

## My Plans

For the next small group session, I'm planning to:

- Remain in the group
- Try a new group
- Take a break from small groups

## Homework

What do you like most about the homework?

What do you like least?

If you could change one thing about the homework, what would it be and why?

The homework is:

- just about right
- a little too much
- not quite enough. Please explain.

## My Leader

One of the things I appreciate most about my small group leader is:

If your leader asked for advice on whether he or she should talk more, less, or exactly the same during your meetings, what would you say?

## My Host

One of the things I appreciate most about our host is:

Is there anything your host could do to make your meetings better? (seating, lighting, temperature, refreshments, socials, etc.)

## Epiphany: Manifesting Jesus to the World

The Feast of Epiphany on January 6 brings the twelve days of Christmas to a close. On Epiphany, we remember the arrival of the Magi from the east who came to see the newborn King. An epiphany is a manifestation, or making known, of something. While Jesus was born of the Jews, He was nevertheless made manifest to the world, and so with the arrival of the Magi, we behold the world coming to adore the King of kings.

The first Sunday after Epiphany always remembers Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan River, and the final Sunday after Epiphany always recalls the Transfiguration. In between, the readings call the followers of Jesus to manifest Him to the world as we make the gospel known. For that reason, the color of the season is green, the color of the growth of the Church as we make Jesus known to the world. The season reminds us, then, that as followers of Jesus, we are disciples called to manifest Jesus even as we make disciples of Him.

In this five week study, we will follow the Sunday gospel lessons and explore the life of discipleship. While discipleship is currently a popular topic, there is some confusion regarding what it is. Discipleship is not an educational program or a particular level of theological knowledge. Discipleship is not merely for those who are truly "serious" and whole-hearted about following Jesus, as opposed to half-hearted. Discipleship is not one-on-one mentoring. Discipleship includes all these things, but it is much more fundamental. At its simplest, discipleship is the life of a disciple. A disciple is one who has come to Jesus Christ for eternal life and has chosen to obediently follow Him as Lord.

As we engage the readings of Epiphany through the lens of discipleship, we will find deep insights into the life of a disciple. Without giving too much away, we will find that a disciple is called to be transformed and grow in the image of Christ and is enabled and empowered to join in Jesus' mission. As we faithfully live this life of discipleship, we will find that it is Jesus Himself who is made manifest to the world through the Church.

Week One  
The Spirit's Work in Our Lives

**Getting Started** \_\_\_\_\_

1) Have you ever been able to keep a New Year's Resolution? If so, what was it?

2) Do you have any *spiritual* resolutions for the New Year?

**Into the Bible** \_\_\_\_\_

3) The sermon spoke of Jesus' mission. What is Jesus' mission and how is He accomplishing it?

By His cross and resurrection, Jesus has poured out the Holy Spirit on those who come to Him as Lord and Savior. By the Holy Spirit, He is forming a people for Himself. Understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is crucial to following Jesus. In this study we will explore two areas of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives: fruit and gifting.

Read Galatians 5:22-23

**End-of-the-Session Evaluation Form**

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

One of the best ways to improve any group is to evaluate it! Please assess both the strengths and the weaknesses of your group. The questions below will help you think through different aspects of your group life. Please answer them *thoroughly* and *honestly*.

**The Group**

One of the things I enjoyed most about being in the group this session is:

Are you happy with the amount of time we spend in:

Discussion                      Yes              No                      Comments

Study

Prayer

Fellowship

Is the length of the meeting appropriate?

How have the group discussions gone? Is everyone who wants to share able to share?

Are there any people or issues that quell the discussion? Explain:

Do you have any suggestions for improving the meetings?

—Prayer Requests—

According to these verses, the Holy Spirit produces the singular fruit (notice it is not plural) of a particular kind of life in us. In other words, He is always producing a life marked by this kind of character in every follower of Jesus. We don't pick and choose which characteristics we get, but the Spirit is seeking to produce all of them in us.

- 4) In your own words and practically speaking, what do these characteristics look like in our relationship with God and our relationships with one another?

- 5) Using the imagery of fruit, we are meant to notice that we can't make fruit grow, but only tend the tree so that it can produce fruit. What are some ways that we can tend our roots and branches to cooperate with the Spirit's work?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

The Corinthians were arrogant about their spiritual gifting and seemed to consider some gifts to be better than others. They misunderstood the source and purpose of spiritual gifts.

- 6) According to Paul, where is the source of spiritual gifts to be found? Upon what basis are gifts bestowed?

7) What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? What does this imply about the “worth” of different gifts?

**Digging Deeper** \_\_\_\_\_

As we look at both the fruit and gifting of the Holy Spirit, we come to see that He is producing the life of Christ within us. We will be like Jesus in character and empowered to play our part in the mission and ministry of the Church. As we do, the Church will manifest Jesus to the world! We don't produce this on our own, but rather, our work is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He produces this life in us.

8) Do you tend to try to produce fruit and carry out ministry in your own strength, or by relying upon the Holy Spirit?

9) What spiritual resolutions might you need to make to grow in your reliance upon the Holy Spirit?

—Prayer Requests—

*Feel free to use this section to jot down the prayer requests of your fellow group member. And then faithfully uphold them in prayer.*

Week Two  
On Being Single-Sighted

**Getting Started** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) If you won the lottery, what would you want to do with the money?

- 2) The sermon spoke of two marks of a disciple of Jesus found in John 1:43-51. What were they?

- 3) What is meant by Nathanael having no deceit, or “single sight?”

**Into the Bible** \_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 6:19-24

In this portion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is calling His followers to give their whole-hearted devotion to God—to be, like Nathanael, “single-sighted.” The heart and the eye were frequently used synonymously in Scripture as the seat of love, desire, and will. What we “set our eye/heart on” determines the course of our lives. The placement of this call in the Sermon on the Mount is revealing. It comes after a discussion of the need for our acts of piety and devotion to be rooted in a humble desire to know God instead of a prideful desire for human praise. It directly precedes and provides the foundation for freedom from anxiety.

4) What is the connection between our hearts, our treasure, and the pursuits of our lives?

5) What do you think Jesus means in verses 22-23, both in a literal and figurative sense?

Many translations state that you cannot serve both “God and mammon.” Mammon is loosely understood as wealth. It is more than just money, it is the “stuff” that we fill our lives with. For some, it may mean money and creature comforts. For others, it may mean relationships, admiration, security, prestige, power, or countless other things.

6) Jesus seems to be indicating that what we treasure is our master. How would you explain Jesus’ statement that “you cannot serve two masters?”

### **Digging Deeper**

7) Jesus Christ is meant to be our Lord and Master, and we are to serve Him alone. How does putting Jesus first enable us to actually enjoy the things of life without them becoming our master?

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared before the face of all people;  
to be a light to lighten the Gentiles,  
and to be the glory of your people Israel.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world  
without end. Amen.

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake  
we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

*In Easter Season, add* Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord.  
*People* Thanks be to God.

*The Officiant concludes with the following*

The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. *Amen.*

*Or this*

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless us and keep us, this night and evermore. *Amen.*

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, illumine this night with your celestial brightness, and from the children of light banish the deeds of darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Saturdays

We give you thanks, O God, for revealing your Son Jesus Christ to us by the light of his resurrection: Grant that as we sing your glory at the close of this day, our joy may abound in the morning as we celebrate the Paschal mystery; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*One of the following prayers may be added*

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. *Amen.*

*or this*

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live: Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

***Prayer requests and free intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered.***

*If time permits, the Officiant and People say or sing the Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32) with this Antiphon*

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

*In Easter Season, add* Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

8) What other treasure and masters do you need to let go of?

9) How can we grow in making Jesus our Treasure and Master?

## Week Three

### A Life of Repentance

#### Getting Started

---

- 1) What is something that you are thankful for God doing or giving in the past week?

- 2) The sermon suggested that there is only one call to which we must all respond. What is it?

- 3) The sermon discussed repentance as a mark of discipleship to Jesus. What is the connection?

#### Into the Bible

---

Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The primary point of the Parable of the Sower is that there will be differing responses to the proclamation of the Kingdom (the seed), and so as disciples who are called to proclaim the Kingdom, we need to expect differing responses. Our responsibility is not to change the soil of hearts, but to simply sow the seed knowing that there will be different responses to the good news of Jesus. On a secondary level, though, we can apply the insight of this parable to our continued life of discipleship as all these kinds of “soil” continue to exist in our hearts.

*Bible Study occurs at this time.*

*If time is short after Bible Study, consider taking prayer requests, praying for one another, and closing with one of the collects on page 6 or 7.*

*Officiant*      Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;  
*People*          For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.  
*Officiant*      Keep me as the apple of your eye;  
*People*          Hide me under the shadow of your wings.

Lord, have mercy [upon us].  
*Christ, have mercy [upon us].*  
Lord, have mercy [upon us].

*Officiant and People*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

*Officiant*      O Lord, hear our prayer;  
*People*          And let our cry come to you.  
*Officiant*      Let us pray.

*The Officiant then says one or more of the following Collects. Other appropriate Collects may also be used.*

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

- 9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge, \*  
and the Most High your habitation,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, \*  
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, \*  
to keep you in all your ways.
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands, \*  
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; \*  
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent  
under your feet.
- 14 Because he is bound to me in love,  
therefore will I deliver him; \*  
I will protect him, because he knows my Name.
- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; \*  
I am with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and bring him to honor.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him, \*  
and show him my salvation.

**Psalm 134** *Ecce nunc*

- 1 Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, \*  
you that stand by night in the house of the Lord.
- 2 Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord; \*  
the Lord who made heaven and earth bless you out of Zion.

*At the end of the Psalms is sung or said*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

- 4) According to the explanation of the parable, what is the meaning of each of the four soils described by Jesus?

- 5) How do you see these kinds of soils in the lives of those around you who need Jesus? In yourself?

- 6) How does knowing that our responsibility is not to change hearts, but simply sow the seed impact your desire to proclaim the Kingdom?

**Digging Deeper** \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) Does anything keep you from sharing the good news of Jesus with others? If so, what are they?

8) Do you find places in your heart where you have:

Hard Ground—

Rocky Soil—

Thorns—

9) Tending the soil of our own hearts is another way to describe a life of repentance. What things can you do to tend the soil of your heart?

3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,  
for you are my crag and my stronghold; \*  
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.

4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, \*  
for you are my tower of strength.

5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, \*  
for you have redeemed me,  
O Lord, O God of truth.

**Psalm 91** Qui habitat

1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High \*  
abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 He shall say to the Lord,  
“You are my refuge and my stronghold, \*  
my God in whom I put my trust.”

3 He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter \*  
and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He shall cover you with his pinions,  
and you shall find refuge under his wings; \*  
his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.

5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, \*  
nor of the arrow that flies by day;

6 Of the plague that stalks in the darkness, \*  
nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day.

7 A thousand shall fall at your side  
and ten thousand at your right hand, \*  
but it shall not come near you.

8 Your eyes have only to behold \*  
to see the reward of the wicked.

*One or more of the following Psalms are sung or said.*

**Psalm 4** *Cum invocarem*

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; \*  
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;  
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 “You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory? \*  
how long will you worship dumb idols  
and run after false gods?”
- 3 Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; \*  
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.
- 4 Tremble, then, and do not sin; \*  
Speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.
- 5 Offer the appointed sacrifices \*  
and put your trust in the Lord.
- 6 Many are saying,  
“Oh, that we might see better times!” \*  
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart, \*  
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.
- 8 I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; \*  
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

**Psalm 31:1-5** In te, Domine, speravi

- 1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame: \*  
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; \*  
make haste to deliver me.

**Week Four**  
**Submitting to God’s Word**

**Getting Started** \_\_\_\_\_

1) What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?

2) The sermon noted two more characteristics of a disciple of Jesus. What are they?

3) How do you think you would have felt if you had witnessed Jesus healing the man with the unclean spirit?

**Into the Bible** \_\_\_\_\_

One of the things we are confronted with in Jesus is the authority of His presence and word. He speaks spiritual, emotional, and physical healing with the power of His Word. Even though many people in Jesus’ day heard Him speak, not all of them responded by submitting themselves to Him. His disciples, though, are those who come to Him for “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Read John 14:15-27

4) How is true obedience always an expression of love?

5) In the midst of the call to loving obedience to His Word, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will be with His disciples. According to these verses, what will the Holy Spirit do for us as followers of Jesus?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

While Paul was referring to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Church came to recognize the writings of the New Testament as equally inspired and authoritative in the lives of God’s people.

6) What is the connection between the Holy Spirit and Scripture? How does this echo Jesus’ teaching in John 14?

7) According to these verses, what does submission to Scripture accomplish in the lives of disciples?

## Compline

*The Officiant begins*

*People* Our help is in the Name of the Lord;  
The maker of heaven and earth.

*The Officiant continues*

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

*Silence may be kept. The Officiant and People then say*

Almighty God and Father, we confess to you,  
to one another, and to the whole company of heaven,  
that we have sinned, through our own fault,  
in thought, and word, and deed,  
and in what we have left undone.  
For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,  
have mercy upon us, forgive us all our sins,  
and by the power of your Holy Spirit  
raise us up to serve you in newness of life,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*The Officiant alone says*

May Almighty God grant us forgiveness of our sins,  
and the grace and comfort of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

*Officiant*

O God, make speed to save us.

*People*

O Lord, make haste to help us.

*Officiant*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

*People*

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

*Except in Lent, add* Alleluia.

**Digging Deeper** \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) Is your discipleship to Jesus marked by rest, or time off?  
What can you do to find time to rest in Jesus?

- 8) Is prayer your first defense or your last ditch effort?  
What can you do to deepen your life of prayer?

**Digging Deeper** \_\_\_\_\_

Submission to God's Word allows the Holy Spirit to work in us such that "the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). We are meant to do more than simply marvel at Jesus' authority and teachings, we are meant to submit to His Word.

- 8) How does Scripture work in us toward spiritual maturity and healing?

- 9) Practically speaking, what does it mean to submit to Scripture?

## Week Five

### The Life of Prayer

#### Getting Started

---

1) What do you think of when you think of prayer?

2) The sermon noted the difference between being a “fan” and a disciple. How would you describe the difference?

3) The sermon discussed more marks of discipleship to Jesus. What are they?

#### Into the Bible

---

Read Philippians 4:4-9

Disciples of Jesus are meant to be committed to prayer and to experience deep and joyful peace in life. In this passage, Paul exhorts and encourages his readers as he calls them to lives of prayer as they center their lives upon Jesus.

4) How does rejoicing *in the Lord* perhaps differ from rejoicing in the world? How is Jesus a constant source of joy in the lives of His disciples?

5) How does knowing that “the Lord is at hand” lead to freedom from anxiety and the experience of peace?

6) How does giving thanks increase our awareness that “the Lord is at hand,” give us joy, and impact the content of our prayers?

Part of Paul’s insight in this passage is that he had faith in Jesus’ love for him in a way that produced hope, quieted anxiety, filled him with joy and peace, and allowed him to set his heart and mind on God’s goodness all around him. Prayer is meant to be so much more than simply giving Jesus our daily to-do-list and list of people in need. While these things are good and should be included, they are to be intentionally engaged in a posture of resting in Jesus’ strength and love for us. This kind of prayer demands a “wilderness place” like Jesus sought, a place to stop being busy and to be alone with the Lord of Love in a way that allows us to rest in Him. Many in our culture find rest to be elusive, and often the best we can do is find “time off.” Jesus wants more for us, and His promise is that if we come to Him, we will find “rest for our souls” (Matthew 11:29).