

**Discipleship:
A Lifelong Journey**
by Pastor Paul

Disciples are learners and followers. Disciples of Jesus *learn from and follow after* Jesus. And that takes time and effort. It is not like a chocolate manufacturing plant where you drop some ingredients on a conveyor belt and it goes through a series of processes from mixing to molding to baking to packaging and in 10 minutes you get a candy bar ready to be shipped. You can't run people through a program that spits out fully mature disciples.

Discipleship is about trajectory; it's about providing direction and guiding believers in their journey of faith. In theological terms it is progressive sanctification: the ongoing, steady transformation of our character, our motives, our desires and our actions to reflect Jesus. It is a lifelong pursuit of becoming more like Jesus.

At Grace we are committed to helping you *grow* in your relationship with Christ. We are eager for you to "increase in the knowledge of God" (Phil 1:10) and to be "built up ... to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). We encourage you to join in on one of the following opportunities so you can flourish in your own journey of faith:

- Ladies' Bible Study & Prayer Groups (several times throughout year)
- Men's Bible Study (2nd Thursday of every month)
- Life Groups (in homes throughout the week)
- Grace Bible Institute (Wednesday evenings)
- Seniors Bible Study (1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month)
- Recovery Group (Sunday mornings)
- Berean Bible Study (Sunday mornings)

Life Groups

Community can play an important role in the life of a believer. It's in a community of believers that discipleship can flourish as we constantly and regularly rub shoulders together, as we learn from each other, and as we stretch each other to grow in our faith.

Many in our church are growing in their spiritual walk because of their Life Group experience:

"We look forward to our Life Group meetings every week. We study the Bible, see how it applies to our lives, pray for one another and challenge each other to grow in Christ. The friends we have made in these settings are so very dear to us. It is a sweet time of community and fellowship." - Colleen Coole

“It is clear that the Bible tells us to grow in the knowledge of Christ. A Life Group is a perfect opportunity to seek this growth as you study the complexities and simplicity of God’s word. It is also a great chance to expand what you consider your family and develop relationships with those who are your brothers and sisters. God places these opportunities in our life but we need to pursue them in order for them to have any effect.” - Mark Heiny

Scripture has much to say about encouraging and admonishing one another:

- Romans 14:19 - *So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.*
- Galatians 5:13 - *For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 - *Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.*
- Hebrews 3:13 - *But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today", so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*
- Hebrews 10:24 - *and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds*
- Hebrews 10:25 - *not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

Our Life Groups are meant to help you build relationships in our church in a context of sharing and caring for one another. You will talk about life together, pray together, and help each other push past mere Bible knowledge and on to life application, so that more and more transformation into the image of Christ can take place in you.