

LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



FIRST SEMESTER UNIT 1

"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5



WHAT ARE LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS?



Living Stones Discipleship Groups are bi-weekly meetings of brothers & sisters in Christ for the purpose of advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ through growing in Christlikeness and serving God's purposes for their lives.

WHAT TO EXPECT



Living Stones Discipleship Groups are scheduled for 21 meetings over the course of a year. Meetings are divided into three semesters. Each semester is divided into 7-units surrounding the subjects of God's salvation, God's sanctification, and God's mission.

FIRST SEMESTER: God Saves

7 meetings // May - August

In the first semester, we study the fundamentals of the gospel. How does God accomplish the salvation of sinners? We study God's self-revelation in the Scripture, the nature of Jesus, the need for salvation, and a whole lot more.

SECOND SEMESTER: God Sanctifies

7 meetings // September - December

In the second semester we study the ways God advances the gospel in us to advance it through us. This semester is about sanctification, the work of God in setting us apart for His use. We discuss spiritual disciplines, overcoming temptation, the ordinances of the church, and more.

THIRD SEMESTER: God Sends

7 meetings // January - April

The third semester is all about the mission of God. What is God's mission for the church, for His people, for you? We study methods for evangelism. We study practical things like marriage, work, church membership, and making disciples.

UNIT 1:

Introduction & Invitation

IN THIS SESSION

- :: Introduction of all group members
 - :: Structure of group meetings
 - :: Why do discipleship groups?
 - :: Prayer and Encouragement
 - :: Covenant of Commitment

UNIT 1: Introduction & Invitation

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Welcome to your Living Stones Discipleship Group! Over the next several months you will get to know the members in your group and learn how a discipleship group can help you grow in Christlikeness, as well as discover and walk-out the Lord's purposes for your life.

First thing's first. Let's introduce ourselves. Share your name and a little bit about your life. What's your church background? How did Jesus save you?

List the names of your group members and one or two things you learned about them.

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UNIT 1: Introduction & Invitation

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MEETINGS

:: Meetings are held every other week and last between 60-90 minutes.

:: Every meeting follows the same general format.

LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

1. Opening scripture reading & prayer
2. Follow-up previous unit's meeting assignments
3. Bible study & open discussion
4. Missional assignment
5. Prayer Requests & Praise Reports
6. Closing prayers

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF EACH MEMBER?

:: Members are encouraged to attend every meeting and to inform the group leader when they cannot.

:: Members are asked to complete all bi-weekly assignments

:: Members are encouraged to be honest and transparent with other group members

:: Members are asked to keep prayer requests private

GOALS OF LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP

:: Grow in Christlikeness

:: Develop healthy relationships with other Christians

:: Discover the Lord's purposes for your life

:: Advance the gospel of Jesus Christ in your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc.

:: Serve your brothers/sisters in the advance of the gospel in their lives

UNIT 1: Introduction & Invitation

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP & WHY DO DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS?

- :: Discipleship is simply the process of making disciples of Jesus Christ. It is the responsibility of all followers of Jesus. The mission is difficult, impossible even, if we do it alone. There are many things meant to cause us to fail. This is why God has graced His people with the gift of His Word, His Spirit, and His people.
- :: Through giving yourself to your Discipleship Group, you are entering into the process through which God has designed to equip you for His mission. The other members of your group need you, and you need the other members of your group.
- :: Your group consists of Christians who have covenanted to see you grow in Christlikeness, fulfill God's mission for your life, and experience the supreme joy of serving Jesus Christ!

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

- :: A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ who is compelled by Christ's love for Him such that he/she is willing to joyfully give his/her whole life to loving and serving Him and His purposes. 2Corinthians 5:14-15 describes a disciple this way: **"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."**
- :: Charles Hodge, in commenting on the passage above, defines a Christian as, *"...one who recognizes Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, as God manifested in the flesh, loving us and dying for our redemption; and who is so affected by a sense of the love of this incarnate God as to be constrained to make the will of Christ the rule of his obedience, and the glory of Christ the great end for which he lives."*

:: Your Discipleship Group has been designed with two purposes in mind: (1) To foster an environment where you are encouraged, strengthened, and equipped to become a spiritually mature disciple of Jesus Christ to the glory of God. And (2) to provide you the opportunity to encourage, strengthen, and equip others to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS GROUP?

:: Thus, the goal of a discipleship group is to *create* spiritually mature disciples of Christ who are *creating* spiritually mature disciples of Christ.

:: We believe every spiritually mature Christian will exhibit several Christlike qualities. At the very least, he/she will:

- Live their life—empowered by the Holy Spirit—for the glory of God and advance of the gospel;
- Regularly spend time in the Word of God and prayer;
- Discover and use his/her spiritual gift(s) for God’s glory;
- Regularly share the gospel with unbelievers;
- Faithfully attend a local church;
- Be an effective manager of life, relationships, and resources;
- Be humble and willing to serve others;
- Be faithful to God and family;
- Be willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- Regularly see the Lord in repentance when he/she fails in any one of these qualities.

Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time... Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever... Resolved, if ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these Resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when I come to myself again.

Resolutions 1 & 3, Jonathan Edward's Weekly Resolutions

UNIT 1: Introduction & Invitation

INVITATION & COVENANT

:: Are you willing to make a commitment to seeing the gospel advance in your life and in the lives of those in your discipleship group? If so, you are officially invited to covenant with the members of your discipleship group.

:: Here is what it will take:

- Around 2-3 hours per week in Bible study, prayer, and reading plus your bi-weekly meeting;
- Attend 21 meetings over the course of the next 12 months;
- Open and honest communication and feedback to your discipleship group;
- Do the bi-weekly homework assignments;
- Pray for the other members of my discipleship group;
- Keep the personal matters of my group members private;
- Participate in 1 outreach event scheduled by your group;
- Attend 1 spiritual outing event scheduled by your group;
- Sign the group covenant included in this packet.

UNIT 1: Introduction & Invitation

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- :: Sign the Living Stones Discipleship Group Covenant.
- :: Complete the Unit 2 worksheets and activities (when applicable).
- :: Pray for the needs of your brothers/sisters in your group.
- :: Ensure you are able to attend the next session.