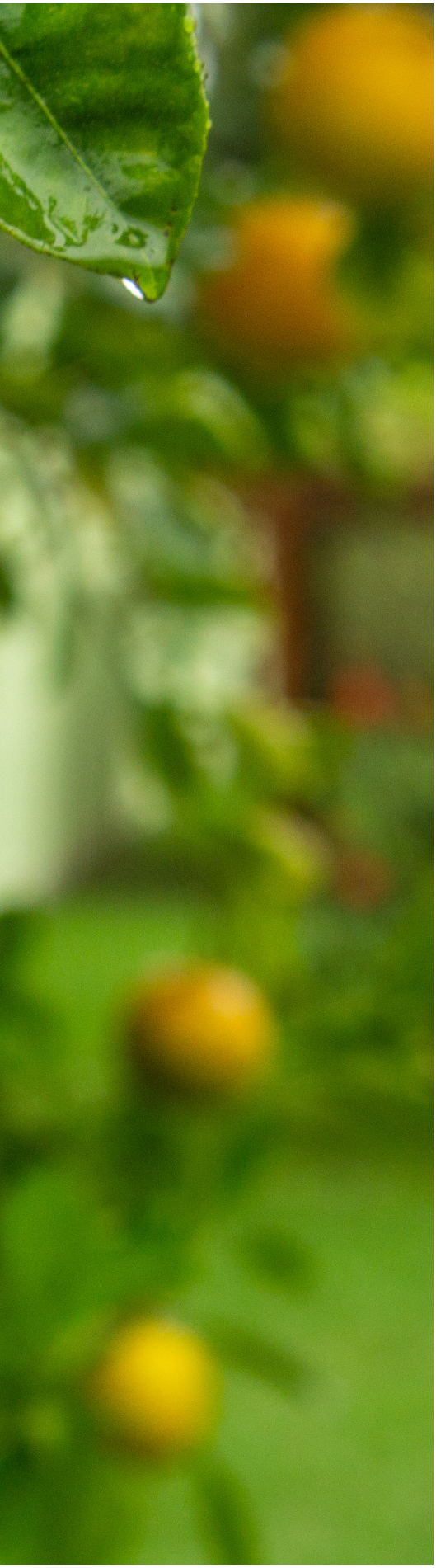
MATURING
A CLOSER Look At
SERVICE



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Serving the Lord in your area of giftedness is one of THE greatest joys of the Christian life. To see his power manifest through you to bless others is something out-of-this-world! If you have not yet taken a spiritual gift assessment, we encourage you to do that by visiting the Discipleship Path at gracetoday.org/closerpath. Once you have taken the assessment, we encourage you to connect with a serving ministry in your church and get started!. If you are already serving in your area of giftedness and are looking for godly wisdom on the subject, you have come to right the place.

This workbook is designed to help you use your spiritual gifts for His glory. Let's get started using scripture to help see God's way of noble service!

WEEK 1 :: HELPFUL SERVICE

Ephesians 4:1-16, Numbers 2

WEEK 2 :: HUMBLE SERVICE

Romans 12:1-8, Numbers 4

WEEK 3 :: HONORABLE SERVICE

Romans 12:9-21, Numbers 12

WEEK 4:: HARMONIOUS SERVICE

1 Corinthians 12:14-26, Numbers 14

CLOSER
DISCIPLESHIP

To You, Dear Disciple:

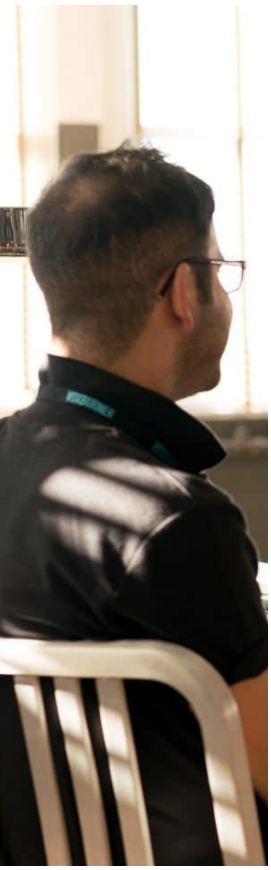
At its core, the CLOSER method is a way of studying your Bible. CLOSER is an acronym for a series of questions and exercises designed to lead you into a deeper understanding of God's Word.

However, knowledge is not the goal. The goal is transformation that leads to multiplication. Jesus called us to not only be disciples, but to be disciple-makers (Matthew 4:19 and 28:19-20).

Simply put, discipleship is teaching others to follow Jesus.

So this book is meant to be done with a partner. Whether you are in need of discipleship or you are ready to disciple someone, reach out and ask someone to study along with you. You might be using this workbook in a CLOSER group- and that's great. If you aren't in a CLOSER group or connected with anyone right now, be encouraged to find a partner today. Making the journey with a friend makes it so much richer.

Either way, my prayer is that you will be blessed in this time of self-study. The Lord is worth pursuing and his people are worth serving. Let's be intentional about growing closer to Him and to each other.



Much Love In Him,

Julie Keeler
CLOSER Creator

The CLOSER Method

CLOSER is an acronym for a series of questions and exercises designed to lead you into a richer understanding of God's Word. Whether you are brand new to Bible studies or have been a believer a long time, this method will help you to discover truths about God and His Word. Take a look at the types of questions you will find...

CONTEXT
Reading about a time period and culture that is so different than our own can be fascinating and bring clarity. When you consider the circumstances of the people and the historical context of the text you are reading, you are more likely to understand the true meaning intended by the author.

LOOK
Simply skimming God's Word isn't enough to gain a good understanding of who He is and what He is doing. This section will prompt you to look closely at each line of His Word through the use of key words.

OBSERVE
Once you have examined each line of the text, you will be guided to make specific observations that are important to the topic.

SUMMARIZE
By this point, you have probably observed some new truths that have interested you. Take some time here to put it all together in your own words.

EXPAND
You are part of the story, too. View the storyline of the Bible to include you. Thoughtfully consider how God is using you to continue to accomplish his big plan for the world.

REMEMBER
Prayer and Bible memorization are powerful tools for growth. This section will help you to connect with God, remember what you learned, and apply it to your life.

WEEK 1
HELPFUL SERVICE

EPHESIANS 4:15-16

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

The Book of Numbers and the Church

Much of the Old Testament is a picture or representation of Christ and his church. We can use their stories to help us better understand how the church is to operate. In the book of Numbers, we see how God's people are to be helpful, humble, honorable, and harmonious when they serve.

During the time Numbers was written, the Israelites were nomads in the wilderness with a temporary tabernacle instead of a permanent temple. They were also facing the monumental challenge of warring against the surrounding nations. Yet, God still required them to follow all the sacrificial and ceremonial requirements of the Law. As you can imagine, this would require a great deal of work. They would have to continually set up and tear down the tent of the tabernacle; continually gather needed materials; and continually fight to protect their families.

Just as in the Old Testament time, we too have a great work to do. We are to be God's representatives to a lost world; we are to build his church and his kingdom; and we are to care for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. The task is large, but so is our God; and he has given us helpful principles to follow.

A CLOSER Look at Helpful Service

Context :: Ephesians

Paul is writing to one of his early churches, whom he nourished and loved. He is now in prison for his testimony, but the church continues its mission. Paul writes because he wants them, the body of Christ, to be effective for the Lord in his absence.

Look

Read through Ephesians 4:1-16 in the margin. As you read, underline the words *body, building up, mature, equipped,* and *work*.

Observe

What is the purpose of the church working together? How is this unified work helpful to other believers and beneficial to the church?

What are three prerequisites to such effectiveness (vs. 1-3)?

Read Numbers 2. Notice that the Israelites were told where to station their families. They were all positioned around the Tabernacle in order to protect it. What does this teach you about our service? How does this foreshadow the church and its members?

Ephesians 4:1-16 ESV

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge
you to walk in a manner worthy of the
calling to which you have been
called, 2 with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another
in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of
the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There
is one body and one Spirit—just as you
were called to the one hope that belongs
to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one
baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who
is over all and through all and in
all. 7 But grace was given to each one of
us according to the measure of Christ's
gift. 8 Therefore it says,"When he
ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men." 9 (In saying,
"He ascended," what does it mean but that
he had also descended into the lower
regions, the earth? 10 He who descended is
the one who also ascended far above all
the heavens, that he might fill all
things.) 11 And he gave the apostles, the
prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds
and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the
work of ministry, for building up the body
of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the
unity of the faith and of the knowledge of
the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the
measure of the stature of the fullness of
Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be
children, tossed to and fro by the waves
and carried about by every wind of
doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness
in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking
the truth in love, we are to grow up in
every way into him who is the head, into
Christ, 16 from whom the whole body,
joined and held together by every joint
with which it is equipped, when each
part is working properly, makes the body
grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Summarize

WEEK 1

Now that you have studied your Bible and discussed the topic of helpful service with your small group or discipler, summarize in 2-3 sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

KEY TRUTH for WEEK 1

First and foremost, our service is to be helpful. Service matures us but it is not just about us. Service is about His people and His church and what they need in order to be effective for Him.

A CLOSER Look at Helpful Service

Expand

How do feel the Holy Spirit moving you to help His people and His church be more effective?

Describe a time when someone has helped you to be more effective for the Lord.

In what areas do you see the modern church as being ineffective? Could this be an area in which you could help?

Remember

Write Ephesians 5:15-16 here and commit it to memory this week.

What piece of truth stick out most to you from these verses. Why?

WEEK 2
HUMBLE SERVICE

Romans 12:3-4

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment. For as in one body we have many members.

Humble Service

As we serve, it easy to think of our area of service as most important, especially if we are in a leadership position. Because we are divinely filled with zeal for our task, we assume others are too. We can easily fall into the trap of either judging others for not being good stewards or exalting ourselves because we are.

But as any good leader or servant of the Lord will tell you, service is also a humbling experience...and extremely hard work! No one is immune to the purifying effect of service. When we truly are serving the Lord, we are overcome with a sense of holy awe for the work that we have been entrusted with.

Gifted to teach. *What if I speak heresy?*
Gifted to lead. *What if I lead them the wrong way?*
Gift of encouragement. *What if I can't find the right words?*
Gifted to evangelize. *What if I don't reach them?*
Gifts of helps or service. *What if I am not enough?*

Serving the Lord is no easy task. It is often filled with one teaspoon of glory and 5 pounds of refining. But that is the beauty of it. Service matures us for exactly that reason. May we learn to accept the humbling effect of service and walk on with Paul's great promise:

"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For ***when I am weak, then I am strong****." 2 Corinthians 12:10*

A CLOSER Look at Humble Service

Context :: Romans 12

The book of Romans is thought to be the complete proclamation of the Christian faith. Chapters 1-11 are said to be what God did for humanity, and chapter 12 begins the chapters on man's reasonable response to God's merciful actions.

Look

Read Romans 12:1-8 in the margin. Underline the words *gift*, *grace*, and *members*.

Observe

What is the prerequisite for proper service (vs. 2)?

Why are we "not to think more highly than we ought to think" about ourselves (vs. 4-6)?

Read Numbers 4. These are the instructions for the Levites, who were to be in the service of the priesthood and in charge of the tabernacle. What do you notice about their service? Knowing that they were the priests of the nation. What does it teach you about humble service?

What does it teach you about the importance of organization in God's church?

Read Leviticus 10:1-3 and Numbers 3:4. What do these verses teach you about effective service?

Romans 12:1-8 ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

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Summarize

WEEK 2

Now that you have studied your Bible and discussed the topic of humble service, summarize in 2-3 sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

KEY TRUTH for WEEK 2

Service is a purifying and humbling experience. It is hard work and should not be taken lightly.

A CLOSER Look at Our Humble Service

Expand

Why do you think people are tempted to become proud in the use of their gifts? How have you been tempted to see your gifts as most important?

What complimentary gifts do your gifts need? For example, someone with the gift of leadership often needs someone with the gift of administration to make their plans work well.

Who can you partner with to make your work for the Lord more effective?

How might meditating on God's mercy help a person stay humble? Are there other things you can do?

Remember

Write Romans 12:3-4 here and commit it to memory this week.

Take a time of confession if needed. Also, step out today in view of God's mercy and the grace of all the gifts given to His church and ask someone to partner with you (or offer to help someone who has already begun a good work).

WEEK 3
HONORABLE SERVICE

Romans 12:10-11

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

HONOR

Honor is an interesting word. We can honor someone who is worthy of respect or we can act in honorable or respectable ways. They seem to be two different definitions, but when we use them in reference to the Lord, we see they are one in the same. To honor the Lord, to hold him and his ways in high regard and to show him respect, is to walk in a respectable manner. His ways are good ways. His ways are the best ways. His ways are the most respectable ways.

So when he calls us to service, you bet he is calling us to serve honorably. This means serving in the way that He says we are to serve. In Romans 12, we see that a large part of that honorable service is in how we treat others.

It can be easy to get frustrated with others when serving. Differing opinions and divergent methods often create tension. Sometimes, we just want to walk away or maybe even take over, but this is not the Lord's way. The Lord calls us to outdo one another in showing honor. That's the standard, but it is also the most life-giving way.

A CLOSER Look at Honorable Service

Context :: The Beauty of the Church

This week's verses read like a list of to-do's, but read with the proper context-serving the Lord-they take on a new beauty. God's church is to function like a healthy family-full of love and grace. What if God's people all did this for one another?

Look

Read Romans 12:9-21 in the margin. Underline the words for *love*, *good*, and *honor*.

Observe

What are some of the ways listed that we can love one another?

Which ones are especially needed when serving in the church? Why?

Read Numbers 12.

- What was Miriam's sin?
- Why do you think the Lord dealt with her so severely?
- How did Moses continue to honor her despite her criticism?
- Which verses in Romans did Moses exemplify?
- How did the Lord honor Moses as a result?

Romans 12:9-21 ESV

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is
evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love
one another with brotherly
affection. Outdo one another in
showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in
zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the
Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in
tribulation, be constant in
prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of
the saints and seek to show
hospitality.14 Bless those who persecute
you; bless and do not curse
them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice,
weep with those who weep. 16 Live in
harmony with one another. Do not be
haughty, but associate with the lowly.
Never be wise in your own
sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil,
but give thought to do what is
honorable in the sight of all. 18 If
possible, so far as it depends on
you, live peaceably with
all. 19 Beloved, never avenge
yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of
God, for it is written, "Vengeance is
mine, I will repay, says the
Lord." 20 To the contrary, "if your
enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is
thirsty, give him something to drink;
for by so doing you will heap burning
coals on his head." 21 Do not be
overcome by evil, but overcome evil
with good.

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Summarize

WEEK 3

Now that you have studied your Bible and discussed the topic of honorable service, summarize in 2-3 sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

KEY TRUTH for WEEK 3

Proper service requires honoring one another, no matter the circumstances. This both honors God and brings honor upon you.

A CLOSER Look at Honorable Service

Expand

How have you been with honoring others and their service?

What can you do today to improve how you honor others?

What blessings and promises can you claim for honoring others?

Remember

Write Romans 12:10-11 here and commit it to memory this week.

Do you need to ask forgiveness from someone? Write their name here, go do it, and then come back and check it off as a way of remembering your commitment to honor others while serving.

WEEK 4
HARMONIOUS SERVICE

1. Corinthians 12:25

That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another

HARMONY

A harmonious team is an effective team. When everyone contributes, encourages, and cares for one another, the work is joyful and it seems effortless. But the opposite is also true. When a team is not harmonious, people stop working, people grumble, and the work is a drag. Why? Because complaining destroys the morale of the team. Complaining puts the brakes on progress. It forces others to stop the good work they are doing and address the complaint. It also causes doubt. It is hard for others to press on when part of the team is running the other way. That's why as servants of the Lord, we have to do our best to build harmony within the church.

There are a few things that can cause division:

- when things don't work out the way we think they should
- when someone on the team isn't valued
- when someone on the team is suffering alone

Let's take a look at how we can be more harmonious in these situations.

A CLOSER Look at Harmonious Service

Context :: The Church at Corinth

The church at Corinth was anything but harmonious. They not only had grievous sin within their church, but they also had a competitive spirit regarding the gifts and leadership of the church. Paul's goal was to bring unity to this church.

Look

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 in the margin. Underline the words *single*, *chose*, *parts*, and *division*.

Observe

Who assigned the parts of the church body? (vs. 18)

How is Paul encouraging the "lesser parts"?

What principles of teamwork do we see in vs. 25-26?

Read Numbers 11:1-11. What effect did the people's complaints have on Moses? What does this teach you about the burden of leadership and what team members can do to help their leaders?

Read Numbers 13:30-14:10. What effect did the spies bad report have on the congregation? What does this teach you about complaining?

1 Corinthians 12:14-26 ESV

14 For the body does not consist of one
member but of many. 15 If the foot
should say, "Because I am not a hand,
I do not belong to the body," that
would not make it any less a part of
the body. 16 And if the ear should say,
"Because I am not an eye, I do not
belong to the body," that would not
make it any less a part of the
body. 17 If the whole body were an
eye, where would be the sense of
hearing? If the whole body were an
ear, where would be the sense of
smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the
members in the body, each one of
them, as he chose. 19 If all were a
single member, where would the body
be? 20 As it is, there are many parts,
yet one body.21 The eye cannot say to
the hand, "I have no need of you," nor
again the head to the feet, "I have no
need of you." 22 On the contrary, the
parts of the body that seem to be
weaker are indispensable, 23 and on
those parts of the body that we think
less honorable we bestow the greater
honor, and our unpresentable parts are
treated with greater
modesty, 24 which our more
presentable parts do not require. But
God has so composed the body, giving
greater honor to the part that lacked
it, 25 that there may be no division in
the body, but that the members may
have the same care for one
another. 26 If one member suffers, all
suffer together; if one member is
honored, all rejoice together.

WEEK
4

Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and discussed the topic of our harmonious service, summarize in 2-3 sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

KEY TRUTH for WEEK 4

As it depends on us, we should seek harmony within the team we are serving.

A CLOSER Look at Harmonious Service

Expand

What principles about teamwork and service do you want to take away from this lesson?

Sometimes issues come up that need to be addressed. Using the principles you have learned this week, what is the proper way to address it?

What do you do when someone you are working with is divisive? How could you have handled it better than they did? How could you be a peacemaker?

Remember

Write 1 Corinthians 12:25 here and commit it to memory this week.

Write a prayer asking the Lord to help you be a servant unto Him: one that is helpful, humble, honoring, honorable, and harmonious.