First Baptist
Scott City

My3 Discipleship Training Guide

Updated: May 26, 2025 Compiled by Jeremy Sells

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And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

(Matthew 28:18-20)

What is the My3 Discipleship Guide?

The My3 Discipleship Training Guide is a practical step-by-step guide for equipping you to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) was given by Jesus to the Church. It was not just given to the Apostles, Pastors or Deacons. It is not just for extroverts; it is the mission of the Church and it must be carried out by the Church. This means every member of the church has the calling and responsibility to make disciples. Specifically, this guide will teach you how to make disciples by:

1. Praying for your unchurched family and friends,
2. Sharing your testimony,
3. Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, &
4. Teaching and Modeling good discipleship habits.

Lesson 1 – Discipleship Self-Examination

Most malls and large shopping centers have maps that indicate the location of shops and amenities. These maps are very helpful because they indicate where you are ("You Are Here!") and they point you to your intended destination. Knowing where you are is crucial to getting where you need to be. Similarly, the destination for Christians is to be spiritually mature followers of Jesus Christ (see Colossians 1:28-29) who help others become spiritually mature. With this being our destination, it is vital that we take time to have the Holy Spirit reveal to us whether or not we are a Christian and, if we are, our current level of spiritual maturity. The following Discipleship Self-Examination is a helpful resource to determine your current level of spiritual maturity.

My3 Discipleship Self-Examination

What is a disciple? Jesus defined what it means to be a disciple in Matthew 4:19 when He said, "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*"[1] Using Matthew 4:19 as a guide, examine your commitment to being a disciple and making disciples:

1. "*Follow Me*" – A disciple of Jesus Christ follows Jesus Christ and no one else. A disciple of Jesus Christ calls Jesus "Lord" and submits to Him. **Question**: "Am I following Jesus?"
   a. ____ No. I do not base my life on Jesus. I follow some other religion or myself.
   b. ____ Yes, but I am not always sure what that means.
   c. ____ Yes, but I have a lot going on in my life right now so I just try my best.
   d. ____ Yes. Jesus is Lord and I am following Him and no one else. I fail to do this as I should and I know I need help.
   e. ____ Yes. I have made a commitment to follow Jesus every moment of the day. I am by no means perfect but I am committed.
2. "*And I will Make You*" – A disciple of Jesus Christ is being changed by Jesus Christ. Jesus takes us just as we are, but does not leave us as He found us. He is committed to daily transforming us to become more like Him. **Question**: "Is Jesus changing me?"
   a. ____ Jesus is not changing me because I don't want Him to change me. I am fine just as I am.
   b. ____ I have no idea what that means, but it sounds good.
   c. ____ I am sure He is changing me, but I don't really think about it much.
   d. ____ I want to change but it seems I take two steps forward and two steps back.
   e. ____ I can definitely list areas of my life that Jesus has changed.
3. "*Fishers of Men*" – A disciple of Jesus Christ is committed to Jesus' mission to seek and to save the lost. **Question**: At what level is my commitment to the mission of Jesus?
   a. ____ I do not care about Jesus or His mission. I have more important goals.
   b. ____ I am a little confused at times as to what part I play and how I do this.
   c. ____ I want others to know Jesus, but I have too much going on in my life right now.
   d. ____ I want to make disciples and help others grow and know I should, but I am not. I need someone to help me.
   e. ____ I am committed to helping others grow in spiritual maturity and am currently (or recently) discipling someone.

[1] One of the best resources on this verse is *Real-Life Discipleship* by Jim Putman.

Results:

After you take the short self-examination, consider what your responses indicate regarding your commitment to discipleship. Pray and ask God to help you grow in spiritual maturity and how you can lovingly help others grow in spiritual maturity.

1. If your answers are mostly "A's": You are **Spiritually Dead**. This spiritual stage includes everyone who is not a Christian. Those who are spiritually dead are in danger of being punished in hell for eternity because of their sinful rebellion against God. They need to be saved. They need people to love them, pray for them, and share the gospel with them.
2. If your answers are mostly "B's": You are a **Spiritual Infant**. This spiritual stage includes someone who is either a new Christian or a Christian who is characterized mostly by what they do not know about the Christian faith. They need a mature Christian(s) to share their life, share new truth, and share new habits with them to help them grow in spiritual maturity.
3. If your answers are mostly "C's": You are a **Spiritual Child**. This spiritual stage includes immature Christians who are characterized mostly by selfishness and self-centeredness rather than service. Sadly, many Christians remain in this stage for a long time because it is difficult to break out of a self-obsessed mindset. They need to be connected to God, to others and to their purpose in the Kingdom of God.
4. If your answers are mostly "D's": You are a **Spiritual Young Adult**. This spiritual stage includes Christians who have begun to grasp the importance of service and self-denial. They are God-centered and others-focused but are not actively making disciples. They need to be trained to use their gifts and abilities to minister to others, provided with opportunities to serve others, and released to do ministry.
5. If your answers are mostly "E's": You are a **Spiritual Parent**. This is the spiritual stage that every Christian should strive to be in. This is not a stage of perfection, but a stage of commitment. Christians in this stage are spiritually mature and are intentionally making disciples. They can explain the discipleship process, are eager to be trained to disciple others, and are actively discipling others to grow in spiritual maturity.

Lesson 2 – Praying for Others

Pray for Your Unchurched Family & Friends

The first step in making disciples is to be a disciple. The only fuel that will empower you to make disciples is God's love which "*has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*" (Rom 5:5). We must also begin with a humble recognition of our complete dependence on God. God alone brings spiritual life. We must also become burdened for our family and friends that are not Christians and desire that they be saved and come to a saving knowledge of Jesus as Christ and Lord.

In prayer, we ask God to save our friends and family for boldness and opportunities to share with them. A very practical way to develop this good habit is to list all unchurched family and/or friends that you know on a piece of paper. This is your prayer list[2]. Your goal with this list is to:

- Pray for all of them to become Christians
- Pray for God to bless them and help them
- Pray for opportunities to share your testimony and the gospel with them
- Pray that God would send others to share their testimony and the gospel with them.

But where do you begin? Pray and ask God to reveal to you three individuals from this list to begin sharing with. Circle these names because these three individuals are "My3".

Commit to praying for them to be saved. You may be tempted to think that the person's name you circled will never become a Christian, but pray in faith. Trust that if God is stirring you to pray for them that He is also drawing them to come to Jesus in faith. Remember that the power of God that saved you is powerful enough to save anyone.

[2] The idea for this type of prayer list is from *T4T: Training for Trainers* by Ying Kai. More information can be found at t4tonline.org.

My3 Prayer List

Write the names of all your unchurched family and friends. Commit to praying for them and asking God for opportunities to share your testimony and the gospel with them. Pray and ask God to show you three names to begin with. You can say: "These are My3!"

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Sample Prayer for Salvation[3]

Heavenly Father, I ask you in Jesus' name to:

- *Pour* out Your Spirit upon these people.
- *Convict* them of their sin and separation from You (John 16:8).
- *Reveal* to them who You are and what Christ has done for them.
- *Open* the eyes of their understanding (Eph 1:18).
- *Remove* their spiritual blindness (2 Cor 4:4).
- *Draw* them to Yourself in a powerful fashion (John 6:44).
- *Bind* Satan from them.
- *Guard* them from Satan stealing Your Word from them (Matt 12:19).
- *Surround* them with Your mercy and grace.
- *Help* me to be willing and anxious to be the means by which You save and deliver them.
- *Show* me how to lead them to Christ.
- *Send* others across their path to bring them a witness of Christ.
- I am *trusting* that because You are stirring my heart to pray for them that You are working in their heart to draw them to Christ. Amen.

[3] This sample prayer is adapted from *How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life* by Greg Frizzell.

Lesson 3: Sharing with Others

You have taken a major step of faith by praying for your unchurched family and friends. Now take the next step of faith and prepare to share your testimony with them. Continue to pray that God would open their hearts to hear your testimony and receive God's free gift of salvation. Also, do not go into this alone. Contact some Christian friends; tell them what you are doing and ask them to pray for you as you share with the people on your list.

Why Should I Share?

Being nervous is natural, but do not let nervousness keep you from obedience. You should want to share your story because you love God and desire to see others know Jesus as Savior and Lord. The Bible is clear that "*the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Cor 6:9). In order to inherit God's kingdom you must be "*justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*" (1 Cor 6:11). Acts 4:12 also tells us that Jesus is the only means of salvation. Therefore, it is very important that you tell your friends and family how they may be saved. It is also wise to have Christian friends you trust hold you accountable to do this and encourage you before, during, and after.

What is My Testimony?

Every Christian has a testimony. Your testimony is your story of coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Each testimony has three-parts:[4]

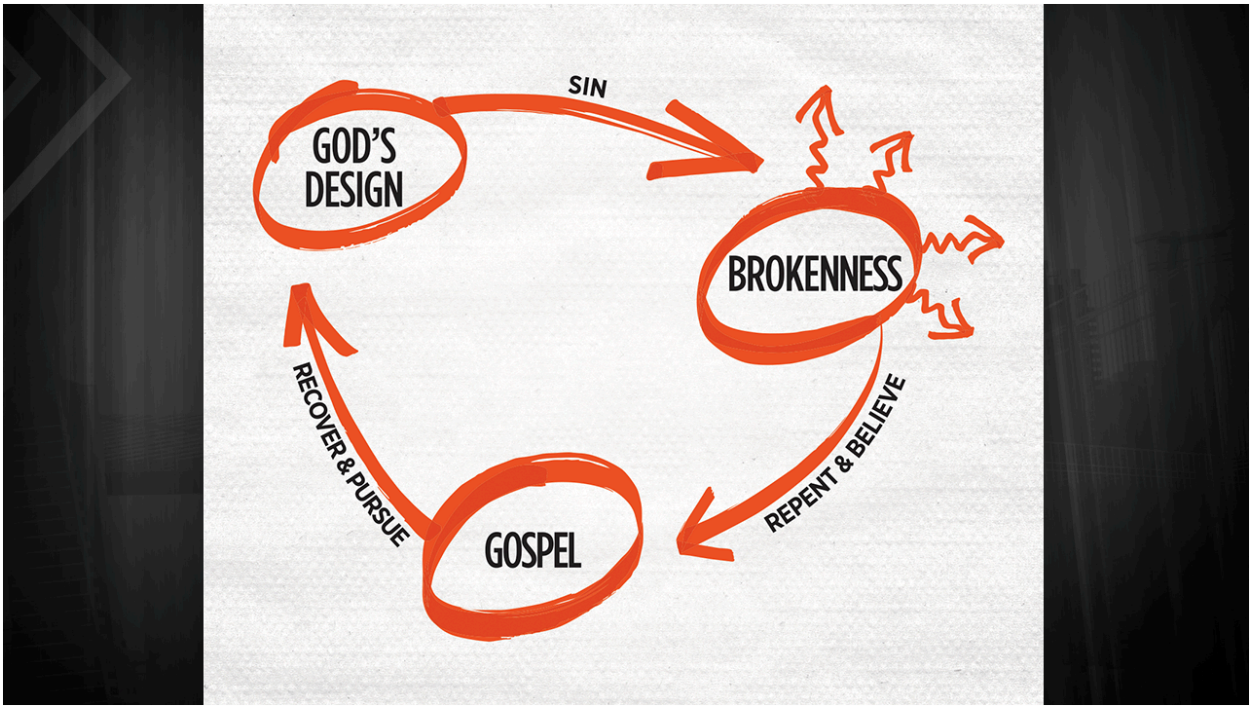
1. **First**, tell about your life **before** you came to know Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You do not have to spend much time on the particulars of your sin. Share that you used to be a sinner who lived in rebellion against God. Talk about the ways you tried to fix yourself and failed.
2. **Second**, tell about **how** you met Jesus. Talk about what led you to Jesus and why you felt the need to become His follower. What happened that caused you to surrender your life to Him and follow Him? Who were some major influences in your life at that time?
3. **Third**, tell about your life **since** you met Jesus. Be open and honest about how you daily struggle against sin and daily use Jesus' strength to live a life pleasing to Him. Emphasize that you are committed to loving God and loving others. You can say with John Newton, "by the grace of God, I am not the man I used to be."

[4] This simple guide for sharing your testimony is from *T4T: Training for Trainers* by Ying Kai. More information can be found at t4tonline.org.

Write out your testimony on a piece of paper and practice sharing it. Remember the 3 C's of effective communication: **Clear** (don't ramble; stick to the main points), **Concise** (approximately 5 min), **Compelling** (this is an important story).

Your goal is to conclude (if you are given the opportunity) with a gospel presentation and how your friend can become a Christian. There are many great ways to do this and one method is **3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide**[5] by the North American Mission Board. The 3 Circles method is a quick and effective way to share the Gospel. This method utilizes three circles which represent:

1. **God's Design** – God created everything and it was created to be good.
2. **Brokenness** – Man sinned against God and our sin leads to brokenness. We try in vain to fix ourselves but are always left discouraged.
3. **Gospel** – If we repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ, we are freed to recover and pursue God's Design for our life and break the power of sin in our life.



Please contact Pastor Jeremy for training and booklets you can use to share this gospel method with your friends and family. There is also an app for your Smartphone. Make the

[5] This method is called 3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide. It has been created by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. More information can be found at: namb.net/video/3circlesguide

commitment to share your testimony and the gospel with your unchurched family and friends. Pray for God to grant opportunities and to give boldness to do so.

What Do I Do if They Say…?

After you have shared your testimony and the good news of the Gospel, **Ask them if they would like to have a personal relationship with Jesus.** Do not be embarrassed to ask this question because it is an extremely important question. If they say:

1. **"No."** Don't be discouraged if they say "No." It shouldn't make you happy, but it should not cause you to abandon hope. Keep in mind that you cannot make them believe; therefore, you are not accountable for their decision. You are accountable for sharing and there is great joy in being faithful to do what God commands you to do. By sharing your story with them, you have boldly testified about Jesus and God will reward your faithfulness. If they reject the gospel now, keep praying for them and praise God for giving the opportunity to share.
    - While it does not occur as often in the United States as in other nations, it is possible that sharing the gospel with someone may cause them to stop being friendly to you. Do not be discouraged if you lose a friendship. Continue to pray for them to be saved and love them.
2. **"Maybe."** Some people need time to process a major decision such as this. Entrust them to the Holy Spirit, but do not abandon them. Trust that God is not only stirring you to pray for them but also working in them to draw them to Christ. Tell them that you understand their need to give this more consideration. Let them know that you will be praying for them and would love to meet with them again soon. Pray that God would open their heart (Acts 16:14).
3. **"Yes!"** Praise the Lord! You have led someone to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! Your friend has become a child of God and has had their sins forgiven! Also, you are officially a spiritual parent and this new Christian needs your help to grow in spiritual maturity. Let them know that the next step of obedience is to be baptized (Matt 28:19). Be willing to help them develop good spiritual habits as they grow in spiritual maturity. Invite them to your local church so they can make this decision public and be baptized.

My3 Testimony Guide

How can you easily share your testimony with someone? Utilize this page to write it down. Remember the 3 C's: keep it **Clear**, **Concise**, and **Compelling**. Remember the three parts of your testimony: **Before**, **How**, and **Since**. Practice sharing it with someone and ask them to pray with you as you share it with others.

1. **My Life <u>Before</u> I Met Jesus.**

2. **<u>How</u> I Met Jesus.**

3. **My Life <u>Since</u> I Met Jesus.**

Lesson 4 – My3 Habits: Bible Intake

The Importance of Biblical Intake

It is important that new Christians develop new habits that will help them grow in spiritual maturity. In this section we shall discuss the first new habit: Bible Intake.

A Holy Habit

We must hear, read, study, and meditate on the Bible regularly because it is God's Holy Word. It is divinely inspired, divine instruction that is true and trustworthy.

Divinely Inspired

A common objection to the Bible is that it cannot be the "Word of God" because it was written by men. Christians respond by saying: "While it is true that men wrote the Bible, they wrote only what God led them to write." In other words, while it is true that men wrote the Bible, no man can claim to be its author because the Bible's author is God. 2 Timothy 3:16 says "*all Scripture is inspired by God*". The Baptist Faith and Message[6] (BFM) states this truth:

> *The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man...It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.*

Divine Instruction

Not only is the Bible divinely inspired; it is divine instruction. The BFM says, "*It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction*." Where do we go to learn what is right and wrong? Where do we go to discover what God has said we should do and not do? The BFM says the Bible is "*the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried*." We do not base our values on what we think or what the culture tells us, rather we turn to the Bible because it is the only book that is authoritatively from God.

True and Trustworthy

Not only is the Bible divinely inspired divine instruction, it is true and trustworthy. The BFM clearly states: "*All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy*." The Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy says, "*Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives*."

A Healthy Habit

Biblical intake is not just commanded by God, it is a blessing. Hearing, reading, studying, and meditating on the Bible is good for you; namely, your head, heart, hands, and home.

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[6] This is the confession of faith of Southern Baptists and a copy can be found at http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp

Good for Your Head

The Bible says we must be "*bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:5). If you keep up with the news you will quickly see the evil and depravity of man. God uses the Bible to teach us what is right and to encourage us to think right. The Bible teaches us wisdom concerning what is right. When we read the Bible we should ask questions such as: "What does this text say? What is it telling me about God? What is it telling me about myself and the world around me?" We are also instructed in the Bible about how to think. Paul wrote, "*whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things*" (Phil 4:8).

Good for Your Heart

We should strive for a clean, pure heart (James 4:8) and fight against a hard, callous heart (Heb 3:13). The Bible says, "*A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones.*" (Prov 17:22). This world with its sin and evil will dry you up; only by coming to the Bible and being reminded of God's holiness, love, and goodness can we find the "*good medicine*" to bring us joy to our hearts. Only the Bible can truly guide your heart to good and proper things while keeping a proper perspective. The Bible is good for your heart. When we read the Bible we should ask questions such as: "What do I like about the text? What in the text do I struggle with? What truth must I embrace?"

Good for Your Hands

Most people want to do something good with their lives, but are unsure what to do. The Bible is good for your hands because it reminds you that your hands belong to God and should be employed for His glory. We are a "*living sacrifice*" (Rom 12:1) to God and we are to remember "*that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's*" (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The Bible tells you to put your hands to work for the glory of God and for the good of others. Ephesians 2:10 says "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*" When we read the Bible we should ask questions such as: "How am I going to think, speak, and act differently because of what I just read?"

Good for Your Home

The Bible is good for your home. The family that has Jesus as its foundation is a family that will last. When the rain comes and the wind blows, the firm foundation of Jesus will make sure that the house will not fall. If you try to build your family on any other foundation the house will fall and great will be its fall (Matt 7:24-27). Read the Bible together and talk about God's Word (Deut 6:4-9).

Practical Helps for this Habit

Picking up a Bible for the first time or after many years can feel overwhelming. Jesus told the church to "*observe all that I have commanded*" (Matt 28:20) and there is much for us to obey. Here are a few questions that are frequently asked about the Bible.

1. **What are good translations?** There are many great translations. Pastor Jeremy prefers the New King James Version (NKJV), the Christian Standard Bible (CSB), and the New American Standard (NASB). These provide a good balance between faithfulness to the original language of the Bible while providing an easily understood English translation. Other good translations include: the King James Version (KJV) and the English Standard Version (ESV). If you have questions about others, contact Pastor Jeremy.
2. **What is a Study Bible and why are they helpful?** A Study Bible is a Bible that contains notes that help the reader better understand the meaning and background of the books of the Bible. A good Study Bible is a valuable tool to help you increase your biblical knowledge. Good Study Bibles are: ESV Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, and the CSB Study Bible.
3. **I don't like reading books. Why should I read the Bible?** Your commitment to reading the Bible reveals how much you value it. Make it a priority to read the Bible. If you are struggling to read it, there are audio versions of the Bible. The YouVersion Bible app allows you to listen to the Bible.
4. **It's hard to understand the Bible. How can I?** While it may be difficult at first to understand, the more you read and study the more you will learn. For example, most people do not automatically know how to ride a bike and find it difficult at first. If they keep practicing; they soon become more proficient. Therefore, do not use this as an excuse for failure to read the Bible. Make the commitment to study the Bible.
5. **What are Bible Reading Plans?** Bible reading plans are helpful because they provide structure to reading the Bible. Some plans take you through the Bible in one year, others guide you through various subjects mentioned in the Bible. Ask Pastor Jeremy or search the internet for Bible reading plans.
6. **What are a few good devotional books?** A good devotional book is one that increases your love and appreciation for the Bible. A few books Pastor Jeremy highly recommends are:
    - *Valley of Vision* by Arthur Bennett is a collection of prayers.
    - *Gospel Primer* by Milton Vincent reminds us of the need to rehearse the gospel to ourselves daily.
    - *New Morning Mercies* by Paul David Tripp is a daily gospel-centered devotional.
    - *Be Thou My Vision* by Jonathan Gibson is a liturgy for daily worship.

Lesson 5 – My3 Habits: Prayer

Are you praying for your unchurched friends and family? Have you had an opportunity to share your testimony with them? We have been learning about developing habits for spiritual growth. Last week we learned about Bible Intake and in this lesson we will focus on prayer. In Luke 11:1 Jesus "*was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."* It must have delighted Jesus to hear one of His followers ask Him to teach them to pray. Examining Luke 11:1, we learn: **Why** should we pray? **Who** teaches us to pray? **What** is prayer? **How** do we pray?

Why should we pray?

E. M. Bounds spoke of the goal of prayer: "*The goal of prayer is the ear of God, a goal that can only be reached by patient and continued and continuous waiting upon Him, pouring out our heart to Him and permitting Him to speak to us. Only by so doing can we expect to know Him, and as we come to know Him better we shall spend more time in His presence and find that presence a constant and ever-increasing delight.*[7]"

Who Teaches Us?

Jewish religious teachers, including John the Baptist, were expected to teach their disciples how to pray. The disciple in verse 1 asks the perfect person to instruct in prayer. Because prayer is an act of worship of God, it must be learned from God. It is fitting that Jesus' disciple asked Him to teach them because Jesus makes prayer possible. They asked Jesus to teach them to pray because they observed Him praying.

What is Prayer?

What is prayer? Simply put, prayer is *communication* with God. It is the intentional act of speaking to and listening to the Creator of the Universe (God). This communication is possible because Jesus Christ has established the connection between you and God. Consider that when Jesus said "*whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you*" (John 16:23), He is doing more than just telling us to close our prayers by saying, "In Jesus' name". Rather, He is declaring that He has opened the door for us so that we can draw near to God (Heb 4:16). When we come to the Father "in Jesus' name," we are saying, "It is Jesus only; not my goodness that brings me before you and call upon You." Prayer is an act of worship in which a person *communicates* with God the Father, through the *access* provided by God the Son, and by the *prompting* of God the Spirit.

Communication with God

Prayer is *communication* with God. It is the intentional act of speaking to and listening to the Creator of the Universe (God). Because prayer is an act of worship, prayer can *only* be directed

[7] E.M. Bounds, *The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds on Prayer: Experience the Wonders of God through Prayer*

to God. You cannot and must not pray to anyone or anything other than God. A Christian may ask a fellow believer to pray *for* them, but a Christian never prays *to* a fellow believer (living or dead). Prayer is with God alone.

Access Provided by God
Prayer is possible because Jesus Christ has reconciled you with God (2 Cor 5:18). Jesus has provided the satisfactory sacrifice (1 John 4:10) for our sins. Jesus is the One who provides peace between us and God and access to God (Rom 5:1-2). Hebrews 4:16 tells us that through Jesus Christ, "*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*" Through Jesus Christ, we have *complete* access to the Father in prayer.

Prompted by God
Christians' prayers are "*in the Spirit*" (Eph 6:18). In other words, our prayers must be led by the Spirit who "*helps us in our weaknesses...makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*" (Rom 8:26). Praying in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:15, Eph 6:18, & Jude 1:20) has less to do with what words you say than the attitude of your prayers. Praying in the Spirit is a humble declaration of your dependence on Him each day. It is also a recognition that the Spirit of God is preserving us. Don't despair if you don't know what to pray or how to pray. Confess to God your need and He will help you through the Spirit.

How Do We Pray?

In prayer we ask God for what we need (Matt 7:11), but it is far more than just asking God for things. Remember, prayer is an act of worship and is an important means by which God makes us more like Jesus Christ. There is no spiritual growth apart from prayer. Prayer is a time for aligning ourselves to God and His will. Since prayer is an act of worship, the content of our prayer should be on the worship of God and what we need to appropriately worship Him.

The focus of our prayers should be God and not ourselves. We give God praise and thank Him. We ask for what we need in order to carry out our good works. We should "*pray without ceasing*" (1 Thess 5:17). This involves both private and public prayer. We need to pray in our "*private room*" (Matt 7:6) without distraction. We need to pray "*everywhere*" (1 Tim 2:8) with and for one another. We should pray shamelessly (Luke 11:8), persistently (Luke 11:9), and expectantly (Luke 11:10).

Five Main Types of Prayer

Greg Frizzell has summarized the five main types of prayer[8] found in Scripture:

1. **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Praise**. This type of prayer focuses on giving thanks to God and praising Him. It is vital that we come to God in prayer and offer Him thanksgiving and praise. It doesn't matter if you feel like praising and thanking Him, do it because He is worthy! Consider His characteristics, His names, His work, His salvation. Praise His Holy name! See Psalm 113 for a perfect example.

2. **Prayers of Confession**. This type of prayer focuses on the confession of sins. 1 John 1:8 says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" Every Christian has been freed from bondage to sin and is now able to "*put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry*" (Col 3:5). Confess sins of thoughts and attitudes, sins of speech, relationship sins, sins of wrongdoing, and sins of failing to do what is right. Remember "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9).

3. **Prayers of Petition**. This type of prayer focuses on asking Jesus to meet your needs. Take note that it is important to know the difference between your needs and your wants. Jesus never promised to give us all that we want; but did promise to meet our needs. Jesus tells us to "*ask, seek, and knock*" (Matt 7) and He will give. Come to God and ask Him for what you need that will help you carry out His will for your life. Pray for the physical, mental, and spiritual needs you have. Come boldly to Him asking Him to supply all that you need.

4. **Prayers of Intercession**. This type of prayer focuses on making petitions on behalf of others. Pray about what they need and ask God to give it to them. This is a very important type of prayer because you are thinking less about yourself and more about others. Ask for God's help for physical, mental, and spiritual needs others have. This prayer is an indicator of your love for others so don't neglect it. See Ephesians 3:14-21.

5. **Prayers of Meditation**. This type of prayer focuses on listening to God. As we said earlier, good communication is both talking and listening. Every type of prayer thus far has involved us talking to God. Meditation is important because it is prayerful listening (1 Sam 3:10). Take time out of your busy, hectic life to be alone with God. The emails, text messages, and Facebook notifications can wait. Listen to God and allow the Holy Spirit to search you and guide you.

[8] These 5 types of prayer are from *How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life* by Greg Frizzell.

Lesson 6 – My3 Habits: The Church

More and more Christians are deciding that regularly going to church no longer makes sense. They love Jesus, read their Bible, and pray; but do not see the importance of going to church. "Isn't it more convenient," they argue, "to stay home and listen to Christian radio and watch a sermon on TV? Aren't I doing the same thing?" While all the things just mentioned are good; they are not replacements for the church. In this lesson we will discuss why being connected to a local church is an essential (not optional) aspect of your spiritual growth and how we can make the Church a priority in our lives.

What is the Church?

We must be very careful when we speak of the Church. The Church is not a building or a Worship Service. The Church is "the people of God who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and have been incorporated into His body through baptism with the Holy Spirit."[9] The Church is important to Jesus. He died for the Church (Acts 20:28). The Church is Jesus' Plan (Matt 16:18), Jesus' Bride (Eph 5:25–27), Jesus' Body (1 Cor 12:27), and "*the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim 3:15). Jesus' Church gathers throughout the world as local congregations.

Why Do We Gather as a Church?

The Church is important to Jesus; therefore, it must be important to us. Sadly, the church is not important to many Christians in the United States because our society has become very individualistic. Zane Pratt correctly stated, "We tend to stress an individual relationship with God, but undervalue the corporate relationship of the church." In other words, while our Christian faith is personal, it is not private. We must be personally reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and Jesus intends for our Christian growth to happen in a Christian community (i.e., a local church). Therefore, being connected to a local church is essential (not optional) for spiritual growth. Consider that, while some of the letters in the New Testament are written to individuals (Timothy, Titus, etc.), most of the letters are written to churches. The Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) was given to the Church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances (a command from Christ) of the Church. The Church is very important to God and "the church is the primary means through which God accomplishes His plan in the world"[10].

We, the First Baptist Church of Scott City, MO, understand this. This is why our Constitution states that our purpose is "*to promote the interests of the Kingdom of God by evangelizing the unsaved and seeking the spiritual improvement of its members through the Gospel as set forth in the New Testament.*"[11] We gather to worship God and help one another grow in spiritual maturity. Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us "*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and*

[9] Gregg Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church, Foundations of Evangelical Theology*
[10] Wayne Mack & Dave Swavely, *Life in the Father's House.*
[11] From the Constitution of the First Baptist Church of Scott City, MO.

good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." God has planned that our spiritual growth and sanctification occur in the context of the local church. Jesus intends for His followers to gather together for prayer, singing, preaching, evangelism, correction, and to help one another.

What is a Healthy Church?

Notice that we are speaking of *healthy* churches and not *perfect* churches. There are no perfect churches because there are no perfect Christians. What makes churches healthy? For far too long the determining factors used to gauge health were "nickels and noses". The two questions asked were: How much money did we collect (nickels)? and How many people showed up (noses)? While churches should praise God for every nickel and nose, these factors can be very misleading. Are larger churches healthier than smaller churches? What about music? Are churches playing modern Christian songs healthier than those who only play hymns (or vice versa)? What about the building? Can church health be determined by the age of the carpet or whether the sanctuary has chairs or pews? Sadly, many churches fight over these things and are unhealthy.

What makes a healthy church? Healthy churches are comprised of healthy Christians who are committed to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-40). Healthy Churches have healthy members who value:

- the *Bible* as the perfect treasure of Divine instruction,
- *Worship* that is authentic and glorifies God,
- *Prayer* that is authentic, persistent, and guided by faith,
- the *Dignity* of all mankind who are made in God's image (Gen 2),
- *Good works* that glorify our Father in heaven,
- *Forgiveness* as they forgive one another as they have been forgiven by Christ, and
- *Discipleship* that results in all nations obeying all that Jesus commanded and who are more focused on making Christian disciples rather than Christian consumers.

The Two Ordinances of the Church

Our statement of faith (BFM) says, "Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."

What is a Healthy Church Member?

According to Thom Rainer, here are 6 aspects of being a healthy Church member[12]:

1. **Be a functioning church member.** We are not members of a country club. We did not join in order to have people serve us. We are members of the church of Jesus Christ who are charged with making disciples. 1 Corinthians 12 uses the imagery of a human body to describe a local church. Just as a human body needs functioning members (arms, etc.), so too the church. Every member of a church is given a role or function and is valuable and necessary. If a member ceases to function, the body suffers.

2. **I will be a unifying church member.** Jesus said in John 13:35, "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" Do we truly love one another? We must commit to being willing to forgive others and be forgiven by others. Nothing destroys unity more efficiently than gossip. Are you "*endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph 4:3) or fighting for your desires and preferences?

3. **I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires.** Everyone has desires and preferences but we must never let them cause divisions in the church. The church belongs to Jesus, not to us and we are to serve rather than be served.

4. **I will pray for my church.** If you believe that prayer is important, please pray for your church because it is under constant spiritual attack. Pray for God's protection on its leaders and members. Pray for all the ministries that occur on Sunday and during the week. Pray that everyone would love one another and share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who are not Christians. Pray for unity.

5. **I will lead my family to be healthy church members.** Healthy Churches are comprised of healthy Christians and healthy Christians flourish in healthy families. Take time during the week to pray together as a family, to read the Bible as a family, and to prepare yourself for worshiping together with your church.

6. **I will treasure church membership as a gift.** I will not neglect the gathering of the local church. A gift must be treasured and we must always be thankful for it. When we are thankful for something, we have less time and energy to complain about it. Yes, the church is not perfect, but neither are you. Even if there are problems in the church, you must remember that you are called to be a solution, not part of the problem.

[12] Thom Rainer, *I Am a Church Member*.

Lesson 7 – Our Responsibilities as Disciples

Every Christian is accountable to God. In this section, we shall discuss four important responsibilities we have as disciples of Jesus Christ: to love, serve, give, and forgive.

Responsible to Love

Christians should love because we are loved. We know what true love looks and feels like because we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The love of Christ transforms us. It should flow out of us onto all that we meet. Having been blessed in this way, we are called to share this love and are accountable to love God and love others.

Love God. In response to a question regarding the greatest commandment of the Law, Jesus replied: "*you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment*" (Matt 22:37-38). Christians must remember that everything we do must be motivated by our love for God. He is our Creator, Ruler, Sustainer, and Provider. The Bible tells us that "*We love Him because He first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). True faith is shown in our love for God.

Love Others. Jesus, in His response about the great commandment, continued by saying: "*And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*" (Matt 22:39-40). Jesus intentionally mentioned this second commandment because our love for God is demonstrated by our love for others. The Apostle John wrote: "*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*" (1 John 4:20). John also quoted Jesus: "*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*" (John 13:35). We cannot hate one another and love God.

Responsible to Serve

Christians should serve God and others. This is important because Jesus tells us in John 13 that we are servants and not kings. Jesus' ministry is summarized in Matthew 20:28, "*just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" Jesus came to serve, not be served and we are called to imitate our Lord. We may think that the world would be a much better place if everyone did whatever we wanted, but we are not called to tell people what to do but to serve them. Jesus tells us that we should not strive to be the greatest but a servant (Luke 22:26). We should devote ourselves to serving others out of love for them and in order to lead them to Christ. We can be much more effective in our service than in our demands.

Responsible to Give

Christians should be the most generous givers in the world. An important aspect of giving involves money and possessions. Christians are not *owners*, but *managers*. The money and possessions you have are God's gift to you and He is the owner. While it is important to work hard, we must remember that all we have comes through God's grace. Even though you do not own them, you are still responsible for them. Remember, a manager is employed to manage particular things on behalf of the owner. Managers are entrusted and responsible. The manager works for the owner and is held accountable to the owner.

How then shall we properly manage God's money in a manner that pleases Him? We use it to further God's agenda--"*for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10)--and not our own. We must be on guard against greed. Greed is dangerous because it is the belief that everything we have is for us. Andy Stanley defines greed as "the assumption that everything is for my consumption."[13] We must not be selfish hoarders, but should be cheerful givers (2 Corinthians 9:7). We should give cheerfully and sacrificially.

A few Bible verses will help us better understand. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*" 1 Corinthians 4:7, "*or who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*" Therefore, give for the glory of God. What are some practical ways we can give? A helpful way to remember is that we give our time, talent, and treasure.

Give Your Time

Who owns your time? We always make time for what is important. If you believe that God is most important, then you will give all of your time to God as a "*living sacrifice*" (Rom 12:1). This means you are diligent to give your schedule to God and ask Him to fill in the appointments and set the agenda. Also consider:

- What occupies most of your time? Does it contribute to or hinder your spiritual growth and maturity?
- What occupies most of your thoughts? Is it good, holy, and pure? Or not?
- Do you make time during the week for worshiping God at your local church?

Give Your Talent

Who gave you your talents? We have been created, designed, and gifted by God for His glory and our good. Each of us have been given talents and gifts and are expected to use them. If you use your talent for God's glory then you will be blessed, but if you do not use your talent for God's glory then you will be disciplined (Matt 25). Consider:

[13] Andy Stanley. *The Consumption Assumption*. Guardrails Study.

- Are you using your gifts and talents selfishly or for the benefit of others?
- Are you using your gifts and talents so that people will grow in spiritual maturity and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Give Your Treasure

To whom are you accountable for your money? Every dollar that you have in your possession has been *given* to you by God. He is the rightful owner and He has given it to you to manage. Christians, according to the Bible, are not the owners of their money and possessions but managers. As managers of God's resources we will one day give an account of what we did with it. Consider:

- Do you admit that everything belongs to God and you are not the owner but a manager of it?
- Do you give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7) to your local church? To good causes?
- Do you fail to give a portion of your income back to God because you are afraid you will not have enough to live on? Remember, giving is an act of faith that you are trusting God to take care of you. Trust Him and give cheerfully.

Responsible to Forgive

Christians should forgive. Conflict is inevitable. God knows this and a sure sign of Christian maturity is not how well you *avoid* conflict, but how you *respond* to conflict. We must be willing to forgive one another and be forgiven by one another. This is not optional for a Christian; it is commanded. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14, "*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*" But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses. Paul echoes this in Ephesians 4:32: "*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*" It is disheartening to hear of Christians who harbor bitterness and resentment against others and refuse to forgive. Lack of forgiveness is dangerous. It has been said that resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die. It is also dangerous spiritually. It may mean that a person does not understand forgiveness because they have never received forgiveness from God. Ask God to help you forgive others. Allow the motivation for your forgiveness of others be His forgiveness of you. Release resentment and be healed. How do you forgive those who have hurt and sinned against you?

- **Step 1 – Ask God to help you forgive.** Confess that you are powerless to forgive and completely dependent on God. Conflict happens because we are all sinners.
- **Step 2 – Choose to forgive.** You must make an intentional decision to forgive. You choose not to use the incident as a weapon against them.
- **Step 3 – Stop dwelling on the incident.** You refuse to dwell on the offense and instead choose to dwell on "*whatever is true, whatever is honorable...*" (Phil 4:8).
- **Step 4 – Seek to overlook the offense.** It is virtuous to overlook an offense (Prov 19:11).
- **Step 5 – Pursue Reconciliation.** Seek peace with the other person (Matt 18).

Commitment

Congratulations on completing this discipleship course! Our prayer is that you have a good grasp of the basics of discipleship and have a desire to be a disciple-maker. If you are committed to making disciples and helping people grow in spiritual maturity, we encourage you to make this commitment official. This discipleship guide is an attempt by First Baptist to mobilize and equip our members to go and make disciples of all nations. First Baptist's passion is to see a great and sweeping revival among our land and see all people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and grow in spiritual maturity. Imagine what this would mean:

- Towns and cities that see a noticeable reduction in crime
- A great reduction in drug abuse and drunkenness
- Marriage and family being held in honor in our society
- Families that are strong, vibrant, and loving
- Television, magazines, and the Internet **not** being polluted with sexuality
- God being glorified in His people!

Pray over each of the following and place a check next to each item and commit yourself to be obedient to Jesus and make disciples:

1. ___ Pray for your unchurched family and friends
2. ___ Share your testimony with the people on your prayer list
3. ___ Share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people on your prayer list
4. ___ Commit to the discipleship habit of Bible Reading
5. ___ Commit to the discipleship habit of Prayer
6. ___ Commit to the discipleship habit of being connected to Church
7. ___ Commit to the discipleship habit of being Responsible
8. ___ Be a Spiritual Parent and help others grow in spiritual maturity

I _____ commit myself to making disciples of Jesus Christ. I pray that God would give me strength in this great task and give me boldness to stand.

_____ _____ _____

Signature *Date* *Witness*

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