



**fellowship**  
BIBLE CHURCH

**Discipleship  
Starter Pack**





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# PREFACE & OVERVIEW

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## THE “WHY” OF DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is Jesus’ primary strategy in the Gospel reaching every person on earth. In some of Jesus’ last words before His ascension, He did not say to host more revival services, to gain a bunch of converts, or to simply invite more people to church. Though all of those are good things, Jesus’ primary commandment He leaves us with is to “make disciples.” (*Matthew 28:18-20*). Therefore, discipleship is not just a thing that the Christian does, but discipleship is *the* thing that Christians do. Discipleship with Jesus first and foremost, and discipleship with others second.

God forms us through His Word, His spirit, and His people. All throughout the Old and New Testament, God’s idea of His people growing has always been in the context of community. Moses needed Aaron, Hur, and Jethro in order to accomplish all that God had for him. David needed Jonathan. Elijah needed Elisha. Israel needed elders, priests, and prophets. And again in the New Testament we see a similar theme emerge. Jesus could have chosen to accomplish the Father’s will in any way that He pleased, and yet He chose a group of disciples to share His ministry with. Paul needed Barnabas. Timothy needed Paul. And the early church in Acts spread like wildfire in large part due to their communal nature.

You were not designed to try to follow Jesus on your own. It always has been God’s design that you would grow as a Christian in the context of community. Attempting to follow Jesus alone is a difficult way to live (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*). You need other Christians in your life to grow, flourish, and be refined into the person God has equipped you to be. Discipleship is one of the main avenues of the church to see that community come to life.

Discipleship matters because you matter. In *Romans 12:3-13*, the author, Paul, uses the analogy of a body to describe the church. Each part of the body: the ear, the

heart, the eye, all has a different function that works together to create a healthy body. If the eye isn't there, the body suffers. If the foot stops working, the body has a harder time moving. As the body operates, so does the church. Each person has a valuable role in the overall health of the church. If a person doesn't participate or is disengaged, the whole body hurts.

The church needs healthy disciples who are actively and consistently pursuing Jesus. The church needs healthy disciples who are regularly encountering God's grace. The church needs healthy disciples who are actively encouraging and challenging others. The church needs you. Discipleship matters because you matter.

## THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP

The goal of discipleship is to see people know and follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and be committed to the mission of Jesus. (*Matthew 4:19*). Discipleship is not a short-term practice for Christians. Discipleship is a life-long process for Christians as one of the main ways we grow to know, love, and enjoy Jesus. Discipleship is meant to grow, challenge, and stretch you. But most of all, discipleship is meant to further your joy in Christ as you know and follow Him, as you are being changed by Him, and as you commit to the mission of Jesus.

**- To know and follow Jesus:** To grow in our knowledge of who Christ is, as well as finding joy and satisfaction in obeying Christ's commandments. Our foundation for knowing and following Jesus is the Bible. (*John 8:31-32*)

**- Be changed by Jesus:** Allowing God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and God's people to bring about evident marks of growth and maturity over time. In a discipleship group setting, this is best accomplished through humility, mutual encouragement, exhortation, and accountability. (*Philippians 2:12-13*)

**- Committed to the mission of Jesus:** To desire to see more people in Southwest Missouri and around the world knowing, following, and being changed by Jesus.

Using our spheres of influence as opportunities to point others to the goodness of Jesus, and invite them into a relationship with Him. (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

- **Disciple:** A disciple is someone who knows and follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus. (*Matthew 4:19*)
  
- **Disciple-maker:** A disciple of Christ who helps another disciple (typically of less time following Jesus) grow toward spiritual maturity alongside them. (*Colossians 1:28-29*)
  
- **Disciple-making:** The relational and intentional process by which a disciple develops into a state of greater spiritual maturity. (*Ephesians: 4:11-16*)
  
- **Discipleship:** A lifetime journey of obedience to Jesus resulting in knowing Him deeply, reflecting Him authentically, and sharing Him Intentionally. (*Matthew 4:19*)
  
- **Spiritual maturity:** Catching the vision for being a disciple who makes disciples for a lifetime. Being equipped and confident to reproduce the disciple making process. (*John 20:21*)

WEEK 1

# **BEGINNINGS OF A GROUP**



## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE OF WEEK 1

- To understand what to expect in the group.
- To tell and listen to the testimonies of the group participants.
- To build a foundation of care and understanding for the relationships in the group.

## OPENING PRAYER

Begin your time by praying that the Lord use this group to grow each person spiritually, to build relationships centered on Christ, and to bring God glory.

## ALIGN EXPECTATIONS

**Communicate and decide on the following expectations for the group:**

- No question is a dumb question
- This group is a safe place to share openly, honestly, and with vulnerability without having to fear if the information will be shared outside of the group.
- If you are unable to do the “homework” before the group meeting, come anyway! Though, you’ll get more from the group if you are prepared ahead of time.
- Items to bring for each group meeting: a physical bible and something to take notes on/with.
- Both the leader and members of this group are present to learn, share, and walk with Jesus alongside each other.
- Discipleship is a lifelong process where God, in His grace, allows us to both lead and be led by others. The goal would be that each person in this group would feel confident and equipped to lead others once this group ends.
  - Remember, Christ’s definition of your adequacy to lead is simply: He is always with you. You can lead not because of your own competency (or lack thereof) but only because of Christ’s competency within you.

### **Some questions to answer to together:**

- What time works consistently to meet together?
- How long would we like this group to meet upfront? (Fellowship recommends at the minimum 6 months and at the maximum 12 months upfront. You can always re-evaluate when the agreed length of time is up, this is for a base minimum).
- What are the main things you are interested in learning about and/or growing in after this *Starter Pack* is complete?

## **GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER**

Discipleship groups are meant to be a foundation for real, authentic relationships to be formed. Answering the following questions as a group will not only allow you to know others better, but also for them to understand you better. Your level of openness and vulnerability will determine how well the other members of your group will be able to get to know you, the real you, and subsequently how to best encourage, challenge, and celebrate you as you grow as a disciple.

### **Answer the following questions together:**

- What does your family and season of life look like right now?
- How did you end up in Springfield and/or at Fellowship?
- What are some of the main hobbies and interests you have?
- What things are you passionate about?
- What is your testimony? (see the next section for guidelines in sharing testimonies)

### **Guidelines for How to Share Testimonies:**

- A helpful framework for you and/or your group for sharing testimonies:
  - What was your understanding of God growing up? Would your family have identified as Christian?

- Was there a specific turning point where you began to pursue Jesus personally? If so, what prompted that?
- Before intentionally following Jesus, how would you describe your outlook on life?
- Since you began following Jesus, how have you seen Jesus grow you in your daily life?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life over the past few months?
- Reminder: Your testimony is not just all of the bad things that have happened in your life, but how you have seen Jesus move in and through those difficult seasons and how He has grown/sanctified you in the process?

## **HOMework FOR THE GROUP**

- Pray for your group throughout the week, and ask the Lord to grow each member's relationship with each other and with the Lord.
- Read Matthew 4:18-22 and write down any thoughts, questions, or things that stand out to you in order to prepare for next week!

WEEK 2

**THE GREAT CALL**



# THE GREAT CALL

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## TEXT

**Begin by reading Matthew 4:18-22 twice; once aloud as a group, and once on your own.**

- This passage is referred to as *The Great Call* as it is one of Jesus' first calls for disciples to follow Him. This passage is short, but packed full of meaning and implication for us.

## THEOLOGY

*Theology is simply the study of God. Studying God and His Word develops our knowledge of who God is and what His commandments are. Doing this in a group setting helps us to flesh out the ideas in our mind, as well as learning from each other in what God is showing them. No idea is a bad idea. Talking about Theology helps us to know and follow Jesus, as well as see Him change us over time as we learn, grow, and love Him more and more over time.*

### **Questions to better understand and apply the Scripture:**

- What are some things that stand out to you or questions that you have?
- Why do you think Jesus uses the metaphor of fishing with these first disciples?
- Re-read verse 19. Where in this text do you see the foundation for the disciple definition (*Someone who knows and follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and committed to the mission of Jesus*).
- Would you say you currently know and follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- Have you seen evident marks in your life as a Christian of Christ changing you from the inside out? What areas do you hope God will change in you throughout discipleship?
- Do you currently view your spheres of influence as space to share the Gospel and love as Christ has loved you? Why or why not?

- How is following Jesus different than simply believing in Him?
- What are the “nets” in your life? In other words: what things may God be asking you to leave behind in order to more faithfully and consistently follow Him?
- Allow space for any other questions or comments related to the passage.

## **LIFE**

*Life means simply having a consistent rhythm of sharing what is happening in our lives. This is best done when we share both good and bad things, and in the categories of emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. This is not a “venting” time, but rather a time to allow others to know you, the real you, better, as well as an opportunity to know the other members of the group better. This may feel odd or “clunky” at first if you have never done this before. But we can assure you: if you consistently share honestly and openly, you will find a lot of freedom in being known by others. God has made us to be relational beings. So when we share and allow others to know us, the good and the bad in our lives, it allows us to experience close relationships.*

### **Take turns sharing about each of the following questions:**

- What areas of life have brought you joy as of late?
- What areas of life have been particularly difficult for you as of late?
- How are your closest relationships (spouse, kids, roommates, family, etc.) going?
- What areas are you feeling most tempted in? (pride, finances, sexual purity, dishonesty/lack of integrity, comparison, anxiety, etc.)
  - Follow up question: What does being a good friend/holding you accountable in those areas look like?
- What is one action step you can take this week to apply this passage to your life?
- After allowing everyone time to share, spend time praying for one another over these answers and any other additional prayer requests.

## **HOMEWORK FOR THE GROUP**

- Focus on applying your action step from today to your life this week!
- Read Matthew 22: 36-40 and write down any thoughts, questions, or things that stand out to you.
- Make it a priority to pray for each person in your group at some point between today and next week's meeting. And, text them that you just prayed for them! Knowing someone just prayed for you goes a long way in building friendships.

WEEK 3

# **THE GREAT COMMANDMENT**



# THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

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## TEXT

**Begin by reading Matthew 22:34-40 twice; once aloud as a group, and once on your own.**

We learned from last week that the first step to being a disciple of Jesus is to accept *The Great Call* to follow Him. This week's passage is referred to as *The Great Commandment*, since Jesus is responding to a question regarding what the greatest commandment is in the Old Testament Law. Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5 with His response, also known as the *Shema*. The *Shema* is a daily prayer that is recited by the Jewish people; declaring faith in one God (Yahweh) and commanding absolute love for Him with one's entire being. In other words, Jesus is saying that the most important part of being a disciple of Jesus is to acknowledge God as the one true God, and to love Him with everything you have. And then, from the love you first have and receive from God, extend that love to others as well.

And, as we know from 1 John 4:19: We can only love because Christ has first loved us. This is the foundation of discipleship to Jesus, loving God because He first lavished His love on us.

Being a disciple is defined as *someone who knows and follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and committed to the mission of Jesus*. The Great Commandment is the foundation of all three of those elements. It is from God's love for us that we desire to know and follow Jesus. We will see Him change us over time as we grow in our love for God and for people. And then we will be more and more committed to bringing the Gospel to people as we grow in our love for God and His people.

## THEOLOGY

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### **Questions to better understand and apply the Scripture:**

- What are some things that stand out to you or questions that you have?
- Why do you think Jesus chooses this as the greatest commandment of them all?
- What do you think that says about what Jesus knows our hearts are prone to do?
- What does it look like to love God with heart, soul, and mind—how are those distinct, and how do they overlap?
- What are things in your life that are making it hardest for you to love God with a whole heart?
- How is loving God and loving others intertwined?
- What are some subtle ways you can avoid loving others while still thinking you're obeying God?
- What things
- What does Jesus mean when He says "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"?
- If someone watched your life, would they be able to identify these two commandments as your core values? Why or why not?
- Allow space for any other questions or comments related to the passage.

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### **Take turns sharing about each of the following questions:**

- What areas of life have brought you joy this past week?
- What areas of life have been particularly difficult for you this past week?
- How are your closest relationships (spouse, kids, roommates, family, etc.) going?
- What areas are you feeling most tempted in? (pride, finances, sexual purity, dishonesty/lack of integrity, comparison, anxiety, etc.)
  - Follow up question: What does being a good friend/holding you accountable in those areas look like?
- What is one action step you can take this week to apply this passage to your life?
- After allowing everyone time to share, spend time praying for one another over these answers and any other additional prayer requests.

## **HOMEWORK FOR THE GROUP**

- Read Matthew 28: 16-20 and write down any thoughts, questions, or things that stand out to you.

- Make it a priority to pray for each person in your group at some point between today and next week's meeting. And, text them that you just prayed for them! Knowing someone just prayed for you goes a long way in building friendships.
- Think through what topics related to following Jesus that you are most interested in growing in. Next week you will share as a group and talk about what resource/topic you will begin next.

WEEK 4

# **THE GREAT COMMISSION**



# THE GREAT COMMISSION

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## TEXT

**Begin by reading Matthew 28:16-20 twice; once aloud as a group, and once on your own.**

This is famously referred to as *The Great Commission*. And the call from Jesus is clear: go into the whole world and make disciples of all nations. How? By baptizing and teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded. This is why reading the bible regularly is SO important if you want to be a disciple of Christ. In order to teach others how to observe the commands of Christ, you yourself must actually know what those commands are! God's Word, and especially the four Gospels, are littered with them.

*The Great Commission*, or in the definition of being a disciple, "*being committed to the mission of Jesus*", can be daunting and scary to us sometimes. Our minds can flood with questions like:

- "What if I don't know enough?"
- "What if they ask me about \_\_\_\_\_, I have no idea how to answer that!"
- "I am unqualified to bring the Gospel to others because of what I have done in my past."
- "That command is only for the spiritually elite and 'super Christians'".

The reality is: you will never be "qualified" enough to be a carrier of the Gospel and you will never know every detail of the Bible. And yet, God in His infinite wisdom, has chosen people like you to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth! How cool! And the confidence and courage to partake in the Great Commission does not come from within your own strength or knowledge, but rather according to verse 20, from the promise that the Spirit of Jesus is *with* you. God is with you in every moment, and therefore you can be confident as you step into conversations about the Gospel and

discipleship; knowing that “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4).

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### **Questions to better understand and apply the Scripture:**

- What are some things that stand out to you or questions that you have?
- Verse 17 tells us that upon seeing Jesus post-resurrection, some of the disciples worshiped Him while others doubted. Why do you think some still doubted? Do you find it easier to worship or doubt Christ in your heart?
- Why do you think Jesus stated that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him before giving the Great Commission?
- What are some of your initial thoughts/emotions when you read verses 19-20? And what do you think leads to you having that reaction?
- What things/thoughts can get in your way of fulfilling the Great Commission?
- Why is it so important that Jesus ends the Great Commission with a promise to be with us, even until the end?
- What other parts of Scripture come to mind of where God commissions someone to accomplish something great, and responds to their fears with a simple promise of being *with* them?
- Allow space for any other questions or comments related to the passage.

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# CONCLUSION



# CONCLUSION

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## YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE STARTER PACK!!

You have officially completed the Discipleship Starter Pack, way to go! We are SO pumped for you and your group! We cannot wait to see what God does with this group as you each grow in knowing and following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and committing to the mission of Jesus!

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or just want to talk to someone from the Men's or Women's Leadership Teams, the best way to contact us is to email [women@fbclife.org](mailto:women@fbclife.org) or [men@fbclife.org](mailto:men@fbclife.org) and it would be our greatest joy to buy you a cup of coffee and talk about anything.

We have the full confidence and hope that Philippians 1:6 would be true of each person in this discipleship group going forward: "And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

