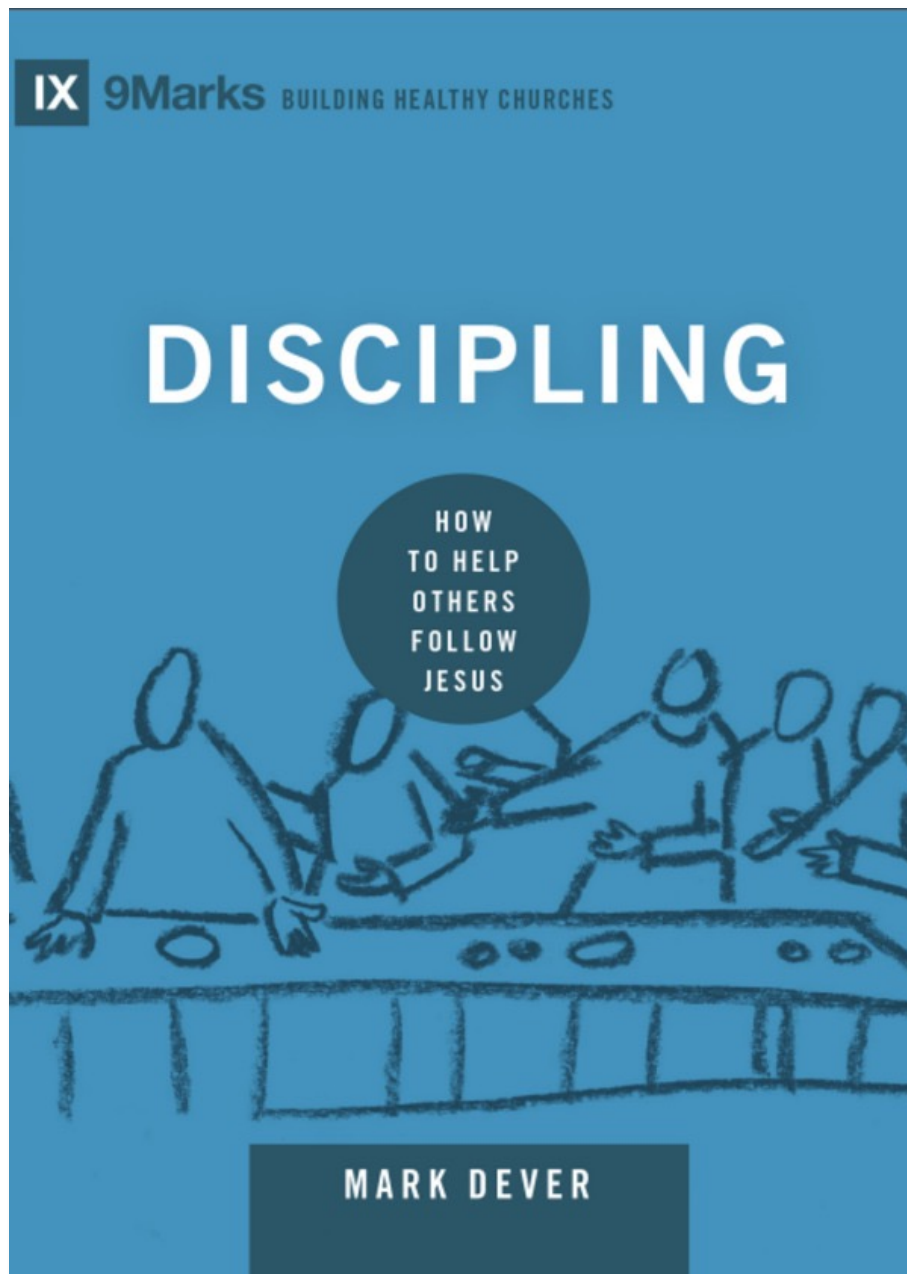


CHRIST  FELLOWSHIP

Growth Group Study Guide

based on Mark Dever's book *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*



Introduction

The subtitle of this book by Mark Dever is a concise, yet helpful definition of the book's title and subject matter. Discipling is simply, as Dever puts it, helping others to follow Jesus. We have a tendency to complicate discipling more than we need to. It is our desire at Christ Fellowship Church to have discipling relationships all across our body. Indeed, what we want is a culture of discipleship – that the way of life among the members at Christ Fellowship is that of members helping other members to follow Jesus. This is what we want *for* every member; and this is what we want *from* every member.

It is easy to think of discipling as a super-spiritual activity that only the elite tier of Christians do. We assume that discipling is what the pastors/elders do, or maybe we would widen that circle to include growth group leaders or the most particularly spiritually gifted among our body. But that is not what Christ envisions when he gives the Great Commission to all of his followers. He intends that every disciple of his would be a disciple-maker. Every disciple of Jesus, every single Christian's God-given task is to make disciples. "Disciples disciple," as Dever puts it in his book. This is precisely why we want to take the time to walk through this book as a church. We want the members at CFC to be actively involved in discipling one another, actively helping one another follow Jesus. We want regular meetings to occur among pairs or smaller groups of members, in which they really do spiritual good to one another by speaking the Word and pointing each other to Jesus. We want this to become the standard practice in the life of our body. And our hope is that through this study, through the discussions in our growth groups, that God would help more of us to see the simplicity of this process (how anyone can do it) as well as the significance of it (how much spiritual fruit can be borne, how it is necessary for our obedience to Christ), and grow us in faithfulness to this task.

Now, a few things about how to prepare for these discussions. **First of all**, we are actually going to ask you to do something a little different as far as your standard monthly rhythm is concerned. Typically, we'd like you to rotate weekly through the rhythm of Study-Prayer-Study-Fellowship. However, for this brief study, we are going to try to pile up a few more study nights in a row. The main reason for this is because we will also be preaching a sermon series on the topic of discipleship that we'd like to coincide with the Growth Group studies. As a result, we are going to ask every group to follow a pretty uniform schedule. I know that this is out of the norm, but we'd really like for all of our church to be on the same page for a few weeks on this. You'll find the schedule for how we'd like you to walk through this study on page four.

Second, everyone in your group will be drastically more prepared if they come having read the allotted reading. I know that it is usually almost impossible to get 100% participation on the reading, but try to set the tone of its importance as much as possible. The readings are brief, usually around 13 pages and never more than 19.

Third, the sermon series each week will give you other fodder for discussion. We have tried to intentionally plan a five week sermon series to correspond with the schedule for all the growth groups as they walk through this book. The hope is that the sermons help you in your discussion, perhaps even as a way to get started each week. Encourage everyone to bring their sermon notes and any thoughts they had while listening. As the leader, if you have questions that are brought to your mind from the sermon, please incorporate those. As a general practice, you should try to allot somewhere between 5-10 minutes to sermon discussion before turning to the book discussion.

Fourth, we have supplied you with questions from the reading that highlight some of the important principles from each section of reading. You do not have to ask all of the questions listed. They are simply there so that you do not have to reach for topics of conversation. If you have additional questions you would like to add, please do. The questions we have provided are to help you keep the discussion flowing and on track. And we do think they will provide fruitful discussion.

Fifth and finally, there are a set of prayer points at the end of each night's discussion. Please be intentional about making time to pray for these things. While we interrupt our regular Study-Prayer-Study-Fellowship rotation for a season, this is one way that we intend to keep prayer central in our Growth Groups. If at all possible, try to budget more than just a couple of minutes for prayer regarding these things.

We pray that this will be a growing time of discussion in your groups that will bear much fruit in the life of our church. Please join us in praying along those lines.

Schedule

Session #1 - Preface & Introduction (week of September 18-23)

Session #2 - Chapters 1 & 2 (week of September 25-30)

Session #3 - Chapters 3 & 4 (week of October 2-7)

Session #4 - Chapters 5 & 6 (week of October 9-14)

Session #5 - Chapters 7 & 8 (week of October 16-21)

*Session #6 - Chapters 9 & 10 (week of October 23-38)

*This night will be a fellowship night with guided discussion.

Session 1 - Preface & Introduction

Sermon Discussion

- "The Command of Discipling" from Matthew 28:16-20
- Using your sermon notes from this past Sunday, discuss any helpful, instructive, challenging, or convicting points from the sermon.

Questions for Further Discussion

- 1) ***What does it mean to be a Christian?*** (This question is meant to be broad, even to stir up discussion before you get into the book. The answer we'd eventually like you to get to is that a Christian is a disciple of Jesus.)
- 2) ***What is a disciple?***
 - *"To be a Christian means to be a disciple. There are no Christians who are not disciples. And to be a disciple of Jesus means to follow Jesus. There are no disciples of Jesus who are not following Jesus." (p.15)*
- 3) ***What do disciples do? In other words, how do I know that you are a disciple?***
 - *"Discipling is basic to Christianity. How much clearer could it be? We might not be his disciples if we are not laboring to make disciples." (p.18)*
- 4) *"The working definition of discipling for this book: helping others to follow Jesus. Another way we could define discipling might be: discipling is deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ. Discipleship is the term I use to describe our own following Christ. Discipling is the subset of that, which is helping someone else follow Christ. The Christian life is the disciplined life and the discipling life....We love others best by helping them to follow Jesus down the pathway of life. (p. 13)*
 - ***Is this how you've understood Christianity, and what it means to be a Christian?***
- 5) *"God wants you to be in churches not merely so that your needs are met, but so that you will be equipped and encouraged to care for others." (p.20) As a church, discipleship is something that we want for you. But what we want you to see through this study is that discipleship is something that we want from you. To be faithful in your own discipleship*

(your following Jesus), you must begin to see your active discipling in the church as part of what it means for you to faithfully follow Jesus yourself.

- ***What needs to change in your approach to Christ Fellowship Church so that you go from seeking to have your needs met to seeking to encourage and care for others?***
- 6) ***Do you believe that it is your responsibility to help build a healthy church?***
- 7) Some questions for personal reflection (i.e., may not yield much conversation, but need to be thought through):
- ***So when you attend church on Sundays, do you only look for what you can get, or do you also look for ways to give?***
 - ***How can you begin to use your meals and spare time throughout the week to disciple others in Christ Fellowship Church?***
 - ***How can you intentionally strategize for evangelism or for ways to build up other Christians?***

Prayer Points

- Praise God that the good news of the gospel has reached you through the faithful discipling efforts of many Christians who came before you.
- Confess the ways in which you have approached our faith in an individualistic and consumeristic manner.
- Thank God for entrusting you with the gospel and for placing you in a church in which you can forge discipling relationships with other believers.
- Ask God to help you think through ways to intentionally focus your time and efforts toward the end of making disciples in our church and among all nations.

Handout for Session 1 - Preface & Introduction

- 1) What does it mean to be a Christian?

- 2) What is a disciple?

- 3) What do disciples do? In other words, how do I know that you are a disciple?

- 4) Dever: *“The working definition of discipling for this book: helping others to follow Jesus. Another way we could define discipling might be: discipling is deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ. Discipleship is the term I use to describe our own following Christ. Discipling is the subset of that, which is helping someone else follow Christ. The Christian life is the disciplined life and the discipling life....We love others best by helping them to follow Jesus down the pathway of life. (p. 13)*
 - Is this how you’ve understood Christianity, and what it means to be a Christian?

- 5) What needs to change in your approach to Christ Fellowship Church so that you go from seeking to have your needs met to seeking to encourage and care for others?

- 6) Do you believe that it is your responsibility to help build a healthy church?

- 7) Some questions for personal reflection (i.e., may not yield much conversation, but need to be thought through):
 - So when you attend church on Sundays, do you only look for what you can get, or do you also look for ways to give?
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Prayer Points

Praise God that the good news of the gospel has reached you through the faithful discipling efforts of many Christians who came before you.

Confess the ways in which you have approached our faith in an individualistic and consumeristic manner.

Thank God for entrusting you with the gospel and for placing you in a church in which you can forge discipling relationships with other believers.

Ask God to help you think through ways to intentionally focus your time and efforts toward the end of making disciples in our church and among all nations.

Session 2 - Chapters 1 & 2

Sermon Discussion

- “The Goal of Discipling” from Colossians 1:28-29
- Using your sermon notes from this past Sunday, discuss any helpful, instructive, challenging, or convicting points from the sermon.
- **What are some specific ways that you can use the Word in your discipling relationships?**

Questions for Further Discussion

- 1) **What are some of the spheres of your life in which you have some measure of influence?** (Let everyone bat that around for a bit. Expect answers like work, family, gym, etc. But the goal will be to get everyone to consider our church as a place where each person sees themselves as having influence.)
- 2) **Are you maximizing your influence by leveraging it for discipleship, or are you minimizing it by neglecting to utilize it at all?**
- 3) *“If you have never seen pigs come to a trough for mealtime, you can probably imagine it. Pushing. Shoving, Snorting. Swallowing as much as they can with no thought for others. Here’s a funny question worth thinking about for a moment: Is that how you attended church last Sunday? No, I’m not calling you a pig. But stop to consider: Where did you park? What time did you get to church? Where did you sit? Who did you speak to? Each one of these decisions provided you with an opportunity to give yourself to others and so join in the work of Christ. Or they provided you with an opportunity to look out for yourself, and do what is best for you. So which was it? Did you consciously strategize how to bless others with each of those decisions? Being a disciple of Jesus means orienting our lives toward others, just as Jesus did.” (p.27)*
 - **Have you ever approached a Sunday morning like this? Do you ever consciously strategize how to bless others in small and large things?**
- 4) **What does it look like to live an others-oriented life?**
 - How might this change the questions that you ask other people?
 - How might this cause your schedule to shift?

5) A question for personal reflection (i.e., may not yield much conversation, but a good thought to leave people with):

- *"Name a couple of people in your life whom you would love to see presented mature and godly on the Last Day. Got their names in mind? **Now, how are you proclaiming the gospel to them now to prepare them for then?**" (p.34)*

Prayer Points

- Praise God for his relentless pursuit of us and his unswerving intention of presenting us as mature and blameless on the Last Day.
- Confess the ways in which you have been self-focused with your time, your energy, and your interest rather than investing those things in the lives of others.
- Thank God for the other-oriented nature of Jesus, who looked not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of others that we might have life in Him.
- Ask God to help you orient-your life toward others. And ask him to provide a person in your life that you can strive to see presented mature and godly on the Last Day, and that he would give you opportunities to do them real spiritual good in the coming days and weeks.

Handout for Session 2 - Chapters 1 & 2

- 1) What are some of the spheres of your life in which you have some measure of influence?

- 2) Are you maximizing your influence by leveraging it for discipleship, or are you minimizing it by neglecting to utilize it at all?

- 3) Dever: *"If you have never seen pigs come to a trough for mealtime, you can probably imagine it. Pushing. Shoving, Snorting. Swallowing as much as they can with no thought for others. Here's a funny question worth thinking about for a moment: Is that how you attended church last Sunday? No, I'm not calling you a pig. But stop to consider: Where did you park? What time did you get to church? Where did you sit? Who did you speak to? Each one of these decisions provided you with an opportunity to give yourself to others and so join in the work of Christ. Or they provided you with an opportunity to look out for yourself, and do what is best for you. So which was it? Did you consciously strategize how to bless others with each of those decisions? Being a disciple of Jesus means orienting our lives toward others, just as Jesus did."* (p.27)
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Session 3 - Chapters 3 & 4

Sermon Discussion

- “The Intentionality of Discipling” from Hebrews 10:24-25
- Using your sermon notes from this past Sunday, discuss any helpful, instructive, challenging, or convicting points from the sermon.

Questions for Further Discussion

Here Dever gives a little more of a ‘how to’ definition of discipling: “*Discipling is initiating a relationship in which you **teach, correct, model, and love.***” (p.36).

1) On Teaching: “*Keep in mind, discipling among gospel-believers doesn’t mean you as the disciplined always play the wise one, or that you must be a fount of Socrates-like wisdom with all the answers. Discipling in the gospel means that sometimes you lead the way in confessing weakness or sin. By doing so, you demonstrate what it looks like not to find your justification in yourself, but in Christ. And so you live transparently and honestly. Christian discipleship, in other words, isn’t just about displaying your strengths; it’s about displaying your weaknesses, too.*” (p.36).

- **How does this reality make discipleship easier?**
- **How does it make it more difficult?**
- **How does it make it more realistic?**

2) On Correcting: “*Sometimes discipling requires you to warn someone about the choices he or she is making. People grow when you teach them general truths, yes, but also when you correct their particular errors. Part of being a Christian is recognizing that sin deceives us, and we need other believers to help us see the things we cannot see about ourselves....In fact, you can lead in a discipling relationship by inviting others to correct you, and making it easy for them to do so.*” (p.38-39)

- **How does this aspect of discipleship make us uneasy?**
- **But how is it essential for “deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ”?**

- 3) On Modeling: *"Discipling is inviting them to imitate you, making your trust in Christ an example to be followed. It requires you to be willing to be watched, and then folding people in your life so that they actually do watch."* (p.40)
- ***Why can't this be accomplished simply in reading a book together on a weekly basis?***
 - ***What more must be done?***
- 4) On Mutual Love: ***How is discipling an act of mutual love?***
- 5) ***How can a lack of humility derail the whole process of discipleship?***
- 6) ***Which of the seven objections to discipling in chapter four have you reasoned or even suggested (or at the very least displayed by your lifestyle)?***
- 7) ***Does the transience of our congregation excuse us from discipling? What's a better perspective for discipling even those whom you know won't be around for any real length of time?***

Prayer Points

- Praise God for approval that we have before God in the merit of Jesus Christ's blood and righteousness, and for the fact that we are freed from having to prove ourselves worthy to be his disciples since he has made us worthy.
- Confess the pride in your life that either has in the past or could in the future keep you from inviting others to correct you or instruct you in Christlikeness.
- Thank God for the brothers and sisters to hold fast to the confession of Christ with you, who stir you up to love and good works, and who encourage you in faith.
- Ask God to give you the courage to lean into the more uncomfortable parts of discipleship. Ask him to help you in the areas of discipleship where you feel particularly under-equipped.

Handout for Session 3 - Chapters 3 & 4

1) Dever on Teaching: *"Keep in mind, discipling among gospel-believers doesn't mean you as the discipled always play the wise one, or that you must be a fount of Socrates-like wisdom with all the answers. Discipling in the gospel means that sometimes you lead the way in confessing weakness or sin. By doing so, you demonstrate what it looks like not to find your justification in yourself, but in Christ. And so you live transparently and honestly. Christian discipleship, in other words, isn't just about displaying your strengths; it's about displaying your weaknesses, too."* (p.36).

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- How does it make it more difficult?
- How does it make it more realistic?

2) Dever on Correcting: *"Sometimes discipling requires you to warn someone about the choices he or she is making. People grow when you teach them general truths, yes, but also when you correct their particular errors. Part of being a Christian is recognizing that sin deceives us, and we need other believers to help us see the things we cannot see about ourselves....In fact, you can lead in a discipling relationship by inviting others to correct you, and making it easy for them to do so."* (p.38-39)

- How does this aspect of discipleship make us uneasy?
- But how is it essential for "deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ"?

3) Dever on Modeling: *"Discipling is inviting them to imitate you, making your trust in Christ an example to be followed. It requires you to be willing to be watched, and then folding people in your life so that they actually do watch."* (p.40)

- Why can't this be accomplished simply in reading a book together on a weekly basis?
- What more must be done?

- 4) How is discipling an act of mutual love?

- 5) How can a lack of humility derail the whole process of discipleship?

- 6) Which of the seven objections to discipling in chapter four have you reasoned or even suggested (or at the very least just displayed by your lifestyle)?

- 7) Does the transience of our congregation excuse us from discipling? What's a better perspective for discipling even those whom you know won't be around for any real length of time?

Prayer Points

- Praise God for approval that we have before God in the merit of Jesus Christ's blood and righteousness, and for the fact that we are freed from having to prove ourselves worthy to be his disciples since he has made us worthy.

- Confess the pride in your life that either has in the past or could in the future keep you from inviting others to correct you or instruct you in Christlikeness.

- Thank God for the brothers and sisters to hold fast to the confession of Christ with you, who stir you up to love and good works, and who encourage you in faith.

- Ask God to give you the courage to lean into the more uncomfortable parts of discipleship. Ask him to help you in the areas of discipleship where you feel particularly under-equipped.

Session 4 - Chapters 5 & 6

Sermon Discussion

- “The Community of Discipling” from Ephesians 4:7-16
- Using your sermon notes from this past Sunday, discuss any helpful, instructive, challenging, or convicting points from the sermon.

Questions for Further Discussion

- 1) **Where is Dever saying that we can most naturally and effectively disciple other Christians?** (in case you missed it, his answer is the church) **Has that ever occurred to you before?**
- 2) Read Hebrews 10:24-25 aloud together. *“Notice that the goal here is to help one another follow Jesus, or, as Hebrews puts it, stir one another up to love and good works. And how does the author say that a church accomplishes this goal? By not neglecting to meet together. By gathering! This is how we ‘encourage’ one another. He means for us to repeatedly and regularly gather, and that regular meeting gives shape to following Jesus and helping others to follow Jesus.”* (p.55)
 - **Is your discipleship and your discipling hindered by your neglecting gathering together? Have you ever thought about it this way?**
- 3) Regarding the discipling efforts of our pastors/elders:
 - **What are our pastors’ responsibilities to us as a congregation?**
 - **And what are our congregation’s responsibilities toward our pastors?**
 - **And finally, what are our responsibilities toward other members?**
- 4) Have everyone turn to pages 65-66 and read this portion of text together:

*“Suppose I have two Christian friends, one who is a member of my church and one who is not, and I am trying to disciple both of them. With the brother who is a member of my church, I can appeal to Sunday’s sermon. I can appeal to the example set by our elders. I can appeal, if I must, to the threat of discipline for unrepentant sin. **Plus, I know I’m personally responsible, as a part of my corporate responsibility, for pursuing the brother in all of these ways.** And the fact that our discipling relationship occurs within this accountability context*

*invigorates my sense of ownership and care. I'm responsible for him, just like I'm more responsible for my wife than for other women, or more responsible for my children than other children. Now with the brother who is not a member of my church, I am responsible, for Christ's sake, to love and encourage and warn him of the consequences of unrepentant sin. But I'm not the one tasked by Jesus with providing the final accountability structure in his life. The members of his church are. I wouldn't want to say that that fact will make me more complacent in my care for him. But it does lower the stakes and lessen my responsibility for him, again, just as I am less responsible for your children than I am my own. Do you see how the church's responsibility for itself aids the work of discipling? Do you see how the skeleton of the body and the body's flesh and muscle hang together? **Formalizing our obligations to one another as a congregation helps us to commit to each person who joins the church.** It aids our sense of ownership and responsibility. It gives shape to our discipling relationships." (p. 65-66)*

- **Does your time and do your relational priorities reflect this understanding?** (This is not to exclude long-term gospel-sharing relationships with lost co-workers or international students, but it is to place proper importance on those with whom you have covenanted together as church members.)
- **What are the advantages to being a covenant member of a church? What are the disadvantages of not being a member?**

- 5) **What does it mean for our church to have a culture of discipling?** (discussed on page 66)
- 6) Direct everyone to page 69 and read the following excerpt:

*"Suppose that tomorrow a non-Christian friend of yours in another city for whom you've been praying for years becomes a Christian and starts attending an evangelical church in his city. How would you want that church to receive your friend, whom you love? Presumably, you'd want the congregation as a whole to take responsibility for him. You'd want the elders to teach him. And you'd want a number of individuals in particular to reach out to him, to take him under their wing, to disciple him. You'd want them to teach and model what it means to study the Bible, to walk in righteousness, to evangelize, to be a Christian spouse and parent, to stand up to the world, and to disciple others in turn....**Now, do you receive and disciple the members of your church like this? Have you been helping others follow Jesus? Are you the answer to prayer of Christians in other cities?"***

- 7) Direct everyone's eyes to this portion of the book at the bottom of page 69 and onto page 70. This is going to be the homework for our next Growth Group meeting:

*"Think about one person in your church--just one. Think of one person whom you would love to see following Jesus more. Now, pray for that person [and pray for them over the next week]. **Next, how do you think you might go about discipling that person?** Okay, maybe that word discipling still seems intimidating to you. Let me rephrase: **how do you think you might go about helping that person follow Jesus? Or, how can you do deliberate spiritual good in his or her life? What one or two small steps can you take?"***

- This is going to spill into our next couple of meetings. Pray and think about these very questions over the next two weeks and ask the Lord to help you identify a person and give shape to a plan for discipling them.

Prayer Points

- Praise God for adding you to the body of Christ and for his faithfulness to pursue your continued growth in Christ.
- Confess any apathy in your heart toward the spiritual good and growth of other brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Thank God for gifting our church with the things that we need to grow together into the measure and state of the fullness of Christ.
- Ask God to help you identify someone in our church whom you can actively begin helping to follow Jesus. If you are already in a relationship like this, ask God to help each of you grow in Christlikeness.

Handout for Session 4 - Chapters 5 & 6

1) Where is Dever saying that we can most naturally and effectively disciple other Christians? Has that ever occurred to you before?

2) Read Hebrews 10:24-25.

- Is your discipleship and your discipling hindered by your neglecting gathering together? Have you ever thought about it this way?

3) Regarding the discipling efforts of our pastors/elders:

- What are our pastors' responsibilities to us as a congregation?
- And what are our congregation's responsibilities toward our pastors?
- And finally, what are our responsibilities toward other members?

4) Read the long block quote from pages 65-66.

- Does your time and do your relational priorities reflect this understanding?
- What are the advantages to being a covenant member of a church? What are the disadvantages of not being a member?

5) What does it mean for our church to have a culture of discipling? (see page 66)

6) Read the first full paragraph on page 69. After that, Dever asks the questions, *"Now, do you receive and disciple the members of your church like this? Have you been helping others follow Jesus? Are you the answer to prayer of Christians in other cities?"*

7) For personal reflection: *"Think about one person in your church--just one. Think of one person whom you would love to see following Jesus more. Now, pray for that person [and pray for them over the next week]. Next, how do you think you might go about discipling that person? Okay, maybe that word discipling still seems intimidating to you. Let me rephrase: how do you think you might go about helping that person*

follow Jesus? Or, how can you do deliberate spiritual good in his or her life? What one or two small steps can you take?"

Prayer Points

- Praise God for adding you to the body of Christ and for his faithfulness to pursue your continued growth in Christ.
- Confess any apathy in your heart toward the spiritual good and growth of other brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Thank God for gifting our church with the things that we need to grow together into the measure and state of the fullness of Christ.
- Ask God to help you identify someone in our church whom you can actively begin helping to follow Jesus. If you are already in a relationship like this, ask God to help each of you grow in Christlikeness.

Session 5 - Chapters 7 & 8

Sermon Discussion

- "The Life of Discipling" from Philippians 3:17
- Using your sermon notes from this past Sunday, discuss any helpful, instructive, challenging, or convicting points from the sermon.

Questions for Further Discussion

- 1) **As you think through the list of nine factors to consider in deciding whom to disciple (on p. 75-80), which factors would have never occurred to you?**
- 2) **What is the importance of discipling someone who will in turn be a disciple-maker? How can you help instill that principle as you go?**
- 3) **As you consider who to seek out, is your own personal tendency to be more like Bob or more like Bill (the examples from p.73-74 and brought back on p. 83)? How might your personal tendency affect how you intentionally guide your discipling efforts?**
- 4) "Have you ever heard of the life>truth>life pattern? Your life should attract people to listen to you; your teaching should then work for their transformation; their transformed lives should then illustrate what you taught, which in turn attracts people to listen to them." (p.84)
 - **How does the life>truth>life pattern structure both your approach to discipling and your carrying it out?**
- 5) Discipling is not necessarily one more meeting you need to add to your schedule – not just one more breakfast meeting on Mondays or one more evening meeting blocking out your Thursdays. Much of it is simply inviting the person that you are discipling into your pre-existing life and routine. **How does this help you discipling efforts?**
 - "So much of discipling is doing what you ordinarily do but bringing people along with you and having meaningful conversations, like Jesus did. And when you invite them into your life, be transparent. Facades defeat the purpose. Invite others to learn from your mistakes." (p.85)

6) Discipling is *"about doing life together with other people as you all journey toward Christ. We make friends and then walk them in a Christward direction."* (p.86)

- **As you think about it this way, is there someone in your Growth Group (or who is already in close proximity to you in another capacity) who you could more naturally begin to walk more intentionally Christward with?** (This question is not necessarily designed for people to answer tonight, but to prompt prayerful thought about this over the next week. The following questions could also help people think and strategize. Ask them rhetorically.)

Or...

- ▶ Is there a couple who just got married, and you know maybe didn't have great premarital counseling, or doesn't have great marriage examples in their lives that you (who have been married for 5+ years) could walk alongside?
- ▶ Is there someone that you know is entirely unconnected at CFC? Maybe they cannot be in a growth group because of their work or school schedule? Nick Murray usually has a list of people in this situation and maybe he could help you find someone.
- ▶ Is there a college student you could seek out? Ryan Adams can connect you with one.
- ▶ Is there someone in the exact same line of work as you? Or someone who works in the same building as you?

Prayer Points

- Praise God for those who have gone before you, leaving a Christlike example that can be imitated and replicated to the glory of God.
- Confess the ways in which your life has not always modeled truth, and where you have failed to reproduce the truths that you know in other people's lives.
- Thank God for the discipling example of Jesus, and how even through his discipling efforts, the gospel has come to you.
- Ask God to grow in your heart a desire to disciple others. Ask that your life would model truth, and that you'd teach that in other lives. And ask for help identifying people whom you can disciple.

Handout for Session 5 - Chapters 7 & 8

- 1) As you think through the list of nine factors to consider in deciding whom to disciple (on p. 75-80), which factors would have never occurred to you?
- 2) What is the importance of discipling someone who will in turn be a disciple-maker? How can you help instill that principle as you go?
- 3) As you consider who to seek out, is your own personal tendency to be more like Bob or more like Bill (the examples from p.73-74 and brought back on p.83)? How might your personal tendency affect how you intentionally guide your discipling efforts?
- 4) How does the life>truth>life pattern structure both your approach to discipling and your carrying it out?
- 5) Discipling is not necessarily one more meeting you need to add to your schedule - not just one more breakfast meeting on Mondays or one more evening meeting blocking out your Thursdays. Much of it is simply inviting the person that you are discipling into your pre-existing life and routine.
 - How does this help you discipling efforts?
- 6) Discipling is *"about doing life together with other people as you all journey toward Christ. We make friends and then walk them in a Christward direction."* (p.86)
 - As you think about it this way, is there someone in your Growth Group (or who is already in close proximity to you in another capacity) who you could more naturally begin to walk more intentionally Christward with?

Prayer Points

- Praise God for those who have gone before you, leaving a Christlike example that can be imitated and replicated to the glory of God.
- Confess the ways in which your life has not always modeled truth, and where you have failed to reproduce the truths that you know in other people's lives.
- Thank God for the discipling example of Jesus, and how even through his discipling efforts, the gospel has come to you.
- Ask God to grow in your heart a desire to disciple others. Ask that your life would model truth, and that you'd teach that in other lives. And ask for help identifying people whom you can disciple.

Session 6 - Chapters 9 & 10

This night's discussion will take place over a fellowship night. So we'll have a handout for everyone to take and use as a guide to talk with one or two other people in the group.

The main goal of the night is to help everyone think through the question on page 74 of the book: **"Who should you spend time with? You only have so much time in the week. You cannot disciple the whole church. How do you decide in whom to invest?"**

The hope for tonight is to help push you toward a person that you can initiate a relationship with, but also to relieve you from the inherent burdens you might feel with "adding another thing to your plate." We want it to seem less like one more thing to do, and more like the main heartbeat of what your life looks like as a Christian.

Questions for Discussion Pairs

- 1) *"When I say 'discipling,' I should be clear that not all discipling relationships look the same. They conform to the circumstances of my life and the other person's life. And those relationships change over time....Also, these relationships can fall on a spectrum between more and less formal." (p.87)*
 - **Our hope is that any discipling relationship is life-giving and not burden-heaping. Do you find this more fluid definition freeing?**
- 2) **Discipling requires time, study, prayer, and love. Which one is the hardest to faithfully contribute? How might a discipling relationship be deformed with an overemphasis on one of these or an underemphasis on one?**
- 3) *"Everything the Lord gives you, he means for you to turn around and give to others in some fashion. Any time, truth, prayer, or love he gives you can be used for others." (p.91).*
 - **How does this affect how you view your own time, etc.?**
- 4) Who do you sense that the Lord is leading you to spend time with in a discipling relationship? Particularly, who could that person be in our church?
 - ▶ Is that person in your Growth Group? Or your Titus 2 group?
 - ▶ Is there a couple who just got married, and you know maybe didn't have great premarital counseling, or doesn't have great marriage examples in their lives that you (who have been married for 5+ years) could walk alongside?

- ▶ Is there someone that you know is entirely unconnected at CFC? Maybe they cannot be in a growth group because of their work or school schedule? Nick Murray usually has a list of people in this situation and maybe he could help you find someone.
- ▶ Is there a college student you could seek out? Ryan Adams can connect you with one.
- ▶ Is there someone in the exact same line of work as you? Or someone who works in the same building as you?
- ▶ Is there an area in your spiritual life that you know you need growth in, and a person who is particularly mature in that same area? For example, are you weak in evangelism, but know of someone who is especially faithful in it? Seek them out and seek to grow with them.

5) These questions are designed to help you think through any appropriate rationale in choosing someone to disciple. But once you have prayerfully identified that person, remember Dever's advice: *"Whatever the rationale, pray, ask for wisdom, and then get to it."* (p.81)

Prayer Points (pray these in your discussion pairs)

- Praise God for the gospel: for the fact that Jesus Christ has come, has died, has risen, and is coming again. And praise God that you have the privilege of helping brothers and sisters better know and better live in light of that gospel news.
- Confess the unbelief and selfishness in your heart that may be leading you even now to want to recoil from engaging in discipling relationships.
- Thank God for the opportunity to walk through this study, and for the ways that it has shaped the way you view your discipleship and your discipling.
- Ask God to help you "get to it," and to help you be faithful in committing to discipling relationships in the future.

Handout for Session 6 - Chapters 9 & 10

Questions to Be Discussed in Pairs

The main goal of the night is to help everyone think through the question on page 74 of the book: ***“Who should you spend time with? You only have so much time in the week. You cannot disciple the whole church. How do you decide in whom to invest?”***

- 1) Our hope is that any discipling relationship is life-giving and not burden-heaping. As Dever says, *“When I say ‘discipling,’ I should be clear that not all discipling relationships look the same. They conform to the circumstances of my life and the other person’s life. And those relationships change over time....Also, these relationships can fall on a spectrum between more and less formal.”* (p.87)
 - Do you find this more fluid definition freeing?
- 2) Discipling requires time, study, prayer, and love. Which one is the hardest to faithfully contribute? How might a discipling relationship be deformed with an overemphasis on one of these or an underemphasis on one?
- 3) Dever: *“Everything the Lord gives you, he means for you to turn around and give to others in some fashion. Any time, truth, prayer, or love he gives you can be used for others.”* (p.91).
 - How does this affect how you view your own time, etc.?
- 4) Who do you sense that the Lord is leading your to spend time with in a discipling relationship? Particularly, who could that person be in our church? (Note that this person should be of the same gender as you.)
 - Is that person in your Growth Group? Or your Titus 2 group?
 - Is there a couple who just got married, and you know maybe didn’t have great premarital counseling, or doesn’t have great marriage examples in their lives that you (who have been married for 5+ years) could walk alongside?
 - Is there someone that you know is entirely unconnected at CFC? Maybe they cannot be in a growth group because of their work or school schedule? Nick Murray usually has a list of people in this situation and maybe he could help you find someone.

- Is there a college student you could seek out? Ryan Adams can connect you with one.
- Is there someone in the exact same line of work as you? Or someone who works in the same building as you?
- Is there an area in your spiritual life that you know you need growth in, and a person who is particularly mature in that same area? For example, are you weak in evangelism, but know of someone who is especially faithful in it? Seek them out and seek to grow with them.

5) These questions are designed to help you think through any appropriate rationale in choosing someone to disciple. But once you have prayerfully identified that person, remember Dever's advice: *"Whatever the rationale, pray, ask for wisdom, and then get to it"* (p.81). So take time now to pray together about potential discipling relationships. You are welcome to use the following prayer points as you pray.

- Praise God for the gospel: for the fact that Jesus Christ has come, has died, has risen, and is coming again. And praise God that you have the privilege of helping brothers and sisters better know and better live in light of that gospel news.
- Confess the unbelief and selfishness in your heart that may be leading you even now to want to recoil from engaging in discipling relationships.
- Thank God for the opportunity to walk through this study, and for the ways that it has shaped the way you view your discipleship and your discipling.
- Ask God to help you "get to it," and to help you be faithful in committing to discipling relationships in the future.

Putting It into Practice

You've read through the book. You've walked through this study. And you're on board. You want to be involved in discipling relationships. You've even got a person in mind. So now what? How do you actually do this? What does a typical meeting look like? What should you talk about? What should you study together? These are all great questions.

1) What does a typical meeting with someone look like?

Honestly, what you do when you get together is not nearly as important as consistently meeting together and working to build a relationship with biblical truth at its core. So really, there is no "set program" for discipling relationships at CFC. You can do a number of things:

- Meet weekly to discuss the prior Sunday's sermon, a good Christian book, or a book of the Bible. You can do this over a meal, over coffee, or in your living room with kids running around, whatever is conducive to both of your schedules.
 - ▶ If you want some more guidance on how to read the Bible with someone, see Appendix One: How to Read the Bible Together.
 - ▶ If you want some recommendations for a book to read together, see Appendix Two: Recommended Books for Discipling Relationships.
- Attend an Equip class together and discuss specific application in one another's lives.
- Invite unmarried members to sit in on family devotions.
- Accompany mothers with young children as they run errands.
- Help dads with yard work and ask them for counsel.

Schedules and venues are flexible. What's important is that you pursue something where you have time to relate to another member with the intentional aim of encouraging and being encouraged by the truth from God's Word.

So be creative! But be intentional about loving one another in the best, the highest, the most biblical way—by aiming to do the other person spiritual good.

2) What are some questions I should ask in a discipling relationship?

- How did you become a Christian? (Obviously, this is not a question to ask every week, but should certainly be covered first as every discipling relationship forms.)

- What have you been reading in your time with the Lord recently? What have you been learning and doing because of it?
- How is your prayer life? What are some things you are praying about?
- How is your marriage/dating relationship/contentment in singleness?
- What areas of growth have you identified in your spiritual life? What's one area you need to grow in?
- How have you been intentionally preaching the gospel to yourself this week?
- Have you been using your finances/free time/relationships to glorify God?
- Are you reading anything that is stirring your affection for the Lord?
- Who have you been able to share the gospel with recently?
- What sins are you frequently tempted towards? How are you fighting against those sins?
- Where have you seen God graciously work in your life recently?
- Have you seen any sin in my life?
- Am I serving you well, and is there any other way I can better serve you?
- How can I pray for you?

Appendix One: How to Read the Bible Together¹

Whether you are doing evangelism, helping a new Christian, or sharpening a mature Christian, one of the best ways to help other people spiritually is to study the Bible together. A typical meeting of Bible reading will likely consist of a few essential elements.

1. Praying and Reading – Be sure to begin by asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply the passage. Then it will probably be helpful to read the passage out loud.
2. Talking Together – Remember that questions and open-ended statements offer good ways to sustain discussion. “Nothing will kill reading one-to-one faster than one of the two partners pontificating on the text (or worse, something other than the text). The remedy, of course, is to be as good a listener as you are a speaker.”² One last point of advice here: you don’t have to have all the answers. If it’s an important issue, you can consult study guides, commentaries, or a pastor and return to it later.
3. Applying the Passage to Everyday Life – Bible reading is not just for expanding our minds, but also for enlarging our affections and shaping our actions. Be sure that you see how this passage teaches, reproves, corrects, or trains in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).
4. Praying – Specifically, let your prayer flow out from what you’ve studied together and how it applies to your lives.

In terms of studying the passage together, you and your reading partner can decide whether you’d benefit from preparing beforehand or whether you’d prefer to do all of your study when you’re together. There are a variety of effective ways to study the Bible, but here are two that you can use pretty easily.

Swedish Method

1. Read the passage aloud.
2. Each person then reads back over the passage on their own and looks for three things:
 - a. A light bulb: anything that shines out in the passage and draws attention, whether it is important or strikes the reader in a particular way.

¹ Most of this is taken from David Helm’s book, *One-to-One Bible Reading*.

² David Helm, *One-to-One Bible Reading*, p.28.

- b. A question mark: anything that is hard to understand, that you'd like to ask the author about.
 - c. An arrow: anything that applies to the reader's life.
3. Each person should write down at least one thing and no more than three things in each category. (If you are preparing beforehand, this is your preparation. If you are not preparing, allow 5-10 minutes to come up with these.)
 4. Each share your light bulb(s) and discuss.
 5. Each share your question mark(s) and do your best to work out an answer from the passage (or return to it next time if you need more time to investigate).
 6. Each share your arrow(s) and discuss.
 7. Pray together about what you've learned.

COMA Method

1. Read the passage aloud.
2. Ask some **context** questions of the text:
 - a. What sort of writing is this? (A letter, a narrative, a poem?)
 - b. Are there any clues about the circumstances under which it was written?
 - c. What has happened so far?
3. Ask some **observation** questions of the text:
 - a. Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
 - b. What is the main point or points?
 - c. What surprises are there?
 - d. What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?
4. Ask some **meaning** questions of the text:
 - a. How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
 - b. How does the passage relate to Jesus?
 - c. What does this teach us about God?
 - d. How could we sum up the meaning of this passage in our own words?

5. Ask some **application** questions of the text:
 - a. How does this passage challenge (or confirm) my understanding?
 - b. Is there some attitude I need to change?
 - c. How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?
6. Pray together about what you have learned.

Hopefully this is enough to get you started reading the Bible in discipling relationships. If you are looking for other good resources, we recommend *One To One Bible Reading* by David Helm. You can view information about the book, including some free and extremely helpful guidelines, at <http://www.matthiasmedia.com/one-to-one-bible-reading>.

If you want something that is a little more particular to the book you are studying, there are a variety of good Bible study options out there. *The Bible Speaks Today* is a commentary series that is devotional in nature, with many in the series containing a study guide at the end of the book. Matthias Media is a publishing company out of Australia that offers a variety of Bible study helps. Their *Pathway Bible Guides* are a good choice for people with little exposure to the Bible, while the *Interactive Bible Studies* are a little meatier and provide good discussion points. The Good Book Company has the *God's Word For You* series that includes good devotional thoughts along with some helpful questions. Finally, Crossway publishes a series of short studies called *Knowing the Bible* with 12 weeks through various books of the Bible.

Appendix Two: Recommended Books for Discipling Relationships

What are some books that might be good to read in a discipling relationship? There are a ton of great options to read through together! Check out the appendix in *Discipling* by Mark Dever for a pretty good list. Alternatively, you can also find a lot of good recommendations on CFC's website (www.cfcbermingham.org/recommended-resources). Here are a few of our favorites to get you going:

Understanding the Bible

- *God's Big Picture* by Vaughan Roberts
- *The God Who is There* by D.A. Carson

Growing in Your Knowledge of God

- *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer
- *Prayer* by Tim Keller
- *The Holiness of God* by R. C. Sproul

Growing In Christlikeness

- *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Don Whitney
- *The Hole in our Holiness* by Kevin DeYoung
- *When People are Big and God Is Small* by Ed Welch

Missions & Evangelism

- *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism* by Mark Dever
- *Let the Nations Be Glad* by John Piper

The Church

- *What is a Healthy Church?* by Mark Dever
- *The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ* by Ray Ortlund

Marriage

- *When Sinners Say 'I Do'* by Dave Harvey
- *The Meaning of Marriage* by Tim Keller

It must also be noted that some book titles can be misleading. A new book with a catchy title may actually be quite off-base when it comes to aligning with the truths of the Bible. With that in mind, it is usually best to consider authors of books more so than titles of books when selecting a book to use in discipling relationships. So in addition to books that we recommend, there are numerous authors that we trust and would commend almost everything that they have written. Some of those authors include: Mark Dever, John Piper, Tim Keller, Kevin DeYoung, Paul Tripp, and Russel Moore.