Journal your prayers.** If you find you are getting distracted while praying, it helps to write out your prayers.
- **Pray Scripture.** As you read, pray scripture for yourself and others in your life.

Share some things you'd like prayer for and spend some time praying together.

This week write down a list of the top 10 people who don't know Christ you'd like to pray for. Bring the list next week to pray for together.

Connect *to join, link, or fasten together; unite or bind*

Who in your life are you closest to? Why?

What element does quality time play in the strength of your relationships?

Developing your personal time with the Lord

The primary purpose for a “quiet time” (a.k.a. connect time, personal devotions) is to fellowship daily with our Father. This is one of the greatest priorities a Christian has. A Quiet time is a time alone with God each day to refocus our life according to biblical truth, and to apply His power to the concerns of our day. We need to see where we have failed, and allow the Holy Spirit with the Word to transform our lives into His perfect will. Our time with the Lord should regroup our forces after the battle of the previous day, and it should prepare us for the next day’s challenges. It is a time spent hearing from God in His word, confessing sin, thanking and praising Him, asking Him for our needs and desires, committing the day to Him, and consciously beginning our day being filled with the Spirit.

What was Jesus’ habit revealed in Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16?

What was King David’s example in Psalms 5:3?

What does God promise to do if we draw near to Him in James 4:8?

What did Jesus commend Mary for in Luke 10:38-42?

Suggestions for how to spend time with the Lord in His Word

Pick a book of the Bible and read a chapter a day. Before reading that chapter make sure Christ is on the throne.

Read: Make note of the things that stick out to you.

Paraphrase: Sum up the chapter in your own words.

Principles: Write down a couple principles that stick out to you. (Remember to let Scripture interpret Scripture.)

Process: Ask God why He brought these ideas to your mind and write down the things that come to mind. What does this verse show you about God’s character? What does this verse show you about mankind? Put yourself in this situation, what would you be thinking and feeling? What does this relate to in your personal day to day life? What is one way you can respond to what God has brought to your mind?

Personal Application: How does the above relate to your personal day to day life? How can you trust & depend on the Lord with it today?

Tips for having personal time with the Lord

a. Schedule it. If your quiet time is not scheduled it will very likely be cut short, interrupted or forgotten. When we get busy our quiet time often becomes the first thing to go. Make your time with God your highest priority.

b. Allow sufficient time. Quality quiet times require time. If you rush through your time with God it will become religious, boring and unfruitful.

c. Be alert. Do whatever it takes to be alert during your time with the Lord. Some possible ways of making sure you're alert:

- Get plenty of sleep the night before (go to bed early enough to make sure you'll have enough rest).
- Have your quiet time away from bed (not under your covers).
- Take a shower.
- Drink coffee or tea, have breakfast.
- Pray that God will help you focus.

d. Have someone keep you accountable. Set up a system. One idea is to find someone who can call you (or someone you can call) every morning to remind you.

e. Be alone. Spend your time with God alone, between you and Him only. Jesus did this (Matt.14:23). This includes not hanging out with C.S. Lewis or another Christian author.

f. Have a distraction free place. Have your quiet times in a distraction free place (not in the cafeteria or coffee shop), where you will be able to focus on God without interruption. Jesus did this also (Luke 5:16).

g. Ask questions. God says, *"Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great unsearchable things you do not know."* Jer. 33:3. Ask questions like, *"What does this show me about God?"*

h. Read it daily. It is better to set aside fifteen minutes every day to let the Bible affect you, than to try to manage an hour a day but to fail most of the time. Start with an amount that realistic every day and then continue to have that time get longer.

i. Read it systematically. If you read at random, you will tend to read only the parts you like and miss large portions that are unfamiliar or seem uninteresting. If you read at random you will get an unbalanced view of God. Instead, read straight through whole books. Alternate between the New and Old Testament.

j. Keep a journal. Writing down what God is teaching you will help you remember it and be able to share it with others. It will also be a place you can go back to and remember how He worked in your life and prayers He answered.

Right now take 15-30 minutes to have a “quiet time”.

Throne Check: Make sure Christ is on the throne of your heart and ask God to show you what He wants to.

Read Isaiah 40: make note of the things that jump out at you as you read.

Paraphrase the chapter and make note of the things that stick out to you.

Process: Ask God why He brought these principles to your mind and write down the things that come to mind. What does this verse show you about Gods character? What does this thought show you about mankind? Put yourself in this situation, what would you be thinking and feeling? What does this relate to in your personal day to day life? What is one way you can respond to what God has brought to your mind?

Personal Application: How does the above relate to your personal day to day life? How can you trust & depend on the Lord with it today?

Come up with a plan of how you can spend time with God in His Word like this every day.

Community

sharing of values, experiences, and space within a group of people.

How do you think God desires us to relate to other believers? Can you think of any Scripture that would answer this question?

Looking back at the truths talked about under **New**, how would believing these truths about other believers affect life and relationships overall? How would they specifically affect your relationships?

Fellowship is deep and meaningful mutual encouragement between Christians that can benefit every area of the believer's life. This fellowship is always a natural by-product when two or more believers who have put Christ first in their lives take the personal initiative to build each other up in Christ. Fellowship is vital to our growth because we can learn a lot from other believers as well as share how God has worked in our life.

There is a great sense of encouragement when we can share the reality of Christ through our victories and the mistakes we have made. Fellowship helps us understand our dependency on God and each other. We need close relationship where we are mutually accepted, developed, and encouraged in order to grow. We need to sense that we are truly in the family of God. Fellowship is a lot like a burning fire that gives off light and heat, but the logs in the fire must be close to each other or the fire may go out.

Read **Hebrews 3:13 & 10:24-25**. Discuss which picture best describes these verses and why.



Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** and discuss which picture best describes this verse and why.



Read **Acts 2:42-47**

What types of things did the early Christians do together in fellowship?

What could fellowship practically look like in your circle of believers?

Read **Galatians 6:1-2** and discuss which picture best describes the authors intended meaning of this verse and why.



The word restore in Greek means to set a broken bone or mend a net.

Discuss how these word pictures bring depth to the verse.

Read the following verses and write down the specific instruction of how to treat other believers.

John 13:34-35

Romans 12:16

Romans 15:7

Galatians 5:13

Ephesians 4:25, 32

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Hebrews 10:25

James 5:16

1 Peter 4:9

What are some reasons God wants us to treat other believers the ways described above? Which is the easiest for you? Hardest?

What relationship with a believer in your life would be different if you believed what God said was true about them? How can you help yourself believe what's true about them this week?

How can you encourage another believer in your life toward action this week?

When there is little or no genuine fellowship in your life, Christianity becomes more theoretical than real. You become a lone ranger believer who becomes ingrown, undeveloped, self-centered and lives a life of futility. True fellowship fades because of personal sin and when a believer allows sin to take over, he rebels and runs from God and other believers.

Christ centered fellowship which encourages obedience to Him is one of the most positive contributors to growth you will find. Without that strengthening community we are bound to live a life of failure after failure, never experiencing the help God intends from those around us.

Share *to distribute*

When you think of evangelism, which picture describes your initial reaction?



What caused you to see your need for Christ and give Him control?

Who shared with you that you were separated from God and needed God's forgiveness?

What would be true about you if no one shared the Gospel with you?

Can you think of any greater decision you could make than inviting Christ into your life?

What is the greatest thing you could ever do for another person?

"Successful evangelism is taking the initiative to share the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results up to God." Bill Bright, Founder of CRU

How does this quote change your thoughts about evangelism?

In John 20:21 Jesus says, *"As the Father sent me, I am sending you."* Every follower of Christ is called to partner with Him in reaching this world for Him. Communicating the Gospel, involves taking the initiative in the power of the Holy Spirit to reach out and share with another person how he can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is truly the greatest miracle of all to see a person come out of darkness into the light of Christ. We witness verbally with words and non-verbally by our lives. Both ways are necessary and complimentary, not mutually exclusive. Our talk needs to match our walk, and our walk needs to match our talk. Evangelism is one of the most exciting parts of the Christians life. Unfortunately only about 2% of American Christians share their faith-mostly because they are scared and have never been shown how. Evangelism is part of a lifestyle that involves prayer, sharing the message of the Gospel, asking for a response, follow through, and more prayer.

Read Romans 10:13-15

What is the dilemma of the non-believer?

Read 2 Peter 3:9

What is one of God's greatest wishes?

Why does God have this wish?

Read Ephesians 2:1-3

What miraculous work has God done in your life that you can now be a part of that miracle in another's life?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

What did God give all believers?

Describe the process of reconciliation (to restore or bring into agreement or harmony).

What is the function of an ambassador?

Read Matthew 28:18-20

Who has given us the authority to tell others?

What is the first step of discipleship?

Can you think of any greater ambition for your life? Why or why not?

Read Romans 10:9-15

What must someone do to be saved?

What does it take for them to hear the gospel?

Who has God chosen to bring the good news?

Read Colossians 4:2-6

How does prayer relate to outreach?

What qualities should come from our words as we share the Gospel?

Read 1 Peter 3:15

How can you "always be prepared" to share your faith?

What would you say if someone asked you how you became a Christian?

How could you be sure that you would be able to communicate effectively?

Read the following verses and discuss what they are saying about evangelism.

Psalms 96:1-2

Proverbs 11:30

Luke 15:10

Acts 20:24

1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 15:1-7

1 Thessalonians 2:4

Which one stands out most to you? Why?

In order to share the gospel, you have to break four Sound Barriers. (Developed by CRU)

1. Get into a simple conversation. What's your name, how are you etc..
2. Swing the conversation to spiritual things.
3. Share the Gospel.
4. Ask them to respond to the Gospel/ask for a decision.

What are some practical tools that could help you break each of these sound barriers?

As God works through believers in seeking to save the lost, there are three different types of relational avenues which give us opportunity to share the message of the Gospel. These avenues are determined by the nature of the relationship between the believer and the unbeliever.

Organic: Getting into conversations with others in the normal course of life.

Read the examples and discuss how they used the conversation to talk about spiritual things.

John 4:1-42

Communal: Inviting non-believers to be part of your believing community. Letting them see how believers interact and using this to get into a spiritual conversation with them. Acts 2:42-47

Missional: Intentionally taking the gospel to people you have not met yet.

Read the examples below and write down a few key words or a sentence reminding you what it says. Luke 9:1-6

Social: Using your social media influence to post or share the message of the gospel.

Through which of these avenues did you come to Christ?

Which one of these avenues is the most challenging for you personally? Why?

Are all four of these avenues necessary to saturate our culture? Why?

Practical steps to getting started

- Learn how to use your personal testimony as an evangelism tool. (Find a worksheet to help you do this at MasterPlanMinistries.net/build-discipleship)
- Learn how to use the Knowing God Personally Booklet as an evangelism tool.
- Go with someone. Taking a friend with you to share your faith will encourage you.
- Practice. No one will be good at sharing their faith right away. Keep on going. You will get much better at it and it will become a natural way of life over time.

Results of sharing your faith

- Great joy and excitement to be used by God to share the greatest message from the greatest person of all time and eternity!
- Confidence based in God's faithfulness is quickly produced.
- Fears are overcome (even after rejection) by reaching out to others consistently.
- You gain a full understanding of everything you have in Christ Jesus (Philemon 6)
- Seeing God work in another person's life expands your faith, especially if you've been praying for and sharing with this person.
- Generally witnessing will spark and motivate the Christian in all the other areas like prayer, reading the Bible, and fellowship. The Christian's general attitude seems to become more positive, and walking in the Spirit more real.
- As the Christian I involved in God's battle against Satan for the lives of others, he gets a much better understanding of his purpose for life.
- Fruitfulness and the abundant life become a way of life.

"Each time I am with someone for five minutes or more, I consider it a God-given opportunity to testify of God's mercy and grace in my life. You may be thinking: Bill Bright is the president of a worldwide organization dedicated to introducing people to Christ. Surely, proclaiming the gospel is easier for him than for me. I could never witness like that. I am naturally a shy and reserved person, so sharing my faith is sometimes difficult for me. I must continually rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to be a fruitful witness." Bill Bright

Take a few minutes to ask God to bring to your mind people to talk about the Gospel.

Set aside time with your older Christian friends who are more experienced in evangelism to go sharing together 2-3 times over the next 2-3 weeks.

To see some tools and how to use them go to

<http://www.masterplanministries.net/videos-using-ministry-tools.html>

Recommended reading:

Radical by David Platt

Fuel and the Flame by Steve Shadrach

www.CruPressGreen.com

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman

The Unexpected Adventure by Lee Strobel & Mark Mittelberg

Great Commission Leadership by Nate Herbst