

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
WAY

The title is presented in three lines. The first line, 'THE', is in a simple white outline font. The second line, 'DISCIPLESHIP', is in a bold, green, sans-serif font; the letter 'D' has an upward-pointing arrow, the 'C' has a leftward-pointing arrow, and the 'P' has a rightward-pointing arrow. The third line, 'WAY', features the 'W' and 'Y' in white outline font, while the 'A' is replaced by a green road graphic with a white dashed center line that tapers to a point at the top.

Jonathan Mackwell

The Discipleship Way

Jonathan Mackwell

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Introduction

Why DISCIPLESHIP?

I can remember, as a child, going to a Church with my parents and taking along a younger lad who my parents were fostering. It was his first time of ever going to Church. He was quite excited and when he first set eyes upon the fully gowned vicar up front he shouted out in his enthusiasm - "is that God?"

For many, our education about who God is and what Christians believe comes more from the Simpsons or the Vicar of Dibley. 'Jesus' and 'Oh my God' are simply expletives. Unlike previous generations who, out of tradition, attended Sunday School and had School assemblies with prayers and hymns, exposure to Christianity is now extremely limited.

Yet here you are, having somehow been introduced to a guy called Jesus. Maybe you've been on the journey seeking something more in life for a while, or maybe something has happened unexpectedly recently that has got you questioning. But having started this journey, how do you now continue? How can you get to know this guy Jesus better and how can you build your relationship with Him so you can hear Him better and live His way?

When I used to live in Africa I often travelled cross country on a motorbike with only a rucksack on my back. I knew I needed to carry all the essentials which would get me to the destination but also at over 40 degrees centigrade I didn't want to take any baggage that was non-essential.

The aim of this course is to cover the essentials, to explore God's great love story. To get to know Him better, learn to hear His voice and have intimacy with Him. It's not just about eternity but about the here and now. God created fun, pleasure and enjoyment - He wants us to have life to the full now, today.

Unfortunately, we can come with baggage which can get in the way and weigh us down on the journey. This may be cultural, spiritual, mental, emotional or physical. The Bible talks about a Kingdom Culture, a new approach, God's approach which brings life.

This course brings together some of what I have learned and the tools I have used over the years to grow both myself and help others in

learning to journey successfully, together with Jesus.

This course is not meant to come with all the answers, but to provide tools and basic understanding to form a good starting foundation upon which to build.

The course will follow a simple 12 step route to journey together with Jesus. Each steps title starts with the letters of D-I-S-C-I-P-L-E-S-H-I-P.

Discipleship is the process of becoming a disciple who then disciples others. At the time of Jesus, the people who chose to follow Him, who chose to learn from Him, share life with Him and grow to become more like Him were called “disciples”. Another word for disciple could be follower, not only in being led and guided by Jesus, but also following and imitating Him in belief, thought and action.

The first followers of Jesus, the disciples, not only grew in their faith and relationship with God themselves, but they passed it on. It was as they passed it on that they themselves grew more.

This ‘way’ of a life of discipleship, as a follower of Jesus, who prepare the ‘way’ for others to follow (Isaiah 40:3), led to the early disciples being called ‘People of the Way’ (Acts 9:2, 24:14).

My hope and prayer is that, as you go through this course you will learn the tools that will help you to grow in your faith and relationship with Jesus, and also let go of any baggage which may wear you down and get in the way. This course, hopefully, will also become something which you can in the future lead others through, helping them also to have life to the full following the ‘Discipleship Way’ as a follower of Jesus.

May our faithful God of love bless you as you start to journey together with Jesus.

Jonathan Mackwell




Step 1 Disciple


It is great that you have decided to join us on this journey of learning how to get to know Jesus better and how to live His way. This is called becoming a disciple of Jesus. Through this course we will cover many different subjects and would really encourage you to be open and fully engaged. To begin with, some things may seem strange and new, you may feel a bit overwhelmed but slowly with God’s help you will start to see how amazing, satisfying and exciting life as a disciple of Jesus can become.


This step is a bit different as we outline key principles of the course then focus in on the Bible as our essential piece of equipment for our journey.


The rest of the steps follow the structure of introduction story, 3 studies, then group discussion including questions and study.


Key principles:


-  Worship and greater intimacy with God.
-  Growing and learning together with friends.
-  Taking what we are learning and applying it to our lives and sharing it with others.


 **Travel Together** - Growing as a disciple of Jesus can only really happen when we do it with other people. It is key to spend time with other Christians, learning together how to know Jesus in everyday life by sharing life, studying together, praying and worshipping together. Try to work through this course in a small group, or with someone who has been journeying with Jesus for longer who can be a bit of a coach.

 **Study** - To explore and apply the Bible for yourself is a key part of this course. There is an introduction to each step’s theme followed by 3 studies. You may want to work through these yourself or with a friend. These bring some of the key building blocks. Don’t worry if you struggle with some of the answers, you won’t be on your own. Try your best to answer them - your understanding will grow. Also highlight any questions you have to discuss with others.

 **Discuss** - At the end of each step are some group discussion questions. These start with an opportunity to chat through any questions from the studies. Then there's some further questions and areas to explore more in a group setting, or with your coach.

 **Action Points** - Finally, to ground each step is an action point. This is where the rubber hits the road. This is a challenge to apply what has been learnt during the step. Try to hold each other accountable, not only to work through the studies, but also in how you get on with the action points.

 **Replicable** - The hope of this course is that not only will you grow to become a disciple of Jesus. But that you also will then become a coach who can also begin walking others through this course. Remember discipleship is the process of becoming a disciple who then disciples others!

 **Films** - There are also available supplementary short films for each of the steps. These you may want to use during your small groups, or if you want to go through the course as a church.

The Bible

Get a Bible:

We would really encourage everyone to buy a copy of the Bible, it doesn't need to be fancy with gilded edges and leather bound. Many Churches will have a stock of Bibles they are willing to give away for free.

The Bible was originally written in mainly Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament, and Greek for the New Testament. As is the nature of translation, different words can have the same meaning. Older translations like the King James Version (KJV), would have been the modern English at the time of being written, but now seem archaic and difficult to understand. So for today's current English translation of a Bible, we would suggest either using the New International Version (NIVUK) or the New Living Translation (NLT). These are in modern English and so easier to read and engage with.

You may also want to get a bible app on your smartphone. A good free one is by YouVersion www.Bible.com, App store: YouVersion.

The YouVersion App also, will read the Bible to you which can be extremely helpful if you struggle to read due to having dyslexia, or if driving or doing another task!

Bible reading plans - you may want to check out the different Bible reading plans available on the bible app. It's great to start with a New Testament Reading Plan such as 'Solid Life', which is one chapter a day and covers the whole of the New Testament in a year. Try not to take on too much at once!

Community - it's also good to connect with friends through the 'Community' page of the app and encourage each other with their Bible reading and chat and learn from each other, when maybe you don't fully understand a passage.



Study: Why read the Bible?

A number of years ago I was attending a conference in Pitlochry, Scotland. During the lunch break I went for a walk to the local park. En route, I was stopped by a young guy who wanted to sell me a book. He was a Hari Krishna, after a good chat I bought the book and carried on to the park and skimmed the book. I returned to the guy and asked him

about what his thoughts were about Jesus. He didn't know much about Jesus only what he had been told by his teachers. I pointed out that in his book I had just bought it refers to Jesus as being Lord, as being the Son of God, and spiritual master. I asked him if he felt it would be important with such a appraisal of being Lord, Son of God and spiritual master to find out what Jesus actually said for himself.

We parted with his agreeing to read the Gospels - Matthew to John to discover for himself what Jesus had said.

The reason we read the Bible to get to know it for ourselves, rather than just hearing what others tell us it says, it is best to look at it ourselves (Acts 17:11). We believe the Bible is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12-13), that we can hear from God and get to know Him and hear from Him through reading it. We can delight in it (Psalm 119:16), it isn't boring and we can be excited and transformed by what it tells us. We can find our identity and purpose and future by God's telling us who we are in the Bible, and what are His purposes and plans for our lives (Ephesians 2:10). The Bible teaches us how to live God's amazing way, which is full of love, enjoyment, wholeness, and is completely satisfying (1 Peter 3:10-12). A good anagram for the **BIBLE** is that God has given us 'Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!'

Group Discussion Questions:

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Q. What/who is the source of the Bible?

Q. How is the Bible useful? What can be gained from reading the Bible?

The Bible reveals that God has had a plan since before creation; it is an amazing love story. That although separation from God has entered the

world through bad choices/sin, God has never turned His back on His creation. He had a plan to bridge that gap, centred on Jesus. Jesus is the key to understanding the Bible.

So how do we read the Bible?

Q. What is your experience of reading the bible?

Read Proverbs 2:1-5

“My son, if you **accept** my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and **applying** your heart to understanding— indeed, if you **call** out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and **search** for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2:1-5)

Look at each of the points below drawn from this passage and discuss what your understanding is of each and how you could apply them.

We are to “**Call** out” to the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and to reveal Jesus to us (John 16:12-15). How do we do this and how will the Holy Spirit respond?

“**Search** for the treasure “- what did this mean in the context it was written? What is it saying? What does it mean to me today?

“**Accept**“what the Bible is saying and that God is for you, and wants to bring enrichment and life to you. What does this look like especially when we read things in the Bible which we may find hard?

“Apply” the Word of God - don't just hear the Word but do it (James 1:22-25). How can this passage change my life? My attitudes? My values? My relationships? My plans? My relationship with God?

Read John 5:39-40 & John 16:13

Q. Can you read the Bible without encountering Jesus?

Q. How can we find life through the Bible?

Q. What role does the Holy Spirit play?


Response:

Commit to working your way through the studies.

What time each day will work for you?

Could you commit to doing these together with a friend? How will you encourage each other, chat through any difficult parts and spur each other on?

Pray for each other for a greater hunger for God's living Word and also regarding any challenges to prioritising this.

 **Action Point:** Invest in a Bible and commit to a time each day to read it. Commit to working through the rest of this course.

Bible Guide

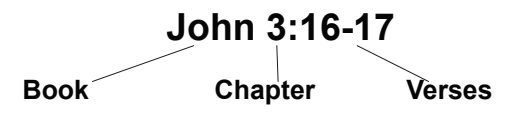
Old Testament 39 Books

New Testament 27 Books

Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	History and Laws	Matthew Mark Luke John	Gospels (Life of Jesus)	Epistles (Letters)
Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther		Acts		
Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	History	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	Paul's Letters	
Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Poetry	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Other Letters	
Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Major Prophets	Revelation	Prophecy	
	Minor Prophets			

The Bible is a library of 66 books, written over hundreds of years by different people, but fully inspired by God.

Each book is broken down into Chapter and Verse, these were later added to help navigate.



Step 2 Initial steps

Memorise John 3:16

Introducing Initial Steps:

For some people they know the exact date and time when they took the step to become a disciple of Jesus, a Christian. For others they couldn't really say when it happened, they just know along the way something changed.

I think it is similar with any relationship, especially marriage. Some people remember the 'love at first sight moment'; others remember a gradual journey of slowly getting to know someone and eventually being surprised that a friendship has grown into love, commitment, and even marriage.

It took over 10 years of friendship before I started to date Jenny, when we first started to date she found it difficult, she felt it was right but she didn't straight away have the 'head over heels' feelings which she had expected. She even had a list of things which could be show stoppers which we had to work through. The feelings eventually came (which was a relief!). Then came steps of commitment, engagement then marriage. But the day of the marriage wasn't the end, it was just the beginning of an amazing journey.

It is the same with our initial steps on this journey with Jesus. We may not yet have the 'feelings', we may even have a list of possible 'show stoppers', we may still need to make key steps of commitment. But we are taking the steps one at a time, starting out on this journey with Jesus.

In the book 'Hinds Feet in High Places' Hannah Hurnard tells an allegory of the Christian life, where a young woman named "Much Afraid" sets out on a journey with the "Shepherd". Along the way she faces different challenges and has to make the decision, will she surrender an area of her life so she can carry on to the High Places, or will she turn back?

Again with the Christian life, it is a journey, a journey with Jesus, along the way we may find that there are things we need to let go of, we have the choice each time, do we say no, or do we let go and take hold of something much much better (Philippians 3:12-14).

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase" Dr Martin Luther King Jr



Study 1: Loved & Accepted

Read Luke 15:11-32

Q. Why did the younger son decide to leave his father?

Q. Can you think of a parable/story for a son who is successful, but who loses his identity as a loved child?

Q. What makes a person realise their need for God?

Q. How is it that the father saw the son far off?

Q. Why do you think the Father runs to his son?

Read again Luke 15:22

Think about the actions of the father:

Best robe - sign of honour, also to cover the shame - "quick" doesn't want to make a public exhibition of the shame but to cover it up instead with favour and honour.

Ring - sign of authority, again a part of the family (signet ring) - stamp/

seal on soft wax on letters and goods - it authorised him to do business on behalf of the family again - access to the family money.

Sandals - sign of a free man - not a slave nor a servant but free and a son.

Q. What would each of these actions look like if God was doing this in response to you?

Q. Who do you identify with most, the younger or the older brother?

Q. Why?

This parable shows us how we can choose to live our lives separated from our loving Heavenly Father. That we can take the good things of life from our Heavenly Father, then continue to live a life for ourselves ignoring the Person who gave those gifts. In many cultures for a son to request his inheritance is to wish his father dead! It is a complete breaking of relationship. Whether a person squanders what they have been given, or is successful in life, they are still living a broken life separated from God.

Our loving Heavenly Father never turns His back on us, but is continuously searching with arms wide open for us to come home. The question is whether we make that choice to get over our pride or our sense of unworthiness and choose to turn around from the direction in which we are going, and turn back to God. The younger son took this step and came back to the father seeking forgiveness recognising he'd chosen the wrong path away from his father.

Read again Luke 15:31

Q. Did the older son have a real relationship with his dad?

Q. Is it possible to go through the motions of being a Christian without really knowing our identity and enjoying the relationship with God which is open to us?

Many of us have messed up big time, we've done things we are not proud of: hurt others, hurt ourselves, been selfish, immoral, worshipped self, put work or pleasures first. We've lived lives our way and rejected God's way, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Some of us have also been highly religious in doing the right thing out of duty and fear rather than out of a loving intimate relationship.

Both of these responses have led to our seeking love and affirmation from people and from the stuff we do. Unfortunately no matter how good people and these things are, we will never be fully satisfied because we were made to have a relationship with our loving Heavenly Father.

As in the story, our loving Heavenly Father's arms are open wide in embrace, He wants to rejoice in us returning to Him and welcomes us back into His family with full status as His child.

Reflection:

(You may want to listen to 'Good, Good Father' by Chris Tomlin)

Imagine yourself in the story, what has your life looked like up to now? How have you excluded your loving Father from your life? What could your life have been like? As you consider turning back to your loving Heavenly Father - what words would you want to say to Him? As you look up you see your Heavenly Father running towards you, what does He do and say? How do you feel in response, what do you want to say?

"Christianity is not about religion. It's about faith, about being held, about being forgiven. It's about finding joy and finding home."
Bear Grylls



Study 2: Separated & Redeemed

Read Isaiah 59:1-2 (Transgression = sin/stuff we do against God's best for our lives which ultimately hurts both others and ourselves, overstepping His limitations, making ourselves God and rejecting God's love and guidance)

Q. What does sin do?

Read Romans 3:23

Q. Who has sinned?

When we look at what sin is we often refer back to the 10 Commandments as found in Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Jesus in Matthew 5:28 however took this a step further to infer that we would be held accountable for even entertaining thoughts of sin.

Even if we may never have acted on our hatred, envy or lust, because we have entertained the thought, this brings separation between us and God who is holy and just.

Jesus also sums up His way - love God with everything you are and love others as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39), if you fully do this then you will be living God's way.

Q. How can I discover what God sees as sin, and what is His best way for my life?

Read Romans 6:23

Q. What is the consequence of sin?

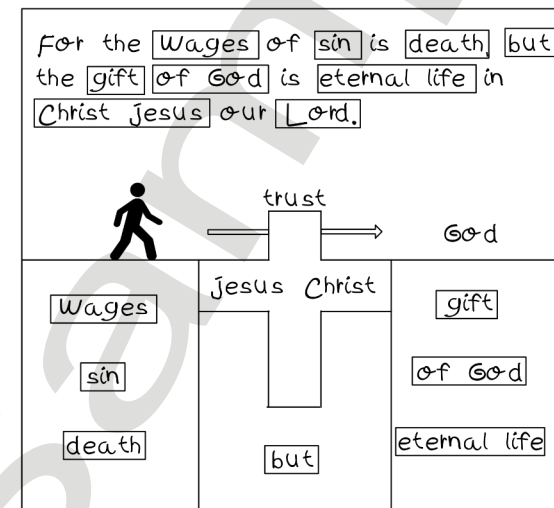
Wages are earned, they are deserved and reflect the justice of God.

When we sin against God the Bible tells us the deserved punishment is death (eternal separation from God). When we reject God and His ways the result is a chasm between Him and us.

Q. What does separation from God mean? What does it look like?

Some try to fill this chasm with stuff to try to get rid of the emptiness; others try to bridge the chasm by trying to earn their way by doing good works or religious duties. But neither of these options work.

The free gift, the good news (Gospel), is that Jesus died on a cross to take away our sins and he rose from the dead to give us new power to live the way God wants. A gift is freely given, but costs the one giving it. Jesus paid the ultimate price to bridge the chasm, His own death on the cross. As we choose to trust Jesus we receive this free gift of God.



Read 1 Peter 3:18

Q. Why did Jesus die?

Jesus as the only perfect, sinless person died as our substitute, the righteous for the unrighteous. He took our sin and paid the price of

justice. Jesus is God so as we are united with Him, His death meant our sinful self died on the cross with Him and through His resurrection we gained life.

Reflection: Matthew 13:44-46

Q. Why did those who found the treasure/pearl sell all they had?

Often people consider the treasure/pearl is the Kingdom of God that we have to let go of everything to accept Jesus. There is truth in this; however spend time reflecting on the concept that God considers you the pearl.

 **Study 3: Born again**

Read John 3:1-8

Birth is another picture of salvation, a person is born into a family and is a citizen of a country by birth. We gain our identity from our family and nationality. We also may look like our parents and behave like them - we carry their DNA and learn how to live from them.

Q. In what ways would natural birth and spiritual birth be similar?

Q. Different?

Often in Church circles the term 'born again' is used about someone who has chosen for themselves to accept Jesus into their life and, by doing so, experience a spiritual renewal.

The word 'again' in the original greek language can also be translated

as 'from above'. Becoming a Christian is not making a new start in life, it is receiving a new life with which to start. It is not about receiving a set of rules to live by now; it is about receiving life and spiritual connection with our loving Heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit.

Q. What do you understand by the concept that Jesus wants to give you new life, the life of God the Holy Spirit, to come and live within you?

Q. What would this look like?

Q. How would this change your life?

Response: Read Romans 10:9-10

Q. What does Jesus being Lord mean to you?

Q. How does Jesus being raised from the dead impact your life?

Sometimes, in life, it is good to make a clear definitive decision, rather than simply to drift. If you have never made a clear decision to become a follower of Jesus and accept what He has done and make Him Lord then there are some easy steps you can follow.

Accept - We have been living our way rather than God's way. This is sin against God and the wages of sin is death.

Believe - That Jesus is God's son, He died the righteous for the unrighteous, and was raised from the dead. He did this to take our punishment and reconcile us to our loving Heavenly Father God.

Confess - In response we confess our sins verbally to God, we accept what Jesus did on the cross for us and state our intent to give Him the place in our lives as Saviour and Lord. We then invite Him to come and live in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you believe this for yourself then here's a simple prayer you could say to take this step today:

Dear God,

I am sorry for my sins. I believe Jesus died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me. I ask You Jesus to come into my life through Your Holy Spirit to be my Saviour and Lord. Thank You for loving me and saving me from my sins. In Jesus Name, Amen

Date _____

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Step 2: Initial steps

What is the memory verse? - John 3:16

Q. Can you summarise each study?

Q. Any questions from course material?

Read: Romans 8:15-16 (TPT)

And you did not receive the "spirit of religious duty," leading you back into the fear of *never being good enough*. But you have received the "Spirit of full acceptance," enfolding you into the family of God. And you will never feel orphaned, for as he rises up within us, our spirits join him in saying the words of tender affection, "Beloved Father!" For the Holy Spirit makes God's fatherhood real to us as he whispers into our innermost being, "You are God's beloved child!"

Q. What in being a disciple of Jesus, is the difference between religion and relationship?

Q. What is the difference between being in the family of God and being an orphan? What does the reality of this look like?

Q. What does a loving relationship between a Father and child look like?

The Bible explains we can have this close intimate loving relationship with our Father God.

Q. How does this affect how we relate to God?


Q. How does this affect how we live out our life?

Response:

Spend a moment to reflect and ask God: What is limiting me from experiencing greater intimacy with Father God?

Pray for each other for breakthrough in this, and for a greater experience of intimacy with Father God.

If you have not yet taken the step of making a clear decision to be a follower of Jesus you may want to pray the prayer found at the end of Study 3 with someone in your group.

 **Action Point:** Share your story of God's love with someone this week.

Step 3 Speaking

Memorise Matthew 6:9-13

Introducing Speaking:

A number of years ago I was helping at a residential youth camp to lead a dorm of 11-14 year old lads who had no church background. They were from quite a rough council estate and had been connecting a bit with a local church youth group. At the beginning of the week I felt a great burden from God to take time with Him to pray for these boys. I ended up spending most of the night talking to God about them and praying for His will in their lives.

The following evening in the dorm I felt God leading the conversation and we ended up talking about God, about why Jesus had to die, and also about how we could have a real friendship with God and speak to Him and that He can speak back to us.

I said to the lads that Jesus was right there in the room with us, and that we could just chat to Him as we would to one of our friends. So the lads did. There was no hands together, eyes closed. There was no religious language. If anything the language was a little colourful, but that was their normal conversation. The lads talked to Jesus about what was in their hearts, what their worries and concerns were and asked Jesus to change situations.

I then said to them, shall we now listen to what Jesus wants to say to us in response? This surprised them as they didn't realise that Jesus could speak back to them. So we spent some time listening and asking Jesus to bring His peace and words of life into our situations. And He did! The following morning the lads asked if we could do it again that evening and also asked the leaders of the camp for Bibles so that they could find out more about who this Jesus is who they had met.

Prayer is simply having a conversation with God. It is two way. There's no need for formal liturgy, no need for eloquence; we simply come as we are and speak in our own simple words. And God loves it! Jesus called God, Father, Abba, Daddy, in Romans 8:15 it says through the Holy Spirit that we we can come as loved children and speak to our Heavenly Daddy.

"Prayer is simply talking to God like a friend and should be the easiest thing we do each day". Joyce Meyer

Step 8 Equipment

Memorise 1 Peter 4:10

Introducing Equipment:

“Sadio Tubaku (my Fula name), please can you help me?” “What is it Mamadu?” “I have cut the base of my thumb and can no longer bake the bread”. I look at the thumb and see it swollen red and the wound open with yellow pus, but more worrying a red line along Mamadu’s arm from the wound all the way up to the shoulder. “Mamadu I need to take you to the hospital, the wound is infected and you need medicine”. “Sadio, I can’t go, please can you help me”. “Mamadu, I will wash the wound and put on iodine, but you really have to go to the hospital because the infection looks like it is in your blood. Look at the red line, it could be sepsis or quickly become sepsis, that could kill you! Please let me take you to the hospital, I can pay for the medicine.”

“No Sadio, I cannot go”. “OK Mamadu, the only other option is for me to pray for you in the powerful name of Isa (Jesus), He can heal you”. “OK Sadio, you treat my thumb and pray to your Isa.”

So I wash and treat Mamadu’s thumb, I then place my hand on his thumb and pray to Isa. I thank Isa that He loves Mamadu so much and I reach out in faith to the Holy Spirit for a gift of healing, I then pray that Mamadu would be fully healed in the powerful name of Isa. Mamadu thanks me then leaves my hut to go home.

I didn’t see Mamadu for a couple of weeks, I kept spotting him but he kept avoiding me. I eventually managed to catch him by himself. He just showed me his thumb, there remained a small mark where the wound had been. He hadn’t wanted to admit what had happened - it had been completely healed by Isa with no medicine.

From that time on there was a greater openness to talk about Isa. Other people also started to visit my hut for ‘medical treatment’, which often included prayer to Isa.

“There is nothing impossible for God. All the impossibility is with us when we measure God by the limitations of our unbelief”.
Smith Wigglesworth



Study 1: Spiritual gifts 1

In the New Testament the word in greek for spiritual gifts is “charismata”; this simply means ‘gifts of grace’.

Spiritual gifts are different to natural abilities or talents, though they may parallel them and all are given by God. Spiritual gifts go beyond natural ability, they are a supernatural ability from God to do a particular task.

They are tools not toys! When we face a difficult situation we reach out to God in faith for His gift/tool to deliver into the situation to bring His insight and blessing. It’s not about us, our level of holiness, spiritual maturity etc. It’s all about God, we cannot earn the gifts, they are given freely and as God pleases.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Q. Can someone have Holy Spirit gifts without knowing Jesus?

Q. Will everyone receive spiritual gifts?

Q. Why are there different spiritual gifts?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

From the passages in 1 Corinthians 12 it may appear to some that each person only receives one gift. This however is not the case, the passage is focussing on the setting of a church gathering, and the aim is to show how each person is different yet is equally needed, and brings something, both their praise and also their gifts, this is known as body ministry.

We can reach out in faith and receive any of the gifts of grace which the Holy Spirit chooses to give us. We do not own the gift, we simply deliver

it to the intended recipient, the gift then remains with them. Once we have delivered that gift we can then reach for another gift, if required. When we look at the model of Jesus and also the first disciples we can see that they used different gifts at different times, sometimes more than one simultaneously (Luke 6:8-10, Knowledge & Healing, Acts 9:10-19, Knowledge, Prophecy, Healing).

In 1 Corinthians 1:7, the Apostle Paul says “Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift”. In 12:31, he says “Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.” Then, in 14:5, he says “I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.”

All of us, when we receive the Holy Spirit, receive the giver of all the spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit within us will then give us, as we reach out in faith, any one of the gifts of grace needed at any point in time when we face a need or difficult situation.

Having access to all of the spiritual gifts doesn't mean necessarily that we will use them all. Sometimes we can veer away from some gifts. The Holy Spirit never forces us, He invites us.

Reflection:

Q. Have you faced any difficult situation recently where a supernatural gift of grace from God would have been helpful to bring insight and blessing to someone?

Q. How do you feel, knowing that all these gifts of grace are available to you?

Q. Is there any gift(s) you veer away from? Why?

“Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but for the benefit of others, just as other people were given gifts for your benefit.”
Rick Warren



Study 2: Spiritual gifts 2

There are different lists of spiritual gifts found within the Bible. These lists are not definitive, they have overlap, different orders, some gifts which can be seen outworking are not even listed. What is important is to know that the Holy Spirit equips us for every situation.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Revelation gifts:

Word of wisdom: The inspired word which unlocks a situation to bring us into a place of God's truth and purpose; it invokes holiness and worship of God.

Word of knowledge: The revelation of facts about a person or situation by God with the purpose of guiding and bringing help, safety, and blessing.

Discernment of spirits: The ability to recognise the motivating spirit behind certain words or deeds whether of God, Satan, the world, or the flesh.

Power gifts:

Faith: The inner certainty in the goodness, sovereignty and power of God. Enabling us to place all in His hands, and to step out taking God at His word.

Gifts of healings: The bringing of health and wholeness to people with diseases and infirmities through the Holy Spirit's supernatural power.

Working of miracles: The activity of God's power where the Holy Spirit intervenes in the natural order, leading to awe and wonder.

Speaking gifts:

Speaking in tongues - allowing the indwelling Holy Spirit to collaborate with our spirit to cry or to sing out to God in an unlearned language praise or prayer.

Interpretation of tongues: The Holy Spirit's revelation of the dynamic equivalent in an understood language, so everyone hearing can join in the “Amen” of the praise or prayer.

Prophecy: To receive and communicate a message directly from God. It can be the forth-telling into a current situation, or the foretelling of something which will happen. It is always for their strengthening/upbuilding AND encouraging/exhorting AND comfort/support (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Gifting or character?

The giving of spiritual gifts is not dependant on our holiness or spiritual maturity, but simply because we have a relationship with Jesus, and so we now have the Holy Spirit living within us. Because of this, unfortunately, some Christians can appear very gifted spiritually, but their character does not match.

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Q. What warnings does the chapter bring?

Q. How can we apply this chapter to grow our character?

Reflection:

Pray about how you can both grow in using spiritual gifts and in character



Study 3: Ministry Gifts

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

Why does Jesus give the five fold ministry gifts? (Apostle, Prophet etc)

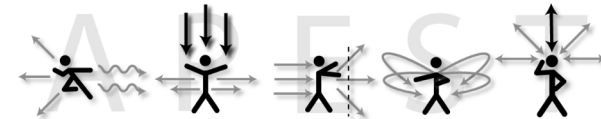
Vs 12 _____

Vs 13 _____

Vs 14 _____

Vs 15 _____

Vs 16 _____



Apostles (Dream Awakener*) - expand the Church. As the 'sent ones', they focus on establishing church in new contexts, identifying and developing leaders and growing the Church, both numerically and in depth.

Prophets (Heart Revealer*) - know God's will. They bring God's truth into today, and challenge any area of false teaching or secular culture which has invaded the church.

Evangelists (Story Teller*) - recruit. They are contagious gossipers of the gospel. They communicate the simple message of salvation. They also encourage the wider church to mission and outreach.

Shepherds/Pastors (Soul Healer*) - nurture and protect. They focus on bringing care, community, love and spiritual maturity into the Church. They also help the Church to reach the hurting and broken of society.

Teachers (Light Giver*)- understand and explain. They help people to engage with, and draw from, and base their lives on the Bible. They help people to discern for themselves God's will and wisdom, and call for faithfulness to God's word.

Sometimes in churches individuals are recognised to be strong in a specific ministry gift. Sometimes the strength of their gift can lead them to be recognised by other churches, even globally. For a church to be balanced, it is good for the whole five-fold ministry to be active. It is good to also note that ministry gifts are not static, God can change a persons ministry gift for a new season (2 Timothy 4:5).

All of us can grow in different ministry gifts, we do this by spending time with God, reading the Bible, learning from people who are more mature in their use of their gifts and getting stuck in and doing the stuff! We may discover we start to identify more with one or two areas, but it is good to keep also growing in the other areas.

Reflection:

You may want to take an online APEST/Fivefold Ministry Test such as in Appendix 1 to explore this area further. You may also find others for free online. Don't however feel tied by the results of a test, as mentioned we can all work to a level in all the ministry areas and can also grow and change in different settings.

Q. Do I know anyone who appears strong in any of these ministry gifts?

Q. Do any of the ministry gifts draw me, any which resonate with my heart and passions?

Pray and ask God to show you:

- How you can grow in an area which draws you
- How you can grow in an area in which you would feel weakest.

(APEST info drawn from Alan Hirsh, theforgottenways.org, Eric Knopf fivefoldministry.com *names were originally coined by J.R. Woodward, jrwoodward.net).

 **Group Discussion Questions:**

Step 8: Equipment

What is the memory verse? - 1 Peter 4:10

Q. Can you summarise each study?

Q. Any questions from course material?

Read Romans 12:1-8

Q. What does it mean to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice?

Q. How will we know what God's will is? (Vs 2)

Q. How are our spiritual gifts important to the rest of the church family?

The Discipleship Way Course

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- S**peaking – getting started with prayer
- C**elebration – getting started with worship
- I**ntity – knowing who you are in Jesus
- P**resence – knowing the Holy Spirit
- L**iberation – finding freedom through forgiveness
- E**quipment – learning to use God's gifts
- S**trongholds – finding freedom from any enemy hold
- H**ousehold – discover the role and importance of the church
- I**nvestment – discover why money is important to God
- P**urpose – knowing our God given purpose for life

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