

EMBRACE

**DISCIPLESHIP**

NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP

# EMBRACE

## Section One - Embrace

### *Discipleship Commitment Commitment Agreement*

Embracing Christ

Embracing the Gospel

Embrace the Scriptures



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# Discipleship

## Where are we going?

*Growing members to know and demonstrate their faith.*



Don't waste my time. I don't have time for it. Tell me where you're taking me. Don't sign me up for another growth group just so we can do "group time." What's the purpose? Where are we going?

Have you ever joined a group and had no idea where they were going? This is not the goal of discipleship. Most of the time in groups we read and discuss the spiritual disciplines but are never held accountable to practice them.

Groups struggle with exchanging spiritual information. Why? Because people find it is much easier to read than to practice.

You're not just signing up to do "group time." There are steps and goals. There is accountability and expectations. At the end of discipleship, you should know and demonstrate your faith. You should be equipped in order to call others to the same knowledge and demonstration of faith.

### What is it?

Christ called the apostles to the discipleship ministry. He said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20)."* In the same manner Christ calls the church to continue this ministry.

What is discipleship? We understand the call, but most people have no idea what discipleship looks like. Here in Lesson One we will discuss the definition and steps of a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this lesson is to lay out what it is and where we are taking you.



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### THE REASON FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship should never be delayed. Jesus called you to follow Him so you might grow in Him. Christians have too often put off the necessity to follow Christ's command of discipleship. This delayed obedience has become, for some, the first step toward disobedience.

Followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to become imitators of Him. Jesus said in Matthew 28:19,

*"Go therefore and make disciples...."* God was never content with just saving you. He wants more. He wants to cultivate your character into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

*We do* discipleship because God has called the Church to grow its members. *We invite* you to discipleship so you may know and imitate Jesus. Do not put off this calling any longer.

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## THE DEFINITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

A disciple is one who embraces, follows, and expresses the teachings of his teacher. Although this definition is accurate, it's not Christian. It lacks the fundamental subject.

Throughout time people have embraced, followed, and expressed the teachings of their teacher, and this, in part, has become the problem. Take for example the Pharisees in the New Testament. They're recorded as having disciples. Jews, in the same manner, considered themselves disciples who embraced, followed, and expressed the teachings of Moses. Before becoming a Christian, whether you knew it or not, you were embracing, following, and expressing the teachings of your teacher. Who was this teacher? The Scriptures explain before you were saved your teacher was Satan and it was he who you embraced, followed, and illustrated (Ephesians 2:1-3).

Why is the definition stated above not distinctively Christian? It lacks the teachers name. Without the teacher being defined, a Christian is missing the

fundamental subject of true discipleship. The subject is crucial. How then should we define discipleship?

*“A disciple is one who embraces, follows, and expresses the teaching of Jesus Christ.”*



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## INVESTIGATING DISCIPLESHIP

**Before moving forward, examine discipleship in the Scriptures.**

Read Mark 2:18-19; John 1:35, 9:28. Each of these texts mention different types of disciples. Who were the teachers?

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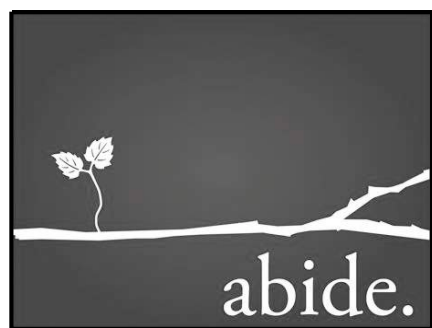
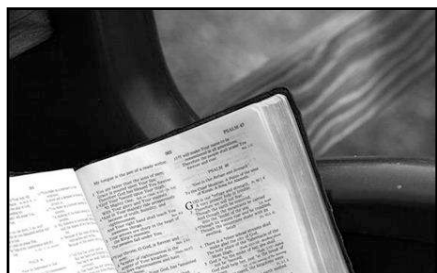
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## THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP

The purpose of discipleship is to invite you to know and imitate Jesus Christ. Our ultimate hope is you will become an individual who embraces, follows, and illustrates the teachings of Jesus Christ and guide others in this journey, as an intentional and strategic commitment made only by yourself. *Once completed you will equip others by discipleship.*

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## WHERE WE GET THE PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP



**Read:** John 15

How many times does the word *abide* show up? \_\_\_\_\_

Christ's sacrifice saved you. He now calls you to maturity through discipleship. Discipleship occurs when someone is guided to actively imitate Christ. Thankfully, Christ explained how this process takes place.

If you haven't already read John 15, take the time to do so. John 15 is a crucial text in the life of Christ. He is at the end of His ministry and discipleship. He sums up for His disciples, one last time, the goal. He gives them three primary principles which every mature Christian should have in order to be true imitators of Jesus Christ. It is out of this text that we model the discipleship process.

In the coming months you will know these principles backwards and forwards. You will be held

accountable to them and eventually expected to express this truth to others.

What are these three principles found in John 15?

**First** - In order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ you need to *embrace* Him.

**Second** - In order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ you need to *remain* in Him.

**Third** - In order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ you need to *express* Him to others.

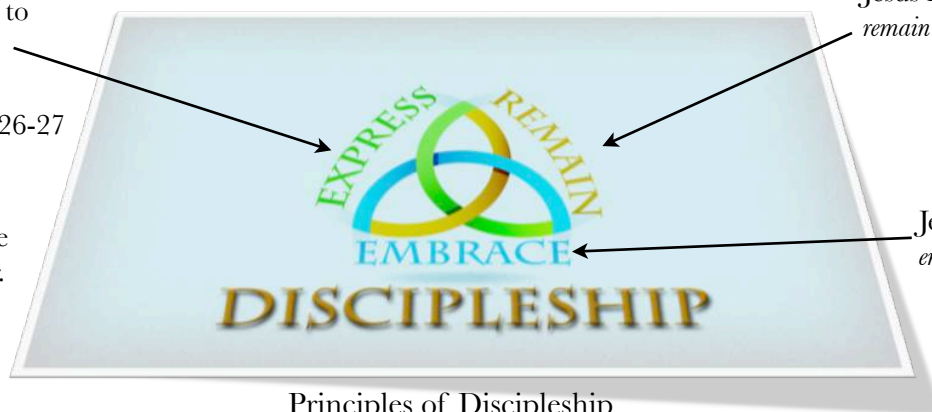
*Jesus has called you to embrace Him, to remain in Him, and express God's truth bearing fruit.*

## THE PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus has called you to *express* God's truth bearing fruit.

John 15:8-11; 26-27

All three principles are necessary. None are more important than the other.



Jesus has called you to *remain* in Him.

John 15:4-8

Jesus has called you to *embrace* Him.

John 15:1-3

Principles of Discipleship

John 15



## DISCIPLESHIP

Can a Christian be actively imitating Christ with only two principles applied? How about one? The answer is no. As you will soon see, Christians who only practice one of the principles, as revealed in John 15, act as inadequate Christians. Each principle is crucial and dependent upon the other in order to truly be a Christian who imitates Christ.



## THE DISCIPLESHIP PATH

### Where You're Going...

The components of the discipleship journey:



#### Embrace

##### Embracing the Gospel

In this section we want you to understand and embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ.

##### Embracing Christ

In this section you will learn about Christ's identity. Understanding who Christ is foundational.

##### Embracing the Word

In this section we want to observe the benefits of embracing the instructions of Christ.



#### Remain

##### Spiritual Disciplines

Remaining in Christ is a disciplined process where you will learn the spiritual disciplines of prayer, quiet time, and Bible study.

##### Embracing Christ

In this section you will learn about Christ's identity. Understanding who Christ is foundational.

##### Productivity

Followers of Christ are productive. They bear fruit. They obey. Christ convicts and enables us for the ministry.



#### Express

##### Personal Evangelism

By this time you should know the gospel, but in this section you learn how to present the gospel.

##### Faithful Fruit

God has gifted you and expects you to continue expressing your faith bearing fruit.

##### Reproduction

The discipleship process is about reproducing disciples. In this closing lesson we urge you to continue the discipleship process with someone else.

### Projected Path 5 to 6 Months

#### Embrace - 2 to 3 Months

The Gospel  
Christ  
Scripture

#### Remain - 2 to 3 Months

Spiritual Disciplines  
Relationship  
Productivity

#### Express - 1 to 2 Months

Evangelism  
Faithful Fruit  
Reproduction

### The Goal

The goal of discipleship is *not just* about being biblically smart. It's *not just* about establishing consistent patterns of spiritual disciplines. And it's *not just* about being evangelistically equipped.

The goal of discipleship is to remain faithful, as Christians, to Christ's command to discipleship.

The results of discipleship should produce more spiritual knowledge, spiritual disciplines, and even more evangelistic opportunities, but again they are not the goal.

The goal of discipleship is to equip you to maturity so you also might be faithful in discipleship with another brother or sister.

Matthew 28:19-20



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# The Discipleship Commitment



The path has been clearly stated. We explained the reasons for discipleship. We defined its purpose and its principles. The decision is now up to you.

Without your commitment, this discipleship process will never happen. Will you commit over this period to work diligently with your mentor on the different principles of discipleship? Will you commit to learn what it means to embrace God?

Will you commit to being held accountable as you learn to remain in a healthy relationship with God? Will you commit to what it means to express yourself as a believer of Jesus Christ?

If your answers are yes, sign and date below committing yourself to the discipleship process.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

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# EMBRACE

## Section One - Embrace

Discipleship Commitment

***Embracing the Gospel***

Embracing the Christ

Embrace the Scriptures





# EMBRACE

Embracing the Gospel



Understanding the gospel is foundational to understanding God's redemptive story.

## The Gospel No Greater Love

How do you know you're saved? One person says they're saved because they're a good person. Another says they're saved because they regularly attend church. Even while these responses are very common, they're dangerously misleading.

Salvation only occurs when a believer embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ. To neglect the conversation of salvation in the discipleship process is to neglect the very foundation of our faith. We can't assume that everyone is saved just because they go to church or because they're nice people. We have to have the discussion.

So we ask again, "How do you know you're saved?" Or "Do you even know you need to be saved?"

The gospel of Jesus Christ is so important to embrace for two reasons. First, the gospel reveals to us the love of God toward us. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." The gospel shows us how much God loves us. Second, the gospel reveals to us why we need to be saved. Luke 19:10 states, "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Believers in Christ embrace the gospel because they know without

Christ their sins separate them from God. Christ came to seek us and save us from our sins. He saw our situation and He said, "Great love has no other than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)." He has done this for us.

For some of you this lesson may be a new discussion, and for others it may be a refresher. Whatever your background might be, embracing the Gospel is a foundational decision in having a relationship with Christ. Those who accept the gospel cohere themselves with the vine, Jesus Christ.

Let's embrace, reflect, and reconsider what Christ has done for us.

Before Beginning Read:

**JOHN 15**



# SIN Separated From God

Without Christ, humanity is separated from God. Jesus taught us that in order to have a relationship with God we must be perfect. He said, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48)." Here is the problem, who can live up to this standard? We are far from perfect; imbedded with a sin issue.

What does the Bible say about man's perfection? What does Romans 3:23 state?

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Any sin, whether big or small, separates us from having a relationship with God.

Are there exceptions? What does Romans 3:10 and Ecclesiastes 7:20 state?

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Every person in this world is affected by sin and separated from God. Our situation is bad and gets worse. God declares that whoever has sinned is condemned to die eternally separated from Him. In short, the consequences of sin is eternal death.

What does Romans 6:23 state?

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***"Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."***

Ecclesiastes 7:20

What does Isaiah 59:2 state?

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How is eternal separation experienced? Should this scare us? Why? (2 Thessalonians 1:9)

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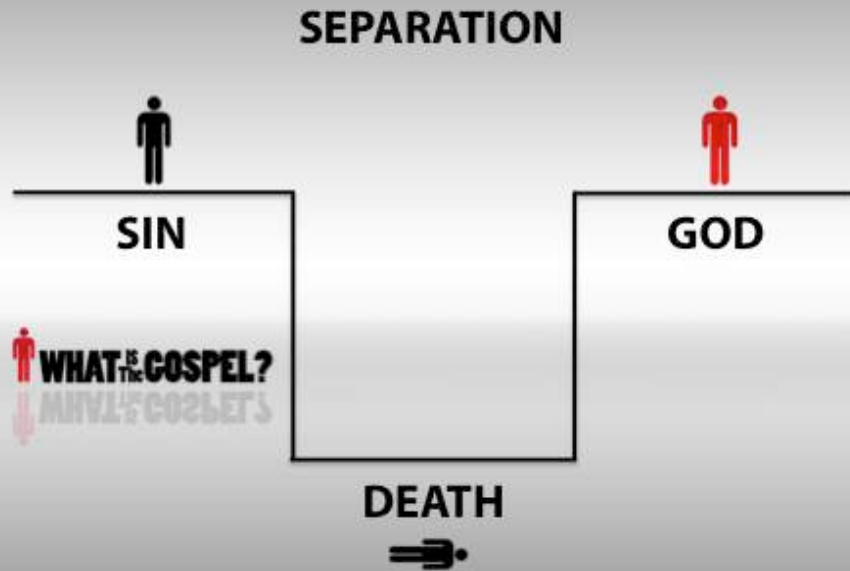


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God expects each person to be perfect in order to have a relationship with Him. That's a problem because we are all born into sin (Psalms 51:5). We are all infected with sin (Romans 6:23). And we all have chosen to continue living in our sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

We stand in opposition to God's intent and because He is a Holy God, He has to deal with sin justly. In His justice, He condemns each one of us to death. Our sin separates us from God and there is nothing we can do to bridge the gap.

**SIN  
SEPARATES  
US FROM  
GOD.**



# NO GREATER LOVE

## John 15:13

God is just in condemning sin, but He is also gracious desiring that none would perish (2 Peter 3:9). God is just and must deal with sin. Death for sin must be served, but because God is rich in love He sent Christ to pay the price for our sins. Christ in John 15:13 explains God's love when He said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." This is what Christ has done for us. He has paid our debt.

### CHRIST TOOK OUR JUDGMENT

To give your own life so another person can live is the ultimate validation of love. And that's exactly what Jesus did for us. Christ's sacrifice was what God desired and what our sin required.

Romans 5:6 states that "While we were still \_\_\_\_\_, at the \_\_\_\_\_ time Christ died for the \_\_\_\_\_."

Romans 5:8 continues with the same thought stating, "God shows his \_\_\_\_\_ for us in that while we were \_\_\_\_\_ Christ died for us."

1 John 4:10 also states that, "In this is love, not that \_\_\_\_\_ loved God, but that He loved us and \_\_\_\_\_ His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our \_\_\_\_\_."

Christ took our judgment. He was the only one who could. He took the wrath of God on the cross with the purpose that we might have a relationship with God.

### CHRIST DIED IN OUR PLACE AND RESURRECTED

Christ was oppressed and afflicted upon the cross. He willingly took our place and sacrificed Himself without fighting nor opening His mouth against it. He took the punishment and

***"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."***

John 15:13



completed the sacrifice dying in our place. The scriptures tell us God the Father was pleased that the Son offered himself as an offering for our sins (Isaiah 53:10).

Christ suffered, took our judgment and then died. This however is not the end of the gospel. Christ resurrected three days later demonstrating to us that who ever accepts the gospel by faith will also experience a Christlike resurrection!

What does it mean when we say that Christ died in your place for your sins?

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Why is the resurrection so important? What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19?

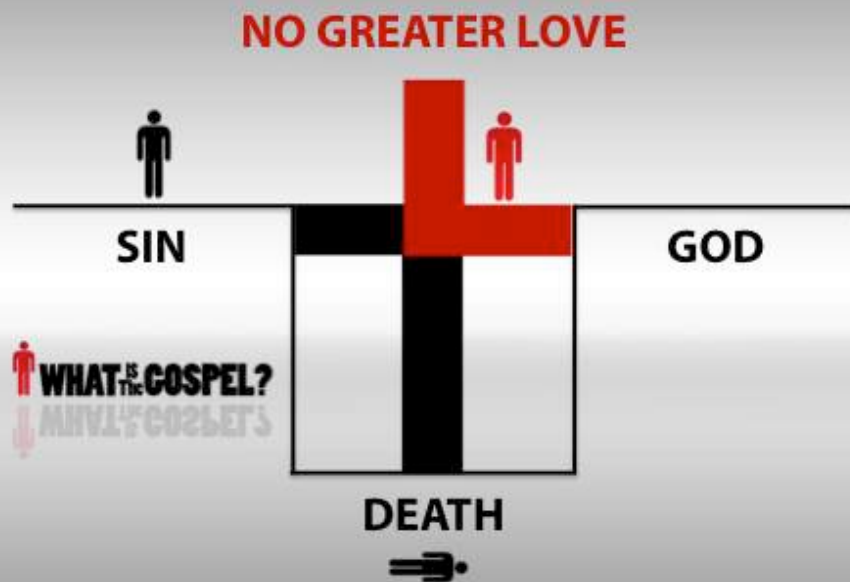
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### Gospel Facet #5

Christ demonstrated the greatest love for us dying in our place.



# Eternal Life Through Faith

Knowing the gospel is important, but it does nothing for you if you just know it. God wants more than that from you. The benefits of the gospel are only transferred into the believer's account when the believer, by faith, accepts the essential components of the gospel as true.

A believer is sealed for eternal life when they (1) acknowledge they are a sinner (Rom. 6:23). (2) Believes by faith that Christ paid for their sin (Rom. 5:8). (3) Believes Christ was buried and rose from the grave on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4). These are the essential elements to the gospel which can only be experienced by faith.

## WHY WORKS DON'T WORK ➡

We are dead in our sins without Christ. How can a dead man do anything good? In God's eyes we are nothing more than a dead corpse without Christ. Many have tried to earn their way into a relationship with God, by dressing themselves with good deeds like tithing, outreach projects, or just by trying to be a good person. But putting clothes on a dead corpse does not change their condition. A corpse in good deeds is still a dead corpse in God's eyes.

Those who try to work for their salvation fail to see their fallen state (Rom. 1:18). They ignore God's Son who provided the means for their salvation.

As good as you might think your good works are, God views them entirely differently. Read Isaiah 64:6. What does it state?

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***"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God not because of works, lest any man should boast."***

Ephesians 2:8-9

## ETERNAL LIFE ONLY THROUGH FAITH



Only by faith do sinners experience eternal life. God does the work and by faith trust in His work through Christ. Only then can we receive His eternal life.

Why is salvation only through faith?

1. *Mankind needs grace.* Both Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 tell us what?

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2. *God wants the credit for your salvation.* In Ephesians 2:9, Paul explains that salvation is only through faith. How does faith glorify God?

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3. *God is only pleased by those who respond in faith.* Does Hebrews 11:6 leave room for any other way to please God? What word supports your opinion?

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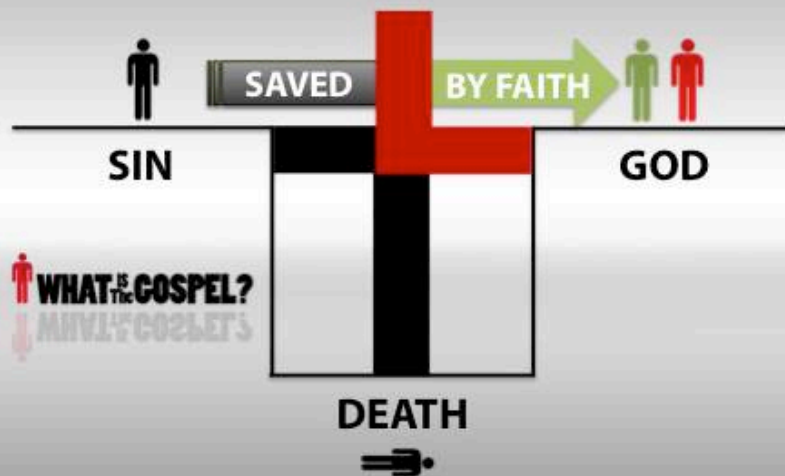


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Have you responded to God? Have you placed your faith in the work of Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

## Gospel Facet #7

Eternal life is given to those who respond in faith to the gospel.



## Embrace the Gospel

We ask you once again, “How do you know you’re saved?” Have you placed your faith in the only one who can save you? If you haven’t, you can today.

If you believe that you’re a sinner, believe by faith that God the Father provided His one only Son to come and die in your place, and that He raised from the dead on the third day then Christ declares you are saved! He says, “He who hears my word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24).”

We suggest that if you just made this decision to take a moment a thank the Lord for this salvation with prayer. If you desire, here’s a prayer you can pray:

*Dear Father,*

*I understand that I am a sinner. I understand there is nothing I can do to restore my relationship with you outside of your Son Jesus Christ. I believe you sent your Son to come, die on the cross for me and that He rose again three days later so I could be saved. Thank you for your Son Jesus Christ and help me to live in a way that pleases you. In Jesus’ name.*

*Amen*

*Do you affirm the Gospel of Christ to be true?\_\_\_\_\_*



*“Without the gospel everything is useless and vain; without the gospel we are not Christians; without the gospel all riches is poverty, all wisdom folly before God; strength is weakness, and all the justice of man is under the condemnation of God.”*

Theologian John Calvin

## Connected to the Vine?

The discipleship process begins when someone embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ. Growth will never occur unless they’re connected to the vine.

There is no greater love than the love of Jesus Christ. His sacrificial life provides the means by which we are connected to God. He is God’s greatest expression of love toward us. Christ is the exact reflection of the Father’s love. He said, “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love (John 15:9).” He calls each of us to embrace Him and His gospel. When we embrace Christ, we are placed into a real relationship with Him. We are connected to the true Vine.

Are you connected to the vine? First, those who continue to deny Christ and His sacrifice are unable to do anything fruitful. Christ said, “Apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5).” However, those who embrace His sacrifice are grown into fruit-bearing, God-pleasing, and God-honoring individuals. Christ said, “He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit (John 15:5).”

The words in John 15:13 are powerful. He saw our situation and knew there was nothing we could do to restore our relationship with God. Christ considers us as a friend. He considers you worthy and worth dying for. “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (vs. 12).”

# EMBRACE

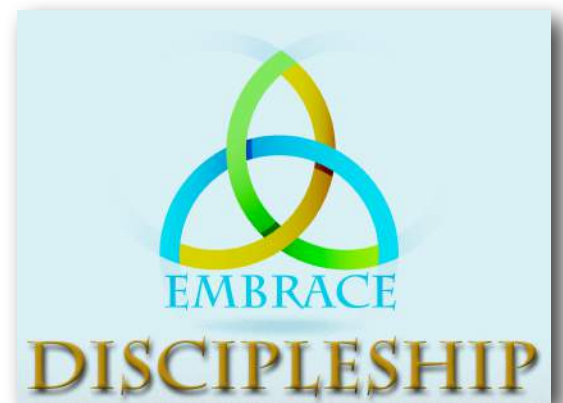
## **Section One - Embrace**

Discipleship Commitment

Embracing the Gospel

**Embracing the Christ**

Embrace the Scriptures





## EMBRACE

*A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.*



## Who do you say that I am?

Jesus cannot be ignored. Our world knows it and so do you. He must be defined. His impact has traveled into every culture, and every group has tried to define Him.

Some have defined Christ as a created man just like every human being, but was the first to receive a spirit body and become an actual god. Others have defined Him as a great prophet but are unwilling to call Him God's Son. Look at nonreligious groups that acknowledge Christ as a great role model to be admired and followed, but usually nothing more than that. Even Atheists have a definition for Jesus and often acknowledge Him as a great teacher, but of course not God.

People cannot ignore Christ and neither can you. You must define Him. So at this point we must ask, "Who do you say Jesus is?"

Jesus did not ignore His identity. One day while walking with His disciples, He turned to them and asked, "Who do people say I am?" The disciple's response sounded pretty similar to what some say today. They said, "Some say you're a prophet; others say John the Baptist; and others say Elijah." Even early on in Jesus' ministry, people around Him were trying to figure out who He was.

Jesus has clearly defined Himself. However, people throughout the ages have tried to redefine Him.

Followers of Jesus Christ do not make this mistake. They understand who Christ is and they embrace His true identity.

Jesus defined Himself with two words, "I Am." We see this in John 15:1. These two words are simple. They're comprised of only three letters, but the depth of Christ's identity is captured in these three letters. One of the main points for discipleship is to be one who embraces Jesus Christ. Knowing Him is foundational to embracing Christ. In this lesson we are going to learn about Christ's identity and learn how to define Him properly.

# Who do you say that I am?

## I am Eternally Heavenly

The identity of Christ is not bewildering however, people over time have confused Christ's identity. Thankfully, Christ clearly defined himself and did not leave it up to the bewildered to decide. Whenever Christ was making a characteristic of himself, He would often start with these two words, "I Am..." Let's turn now to the first "I am" and see who Christ said He was.

**Examine these texts and answer the questions.**

What did Jesus mean in John 8:56-58?

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Where did Jesus say He was not from in John 8:23? Why?

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Where did Jesus say He was from in John 6:51 and what does that mean?

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### Definition of Terms

**Eternal** - Christ is eternal in that He is everlasting, without beginning and without end. There was never a time when Christ was not.

**Heavenly** - Christ is heavenly. He is Divine and not of this world.

Jesus stood before the crowd and He revealed two characteristics of himself. (1) He said, "I am not of this world." The crowd was astonished by this statement. Who talks like this? (2) He said, "I have no beginning." This statement got under the skin of some. Notice in John 8:56, Jesus didn't say before Abraham 'I was.' He said, before Abraham "I Am." Christ specifically said this to emphasize His eternality. This type of language did not suit the hearers very well because they knew exactly what He was claiming and for this reason they picked up stones to kill Him.

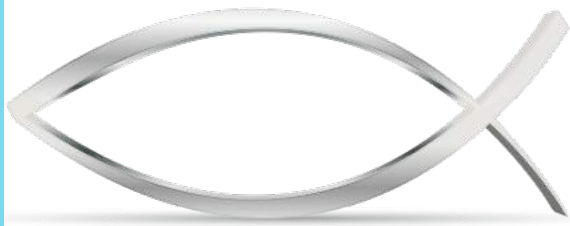
Today, people get upset when you define Christ as a eternal being. They perceive a man with earthly beginnings. They observe a man with a beginning and an end. Christ on the other hand did not have this view in mind.

A follower of Christ understands first that Christ is both eternal and heavenly. Those who say Christ was a prophet or just a great teacher, already have a problem. Prophets are created beings. Great teachers are trustworthy and yet if Christ is just a good teacher, we already have a problem with some of the things He's teaching.

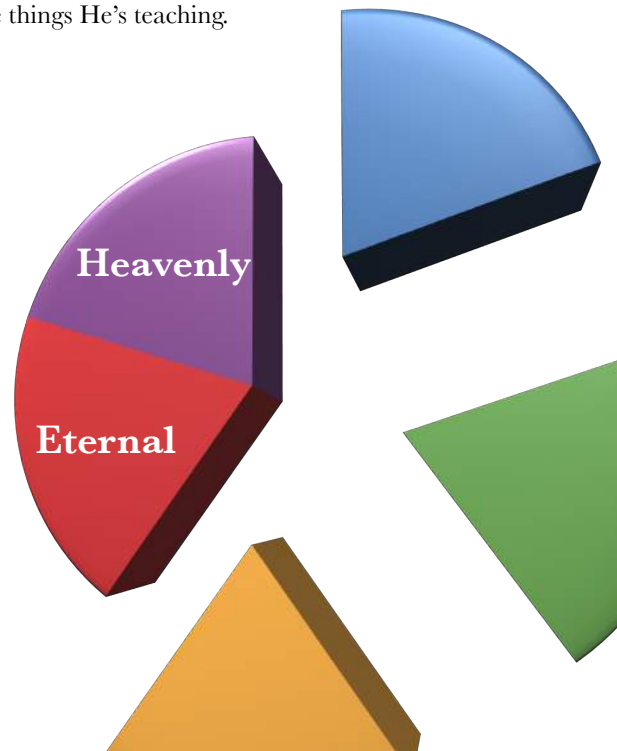
#### John 6:38

*For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*

"You're not yet fifty years old! And Abraham saw you?"



"Believe me, I am who I am long before Abraham was anything."



# Who do you say that I am? I am the Son of God

Christ is more than just an eternal heavenly being. Christ went one step further to claim that He was also divine. Those who claim Jesus was a prophet or a good teacher argue that Christ never claimed to be God and this is an unbelievably inaccurate statement. Review and explain Christ's statements below:

## Christ is the Son of God:

Why were the Jews angry with Jesus in John 10:30-39? Who did they say He was claiming to be? Did He deny it?

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When Jesus says "I and the Father are one" in John 10:30, what is He saying?

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Who did the disciples say Jesus was? Did He correct them? Observe these passages: Mark 8:27-30; Matthew 16:13-20; 14:22-33; John 6:68-69; 20:28-29.

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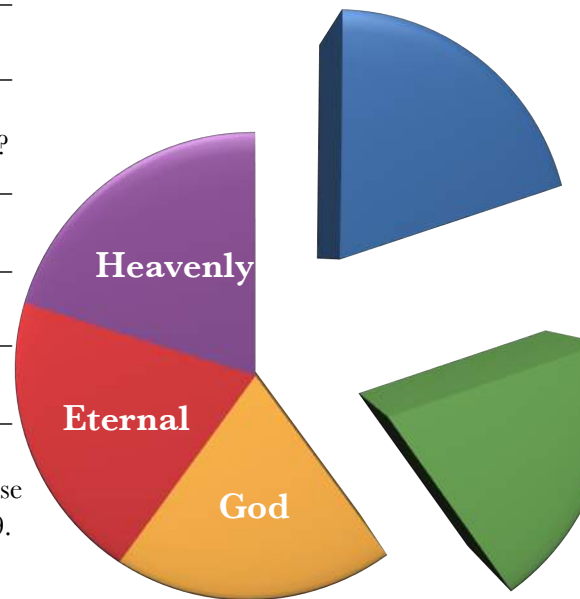
What did God the Father reveal concerning Christ's identity in Matthew 3:16?

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*"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and have to come to know that You are the Holy One of God."*

John 6:68-69



We could mention numerous other passages concerning this perspective on Christ as the Son of God. Crowds worshipped Him (Mat. 2:11) and even demons even cried out saying "You are the Holy one of God!" Notice however, in all the passages, Christ never rebukes or re-clarifies their worship, statements, or praises because their responses were worthy before an individual who is God. Two more principles concerning Christ are to be discovered.

# Who do you say that I am? I am the Only Way

Because Christ is the eternal heavenly divine Son of God, He emphatically declares to all of us that He is the only way to God the Father. This principle is most difficult for many people to grasp because our culture views different religions as alternative ways to get to God. This perspective is denied by Christ and He further clarifies if anyone wants to get to the Father they must go through the I am. Review and explain Christ's statements below:

## Christ is the Only Way:

Does Christ leave room for other legitimate paths to God in John 14:6? If someone denies this truth, are they a follower of Jesus Christ? Are they a Christian? Explain.

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In John 10:9, Christ says He is what? Is it plural or singular? What are the benefits of going through Him? Explain.

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In John 8:12, Christ says He is what? Is it plural or singular? If it is singular, are the other paths people take to get to God in Christ's mind?

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Read John 17:3-5. What does Jesus emphasize here? What relationship does He have with the Father? Explain.

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Christ says: No. I'm not saying I'm a teacher, don't call me teacher. I'm not saying I'm a prophet. I'm saying: "I'm the Messiah." I'm saying: "I am God incarnate." And people say: No, no, please, just be a prophet. A prophet, we can take. You're a bit eccentric. We've had John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey, we can handle that. But don't mention the "M" word! Because, you know, we're gonna have to crucify you. And he goes: No, no. I know you're expecting me to come back with an army, and set you free from these creeps, but actually I am the Messiah.  
-Bono



When people consider Christ, this truth is the most difficult for them to embrace. Yet, Christ makes it clear there is only one way to God. He doesn't leave us any other option. As followers of Christ we need to embrace Christ as the only way. *Anything less will misunderstand His identity as our eternal heavenly Son of God who has provided the only way to a relationship with God.*

# Who do you say that I am?

## I am Life

The source of life is only through Christ. If you haven't read John 15, stop now and read it. Jesus turned to His disciples and said, "I am the vine, you are the branches." Christ states he is the source of life. He who is disconnected to Him is dead. Life disconnected from Christ is really not life at all. Review and explain Christ's statements below.

### Christ is Life:

According to Jesus in John 15:1-5, if a follower embraces Him, what will happen? Explain.

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According to Jesus in John 15:6-7, if someone does not embrace Him, what will happen? Does this mean people cannot produce good fruit without Jesus? Yes or why not? Don't people do good things?

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What are the significant differences between the vine and the branch?

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Read 1 John 5:12. How does it agree with what Jesus has said in John 15?

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Christ Jesus said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." In other words: "I, the living One who have so completely given myself to you, am the Vine. You cannot trust me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of a divine life and power." You are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. "I am the Vine, I will receive you, I will draw you to myself, I will bless you, I will strengthen you, I will fill you with my Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be my branches, I have given myself utterly to you; children, give yourselves utterly to me. I have surrendered myself as God absolutely to you; I became man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be mine."

-Andrew Murray



Farmers know if a branch is disconnected from the tree it will never be fruitful. In fact, a branch's condition is worse than just being unfruitful because it is disconnected from life. Farmers also know a branch disconnected from the tree attracts more bugs and is susceptible to disease and decay, which may infect the tree, so He wisely takes them and burns them to protect the tree so it will produce fruit. In the same way, people who are disconnected from Christ are dead. They may appear to be doing fruitful things but the means by which they do them is out of the condition of the lifelessness. This is why Christians emphasize Christ so much. A fruitful life can only be accomplished when we embrace Him. Anything short of this is truly not life at all.



Christ The I Am

## Christ Defined:

*Christ is our eternal heavenly Son of God whom has provided the only way to God the Father and whom we continually embrace as the only source for true life.*



## Who do you say that I am? Do You Embrace Him?

Jesus first asked His disciples, "Who do people say I am?" And after they replied, He turned to them and asked, "But who do you say I am?" This was the moment of truth for the disciples. It is also a moment of truth for you. We all know about Christ and many people have an opinion of Christ, but only one answer can be truly right. The disciples turned to Jesus and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Acknowledging Christ's identity did not mean everything in life for the disciples became easy because life with Christ was not easy. His teachings were tough and convicting. Many people left Him because of how hard He challenged them, but the disciples recognized that Christ was the Son of God who carried the very words of eternal life. In fact, they even said, "Lord, to whom else shall we go? You have the words of

eternal life. We believe and know You are the Holy one of God (Paraphrase of John 6:68-9)."

Those who embrace Christ are disciples. They embrace His claims. All of them. They believe and understand He is their eternal heavenly Son of God whom has provided the only way to God the Father and whom they continually embrace as the only source of true life.

Embracing Christ is now your decision. Who do you say that He is?

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# EMBRACE

## Section One - Embrace

Discipleship Commitment

Embracing the Gospel

Embracing the Christ

**Embrace the Scriptures**



# EMBRACE

Embracing the Word

## CHRIST SPOKE



You are clean  
because of ***the***  
***word*** which I  
spoken to you.  
John 15:3

## The Word Spoken To You

Christ is God's revelation to us of God's divine revelation and instruction. If this is true then Christians need to realize the great depths of Christ's words. The early disciples did. They learned and believed the words of Christ were incredibly valuable. They believed Christ when He said, "You are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you (John 15:3)." And they believed Him when He said, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you (John 15:7)." The disciples followed and listened to Christ even when His teachings were difficult to understand because they truly believed that He had the "words of eternal life (John 6:68)." Do you?

Many disregard the words of Christ, but not His disciples. This is why we say, "A disciple is one who embraces, follows, and expresses the teaching of Jesus Christ." As a disciple of Christ, you need to realize that His words are far superior and important than any other instruction that our world can offer. His words give us life. His words give us direction. His words purify us. On top of all that, His words direct us into a relationship with the Father.

Why do we need to embrace the words of Christ? It's easy to review and study the words of God without realizing that the words of Christ were written down in order to speak to us so that we might have a relationship with Him. Christ says it over and over again,

abide, abide, abide, abide, etc. We embrace Christ's words in order to embrace a relationship with Him. Through the word, we connect ourselves to Christ.

Today, however, many have turned to other instructions forsaking to embrace the words of Christ. John 15 is never taken to heart and instead of the words of Christ being embraced in their hearts His words remain neglected. This is to their detriment. Christ's words were given to us, for our benefit, for our advantage and for our gain.

Christ spoke to you. In John 15, we read the benefits of abiding in His word. Let's turn now and embrace His Word.

Before Beginning Read:

JOHN 15

# The

## Benefits

### Embracing the Word

The words of Christ are extremely beneficial for our lives and they will challenge us to grow. In John 15, He describes at least two different ways.

#### (1) Grow in the image of Christ

Christ explains that if we embrace His word that we will be made into His likeness. When we connect ourselves to the vine then we inherit it's characteristics. But this takes work on our part and also on Christ's part.

When we commit our lives to Christ, we gain the benefit of the gardner. A farmer knows at times he needs to cut back a plant in order to yield the best croup. They cut out the dead branches, the weak branches, or diseased branches in order protect and provide the best opportunity for fruit. This is exactly what Christ does with us when we embrace His word. He sees our present situation and is able to see the work needed in our lives in order to make us productive fruit bearing individuals.

What does Jesus do to the unfruitful vines? What's the purpose ? (John 15:2).



*The sum of You word is truth,  
and everyone of Your righteous  
ordinances is everlasting.  
Psalm 119:160*

It's important to notice that Christ uses His word in order to make you more fruitful. It's not His desire to see you suffer for no reason. His cuts are precise and purposeful.

Other Scriptures support this perspective such as Hebrews 4:12. What does it state?

What does 2 Timothy 3:16 state?

Christ was never content with just saving you. He wants more than that. He wants to see you growing into the likeness of Himself and He does this through His word. Although we are connected to the vine (Christ), His cuts will hurt but they have a goal in mind. We may even question why the cut was made, but when we abide in the words of Christ, His word is able to correct and train us in order to be more fruitful.

How have you been convicted by the words of Christ? How did you responded?

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

At first glance some may look at this work of Christ with fear. Many of us like our unfruitful vines, but the reality is they are worthless and even dangerous. A gardner knows an unfruitful vine is dangerous.

It acts as a part of the vine but it steals nutrients that other vines could use to produce fruit. It steals in order to please only itself without any external profit. So what does the gardener do? He cuts the unfruitful vine so that the other vines will receive more and even produce more. This is what Christ does with us through His word and is for our benefit.

#### (2) Growing Knowledge of God

Similar to point one, growing in the image of Christ, when we commit to embracing of the words of Christ we grow in the knowledge of the Lord. Without studying the words of Christ many questions go unanswered. What does Christ say about the poor? What does He say about finances, marriage, or how to teach children? Invested time in His instructions provide a growing knowledge of Christ and how we should respond.

For example, how does John 8:1-11 impact our knowledge of God?

# The

## Advantage

### Embracing the Word

The words of Christ are extremely unique and it is to our advantage to embrace the words of Christ in at least three different ways.

#### (1) Relationship with Christ

When we observe Christ's instructions we become connected with Him. While this seems to be obvious, it should not be missed. It is to our advantage to embrace Christ's words. Christ came in order to establish a relationship with His followers. However, just as any relationship has rules, Christ explains His expectations for His followers. Flip to John chapter 14. What are Christ's expectations?

John 14:15 states that His followers will do what?

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*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

*John 15:7*

What does Christ promise His followers in John 14:21? What does it mean that He will disclose Himself to them?

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Again in John 15:10, Christ states this theme: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My Love." Like any relationship, there are expectations but when we embrace Christ's words we receive the enormous advantage of having a genuine relationship with Christ.

#### (2) A Fruitful Life

Everyone wants to have a fruitful life. We all work hard for it. Right? Christ states the only way we can have a fruitful and meaningful life is through Him. Notice that He wants us to abide in Him so that we can be fruitfully productive.

What happens if you try to have a fruitful life without Christ? (John 15:4-6)

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Abiding in Christ happens when you connect yourself to Christ's commands. Committing yourself to His instructions allow Him to work through you in order to bear fruit. It's amazing to consider that nothing can bear fruit a part from Christ. Nothing. Whatever we do a part from Christ will disappear but what ever we do in Christ will "remain (John 15:16)."

How much more should this drive us to understand Christ's instructions? (John 15:5).

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We have to ask ourselves continually, "Am I embracing my words or Christ's?" Are we following our desires or His desires? If we're following Christ's instructions, then we're connected to the vine and promised a fruitful life.

**The Christian life is a life that consists of following the instructions of Christ so that He can do more with it than we could ever do with it ourselves.**

#### (3) Answered Prayer

Finally, Christ declared that if we're connected to Him and His instructions our prayers would be answered. Everyone desires to have their prayers answered. Who wouldn't? Yet, Christ gives us this promise if we embrace His instruction: If we abide in His word then "whatever you ask of the Father in My name (John 15:16)" "it will be done for you (John 15:7)." What's the catch? You have to abide in His will. Anything asked within His will can be and will be done.

When we embrace Christ's words what we are doing is aligning our lives with Christ's purposes. We are abiding within the vine.

What are some prayer requests that some have asked for that do not fit within Christ's purposes?

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What are some things we can pray for that fit within Christ's purposes?

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# The Gain

Embracing the Word

To borrow Christ's illustration, those who are connected to the vine gain the characteristics, benefits, and advantages of the vine they are connected to. A branch connected to a weak vine produces weak characteristics in the branch. A branch connected to the great vine, Jesus Christ, gains His abundant advantages. Christ's resources become our resources. Christ's relationships become ours relationships. The source of Christ's joy becomes the source of our joy. When people are connected to Christ, they gain His resources, His blessings, and His life. What are some of the gains?

## We Gain a Relationship with the Father

Christ declared when we embrace His words we gain a relationship with the Father. Christ said, "I am the Way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6)." When we connect ourselves to the great vine we inherit Christ's relationship with the Father.

What does Christ mean in John 15:16? How do we come to know the Father?

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When we embrace Christ's instruction what is the Father's response? (John 14:21; 23)

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When we embrace Christ's words what eventually happens to the Father? (John 15:7-8). What does this mean?

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A relationship with Christ produces a relationship with the Father. It is a unique privilege only given to those who have embraced Christ and His instructions (John 15:16; 14:21). Without Christ, the Father would not hear our prayers (John 15:16). Without Christ, access to the Father is denied. With Christ, we have access to the Father where there "are many dwelling places (John 14:2)." We gain a relationship with the Father when we connect ourselves to Christ.

## We Gain Complete Joy



Many attempt to live life disconnected from the author of life. They attempt to gain the whole world on their own but are only left disappointed.

What does Christ think of this perspective? What does He say is the relationship between a branch and the vine? (John 15:4).

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On the other hand, Christ explained that if we embrace Him, then we can have a connected life with complete overflowing joy. In Christ there is life. In Christ's spoken word blessings are found. When we embrace them, we gain the characteristics of a life-giving vine.

Christ spoke His word to us not because He was long winded or needed something to randomly say. He spoke His

word with a clear purpose. He spoke His word in order to be a blessing to us and connect us to the real source of joy in life. This is why He says, "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full (John 15:11)." Someone may say, "I can't find joy in life." Followers of Christ on the other hand not only find joy in Christ, but they also continually experience His joy.

Christ said, "I have spoken (John 15:11)." What has He spoken? (John 15:1-11).

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Christ said, "I have spoken to you (John 15:11)." His word becomes personal. How are we to respond?

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Christ said, "I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be full (John 15:11)." What are the two gains for embracing Christ's word spoken to you?

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*"What I am anxious to see in Christian believers is a beautiful paradox. I want to see in them the joy of finding God while at the same time they are blessedly pursuing Him. I want to see in them the great joy of having God yet always wanting Him."*

A.W. Tozer

# REMAIN

## Section Two - Remain

### Remaining Disciplined

Remaining Together

Remaining Productive





# REMAIN

## Remaining Disciplined

A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.



## Remaining Disciplined Abide in Christ

Christ said, “Remain in Me” but how does one remain in Christ? We simply follow His example. In John 15, Christ teaches us that if we are to remain in Him we must connect ourselves to the vine. In other words, we need to connect ourselves to Christ’s example and instructions.

We have a problem now, because many of us don’t act like Christ. We don’t know our Bibles, we don’t pray, and we don’t serve. More than 45 percent of churchgoers have admitted to just “going through the motions.” Many pursue life unconnected to the vine. They go to church, sing the songs, and maybe even tithe but overall don’t invest themselves in the disciplines of Christ in order to remain in Him.

This is a horrific problem. How does a husband think like Christ when he hasn’t connected himself to the vine? How do college students ground themselves emotionally when they don’t connect themselves to the vine? How can anyone’s joy be complete if they’re disconnected from Christ? Hearing the truths of Christ are foundational to Christian development but in order to grow and bear fruit followers of Christ must continually refresh their minds with the words of Christ.

John 15 is so important in the discipleship process. Too often Christians hear God’s truth and quickly toss it to the wayside. Christ however says, “Abide in Me.” It takes work and discipline to remain in Christ and a one hour

service is not significant enough to fulfill this command. When Christ said, “Abide in Me,” He envisioned a relationship - a walk of fellowship that is regularly pursued and disciplined.

Disciple and discipline are not only related, they are one and the same. Christ followers are disciplined followers who have committed themselves to God’s spiritual disciplines.

The goal of this section is not to inform you on Biblical truths, but to equip you with the necessary spiritual disciplines to help you walk and remain in a healthy relationship with Christ. It takes discipline and accountability. The goal is not just to complete a lesson but rather to establish a foundation for your spiritual

**Before Beginning Read:**  
**JOHN 15**

# Remaining Disciplined In the Word

Christ said, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love (John 15:10).” When someone commits to the discipline of studying God’s word, they place themselves in a position to remain in Christ. Unlike any other book, the Word of God gives each of us a divine template explaining, describing, and challenging us on how we are to live in Christ. Sadly, too many of us don’t spend any time committing ourselves to the study of God’s word.

What three things steal your time from reading your Bible?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Look over your three reasons. do any of them seem more profitable? Do they connect you to the vine? Can we be honest? The truth of the matter is we’re lazy. We watch too much TV, play to many video games, or read too be many Facebook posts. How many of those impact our relationship with Christ? As a follower of Christ, you are expected to invest time with Christ.

You must connect your mind with the mind of Christ. Time without Christ is time lived without Christ. Time outside of His word is time outside His instruction.

Explain what John 15:4 means.

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What does Jesus say a disciple will do with His words? How important is it to study His instructions? (John 8:31)

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As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to remain in Christ and when we disconnect ourselves from His word we don’t allow His word to change us. As Howard Hendricks said once, “If you want to know God directly, you need to encounter His word directly.”

Reading God’s word help’s each of us to remain in Christ. Over the next two weeks we want to you to begin developing the spiritual discipline of reading the Word of God regularly.

There are many reading plans out there and many are very good and helpful but if done without three principles in mind, Bible study can become more of a task rather than a life

**“If you want to know God directly, you need to encounter His Word directly.”**

**Howard Hendricks**

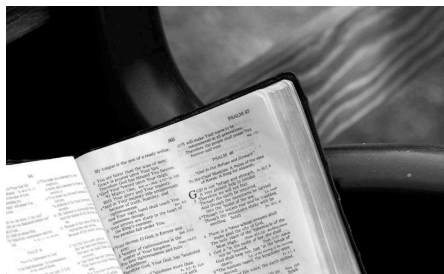
changing discipline. Keep these three principles in mind when reading the Bible:

First, when studying the Word of God you must **OBSERVE** the text. The Bible is meant to be dissected and observed. Ask important questions like: “What is being discussed?” or “How does this passage fit into the context?”

Secondly, when studying the Word of God you must **INTERPRET** the text. Ask yourself, “What message is being conveyed?”

Finally, when studying the Word of God you must **APPLY** the text to your life. Ask yourself, “What spiritual truth do I need to apply to my life?”

Christ said to His disciples that His word cleaned and restored them. He said that it pruned them like a branch (John 15:3). Why wouldn’t we, as followers, want to invest ourselves in His words? His words have the power to keep us in a relationship with God (John 15:10). His words have the power to protect us from sin. His words change us, grow us, and keeps us within a relationship with God.



**If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.**

John 15:7

## Reading Plan Life Of Christ

- ☐ Day 1: (Luke 1) The King is coming.
- ☐ Day 2: (Luke 2) The King is born.
- ☐ Day 3: (Mark 1) Christ’s ministry begins.
- ☐ Day 4: (Mark 3) A day in the life of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 5: (Matthew 5) Sermon on the Mount.
- ☐ Day 6: (Matthew 6) Sermon on the Mount.
- ☐ Day 7: (Matthew 12) Parables of Jesus.

- ☐ Day 8: (John 4) A evangelistic conversation with Jesus.
- ☐ Day 9: (John 13) Jesus sets the standard.
- ☐ Day 10: (John 14) Jesus gives final instructions.
- ☐ Day 11: (Matthew 26) Jesus is betrayed.
- ☐ Day 12: (Matthew 27) Jesus’ execution.
- ☐ Day 13: (John 20) Resurrection
- ☐ Day 14: (Matthew 28) Jesus sends the disciples out to do the ministry.

# Remaining Disciplined Through Prayer

The prayer life of Christ convicted the disciples to ask Christ, "Teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)." Christ was known for retreating from the activities of the world in order to have time with the Father. He did this because a real relationship existed with the Father and as in any relationship it needed to be continually fostered and cultivated. Christ stressed this relationship in John 15:1 when He said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser." Christ's ministry was always connected to the will of the Father. Through prayer, Christ cultivated His relationship and aligned His will with the Father.

Christ believed in prayer, do you? He spent hours in prayer. He even told the disciples, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you (John 15:7)." That's an amazing promise! But few Christians capitalize on this promise. Why? What are some reasons?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer will change you. There is no doubt about it. But if you remain disconnected from Christ, you remain disconnected from life transformation. God gave us the gift of prayer for our benefit. When we pray, we learn how to determine the Lord's will. We learn how to praise Him for His goodness. And we cultivate a relationship with God. It wasn't meant to be a burden. However, we have made prayer a burden focusing our attention on other less disciplined activities.

**"Prayer is the rope that pulls God and man together. But, it doesn't pull God down to us: It pulls us up to Him."**

**Billy Graham**

What are the qualifiers for answered prayer that Jesus gives us? (John 15:7; John 3:22)

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What are the consequence for not praying? (James 4:2)

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What is 1 John 5:14-15 saying about prayer? Do you personally agree that this is true?

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God wants us to come to him in prayer. He wants us to cry out to Him, confess sins, and praise Him. Prayer is a gift and our direct link to God. Prayer changes us, encourages us, and corrects us. Will you commit to prayer for at least five minutes every day? Your discipleship partner can help and encourage you in this spiritual discipline over the next couple weeks.



## Learning to Pray ACTS

Many of us are confused about the proper way to pray. The disciples were, so they asked the Lord to teach them: "Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)." If you are uncomfortable praying follow the ACTS pattern:

### Pray with **A: Adoration**

Suggestions:

1. Praise God for who is.
2. Praise God for what He has done.
3. Praise Him for what He will do.

### Pray with **C: Confession**

1. Confess sin.
2. Ask if you had done anything displeasing to God.
3. Ask God to help you forgive someone.

### Pray with **T: Thanksgiving**

1. Thank the Lord for your job.
2. Thank the Lord for your family.
3. Thank the Lord for everything.

### Pray with **S: Supplication**

1. Pray for major concerns.
2. Pray for relationships
3. Pray for the lost.

ACTS is a wonderful tool to help anyone learning how to pray. God desires each of His children to come before Him in prayer. He is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us (Ephesians 3:20)."

# Remaining Disciplined

## Through Bible Memorization & Meditation

Just as it was true in the days of Christ, it is also true for followers of Christ today, we are confronted daily with thousands of messages that could lead us into sin. In Christ's time, Satan tempted Christ hoping to lead him into sin. If Satan attempted to tempt Christ, we can be assured that he will attempt to tempt followers of Christ.

Satan was unsuccessful tempting Christ because Christ knew the Word of God. As followers, our ability to pinpoint, defend, and defeat sinful temptations is greatly influenced by our knowledge of God's Word. Sadly, many fall for temptation because Christ's instructions are not mentally present. In a moment of conflict there is no time to reach for a Bible which is why Bible memorization and mediation is so important.

When Christ said, "keep My commandments (John 15:10)" He had more in mind than just you reading His instruction. We don't just read them. We abide in them. We memorize them. We meditate on them. We do this so that our minds might be aligned with the mind of Christ. Christians daily are faced with numerous opportunities to sin and without any Biblical defense we will fall into sin. It's that simple.

What does Psalm 119:11 say about Bible memorization? Why is it so important?

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We memorize the words of Christ not just to be protected from sin but also to grow in deeper relationship with Christ.

*His delight is in the law of the Lord, and His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yield fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in what he does, he prospers.*

**Psalm 1:2-3**

It's one thing to read the words of Christ and another to remember the words of Christ.

If you were to spend a week reflecting on John 15:5 how might that change your view of what you do?

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Christ desired that we know His words but He also desires that we would meditate on them continually. The word "meditate" carries the idea of murmuring a particular thought. You could describe this idea to having the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" stuck in your head all day. The idea is that as followers of Christ we would murmur or sing the thoughts of God in meditation wherever we go.

Consider Psalm 1, in a world of sin and scoffers how should followers of Christ protect them from falling into sin? How do you presently meditate?

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"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

**Psalm 119:11**

## How to Memorize

We know that the words of Christ are meant to be remembered wherever we go so that we can reflect on the things of God in a world that constantly challenges us, but where does someone start?

First, you can memorize Scripture. Some try to claim that they can't memorize Scripture but are able to know every fact and stat in baseball. God has given all of us the ability to know His word but like anything it requires discipline.

Second, you have to make time. This is obvious, but in order to know the words of Christ you regularly need to reflect on them.

Here are some suggestions in order to help you memorize scripture:

- Use note cards and carry them with you wherever you go.
- Download a verse memorization app for your phone.

- Write down a memory verse on your bathroom mirror with a dry erase marker.
- Find what works for you. Explore and be creative.
- Review. Don't let your hard work be lost.

Memorization is like exercise. The more you do it the easier it will get. In fact, if you commit to memorization of God's word, you may see more memory growth in other areas.

We suggest that you start with memorizing three to four verses over the next two weeks:

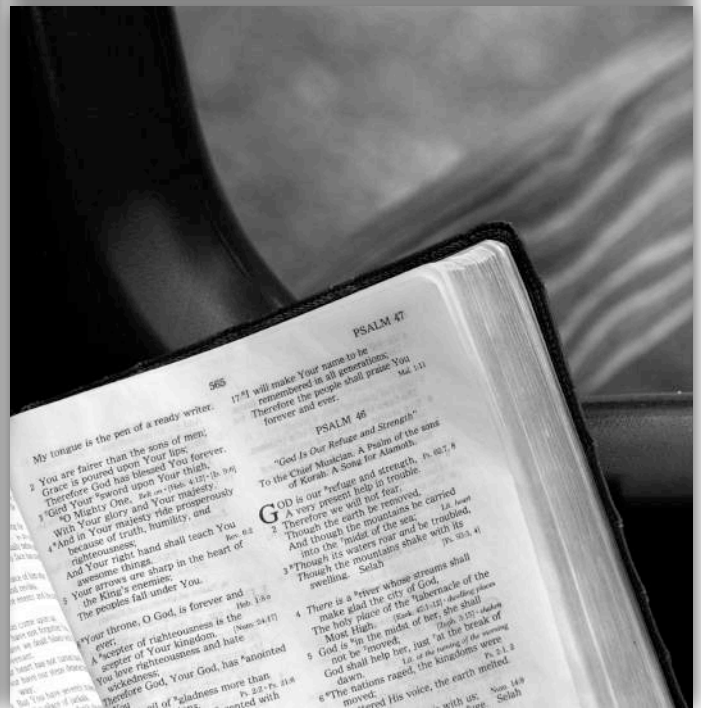
- ☐ Psalm 119:11
- ☐ John 15:5
- ☐ John 15:10
- ☐ Romans 5:8

# Acts

## PRAYER

*"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."*

*Psalm 119:11*



## Remaining Disciplined Abide in Christ

A disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ, but this cannot happen without discipline. Remaining disciplined allows us to be changed into the likeness of Christ. When we discipline ourselves in the Christlike disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and meditation we are slowly being changed whether we know it or not. The way you think will change. The way you talk will change. The way you walk will change. Every aspect of your life will be changed and people will notice. Why? Because you have decided to embrace the vine and remain within His instruction. The product is a fruitful change.

Farmers know when they see a branch disconnect from a plant that the branch is unable to produce anything. Its value has been lost. Even though at one time it bore much fruit, being disconnect from the vine, the plant's ability to do that which it once was able to do has been lost. The farmer is

unconcerned about its past performance and takes the branch and burns it because it has no value.

As extreme as this is, Christ told us that we could do nothing separated from him. We need to regularly engage in the disciplines of remaining in Christ. Satan's desire is to disconnect us from the vine. Satan's desire is to see you valueless. He desires to see you lifeless and unfruitful.

However, when a farmer sees branches bearing fruit he is greatly pleased because the branches have value. He will protect these branches from harm and even give extra attention to them because they are able to produce fruit. Their fruit is alluring and able to provide life to others. So what does the farmer do? He finds pleasure and enjoys the produce. In the same way when we bear fruit, the Father up above is glorified (John 15:8). Embrace Christ, remain in Him disciplining yourself so that you might please the Father bearing fruit.

# REMAIN

## Section Two - Remain

Remaining Disciplined

**Remaining Together**

Remaining Productive





# REMAIN

Remaining Together

## *Commanded TO LOVE*

A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.

### Remaining Together Where do we fit in?

There was a young boy who never fit into any crowd. He thought it was because he was forced to wear ridiculous oversized glasses throughout elementary and middle school. No matter what he did, he could never “fit in” with his fellow classmates. They called him names such as “four eyes” or “window face” and no matter what he did he felt outside the group.

So as he grew older and reached high school his parents purchased contacts for him. With great excitement he put his first set of contacts in his eyes and thought to himself, “Now I’ll fit in. Now I’ll have friends and maybe people will notice me.” To his surprise, even though he didn’t wear glasses, his classmates never truly let him “fit in.” Why?

It wasn’t his glasses, it was his relationship with Jesus Christ. Later, this young boy learned that his classmates were observing the way he acted and didn’t really understand him. He didn’t swear. He acted respectful to his teachers. He didn’t cheat. He told the truth even when it might impact a friend. His Christlike character stood in direct opposition to the character of his classmates. It wasn’t his physical glasses that his classmates rejected, it was his Christlike spiritual glasses.

However, the story didn’t end there because as he journeyed through high school he met others who wore Christ’s spiritual glasses. Soon they began gathering together, praying for each other, and encouraging one another.

These Christians played a significant role in this young man’s spiritual life. Now he really fit in. They knew, just like him, what it was like to be different. They knew why Christ expected His followers to speak respectfully. They knew that Christ expected His followers to be kind to others. They knew what it was like to wear spiritual glasses in a world that saw everything differently.

As Christians, we have to come to grips with our relationship with Christ, with other Christians, and a world that rejects our Savior. When is it ok to “fit in” as a Christian? How do we “fit in?”

In John 15, Christ explains how we fit in and our proper response to three different types of relationships.

Before Beginning Read:

JOHN 15

# Relationship with Christ Just as He did.

The first relationship Christ stressed in John 15 is a relationship with Him. As followers of Jesus Christ everything flows out of our relationship with Him. Only when we put our relationship with Christ first are we able to engage in Christlike relationships with others as God intended. In other words Christ taught us that life is about “fitting in” with Him.

Christ said, “I am the true vine (John 15:1).” This phrasing implies that there are other sources people might have tried to find in life. What are the other vines out there? What value does Christ give them (John 15:16)?

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Everything in a disciple’s life should flow out of a relationship with Jesus Christ because he is connected in a relationship with the “true” vine.

Christ knows that if his disciples invest in a relationship with Him, they will be able to have godly relationships with others. However, in order to establish godly relationships it must flow out of a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is why Christ stresses the principle of “Abide.”

***This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.***

John 15:12

Notice what Christ says in John 15:12. Who is our example to love others? Why is this important to notice?

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A person who communicates with God regularly, through prayer, Bible study, and mediation, can express the same love of Jesus Christ. When we spend time with Christ we end up loving like Christ. When we build our relationship with Christ we become gracious like Christ. When we invest time with Christ we end up being patient like Christ. Once again, everything flows out of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Look at these passages below. What characteristics of Christ should be modeled when we have a relationship with Him?

- Because Christ \_\_\_\_\_ we should \_\_\_\_\_. (Mk 10:45)
- Because Christ \_\_\_\_\_ we should \_\_\_\_\_. (Jn 13:34)
- Because Christ had \_\_\_\_\_ we should be \_\_\_\_\_ towards others (Lk 7:13).
- Because Christ was \_\_\_\_\_ we should be \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 6:36).

Just as Christ did, so do we. Everything. Even our relationships should flow out of a relationship with Christ.

***“Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus.”***  
Philippians 2:5



# Relationships with Followers

## Love One Another

Christ simply and clearly commanded us to love one another (John 15:12-17). The command of Christ to love one another refers specifically to followers of Christ. He was passionate that we love each other. However, this has been the most challenging perspective for Christians today. We tend to be too busy for one another. However, Christ taught that it is extremely important to have a relationship with Him and with His followers.

Sadly too many Christians grow up in the church disconnected from one another. If you can't think of three or four followers of Christ who you are regularly engaging with, you are not able to fulfill one of Christ's greatest commands, "Love one another (John 15:2)."

The concept of "one another" is distinctly Christian. This theme of Christ is repeated over and over throughout the New Testament.

Examine just a few of these expressions:

- \_\_\_\_\_ one another (Romans 14:1).
- \_\_\_\_\_ one another (Hebrew 3:13).
- \_\_\_\_\_ for one another (James 5:16).
- \_\_\_\_\_ one another (Colossians 3:13).
- \_\_\_\_\_ one another (John 15:12).

The list goes on and on, and the point is that Christ expects His followers, past and present, to live in a loving relationship with one another. In other words, to act Christianly, we must live with Christians. It's only through living with one another that Christians fulfill one of Christ's greatest commandments.

***This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.***

John 15:12

In your own words why is it so important to live in community with other Christians? Do you?

Many churches today have stressed the need for believers to live in community together establishing the system of small groups. If a Christian says they don't have time for such activities of Christian fellowship what is their attitude toward Christ, His commands, and His followers?

How did the early church model this command of Christ? (Acts 2:41-47)

Christ expects His followers to love one another. He expects them to live with one another. Christ established the community of believers to be a blessing to each other and to be a testimony of Christ's life to the world so they see the love of God expressed through His community.

***"Greater love has no one that this, that one lay down his life for his friends."***

John 15:13

**LOVE**

**ONE ANOTHER**



# Relationships with the World

## Love To Hate

The third relationship Christ had was a unique relationship with the world. Christ spent His entire ministry revealing to His creation that He was the Messiah and the world rejected Him “without a cause (John 15:25). John explains it this way, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him (John 1:11).”

In John 15:18-25, Christ states that the world rejected Him on two accounts. They rejected what He said and what He did.

### 1) They rejected what He said (John 15:22):

- ~ Christ said He is the \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 6:35) and the Jews \_\_\_\_\_ about Him (Jn. 6:41).
- ~ Christ said He is the \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 8:12) and the Pharisees said your testimony is \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 6:13).
- ~ Christ said He is the \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 10:11) and the crowd called Him \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 10:20).
- ~ Christ said He is the \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 11:25) and the Pharisees planned together in order to \_\_\_\_\_ Him (Jn. 11:53).

### 2) They rejected what He did (John 15:24):

- ~ Jesus healed the paralytic at Bethesda and the Jews responded \_\_\_\_\_ Him (John 5:16).
- ~ Jesus healed a blind man and the Pharisees said that Jesus was not from \_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 9:16).
- ~ Jesus even raised up a dead man, Lazarus, and the Pharisees gathered together in order to plan how they might \_\_\_\_\_ Him (Jn. 11:53).

Even though Christ said and did many wonderful things, there were those who loved the world so much that they rejected everything that Christ had to offer.

Christ warned His disciples that the world was going to hate them because they represent Him. The words of Christ are still true for us today. Pastors, teachers, and coworkers are continually chastised for their faith in America and even more abroad.

### For example:

- ~ The world \_\_\_\_\_ it when we say that Christ is only way to the Father (John 14:6).
- ~ The world \_\_\_\_\_ it when we say that Christ is the author of life (John 15:5).
- ~ The world \_\_\_\_\_ it when we say that their deeds are evil (John 7:7).

And even though each of these phrases are true and good the world will continue to respond hating us and rejecting the message of Christ.

Has there ever been a time you were persecuted or been made fun of because of your relationship with Christ? Explain.

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Jesus said, “A slave is not greater than his master (John 15:20)” and many of us might think we can do the ministry better than Christ. We can’t. We can’t walk on water, love like Him, feed the ten thousand, or communicate as well as He did and yet they still rejected Him! We on the other hand are his servants and if He faced rejection for all the great things He did, we can expect rejection for less great things we do.

The amazing part about this section is it proceeds John 15:12-17. In that section, we remember Christ encouraged the believers to love one another. He stresses the need over and over so they might not forget it. He did this knowing when He left to go to the Father He would be leaving them in a world that would hate them. If they didn’t love each other as followers of Christ, then no one would. This is why the church is so important. It is the means by which Christ’s community expresses the love of Christ to each other while living in world which continually rejects them without a cause (John 15:25).

*“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.”*  
John 15:18

*“Love each other*

***BECAUSE***

*they won’t .”*



## Remaining Together Where do we fit in?

Nobody likes ridiculous glasses. They stand out. Everyone notices them. In fact, those who wear these types of glasses need them in order to perceive the world correctly. In some sense glasses are used in order to correct a flaw. Without glasses the world is foggy to them and they are unable to correctly understand the world around them.

In a similar way this is how the world perceives Christians when they follow Christ. As followers we believe we need “glasses.” So this is why we connect ourselves to the vine, Jesus Christ. He is able to equip us with the necessary perspectives in order to live life as God intended. When we are in Christ the world is perceived differently. We love differently. We serve differently. We walk differently.

The truth of the matter is that the world hates that we are different. In their eyes, when we wear these ridiculous glasses, we are continually reminding them that there is another way to perceive the world. Actually it’s the only way. The world however hates this. They love the way they love. They love the way they spend their money. They love the way they talk. They love looking at whatever they want no matter how foggy the world appears to them.

It is so important as Christians to engage the world proclaiming the gospel of Christ. However, we must always remember that we do not fit in it. We are different. If we don’t fit in the world, then where then do we fit in? We “fit in” the body of Christ. We are all individual branches within the vine working within a relationship with Jesus Christ AND with each other. Christ knew we needed help in this world so He commanded His followers to live in a relationship with one another. He commanded us to love one another as He loved. He commanded us to serve one another as He served. He commanded us to forgive as He forgave.

Followers of Christ have three types of relationships. (1) We have a relationship with Christ that glorifies the Father (John 15:15), (2) We have a relationship with other followers of Christ (John 15:12-17). And (3) we have a relationship with a world that does not understand us.

In closing, how would you rate your relationship in each? (1 being weak and 10 being strong)

With Christ:	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10
With Believers:	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10
With the World:	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

# REMAIN

## Section Two - Remain

Remaining Disciplined

Remaining Together

**Remaining Productive**





# REMAIN

Remaining Productive

A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.

PROVE TO BE MY **X** Disciples.

## Remaining Productive Bear Fruit

A varsity soccer coach said to a freshman high school student, “You will never start for me.” What a challenging statement! Some freshmen would have given up right then, but this young boy didn’t. He went out to prove to his coach that he was worthy to play for him.

We don’t know what led the coach to say what he said. Maybe he said it in order to weed out the weak players from the skillful players. Maybe it was a challenge. Or maybe the coach thought it would motivate the young soccer player to work harder and prove himself. The latter ended up becoming the path for this freshman. He worked hard and proved himself. He quickly moved from the freshmen team to the

junior varsity team in the first year. In his second year, he was playing for the varsity team. By his senior year he was starting the varsity team as team captain!

This coach challenged the young soccer players in order to prove themselves worthy to play for him. In doing so, he weeded out the wanna-be soccer players and collected the players committed to the game.

We see a similar challenge from Christ in John 15. Christ said, “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples (John 15:8).” Even in the way Christ says this, you can sense a challenge. Show me you are for real. Where’s your fruit? Are you serious about being my

disciples? It’s like He’s asking us to show Him what we got. Can you bear fruit? Prove yourself and be productive.

Every person in Christ is expected to be productive, become His imitators, and bear fruit. What does this mean? The Christian life is not meant to be on auto pilot. God has challenged us.

As we said earlier, “God was never content with just saving people.” He wants more. He expects urgency. He wants to cultivate us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The cultivation process has a goal in mind so that each one of us might be fruitful and productive.

Let’s look now at Christ’s challenge.

Before Beginning Read:

JOHN 15

# Remaining Productive The Father Prunes

We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and not by works. However, that doesn't mean we don't do anything. That would be foolish. Anyone who has remained in Christ for any significant amount of time will bear fruit. A fruit-bearing follower is a demonstration of a connection to Christ. The fruit acts as proof. Sadly, Christ saw that some believers would bear little fruit, if any (John 15:2). In the Father's eyes this is unacceptable.

What is the responsibility of the Father according to Jesus (John 15:1)? What does the Father do to the branches (John 15:2)?

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Only two types of branches exist. What are they?

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What does an unfruitful Christian look like? How does the Father correct this behavior? Can you remember a time when the Father pruned you?

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*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.*

**John 15:2**

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The Father desires fruit. He is the vinedresser and is committed to seeing that each part of your life is bearing fruit. He is committed to saving you and to continually "pruning" you into a more productive individual. This is why Jesus said, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit (John 15:8)."

How might verse six encourage someone to bear fruit? How might this verse scare someone? What does 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 suggest the fire is for?

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Some have assumed wrongly that verse six relates to a loss of salvation. This is not the argument of Christ in this section. He is referring to followers. The point is God the Father is serious about followers of Christ bearing fruit. Just like any other farmer the Father desires fruitful branches and anything short of a fruitful crop is unacceptable.

## John 15:6

*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*



# Remaining Productive Tangible Fruit

As a result of the Father's involvement each, branch will produce tangible fruit. The fruit that a Christian bears is both seen and experienced. Jesus himself, believed there are real expressions of faith that others in the world could tangibly see. Jesus explained that if we remain in Him people would know we were followers of Christ because of our fruit (Matthew 7:15). Jesus said, "I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain (John 15:16)."

The great aspect about the fruit of Christ is not only is it tangible it is also a fruit that will always remain. It doesn't appear then disappear. It's a fruit that impacts and endures. In other words, when you bear fruit in Christ the fruit is active and everlasting.

What are some things we participate in that have no everlasting impact?

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## Tangible Fruit

What are the tangible fruits? As you go through the fruits you, will notice that each of these fruits can be seen by the individual bearing the fruit and also by others.

Christ taught that **prayer** is a tangible fruit (John 15:7). It is tangible because the Father answers our prayers. How might prayer be revealed as fruit to someone who is unsaved?

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Christ taught that **obedience** is a tangible fruit. It is tangible because Christ expresses His love towards us when we follow His instructions (John 15:10). How might a husband reveal Christlike obedience as a fruit to his wife (Ephesians 5:25)?

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Christ taught that **joy** is a tangible fruit. It is tangible because even though an individual may be going through a difficult situation there still remains unquenching joy. How has a suffering Christian revealed the fruit of joy to you?

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Christ taught that **love** is a tangible fruit. It is tangible because it will consider others more important than himself (John 15:13). How do Christians reveal the tangible fruit of love (Philippians 2:2-3)?

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### John 15:16

*You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain.*



# Remaining Productive Tangible Fruit

## Galatians 5:22-23

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Christ taught that **new believers** are a tangible fruit. New believers are a tangible fruit because it is through believers that Christ reaches out to the lost. Christ chose us saying that He “appointed you that you would go and bear fruit (John 15:16)” and “testify (John 15:27).”

If the statement above is true then you are a tangible expression of the fruit in someone else’s life. You are a part of the vine as result of someone remaining productive in Christ. What is your responsibility then?

What are the fruits of those who are disconnected from Christ? (Galatians 5:19-21)

What are the fruits of those connected to Christ? Are these tangible fruits that can be seen by others? (Galatians 5:22-23)

## Other Examples of Tangible Fruit

Paul contrasted the fruit of those who are disconnected from Christ with the fruit of those who are connected to Christ in Galatians 5:19-26.



## PROVE YOURSELF

We’re not alone in the process of proving ourselves worthy to be Christ’s disciples. God is on your side. He wants you to be fruitful. Christ acts as the fuel for the fruitful life. You also have the Father who is strategically observing your situation, your activities, and your heart pruning and correcting you where there is opportunity to encourage a more fruitful life (John 15:2).

God the Father has a responsibility. The Father prunes. Christ has a responsibility. Christ supplies life. And finally, we have a responsibility. We prove ourselves as worthy disciples. God has given us all the resources we need as we remain in Christ and when we do we produce tangible fruit.

So many church members have missed the last step. Christians who engage with Christ, who remain within His instructions are compelled to live differently. They pray with connection. They obey without question. They’re filled with joy like no other. Their love is genuine. They’re compelled to tell others. In short, their different.

God is gracious providing the necessary instructions to live as Christ. He works on us, and gives us the Holy Spirit. God the Father does His part and expects us to do our part. Will you prove yourself worthy?

The young freshman we spoke about earlier knew the game of soccer. He had all the gifts necessary to play the game but it didn’t give him the right, in his coaches eyes, to play the game. The coach wanted him to prove himself worthy to play for him. In the same way our Father knows we have the gifts; because He was the one who gave us the gifts in the first place. However, it’s not enough to know about the fruits or the game. He’s asked us to move from knowing how to grow fruit to proving ourselves as worthy productive disciples.



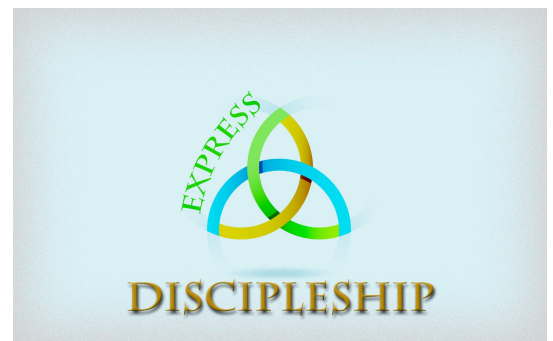
# EXPRESS

## Section Three - Express

### Expressing Christ

Expressing Life

Expressing Reproduction





A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.



## Expressing Christ Relational Evangelism

Christ desired His followers to embrace Him, remain in Him and finally express Him to others in at least three ways. Here we will address the first, relational evangelism.

The discipleship process is not exhaustive without learning how to express your faith to the lost.

We asked in the embrace section, “How do you know you are saved?” We worked through the gospel and examined what it meant to be saved. We know salvation occurs when a believer embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, too often, believers are unable to express the gospel to the lost on their own.

Like the first section, we must ask, “Can you explain the gospel to someone else?” Do you know

the verses? Do you have a template established so when the opportunity comes about you will know how to do it?

Sharing your faith shouldn’t be difficult. God has already put people in your life who need to hear the gospel. You don’t have to go looking. We’re not going to ask you to knock on random doors, but what we’re asking is that you would be prepared to express your faith to those you already know. Many believe the gospel presentation is up to the pastor. This view is shameful. Christ expects all of us to express His redemptive work.

The majority of all conversions occur in the context of a personal relationship. It takes a relationship to ask a friend to church. It takes a

relationship to challenge a friend to respond to the gospel. It takes a relationship for friends to see what it looks like to be a Christian.

Our hope is that you will learn and know how to express the gospel. Jesus desires that we testify about Him (John 15:27) and so with that in mind you will learn how to do it.

This lesson requires scripture memorization and practice. The more you do it the better you’ll get at it. Remember, Christ said that He sent us a Helper, the Holy Spirit, who helps us to testify about Christ (John 15:26). Even though you might be nervous about a gospel presentation, the Holy Spirit is going to be the one who help drives the gospel home.



# Expressing Christ Separated From God

When expressing the Gospel of Christ the need for salvation needs to be clearly explained. We suggest you learn the gospel in three steps. Remember, the goal of this lesson is to equip and challenge you to articulate the gospel to someone else. Later you may want to change this approach to something that works for your style.

## In step one we want to communicate:

### **Sin separates from God.**

The easiest way to communicate this truth is to agree with the individual that everyone at one time has done something wrong like lied, cheated, lusted, or even hated someone. At this point you explain that because we have sinned against God. Sin eternally separates us from God. Then say:

#### *The Bible says ...*

*“For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).”*

*“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way (Isaiah 53:6).”*

### **The consequences of sin is death.**

Here, you want to explain that as a result of being a sinner, God must judge our sins because He is holy and righteous being. You should explain that the consequences of sin is eternal separation from God. Then say:

#### *The Bible says ...*

*“For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).”*

*“And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27).”*

Verses to memorize:

🔊 Romans 3:23

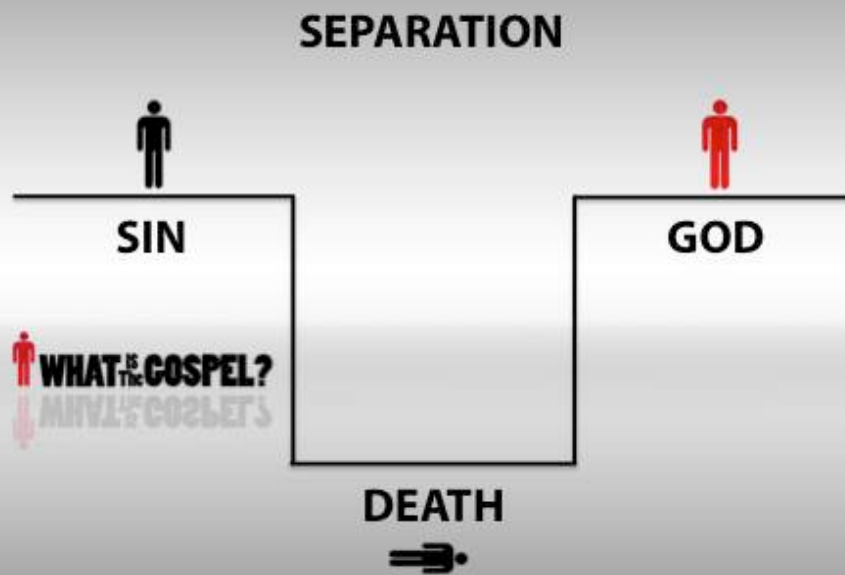
🔊 Romans 6:23

Optional Verses to memorize:

🔊 Isaiah 53:6

🔊 Hebrews 9:27

**SIN  
SEPARATES  
US FROM  
GOD.**



# Expressing Christ No Greater Love

After the need for salvation has been established, you want to explain how Christ saves us.

## In step two we want to communicate:

### **Christ paid our debt.**

Jesus Christ made it possible for us to have a relationship with God by taking our sin and paying the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross.

The legitimacy of His payment was revealed to us when He rose from the dead three days later. Then say:

#### **The Bible says ...**

*"But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)."*

*"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit (1 Peter 3:18)."*

### **We are saved by grace through faith.**

Jesus took our punishment and when we, by faith, believe that Christ died in our place and resurrected from the dead our relationship with God is restored. By faith, when we believe Jesus took our punishment by dying in our place and being resurrected from the dead our relationship with God is restored.

It is important here to note that an individual is saved by faith and not by anything they might be able to do. Salvation rests only on the sacrifice of Christ by faith. Then say:

#### **The Bible says ...**

*"For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9)."*

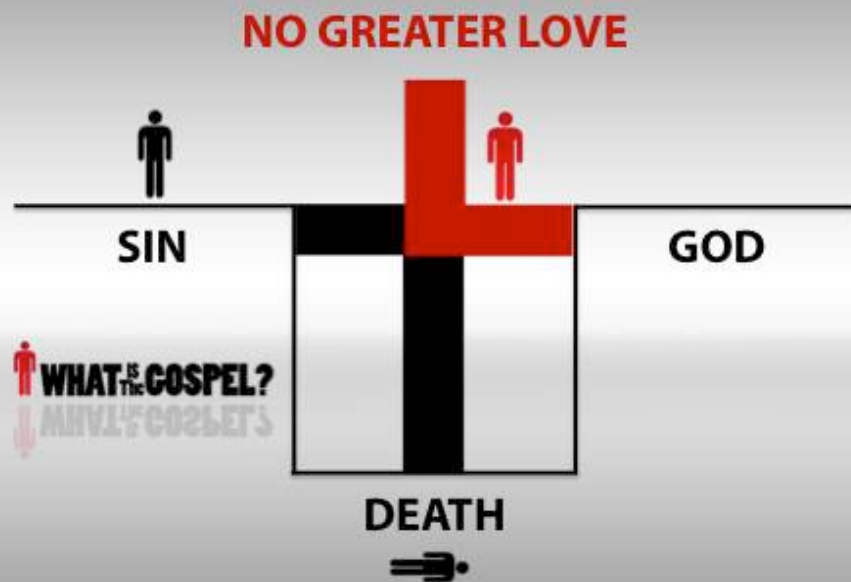
*"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy (Titus 3:5)."*

Verses to memorize:

🕒 Romans 5:8

🕒 Ephesians 2:8-9

**Saved  
By Faith**



# Expressing Christ

## Make a Decision

Once steps one and two have been clearly communicated, you want to move the individual to a decision. Will they reject Christ or will they accept His sacrifice?

### In step three we want to push to a decision:

#### **Will you trust in Christ now?**

If an individual says, "Not right now," ask if you can continue to pray for them.

If an individual say, "I would." then it is fitting time to help lead them in prayer as they make this expression of faith to God.

*Dear Father,  
I understand that I am a sinner. I understand there is nothing that I can do to restore my relationship with you outside your Son Jesus Christ. I believe you sent you Son to come and die on the cross for me and that He rose again three days later so that I could be saved. Thank you for your Son Jesus Christ and help me to live in a way that please you.*

*In Jesus name  
Amen.*

### **From Death to Life**

If you are given the opportunity to lead someone to the Lord, it is helpful to show them what Christ thinks of them now that they are saved:

Christ said ...

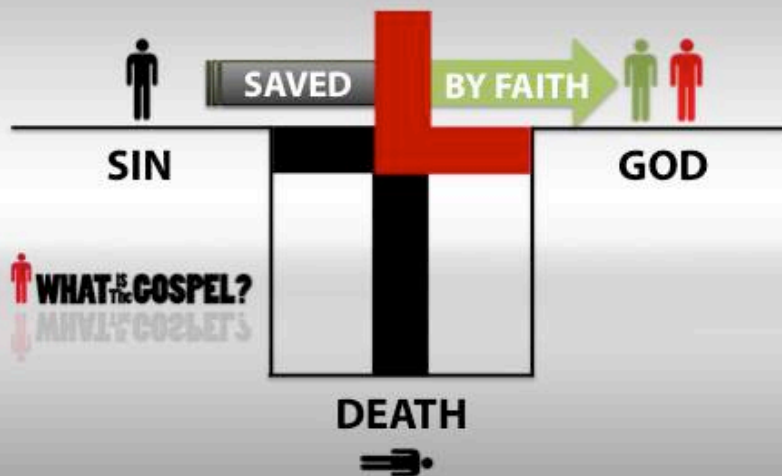
*"Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24)."*

Verses to memorize:

📖 John 5:24

If you get to experience someone is coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ, take time afterwards to thank the Lord for using you. What a privilege!

### **Make A Decision**

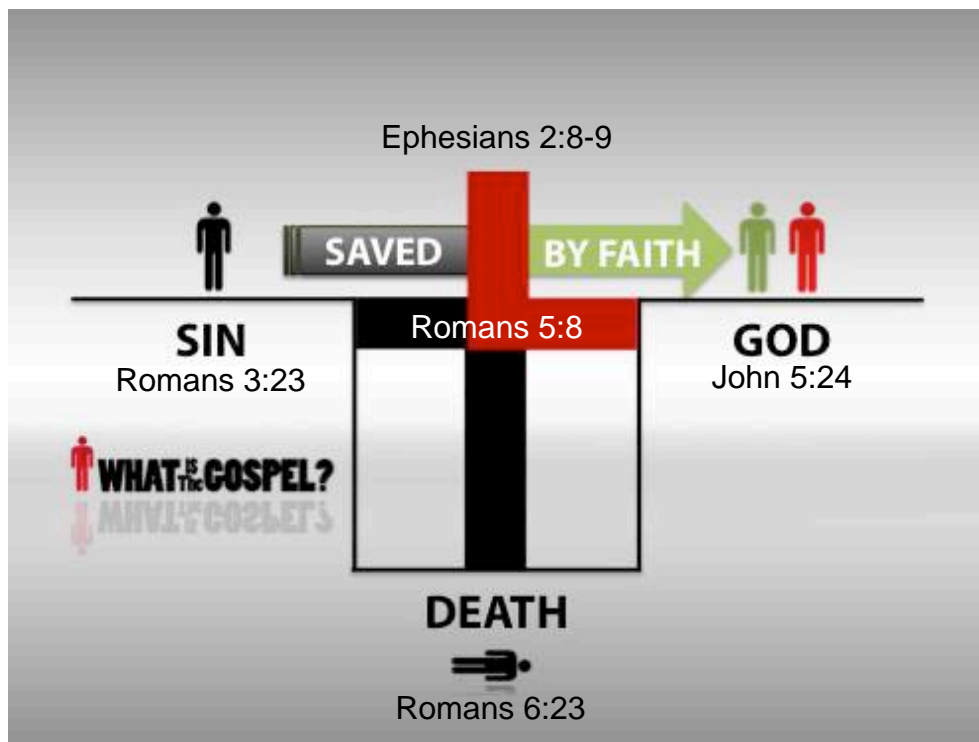


## Expressing Christ

Followers of Christ are branches that bear fruit. They are able to take that which has been given to them and express it by bearing fruit. It is wrong and un-Christlike to experience the salvation of Christ and keep what has been given and keep it to yourself. Christ saved you and wants to continue saving people through you!

All you have to do is memorize five verses! And to be honest, you probably know some of them already. For others, it will take practice and discipline but the rewards of learning to articulate the gospel are profound. You will become much more confident about talking about your relationship with Christ.

We hinted at this in the beginning, but the point of knowing the gospel is being prepared to explain the gospel to anyone the Lord might bring our way. We only proclaim the gospel. We don't make people believers. In John 15, Jesus said it was the Helper who would help testify. Listen to His words, "I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify



about Me, and you will testify also (John 15:26-28).” When we communicate the gospel to others we are being inspired by the Holy Spirit. In other words, we are not testifying alone. We are empowered by God the Holy Spirit! We are embracing, remaining, and expressing Christ.

### Learn It!

Over the next two weeks practice the gospel presentation. Memorize the key verses and set a time aside in two weeks so that you can sit down with someone and practice it with them. Have them evaluate your presentation.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

John 3:16

## Evaluation

### SIN

Did they emphasize sin?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Did they use a verse?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

### Paid the Debt

Did they explain that Christ died in our place?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Did they use a verse?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

### FAITH

Did they explain how someone comes into a relationship with Christ?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Did they use a verse?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

How well did they do from a scale from 1 to 10.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

Is it necessary that they practice it again later?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

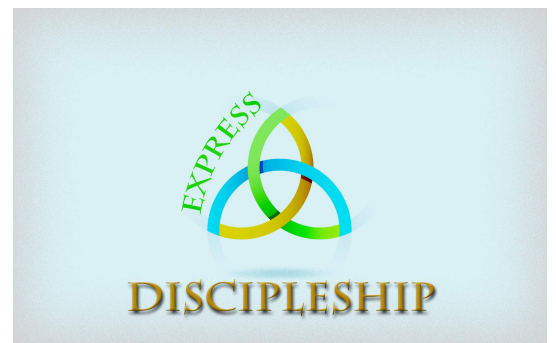
# EXPRESS

## Section Three - Express

Expressing Christ

**Expressing Your Faith**

Expressing Reproduction



# EXPRESS

Expressing Your Faith

A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.



## Express Your Faith GO and BEAR FRUIT

Christ desired His followers to embrace Him, remain in Him and finally, express Him to others. In this lesson, we will discuss how to express your faith. Don't be alarmed if the following information seems like it's been covered before.

Many seminary students spend hours upon hours learning the original languages of the Bible. It is a very disciplined process. Teachers who teach these classes have noticed and observed that there are two types of students when it comes to memorizing the original languages.

The first type of student is a individual who learns the languages with no intent of remembering the language after the class has been passed. They

will spend countless hours learning the language to only forget it later. For them, the goal is to complete the class so they can obtain the seminary degree and nothing more than that.

However, the second type of student is a teachers delight. This student studies in order to keep it. They study the languages not just to pass the class, but knowing that it's going to impact the way they preach, teach, and convey the revelation of Jesus Christ to others.

I hope you're the second type. I hope you didn't go through this discipleship just to complete the curriculum. What a waste of time for you and your discipleship partner if you're the first type. What a waste.

The goal is to produce fruit which is the expression of what you're putting your time into. Each of us needs accountability to continue in the journey of discipleship. Systems need to be put in place to keep you on the path of spiritual growth.

Jesus said, "I chose you, and appointed you that you would GO and BEAR FRUIT (John 15:16)." Our biggest fear is that after you complete this discipleship process, everything you establish will be lost. Systems need to be put in place to continually motivate you to express your faith. Expressing your faith requires continual accountability of what you have already learned.

Here are the three areas every follower needs to be actively

Before Beginning Read:

JOHN 15



# Express Your Faith In Your Personal Life

So many times people start to practice the spiritual disciplines (Bible study, pray, meditation) only to give up on the practice shortly after they have started. You have learned these disciplines. You know how to do them. Please don't be like the first type of seminary student and stop using them. This is not the path of the believer who abides in Christ. Christ expects active expressions of your faith even in your spiritual disciplines.

What does Christ expect from followers when He said, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine (John 8:31)?"

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Systems need to be put in place so you will continue to be active in expressing your faith in your personal life. Without accountability we most likely will fail. Here are three ways to help you succeed:

**\*Get an accountability partner.**

This individual will be the person who asks you whether or not you have been doing your quiet time? It needs to be someone whose not afraid to ask. Who is that person? Do they know it?

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**\*Set goals.**

Some people set a goal of reading the Bible all the way through each year. What is your goal this month? Is it to read Galatians or John? Set goals that are reasonable. If

you're unaware of any Bible reading plans you can find one easily at [YouVersion.com](http://YouVersion.com) under reading plans.

**\*Record prayer requests.**

One of the best ways to get excited about prayer is seeing how God has answered prayers in the past. This could be done in a small journal.

What are two things you could pray for this week?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Who are two people you could pray for this week?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Be honest**

You're going to get discouraged. Be honest with yourself, but when you start slipping up and ignoring your personal time with Christ, what are you going to do?

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Before we can express Christ with others, we, ourselves need to be connected to Christ. This requires time with Him. Get an accountability partner. Have them check on you. It's that important! Each of us are challenged with schedules and life happens. But Christ has required us to make Him the center of our life. Expressing your faith in your personal life acts as the catalyst to expressing Christ in every other part of your life.

**John 15:6**

*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branchy and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*



# Express Your Faith In the Church

As we have said many times before, Christ desires you to be fruitful. Fruit is the goal. However, in order to bear fruit we must “Go.” We must be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ.

When I look at John 15:16 and see the words GO and BEAR fruit, I think of the two seminary students discussed on the previous page. Many people learn about Christ but how many actually go? In your own words, what does a Christian look like when they go?

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## Serve

The term “go” is a favorite of Christ’s, and it’s connected to the concept of bearing fruit. We don’t just go, to go. We go with a distinct purpose to bear fruit. To be Christian doesn’t mean that you’re automatically bearing fruit. To be a “going” Christian implies an expression of your faith by which fruit is produced.

As followers of Christ, we need to express our faith through service. Sadly, over the last 50 years or so the church has seen 20% of its members doing 100% of the work within the ministry. That means 80% of the congregation is not actively expressing their faith.

How do you serve your church? Are you connected in any ministry? Are you active?

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## John 15:16

*I chose you, and appoint you that you would GO and Bear Fruit.*

If for some reason you have not had the opportunity to get involved in a ministry in your church take the time NOW to get involved with a ministry, it is so important. Why might someone not get involved in their church ministry?

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## Community

The phrase “go and bear fruit” in John 15 comes out of the context of Christ’s command to love one another. In other words, Christ told the disciples to live with one another. To love one another. To die for one another. Sadly, many Christians don’t even know the names of those who attend their church.

Small Group ministries can help you get connect to others in your church on a personal level. It is through relationships with other Christians that we learn how to express our faith to each other and encourage one another. Are you in a Small Group? Are you in a Christian community? If you’re not, take the time NOW to get connected. Why might someone not get involved in a small group? Why is this not a reasonable Christian response?

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## John 8:31

*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.*

BE THE  
**HANDS & FEET**  
OF JESUS

# Express Your Faith In the World

Could you imagine what life would be like without the airplane? What if the Wright brothers would have kept the secret of flight to themselves? Or what if Bill Gates kept the secrets of computer coding to himself? Could you imagine life without computers? Truthfully, our world couldn't imagine life without these taken-for-granted necessities. Sadly, many Christians have taken-for-granted Christ keeping Him a secret. We know Christ is more important than airplanes, right? We know Christ is more important than computers, right? Christ said, "GO and BEAR FRUIT (John 15:16)." We are called to express our faith to a world that desperately needs Him.

We spent in two previous lessons discussing the gospel. You should know it forwards and backwards. You have affirmed it for yourself and learned to articulate it. Now is the time to start preparing to express your faith.

Christ's command to "go" is always, in some shape or form, connected to evangelism.

In Matthew 28:18-20 what does Christ expect us to "go" doing?

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## Personal Evangelism Impact Card

Date you added them to your Impact list: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person(s) you are praying for: \_\_\_\_\_

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Why are you praying for them?

To Trust Christ ☐ To Become Church ☐ Other ☐

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

\_\_\_\_\_

In Mark 16:15 what does Christ expect us to "go" do?

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In other words, you are to live a life actively expressing your faith to a world that has not accepted Him. You know this, but now is the time to start expressing your faith. Now is the time to get on your knees

praying that people would respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You have been equipped for the ministry of evangelism. You know the gospel and are prepared to explain it to someone else.

Located above is a Personal Evangelism Impact Card. Who is on your heart? Who has God placed specifically in your life to explain the gospel to?

Take a moment to fill out the card above. The time is now to pray for someone specifically. As you begin to pray for opportunities, don't be surprised when they come, and don't be hesitant when the opportunity arrives. Don't keep Christ a secret. GO and BEAR FRUIT.



Expressing your faith requires activity. Much of what we have discussed has been a review. It was meant to be. It's so easy to give up on prayer, which is why you need an

accountability partner. It's so easy to stop your personal Bible study. It's so easy to forget to evangelize to the lost, which is why we need to be regularly praying for them. We need to express our faith through service in the church, which is why we need the Christian community to keep us accountable to that work.

The worst thing you could do is neglect everything you have learned in this discipleship process. Don't be like the seminary

student who spent hours and hours to learn something new just to forget it. Christ expects us to express what we've learned. Christ expects expressions of faith! He expects fruit!

Embracing Christ is important, and so is remaining in Christ, but it's incomplete without expression. Fruit is to be expected and bearing fruit is the ongoing expression of our faith. To say you know Christ, but be inactive in your church's ministry is to be inconsistent with Christ's commands. To say you know Christ, but do not know your brothers and sisters in Christ is to be inconsistent with Christ's teachings. To say you know Christ, but have no prayer life or no evangelistic expressions is to be inconsistent with Christ's instructions. In other words you're connected to the vine, then there must be fruitful expressions. The fruit must be seen. Demonstrate your connection to the vine and express Him actively. GO and BEAR FRUIT.

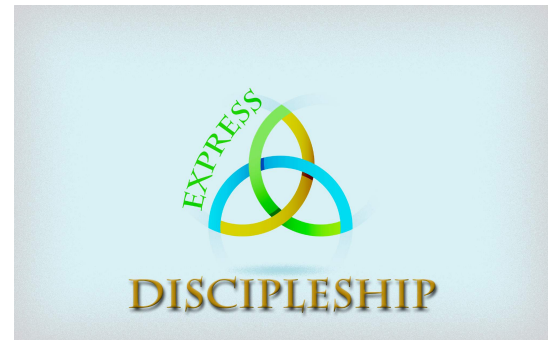
# EXPRESS

## Section Three - Express

Expressing Christ

Expressing Your Faith

**Expressing Reproduction**



A Disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.

## THE NEXT STEP

### Expressing Reproduction Relational Evangelism

Before Beginning Read:

JOHN 15

The discipleship process is a journey and it's never finished. It begins with embracing Christ. Seeing who He is, what He said and what He did. It then requires more as you learn to remain in Christ. You learn how to be connected to the vine. You learn your place in this world and in the church. You learn the Father's expectation to prove yourself as a disciple while you remain in Christ's instructions. And finally it continues as you regularly express your faith to others. You learn the gospel so that others may respond to it. You actively express your faith in service and in the Christian community. And finally you express your faith as you disciple others.

We said in the very beginning the purpose of the discipleship

process was to invite you to know and imitate Jesus Christ. But now what? What's the next step? Christ says the next step is discipleship.

Once the discipleship is complete you in return should engage with others in the discipleship process. Discipleship is and was never about just you. It is and it isn't. When discipleship is done correctly others should be discipled as result of your discipleship. In other words, the fruit of your discipleship should be shared with others. Discipleship has been and will always be about the reproduction process.

The goal of this process is to develop reproducing disciples. That's why you can't forget everything you have learned and practiced. The success of the next

disciple is dependent upon your Christlike expressions.

Christ is all about the fruit. Anything connected with Him bears fruit. A disciple connected to Christ engages the reproduction process with others because that's the business of Christ.

Christ said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing (John 15:5)." To stop with the discipleship process here would be unChristlike. He desires you to continue with the discipleship process expressing it through discipleship reproduction.

This lesson starts when you start discipling someone else through the embrace, remain, express discipleship journey.



<b>The Discipleship Process</b>  A disciple is one who embraces, remains, and expresses the teachings of Jesus Christ.	<b>Embrace</b>	<b>Remain</b>	<b>Express</b>
	<b>Gospel</b> John 15:13 Embracing the work of Christ.	<b>Disciplined</b> John 15:10 Learning the spiritual disciplines of how to remain in Christ.	<b>Christ</b> John 15:26-27 Sharing the faith.
	<b>Christ</b> John 15:1 He is the true vine able to act as our Savior and King.	<b>Together</b> John 15:12-25 Understanding where we need to remain in a fallen world.	<b>You Faith</b> John 15:16 Keep the disciplines establishing systems for continued growth.
	<b>The Word</b> John 15:3 When we embrace the words of Christ we experience the benefits of His instruction.	<b>Productive</b> John 15:1-8 Prove to be my disciples.	<b>Reproduction</b> John 15:1-27 Be a reproducing disciple. Who is your fruit?

## Disciple Reproduction

The goal of the discipleship process is to connect people to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To see them become individuals who embrace the gospel, remain in Christ, and express the teachings of Christ to others. This has always been about producing fruit bearing Christians.

Christ is about building up His church and He has done this through the discipleship process. The responsibility is now up to you. Prove to be His disciple and express His teachings to someone else. Who will benefit from your connection with Christ? Who will be forever changed because of your investment in their life?

### The Call

No one ever became a Christian without a call to accept Christ. The discipleship process is similar. How will some respond to the call of discipleship without the challenge? Levi faced this similar challenge from Christ when He said, "Follow Me!" What did Levi do? He got up and followed Christ. There are so many in the church that are ready for the discipleship process. All they need is a challenge.

In the first section of this book, you read the discipleship challenge. Find someone, have them read it and consider going through it with you.

## How to Start the Disciple Process

First, continue applying everything you have learned in this discipleship process. One who disciples should never ask another to do that which he himself isn't doing.

Second, pray that God would place someone on your heart to consider discipling. Consider those around you that God has placed in your life.

Thirdly, don't create anything new. Don't recreate the wheel. Take them through the embrace, remain, and express discipleship process.

### Closing

Believe it or not, the goal of discipleship is not just about being biblically smart. It's not just about establishing consistent patterns of spiritual disciplines. And it's not just about being evangelistically equipped.

The goal of discipleship is to simply to be obedient to Christ's command to discipleship. The results of discipleship should produce more spiritual knowledge, spiritual disciplines, and even more evangelistic opportunities, but again they're not the goal. Obedience is.

We close with these words, "Discipleship is the process where a disciple is trained to embrace, remain, and express the teachings of Jesus Christ." Now it's your turn. Embrace, remain, and express Christ.



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19



