

2018

The Path Study Series

LIFE GROUP RESOURCE

NEW BRAUNFELS CHURCH OF CHRIST | 473 S. Castell Ave * New Braunfels, TX 78130

Table of Contents

LOVE GOD

Relate to God

Trust God

Obey God

Worship God

Study God

Surrender God

BUILDING CHARACTER

Stay Connected

New Creation

Spiritual Disciplines

Confession

Freedom

Wisdom

Steadiness – Perseverance

LOVE PEOPLE

Relationally Engaged

Peacemaker

Build Others

Humility

Self-Awareness

Sacrifice

Faithfulness

BE THE BODY

Serve

Spiritual Gifts

Financial Generosity

Outreach

Intercession

Ministry

Multiplication



LOVE GOD RELATE TO GOD



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Intentionally cultivates a genuine relationship with God by humbly walking through life with God, talking and listening to God, and intentionally seeking to personally know him.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

In Scripture, God uses a surprising word to describe the relationship between himself and Abraham. He refers to Abraham as “my friend” (Isaiah 41:8). Similarly, toward the end of his earthly life, Jesus wants his closest followers to know how much he values their relationship when he says, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

*“...one can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of Him...knowledge about God, and the capacity to think clearly and talk well on Christian themes, is not at all the same thing as knowing Him.”
-- J.I. Packer*

To authentically follow Christ is the cultivation and experience of a genuine relationship with God. Yes, there is reverence, awe and worship of God, but there is also a daily walking and talking with God that overtime has its own unique intimacy. This relationship is cultivated with God through prayer and Scripture, and like any relationship, can grow cold without intentionality and effort. But when we engage the highly intentional practice of talking and listening to God, we then develop our own relationship with him that is ever-present throughout our daily lives.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person’s Life:

- The passion and practice of engaging God daily through Scripture.
- The passion and practice of engaging God daily through conversational prayer.
- Seeking God for wisdom, insight, and direction in all aspects of one’s life.
- The daily bringing of both hardship and celebration to one’s relationship with God.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Joshua 1:1-9

Observations:

Discernment Question: Joshua was exhorted to meditate on God's word day and night. When your mind goes to neutral, what do you think about?

1 Samuel 3 (especially 3:19)

Observations:

Discernment Question: Scripture tells us the Lord was with Samuel and that the Lord did not let any of Samuel's words "fall to the ground." How are your conversations with God? Do you talk with God? Do you believe he listens to you? Are your conversations intentional or haphazard, genuine or forced, thoughtful or flippant?



1 Kings 19:10-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: Elijah did not hear God in the earthquake or the wind but in the quiet whisper. How disciplined are you about quieting yourself before God? Do you create enough space in your life to both seek and experience God's presence?

Proverbs 2:1-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: Solomon describes a highly intentional effort to seek and know God. How intentional is your effort to seek God? How disciplined are you in engaging God through Scripture? How disciplined are you in engaging God through prayer?



John 10:27

Observations:

Discernment Question: Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice.” How do you hear God’s voice in your life? Do you listen through prayer? Do you listen through Scripture? Have you opened yourself for the possibility of God’s voice in your life?

John 17:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: Life is described as “knowing” God. If there was a spectrum of knowing God with “strangers” on one end and “intimate friends” on the other, where would you fall on that spectrum? What are you doing in your life today to cultivate a friendship with God?



Philippians 3:7-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Paul considered all things loss that got in the way of his “knowing” Christ. What inhibits your relationship with God? What might you need to lose in order to gain Christ and more intentionally and authentically relate with him?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: Paul teaches Scripture is “God-breathed.” Are you currently taking full advantage of the opportunity you have with Scripture?



1 John 1:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: What could you do to increase “fellowship” with the “Father and with his son, Jesus Christ,” as this passage describes?

Revelation 3:20

Observations:

Discernment Question: If Jesus is knocking at your door, are you letting him stand on the other side, opening the door but not letting him truly enter, or sharing a meal with him in the kitchen?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on cultivating a relationship with God? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Memorize Scripture:

Mark 12:30 NIV

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

John 17:3 NIV

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE GOD TRUST GOD



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Trusts God and not idols (e.g., money, relationships, career) as one's source of security, joy, and purpose.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Common perception is that a follower of Christ is someone who believes in the existence of God and believes in the deity of Christ. Simply believe that God exists and that he sent his son, and you are considered a Christ-follower. Such thinking, though, is flawed. It misses the critical distinction between *belief* and *trust*. A person might believe an airplane can fly but not be willing to trust in the airplane by actually boarding it and experiencing flight. Scripture not only calls us to a belief in the existence of God, but we are exhorted to entrust

our lives and well being to God through Christ. James wrote, "You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder" (James 2:29). Or put another way, even enemies of God believe God exists and that he sent his son.

*"Personal saving faith, in the way Scripture understands it, involves more than mere knowledge. Of course it is necessary that we have some knowledge of who Christ is and what he has done, for 'how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?' (Rom. 10:14). But knowledge about the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for us is not enough, for people can know facts but rebel against them or dislike them."
-- Wayne Grudem*

Abraham was called a friend of God, not because he believed God exists, but because he entrusted his life to God. Humanity looks to many things other than God for security, purpose, and well being, effectively making these things their god.

Most common, possibly, is an unbridled trust in money. Money is important and plays a critical role in our lives, but we understand without explanation when Scripture commands those who are rich to "*not put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God*" (1 Timothy 6:17). There are many things we can trust in with the kind of ultimate trust that should only be put in God: social status, vocational advancement, beauty, marriage, family, politics, and more.

These, and others, are often both good and necessary aspects of life, but we make a critical distinction when we internalize the truth that they make lousy gods of ultimate trust. David, the warrior and king, knew this distinction well when he wrote, "*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God*" (Psalm 20:7).

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Enjoyment of God's gifts (e.g., money, friends, opportunities, jobs) without clinging to them.
- A willingness to follow God, even when it hurts (losing the deal rather than compromising integrity, losing the relationship rather than compromising morals, etc.).
- A willingness to follow God, even outside of one's comfort zone (engaging needed but risky conversations, following God's promptings without full understanding).
- A rested spirit and an absence of striving.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Exodus 17:8-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Moses and the Israelites entrusted their battle to God. What do you do when life battles against you (engage, escape, pray, eat, drink, etc.)? What are practical ways you can entrust your battles to God?



Exodus 20:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is God's greatest competition in your life? What "gods" might you go to rather than going to him?

1 Samuel 17:41-45 (especially 17:45)

Observations:

Discernment Question: If Goliath was living your life, what would he point to for his confidence (education, finances, skills, strength, etc.)?



Psalm 20:7-9

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is the equivalent of “chariots and horses” in your life? What does it look like to entrust your wellbeing to God whether you have these chariots and horses or not?

Psalm 147:10-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How does your life give God pleasure and delight?



Proverbs 31:30

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have physical attractiveness or physical strength effected your confidence in life? Have they brought about either arrogance or insecurity? If so, why and how might your confidence in God (or lack of confidence) influence these areas?

Jeremiah 1:4-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: What has God called you to be or do, but you have hesitated due to worldly insecurities?



Habakkuk 3:17-19

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have disappointments and unmet expectations effected your trust in God?

Matthew 6:25-34

Observations:

Discernment Question: How has having material possessions and money effected your trust in God? How has not having material possessions and money effected your trust in God?



Matthew 8:23-27

Observations:

Discernment Question: What “wind and waves” are currently rocking your boat? How might you experience God’s peace despite these challenges?

Matthew 14:13-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are the loaves and fish in your own life God is wanting you to entrust to him?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on trusting God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-
-
-

Memory Verses:

Psalm 46:10 NIV

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

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.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.





LOVE GOD OBEY GOD



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Regularly and willingly lives according to the teachings of scripture, according to the conviction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and from a place of trust in God.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

You might not recall the title of the 1887 hymn When We Walk with the Lord, but the chorus is well known:

“Trust and obey for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”

I am accepted by God
through the work of
Jesus Christ; therefore,
obey.

Timothy Keller

Central to our relationship with God is His call to trust and obey Him. Jesus said it simply, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." (John 14:23) Notice the language: *love, Father, home*. God is after relationship. It's only in the context of both trusting and obeying that we can experience intimate relationship with God and that we're also able to enjoy the blessings He has for us. A lack of trusting and obeying was what caused the Israelites to wander for 40 years, struggling relationally with God and missing out on the blessings He'd prepared for them in the promised land.

Also central to following Jesus is the fact that we often struggle to obey. It's essential to understand that our relationship with God is not based on whether we obey or not. Our relationship with God is based on grace. "For it is by grace you have been saved...not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Paul makes it even more clear when he wrote that he would "never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). Even on our best days of obeying God, there's nothing for us to boast in. Our right standing before God is not because we have been good but because the cross of Christ has brought about much needed forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation.

This teaching of grace, though, is often grossly misunderstood and misapplied. Scripture clearly teaches us that our relationship with God is based on grace, but it does not teach that obedience is optional. Jude boldly challenges using grace as a license to sin when he wrote about an "ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (Jude 1:4). The cross of Christ is not a license to get away from God so that we can do our own thing. The cross of Christ makes it possible to get

close to God, so we can follow him and obey him, because God's ways are right and good. Freedom is not *freedom to* sin because we desire to sin, but *freedom from* sin because we love Jesus and thus hate sin. Putting off the old self and putting on the new is much of the Christ-follower's experience; it requires obedience, but we are not left to do it alone or in our own strength.

Grace is not only a means of salvation and forgiveness, but scripture tells us that grace is also the foundation and means of our spiritual growth. "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people (and it also) teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ... Jesus gave himself for us to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14).

It is by grace through faith in Christ that we are saved, and it is by grace through faith in Christ that we learn to trust and obey.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can identify progress in obedience over the last three months.
- Can offer specific examples of 'loss' or 'cost' due to obeying God at the expense of opportunity or relationship.
- Can name points of struggle or temptation that are currently being addressed by taking them to God for strength to overcome.
- Recognizes the Spirit's conviction and guidance and actively applies this guidance to one's life.
- Has a deepening trust in God.
- Experiences rest, hope, confidence, and blessing.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Observations:

Discern Question: What is your perspective on obeying God? Do you believe (in your heart and head) that God has your best interest in mind? Do you believe obedience is possible? Do you want to obey God? Will obeying God give you life or will it be restrictive and oppressive?

Joshua 24:14-15

Observations:

Discernment Question: If you were to commit your life to something or someone other than God, what would that be? What "god" would you obey other than God?

Proverbs 1:10-19

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your current season of life, where do you feel pressure to not follow God? If it's people, who are those people? If it's circumstances, what are those circumstances?

John 14:15-24

Observations:

Discernment Question: Jesus said that if we love God we will keep his words. What do you love about God that inspires you to want to follow him?

Ephesians 5:1-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage names numerous common areas of disobedience: sexual immorality, covetousness, foolish talk, crude joking, drunkenness, etc. Which of these are you most susceptible to in your current season of life?

Philippians 3:17-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage references those whose “god is their belly.” What physical appetites might you be obeying rather than obeying God? Why are they a challenge for you?

Colossians 3:5-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: What most gets your attention in this passage, the things you're called to get rid of or the things you're called to do more of? Why?

Titus 2:11-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage exhorts us to "wait" for our hope, Jesus Christ, rather than engage worldly passions. In other words, we must live in this world, to a degree, with unfulfilled desires, because these desires will be fulfilled in Christ not in this world's cheap substitutes. How good are you at waiting? How does this affect your obedience?

1 John 2:15-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage identifies three categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Which of these do you most battle with in your current season of life? Why?

1 John 5:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you find God's commands burdensome or liberating? Why?

Jude 1:4

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your view of grace? Do you use grace as a license to sin or as power to overcome sin?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on obeying God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-

-

Memory Verses:

James 1:22 NIV

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

1 John 5:3 NIV

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™



LOVE GOD WORSHIP GOD



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Desires and enjoys God above all else and displays this desire for God throughout one's daily life.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Everybody worships. Everybody may not worship God, but everybody has something or someone they desire and crave above all else. That which is central is that which we worship. We may or may not worship the God we sing to on a given Sunday. As we sing, we may in fact be dreaming about and contemplating the true object of our worship: the next deal, the prospective spouse, the respect and admiration of others, etc. What is our central *hope*, that one thing we long for that will change everything if we get it? What is our central *love*, that one thing we could not lose or life would not be worth living? What is our central *trust*, that one thing we look to for strength and confidence in life? How we answer these questions reveals the object of our worship. God is looking for a people who will make him their ultimate *hope*, their ultimate *love*, and their ultimate *trust*. In short, he is looking for a group of people who will let him be their God, the object of their worship. He longs for this, not because he needs this from us, but because he knows we need him for our own wellbeing and satisfaction.

"EVERYTHING. THAT'S WHAT'S AT STAKE IN WORSHIP. The urgent, indeed troubling, message of Scripture is that everything that matters is at stake in worship." -- Mark Labberton

Many view worship as a lifeless ritual of singing songs at a church gathering. Jesus challenged such thinking when he quoted Isaiah, saying, *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me"* (Matthew 15:8). Gathering with a group of others to sing songs of worship is only authentic worship when God is that person's deepest and truest desire. A person may sing to God, but if that person's most central desire is about vocational advancement, financial gain, or relational satisfaction, then it is not true worship. True worship happens not only in the context of congregational singing, but it happens throughout one's week as we display with our every decision that which we truly value.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- A growing longing for the presence of God.
- Increased thoughts of God throughout one's day.
- Increased self-control as lesser desires are seen for what they truly are and are not.
- The presence of joy and peace despite challenging circumstances.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

2 Chronicles 20:1-34

Observations:

Discernment Question: Jehoshaphat and his army entered into battle with worshippers leading the way. What do you do when life's battles war against you? What would it feel like and be like to enter life's battles in a spirit of worship? How could you do this authentically?

Psalm 27 (especially 27:4)

Observations:

Discernment Question: David's "one thing" (his most central desire) was to "gaze upon the beauty of the Lord." What's your "one thing"?



Psalm 73:25

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you desire God as this Psalmist desires God? Why or why not? If not, what is it you desire (worship) above God?

Isaiah 29:13

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well are the words you say about God a reflection of the heart you feel toward God?



Jeremiah 2:12-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you satisfy your soul thirst?

Luke 24:50-53

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does Jesus inspire worship from you? Why or why not?



John 4:13-24

Observations:

Discernment Question: Could your current relationship with God be described as a relationship that quenches your thirst or a relationship that makes you thirsty? Why?

Acts 2:46-47

Observations:

Discernment Question: How much do you value gathering with other follows of Christ, in both small and large groups, to praise God as a community? Is this value reflected in your practices?



Romans 12:1-2

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do the actions of your life display worship of God?

Colossians 3:15-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you celebrate God?



Hebrews 12:28-29

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you revere God? Does he regularly inspire awe in you?

Revelation 22:8-9

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are there any people or things you effectively fall down before in a way that should only be done with God?

Before moving on to the Next Steps, consider taking time to worship God, express gratitude to God, or celebrate God in a way that is genuine for you.



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on worshipping God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Memory Verses:

Psalm 27:4 NIV

One thing that I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Hebrews 12:28 NIV

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE GOD STUDY GOD



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Cultivates a true knowledge of God and God's teachings by gaining a solid biblical and theological foundation

Spiritual Outcome Described:

There are two all-too-common errors when it comes to studying God and God's teachings. The first is to let one's relationship with God be overrun by study. This is the person whose so-called relationship with God becomes an academic exercise. The second error is the exact opposite. This is the person who is all heart and no head. Possibly out of

reaction to those who merely study God academically, these are those who fail to study God at all. Neither error is acceptable for the authentic follower of Christ. When giving the greatest commandment, Jesus made it clear that we are not only to love

*"Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity."
-- C.H. Spurgeon*

God with all our heart and all our soul, but we must love God with all our minds (Matthew 22:36-40). To neglect the study of God not only dishonors God but is also dangerous: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6). Life is hard and abounds with challenge. The person who has carefully considered God's sovereignty, grace, mercy, and providence will be the person whose roots go deep into the ground strengthening that person for life's inevitable storms. The person who neglects these thoughts of God may have great heart for God but will be dangerously vulnerable when winds blow hard against them. Put another way, knowledge of God leads to knowledge of life, and sadly, the flip is also true. When we ignore God we are ignoring the abounding life God will birth in us and through us. To authentically relate to God and trust God, we must know more of who this God truly is and what he is up to in this world. When we lack depth of understanding we will lack depth of conviction and depth of participation. When we have depth of understanding, we will have the depth of conviction that will bring about the kind of living for which we truly long.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can articulate, in one's own words and from Scripture, teachings on eight central topics: the Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, humanity, salvation, the church, and spiritual growth.
- Knows and can articulate the overarching story of Scripture.
- Knows how to discover holistic and balanced truths in Scripture by letting Scripture interpret itself.
- Can identify ways one's knowledge of God is currently impacting daily living.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well are the teachings of Scripture integrated into your daily life and conversation? What appeals to you about integrating Scripture into your daily life and conversations? What resistance do you have to it?

Joshua 1:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: How much of your thought life could be characterized by meditating on God's law and teaching? Why a lot? Why a little?



Psalm 1:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you drink deeply from Scripture as a tree would drink deeply from a nearby river? What motivates this in your life? What inhibits it?

Psalm 119:23-24

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent do God's teachings "delight" you or bring you pleasure? Why or why not?



Proverbs 2:1-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you seek God's wisdom as you would seek a hidden treasure in a nearby field? Why or why not?

Hosea 4:6

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you seen destruction or hardship in your life due to lack of insight into God's teachings?



Romans 12:2

Observations:

Discernment Question: What most shapes your mind? In your current season, is the world “conforming” you or are God’s teachings transforming you?

1 Timothy 4:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you take doctrine and biblical teaching seriously? Why or why not?



1 Timothy 6:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: How caught up have you been in peripheral teachings or arguments that promote disunity rather than unity around the essentials?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on studying God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Memory Verses:

2 Timothy 3:14 NIV

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 NIV

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.comThe “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE GOD SURRENDER



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Live surrendered to the will of God, as shown in one's lifestyle, decisions, character, life missions, etc..

Spiritual Outcome Described:

It's almost inevitable that the newer follower of Christ will make a false assumption. It may not be articulated and may not even be conscious, but the perception is that because God loves us he will be certain to fulfill our hopes and dreams. We will have the job, the spouse, the financial resources, and the opportunities that otherwise would not have been available to us apart from Christ. In truth, God does love to bless us, but the further we get down the path, the more we learn the reality of what it means to "take up your cross and follow Christ" (see Matthew 16:24). Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ and no longer live but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20), and John wrote that, "if anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them." (1 John 2:15). The Deepen follower of Christ has learned to fully surrender their desires, hopes, and dreams and to passionately seek God's desires, hopes, and dreams. To do so is simultaneously death and life. We die to the life we had envisioned so that we may live life freely for the greatest of goods.

"If my life is surrendered to God, all is well. Let me not grab it back, as though it were in peril in His hand but would be safer in mine!"
--Elisabeth Elliot

This depth of surrender is both powerful and profound, albeit at times painful. There is a peace gained that life circumstances can never give, and there is an empowerment that happens toward fulfilling one's true calling and the good works "God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10). It's only when we do this that we can authentically pray with Jesus, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39).

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can name a significant disappointment that has been processed openly with God to a point of peace (peace with God and peace with the disappointment).
- Has an identifiable expectancy and excitement for the will of God in one's life.
- Can identify a time in a recent season of life where one followed God despite personal inhibitions or concerns.
- Has let go of one's own manmade vision of one's life and has fully embraced God's vision for one's life (or is passionately seeking God's vision).

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Psalm 131

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you at peace? Why or why not?

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Observations:

Discernment Question: To the extent that you have peace, how much of that peace is dependent on current circumstances that could change?



Matthew 16:24-27

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are you attempting to gain this world?

John 5:30

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent is your will (over God's will) shaping your expectations of God?



Romans 12:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are your desires shaped by the world's expectations rather than internal transformation from God?

Galatians 2:20

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you like this verse? Why or why not?



Philippians 2:1-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are your relationships dominated by your agenda or by a desire to serve others?

Colossians 3:1-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: How great is your passion for eternal matters? How focused is your pursuit of eternal matters?



1 Timothy 6:6-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you content with what you don't have?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on surrendering all to God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Walks through life in communion with God, listening to the Spirit for guidance and trusting the Spirit for strength.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Maybe one of the more surprising statements made by Christ was when he told his disciples, “It is for your good that I am going away” (John 16:7). What could be better for their lives than to physically walk through life with the Son of God? If they had a question, they could ask him. If they needed help or guidance, he was right there with them. Jesus was unquestionably clear, though, their situation was getting ready to improve, because he was leaving. “Unless I go away,” he told them, “the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7). Jesus had previously hinted at this improvement when he said that this Counselor, the Holy Spirit, “lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). So the Spirit that was around them would one day live within them. Jesus later explained that when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they “will receive power” (Acts 1:8). So although they did not understand it, and although it is commonly misunderstood today, their situation was transitioning from having the presence of God walking beside them to the presence of God residing within them. This certainly would be an improvement, but what are the implications for today? What do the Scriptures teach us about the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Scripture offers both examples and teachings about God’s Spirit. When Paul and his companions were looking for guidance, Acts tells us that “they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to” (Acts 16:7). In another place we are taught to “keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25), and that when we do, the presence of God’s Spirit will be evidenced by specific fruit in a person’s life. This fruit of God’s Spirit is contrasted in Scripture to the “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16-25). The presence of God’s Spirit is evidenced by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, but the evidence of the flesh is seen in sexual immorality, jealousy, fits of anger, dissensions, envy, drunkenness, and more. We see then in Scripture that the authentic follower of Christ discovers the grace of living by the unlimited strength of God’s presence and guidance rather than living by their own very limited strength and perspective of their flesh.

*“God created you to do life with him,
right now, moment by moment.”*
-- John Burke

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person’s Life:

- Ever-increasing presence of the fruit of the Spirit in one’s life.
- A growing conversational relationship with God throughout one’s day.
- An identifiable decrease in sin’s appeal or grip.
- A growing ability to discern God’s guidance throughout one’s day.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Genesis 1:2, Joel 2:28-29

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are your initial thoughts regarding the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit a new idea or an old friend?

Luke 3:16, Luke 11:11-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: Have you asked God for his Spirit? If yes, how have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your current season of life? If no, what inhibits you? Knowledge? Insight? Awareness?



John 14:15-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent do you treasure the Holy Spirit? To what extent do you engage the Holy Spirit?

John 15:1-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent do you have a day by day, moment by moment, dependence on God's presence as a branch would depend upon a vine?



Acts 1:8, 4:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent have you looked to the Holy Spirit to empower you to make a difference in the world?

Romans 8:5-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your current season of life, does your mind settle more into thoughts of the flesh or thoughts of the Spirit? How do you see this played out in your life?



1 Corinthians 3:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you view and treat your body? Do you treat it as a temple for the presence of God? How yes or how no?

Galatians 5:16-26

Observations:

Discernment Question: How characterized is your life by fruit of the Spirit? How much more or less is your life characterized by fruit of the Spirit compared to a year ago? Five years ago?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on staying connected to God's Spirit? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-
-

Memory Verses:

John 15: 4-5 NIV

Remain in me [Jesus], as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Galatians 5:22 NIV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BUILD CHARACTER

NEW CREATION



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Embraces, enjoys, and lives out of one's true identity in Christ, combating lies of the enemy with God's truth and God's power.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

We've heard the phrase, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." It comes up when we see a person stuck in their ways. A person may be able to fake being something they're not for a short while, but it's just a matter of time before their true self comes out. It's for this very reason that when we address building character, we recognize that Scripture does not call us to *change*, because change is impossible. The calling of Scripture is not to change but to die, and to then experience a new life in Christ. Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). Paul did not seek to change his old self, rather, by entrusting his life to Christ his old self was crucified on the cross with Christ, so a new self would be raised with Christ to live a new way.

*"Now, with God's help, I shall become myself."
-- Soren Kierkegaard*

To the Romans Paul wrote, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4). The authentic Christian life is not a life of muscling our way to change our behaviors. Such living is both frustrating and futile. The authentic Christian life is miraculous. It is the life that learns to live out of the new creation. "If anyone is in Christ," Paul wrote, "he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The enemy knows this reality and combats it with the same strategy he has used for thousands of years. He lies to us about ourselves. Jesus referred to our enemy as "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

We should not be surprised then, that when it comes to new creation living, we must identify deeply embedded lies about ourselves, and replace these lies with Scripture's truths. Warped thoughts lead to warped living. Understanding and embracing the wondrous work of Christ in our lives leads to a new kind of living that would be impossible if left to our old selves. But we are not left to our old selves. We have been raised with Christ that "we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Knows and confidently claims Scripture's teachings on one's identity in Christ.
- Is aware of personal points of vulnerability to the enemy's lies and knows the truths that correct these lies .
- The conviction that one can and will live differently because of the work Christ has done in one's life.
- Has a growing ability to help others identify lies about themselves and is able to point them to Scripture's truths that correct these lies.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

John 3:1-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: Have you meditated on the reality that if you have trusted Christ, the Spirit of God has birthed new life in you? How have you seen this new life in your daily life?



Romans 6:1-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Just as we died with Christ on the cross, we rise to new life in his resurrection. How has this newness of life made you different from your old self?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you experience divine power in your daily life?



Ephesians 2:1-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you seen “death-like” living in your old life and newness of life in your experience of Christ?

Philippians 4:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: What do you think about? What do you meditate on? Is it reflective of your new life in Christ or your old life apart from Christ?



Colossians 1:21-23

Observations:

Discernment Question: One day you will be presented holy and blameless before God in Christ. How does this reality influence your daily living?

1 John 3:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How has being made a child of God, and having hope for Christ's appearing, inspired purification in your life?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on our new creation in Christ? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scripture Memory:

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Ephesians 2:22-24 NIV

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BUILD CHARACTER

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES



Spiritual Outcome Defined: Practices and rhythms that strengthen your identity in Christ by experiencing God through disciplines of prayer, Scripture, solitude, fasting, confession, and others.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Whether you're new in your faith journey or been walking with Christ for decades, you want more out of life and out of your relationship with Christ. The good news? More is possible! God always has more for you. However, the "how-to-get-there-from-here" answer of "spiritual disciplines" can sound painful. It can sound like more boxes that need to be checked or a list of things we "should" do that we can't seem to find time for.

What if we looked at these practices another way? Instead of seeing them as ho-hum-must-do's, what if we see them as spiritual opportunities that could do the most life changing thing of all, put us in the presence of God. It's being open and available physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually through these practices that we have the opportunity to listen to, see, and experience God which can take us from the "one degree of glory to another" we see in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that we so long for and desire. Not only does the path to spiritual growth vary from person to person, it can vary from season to season in a person's life. Pausing to look at the spiritual practices and rhythms you have in place and being open to shifting or trying on new ones not only can help you get "spiritually unstuck" but can keep your relationship with Christ vibrant and life-giving.

The opportunity for the **more** you are looking for awaits you as you faithfully and regularly engage in spiritual practices and rhythms of life that even Jesus, when he walked the Earth, thought so important to adopt. Yes, even Jesus needed time away from people to connect in a real way through prayer, scripture, fasting, worship, etc. to stay connected to his Father.

What practices might you try on or regularly put in place in the rhythm of your life to help you live loved, filled, and free?

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Is able to explain the purpose of various disciplines and can describe them through both Scripture and experience.
- Consistently reads and reflects on all genres of Scripture.
- Has an implemented method for regularly dialoguing with God in prayer.
- Has identified and implemented a holistic plan for engaging spiritual disciplines in their current season of life.

Psalm 1:1-3

Discernment Questions: If you were a tree, in your current season of life, would your leaves be vibrant and green or brittle and dry? Why?

Proverbs 2:1-8

Discernment Questions: What things are you pursuing in your life right now? How passionate is your current pursuit of God? If it were a treasure hunt, would you likely find the treasure?

1 Timothy 4:7-8

Discernment Questions: Thoughtfully consider your current spiritual practices or training. How effective are they? Are you “spiritually fit” or “spiritually flabby”? Knowing training for godliness has value for not only this life, but the life to come, what new practices or rhythms do you need to put in place to help you become more spiritually fit?

Jeremiah 29:11-12

Discernment Questions: How would you describe your prayer life right now? Is it hard to believe that God wants to hear your prayers? As you pray, what makes it difficult to believe that the way He answers your prayers is to prosper you and not to harm you?

Philippians 4:6-7

Discernment Questions: When you pray, what are your prayers like? Are they filled with prayers of gratitude and thankfulness for the little and big wins of life? Or is it tempting to just pray about the wants and worries of life? How could praying like vs 6 suggests help you have more peace as mentioned in vs 7?

Mark 1:35

Discernment Questions: To what extent do you have solitude in your life? What practices or habits could you engage to create space for solitude and time alone with God?

Isaiah 30:15

Discernment Questions: How can practicing solitude, silence, and rest help strengthen you in this season you are in? Do you make time for this regularly or has your life been like the Israelites and you've been too busy making things happen?

Matthew 6:16-18

Discernment Questions: What has your experience been with fasting for spiritual reasons? If it's something you have done, have those experiences been vital and important? Why or why not? If it's something you have not done, what keeps you from doing so? Is it just a new idea you haven't considered? Or, is it something you are aware of but resistant to?

Joel 2: 12-13

Discernment Questions: Knowing that God wants all of your heart, how can fasting help your heart turn fully towards Him? Is there anything in this season God is calling you to fast from (food, social media, tv, etc) so that He can have more of your heart and attention?

Psalm 30:11-12

Discernment Questions: There is not only a time and place where silence refreshes the soul, but celebration as well! When is the last time you celebrated with God and others? What big or little things in this season of your life could you take time to celebrate?

2 Peter 1:3-9

Discernment Questions: To what extent are you increasing in the qualities listed? What equips and inspires you? What inhibits and restricts you? How would implementing new spiritual practices or rhythms help you spiritually grow and mature?

Next Steps:

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on obeying God? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-

-

Scripture Memory:

Romans 12:2 NIV

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.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 NIV

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.



BUILD CHARACTER CONFESSION



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Regularly engages the practice of confession, to both God and others, keeping oneself in step with God's Spirit.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

The most dangerous problems in life are the hidden and unknown problems. These are the problems that lurk below the surface—undetected—wreaking havoc or preparing to make themselves known. Cancer is a problem, but it is a much more significant problem when it grows undetected. Disloyalty in an organization is a problem, but it creates an even bigger problem when that disloyalty quietly sows seeds of doubts in others and spreads the disease. Faulty engineering is a problem, but the defective design of a bridge is most dangerous when cars continue to use that bridge and nobody is aware of the issue. Known problems can be dealt with and addressed, especially when detected early. It's when a problem festers and spreads that the problem *really* becomes a problem and the damage may be irreversible. Confession is the honest and humble admission of a problem. It's the bringing of spiritual cancer out into the open so that cancer can be dealt with before it creates an even bigger problem. The more challenging thing about sin, though, is that resistance to confession is not just because the problem is at times unknown. The more pervasive problem is that authentic confession is resisted because authentic confession is accompanied by repentance, and we often don't want to let go of our ways. The sin, then, is effectively hidden—even though it is known—and the damage of that sin increases overtime. The authentic follower of Christ knows this and has a growing passion to dismiss sin early. He or she is open with God and open with their confidants. It takes a great deal of humility and courage to bring one's sin out into the open, but the power of doing so is profound. Scripture teaches that *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). In another place we are commanded to *"confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed"* (James 5:16). Those serious about ridding themselves of spiritual cancer are serious about both vertical and horizontal confession. We confess and repent before God, and we confess and repent before each other.

*"The discipline of confession
brings an end to pretense."
-- Richard Foster*

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- A daily practice of honest conversation and confession to God.
- No known areas of life that are "hidden" from God.
- Identified and named people with whom one can be fully transparent.
- Can identify a conversation in the last month where a sin or struggle was confessed to another person.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

1 Kings 8:33-34

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you currently holding onto that you are hiding from God or resistant to submitting to him?

2 Chronicles 26:16-23, Proverbs 16:18

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you struggle with arrogance or pride? If so, how is it keeping you from listening to God or the people around you?



Psalm 32:1-7

Observations:

Discernment Question: What result of unconfessed sin have you seen, or are you currently seeing, in your own life (restlessness, anxiety, sleeplessness, bitterness, anger, etc.)?

Proverbs 28:13

Observations:

Discernment Question: As you are reading these passages, are any areas of your life coming to mind you need to address? If so, what are those what has kept you from addressing them in your life?



Isaiah 2:12-22

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are you worshipping God externally but internally rebelling against him? What keeps you from being fully honest before God and others?

James 5:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you engage the regular practice of confessing to those whom you trust and who know you best? If not, what keeps you from doing this?



1 John 1:5-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you have a confessional community, where you collectively seek God's grace through Christ and are open with each other about any struggles? If not, what keeps you from having this and how could you make it a high priority to cultivate it?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on confession? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scripture Memory:

James 5 NIV

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1 John 1:9 NIV

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BUILD CHARACTER FREEDOM



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Experiences freedom in ever-increasing ways from addictions and sin patterns by surrendering to God and engaging authentic community.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

There are at least two errors commonly made when it comes to overcoming sin. The first is to pretend sin is not there. This is the professing follower of Christ who pretends to be perfect. They of course wouldn't say as much, but they carry an air of superiority and arrogance that results in a plastic religiosity. The Pharisees of Scripture were notorious for this. The second error is equally destructive but a bit more subtle. This is the error of fully recognizing one's sin, but not believing the sin can truly be overcome. This is not the person who is stuck in their arrogance of perfection, but the person who is stuck in the despair of their imperfection. For some, they are stuck in their sin because they're convinced the situation is hopeless. For others, they are stuck in their sin, because they're convinced that to be sinful is to be authentic and to claim to have overcome a past sin is to be inauthentic, and they would never want to be that. These errors, denying sin and being stuck in sin, are two ditches on opposite sides of the same road. In the middle is Scripture's teaching on freedom.

"Sin is like compulsive or addictive habits that seem to control our actions even when we don't want them to and after we swear we will 'never do it again.' Paradoxically, even though we are powerless to defeat Sin on our own, we are responsible for our Sin and for seeking help to stop sinning, a seeking that leads us to God."
-- Keith Miller

To be free, according to Scripture, is not to just do whatever one wants to do, but it is freedom from destructive patterns of living. Jesus said, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). We know this slavery when we consider how challenging—impossible—it seems to break destructive patterns of living in our own lives. We struggle with substance abuse, eating disorders, lust, greed, and more. It is easy to remain convinced that these are realities we must simply accommodate. But Jesus was clear that "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Paul addresses the same theme from a different angle when he talks about the new life available to us through Christ. He points to the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead as the Spirit that will raise us out of our destructive patterns so "we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4). Freedom is possible. Available to us is a power that raises the dead and breaks us out of bondage. To diminish this power, or to attempt to live in our own strength, is to minimize the gospel and neglect the authentic kind of living that is truly available to us.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- The ability to explain Scripture's teaching on freedom.
- Can name past destructive patterns that are no longer active in one's life.
- Is not clinging to any current destructive patterns by being unwilling to submit them to God's grace and power.
- The desire, ability and practice of helping others gain true freedom.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent do you believe that, by grace, you can overcome destructive patterns of living?

Galatians 5:1

Observations:

Discernment question: What form does slavery take in your life? (anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, fear, coveting, negativity, etc.) How does it wreak havoc in your life?



Proverbs 20:1, 23:20-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you control your physical appetites for food, drink, or any physical substances?

Isaiah 5:11-12

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you give alcohol or other substances to great a focus in your life?



John 8:31-36

Observations:

Discernment Question: From what has Christ set you free? From what do you need Christ to set you free?

Romans 6:1-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent is your current life characterized by the new and resurrected life in Christ?



Romans 13:13-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you engage any form of sex outside of marriage (premarital, extramarital, pornography, etc.)? If so, why?

1 Corinthians 10:13

Observations:

Discernment Question: What currently most tempts you? What way out does God provide?



Ephesians 5:18

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might the Spirit of God replace drunkenness or other destructive patterns in your life?

Philippians 3:12-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently looking forward to what is ahead in your walk with Christ? How stuck are you in past patterns? How might insights from this passage motivate you?



Titus 2:11-14, 3:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: How is grace teaching you to renounce and move beyond past destructive patterns? How is your salvation saving you not just for heaven but from destructive patterns today?

James 1:12-15

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you see desire and temptation giving birth to sin in your own life? What are some of the patterns you could recognize and disarm? What are practical things you could do to avoid these patterns in the future?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on freedom? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scripture Memory:

Romans 6:11-14 NIV

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Titus 2:11-14 NIV

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BUILD CHARACTER WISDOM



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Live wisely in accordance with the wisdom of Scripture and the counsel of those who have experience beyond one's own.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Let's make a distinction: wisdom is different than intelligence. Intelligence may be had by those able to hold a great many facts in their minds. They know a lot about a lot of things, which can be a very useful tool. But there is such a thing as an intelligent fool, or conversely, a person who may not have a high degree of intelligence but who has a deep degree of wisdom. Wisdom is the person who knows how to live and how to relate. The intelligent person might be gifted at crafting words or statements, for example, but the wise will know when to speak and when to be silent.

The intelligent may have the competencies to be impressive in the moment, but the wise will have the discipline to get things done overtime.

Wisdom is not flashy and is often overlooked and underappreciated. Ecclesiastes tells us *"there lived...a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom."* It goes on to say, though, that *"nobody remembered that poor man."* (Ecclesiastes 9:15). The wise are content with this. They do not live to be impressive but effective, unlike the fool who parades himself. Scripture has a great deal to say about wisdom.

"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many ... know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom." -- Charles Spurgeon

The book of Proverbs is dedicated to wisdom, as are Ecclesiastes and a few others. James is often referred to as the wisdom book of the New Testament, Song of Solomon has a great deal to say about romance and relationships, and Job gives wisdom for enduring hardship and suffering. Scripture tells us, *"Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold."* (Proverbs 3:13-14). Wisdom is found through both Scripture, and according to Scripture itself, through the counsel of many (see Proverbs 15:22). We learn from our own experience, the experience of others, and the experience of Scripture. Those who grow in wisdom are those who listen carefully to the counsel of Scripture, they seek the guidance of others, and they are reflective enough on their own experiences that they learn from their own collection of wins and losses.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Is familiar with the teaching of Scripture's wisdom books and actively applies these teachings to one's life (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and James).
- Can name personal advisors for all aspects of one's life: work, relationships, dating, marriage, parenting, money management, health, etc..
- Can name at least three areas of life (finances, relationships, work, conflict management, etc.) where living foolishly has been replaced by living wisely.
- Can name a time in the past month where wisdom was intentionally sought and found through Scripture and counsel about a specific area of life (finances, relationships, work, etc.).

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times, and if helpful, in multiple versions. Very simply, write your observations about the passage. What do you notice? What words or thoughts catch your attention? What does it mean and what implications does it have in your life?

Proverbs 1:1-7

Observations:

Discernment Question: How important has the pursuit of biblical wisdom been in your life? What have you done to acquire it?



Proverbs 1:20-33

Observations:

Discernment Question: Where in your life have you seen the fruit of wisdom? Where have you seen the fruit of foolishness?

Proverbs 3:1-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: What do you think it means to be “wise in your own eyes” rather than the one who “fears the Lord”? Which is more descriptive of your current life?



Proverbs 6:6-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you more like the ant or the lazy sluggard? Why?

Proverbs 6:20-29

Observations:

Discernment Question: How has wisdom protected you from temptation? How has foolishness drawn you into temptation?



Proverbs 9:7-9, 15:12, 15:22, 15:31, 19:2, 19:27

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you seek counsel and receive advice or correction?

Proverbs 10:8, 10:19, 11:12, 11:13, 15:1, 17:27, 17:28

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do your words reveal wisdom or foolishness? How?



Proverbs 12:11, 12:24

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does your work ethic reveal wisdom or foolishness? How?

Proverbs 15:16, 15:27, 17:1, 20:1

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does your self-control and contentment toward material possessions and your appetites reveal wisdom or foolishness?



James 1:5, 3:17

Observations:

Discernment Question: How frequently are you asking God for wisdom and genuinely seeking him for it?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on wisdom? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BUILD CHARACTER

STEADINESS & PERSEVERANCE



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Exhibit a rooted peace and a patient endurance through trials, opposition, tedium, changing life seasons, and hardship – keeping one’s eyes fixed on the eternal reward promised by Christ.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

New endeavors have an advantage. They are embraced and enjoyed not just for themselves but for the fact that they are new. The new dating relationship, the new job, the new exercise routine, all of these have a unique appeal not just for their intrinsic quality but for their newness. Following Christ is no exception to these realities. The new follower of Christ is

discovering new ideas and new realities that are transforming one’s life. This is both good and exciting, but it is also temporary.

The authentic follower of Christ knows the power and importance of both steadiness and perseverance. Scripture abounds with story after story of those who have persevered in their faith, decade after decade, and consequently developed profound depth in their lives.

“The disciplined person is the person who can do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.”
-- Richard Foster

Abraham and Sarah persevered through infertility. Joseph persevered through enslavement and imprisonment. Moses persevered in his leadership. Such living demands a perspective that doesn’t need the new and flashy idea or opportunity but is content to be faithful with what was learned years before, even in the midst of hardship. This demands a shift in perspective. A person may be tempted to withdraw from critical relationships, church involvement, and serving opportunities, because for one reason or another, things got hard. The hardship may be something heavy, like suffering and conflict, or it may be something common, like the hardship of boredom. Regardless, withdrawing from God and people due to suffering and pain, or wander and boredom, leads to shallow living that misses the richness of perseverance.

Over and over in Scripture we hear exhortations akin to, *“Be strong, and take heart, and wait for the Lord”* (Psalm 27:14). If we are perpetually trying to “fix” things ourselves rather than maintaining a steady and persevering spirit, we will miss the depth and richness God has for us through the commitment to one long pull in the same direction.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Consistently maintains one's spiritual disciplines year after year.
- Remains committed and involved in one church for a significant period of time.
- Can describe a time where one persevered through hardship resulting in a weathered and deepened faith rather than a withered and weakened faith.
- Has a centered faith that is not daily thrown off by circumstantial frustrations and difficulties.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Psalm 27:13-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: What unfulfilled longings do you carry in life?



Romans 5:1-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does hardship tend to repel you from God or draw you toward God? Why?

Romans 8:28-39

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you view yourself as one who overcomes and conquers hardship by Christ or as one who is defeated? Why?



Romans 12:12

Observations:

Discernment Question: What role does prayer play in your ability to persevere?

1 Corinthians 15:58

Observations:

Discernment Question: Which is most descriptive of your engagement in the work of the Lord: never engaged, formerly engaged, partially engaged, very engaged? Why this descriptor?



Galatians 6:9-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you weary or energized for doing good? What inspires you?

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How vibrant is your hope in Christ? Do you think much with an eternal perspective of life?



1 Timothy 4:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are the dials on your dashboard that you need to watch?
How do they currently read?

Hebrews 10:19-25

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you doing to draw close to God for encouragement?
What are you doing to draw close to others for encouragement?



Hebrews 12:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: What entangles you and weighs you down?

James 1:2-4, 12

Observations:

Discernment Question: Scripture repeatedly affirms that hardship serves a purpose. Do you genuinely embrace this? Why or why not?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on steadiness and perseverance? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE PEOPLE RELATIONALLY ENGAGED



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Participates in and promotes authentic, Christ-centered, unified community.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

In the final days of Jesus' life, he offered a prayer. It is recorded in John 17, and it offers a critical insight into what Jesus deemed important. He knew he was in his final hours, and he knew he would shortly be removed from his closest followers. It's in these moments that Scripture tells us *"he looked toward heaven and prayed..."* (John 17:1). First he prayed for himself: *"Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you"* (John 17:1). He followed that with a prayer for his closest followers, the disciples who were in earshot at that very moment. He then, though, did something fascinating. He prayed *"for those who will believe in me through their message"* (John 17:20).

"The soul that is alone. . .is like the burning coal that is alone. It will grow colder rather than hotter"
-- St. John of the Cross

In other words, he prayed for us, those who believe in him through the message of his earliest followers. Hear carefully what he asked: *"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."* (John 17:20-21). His prayer was for the unity, the oneness, of his followers. Jesus was not naïve to the challenges his followers would face and how our unity would be challenged time and time again.

But this did not prevent him from asking for it, and for giving us the implicit exhortation that those who follow Christ are to be called together into a unified community. Jesus did not envision a collection of strangers who happen to believe the same doctrines. Jesus envisioned a unified family when he said, *"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother"* (Mark 3:35).

The authentic follower of Christ is one who treasures God's family, seeks to know and be known in that family, and works toward the unity of that family. This takes energy and effort as all relationships do. There is little to no gain for the person who claims to follow Christ, sits anonymously in a church service periodically, and then retreats to his or her "real" friends. The authentic follower of Christ knows there is power and importance in unity and invests the relational time and energy to be connected and unified with fellow followers of Christ.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can identify and name a close circle of friends who are collectively seeking and serving Christ together
- Is committed to a local church and is relationally engaged in and through that church
- Consistently moves past ethnic barriers, socio-economic barriers, and personal affinity preferences to maintain, promote, and engage unity in the body of Christ
- Enjoys and engages unity with fellow Christ-followers in the church at large despite peripheral doctrinal differences

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Psalm 133

Observations:

Discernment Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you value relational connectedness (1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very much')? Do you treasure relational connectedness as the writer of this Psalm clearly treasures it? Why or why not?



Proverbs 1:10-19, 13:20

Observations:

Discernment Question: Describe the influence those closest to you have on you. Are they bringing out your best or your worst? Are they inspiring you to seek God or seek other things?

Mark 3:31-35

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well connected are you to other followers of Christ? Is your connection best described as 'distant and periodic' or 'close like family'? What inspires or inhibits you in your connection to other followers of Christ?



John 17:20-23

Observations:

Discernment Question: How unified are you with other followers of Christ? What has brought greater unity in your relationships? What has made unity difficult?

Acts 2:42-47

Observations:

Discernment Question: How generous are you with your time, energy, and resources with other followers of Christ? How focused is your effort to truly know others and let them know you?



Hebrews 10:23-25

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who is encouraging you in your faithfulness to Christ? Who are you encouraging in their faithfulness to Christ? List names.

1 John 1:5-7

Observations:

Discernment Question: What disobedience might be present in your current season of life that is inhibiting your relational engagement of God and others?



Revelation 7:9-12

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your perspective on relationally connecting with other authentic followers of Christ who differ from you ethnically, culturally, or socioeconomically? Where do you enjoy this? Where are you stretched by it? What are you doing in your life to promote it?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on staying relationally engaged? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-

Memory Verses:

Romans 9: 9-12 NIV

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 9: 13-16 NIV

Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.





LOVE PEOPLE PEACEMAKER



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Proactively engages in biblical conflict resolution and offers forgiveness, grace, and understanding to those who have offended or harmed.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Conflict is a reality of friendship. The question is not *whether* conflict will happen, but when it does happen, how will it be handled and will it be handled well? The world abounds with examples of poorly managed conflict. Friendships are needlessly lost over miscommunication. Families are torn apart by stubborn refusal to give ground. Churches are split and rendered ineffective because a few people get overly determined.

Conflict is dangerous and can be highly destructive, but it can also be something else. Conflict, when handled well, can be highly effective and good at bringing about a greater unity and understanding amidst those involved. Marriages thrive when they have passed through the tunnel of conflict and come out the other side.

The bonds of friendship are strengthened when people go toe to toe and gain greater understanding of the other. Churches, too, are strengthened when people discuss their differences or wounds in an effort to root out the cancer of bitterness and unforgiveness. It's for these reasons that it's no surprise that Scripture says a great deal about conflict management, forgiveness, and accountability. "*Blessed are the peacemakers,*" Jesus said, "*for they will be called children of God*" (Matthew 6:9). With Scripture's abundance of teachings on conflict, one would think healthy conflict management would abound amongst God's people. And to be sure, it often does, but not always.

"If you have 120 volts of electricity coming into your house but you have broken wiring, you may turn on the switch, but nothing works... Why? Because you have broken wiring. The power is ready to do its work..., but where there is broken wiring, there is no power. Unity is necessary among the children of God if we are going to know the flow of power...to see God do His wonders."
-- A. W. Tozer

Engaging healthy conflict takes a great deal of energy and fortitude, which leads involved parties more often to find the easy escape routes of gossip, isolationism, and bitterness. But these escape routes are lethal. Unchecked anger leaves us with colored lenses through which we see everything—especially the people around us—far differently than we would if that anger were removed. Scripture's teaching on engaging and healing conflict is both clear and compelling. Familiarity with these teachings is essential, only to be exceeded by the importance of practicing them.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Knows and can explain the basic teachings of Scripture on conflict management.
- Does not have any unresolved conflict with another person where they have not done all Scripture would counsel them to do.
- Can identify a time in the past three months where they have apologized to another person.
- Can identify a time in the past year where they have humbly approached a person who has offended them without having first spread the offense by explaining it to others.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Proverbs 16:28

Observations:

Discernment Question: Thoughtfully and prayerfully consider your own words and actions. In the past, how have your own words and actions created conflict? In the present, how are your own words and actions creating conflict?



Proverbs 20:19

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you trustworthy? Are you a good friend? Why or why not? Do you speak despairingly about others when they're not present—even in humor—or are you careful with your words?

Proverbs 26:20

Observations:

Discernment Question: Thoughtfully consider a past or present conflict you had with others. How did your words and actions increase the conflict? How did your words and actions bring about healthy resolution?



Proverbs 27:5

Observations:

Discernment Question: How welcoming are you of correction? How effective are you at bringing correction to others in a way they will receive it?

Proverbs 28:23

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you speak thoughtful encouragement to others, or do you flatter them with dishonest encouragement?



Matthew 5:21-26

Observations:

Discernment Question: How intentional are you about reaching out to those who are angry with you? Do you make the effort or do you wait for them to make the effort?

Matthew 18:15-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: How effectively do you live out Jesus' teaching in this passage? When someone offends you, do you go to that person or go to others? When conflict continues to go unresolved, do you thoughtfully bring in others who could help, or do you give up and move on?



Matthew 18:21-35

Observations:

Discernment Question: If God forgave you to the extent you have forgiven others, would you be forgiven of your sins?

Romans 12:17-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you take revenge, even in little ways, on those who offend you?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on peacemaking? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Memory Verses:

Romans 12:18 NIV

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE PEOPLE BUILD OTHERS



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Balances grace and truth in one's approach to others, knowing when to exhort and when to encourage, allowing others to be in process while guarding against enabling.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Profound truths often come at the intersection of two or more important truths that seem to hold each other in tension or to refine each other. Dealing with other people's shortcomings, failures, and sin is no exception. On the one hand, we hear Christ say, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1). On the other hand, James tells us, "Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). With these two passages in mind, consider John's description of Jesus. Very briefly, he tells us Jesus was filled with "grace and truth" (John 1:14). We all know the pain of being corrected. It's not at all pleasant, and yet Proverbs tell us that if we "rebuke the wise... they will love you" (Proverbs 9:8). If we are to authentically love people, we must carefully consider how we build others up. Building others up will at times involve helping them see a faulty foundation so there is something firm upon which to build. But foundation work is both sensitive and invasive. Relationally speaking, the process is both spiritual and pragmatic. It takes prayer, and it takes thoughtfulness. We must be careful of our own perspective and motives, and we must carefully consider the perspective of our friends. To neglect their well being by doing nothing is often unloving, but to neglect their well being by being careless or overly aggressive is unloving as well, and often destructive. Scripture speaks broadly to how we build each other up. Careful thought to the topic will empower us to both authentically and productively love those we truly do love.

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."
-- Winston Churchill

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can name an encouraging comment made about another person to that person in the past 24 hours.
- Can recall a time in the past six months where they graciously exhorted a person and did so with both grace and truth.
- Can recall a time in the past month where they saw an opportunity to correct another person but opted not to do so for good reasons and not for reasons of timidity.
- Knows and can name one's own tendencies that might dangerously sour their ability to bring healthy exhortation (competitiveness, arrogance, self-righteousness, etc.).

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

1 Samuel 12:23-25

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who are you burdened for? Who do you talk with God about? Who do you feel responsible or called to help?

Proverbs 9:8, 15:12, 15:31

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you receive instruction and correction from others?



Proverbs 26:4-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you discern a person's readiness to hear your input? Do you consider their disposition? Do you over-consider it?

Matthew 7:1-6

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you seek to help others, do you do so out of experience or out of textbook knowledge?



Ephesians 6:4

Observations:

Discernment Question: In what relationships might you be overbearing and saying too much?

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you more of an exhorter or an encourager? What about this is good? What about this is challenging?



1 Peter 3:15

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well are you able to explain your hope in Christ? How well do you do so with gentleness and respect? Are you so respectful that you rarely talk about your hope in Christ? Or, are you more overbearing with your faith and need to cultivate a listening ear?

James 5:19-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: What good could you currently do in the lives of those you are currently in relationship with?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on building others? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Memorize Scripture:

Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

James 5:19-20 NIV

My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE PEOPLE HUMILITY



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Being no more or less of yourself than who you are fully created to be in Christ.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Many of our relationships—maybe most—happen in the context of some form of organization: family, workplace, school, church, and more. We don't just bump into people on the streets. We are parents, teachers, bosses, co-workers, and employees. Such realities cannot be ignored when it comes to loving people. Even more, these points of connection expose a central disposition essential to pleasant relationships. Scripture teaches that *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6).

Arrogance is lethal. As we relate to each other in our countless roles and responsibilities, one of the more loving things we can do is become

the type of people who are easy to work with, partner with, and relate to. These are those who listen before they speak, are willing to receive input and instruction, and who have the confidence and conviction to speak up and speak out when situations need their influence.

"We'd like to be humble - but what if no one notices?"
-- John Ortberg

Humility is a disposition essential to both the leader and the follower and is nothing close to insecurity or inassertiveness. A person is humble when they know who they are and who they are not, which gives us a clue as to why Scripture puts such a premium on humility. The humble know that there is a God and they are not him. The arrogant and controlling leader is offensive not just because that person is difficult to work with, but because that person is attempting to be something he or she is not. The arrogantly abrasive follower is equally offensive and for much the same reasons. Whether leader or follower, we are not in control, so why be controlling? We do not know all, so why act as if we do?

The arrogant often carry with them a hidden fear, because deep down they know they are not what they are attempting to be. While the humble experience peace, because they can be themselves. They have come to embrace that God is God and relate to others genuinely instead of with pretense. When we do this, not only will we ourselves experience growing internal peace, but we will find that as we move in and out of our various roles—spouse, employer, mother, father, co-worker, friend, child—we add value to the relationships rather than frustrate them. The humble work and partner well together, regardless of their respective roles, being able to be who they are rather than pretend to be who they are not.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- In the past month, willingly and joyfully embraced another's idea and openly gave credit where credit was due.
- In the past week, has actively sought the opinions and input of others, out of genuine desire for their insight.
- Is able to maintain confidence when others disagree without becoming arrogant or insecure.
- Able to succeed and receive recognition without letting that define them.
- Able to not think less of yourself, but instead think of yourself less.
- In the past month was neither crushed or angered by criticism
- Being the fullness of who God created you to be without puffing up or shrinking back.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

2 Chronicles 33:10-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: Consider your prayer life. Do you pray in a manner that is a calling out to God? How are your prayers driven by genuine humility? Or, how are they not driven by genuine humility?



Psalm 10:4, 25:8-9, 147:6

Observations:

Discernment Question: How well do you relate to authority figures in your life? How well do you relate to God as the ultimate authority figure?

Proverbs 11:2, 13:10, 16:18, 29:23

Observations:

Discernment Question: How does your current life display arrogance? How does your current life display humility?



Luke 14:7-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you self-promoting in either practice or heart? How or how not?

Luke 18:9-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you compare your sin to other people's sin? Do you rank yourself? How well do you see the destructiveness of your own sin and harm you have done to others? How well have you experienced God's grace toward this sin?



Ephesians 4:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you patient with others? Are you gentle with others? Are you patient and gentle with those who struggle, with the weak, with those who offend you?

Ephesians 5:21-33

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you recently displayed humility or arrogance toward family members?



Philippians 2:1-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you displaying humility—as Christ did—in any positions of authority you have? How have you done this in the past?

Hebrews 13:17

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you displaying humility in any relationships where you are under authority? How have you done this in the past?



1 Peter 5:1-6

Observations:

Discernment Question: What kind of example are you to those you lead? Does your leadership inspire others to want to be like you in character? Why or why not?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on humility? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-

Scripture Memory:

Philippians 2:3-4 NIV

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

James 4:6 NIV

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE PEOPLE SELF AWARENESS



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Cultivate an awareness of the impact (both positive and negative) of one's presence on others, seeking to authentically re-present Christ in all circumstances.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

No matter the relationship, one consistent factor is the presence of ourselves. Many other aspects of our relationships will be distinct from each other. In one relationship, we will bring wisdom; in another, we will bring humor; in a third, we will bring comfort. In every relationship, though, we will bring ourselves—a reality that demands self-awareness. Consider the challenge of relating to those who lack self-awareness.

How often have we wished that friend would see it? *Doesn't he realize what he's doing?* Maybe there's a friend whose constant barrage of advice is belittling. Or maybe there's another friend who does a

"You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another."

-- Ernest Hemingway

great deal of talking but very little listening. Identifying the impact of other's presence (other-awareness) is easy, though. Self-awareness is much more difficult, and yet cultivating such awareness is a tremendous gift to those around us and a significant mark of maturity. For this reason, those committed to loving people will periodically ask, *"What do others wish I knew, but I'm seemingly unaware of?"* The self-aware know the gifts they bring and bring them boldly. They also know the challenges they bring and humbly work toward transformation. We impact those around us, whether we intend to or not, and the loving learn to discern the effect of their own presence.

Scripture addresses self-awareness both directly and indirectly. Directly, we are asked: *"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"* (Matthew 7:3). The self-aware go after their plank before lovingly helping others with their own challenges. We also see examples of those who clearly lacked self-awareness, like the Pharisees who believed they were righteous, but were described by Christ as a *"brood of vipers!"* (Matthew 23:33). These points of deception are not surprising. We are told our enemy is a deceiver and a liar (Revelation 20:10), and no doubt he aims to deceive us about ourselves. Those who authentically love people not only seek to address deception in the world, but they are humble enough to ask others to tell them what they truly need to hear. *How can I bring a more helpful presence to our friendship? What do you wish I knew but seemingly don't? How have I blessed or challenged you? What would you like to have more of from me? What would you like to have less of from me?* These kind of honest conversations should only be had with those we know have our best interest in mind, but when done wisely and well, they will empower us to be the kind of loving people we genuinely want to be.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Is aware of at least three ways they bless others
- Is aware of at least one way they challenge others
- Has engaged a thorough self-evaluation by proactively seeking input from others at some point in the past three years
- Has two to three trusted friends who regularly speak openly about their strengths and weaknesses

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Proverbs 12:15

Observations:

Discernment Question: Consider a recent time when another person offered you advice. How did you receive it? Did you openly consider it? Did you outright dismiss it? Why?



Proverbs 14:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you give thought to your own life? What current practices do you have that help you thoughtfully consider how you are currently living your life?

Proverbs 14:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you flirt with evil? Are you prone to anger? Are you thoughtful or are you careless?



Proverbs 15:14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you actively seek knowledge, wisdom, and insight from others? Do you actively seek their wisdom and insight about yourself?

Proverbs 9:7-8, 17:10, 27:5, 28:23

Observations:

Discernment Question: When was the last time you were corrected? How did you receive the correction? Why were you receptive? Why were you unreceptive?



Jeremiah 17:9

Observations:

Discernment Question: To the best of your knowledge, in what areas of your life are you most susceptible to deception?

Matthew 7:3-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: What log do you currently have in your own eye? Who could you ask to help you with it?



Romans 12:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you view yourself? Do you struggle with either arrogance or insecurity (or both)?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Observations:

Discernment Question: As you read this passage, take out the word love, insert your name, and read it again ("Tim is patient, Tim is kind..."). How accurately does this passage describe you?



1 Timothy 4:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently keeping a close watch on yourself and your belief system? What are you doing daily to get to know yourself and God better?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on self-awareness? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-
-
-

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE PEOPLE SACRIFICE



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Maintain an attitude of cheerful willingness and eager readiness to sacrifice one's time, resources, convenience, and opportunities – one's entire life – for the good of others out of a love for God and people.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

It's one thing to serve others, it's something else to make sacrifices for them. We can serve and feel good about serving but have as an unspoken filter for our service the point at which sacrifice is involved. Serving can be fun and feel good, but there inevitably comes a time when it is most definitely not fun, and rather than feeling good, we feel pain of one kind or another. Christ's service to others ultimately cost him his life. This was not a sacrifice he "felt" like making, as is evidenced by his prayer in the garden (see Matthew 26:36-46).

*"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."
-- Jim Elliot*

Likewise, Paul described the intense sacrifices he made when writing to the Corinthians: *"I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food."* (2 Corinthians 11:27). The authentic follower of Christ will *"lay down one's life for one's friends"* (John 15:13). We are told later that such sacrifice is evidence of authentic love: *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."* (1 John 3:16).

This may or may not be the actual laying down of our lives physically, and in most cases, it's not. It is for this reason that Scripture tells us to take up our cross *"daily"* (Luke 9:23). The one who authentically loves God and people will not only serve when it's convenient and when it fits with their personal agenda for their lives. They will sacrifice their personal agenda and make their agenda God's agenda.

This will be simultaneously rewarding and challenging, but in it is the very life Christ came to give. Jesus made this clear when he said that *"whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it."* (Luke 17:33). We must not just look for opportunities to serve others in ways that have natural appeal or are self-fulfilling. We must be willing to put our desires and preferences on the cross daily, and in so doing, come increasingly into the authentic life Christ came to give.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can name a personal desire sacrificed for another over the past week.
- Has wrestled with God over meeting a specific need and moved forward with doing so despite personal preferences.
- Can identify a service opportunity engaged in the past three months not for recognition, relationship, or reward, but were compelled by God to engage it.
- Can identify a time in the past 3 years when a financial sacrifice—giving beyond comfort—was made for another.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Matthew 25:31-46

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently sacrificing time, money, or energy for the wellbeing of another?



Luke 9:23-25

Observations:

Discernment Question: In what ways does the world have a grip on you? What does taking up the cross look like in your daily life?

John 12:23-26

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you investing your life in a way that it will reap a harvest?



John 13:34

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you love others? Why yes? Why no?

John 15:12-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: In the past week, how have you let go of your agenda to serve another person?



Romans 12:1

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does this passage, and the others you have read here so far, inspire you or discourage you? Why?

Romans 14:7-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your heart of hearts, who owns you?



2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you give (time, money, energy) out of leftovers or as sacrifice?

1 John 3:16-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: What could you do in the coming month to serve another person materially?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on sacrifice? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





LOVE PEOPLE FAITHFULNESS



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Willingly persist in loving people over the long-haul, staying committed to them through both the highs and lows of life.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Proverbs offers a profound truth in this one simple statement: *As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another* (Proverbs 27:17). Iron on iron is not a pleasant description. The result is good, but the process is hard. When it comes to people, though, all too often, the moment the iron touches the iron, the people involved pull away from each other and the process, leaving the much needed sharpening incomplete.

For this reason and others, Scripture calls us to faithfulness.

Those who authentically follow Christ are not those who spin through one friendship after another, one group after another,

one marriage after another, or one church after another. They know the value and importance of faithfully walking with people through time. This will stretch us, but that's the point, at least one of them.

*"A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend, one human soul whom we can trust utterly, who knows the best and worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults."
-- Charles Kingsley*

The faithful become more like Christ, because they stay in the process. Those who disengage from the process carry their unrefined wounds and barbs into the next relationship, and it's just a matter of time before they spin through that friendship as well. The importance of faithfulness is seen in all relationships, but a place where it is commonly challenged is with those seeking to make a difference in the lives of others. The idea of making a difference sounds both good and appealing. We all want to make a difference. Once the newness of the adventure wears off, though, we are often left face to face with the very real problems of the people we intended to serve. Like a doctor discovering the challenge of working with sick people, we discover the weight of engaging relationships that are neck-deep with spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial problems. This weight can be enough to cause us to react and pull away. But to do so misses the very opportunity we initially intended to address. *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick,"* Jesus said (Matthew 9:12).

A lack of faithfulness when people's challenges float to the surface will undermine our ability to truly bring health and healing. Those who authentically love people know and embrace the importance of staying engaged and relationally connected—faithful—when the real challenges make themselves known.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Can name 2 or 3 people with whom they have had conflict but are now stronger friends than prior to the conflict.
- Does not have a pattern of spinning through friendships, jobs, churches, or marriages.
- Has 2 or 3 people with whom they relate who know each other's struggles, who encourage each other along, and who have been doing so for more than one year.
- Has displayed commitment to people struggling deeply by remaining relationally engaged to them despite the drain on time and energy.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Proverbs 20:6

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your most recent season of life, who have you loved and served who has required your perseverance?



Proverbs 25:19

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you trustworthy as a friend?

Proverbs 27:17

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who sharpens you? Who do you sharpen?



1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: Read the passage again but replace the word “love” with your name. Does this passage describe you?

1 Corinthians 15:58

Observations:

Discernment Question: Have you persevered in your ministry? Are you persevering today?



Galatians 6:9

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you weary? If so, why? If not, what's keeping you strong?

Philippians 2:19-29

Observations:

Discernment Question: How would others describe your commitment to Christ and his service?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on faithfulness in relationships? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BE THE BODY SERVE



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Actively seek to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others, address issues of oppression and injustice, bring freedom to those ensnared, and give voice to those unheard.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

One of the more stunning statements of Scripture is Jesus' description of why he came: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45). As this Scripture describes, the being through whom "all things were made" (John 1:3) enters into his own creation not to be served but to serve. In another place we read "he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant." (Philippians 2:7). Jesus could have made demands. He could have revealed his position, flexed his authority, and demanded his own pleasures and comfort. Instead he became "obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8). Why? What would motivate the creator of all to serve and comfort others rather than demand the service of those he created? A glimmer of understanding—and exhortation—comes when we consider the circumstances. Enter into any tragic situation, and anything short of service is grossly misguided. If we were first on the scene of a multi-car pile up, we would not step into the situation and look for ways to serve ourselves. We would call for help, apply tourniquets, bandage wounds, and comfort the distressed. It's revealing that the Son of God took the approach he did in this world. All indicators are that from his vantage point we live in the midst of a multi-car pile up. We don't always see it this way from our vantage point, though.

*"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."
-John Wooden*

All too often, we miss the tragedies that surround us for the thin veil that covers it all. But tragedy does abound, and the people we lock eyes with every day are both hurting and oppressed. Jesus made his purpose clear. He came "to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18). Those who follow Christ will do as he did. We will be freedom fighters, liberators, and healers. We will look for ways to serve those around us—both physically and spiritually—and not be consumed with our own prestige, power, or comfort. We will "have the same mindset of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5). In Paul's letter to the Galatians he describes his interactions with Peter, James, and John, men he described as "pillars" of our faith and said that "they asked...that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along." (Galatians 2:10). So from the earliest followers of Christ, and from Christ himself, we have the example of those who served by proclaiming the deepest of spiritual truths and by giving in the most practical of ways.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Proactively finds ways to serve others rather than dodge needs.
- Can name at least one serving situation in the past three months that was challenging—and not particularly pleasurable within itself—but engaged nonetheless .
- Can identify one simple act of service in the past twenty-four hours.
- Practices service in a manner that truly helps and empowers those being served rather than service that hinders or enables.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your attitude toward helping the poor?



Psalms 82:1-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your attitude toward the weak, sick, or oppressed?

Proverbs 14:21, 31:8-9, 19:17

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your current season of life, what are ways you could speak-up for those who do not have a voice or serve those in physical need?



Isaiah 58:6-12

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does God's heart for the poor and oppressed surprise you? Why or why not? How closely does your heart currently reflect God's heart?

Jeremiah 22:1-5, 15-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you sense God's seriousness and focus on helping the oppressed? How does this affect you?



Micah 6:6-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might your life increasingly reflect the profound simplicity of this passage?

Matthew 5:14-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your life currently radiating?



Matthew 23:11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you been inspired by another person's service? Why might you consider those who serve "great"?

Luke 4:16-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might you increasingly be a freedom fighter, healer, and liberator with Christ?



Luke 22:24-27

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you sitting at the table of life or serving at the table of life?

1 Thessalonians 3:10-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: Has your giving ever become enabling rather than empowering?
If so, how, and how do you discern the difference?



Philippians 2:1-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do your current attitudes and actions reflect those of Christ's? How do they not?

James 1:27, 2:14-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does your life reflect your profession of faith? How or how not?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on service? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Memory Verses:

Mark 10:43-45 NIV

Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

1 John 3:16-18 NIV

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.





BE THE BODY

SPIRITUAL GIFTS



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Identifies, develops, and deploys one's spiritual gifts for the good of others in and through the body of Christ.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

A brief glance at the headlines, and it's clear, brokenness and pain abound in this world. The normal and natural response to the pain we experience and observe is to wonder what God is doing about it. Much can be said to this question, and essential to Scripture's response is teaching about the *body of Christ*. When Jesus was physically present, he informed and demonstrated to his followers that he came to bring healing, restoration, freedom, and hope (Luke 4:14-30). Or put another way, the very reason he came was to address the brokenness we all experience. When preparing to return to the Father, he made known his intentions to his followers: "*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*" (John 20:21). He would be sending them—and ultimately us—out to continue the work he had started. We would be his extension—his body—in a world in need of his healing touch. When writing to the church in Corinth, Paul made clear their unified purpose: "*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*" (1 Corinthians 12:27). The "you" in this statement is plural. He is telling the church that

collectively we make up the body of Christ in this world. By working together, we re-present Christ to each other and to the broken world that surrounds us. We are Christ's hands and feet, and we are called and exhorted to continue the good work Christ started when he was here physically. This calls for wisdom and discernment in Christ's followers.

"God has created and designed us with a purpose in mind. We are 'wired' to care about some things more than others. We have been given spiritual gifts to competently accomplish ministry tasks. We have also been designed with a personal style or relating to others and the world around us. We have been given a passion.

-- Bruce Bugbee

Scripture describes spiritual gifts

given by the Spirit that signify the unique contribution we are each empowered to make. No one is asked or expected to be the entire body of Christ. We each have a part to play, and those who follow Christ will seek these gifts from God so they can maximize their impact in a world that desperately needs healing and reconciliation. As is seen throughout Scripture, the practice of uniquely gifting individuals is not entirely new at the time of Christ. Scripture records unique giftings given to God's people throughout history. What is unique, though, is the clarity we now have about God's mission and purpose in this world, and the invitation and expectation we have to fully participate in the hope and restoration God is bringing in and through his people.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Is aware of one's spiritual gifts.
- Is developing and maturing one's spiritual gifts.
- Knows the strengths and weaknesses associated with one's spiritual gifts.
- Is aware of the spiritual gifts of those with whom they are engaged in the body of Christ.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Exodus 31:1-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How might God have gifted you in ways you perceive as normal (like the craftsmen in this passage) but are not normal for others?



Daniel 1:17-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do your areas of giftedness bring about arrogance or humility in your life? How aware are you of the unique dispositions or opportunities God may have given to you that he has not given to others?

Romans 12:3-8

Observations:

Discernment Question: What unique contribution do you make or could you make to what Christ is doing in the world?



1 Corinthians 12

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently partnering with other members of the body of Christ to make a difference in the world? How could you increasingly partner with others moving forward?

Ephesians 4:11-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you currently doing to strengthen and mature the body of Christ? What could you be doing that you are not doing today?



2 Timothy 1:6

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you currently doing to fan the flame of the gifts God has given you? How are you increasing your effectiveness? What sort of development, training, or experience could you engage to make you more effective in the body of Christ?

1 Peter 4:10-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you lean into God's strength in your service? How might you do so increasingly in a way that will give you greater strength and endurance in your serving?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on spiritual gifts? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Memory Verses:

1 Corinthians 12:7 NIV

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

1 Peter 4:10 NIV

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BE THE BODY

FINANCIAL GENEROSITY



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Resource the body of Christ by giving tithes and offerings.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

There is a significant misunderstanding about Scripture and money. In short, when it comes to money, common perception is that Scripture only teaches us to give it away. This perception is a misperception for multiple reasons. For starters, Scripture addresses money holistically. There is instruction on making money, saving money, spending money, and yes, giving money. A careful reading of Scripture, though, shows that there is not only misperception about Scriptures' holistic teaching on money, but also about Scriptures' teaching on giving.

Consider carefully Jesus' words: *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."* (Matthew 6:19-20). This teaching on giving, when read carefully, is not a teaching on giving in the sense that we give it away and it's lost. It's actually a teaching on investing. Jesus does not want us to waste our money. We waste our money when we invest it in things that will only wither away. Scripture teaches there are investments we can make with our money that will reap weighty and lasting dividends.

"It is possible to give without loving, but it is impossible to love without giving."
-- Richard Braunstein

When we generously resource the body of Christ, we are resourcing a movement whose impact is eternal. For this reason, when writing to the church in Corinth, Paul reminded them that *"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."* (2 Corinthians 9:6). He follows this with an exhortation toward cheerful giving: *"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* (2 Corinthians 9:7). Cheerful giving is not possible if we are wasting our money by giving it away. Such cheerfulness would be a denial of reality. A person is cheerful in their giving, though, because they recognize they are making a wise investment. Their generous "sowing" will result in a generous "reaping." This is an especially cheerful reality when we compare this use of our money to the the many necessary things we must do with our money to make it through this life. We use our money to eat, to clothe ourselves, to provide shelter, and enjoyment. These are all good and healthy ways to spend money. But they come and go. When we come to understand Scriptures' teaching, that available to us is a use of our money that is not here today and gone tomorrow, we are inspired to sow generously toward the greatest of goods.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Wise stewardship of one's resources, living within one's means
- Simplicity in one's purchases; enjoyment of material things without materialism
- Commitment to invest at least 10% of one's income in the body of Christ through their local church
- The presence of joy and cheerfulness in one's giving rather than duty and obligation

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

1 Kings 17:8-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: The world's model of giving is to give out of our abundance. Scripture's model is to give out of our trust in God's provision. How does this stretch you? How does this inspire you?



1 Chronicles 29:14-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: David acknowledges the resources he gives come from God in the first place. To what extent do you share this perspective? Why or why not?

Proverbs 3:9-10, 11:24-25, 22:9, 28:22, 28:27

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are you currently generous? What motivates your generosity? What de-motivates your generosity?



Haggai 1:2-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: How committed and passionate are you about building God's house? How does this compare to your commitment and passion for personal comfort?

Malachi 3:7-12

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your perspective on giving? When you give, are you giving to God what is rightfully his? Or, are you giving to God what is rightfully yours? When you withhold your giving, are you withholding what is rightfully his? Or, when you withhold your giving, are you withholding what is rightfully yours?



Matthew 6:19-21

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you give, does it feel like an investment, or does it feel like you're losing money? Why?

Matthew 6:25-34

Observations:

Discernment Question: On a scale of 1 to 10, to what degree are you worrying about money in this current season of life (1 being not at all, 10 being a great deal)? What would move you closer to 10?



Matthew 23:23-24

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you think about tithing, to what extent do you view it as a 'tax,' or instead, as an opportunity to make a difference?

Mark 12:41-44

Observations:

Discernment Question: Compared to this widow, how significant is your giving?



Romans 12:13

Observations:

Discernment Question: How intentional are you at looking for needs you could meet with other followers of Christ?

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: What inspires your giving? What inhibits your giving? How similar or dissimilar is your giving to the Macedonian church?



2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you have joy when you give? Why or why not?

1 Timothy 6:6-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent has money drawn you away from God? To what extent has money drawn you toward God?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on financial generosity? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

-
-
-
-

Scripture Memory:

1 Chronicles 29:14 NLT

But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!

Matthew 6:19-21 NLT

"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. w www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BE THE BODY OUTREACH



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Actively looks for and engages opportunities to reach others with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Love drives us to do the remarkable. We will give money. We will give time. We will give our thoughts and attention. We will do all of this and more, but there is an all-too-common resistance to actively seeking to talk with people about the good news of Jesus Christ. To be sure, in light of common abuses, the resistance is understandable. We do not want our faith or ourselves to be associated with manipulative, overbearing, or judgmental evangelistic tactics. With that acknowledged, though, there is a profound reality we must embrace. If we authentically love people, we will want them to discover Christ. We will want them to know and understand the forgiveness and freedom we ourselves have experienced. We will want them to be reconciled to God. We will want them to know the power of God's presence for day to day living, and the very real hope we have for all eternity. To withhold all of this is both negligent and unloving.

"Some wish to live within the sound of a chapel bell; I wish to run a rescue mission within a yard of hell."

-- C.T. Stud

Paul exhorted his listeners to *"Be reconciled to God"* (2 Corinthians 5:20). He did this not for his own gratification. He did it, he said, because *"the love of Christ compels us"* (2 Corinthians 5:14). Which is critical to our understanding. One of the greatest inhibitors to outreach is the abundance of exposure people have had to tactics not driven by love. There are countless reasons a person can share Christ with someone else. They may be seeking to feel good about themselves, win an argument, or impress their religious communities. Such motives may not be seen with the eyes, but they are smelled with the nose. In speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, *"You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a son of hell as you are."* (Matthew 23:15). Jesus' approach to those far from God was different. He was referred to as *"a friend of tax collectors and sinners."* (Matthew 11:19). He dined with those others would avoid (Mark 2:15) and welcomed those they would not even touch (Luke 7:38). He did all of this and more, despite the criticism, explaining that *"it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick."* (Matthew 9:12). Jesus modeled intentional and loving relationships with those apart from God. He did this, he said, because he came *"to seek and to save the lost."* With that in mind, it's instructive that when returning to the father, he told his followers, *"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* (John 20:21). If we are to walk as Jesus walked, we will be sent as he was sent. We, too, will *"seek and save the lost"* as we lovingly and intentionally enjoy our neighbors, co-workers, family, and friends, and help them discover Jesus' good news.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Knows how to compellingly explain the gospel and can name a time they have done so in the past 12 months.
- Knows how to compellingly tell the story of one's own personal experience with Christ and can name a time they have done so in the past 12 months.
- Understands barriers and objections to Christ in their current culture and knows how to address them.
- Can name at least three people they are actively praying for and working toward their coming to Christ.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Matthew 9:35-38

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you see those far from Christ, what do you see?



Matthew 28:18-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does this passage inspire you? Why or why not?

Mark 2:13-17

Observations:

Discernment Question: How does your life reflect how Jesus lived in this passage? How does your life reflect how the Pharisees lived in this passage?



Luke 15:1-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently living out these parables? How could you currently live out these parables?

Luke 19:10

Observations:

Discernment Question: How have you intentionally sought out those who are lost over the past year? How could you intentionally seek out those who are lost over the next year? Does the thought of this inspire you or burden you? Why?



Romans 1:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family know you follow Christ? Why or why not?

Romans 10:9-15

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you think about telling others about Christ, do you view yourself as helping them and doing good in the world? Or, do you view yourself as a bother?



1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Observations:

Discernment Question: What do you do or could you do to meet people where they are at?

1 Peter 3:15

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you able to explain why you have hope in Christ? How do you or would you do it? What could you do to be increasingly prepared?



2 Peter 3:9

Observations:

Discernment Question: How much does your heart reflect God's heart? Why?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on outreach? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scripture:

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BE THE BODY INTERCESSION



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Effectively engage the spiritual battle on behalf yourself, others, and the kingdom of God.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

How do we bring about lasting, irreversible, and authentic transformation? How do we move forward in a world that can be so terribly twisted? What do we do to truly and powerfully make a difference? For many, pointing toward prayer as a response to problems and hardship is believed to be a substitute for real action. Maybe prayer is legitimate when all other actions have been taken—something to do when nothing else can be done—but until then, a real difference is made by those who roll up their sleeves and do something. To be sure, a real difference is made by those who roll up their sleeves and do something, but Scripture's teaching and vision for prayer is not prayer as a last ditch effort when nothing else works.

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?"
-- Corrie Ten Boon

Prayer is displayed as the forerunner to action, intertwined with action, and an action within itself. It is, at times, the very thing we do when we roll-up our sleeves to do something. When writing to the Colossians, Paul describes Epaphras as one that is *"working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis."*(Colossians 4:13). Taken alone, one might quickly assume that Epaphras is doing something physical. Maybe he's raising money for them or counseling those in distress. But Paul identifies the work of Epaphras: *"He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."* (Colossians 4:12). So the intercession of Epaphras is referred to as *work* and as *wrestling*.

When we consider the true nature of the problems we face, this is not surprising. If we face a physical problem physical solutions may do. But at the heart of humanity's hardship is not a physical problem but a spiritual problem. For this reason, intercession is mission critical to the greatest of good we can do in this world. We are told to *"pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests"* and to *"be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."* (Ephesians 6:18).

Those who authentically follow Christ will consider carefully these exhortations. We do not want to labor in our own strength but want to be effective *"with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."*(1 Peter 4:11).

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Has prayed thoughtfully—not rote prayers—for yourself and another person in the past 24 hours.
- Has actively asked others to pray for you in the past 3 weeks.
- Can identify a recent time where prayer was engaged with perseverance and as 'work'.
- Consistently prays for the spiritual journey and faith of others and not just when there is a health or financial crisis.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Exodus 17:8-13

Observations:

Discernment Question: What role does prayer play in how you currently engage life's battles?



1 Samuel 12:22-23

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who do you consistently pray for by name?

Jeremiah 29:7

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently praying for the welfare of your city? How could you increasingly do so? What do you or could you talk with God about regarding where you live?



Matthew 5:43-44

Observations:

Discernment Question: What relationships or people are most challenging for you to love that you could be consistently blessing with prayer for their wellbeing?

Romans 8:26-27, 34

Observations:

Discernment Question: When you do not know what to pray, how could you lean into God's Spirit to help you?



Ephesians 1:15-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: Consider the content of your prayers and the nature of your requests. Do your longings for people line-up with God's longings? Are you addressing the most important issues of a person's life?

Ephesians 6:10-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are your prayers battle prayers? Why a lot? Why a little?



Philippians 1:3-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are your prayers an expression of your heart and passion? To what extent are they wrote prayers?

1 Thessalonians 5:25

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you ask for prayer and mean it? Why or why not?



2 Thessalonians 3:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How fervently and frequently do you pray for the advancement of the gospel in the world? Why a lot? Why a little?

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: How fervently and frequently do you pray for leaders and government? Why a lot? Why a little?



James 5:13-18

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you bring both joy and sorrow before God? If so, how do you do this? If not, how could you cultivate this?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on confession? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Ephesians 6:18 NIV

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

James 5:16 NIV

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BE THE BODY MINISTRY



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Know and engage one's calling with the passions, spiritual gifts, experience, and resources God has provided

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Knowing one's spiritual gifts is a starting place. We must know the gifts God has given us, the way his Spirit has empowered us, so we can maximize our efforts by leaning into God's strength and power. A spiritual gift is a tool, though, that can be used in a great many ways and a great many circumstances. The carpenter may be skilled in using a whole array of tools, but this does not mean the carpenter knows what he will build. He could build a house, a hospital, a restaurant, or a business.

Likewise, the follower of Christ must be thoughtful and prayerful about their optimal place of impact. James, Peter, John, Paul, and Barnabas were all leaders in the early church. Galatians records, though, how they all recognized the

*"God did not direct His call to Isaiah— Isaiah overheard God saying, "...who will go for Us?" The call of God is not just for a select few but for everyone. Whether I hear God's call or not depends on the condition of my ears, and exactly what I hear depends upon my spiritual attitude."
-- Oswald Chambers*

unique contributions they were called upon to make: *"James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews."* (Galatians 2:9). Knowing our ministry is critical.

A person may be a gifted teacher, but the spiritual gift of teaching can be exercised in countless formats. Likewise, the spiritual gift of administration can be used to organize oversight for a church or be used to organize the inner-workings of a relief effort to those impacted by a hurricane. To be sure, a person's ministry may change over the years. God may best utilize a person in one season by directing them to one ministry and then later direct them to another. It's also true that the way we often find our best ministry is by getting involved and trying things. At some point, though, the follower of Christ will have increased clarity and commitment to what he or she is called to do in that particular season. Scripture tells us *"we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Ephesians 2:10). These good works may or may not be formal roles and responsibilities, but they will be known and embraced by those who do them. The authentic follower of Christ will take joy in focus and will make the most of the opportunity God has given to make a lasting and critical difference in the lives of others.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Consistently asks God for guidance toward maximum impact for his kingdom.
- Can articulate one's calling.
- Has one's calling affirmed by their community.
- Makes sacrifices of time, energy and resources for the ministry God has given them.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Isaiah 6:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: How willing and excited are you to do whatever God asks you to do?



Matthew 5:14-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you best shine for Christ?

Matthew 9:35-38

Observations:

Discernment Question: How moved are you by those who do not have God as their shepherd? Why a lot? Why a little?



Luke 22:24-27

Observations:

Discernment Question: Is your life characterized by trying to be great in the world's eyes are by being great in God's kingdom?

John 4:34

Observations:

Discernment Question: What kind of service in the kingdom of God most feeds you?



Acts 1:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: Where are you currently a witness for Christ? How is it going?

Galatians 2:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who do you believe you are called to serve?



Ephesians 2:10

Observations:

Discernment Question: To date, what have been some of the good works God has prepared for you? What do you suspect will be good works he has you do in the future?

Ephesians 4:3-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: What is your role in the body of Christ? Be as specific as you can.



Philippians 1:27-28

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently working to advance the gospel in the world? How could you be most effective in doing so?

I Timothy 3:1-7

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are there any current character issues that will limit your ability to serve? If so, what are they? What could you do about them?



I Timothy 4:12-16

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you developing your giftedness? What are you doing in this season that will make you more effective in the next season?

Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on ministry? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™





BE THE BODY MULTIPLICATION



Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Intentionally seek opportunities to help others Discover faith and to humbly train them in the outcomes associated with both Develop and Deepen.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

Consider the weight of final words. When a person is moving, changing jobs, or at the end of one's life, the words they say carry special significance. No longer are they at the periphery of what matters. They speak the words that matter most. At the end of Jesus' time on earth he pulls his closest followers together and gives what would be his final exhortation: *"All authority in*

heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 29:18-20). Considering Jesus' love for God and people, these words are not surprising. The most loving thing one person can do for another is to help him or her reconcile and walk with God.

*"The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed."
-- Hudson Taylor*

Jesus exhorts his followers to reproduce themselves—to multiply—by making disciples throughout the entire world. This exhortation is not simply an exhortation to indoctrinate others. It is an exhortation to bring hope, healing, freedom, and grace to a world in desperate need of all of this and more. To do this, though, one must be willing to get involved in the messiness of life. Discipleship does not happen at a distance. It happens when we are in intentional relationship with those hungry to love God and love people. The intentional aspect of this is critical to multiplication. Yes, we can make a difference in the lives of others in countless ways, and we can help people spiritually in countless ways. To truly multiply, though, is when a person walks intentionally with others to train them in walking the way of Christ. We will all have varying capacities to do this, which is why we make an important distinction in multiplication between doing this *"as your ministry"* or *"alongside your ministry"*. For some, their main ministry may be leading a relief effort for the impoverished or being an advocate for refugees. With these ministries a person will look for ways to multiply oneself, but it will likely be done with 2 or 3 people *"alongside their ministry"*. Others, though, will make multiplication their primary ministry, work with 10 or 15 people, and do this *"as their ministry"*. Either way, the cause of Christ must multiply, and to do so, we must be intentional about inspiring and training each other to authentically walk the way of Christ.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Knows and is intentional about multiplying oneself either "*alongside their ministry*" or "*as their ministry.*"
- Has identified people they are actively helping walk the way of Christ or is daily asking God to bring these people into their lives.
- The people they are helping walk the way of Christ have given verbal commitment to be fully engaged.
- Has an intentional and holistic plan to help people walk the way of Christ.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Matthew 28:19-20

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you currently doing to lead people to Christ and grow people in Christ? How is it going?



Mark 1:17

Observations:

Discernment Question: In your pursuit to impact others, are you following Jesus or hoping he will follow you? How is this played out in your life?

John 21:15-19

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you currently looking out for Christ's sheep? Do the sheep sense Christ's care through you?



Romans 10:14-15

Observations:

Discernment Question: Who are you praying for opportunities to share the gospel with? If you're not currently, who could you begin to pray for?

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Observations:

Discernment Question: How effective are you at meeting people where they are? How could you increase your effectiveness?



2 Timothy 2:2

Observations:

Discernment Question: How are you multiplying your ministry by raising up others who are raising up others? How is it going?

1 Peter 3:15

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you know how to explain the gospel compellingly? Do you know how to answer common questions? Can you tell your own faith story? If not, what could you do to strengthen yourself in this area?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on multiplication? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

