

HOW TO HELP A RECEIVER

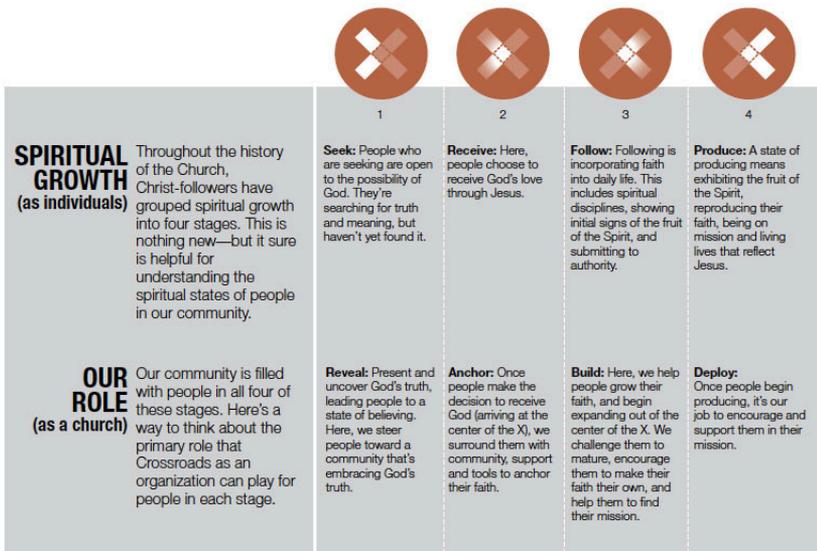
Navigating This Guide

This guide is a handbook for discipling receivers to a place of following. You can read it all in one setting or just skim through it upfront and read as you go. This guide should help you through a journey of a year

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So you've got yourself a friend who's a good old fashioned *receiver*. They've said yes to Jesus, acknowledged Him as Lord and Savior of their life, and have received forgiveness for their sin. They're open to everything Jesus wants to do in their life, and they're learning how to obey daily. They've still got all the *seeker* skills down, too: they're honest, hungry, and willing to experiment. They desire truth and know they need Jesus, and are taking Him in as much as they can. But what they need going forward is to be anchored in the big story of God and start developing the skills necessary for a vibrant interior life in the Spirit. This is core season for foundation building in a life of following Jesus. Spiritual maturity is a process that takes a life-time. It's not as clean and clear cut as a four step process, but at some level, we all pass through these stages as we grow.



As for you: you're a bona-fide *follower* of Christ. You've not only learned the big story of the Gospel, but you've learned the skills of a daily rhythm of abiding, repentance, how to grow your faith, submission, suffering, etc. You're established, and you want to help him/her to be established. *That* is awesome. We want to do everything possible to help you help them.

This guide's purpose is to aid *receivers* in becoming *followers*, with the help of a *follower* or *producer* (which is just the name for a seasoned vet who's helped several people do this, thus learning the skill of reproducing their faith). There are lots of very specific things a follower needs in his/her bag of tricks, and our aim is to point you in the right direction for every one of them. This guide won't necessarily be a point-by-point instruction manual, but it will help you get started, make the goal a bit clearer, and give you a nice, firm push in the backside. You can do this, brah. And your *wanting* to do this is worth shouting about.

Choosing to receive Jesus' forgiveness, salvation, healing, and deliverance isn't the finish line of a life of faith; it's really the starting line. And while being a Receiver is a really important, precious stage in the life of every believer, it's a temporary one. **It must be a transition to a deeper, more committed walk with Christ.** The Bible says that if your walk with Christ ends in this receiving/taking stage, without going through the refinement of suffering, a deepening of commitment, and a growing in holiness (among other things), God is not pleased (Ephesians 4:14-15, Hebrews 5:11-12) and our very salvation is at risk (Revelation 3:15-18). The point is: we're all destined for adulthood in Christ. God intends for each of us to grow into maturity, and helping others get to that place is the work of the church (see Ephesians 4:11-13). So helping someone through the transitional phase of *receiver* into a more mature, equipped place of being a *follower* is important, indeed. Bless you for taking this on!

And, since one of the skills needed for maturity is the ability to help someone else, this process is going to mature *you* as well. That is a pretty nifty double-dip, if you ask us. So go for this full-bore! It's a worthwhile pursuit for you, and is of urgent importance for your receiving friend. Let's do it!

Your receiving friend needs you: access to your life, your knowledge, your skills, and your guidance. We like to say that they need information from you as well as a model for imitation. So not only will your thoughts on God and the Bible be helpful, but behind the scenes glimpses into your own life of discipleship will be crucial, too. So, as you teach the concepts covered in this document (and anything else God has invested in you), be open about your life as you help grow that of your friend. You don't have to know everything, you just have to love them and be willing to give them what you do have. As you start down this road of equipping your receiving friend, keep in mind the following:

1. You're engaging in serious business.

We've already covered the fact that lives are on the line here. In reality, though, it isn't just the life of your friend that's on the line; it's the lives of everyone who'll be affected because of this person's life. Assuming they develop into a Producer, and they make disciples who make disciples who make disciples, etc. Then we're talking about thousands of people at a minimum. Because the implications of your investment are so vast, the need to be thorough and intentional is a high priority. So we encourage you to take this relationship seriously, prepare for the time you spend together, and cover the whole thing in prayer.

2. What you're doing can properly be called "making disciples."

Reproduction of oneself wasn't just the first command to Adam and Eve, it's also the last big command of Jesus' when, in Matthew 28:18, he told his followers to go and make disciples of all nations. (This command is commonly called The Great Commission.)

Scads of books have been written on the importance and techniques of making disciples, but suffice it to say, it's kind of one of our main functions as believers. (Our first job is to posture ourselves in humble worship before the Lord, but the making of disciples is supposed to be a natural by-product of that worship.) The making of disciples was modeled for us by Paul (with Timothy and others), Jesus (with his, you know... disciples), John the Baptist (with his disciples as well, Moses (Joshua), Elijah (Elisha), Eli (Samuel), and Naomi (Ruth), just to name a few. If you want to investigate this enterprise further (eventually it will be worth your time to do so as, again, this is a lifelong function for the mature), we highly recommend Coleman's [The Master Plan of Evangelism](#) as well as Eims' [The Lost Art of Disciple Making](#).

3. This takes time.

Any amount of equipping you can give someone is valuable, so if for some reason you're only able to spend a couple of months building into a friend, go ahead and do it. But if you want to take someone from Willing Receiver to Fully Formed Follower, plan on anywhere from 18 months to 3 years. (I mean, it took Paul, who was already a highly respected rabbi, 3 years to become a disciple of Jesus. We're assuming your friend is not a rabbi. So, give it some time. Also, as you read this guide, know that you won't be covering all this material in a week. It'll be a slow burn, so pace yourself. This isn't a race, and you'd much rather take too long in establishing a Receiver than rushing through any of these foundational topics.) As you'll see, there really is a lot that a fully functioning disciple needs to have mastered. I mean we're trying to look like Jesus here. It's going to be an undertaking. (Also, when we say that, you may be thinking, "Forget them not knowing all this stuff; I don't know that I will know all the things you say they need. So how am I supposed to lead somebody where I haven't been?" Don't worry: your greatest asset is your willingness to serve. If you have any weaknesses in these areas, you can discover them together with your friend—and you'll be modeling for them that you don't have to have it all buttoned up before you can serve the Lord by helping others. That's a good thing. You'll be fine!)

4. The nature of this relationship will be one in which you have more knowledge and training than your protégé, but that doesn't make you their boss.

Because this is a Kingdom undertaking, you need to think of yourself as their servant. Jesus said that religious, controlling, manipulative people love to boss people around, and he can't stand that attitude (Matthew 20:25-28). This isn't a power trip. In fact, our hope is that those we equip will end up more prayerful than we are, more anointed by God, and more skilled in the Word—that is to say, greater in the Kingdom. That ambition, to create a whole bunch of people who will outrank you, is one of humility. We are servants of the LORD Jesus, as well as servants of his children as we do this work. There will be times when you're tempted to dictate to your receiving friend. Resist the urge. In the Kingdom of God, leadership is for the benefit of those being led, and this journey is between them and God. You are simply a fortunate assistant to the process.

Having said that, you are a big brother/big sister type to them. That means they'll need blunt advice, access to your opinions, and leadership. Don't be afraid to give your receiving friend the guidance they need. Paul wasn't shy of saying, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Corinthians 14:1); he was upfront about what he was doing. Our habit is to speaking forthrightly, not shading the truth, but then to say, "Do you think this is what God is saying to you, too? What does your spirit say?" If they answer in the affirmative, we proceed as if it's so, and they're held accountable to what they report to be God's word to them. Easy.

5. Your relationship must embody both invitation and challenge.

Think of a driving instructor. Because she knows more than her students, she must challenge them when they're in error, instruct them in proper philosophy and technique, and drill in them specific skills, giving them encouragement and critical feedback. She must be diligent in her work, because lives are potentially at stake! Is she serving them? Of course. Without her input, they'll never have the power and freedom that driving a car brings. But is she also the expert among the inexperienced? Yes, and for that reason, she must be deferred to. We make it a habit to talk about invitation and challenge with the people we equip. We want them to understand that they have access to our lives, and we want this relationship to be warm, fun, and healthy—that's invitation. We're going on an awesome adventure together! But we also have to agree that challenge will be part of the puzzle as well: as their trainers, we reserve the right to oppose them when need be, call them to account, and call BS if something seems amiss. Relationships without challenge are nice and cozy, but they don't produce the kind of disciples Jesus is looking for--and it's not the way he made disciples, either!

Great question. Glad you asked. Getting started can be tricky, but once you have a few basics down, it will be a snap. The first thing you should do is just meet up with your friend for lunch or coffee. Tell them you want to talk about how you can help one another grow spiritually. At that meeting, share your faith journey with them. Be detailed. Include some of your sin and failure. And tell them where you are right now, including the fact that you're at a place where you want to help others grow the faith that you now have. Then ask them to tell their story. Don't just listen; take notes. What seem to be their major sticking points?

Painful relationship with parents?

Past hurts?

Hang-ups with bad religion?

The suspicion that God is mad or wants them to perform for him?

An undercurrent of pride or unworthiness?

Listen to any clues, and jot them down. Also, note what it seems like they've received—how trained are they already?

Have they ever had a good experience with a community of loving believers?

Do they know how to read the Bible alone with God?

Does it sound like they know how to worship?

Have they been baptized in water?

You don't have to ask these questions, but just listen for clues. "What am I dealing with, here?" is a pretty reasonable question to ask yourself as you listen to their story. You want to know what you have to work with not because they're a project you're fixing up, but so you know how to start praying for them and to start getting a vision of what the relationships might look like.

After you've both told your stories (and assuming that you feel comfortable that you've been somewhere they haven't, and can add value to their life), say something to your friend like...

"Well, listen Tom, (Tom? Is our imaginary disciple-to-be named Tom? Sure. It's Tom.) It sounds like I've been some places in my relationship with God that you have yet to go. Like, do you know how to repent? [He doesn't.] Do you know how to spend time alone with God and make that time meaningful? [Nope.] Can you tell the big story of God and share your faith with someone else? Do you know how to deal with your own sin? How to forgive? How to fashion a life based on healthy rhythms of rest and work? How to relate to God as Father and King? How to let Him judge you? How to suffer without getting bitter?" (The list could go on, but you get the point.)

I'm no expert, Tom, but I have some degree of exposure to those things, and I think they're necessary to being mature in Christ, and I'd like to give you what I've got. Not only that, but I believe God made you with a very specific group of gifts and callings that are amazing and potent. What I want to do is help you uncover that destiny in God, then set you up with every possible tool to make sure that you fulfill that destiny in every way. I want to serve you in helping God's purposes for you come to life. Would you be interested in investigating that?"

(Remember, you're not inviting them to "three years of discipleship." That would be a tad overwhelming. It'd be like saying, "Would you like to go on a first date? We may end up married and with four children by the time we're 25." Maaaaayyybe not the most winsome opening line. Our guess is, you're not going to find many receivers who don't want to investigate the possibility of having their very own spiritual butler who's offering them everything you just did. It's a pretty compelling offer.

So say you and Tom are both willing to stick your toe in the water. Great. Make it clear that you're going to try it out for a month or two and see if it's working for you both. If not, you can stop these meetings and resume your friendship as it was. No harm, no foul. Remember, Tom's not only checking you out ("Is this guy going to try to control my life? Does he think I'm some kind of dum-dum and he's a saint? Does he know what he's doing?"), but you're checking Tom out, too. You need to identify whether Tom is willing to receive from you spiritually; if Tom has a humble, teachable heart; and if Tom will be eager and grateful for this kind of character and skill transfer. (You know,

some people just have time on their hands. They're not particularly passionate about maturing in Christ, but they'll come to a meeting or two if you're willing to do all the work. Word to the wise: get rid of these jokers as soon as possible. They'll drain your time and energy and never be fruitful in the Kingdom—at least not in their present state.) After meeting for maybe 6 weeks, check back in. Is this working? Shall we proceed?

If you get buy-in at that point, then maybe you can say,

“I think I've got maybe a year or two worth of stuff for you, but you can re-visit this conversation anytime. If you're not receiving value from our time together, Tom, I want you to go find something better to do. Really!”

Meeting weekly is probably the best thing early on. Tom is probably going to be meeting one-on-one with God for the first time in his life, and he needs encouragement and accountability to develop that habit. Ninety minutes to two hours is a reasonable amount of time to give, if you're meeting weekly. Aside from that time, though, this receiver needs access to your normal, not-in-an-official-meeting life. Tom may never have seen first hand what a disciple of Jesus looks like when they are interacting with a cashier, or playing with their kids, or being at home with their spouse. Just as Jesus had organized times of teaching and counsel, but also just had meals with his guys and walked with them, so should you have both *organized* and more *organic* time with Tom, too. That doesn't mean more meetings; it means that he's welcome into your home (at least some time!) and can observe your life. (Just to connect the dots between two concepts, the regular, organized meetings will probably be home to more challenge, and the organic, casual times will probably be where more invitation happens.) You're going to be

reproducing both what you know (competency) and who you are (character) in Tom, so Tom has to have access to you- it's that simple. Tom's going to be developing a life worth imitating, so he needs something to model himself after.

PSST- here's a secret. Someday, Tom's going to be making disciples, himself. And chances are, he's going to do it a *lot* like you're doing it with him. So for Tom, the life you model is going to be his standard. If that feels like a huge responsibility, it is. But that pressure of being watched and followed is part of God's development program for us! Again, this whole relationship is a massive win-win.

When most people think of “living for God”, they only think of serving Him. That’s great, but the Bible teaches that something comes before working for God: receiving from Him. So receiving, or “resting in God”, always comes before “working for God.” That’s one reason why this receiving stage is the first in a believer’s development. They need to get good and refreshed by God before they’re sent out to do—anything! This same pattern of *rest—work* is to happen on a daily basis for us. Each believer is to rest/abide/receive from God before going out to serve/act/work. (And even then the abiding doesn’t stop.) Taking that time for resting in God is a powerful habit, usually called a “quiet time” (because it’s contemplative time without distractions).

Tom’s ability to meet alone with God, just the two of them, means everything to this journey. If he can’t spend time alone with God in study, both giving worship and prayers to God, and receiving instruction and encouragement *from* God, he’s cooked. Your first job as someone who’s going to equip Tom is to help this meeting with God become a habit. With any skill building, the pattern of transfer is *information - imitation - innovation*. That means that you need to describe some principles and present a vision of where you’re headed, offer an example to model after, then set someone free to go experiment on their own (based on your model). This is Skill Reproduction 101, whether it’s how to shoot a basketball or how to pray for the sick.

So, if you want to teach Tom how to spend time with God, you need to:

1. Tell him why (*information*).

Show him in the scriptures that Jesus spent time alone with God (Luke 9:18, Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16, et al), and talk about your habit of spending time with God. (It doesn't have to be perfect! Be honest here.) Is it valuable? He's going to need to develop this habit so that he can become familiar with the Bible, learn the character and ways of God, get a sense of the big story of the Gospel, and process the things that you'll be covering together.

2. Show him how (*imitation*).

We recommend two to three meetings in which you have your quiet time with God with your friend right there, watching and taking notes. Explain exactly what you're doing, the whole time. "I write my memory verse here." "I pray this prayer first..." "So then, after spending 5 minutes in the Old Testament, I go to where I am in the New Testament, like this..." "I'm writing 'God, help me to love you like Samuel did. Psalm 99:6 says...'" Invite them to do your quiet time with you, following along. Make sure they have a Bible and a journal that you think works. If you use a Bible dictionary or a concordance, they should too. If you keep a laptop open to biblegateway.com, so should they. They're pantomiming your quiet time. Not because yours is the best or only way. It's just how we learn. If you sing aloud in your time with God, make them do it, too. Let them copycat your every prayer, trace your every thought, and write what you write. It's humbling for you both, but it's really good, and will serve them the rest of their lives. We all but guarantee

that nobody's ever done this for them before. Also, be sure to underline adoration and worship during these times, not just the gathering of facts. When people just spend time telling God how great He is and offering themselves to Him, that's worship. And God just *loves* worship. Jesus said that the Father is looking for worshippers—people who value and adore Him. If 1 John 3:2 is correct (“We will be like him [when] we see Him as He is”), then nothing will change Tom's heart as dramatically as sitting in God's presence worshipping Him. So help him start that relationship of study, prayer and worship. Again, the consequences of this friendly nudge from you can be gigantic. Take the time to model a private life of devotion. And, as always, be honest and vulnerable about your habits. There's nothing wrong with saying, “I still struggle with being disciplined in this area, but I know it's important and God's working on me,” etc. Be real, and you'll encourage your friend to do the same.

3. Remember, this takes (a lot of) time.

Any amount of equipping you can give someone is valuable, so if for some reason you're only able to spend a couple of months building into a friend, go ahead and do it. But if you want to take someone from Willing Receiver to Fully Formed Follower, plan on anywhere from 18 months to 3 years. (I mean, it took Paul, who was already a highly respected rabbi, 3 years to become a disciple of Jesus. We're assuming your friend is not a rabbi. So, give it some time. Also, as you read this guide, know that you won't be covering all this material in a week. It'll be a slow burn, so pace yourself. This isn't a race, and you'd much rather take too long in establishing a Receiver than rushing through any of these foundational topics.) As you'll see, there

really is a lot that a fully functioning disciple needs to have mastered. I mean we're trying to look like Jesus here. It's going to be an undertaking. (Also, when we say that, you may be thinking, "Forget them not knowing all this stuff; I don't know that I will know all the things you say they need. So how am I supposed to lead somebody where I haven't been?" Don't worry: your greatest asset is your willingness to serve. If you have any weaknesses in these areas, you can discover them together with your friend—and you'll be modeling for them that you don't have to have it all buttoned up before you can serve the Lord by helping others. That's a good thing. You'll be fine!)

FREE TIP: If Tom wants to meet with God, but can't get himself in gear at first, give him grace. If, however, Tom kinda says, "You know, I thought you were just going to tell me some interesting God facts that would help my life... I'm not sure becoming disciplined and meeting with God and all that stuff is exactly what I'm after...", that's a horse of a different color. In this case, pat Tom on the back and say, "No sweat. If you want to continue your life as is, I am definitely not your guy. Thanks for experimenting with me and I'll see you around." You will have just saved yourself 18 months of frustration, at least, because Tom is not ready to become a disciple of Jesus. Disciple and discipline go together. They're the same word, for Pete's sake. If Tom is hoping for a life of discipleship without discipline... well, he's just barking up the wrong tree, God bless him.

Okay, so Tom's now trying to meet alone with God daily, as are you, and you're going to get together every week to talk about your journeys. What will that meeting look like?

- Try starting by reporting on homework. (“Homework” as you’ll see, is nothing more than doing what you think God’s telling you to do. It’s not some arbitrary assignment.) You will help Tom by tracking what God’s doing in his life and keeping him accountable to following through on his commitments to God. This reporting on homework should include some description of what you think God is doing and saying to you as you obey. More on this at the end of this section.*
- Quote memory verses to each other. More on this later.
- Sometimes, those two bullet points above can eat up the whole meeting. If that’s the case, no problem: especially early on, a receiver has a lot to process as they start toward God. They desperately need a sounding board for the things they’re experiencing and thinking. They don’t know how to do “following Jesus”, which is why you’re a great resource.

“Am I crazy?”

“Do you think that was God’s voice?”

“Should I talk to them and apologize?”

- If you breezed through homework, memory verses and talk time, then you might present some new content to them (see below), or you might need to process together how you're reacting to outside content.
- Pray together. Tom needs to see you pray a lot. All kinds of prayers are helpful. And he needs you to pray for him a lot. Praying for him with him is the best. Do both intercession prayer (asking God to come through on needs) and worship (just telling God how great He is, maybe in reaction to a passage of Scripture or something you're seeing in your life).
- That's really the bulk of the meeting: sharing what's going on (in reaction to homework), sharing/processing outside content, and praying together. Easy. Before you leave, though, say, "Let's take a minute of silence and consider the number one thing God's saying to us in our lives right now. It might be something we just talked about, or a relationship that needs work, or a character flaw, or anything else..." Give that a minute, and do the exercise yourself. Then say, "Okay, now let's take another minute and consider what we're going to *do* about what He's saying." That is, what can we do, that can be measured, that will be an active response to what you feel God's saying? Report that to each other, and write it down.

Make sure it's measurable.
“I'm going to be more loving”
is a meaningless statement;
“I'm going to write a note of
appreciation to my parents” is
not.

Voila! You have homework. This is what you'll report on when you start your next meeting.

- Is there a verse that God's underlined in quiet times, or one that describes what you're dealing with? (For instance, Tom is learning that He's a candidate for God's power and for being used by God. In that case, Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength” would be a great one for him at this stage of the game.) Commit to memorize it. Memorization of scripture is an important skill that prevents sin (Psalm 119:11), helps us understand truth (John 17:17), builds faith (Romans 10:17), and equips us against the enemy (Matthew 4:3-10). Every verse that Tom memorizes is pouring a foundation slab in his heart. God will use it and build on it!

Well, this is awesome. You guys are meeting with God and memorizing scripture and praying together and processing new stuff and keeping each other accountable and motivated. In doing these things, there are a couple of patterns you want to watch out for and encourage, for the health of this relationship and for Tom's spiritual well being. As we've said, discipline is key to where Tom's headed. He's never had it (at least, not toward Jesus), and is working on developing it. So what disciplines will color this relationship and his spiritual growth?

For starters, there's the discipline of his spending time with Jesus. That alone is fantastic. Affirm him in that as soon as you can. As he develops a personal "walk with Jesus", he'll start to enjoy the benefits: confidence in what the LORD is saying to Him, a working command of the scriptures, a sense of the moment-by-moment leading of the Spirit in his life, freedom from worry, etc. This should be underlined and discussed: discipline produces good fruit! We're not afraid of discipline because we can already see all the resulting benefits!

Also, merely by putting your time together on a calendar, along with his daily quiet times with God, you're underlining the fact that discipline—the repeated choice against laziness and comfort—is a foundational component of spiritual formation. Look for places in Tom's life where he needs to enact discipline to accomplish some spiritual goal (like, making giving a regular part of his financial worldview), or overcome a weakness (like the tendency to gossip or be undisciplined in how he stays healthy physically). As with anything, be careful not to put too much on Tom too fast. This whole world is new to him at this point, remember, so be happy with his just spending time alone with God for a while. But as God starts to take old habits away from Tom,

and give him new ones, be there cheering for discipline all along the way.

Another major discipline that's being developed (perhaps unconsciously) is that of **obedience after hearing**. Jesus says that obedience is one of the marks of those who're being saved (John 14:15, 21) and it's a most necessary skill. By considering what God's saying each week, then considering how you'll respond, you're developing this skill of *hearing then doing*. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." That means that instant obedience, as a knee-jerk reaction to hearing God speak on any subject, is the dividing line between truth and deception, blessing and curse. You must monitor any tendency to think that simply hearing God's voice is, in itself, a kind of victory. On the contrary: hearing God's voice begins a chain of events that must either result in obedience or deception. It's a fearsome thing to hear from God! When we do, we should have developed the reflex to spring into action. That's the discipline you're encouraging.

It's worth saying again that this isn't to be an onerous journey for Tom. His receiving period shouldn't feel burdensome to him, like he's performing for an angry God who wants to slap him around just for kicks. Jesus addressed this tendency to turn the pursuit of God into a joyless slog when he said,

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Matthew 11:28-30

Walking with Jesus is a walk of peace and grace. Particularly for the Receiver, in the youth of their faith, we don't want to crush them with the weight of expectations. This is a time of, well...receiving! So, as leaders, we seek to strike the balance between Tom being built into (which is the main goal) and his gently establishing rhythms of discipline, too.

Tom understands that “God loves him,” at least to some degree, as he’s put his faith in Jesus and received new life. But Tom really doesn’t have the experience or knowledge to be deeply familiar with God’s character or the wide arc of God’s story (also called the Gospel). If he doesn’t understand God’s character or His ways (the patterns of activity God’s established over the centuries), Tom may well be confused at events that happen in his own life. “I just lost my job. Did this happen because God’s angry with me? Is it connected to the lie I told last week? ...gosh, I guess God can get kind of mean...”

Unfortunately, this kind of confusion (and assigning of wrong characterizations to God) is awfully common if people have never grown to know His character. They tend to make assumptions about who God is based on the circumstances around them. When that happens, suffering automatically leads to impending doubt. We want to develop people who interpret their circumstances through the lens of God’s character, not the other way around. To get there, you have to really know him. We recommend that you spend significant content time with your receiving friend researching and discussing God’s story and his character.

For an overview of the larger picture of God on the earth (and the Bible, and the church, and the story of Israel, etc.), we recommend that you and your friend attend The Story Formed Life. These groups happen regularly at Crossroads. Or you can also check storyformedlife.org. We also recommend *The Big Picture* by Tommy Nelson. Once we understand the cosmos-sized drama that’s unfolding in history all around us, it’s much easier to find our proper place in that story. The Gospel isn’t about us; it’s about this great God we’re honored to know and follow.

It's foundational to get this part, because the answers to questions like these are really formative:

Is he good? Always?

Does He get vindictive sometimes like when I disobey?

What does He expect of me?

What can I expect of Him?

All really legit questions, and ones which, when answered, help us orient ourselves to the God Who Is (instead of the God of Our Imaginations, or the God That Tradition Teaches us About, or the God of What I'd Be Like If I Were God). You can appeal to a book like Kay Arthur's God I Want To Know You, or The Nature and Character of God by W.A. Pratney. Or you can conduct a study on your own. If that's the route you'd like to take (and we always encourage discovering the truth of the scriptures firsthand!), here's a starter kit:

God is loving:

1 John 4:7-21, Deuteronomy 4:29-38, 7:6-15

God is faithful:

Deuteronomy 7:9, 2 Timothy 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Psalm 86:15, Hebrews 13:8

God is good:

James 1:17, Galatians 5:22, Psalm 18:30, 107:1, Nahum 1:7

God is healer:

Exodus 15:26, 23:25, Deuteronomy 7:15, Psalm 103:1-3

God is provider:

Psalm 23, Genesis 22:14, Philippians 4:19, Matthew 6:25-34, Ephesians 2:8-9

God is protection:

2 Thessalonians 3:3, 2 Samuel 22:3-4, Psalm 46:1, 91:1-3, 121:7-8, 2 Timothy 4:18

God is holy:

Exodus 15:11, Jeremiah 23:6, Isaiah 6:1-5, Ps 86:8-10, 96:9

God is all-powerful:

Matthew 19:26, Isaiah 40:28, Psalm 147:5, Daniel 2:20-22, 1 Corinthians 1:25, Amos 4:13

God is judge:

Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 75:7, Isaiah 66:16, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 4:12, Isaiah 2:4

Getting Free (AKA Salvation)

Salvation: A lifelong process of being saved from the eternal consequences of sin, healed from disease, and delivered from the power of the enemy by Jesus Christ. It is a process that begins by being born and continues as long as one lives in Christ.

Tom has just started participating in a journey that God started planning for him before the world began (Ephesians 1:4), continued as God knit him together in his mother's womb (Psalm 139:13), and is now finally being revealed in the flesh.

Clearly, God's rescue of Tom is much bigger than the few moments when Tom prays and listens to God, and it would help Tom to understand the broader scope of salvation.

Was his prayer to receive Jesus the last prayer he needs to pray, for instance? When does salvation begin and end? What will be required of him as he receives more salvation? Is salvation an all-at-once deal? These questions matter!

Salvation is not an event. It's a process. It began in God's heart before time began, and it began for Tom when he responded to the Spirit of God's invitation (that moment is called "conversion," (Acts 15:3, et al) "being born again," (John 3:3-7) or "being baptized into the Body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). But salvation, which again is a process (Philippians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 2:15), continues throughout our lives.

If this process stops in anyone's lifetime, the Bible would conclude that the earlier steps along the path were illegitimate (see 1 John 2:19, James 2:14-24, Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-38). So perseverance is a key character trait

for a believer, and the understanding that salvation is a process is really helpful. Even for believers, salvation is for today (2 Corinthians 6:2), and receiving the grace, encouragement, instruction, or correction God has for me now is part of that process.

One of God's aims in the salvation process is dealing with our sin. Not in a dealing-with-the-eternal-consequences-of-my-disobedience kind of way; that was done and dusted when Jesus died and rose again. But, apart from separating us from God in a spiritual way, sin also fools us, produces habits of thinking and talking and acting that divert us from God's best, and separates us from those around us. Sin isn't just an existential problem; it's an everyday one. We've had years of disobedience training, if you will, and it's produced marred character in us, flawed thinking, and compromised will and emotions. We're a mess! And being converted doesn't change most of those things, it just reorients us to God. That's why God continues to work out salvation for us over months and years—to clean us up! **A receiver's main focus is on this process of receiving salvation from God.** Salvation includes three parts:

1. **Saving from sin.**

As we said, this isn't just God dealing with our eternal destiny; it's dealing with the present consequences of sin. The technical term is "sanctification", but it's really just God's process of making us more like His perfect Son, Jesus right now. Dealing with our sin includes God adding to us and taking away from us. He frees us from things like fear, shame, pride, insecurity, depression, etc and refills us instead with good things like humility, patience, joy, trust, longsuffering, etc.

There is no script for how this process works. It happens organically as God leads us through prayer

and Bible study and community and regular life. But if we don't expect it to happen, we're likely to resist it and stand in the way of the good stuff God has for us. A believer in Jesus is open and welcoming of God's correction in his life (because it's part of his/her salvation process!). They learn the skill of not finding identity in sin.

“But I’m a gossip! That’s just who I am! Doesn’t God love me for who I am?”

“Yes, but that sinful habit is not who you are. God designed you to be perfect and holy, without any sin... even the ones you’re really good at.”

It's helpful to know that God is moving us toward His standard of perfection, which is called holiness. Here's a glimpse of that process:

- At conversion, God replaces our dead spirits with His Spirit of life. (Dead spirits = things that lead to death like bitterness, religion, lack of

discipline, lust, envy, etc.)

- That Spirit then begins to move in us, butting up against every place of brokenness, wounding, rebellion, and confusion.
- Because of His insistence on setting us completely free and making us completely holy, He will identify all broken places (even places that we kind of enjoy) and push for us to reject them and receive God's salvation in those places instead.

It's an incredible privilege for Him to do this for us, by the way, but it can be unsettling if you don't know what's going on. It might even be painful because some of those things have been a part of us for so long, we're reluctant to let them go. This could lead to lots of tear-filled conversations and moments of purging that requires you to facilitate both invitation and challenge, but you are up for it. The Spirit will lead you as he also works in Tom.

Your job is to let Tom know what's happening! Conviction of sin, and the push toward holiness, for the sake of total salvation, is a normal (and awesome) part of the process.

1. **Healing from disease.**

Isaiah 53:4-5 says that Jesus took all our physical infirmities with him when he died on the cross. Jesus repeatedly demonstrates God's desire to heal people of all disease (Psalm 103:3, Matthew 9:35). God's power and desire to heal are the same today as ever, so Receivers should not only have an expectation that God will heal them, but should call out to God for that healing with their community of faith. God's healing isn't just for physical infirmities, though. God also heals us from the internal scars of emotional wounds from the past, sexual abuse or perversion, or any of the myriad

ways we can be damaged by people or events (or ourselves). This process can take time, so be open to the possibility of your Receiver friend joining a healing group, entering a 12-step program, or undergoing a season of counseling for past trauma. Jesus comes to undo all the work of the enemy (1 John 3:8), and that includes all the lies and pain suffered in the past. Healing can take various forms, so give time and space for that to occur, and don't be discouraged if you don't find immediate results. Take faith, and keep depending.

2. **Deliverance from the enemy.**

The devil's attacks against believers are complex and varied (1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:11 and 16, Revelation 12:10), and unwinding the knots he's put us in is a long process. Repentance is our key tool, here, as we hand over various parts of our damaged soul to God's mending. If Tom believes, for instance, that he'll never be worthy of God's love, the enemy has a stronghold there—a headquarters from which he can operate. As God identifies this brokenness, Tom can agree with God about that area (through repentance), command the devil to be gone in Jesus' name, and begin the process of being re-fashioned by truth (in this case, that he is made worthy by virtue of God's own decree, and not by his estimation of himself). As Tom grows into a Follower, he'll learn to take his stand against the enemy and make war in Jesus' army. But for now, he need only receive the salvation that God offers by fighting and removing Tom's enemy's forces on his behalf (a la 2 Chronicles 20:17).

Jesus died for us to experience a lot more power than we sometimes operate in, but **training to be in the front lines of battle in healing and deliverance for others are Follower skills.** Right now, we're giving Tom a healthy introduction to the devil and how he can expect God's salvation to rescue him over his lifetime. In short, the devil seeks to steal, kill and destroy. He's good at it. Tom won't be susceptible to that, and he's being grown in Jesus' likeness as he receives, so we want to help Tom recognize his schemes and have practice resisting the attacks on himself through repentance, the Spirit and worship. Down the road, this personal practice and experience will be really handy in passing it on to others.

Without getting too deep and detailed here, you might find you friend has some wounds from bad theology or painful experiences in their past. It's super important to not skip over pain and doubt that can limit our faith and trust in the Father. If you notice sensitivity or resistance to this topic, it might be helpful to consider the next few pages.

The body of a sick, sad or suffering person is the battlefield between God's goodness and the enemy's evil. We must learn to treat it as so. We're often tempted to let our faith be limited by our perception of it "working" or paying off. Faith is *defined* by believing in the unseen, and so we have to keep believing regardless of results. It starts with believing God really does desire to save, heal and deliver.

While healing and deliverance are a part of God's salvation, we're living in a time called the "now and not yet." That means the Kingdom is here because Jesus inaugurated it when he came, but it hasn't been consummated yet (meaning it's not yet in full reign). This interim period is a time of war with an enemy who seeks to steal as many from the army of God as possible before Jesus returns once and for all. We are called to believe in, pray for and fight for healing because we trust God's promises, but we also can't forget we're still in the heat of battle with casualties still falling by our sides. If healing doesn't happen quickly or worse, we experience someone fall before our eyes, we want to treat them as the fallen heroes they are. Without the big picture and deep faith in God's character, we're sometimes unequipped to minister to worried or grieving families. Good intentions poorly executed to "find the cause" or "understand" can accidentally accuse believers of sin or doubt. Worse, we can wonder if our prayers "worked," or question if the tragedy was "God's will" forgetting the truth that **He's a good Dad who is *always* for our healing. We're simply still at war.**

As you share God's promise of healing (physical and emotional) with Tom, believe in God's power and goodness and avoid Christian fatalism that would tempt someone to believe God authored sickness. We don't believe God would say, "You know, I think cancer would be a great character builder for you." Or, "They're really not abiding right now, let's send them something that knocks them out for awhile." Sometimes our sickness (emotional and physical) results *from* our sin because it's inherently poisonous to us, but those examples result from *our* choices or the attacks the *enemy* is making on us. They're not God's design and we can count on him to want to see us healed regardless of the source.

So when you model praying for healing with Tom, avoid any "God, if it's your will to see this healed..." statements that perpetuate the idea that God might desire pain for us. Those are yucky. They don't model faith, and they can quickly breed rejection, confusion and guilt. Instead, start with a statement of faith that reflects God's goodness back to him in worship. *"God, we know you're a good Father who loves us and wants to see us well. We know there is no sickness in heaven, Jesus healed when he was here, and you call us to do the same. So through Jesus' power, we bless our friend here with health. We say 'be healed' because we trust in your goodness. In fact we trust it enough, we will continue praying until we see it, Jesus comes back, or we meet you in heaven. We trust you."*

When you model praying for deliverance or saving from sin with Tom, there is a model that is really powerful. See P43 for the process.

Identity, Grace & Repentance

Identity

The process of salvation is also a process of identity. As we said, it's easy for us to find identity in our brokenness, but God provides us with a new identity in Christ. Because God's covenant with us is unyielding, and the unchanging nature of His love is where we find our security, we grow to find our identity more and more in the Father/son relationship we have with God. God is in the son-making business (Hebrews 2:10, Ephesians 1:4-6), and our growing into that sonship is a major undertaking that will eventually deal with all our sin and brokenness. Romans 8:13-21 and 29 is a treatise on sonship by Paul that establishes a few can't-miss facts:

1. Understanding our sonship before God produces life in us
2. This understanding combats fear
3. This is a spiritual (not mental, not emotional) understanding
4. Sons are heirs, so they get lots of bonus goodies too (things like approval, love, rewards for obedience, patience, grace, a family to give and receive from, etc.), and
5. All of creation is waiting for these sons to be revealed

That points back to the gigantic, cosmic-sized implications of our participating in God's story. (A note here: being "sons of God" isn't a gender discrimination thing. Old identifiers like career, race, age, gender, and nationality carry no gravity in the Kingdom of God. We're not called sons because we're male; we're sons because we have an inheritance in God—women didn't have rights to

inheritance when the Bible was written. Don't get hung up on that, either, because while we're sons of God, we're also collectively the Bride of Christ!)

Grace

Ephesians 2:8-9 says that God's grace (which is another name for his power to redeem) is what saves us, as activated by faith. "It's a gift, not of works, so that no man can boast." We're saved by God's grace, not by any power or smarts of our own, because the day is coming for all of us when our power (or smarts, or faithfulness, or zeal, or any kind of goodness we think we possess) will fail us. What happens then?

Romans 6:3-7 and 11-13 give us some tidy commands about reigning over sin, but what happens when we don't, as Paul describes in Romans 7:15-25? We're in a struggle, and before our faithfulness to God is perfected, we will fail God. How do we appeal to him after that?

Thankfully, his grace (again, his power to act redemptively) is not a one-time thing and, again, salvation is not a singular event. The lessons of the receiver are important precisely because they're not just for this season. As we receive Jesus in the beginning, we're to continue to walk in Him (Colossians 2:6). That means, among other things, that we can appeal to God's same forgiving, compassionate heart as we did when we first came to Him. We need only to confess that we've sinned (to Him, yes, but to another person is even better- Proverbs 28:13, James 5:16), agree with God about his redemptive grace (see Romans 4:4-8), and remember that there's no condemnation for those who're in Christ (Romans 8:1). As for getting rid of sin, God gives us the magical tool of repentance.

Repentance

Repentance: Repent means to turn away from one's sin. This activity includes identifying specific thoughts, words, or actions, and agreeing with God that they fall outside His perfect plan. The repudiation of these sins is coupled with an eviction of the enemy and a request of the Spirit of God to enter into that previous brokenness. It is necessary before becoming a follower of Jesus.

Repentance is the onramp onto the superhighway of salvation (no, really: 2 Corinthians 7:10 says so), and it's not a hard skill to master.

Repentance is the only way we get free and receive more of God. But unfortunately it's gotten a bad rap. Most of the time, we only hear that word in some sort of terrible religious protest on the news or written on the side of the really obnoxious pick up truck outside of Reds' games.

But repentance is *good!* It's not just for our good like eating vegetables. It's something we should embrace like a prized gift. Repentance is our chance to get free, experience joy, receive hope and grace, and look more like Jesus.

The more we get to know God's character, know the freedom we find in him, the more we'll run towards repenting instead of tolerating it or associating it with guilt and shame. When we know we're broken, the need to repent isn't disappointing or guilt-ridden. We expect it and we're just happy we can get free. That doesn't mean it's always light and fun. Sometimes we're pulling up deep stuff, but when we believe it's good we can grow in embracing it.

It's helpful to keep an eye out for how Tom feels about repentance, and champion it through modeling and celebrating it often. The following is a little script for how this process can work between somebody who needs to repent (call them "the recipient") and their helper (whoever's acting as their priest to God- which can be any believer, by the way). This little script is über-useful for all this salvation bidness: keep it handy for being saved, healed, and delivered.

When something's amiss:

1. The recipient should confess it specifically.

"I fantasized about telling off my boss."

"I just thought about what a loser I am and how could anything good ever happen to me?"

"I bragged at dinner last night talking about my marathon time."

2. The helper should look them in the eye and say, "You're forgiven in Jesus' name."
3. The helper, after determining just how the enemy's at work in this lie/habit/situation, commands the enemy to leave. "I rebuke all violence (or insecurity, guilt, envy, pride, or whatever else) in Jesus' name. Leave Tom alone."
4. Since that spirit took off there's an empty space that we want to invite the Holy Spirit to come into instead.

"Lord, you don't want Tom believing these lies that he's unworthy of your love. Save him by entering this place of insecurity and make it secure. Come

into that brokenness and be the Lord. Teach him that Your worthiness covers him, grow him up into sonship, and give him the power to believe what You say about him...”

5. Bless the recipient. This isn't as complicated as it sounds; it's just speaking God's words over somebody's life, claiming God's intentions for them.

“I bless you, Tom, as someone who doesn't entertain thoughts of telling your boss off. I bless you as a man under submission who finds favor in God's sight, and as a man who doesn't retaliate or rebel but chooses humility and grace instead. You are a man of peace and God's own heart of kindness is your destiny. I bless you for this confession and speak God's peace over you.”
Something like that. All this will feel a little foreign the first time you do it (which is why having a helper to model it for us is so great), but it's common parlance in Kingdom life the more we practice it.

The hardest part of repentance, though, isn't that little exchange above. It's what happens afterward:

Tom forgives his wife for something, repents of his resentment toward her... then he answers the phone and it's his wife, giving him a hard time yet again. Enter temptation toward unforgiveness and resentment once again. How does he live out the repentance he's just received? Yeah, great question. This is a process, not just of agreeing that something is “wrong,” but of changing habits.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “We take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.” Romans 12:2 says that we’re transformed by having our mind renewed.

So once God puts his finger on one’s habits (of, say, cheating), we then let God start walking through our thought processes, and retraining us. Very specific conversations happen with God:

“I wanted to cheat on the tax form right there, God. Why? Why would I entertain a thought that I know dishonors you? ...Maybe it’s because I think the government has enough and doesn’t deserve my money... But I was just learning that you want us to honor all authorities in our life. Well, I’ll pay them what they say I owe, but I still don’t think they deserve it. ...Wait, why do I have that attitude? ... Maybe I value what I say over what you say, God. Maybe I need to repent of being judgmental and just ask for your judgments all the time. If my wanting to cheat on my taxes is motivated by my having a judgmental attitude toward the government, I guess I need you clean both of those areas up. I don’t want to agree with these thoughts anymore, God. Cleanse me of this junk.”

These constant conversations about tiny decisions and motivations can be laborious, but boy are they important. God likes these kinds of conversations and will talk back if we’ll ask him what he thinks!

The re-training of our words, actions, and thoughts are the largest part of repenting, and they're huge in our living out that Spirit-led, Christ-like holiness we were discussing earlier. So repentance, you see, is that initial confession and conversation, as well as the follow-up re-training and taking captive of our thoughts. It's all part of receiving what God has to give us, and it isn't passive. Participation is required!

One really great reason to help people learn how to receive repentance is because you'll need them to minister to you! You fail, too, and what better person to help you through confession and repentance than a future minister, like the Receiver you're helping to anchor in these things? In the Kingdom, we are all priests, so we're all learning how to better help each other to God's buffet table of goodness. You'll get more skilled by helping your friend, and your friend will get bounds better by helping you, too. That's how it's supposed to work, as you help your friend toward their new (true) identity, grace, and repentance.

The Church

It would be misleading to think that Tom's relationship with God now just includes you and him. No, when Tom was born again, he was plopped smack-dab into the middle of the "church universal." That is, he's now spiritually connected to every Christ receiver who's living or has ever lived. He's been born into a family—a family of faith. God loves connecting all his sons like this (see Psalm 69:6), and the sooner Tom knows his place in the church, the better.

First of all, walls or organizations or logos don't define the Church. Organizations are great, but joining the local Disciples of Christ Church (yes, that's an actual thing) doesn't make you a disciple, and you can certainly be a disciple of Jesus without joining an organization. (Although you definitely want to be connected to other believers somehow.) Our "family of faith" is anyone who receives and obeys Christ, regardless of his or her origin or affiliation. So if a "Baptist" Christ-follower meets a "Catholic" Christ-follower, they're officially on the same team. They're siblings! And whether their home base is the church that meets in their living room, or they regularly attend St. Saint's MegaCathedral of Our Giant Windows, that believer is a candidate for sharing hearts, prayer, communion, or whatever, in the name of Jesus. When God looks at us, he sees one Church, and we should share his perspective.

Of course, Tom doesn't have a relationship with every member of the Church Universal (also called the Body of Christ in several places, 1 Corinthians 12:5 for example), but he needs to constantly be asking God, "To whom should I be connected, and how?" since the Church is really just a network of relationships that spans the globe. God puts the parts of the Body together just as he sees fit, so He'll want some people to be leaders to Tom (like you!), some to be peers, and eventually, He'll want some to be led by Tom. Since you're the one helping him

navigate these waters, it'll be important that you show Tom (by example) that we both give to, and receive from the other Body members, depending on the nature of our relationships with them and what the Spirit seems to be saying in the moment. For instance, you may have a peer-to-peer relationship with Betty, but she's going through a hard time and comes to you with her need. At that point, you assume a position of servant/priest for her, and pray for her, giving her whatever counsel the Father may be giving you for her. A week from now, those roles may be swapped! So again, it's good that we always be asking God, "To whom should I be connected, and how?"

God gives us some relationships as our intimate friendships, in which we can confide anything, share every sin and hurt, and look to just to be known and loved. Some relationships are simply pleasant acquaintances, and we should feel no ongoing responsibility to make those relationships grow. With those two possibilities (and every shade in between), we simply ask God to direct us as we come across believers all over the world, and across the belief spectrum. We've come to believe, for instance, that mixing with believers with different experiences and expressions of their faith (high church attenders; expressive, charismatic worshippers; zealots for social justice, etc.) is not only healthy for us spiritually, it serves as a preventative to crusty, and possibly even judgmental attitudes about our faith and how it's expressed.

What it is, exactly, that each of us has to bring to the church, is something that's discovered over time. The Bible says that, because we're all built differently, and have different personalities and abilities and preferences, we bring different spiritual gifts to the table. As we mature, God wants his sons to understand their particular gifts, so they can practice them, become experts with them,

and lovingly serve the greater body with those fine-tuned skills. There are two main lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and Romans 12:3-8. These are not exhaustive lists, but are a great starting place for discussion and prayer. There are online assessment tests like spiritualgiftstest.com and fivefoldsurvey.com that can help in identifying gifts, but the best way is to just start serving in all sorts of ways then ask:

1. What do I feel really good at/what energizes me?
2. What does the body seem to respond to most?

Over time, as we serve, observe ourselves, and receive the feedback of others, a clear picture will emerge regarding how we're most gifted. Those gifts are to be used to build up the Body of Christ, according to verses like 1 Peter 4:10- "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Because Tom needs to know how exactly he fits into the church, be sure to call out the gifts you see in operation in his life.

“Wow, you really encouraged that friend. Nice work.”

“You seem to be giving a lot of oversight and leadership to that project at work. Does that come easily for you?”

“You have so many unbelieving friends, and you seem to be sharing your faith with all of them! That seems to be a real sweet spot for you...”

That kind of feedback (as non-glamorous as it may seem) is crucial for Tom to understand who he is in the body, and how he can serve best. Help him understand what spiritual gifts are, how they work together, and which you observe as being active in him. In this way, you’re setting him up for a lifetime of healthy give-and-take in the church.

Having said that, there are several things that any believer is enlisted to do from the get-to, regardless of their experience. It’s a substantial list, but certainly includes serving others in love, giving resources away for Kingdom purposes (including care for the poor), and praying for people. Even things we commonly think of as “advanced” are not always reserved for the mature: Jesus specifically calls out 1) sharing the good news about Jesus and His Kingdom, 2) healing the sick, and 3) dealing with the enemy as being totally normal for even the youngest believer (Luke 10:19-21). So don’t limit Tom in exploring the ways he can contribute to the church at this stage in the game (heck, help him do so! Feel free to enlist in a “Strongholds” community group, go through a book on prayer together, or whatever else will help equip him and assist in his growth). He’s part of the Family, so he’s got a part to play! (Just don’t rush him into it before he’s ready and eager out of natural overflow of what he’s received.)

The Life Of The Disciple

The last thing that Tom really needs to learn, as a Receiver, is an overview of the entire maturation process. You may already know how this works, but here's a bigger glimpse of the process we introduced you to at the beginning of this guide. It's something we call "The Spiritual Framework":

When God starts to woo someone to Himself (which He does in a thousand different ways), and that person responds by starting to ask questions (like, "Is there a God?" "Why was I born, anyway?" or "Is there an objective truth?"), we call that person a *seeker*. They're open, engaged, and realize that they need something.

When they find that something in Jesus, and call out to him for help, we call that person a *receiver* (that's Tom!). They acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior, and that His death and resurrection are their hope for true life, now and forever. They're becoming anchored in the faith by: learning the big story of God, receiving salvation and identity in God, and exploring how God made them, specifically, to contribute to His global mission, the saving of mankind.

As they receive all God has for them, though, they become compelled to pursue Jesus in return: they want to become trained soldiers in Jesus' mission to destroy the works of the devil and set others free. They become a *follower*. As a Follower, they receive training of all kinds: how to war against the devil, how to minister to others in Jesus' name, how to fight through suffering, how to become disciplined in worship and service, and how to think strategically about advancing God's Kingdom.

The Follower's training is best overseen by the very kind of person they aspire to be: a producer. A Producer is really just a seasoned Follower with one main distinction: they have learned to reproduce their faith as a matter of habit to other Seekers, Receivers, and Followers. Producers have learned the selfless discipline of giving their faith away and bringing others along for the incredible adventure of following Jesus. These Producers are our strategists, our discerners who lead communities and help bring a city of Christ followers into harmony and unity. Producers have adopted the heart of the Seekers, the posture of the Receivers, and the diligence of the Followers. Their lives are under the mastery of Jesus, and their mission is in sync with his own. They are expert servants for the whole church, and soldiers for Christ, who has become their model, closest confidant, and adored object of worship. We all strive toward this place of maturity, and regard it as our expected outcome.

It's an incredible thing how God turns standard issue humans into these worshipping, serving specialists, and Tom needs to understand that this same road lies before him, too.

He needs a vision for his life that matches God's. Sure, he doesn't have very much of the skill or knowledge described (yet!), but if Bob can see that maturity in Christ isn't just a noble ambition—rather it's his destiny, that vision will aid him as he navigates life's decisions, pitfalls, and opportunities.

In this journey toward being a Producer (and, more immediately, being a Follower), Tom will have to grapple with a universally tough issue for every Christ follower: Lordship.

Jesus is Lord, and as the King of the Universe, He desires to reign in every heart, for the sake of His Kingdom of love, joy, peace, etc. Where He doesn't reign, there's (ultimately) confusion, fear, deception and death. Where He reigns, His beautiful Kingdom is seen and experienced. But the handing over of the keys to one's life is a difficult process. Jesus always pushes against our fleshly tendencies. If you tend toward being reserved and self-protective, Jesus will challenge your courage and train you in leadership. If you tend to be loud and opinionated, He'll train you toward quiet meekness. He wants to harness what He planted in each of us, and that harnessing process (lordship) requires humility and submission on our part. He wants us to trust him completely and be able to respond at a moment's notice to his interest meaning regular death to self-interest is an inevitable and frequent reality.

Jesus will claim full rights to direct not only our spiritual lives, but our relationships, intellectual pursuits, bodies, physical surroundings and finances as well. The Bible calls Him "Lord of All" for just this reason. The acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord in all areas isn't something that Tom has really faced in fullness yet, but he will have to deal with it before he can become a Follower. Help set this expectation for him, and walk him through this issue when you sense he's ready.

So here we are, maybe 6 months (A year? 18 months?) into your helping Tom as a receiver.

- He's developed the discipline of meeting with God as a habit.
- He has (generally) stopped negotiating with God and instinctively looks to obey whenever he feels he's hearing God's voice.
- He understands the character of God and the big picture of what He's doing in the earth.
- He understands the process of salvation and is receiving his new identity as an approved son of God.
- He knows how to come to God (and others) when he fails, not slipping into self-condemnation or shame.
- His view of the church is as a worldwide family on mission, of which he's an increasingly important contributor.
- Lastly, Tom understands that, as he grows into spiritual maturity, he'll have to deal with his desire to control his life, and hand it over to Jesus, the rightful Lord.
- He has counted the cost of how this will impact his sense of independence, ability to choose, relationships and preferred sins, and says "It's worth it. They're out. I'm in."
- When Tom is ready to do that, he's ready to move on to being a Follower/disciple. A disciple is someone whose primary orientation in all of life is that of following Jesus.

Why do you make the entertainment choices you do?

I'm following Jesus and he tells me what to do.

Why do your relationships look like that?

I'm a follower of Jesus. This is how He wants it done.

Why do you use your money that way?

Again, I'm a Jesus follower. He runs my life! And it's great!

The graduation ceremony from Receiver to Follower is baptism in water. The Bible calls it “a baptism of repentance” (Luke 3:3) and compares it to Noah’s ark (1 Peter 3:20-21). The old, predictable life of going along with the world is over. The new life of adventure and faith engulfs us. There’s nothing left to lean on, floating up there on top of the world, except the trust that God is good, and that Jesus knows what he’s doing. Water baptism is an “all-in” move toward God.

Water baptism can be performed by any priest (so you qualify!), and can happen in any hot tub, pool, public fountain, or bathtub. There’s nothing magical about the setting. (But it does help to have some people there to witness it.) Have Tom tell his faith story to whoever’s there, declare his repentance for his past, and desire to live only for Christ going forward. Then dunk his shiney hiney in the water! (You can use the classic, “I baptize you, my brother, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”... but it isn’t totally necessary. Makes it feel more official, though.)

Water baptism aptly symbolizes the pattern of burial to the old, and rebirth to the new, and is an important benchmark for every believer.

Having a party with Tom’s friends and family present immediately afterward is totally appropriate, since new life is to be celebrated. Tom’s salvation continues! And congrats to you for training him so well; he’s a Follower now, thanks to your patient assistance.

SIDE NOTE: When Tom is baptized in water, he'll be sharing his faith story with whoever's there. But that shouldn't be his first time to do so! First of all, Tom will be developing the skill to talk about his inward life in your regular meetings. But Tom can also share his faith with those around his life. As a Receiver, Tom is well qualified to help Seekers around his life. While Tom needs to be deeply connected to a family of faith, he should also not be cut off from his old friends (unless you agree together that, for his sake, those relationships need to be severed). Those old friendships are important communal links, and he should share his faith story with those to whom he's tied. Of course, some will reject him for "becoming religious" or however people may besmirch faith (this is not a bad thing, by the way. Jesus says that men will hate us because of Him, and sharing in Jesus' suffering is spiritually nutritious), but others may want to listen to more of Tom's story. In that case, Tom may want to get the Seeker to Receiver Guide and start leading his friends along *their* faith journey. How cool would that be, to see Tom developing the skill of reproducing his faith even while his own faith is young? Regardless, help Tom become comfortable telling his story and talking about his faith with the people around his life. Sharing one's faith is a great skill to develop, and also comes with its own rewards (Philemon 6)!

If your Receiver friend has become a Follower, then you have something worth shouting about. But, exciting as that transformation is, it's not the finish line. Tom's destiny is to be a carbon copy of Jesus (Romans 8:29 says so), so he needs to grow up in all the Follower skills listed above. There's a forum for just that training (which is designed to take Followers and turn them into Producers) called a "huddle." You, as the lead horse on this pilgrimage, can lead a huddle with Tom and a few other folks or, if you've never seen it done, you can find a Producer and be huddled together! See [The Huddle Guide](#) for further instructions, and keep pressing on toward maturity.

Know that a significant amount of Fumbling Through will be normal. The mere fact that you're trying and want to obey God in this relationship makes God really pleased. This document doesn't exist so that you'll be "perfect" at helping someone mature in their faith. (Um... that ain't happening.) We just want to provide some guidelines to send you on your way. Don't worry if you don't know the answers, or feel foolish, or keep thinking, "Where is this going, again? What is happening, here?" This is the way that relationships work, and you're going for it! Good on ya.

You're *never* going to know all the answers, and even the "Content" section above is really just a starter to get engaged in Bible-based learning. Your friend is almost certainly not going to get all their questions answered (ours aren't all answered, yet)!

The point is just to address the "big buckets" for Tom: salvation, discipline, intimacy, identity, etc. You're doing that, and helping change his life. Amazing stuff.

As more of our community becomes fluent and skilled at discipleship, there may be a cultural pressure to take people on as projects, as if leading someone to Jesus is a badge of approval that we've made it as a follower of Jesus. That is yucky. For each of us, our relationship with Jesus begins and ends with personal intimacy and devotion to Him. External things (like helping Receivers become Followers) aren't prerequisites to some kind of a spiritual promotion; they're side effects of having a living love life with our Savior. So don't ever let pressure or guilt motivate you in making disciples. We do these things out of a motivation of love for Christ (1 Corinthians 5:8), and if that motivation isn't there, we ought not do them. Simple as that.

Making disciples was Jesus' final command to us. Disciples are created with information and imitation, invitation and challenge. In the Kingdom, leaders are servants. Teach and model quiet times to lay a foundation of abiding and knowing God. Make your meetings simple and effective. Develop the discipline of obedience after hearing in your receiving friend.

Anchor your friend in:

- The Story and Nature of God
- The Salvation Process
- Identity, Repentance and Grace
- The Church and his/her place
- A vision of maturity and discipleship

Baptize in water when appropriate, then... Get your friend into a discipling huddle. You don't have to be perfect to do this! Your interest and authenticity before God qualifies you.

Most of all congrats, and thanks.
The Kingdom just got a little closer
because of your loving service to
your friend. Keep it up!

Glossary

As we pursue a consistent culture of discipleship, we've found that it's helpful to understand what we all mean with our words. Lots of spiritual lingo gets thrown around, and often people don't know what it means, exactly. So here are some basic terms, along with our working definitions.

CHALLENGE

The organized side of disciple-making: structured transfer of knowledge and skills, with a defined desired outcome. Should be paired with invitation.

DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus' training program for those who respond to His invitation of salvation. This process results in maturity and Christlikeness.

FOLLOWER (also DISCIPLE)

A person who has committed to pursue Christ with every part of their life. This person has "died to themselves", meaning that their chief objective is now to serve and please the Lord Jesus Christ. This person is distinguished from a receiver by virtue of this "death to self" (and water baptism, which marks death and resurrection into new life as a disciple).

INFORMATION

The facts and figures and theory behind spiritual concepts. Necessary but incomplete. (Should be paired with imitation: see next page.)

INVITATION

The organic side of disciple-making: encouraging closeness, affinity, and friendship, often with no prescribed outcome. Should be paired with challenge.

IMITATION

Access to a leader's life for the sake of modeling. Coupled with information, allows students to see theories put in practice.

KING (also, LORD)

A name one calls God only when one has repented of his/her broken thinking (and actions) and now submits in obedience. It is the way the follower relates to God, as one who has transferred his/her allegiance solely to the Kingdom of God, and is ready to take orders.

OBEDIENCE

The activity of doing God's will. A necessary component of life in Christ, it hinges upon submission and the subordination of one's will.

PRODUCER

A mature follower of Jesus, who can reproduce his or her faith in a seeker, receiver, or follower, and help them become mature also. This person is an experienced trainer, counselor, and leader.

RECEIVING

An internal posture demonstrating need and desire for God. This is a basic and necessary skill for anyone who wants to become mature in Christ, as all salvation, healing, and deliverance comes by it.

RECEIVER

A person who has called out to Jesus for salvation and been born again. This person is distinguished from a seeker in that they have cried out for Jesus, and from a follower in that they have not yet committed themselves fully. They are simply in a place of being saved, healed, and delivered by the power and sacrifice of Christ.

REPENT

To turn away from one's sin. This activity includes identifying specific thoughts, words, or actions, and agreeing with God that they fall outside His perfect plan. The repudiation of these sins is coupled with an eviction of the enemy and a request of the Spirit of God to enter into that previous brokenness. It is necessary before becoming a follower of Jesus.

SALVATION

A lifelong process of being saved from the eternal consequences of sin, healed from disease, and delivered from the power of the enemy by Jesus Christ. It is a process that begins by being born again and continues as long as one lives in Christ.

SAVIOR

A title of Jesus Christ, often associated with being born again.

SEEKER

One who pursues Truth and is open, honest, and willing to experiment.

