

UNIT SIX: CHRISTLIKENESS & COMMISSION

KEY SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR UNIT SIX

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. - Philippians 3:14-15

CLASS 1: LIVING BY FAITH

1 Reading, 1 Scripture Reading, 1 Exercise

God's desire is for us to know and believe Him in each area of our own lives so that we are not following the ways of this world but trusting in Him like little children. As we set out to tell others to trust God, He says to us, "You first."

CLASS 2: CHRISTLIKENESS (BEING)

2 Exercises, 1 Worksheet

Jesus is our example of flesh and blood life lived by the power of God's Spirit and according to God's will. We are called to be like Him in character, wisdom, and approach.

CLASS 3: COMMISSION (DOING)

1 Reading, 1 Worksheet, 1 Exercises

Jesus commissioned all of His followers to make disciples and participate in the work of His Kingdom. Each one of us has been called as a witness and a minister of the Most High God.

CLASS 4: MATURITY (FULLNESS)

1 Reading, 1 Exercise, 1 Evaluation

Spiritual maturity looks like the life of Jesus and daily obedience to His teachings and commands. All believers are called to maturity and to helping others to become mature.

KEY QUESTIONS

GROUP EXERCISES

YOU FIRST: LIVING BY FAITH

Jesus said that the Law and the Prophets could be summarized in two commandments, which are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and might, and to love your neighbor as yourself. (See Matthew 22:37-39; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.) Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and the Law of God in perfect righteousness and obedience. Therefore, we no longer have to strive to measure up to God's standard in order to receive His love and be blessed by Him.

This said, Jesus gave a new command to us who follow Him, "Love one another as I have loved you." (See John 13:34, 15:12-17.) With this, He entirely changed the configuration and flow of love and blessing. Under the old system, adherents exhaust themselves attempting to love God with all their heart and then, as if there is anything left after using all of their heart, to love others as themselves. But, in the new way of Christ, we as believers receive love unconditionally, freely, and bountifully from God and then are full and able to freely give out what we have received from Him.

This is part of what I call God's **you first** policy. We cannot give out what we have not received for ourselves. God spoke from Heaven in an audible voice in order for His Son (and everyone else around) to unquestionably know of His love and approval. (See Matthew 3:17, 17:5; Mark 11:1; Luke 3:22, 9:35.) In the same way, because of what Jesus did for us, we can be assured of God's love for us before we have done anything to deserve it. (See Ephesians 2:8-9.) But, in order for us to love others as Jesus loves us, we have to let Him love us first.

In fact, Jesus tells His followers to abide in His love. (See John 15:1-9.) This means leaving the old behind being led by the Holy Spirit within us. It means *waiting* for God's guidance and *trusting* that He is working all things out for our good. (See Romans 8:1, 14, 28.) It means *being held and kept* in His presence so that we can receive the fullness of all that He has for us.

Abiding can be hard work because we have to resist the temptations and ways of this world and our flesh in order to remain in Christ. This said, it is the only work that God requires of us.

John 6:29 NLT: Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

For this reason, we need to do whatever is necessary to rearrange our lives and our priorities in order to abide. This may mean spending time in God's presence and keeping Him first in our lives even if this causes other priorities to receive less of our attention and energy. It may mean reading and meditating on His Word rather than watching television or reading other books. It means doing anything that helps us to know God's love and hear His voice, even at the expense of everything else in our lives.

As we abide, every hindrance is removed, wounds are healed, wrong thinking is replaced with truth, all fear is expelled, and we stop striving for acceptance from anyone other than the One who already accepts us and who is the only One that really matters. This makes us free to love and frees us up to obey God's voice and truly fulfill His purposes.

SIMPLE OBEDIENCE

Before we can tell other people to obey God, He says to us, **you first**. Sometimes, our approach to obedience can become overly passive in the name of "God's sovereignty" thinking that God has

predetermined His will and it is both totally inescapable and unaffected by the choices of man. Other times, we can think that doing God's will lies entirely on our ability to obey Him perfectly or the rest of eternity could be altered by our decisions. Another method is to make our own plans and then ask God to bless what we do.

None of these reflect the relationship of Father and child cooperating to bring about God's will on the earth. To put it plainly, God does have His will, and He gives us free will to cooperate with Him or not. God's will was Eden. Adam's free will messed it up. (See Genesis 3) Jesus, on the other hand, surrendered His free will in order to do only what the Father wanted. On a daily basis and even a moment-by-moment basis, Jesus said and did only what He heard and saw His Father doing by living in obedience to the Holy Spirit. (See John 4:34, 5:19, 6:38, 12:49.)

God doesn't really need our help. He wants our cooperation as His children as He fulfills His eternal plans in all the earth. Sometimes, it seems that He tells us everything because we are His friends and other times, it seems that we are on a need-to-know basis because if He told us everything our minds would explode. This said, when we trust that He loves us and is working for our good and the good of others, we are free to obey even when we don't know exactly what He is doing. In fact, we stop trusting in ourselves and our own ways and truly begin to know to the depths of our being that God is real and He is good to us. Through this, our mind, will, and emotions are changed to be like Jesus as we keep our attention on Him and press into deeper levels of knowing and doing God's will for our lives.

*Romans 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (See also James 3:15-17; Galatians 5:19-23)*

*Philippians 2:13: for it is **God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose**.*

*2 Corinthians 3:18: And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are **being transformed into his image** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Obedience is simple. All we have to do is listen to God and do what He says. We obey God by submitting to God's will and ways of doing things even at the expense of our desires, pride, plans, timing, reputation, and way of doing things. (See Hebrews 5:8, 12:3-11; James 1:4; Romans 5:3-5) God knows the end from the beginning and often uses supernatural or miraculous methods of executing His plans because His ways are a lot higher than ours and have a holy and eternal objective. (See Isaiah 55:8-11) For this reason, He often leads us in ways that make absolutely no earthly sense whatsoever in order to demonstrate His love, mercy, and power and so that His name is exalted.

When we do what God asks of us, nothing more and nothing less, we can obey and walk away because we are not responsible for the results...God is. When we have followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we can have a clear conscience and be confident that we have done what God asked of us, even if we do not see tangible change right away. We do not have to look for recognition, approval, or anything in return from those whom we serve.

When situations and people tempt us into old behavior patterns and we want to confront them in their sin and selfishness, desiring secretly in our hearts to crucify them, God says to us, **you first**. God never leads us in hypocrisy. Before we can rebuke anyone for their faults, we must consider our own flesh, selfish ambitions, and preferences to be as good as a dead sacrifice on the altar of God. This way, we will not be offended by the flesh of others so that we can truly love them.

SIMPLE LOVE

All of us want the love of other people but again, God says to us, **you first**. First we have to learn to love

others whether they love us back or not. God's kind of love is merciful. It is not unkind, rude, or jealous. It does not hold a grudge, keep track of how many times people say or do stupid things, or demand loyalty. He just loves.

As we set out to love, undoubtedly, unlovable people cross our paths and it seems that they have been placed there for the singular purpose of aggravating us and revealing to the world just how poorly skilled we are at being like Jesus. But, this is exactly the time for us to overlook their offenses and even to bless them. (See Matthew 5:39-48.) That aggravating person is dead in Christ's death (just like we are), and their sins have already been judged (just like ours have been). This means that we don't have a right to judge them because God already has. If they are a believer, then they are a new creation in Christ even though they may not be behaving like one. What they need is encouragement to know who they really are as a child of God. If they are not a believer, then they are still someone for whom Christ died, and what they need is to hear how much He loves them.

Love is simple, but it is not easy. It can be hard to know what love looks like sometimes. The right approach to loving one person could be a disservice to another depending on where they are in life and what God has purposed for them. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:14.) Sometimes love is allowing ourselves to be treated like a doormat while, at other times, love is rebuking a bully. Sometimes love rushes in to help, and other times love does not.

The only way for us to truly love the way that Jesus loves is to be led by the Holy Spirit the way that He was. As we do so, we discover that love is not catering to spoiled impulses and preferences, enabling or endorsing error, encouraging fleshly lusts or worldly desires, or serving needs towards false ambitions. Love is not turning people into our discipleship projects, conforming them to our image or the patterns of our culture, or creating false dependencies. Love is pointing people to the Father and extending mercy and grace to them as their imperfections are revealed. Love is helping others to stand firm in God's will, plan, and path for their life no matter how hard it gets and leaving them in God's hands when necessary so that their faith is firmly established in Him alone. (See Hebrews 3:13, 10:24; 1 Thessalonians 5:11.) Love is never giving up or losing hope that a person we love can be saved and set free from the pain and torments that afflict them so that they can be transformed into all that God has designed them to be.

In the world's kind of love, there is fear and hidden selfishness such as, "Will they love me back?", or "What if I get hurt by loving so much?" But God's kind of love can be selfless because our love does not depend on anything or anyone other than our relationship and our trust in God—our loving Heavenly Father.

SIMPLE TRUST

Each of us have to trust God for ourselves. This is another part of God's **you first** policy. We have no business telling anyone else to trust Him if we do not trust Him first for ourselves.

Sometimes trusting God is as unsophisticated as believing that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him even if we feel like we do not know what we are doing. (See Hebrews 11:6.) Other times, it means completely taking our hands off of a situation in order to get out of God's way and allow Him to work it out according to His will. (See John 6:29; Zechariah 4:6.) Then again, there are times that God asks us to wholeheartedly jump into doing something completely foreign to us so that we depend entirely on Him as we do it. (See 2 Corinthians 1:9.)

*Proverbs 3:5-6: **Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;**
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

Truth be told, when we start truly relying upon God in deeper levels of trust and obedience, it seems that He leads us straight into situations which appear to be the exact opposite of what He promised us. I call this "a walk with the Lord through the valley of the shadow of death." (See Psalm 23:4.) The path of true greatness and glory includes being willing to be nothing so that God can truly be everything in our lives.

He often leads us through obscurity, failure, humiliation, isolation, and various other trials so that we learn to rely upon Him and His faithfulness to bring about what He promised rather than relying on our own strength, abilities, intellect, or skills. When we have become like children and have learned not to trust in our own knowledge of good and evil, we can receive the Kingdom of God. (See Matthew 18:3.) When we have endured through God's **you first** policy of preparation, we will fear no evil because we have learned to trust God in all things.

CUT TO THE HEART

Before any of us can do much of anything for God, we must submit ourselves to His **you first** policy. In fact, God's desire has always been for people to worship Him in Spirit and in truth, not through religious observance and outward circumcision but because of circumcision of their hearts. (See John 4:24.)

*Deuteronomy 10:16: **Circumcise your hearts**, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. (Also Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4, 9:25-26.)*

*Philippians 3:3: For it is **we who are the circumcision**, we who **serve God by his Spirit**, who **boast in Christ Jesus**, and who put **no confidence in the flesh**. (Also Romans 2:28-29.)*

Since the day of Pentecost, people near and far have been "cut to the heart" when they hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Some, like the 3,000 people who repented after hearing Peter's Pentecost day speech, were cut to the heart and became believers. Others, like the religious people listening to Stephen's speech, were cut to the heart in anger and indignation.

*Acts 2:37: When the people heard this, they were **cut to the heart** and said to Peter and the other apostles, "**Brothers, what shall we do?**"*

*Acts 7:51, 54 KJV: "You stiff-necked people! **Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised**. You are just like your ancestors: **You always resist the Holy Spirit!**... When they heard these things, they were **cut to the heart**, and they gnashed on him with [their] teeth.*

As God calls us to His **you first** process, we will either be humbled and willing to do whatever it takes to repent, change, and serve Him or we will be incensed, and resistant in our own self-righteousness. When we are cut to the heart for Christ, it is because we have received revelation from God that Jesus is who He says He is. It is exhilarating and humiliating at the same time because it is like realizing with full assurance that something that we have been in denial about for a long time is actually true. It is recognizing that we have been wrong all along about Jesus and that we do not deserve the grace that He has never stopped extending to us.

The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of a man dressed in white linen who placed the mark of God on the people who were cut to the heart in grief over the horrendous lack of regard for God in Jerusalem. God's prophet Jeremiah was so deeply cut to the heart for God's people that he is commonly called the weeping prophet. Jesus had so much compassion because of His circumcised heart that some people thought He might be Jeremiah reincarnated. (See Matthew 16:14; Luke 9:8, 19:41; John 11:33-35.) Now, God cuts us to the heart by filling us with His love for people and dismay over their separation from God. This motivates us to serve Him and draw them into His Kingdom.

Have you been cut to the heart yet? If you want to do great things for God and His Kingdom then, God is calling you and saying, "**you first.**"

LIVING BY FAITH

Scripture Reading & Worksheet

Read each of the following passages and then use the chart below for study and reflection.

- Hebrews 11
- Luke 1:26-38
- Mark 9:23
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Matthew 21:21-22
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-12
- James 2:14-26
- Philippians 4:13

Insights this gives me about the life of faith:			
3 Highlights or Significant Points:		3 Questions I have about living by faith:	
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.		
How God is calling me deeper in trusting Him over my own understanding:			
Areas of my life God is asking me to trust Him with:			
Finances	Family	Marriage/Romance	Work/Career
Social/Friends/Fun	Health/Sickness	Location/Living Place	School/Education
Excitement and/or concern I feel about stepping out in faith:			
Practical steps of faith God is asking me to take in my life right now:			

FROM FAITH TO FAITH

Romans 1:16-17 ESV - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation [deliverance, healing, sustenance/provision, life] to everyone who believes; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

DESCRIPTION

Through our faith in Jesus, and what He did for us through His death and resurrection, we have been made righteous before God. Therefore, have free access into all the benefits of being in right standing with God. We receive all these benefits by faith. By definition, in the Romans verse above, the word used for salvation includes salvation, deliverance, healing, and sustenance/provision. Therefore, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God on our behalf for every problem we will ever face. It is God's desire for us to trust Him and live by faith in every area of our lives. We bring God glory when we allow Him to move on our behalf in ways that only He can. This said, similar to training muscle groups of our bodies, we may have exercised our faith in one area but remain weak in another. Plus, even when we feel that we are standing strong in faith, there are always new levels of trust that the Lord desires to take us to so that He can receive greater glory in our lives.

Therefore, to practice From Faith to Faith is about building our faith in God and what He did and desires to do for us by turning over new areas of our lives to a deeper commitment of trusting Him.

PRAYER

Father, I believe that I am righteous before you because of the work of Jesus. Increase my faith in more areas of my life so that I can bring you greater glory. Show me how to exercise my faith by trusting you more in all things. In Jesus' name, Amen.



PURPOSE:

To grow in faith and application of trusting God in our lives.

To increase in obedience and understanding of God's will and ways.

To identify and prune our lives of areas of faithlessness.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Faith and faithfulness.

Deeper experience of God's ways and work on our behalf.

Repentance from self-reliance over trust in God.

Purified motives and approach to life.

PRACTICE

1. Ask God to reveal to you an area where He desires for your faith to grow. (We'll call it your Focus Area.)
 - For example, living by faith in His salvation, deliverance, healing, sustenance/provision, sanctification, miracles, or any other situation in your life right now.
2. For ten (10) days, consciously, deliberately, and totally submit your Focus Area to God. (Ten represents total.)
 - Pray, "Father, I turn _____ over to you. I place my trust in you and your ways above my own thoughts, abilities, and resources. Guide me in the way you want me to go. In Jesus' name, Amen."
3. Ask the Lord to give you one or two Scriptures to believe in and build your faith upon for your Focus Area. (Note: Using only one or two will help you center your faith.)
 - Read these Scriptures out loud every morning when you wake up and every night before you go to bed. Read them throughout the day whenever you are able.
 - Spend at least ten (10) minutes per day in prayer about your Focus Area. In your times of prayer, alternate between quoting your Scriptures and praying in tongues. Also, try singing your Scriptures and singing in tongues.
4. Over the course of the ten days, allow the Lord to build your faith in Him for your Focus Area.
 - Renounce presumption that you understand God's ways.
 - Listen to any guidance He gives you. Do what He says.
 - Resist the wisdom of this world. Resist the lies of the devil.
5. After the ten days is completed, take note of the following:
 - What did God do in your situation?
 - How do you see things differently than you did before?
 - In what ways were you tempted to believe lies from the enemy or trust in your own strength?
 - How does knowing that you are righteous in Christ help you to trust God with situations in your life?

NOTES:



ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Hebrews 11:1, 6
 James 2:17-18
 Colossians 2:8
 1 Corinthians 1:24, 2:5
 Proverbs 3:5-6
 Genesis 15:6
 Habakkuk 2:4
 John 6:29
 Jude 1:20



CHRISTLIKENESS (BEING)

3 Exercises on the following pages.

DEVOTIONAL READING

Song of Songs 7:10-12 NIV - I belong to my beloved, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom—there I will give you my love.

DESCRIPTION

Devotional Reading is about building our relationship with God by encountering Him through His Word. While it is valuable to take times for pure Bible study and scrutinizing, Devotional Reading is for the purpose of experiencing God's love and loving Him back.

As an example, consider a wife who spends time learning about her husband's likes and dislikes so that she can do what is pleasing to him. Compare this to a wife who spends time with her husband, listening to him, hearing of his affection for her, and expressing her love for him. This is the difference between reading for study and reading out of devotion.

To practice Devotional Reading includes approaching the Scriptures with our heart rather than for intellectual understanding.

CONSIDERATIONS

In your life with the Lord, have you tended toward study of the Scripture or devotional reading? Why do you think that is?

How has God used the Scriptures to speak to you in the past? What did you do about it? How has this changed your way of doing things?

In what ways do you think approaching God's Word **only** for devotion could be beneficial? Harmful?

In what ways do you think approaching God's Word **only** for study could be beneficial? Harmful?

What do you think is the right balance between Bible Study and Devotional Reading? How does one maintain this balance?



PURPOSE:

To encounter God through His written Word.

To allow the Word of God to penetrate our heart and consequently, our lives.

To listen to God's voice.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Increased focus on God's voice.

Deeper love for God.

Greater experience of God's love for us.

Developing skill in hearing God's voice.

Softening of our hearts in Christ's likeness.

Alignment with God's will, perspective, and purpose.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for your love. Help me to understand your love for me and to express how my heart feels about you. Speak to me now through your Word so I can hear your voice speaking to my heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRACTICE

- Slow yourself down. Take a breath. Offer yourself to God.
 - Bring a notebook to write things down as desired.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you select one passage of Scripture to use for Devotional Reading. (Psalms tend to be particularly good for this.) Some good passages include:
 - Psalms 1, 5, 8, 23, 27, 37, etc; The Song of Songs
 - Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 8; Isaiah 54, Isaiah 60, etc.
 - John 8:3-11; John 15:1-17; Luke 1:28-55, etc.
 - Ephesians 3:16-20; 1 Corinthians 13; Romans 8, etc.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you read the passage one time all the way through – slowly.
 - In general, describe what this passage is about.
 - How is this relevant to your life right now?
 - How did this passage make you feel? For example, happy/sad, sympathetic/angry, loved/condemned, etc.
 - Tell the Lord how you feel. Listen for how He responds.
- Read the passage again - slowly. This time, as you proceed towards the end of the passage, prayerfully linger on anything that the Lord seems to be highlighting to you.
 - If you were to summarize one thing that God revealed to you from this passage, what would it be?
 - How does this reveal or demonstrate God's love for you? Or His mercy, compassion, faithfulness, goodness, etc.
- Use the revelation God has given you of His love to express your devotion to God.
 - You can use spoken words, writing/journaling, singing, or drawing/painting, etc. as you feel inspired.

NOTES:

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- Psalms 119: 36
- John 15:1-17
- 1 Corinthians 13
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 2 Peter 1:20-21
- Hebrews 4:12
- Psalms 119:97
- Deuteronomy 29:29
- Psalms 119:103
- Psalms 18:30
- Psalms 119:15-18



DIVINE NATURE

2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV – His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

DESCRIPTION

God has given us what we need in order for us to be like Him. Godliness is the reason He created mankind – to reflect His image and His likeness. But since Adam, no one except Jesus has been able to do this fully. When we believe Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells in us. This is the same Spirit of the Lord that came upon Mary, causing her to conceive and give birth to the Son of God. The same Spirit that dwelt inside of Jesus to guide Him in a perfect and sinless life now dwells inside of us. We have divine nature inside us.

From the moment the Holy Spirit enters our hearts, a conflict begins between this divine nature and our own corrupt and fleshly desires. As we allow ourselves to be led by divine nature instead of our flesh, we become more and more like Jesus. The Spirit of the Lord within us will give us strength to resist our own urges and replace them with righteous thoughts and actions. The more the Holy Spirit transforms us in this way, the more of God's image we reflect.

Practicing participation in Divine Nature is about becoming increasingly conscious of the Spirit of God dwelling within us and choosing to obey His leadings as superior to our own inclinations.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for placing your Holy Spirit inside of me to help me become like Jesus. Help me submit to your guidance from within and strengthen me with your power for godliness. In Jesus' name, Amen.



PURPOSE:

To become increasingly godly and reflect God's image.

To be led by the Holy Spirit in righteous and pure thoughts.

To be empowered by the Holy Spirit for right words and actions.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Holiness. Christlikeness. Godliness.

Increasing in the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

Growing evidence of our calling and election through the attributes listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7.

TALK WITH GOD

Jesus was perfect in all of His thoughts, words, and actions. How does this increase your respect and worship for Him? Tell Him about it.

How have you experienced the conflict between your own desires and what the Holy Spirit within you desires? In your life so far, who has been winning this conflict?

How does knowing that Jesus dwells inside you change your concept of approaching godliness? How does God want you to put this into practice in your life?

How is God inviting you to participate more deeply in His divine nature? What area of your thoughts, words, and actions does Jesus want you to reform right now?

Do you think it is possible for a person to be so renewed by the Holy Spirit that they do not sin? Why or why not? What is God's desire in this?

PRACTICE

1. Use the Talk with God points above to have a conversation with God about participating in Divine Nature. Listen to what He shares and put it into practice.

2. As you go through your day, find a way to regularly remind yourself that Jesus dwells inside of you. When you remember, take a moment to re-center your thoughts on Him. Allow Him to guide and strengthen you from within.

3. As you engage with others, remember that the Spirit of the Lord dwells inside of you. Turn yourself over to His guidance. How is Jesus engaging with this person? What is Jesus saying to them? It is not "what would Jesus do?" but "what is Jesus doing right now?" ... through you!

4. Journal to Jesus about the areas of your life or times of day when it seems to be more challenging to obey the Holy Spirit rather than your flesh. Seek the Lord for His insight and assistance with this.

NOTES:



ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Ephesians 4:23-24

2 Peter 2:20

1 John 3:9

1 John 5:18

Titus 3:5

Romans 7:14-20

Romans 8:1-15

Hebrews 1:3

Galatians 5:17-22

PROCESS WORKSHEET

SUFFICIENCY



INSTRUCTIONS

God is all sufficient and almighty. As His children, His desire is for us to depend on Him for all we need. In fact, Jesus said that unless we become like little children, we cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. This said, relying on an invisible God can often be more challenging for us than relying on ourselves or our own methods.

Use this worksheet as a guide for allowing God to shed light on your level of self-sufficiency vs. finding sufficiency in Him. Pray through and write down a summary of each of the following points.

1. How much do you rely on your own abilities in the following areas? Rate each area from 1 to 5. 1 = I do not rely on this – 5 = I rely on this heavily

- i** Ability to Work: Work-ethic, willingness to work hard, do whatever it takes... _____
- Ability to Provide: Capacity for making money, having enough, making things stretch/last... _____
- Social Skills: Use of your personality, looks, humor, or charisma to appeal to others... _____
- Personal Expertise: Areas of skill, capability, knowledge, know-how, experience/wisdom... _____
- Personal Strength: Bodily strength, emotional strength, spiritual strength, ability to “handle it”... _____
- Use of Technology: Use of technological tools to resolve issues independently... _____
- Use of Treatments: Use of methods, routines, practices, medicines, remedies that work for you... _____

2. In what ways is your sense of security reliant upon your ability to do things for yourself?

- i** Do you have anxiety or fears about not being able to take care of yourself?
Describe a time when you were not able, capable, or strong enough to take care of yourself or a situation in your life. What was that like for you? Did you enjoy it or find it challenging? How so?
What do you think are some potential dangers of self-reliance and/or self-sufficiency?

3. In what ways does your sense of security depend on other people? On experts or authorities?

- i** How much do you rely upon your spouse, parents, family, friends, or social groups for your needs?
 - Share a time when you felt secure because of other people.
 - Share a time when your reliance on other people proved to be problematic or disastrous.
 How much do you rely on of the guidance/approval of professionals, experts, authority figures, ministers, or people who know God better than you?
 - Share a time when you felt secure or safe because of the counsel of a professional or “expert.”
 - Share a time when an “expert,” authority figure, or person you revered led you in the wrong direction.
 What do you think are some potential dangers of trusting in other people, even experts?

4. In what ways are you at ease because of your beliefs, principles, and/or following the rules?

- i** How does knowing you are “being a good person” or “doing the right thing,” help you to feel secure?
Do you believe God blesses you more for being good? Punishes you for not doing the right thing?

- Share a time when you felt that God blessed you because you had been obedient.
- Share a time when you became angry/upset because God blessed someone you considered bad/wrong.

What do you think are some potential dangers of self-righteousness?

5. How did Jesus demonstrate for us the life of reliance upon God in all things?

i Jesus said, “By myself I can do nothing,” or “I say only what the Father tells me,” or “I do nothing on my own initiative.” (See John 5:19,30, 8:28, 12:49) What did He mean?

List at least three examples of how Jesus had to live by faith. In what ways did He rely on God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How do these examples of Jesus’ dependence on the Father reveal how God wants us to rely on Him as His sons and daughters?

6. What would it be like to trust God with every aspect of your life?

i What concerns, fears, or anxieties rise up in you at the thought of trusting God in all things?

How do you think your life would be different if you gave up control in order to do only what God said?

Is there a particular area of your life that Jesus is asking you to trust Him with right now? How so?

In what ways have you been striving to perform or earn something apart from the Lord?

7. How is Jesus asking you to trust and rely on His sufficiency in your life right now?

i How is God calling you to rest? Trust in His provision? How is He calling you to co-labor with Him rather than just laboring?

(See Isaiah 55; Matthew 7:11; Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 12:22-32; Romans 4:3-5; Mark 8:36.)

How is God asking you to do and speak only what He reveals by His Spirit rather than your own personality or approach to people?

(Consider 1 John 2:27; Luke 12:12; John 6:29 & 63; Romans 8:7-8 & 32.)

How is God asking you to trust His expertise and strength rather than “handling” things yourself, or trusting in experts, or trusting in principles/rules?

(See 1 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Luke 18:9-14; Galatians 3:2-3; Revelation 3:17)

How does God want you to turn to Him as the One to resolve your issues, answer your questions, give you direction, and heal your body, soul, and mind?

(Consider 1 Peter 2:25; 2 Corinthians 1:9; John 14:26; Hebrews 11:6.)

8. What are your next steps for trusting in God’s sufficiency for your life?



COMMISSION: YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

Ever since Adam's error, God has employed witnesses to testify about who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in times to come. Adam and Eve, eyewitnesses to Eden, testified about God, being in relationship with Him, and about the promise of a Son who would crush the head of the serpent. (See Genesis 2–3.) Enoch walked with God, prophesied, and his supernatural life was, in itself, a testimony. (See Genesis 5:21-23.) Noah was a preacher of righteousness who built an ark because he believed what God told him about the judgment that was to come on the world in his day. (See Genesis 6:9-22; 2 Peter 2:5.) Later, when it seemed that all hope was lost and no one in the world worshipped or acknowledged God, God called upon Abraham to live a life of faith as a witness of the one true God. (See Genesis 12:1-4) Later, when God led the nation of Israel out of slavery, the miracles, signs, and wonders done in Egypt and the parted waters of the Red Sea testified to all the surrounding nations that the most powerful God of all creation was with His chosen people. (See Exodus 15:14-16, 18:1; Joshua 2:10.) The Laws of God were given to Israel to govern them so that they would be a living testimony as witnesses with first-hand experience of the Most High God's holiness, justice, and power. (See Exodus 19:4-6; Deuteronomy 4:5-6, 33-35; Isaiah 43:10, 12, 44:8.) Jesus came to testify of God's Kingdom, God's righteous day of judgment to come, and the opportunity to receive mercy by grace through faith in Him. After the resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples as His witnesses to all the nations of the earth.

*Luke 24:46-48: He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **You are witnesses of these things.**"*

*Matthew 28:18-20: Then Jesus came to them and said, "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."*

*Acts 1:8: 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.**"*

The same command remains for us today. Each one of us has been commissioned by Jesus to declare the good news of Jesus Christ so that everyone can hear and believe. (See Romans 10:8-17.) We have a responsibility to deliver God's message and, significantly, Jesus will not return until we have accomplished our task as His witnesses to the whole world.

*Matthew 24:14: And this **gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world** as a testimony **to all nations, and then the end will come.***

MY WITNESSES

In a legal sense, a witness is "one who affirms what they have seen, heard, or experienced." In a court of Law, a witness testifies for or against someone or something based on what they know about that person or situation. For example, Jesus left His home in heaven as God's witness in order to testify about what He

had seen, heard, and experienced of the Kingdom of God. Now, He sends His disciples out as His witnesses to share with the world what we have seen, heard, and experienced of Jesus.

As we have discussed, this means that witnessing for Christ starts with being cut to the heart in our own lives. We cannot share with others what we do not know for ourselves. God hates hypocrisy and knows that it is easy to refute the testimony of a witness who lacks integrity. The way we live our lives shares a thousand testimonies even when we never speak a word, and even when we are not teaching, preaching, sharing our testimony, or deliberately making disciples.

Moreover, a transformed person simply can't help but tell everyone about Jesus! A true witness for Christ does not consider Jesus' commission to be a work assignment or intolerable burden of responsibility. When our lives have been changed by Jesus Christ, we are always prepared to share the story of how Jesus Christ has changed our lives by His salvation, no matter what happens to us! (See 1 Peter 3:15.)

This is what happened with the first followers of Jesus. Every single one of the first 120 believers in Jerusalem was someone whose life had been dramatically changed by Jesus Christ. This group contained ordinary fishermen who had walked with Jesus while He performed miracles, men and women whom Christ had healed from sickness and freed from demonic oppression, Jesus' mother Mary, who still remembered Jesus' divine conception by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' half-brothers who had not previously believed that Jesus was the Christ, and other disciples who had seen and heard the resurrected Jesus with their own eyes and ears. (See Acts 1:13-15, 2:1, 10:41; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.) These believers could not return to life as usual after the resurrection of Christ. Their purpose in life was permanently altered as the great commission became their eternal assignment.

*Acts 4:19-20: But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, **we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.**"*

*Acts 5:30-32: **The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead**--whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. **We are witnesses of these things,** and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."*

Throughout the Book of Acts and beyond, the word of God's redemption through Jesus Christ spread throughout the world. God added masses of people to His Kingdom through their faith in His Son.

*Acts 2:41, 47b: Those who accepted his message were baptized, and **about three thousand were added to their number that day.** ... And **the Lord added to their number daily** those who were being saved.*

*Acts 4:4: But **many who heard the message believed;** so the **number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.***

*Acts 6:7: **So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly,** and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

*Act 11:21: The Lord's hand was with them, and **a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.***

*Acts 12:24: But the **word of God continued to spread and flourish.***

*Acts 19:20: In this way **the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.***

This said, not everyone will receive the Gospel message. When Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, He often finished His teaching by saying, "if anyone has ears to hear, let them hear!" He knew that not everyone who has natural ears has the ability to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying.

Moreover, when Jesus sent His disciples to testify about Him, He prepared them for those who would reject the message of the Kingdom of God by telling them to "shake the dust off of their feet." This is a sign of judgment and cannot be taken lightly as we remember that the foremost objective of witnessing is to wash people's feet from the dust and wickedness of this world, not to shake dust back at them. (See John 13:1-20.) Christ's disciples were Jewish and knew that when a Jew left a Gentile town or city, they would literally shake the dust off their feet to symbolically demonstrate their holiness and separation from the error of the Gentile's worldly ways. Because of this, they understood that when someone rejected the good news of the Kingdom, they shook the dust off of their feet to visibly express the rejecter's error.

*Matthew 10:14-15: **If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.** (Also Mark 6:10-11; Luke 9:5.)*

Even if people do not listen to us, it is still our responsibility to, "GO." We must share the love of God through Jesus Christ with all people everywhere. As an example of this duty, in the Old Testament, God called upon the prophet Ezekiel to declare to an exiled people a message of hope through repentance from sin. Ezekiel was accountable to God for sharing the message but not for how people responded to it. If Ezekiel shared the message and the people did not repent of their sin, then their sin was on their own head because they had been given the opportunity to believe and chose not to. However, if Ezekiel did not share the message with the people, then God held their sin against Ezekiel. (See Ezekiel 33:1-9.)

As disciples of Christ, we have a responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel to all nations. We are not responsible for how people respond to the message. It is God who grants repentance to those whom He has chosen.

*Acts 11:18: When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, **even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.**"*

*Acts 13:48: When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and **all who were appointed for eternal life believed.** (See also 2Timothy 2:19.)*

*2Timothy 2:25: Opponents must be gently instructed, **in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.***

The Apostle Paul alluded to the connection between Ezekiel's accountability to God the obligation of witnessing for Christ when he declared himself to be innocent of everyone's guilt because he had faithfully preached the whole counsel of God to them. (See Acts 20:26-27.)

MAKE DISCIPLES

Along these lines, it is important to recognize that the commission of Jesus is not, "Go and make people say a prayer to receive eternal salvation," but, "Go and make disciples by teaching them everything I have taught you." God is not after converts, prayers, and professions of faith without circumcised hearts. God is looking for transformed lives of people who will repent of their own ways in order to reveal His nature and power to the lost and dying world. The Apostle Paul referred to this as drawing people into the obedience of faith. (See Romans 1:5, 16:26.)

In fact, the word Jesus used for *make disciples* means, "to follow the precepts, to enlist as a scholar, to teach or instruct." As such, making disciples is helping people apply God's **you first** policy in their own lives by aligning their lives with the teachings and commands of Jesus. This said, the way that each disciple of Christ makes other disciples of Jesus will vary based on how God has designed and called us. Throughout the Book of Acts and beyond, the Holy Spirit revealed Christ's chosen apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. (See Acts 1:2, 5:29, 11:27, 13:1, 15:32, 20:28, 21:8, 10.)

Ephesians 4:7, 11-13: But to **each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.** ... So **Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service,** so that the body of Christ may be built up **until we all reach unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God **and become mature,** attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Even today, every believer is a gift from Christ to the rest of the Body which corresponds to these types of ministries. Each ministry reflects a different aspect of Christ's mission but has the same purpose – to make disciples by drawing others to spiritual maturity and unity with one another. God desires for us to be a living, breathing, walking, talking demonstration of His grace through Jesus Christ. Simply put, the aim of the Christian life is *Christlikeness*, both individually and corporately as a witness for Christ to all creation.

Ephesians 3:10-11: **His [God's] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,** according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

BY TEACHING, PREACHING, TESTIFYING

Throughout the Book of Acts, believers everywhere testified about the resurrection of Jesus. Their focal point was not on the cross of Christ or His suffering but on His resurrection to eternal life. The resurrection confirms God's choice and acceptance of Jesus' offering of atonement for the sins of the world. Amen!

Acts 4:2, 33a: They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, **proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead**.... With great power the apostles **continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.**

Also Acts 2:24,32, 3:15, 4:10, 5:30, 10:40, 13:30, 17:31, 23:6.

The Gospel message was shared in various ways depending on who was speaking and who was listening. Primarily, this was done through teaching, preaching, and testifying. Simply put, teaching is instruction from the Scriptures in the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ; preaching is sharing the good news of Christ's salvation; and testifying is sharing a personal story or experience of the transformative power of God through Jesus. Jewish people who knew the Scriptures typically wanted evidence from the Word of God to prove that Jesus is the Messiah and some kind of supernatural confirming sign from God to prove it. Gentiles were most often looking for wisdom or higher understanding so that they could live a better life. (See 1 Corinthians 1:22.) The message of the gospel was tailored to the audience so that the hearers could believe and be saved but without compromising God's message or intent.

1Corinthians 9:19-22: Though I am free and belong to no one, **I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.** To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. **I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.**

An example of Paul's **teaching**, was in Pisidian Antioch. In the Jewish synagogue after the customary Scripture reading, Paul stood up and taught from the Scriptures that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel. Paul addressed his fellow Israelites as children of Abraham and God's special people by birth. (See Genesis 12-25.) From the Scriptures, He refreshed their memory about the events from the time of their exodus from Egyptian slavery to the time when God promised David that the Messiah of Israel would come from his descendants and would rule on God's throne for all eternity with an everlasting dynasty. (See 2 Samuel 7.) Then, Paul pointed to John the Baptist as Jesus' forerunner (in the spirit of Elijah), who announced the coming of the King and the Kingdom of God and how in fulfillment of all the prophecies,

the religious leaders crucified Him. (See Isaiah 40:3; 53.) But God, by His power, had raised Jesus from the dead giving irrefutable proof that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel and the King above all kings who reigns forever. This is good news! The Messiah that all Israel had been waiting for had come and, through faith in Him they could have a right relationship with God, something that they had never been able to attain through obedience to the Law. Other examples of this kind of teaching of the Gospel include the speeches of Peter and Stephen, Philip's teaching to an Ethiopian eunuch, and Apollos refuting opponents with the Scriptures. (See Acts 2, 3, 7, 8:26-40, 13:16-41, 18:27-28.)

As an example of Paul's **preaching**, in both Lystra and Athens, Paul spoke to Gentiles who did not have any Scriptural knowledge of the one true God but needed to hear the Gospel to be saved. The people of Lystra worshipped many idols and believed in the power of the gods. The people in Athens also had idols but emphasized epicurean or stoic philosophy. Epicureans were materialists who believed that the world was ruled by chance and, accordingly, their approach to life was, *eat, drink, and be merry*. Stoics believed that the world was ruled by fate which was out of their control and, therefore, their aim was to live with minimal emotion and in alignment with the laws of nature while their mindset was, "what will be will be." Paul tailored his message in these places to refute their existing beliefs and tell them about Jesus.

*Acts 14:15b-17: **We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things [idols] to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.***

*Acts 17:23, 30-31: For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship--and **this is what I am going to proclaim to you.** ... In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but **now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.***

In both instances, Paul highlighted God's role as Creator of the Universe. Paul highlighted God's loving provision of rain, crops, sustenance, and life as the obvious sign of God's existence and of His goodness towards all that He created. (See also Romans 1:19-20; Matthew 5:43-48.) Paul informed them of how every person in every nation on earth is descended from Adam, whom God had created, and how God loves all people in spite of the fact that they do not know Him or worship Him. Paul stressed God's authority and control over all the nations of the earth throughout the entire course of history, indicating that God is the true eternal Judge of all. Paul preached the resurrection as proof that God has appointed Jesus Christ as the eternal Judge, and that He will return to administer justice, including everlasting life to those who have believed and everlasting wrath to those who have not believed. Notably, Paul did not bash people or their beliefs. He used what they believed to be true as a segue into revealing the superiority of Jesus Christ as the one true God's Chosen One and only Son.

Examples of Paul's testifying can also be found in the Book of Acts. (See Acts 22:3-21, 26:1-23.) Paul did not shrink back from sharing the full story of how off course he had been before he believed Jesus and how God, in His great mercy, had intervened in his life. Additionally, there are countless other examples in the Scriptures including all the stories that are not told of how Jesus changed people's lives.

*John 9:25: He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. **One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!**"*

*John 4:28-29, 39: Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "**Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.** Could this be the*

Messiah?" ... Many of the Samaritans from that town **believed in him because of the woman's testimony**, "He told me everything I ever did."

John 21:25: **Jesus did many other things as well**. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

TO THE END OF THE AGE

Until Jesus returns, our commission from Him is to make disciples for His Kingdom out of every nation, tribe, and tongue. People everywhere need to hear the word of what Jesus has done for us to spare us from the wrath of God and the day of judgment that is yet to come. People everywhere need to repent from their sins and turn to Jesus for their salvation. There is no other way to be saved. (See Acts 4:12.)

Acts 26:16-18: Now get up and stand on your feet. **I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness** of what you have seen and will see of me... **I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God**, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Act 2:38-40: Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins**. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "**Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.**"

No matter what happens to us or what opposition we face, our assignment from the Lord remains until everyone whom God has chosen for eternal life has heard and put their trust in Jesus.

Acts 5:20: "**Go, stand in the temple courts,**" he said, "**and tell the people all about this new life.**"

Acts 18:9-10: One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "**Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent**. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because **I have many people in this city.**"

MY TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

MY STORY OF HOW JESUS SAVED ME

Briefly share how Jesus first made Himself real in your life and how He has changed you.

FORGAVE MY SIN:

List some specific things you know God has forgiven you for.

REDEEMED ME FROM THE CURSE:

List some specific challenges or family/generational patterns God has delivered you from.

FREED ME FROM EVIL (BE SPECIFIC):

List some specific influences of darkness God has freed you from.

HEALED MY BODY/MIND/HEART (BE SPECIFIC):

List some specific sickness or infirmities God has healed for you.

COME AND SEE

John 4:28-30, 39-42 NIV - Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him. ... Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

DESCRIPTION

When disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus about following Him, His response was, "Come and see." Later, after Jesus prophetically discerned the secrets of a Samaritan woman's life, she went back to her village and told everyone to "come and see" the Prophet she had encountered. She knew He was the King and Messiah they had been waiting for. Sharing our testimony of how Jesus has touched our lives can be powerful by itself. This said, it is also beneficial to accompany our sharing of our story with a demonstration of God's Kingdom. Once they come to see and hear for themselves, they will have had an experience that they cannot easily forget. This could prove to them that Jesus is real and change their faith. Therefore, practicing this Come and See exercise is about sharing our own story of encountering Jesus while also taking it to the next step of engaging the people we share with in the Kingdom of God.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for the ways that you have made yourself real to me. Help me to share my experience of you with others so that they can encounter your Kingdom and goodness. In Jesus' name, Amen.



PURPOSE:

To effectively share our experience of Jesus with others and invite them to their own faith in Him.

To demonstrate the Kingdom of God to those who may not have experienced it yet.

To shine as light in the darkness so that people can come to know Jesus.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Confidence in sharing our faith with others.

Growing in our ability to demonstrate God's Kingdom.

Recognizing what Jesus has done in our lives.

Increasing in being the light of the world to those who are in darkness.

CONSIDERATIONS

How did you first come to know Jesus? What is your salvation testimony? What has Jesus done for you?

In what ways has Jesus revealed His Kingdom and power to you? Did He manifest Himself to you in some way? Have you been headed or received a personal prophetic word? Has He changed your character? Were you "blind but now you see?"

How can you share your experience of Jesus with unbelievers in a way that is relevant to their lives?

How are you personally equipped to demonstrate God's Kingdom? (i.e. prophesying, healing, casting out demons, demonstrating Kingdom character in love, joy, and kindness?)

Why is it important to demonstrate the Kingdom of God to people? How can you become better equipped to do so?

PRACTICE

1. Ask God if there is anyone who may not know Jesus yet that He desires for you to share His Kingdom with.
2. Tell them something about your experience with Jesus. Be led by the Holy Spirit so it is tailored by the Lord for them.
3. Use the following as a guide for revealing God's Kingdom:

If you are not yet equipped in the works of God's Kingdom:

- Is there a church, ministry, prayer group, or worship night you could invite them to where the true Gospel is proclaimed and the Kingdom is manifested?

If you are equipped in the works of God's Kingdom:

- How does God want you to demonstrate the Kingdom to this person? Ask them if you can pray for them. Is God giving you a prophetic word for them? Do they need healing for anything? Follow where the Lord leads you.

If you are advanced in the works of God's Kingdom:

- Invite them to tag along with you as you minister to others. Jesus openly demonstrated His approach to curious followers and they saw, heard, and believed.

NOTES:



ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

John 1:35-42

Matthew 10:7-8

Luke 10:17-20

Acts 10:38

Matthew 8:16

1 Corinthians

14:24-25



TOWARDS MATURITY

Scripture Reading & Worksheet

Read each of the following passages and then use the chart below for study and reflection.

- Matthew 5:43-48
- 1 Corinthians 3:1-15
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Philippians 3:8-16
- 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
- 2 Timothy 2:20-26

General Summary of These Passages:

Main Themes & Common Message:

Key Verses:

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3 Characteristics of Christian Maturity:

3 Questions you still have about this:

<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
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How does this change your impression of what the Christian life is really about?

How is God asking you to respond to these passages in your life today?

PRESSING ON TO SUCCESS

Philippians 3:12-14 NIV – Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

DESCRIPTION

Jesus is God's image of perfect success. Yet, His life did not match the world's view of triumph. Instead, Jesus willingly laid down His life to fulfill God's purpose. When He tells His followers to take up our cross and follow Him, He means denying ourselves as He did, including letting go of our own opinions, desires, cultural norms, preferences, and concepts of success.

For example, when measured by certain standards, the Apostle Paul had much to boast about: However, Paul knew that the world's standards of measurement are worthless in the sight of God. Paul had one objective in life and it was to know Jesus and be like Him, no matter the cost to his life, ego, or agenda.

Pressing on to Success is about entering into a deeper commitment to following Jesus, surrendering ourselves to God, and moving towards His purposes for our lives, no matter the cost.

STUDY/MEDITATION

- Read Philippians 3:4-14 slowly and prayerfully. Read it two or three times, asking the Holy Spirit to speak.
- How did the Apostle Paul's image of success change when He came to know Jesus?
- What was Paul's aim in life with the Lord? What was his burning desire?
- What did Paul have to lose, give up, or walk away from in order to follow Christ?
- Why was Paul willing to give up these things?

Category: Self-Denial

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PURPOSE:

To detach from, let go of, cut off, release, and repent of anything hindering my walk with Jesus and affirming His likeness.

To silence the past and look onwards to the future in the new mercies of God.

To take steps necessary for the advancement of God's Kingdom purpose for my life.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Increased freedom to obey God today.

Advancement in God's purpose for your life.

Alignment with God's perspective and purpose.

Restored focus on Christ.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to be the perfect example of pressing on in your purposes. Help me by your Spirit to forget the past and take new steps of faith towards all you have for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TALK WITH GOD

In your life right now, in what ways/areas is Jesus asking you to "forget what is behind" and press on to follow Him?

How are your standards of success or failure affecting your obedience to God? How is your boldness for God affected by your self-image, fears, or insecurities?

Are your desires, opinions, preferences, behaviors, or cultural norms hindering your advancement in God's purposes? If so, which ones? What does God say about these things?

Are there material objects or relationships that God is asking you to let go of? How is He asking you to go about doing this?

PRACTICE

- Write down your past or present definition of success and its attributes. What does success look like to you? How do you measure success?
- Write down what you believe God's idea of success is.
- Compare your definition and God's view of success.
 - How does your view differ from God's?
- Write a new definition of success for your life.
 - Ask Jesus to refresh your focus on His desires for your life.
 - Ask Him if there is anything from your past that you need to let go of or give/throw away. (It could be a past trophy, a sentimental object, or an old mindset, etc.)
- Ask God what steps of faith He is calling you to take as you pursue Christ and His likeness. Do what He says.

NOTES:



ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

- Colossians 2:13-15
- Matthew 16:23-26
- Luke 14:26
- Romans 8:38-39
- 1 Corinthians 9:24
- John 12:25
- Luke 9:51

Category: Self-Denial

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COMMANDS OF JESUS - EVALUATION

"IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDS." JOHN 14:15

	<i>1 = Not obeying/Not enough</i>			<i>2 = Some/Partial Obedience</i>			<i>3 = Regular Obedient Application</i>		
Repent	1	2	3	Hearing Jesus/Listening carefully	1	2	3		
Believe	1	2	3	Not judging	1	2	3		
Following Jesus	1	2	3	Not condemning	1	2	3		
Rejoicing at Persecution	1	2	3	Forgiving repeatedly	1	2	3		
Reconciling with adversaries	1	2	3	Taking planks out of own eyes	1	2	3		
Cut hand & Pluck eye (cut out sin)	1	2	3	Helping others with speck in eyes	1	2	3		
No taking oaths	1	2	3	Not putting pearls before pigs	1	2	3		
Not resisting evil person/people	1	2	3	Asking, Seeking, Knocking	1	2	3		
Turning other cheek	1	2	3	Doing unto others as you want to you	1	2	3		
Giving more than demanded	1	2	3	Entering through narrow gate	1	2	3		
Going extra mile	1	2	3	Every effort through narrow door	1	2	3		
Giving to everyone who asks	1	2	3	Watching out for false prophets	1	2	3		
Loving enemies & persecutors	1	2	3	Receiving healing (Be clean, loosed)	1	2	3		
Blessing those who hate you	1	2	3	Letting dead bury the dead	1	2	3		
Be perfect/merciful as God is	1	2	3	Showing mercy, more than sacrifice	1	2	3		
Doing good deeds in secret	1	2	3	Praying for laborers	1	2	3		
Giving in secret	1	2	3	Proclaiming Kingdom	1	2	3		
Few words in prayer (no babbling)	1	2	3	Healing sick, casting out demons, etc.	1	2	3		
Praying the Lord's prayer	1	2	3	Freely receiving & giving	1	2	3		
Fasting without show	1	2	3	Shaking dust off feet	1	2	3		
Not storing treasures on earth	1	2	3	Not rejoicing in spiritual power	1	2	3		
Storing treasures in heaven	1	2	3	Being wise as serpent, harmless as dove	1	2	3		
Not worrying about your life	1	2	3	Not worrying about what to say	1	2	3		
Heart not set on food or clothes	1	2	3	Speaking out what Jesus has revealed	1	2	3		
Seeking Kingdom First	1	2	3	Not fearing man, fearing only God	1	2	3		
Not worrying about finances/\$\$	1	2	3	Not supposing peace, but sword	1	2	3		
Guarding against greed	1	2	3	Not stopping false teachers	1	2	3		
Coming to Jesus for rest	1	2	3	Believing God	1	2	3		
Learning of Jesus	1	2	3	Believing also in Jesus	1	2	3		
Denying self, taking up cross	1	2	3	Keeping commands of God	1	2	3		
Having no fear	1	2	3	Not separating marriages	1	2	3		

Being aware of yeast: religion	1	2	3	Watching out that no one deceives you	1	2	3
Being aware of yeast: unbelief	1	2	3	Being ready for service	1	2	3
Being aware of yeast: worldliness	1	2	3	Not taking place of honor for self	1	2	3
Paying taxes to Caesar	1	2	3	Taking lowest place	1	2	3
Coming to God like a child	1	2	3	Not inviting friends to banquet	1	2	3
Going to those who sin against you	1	2	3	Inviting those who cannot repay	1	2	3
Selling possessions, giving to poor	1	2	3	Hating own life (compared to Jesus)	1	2	3
Being a servant of all	1	2	3	Hating family (by comparison)	1	2	3
Loving God	1	2	3	Using wealth to make heavenly friends	1	2	3
Loving neighbor as self	1	2	3	Hating money	1	2	3
Not chasing Kingdom, anointing	1	2	3	Rebuking those in sin	1	2	3
Being ready for Jesus' return	1	2	3	Not fearing end times wars and battles	1	2	3
Keeping watch for Jesus' return	1	2	3	Remembering Lot's wife	1	2	3
Showing mercy (Good Samaritan)	1	2	3	Praying to not fall into temptation	1	2	3
Generously giving to the poor	1	2	3	Being born again by the Spirit	1	2	3
Feeding the hungry, thirsty	1	2	3	Not turning God's house into marketplace	1	2	3
Taking in strangers	1	2	3	Worshipping in spirit and truth	1	2	3
Clothing the naked	1	2	3	No excuses (take up mat and walk)	1	2	3
Caring for the sick	1	2	3	Stop sinning, sin no more	1	2	3
Visiting prisoners	1	2	3	Not working for food that spoils	1	2	3
Taking Communion rightly	1	2	3	Not judging by appearances	1	2	3
Going to all nations (fulfill calling)	1	2	3	Judging with right judgment	1	2	3
Making disciples	1	2	3	Obedying teachings of Jesus	1	2	3
Baptizing others into faith	1	2	3	Obedying commands of Jesus	1	2	3
Teaching the teachings of Jesus	1	2	3	Washing feet of others	1	2	3
Feeding God's sheep, lambs	1	2	3	Doing the works as at first (first love)	1	2	3
Waiting on God	1	2	3	Not afraid of suffering	1	2	3
Witnessing for Jesus	1	2	3	Being faithful even unto death	1	2	3
Doing the works of Jesus	1	2	3	Holding on to what you have	1	2	3
Abiding in Jesus, remaining	1	2	3	Waking up! Re-Strengthening to finish	1	2	3
Loving one another as Jesus loves	1	2	3	Being earnest	1	2	3
Laying down life for others	1	2	3	Being hot or cold	1	2	3

UNIT SIX – KEY QUESTIONS

Christlikeness & Commission

Use this worksheet to test your grasp of the material and exercises of Unit Six.

What does spiritual maturity look like?	
What is God's will for me?	What does it look like to live by faith?
How did Jesus live? How does He want me to live this way?	What is the obedience of faith?
What does it mean to make disciples? How does God want me to do this?	How does God want me to grow to spiritual maturity?
What is one thing you learned that you did not know before?	What questions do you still have about this subject?

UNIT SIX: GROUP EXERCISES

Have each member of the group share one way that God is currently challenging them to live by faith or obey the commands of Jesus more. Ask them to articulate how they intend to begin to step into this in obedience. (i.e. Being or Doing.) Pray for them as they step out in faith.

AND/OR

As a group, discuss what the marks of spiritual maturity are for an individual or for a group of believers. Talk about how this impacts God's purpose for your group. (i.e. the way you meet, what you do, etc.)

AND/OR

Pair up two-by-two and use the Come and See Exercise to go out in your city and tell people about Jesus.