

**BEGINNING**



*A CLOSER Look At*  
**FOUNDATIONS**

# BEGINNING

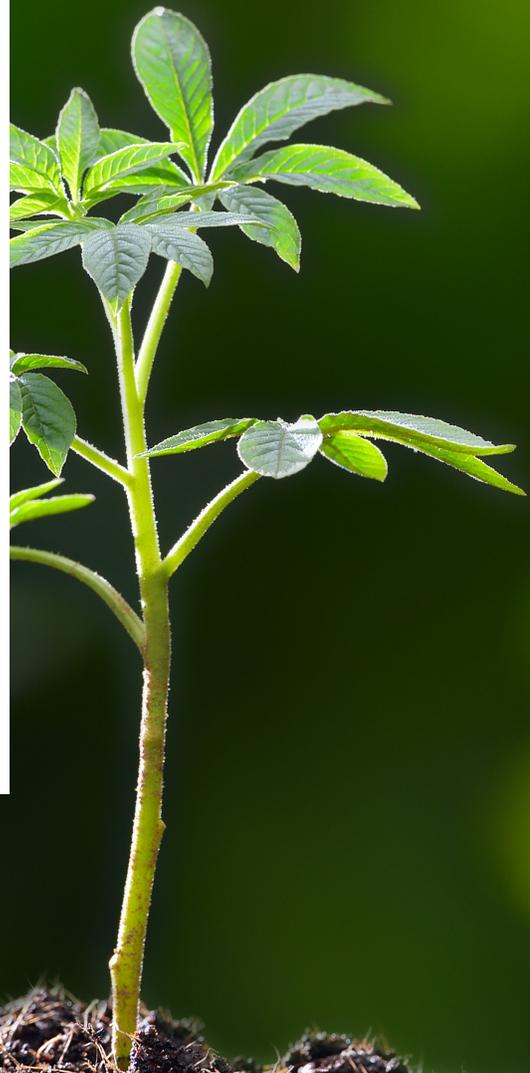
## THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

Believers in Jesus have received the greatest gift of all time: life.

When we think of life, we often think of the absence of death. But the life that Jesus promises is much more. It is rich with purpose, power, and privilege. The new life we have through Jesus is one of fulfillment and brings with it a sense of wholeness. God wants good things for us..

Too good to be true?

In this study of the foundations of your faith, you are going to learn that God has gifted you with eternal purpose and promised power to carry it out. Grace means undeserved favor and indeed God's gifts and power are full of favor and life.



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# The CLOSER Method

*CLOSER is an acronym for a series of questions and exercises that are 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

A little bit of context goes a long way. Reading about a time period and culture that is so different than our own can be fascinating, but can also be confusing or even cause disillusionment. However, if we consider the circumstances of the people or the historical context of the text we are reading, we are more likely to understand the true meaning intended by the author.

## LOOK

You can't simply skim God's Word and get 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 combed through each line of the text, you will be guided to make specific observations that are important to the topic.

## SUMMARIZE

By this point, you probably seen some new truths that have interested you. Take some time her to put it altogether in your own words.

## EXPAND

You are part of the story, too. Expand the storyline of the Bible to include your life and your people in today's time. What do you need to do in order to grow in your experience of Jesus?

## REMEMBER

Prayer and Bible memorization are powerful tools for growth. This section will help you to connect with God and remember what you learned past your morning coffee.

# WEEK 1 NEW LIFE



## OPENING QUESTION

What does it mean to have new life in Jesus?

### *Real Life*

Real life on earth is found in God. That may sound strange to you or you may not fully understand why that is. As with most things, to understand why something is, you have to go back to the beginning. In the second chapter of Genesis, we see the account of the Garden of Eden and how God intended life to be for men and women.

In the Garden, life was perfect. Man walked with God and related perfectly with Him on all levels: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In that perfect state, God gave man significance, purpose, and fulfillment. Man and woman walked and talked with God (Genesis 3:8). They were naked and unashamed (Genesis 2:25). God meant good for mankind. He made them with desires in their heart and then fulfilled those desires with good things. It was man, through sin, that destroyed God's good purposes.

# A CLOSER LOOK AT NEW LIFE

## Context :: Genesis

Genesis is the account of how God created all that we see: the heavens, the earth, the sea, the plants and the animals. He created mankind last. The word for "man" (Adam) in Genesis is the generic term for mankind and becomes the name of the first man: Adam.

## Look

Read through Genesis 1:26-31 in the margin. As you read, look for the words likeness, image, and good. Underline or circle them.

## Observe

What do you notice is said to be very good?

God gave man and woman good things. What would you say are some of those things that God gave to them? See verses 1:26, 1:28, and 1:29.

Read Genesis 2:17 as a group. What did God say would happen if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

Read Romans 6:23 as a group. What is the bad news and the good news in this verse?

What does Jesus promise in John 10:10?

## Genesis 1:26-31 ESV

26 Then God said, "Let us make man[a] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

a. (adam) mankind

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 1.

*You can find the video on YouTube/Closer Discipleship*

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

1

### Words to Define

Man:

Likeness:

Image:

Eternal Life:

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new life, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH #1

We have been made alive to God and can enjoy the benefits of life with him now and in eternity.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW LIFE

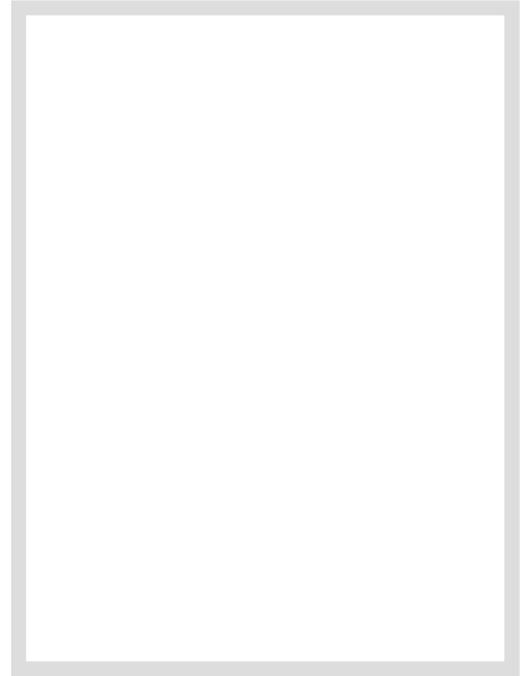
## Expand

How have you experienced the result of the Fall in your own life?

How does it change your outlook to know that this was not how God intended it and that you now have been given life?

What benefit do you want to claim today in your life? How can these benefits help you overcome feelings of inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, guilt, doubt, or shame?

## Leader Generated Questions



## Remember

Write John 10:10 here and commit it to memory this week.

Write a prayer to the Father claiming this week's foundational truth and thanking Him for the benefits of your new life.

If you see the benefits of His restoration in your life or someone else's this week, recount the experience here:

# WEEK 2 NEW PURPOSE



## OPENING QUESTION

What would you say is your purpose in life?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## *Purpose*

Why am I here? Who am I? Does my life matter? These are questions that exist in the heart of every human being. Why do we ask ourselves these questions? Because we were made for more than this life here on earth can offer. We were made by God for His purpose.

That may sound fatalistic to some, as if God is just a puppeteer and we are His puppets, but really it is a great promise and a great hope. The God who made this universe with all its awesome and unfathomable attributes- the sun to distinguish the day, the moon to light the darkness and the stars to paint the sky- has made you and I for a purpose as well.

Sadly, many of us question our purpose. We may feel like our life doesn't really matter or that we are just going through the motions of life trying to survive. The problem is that we have been trying to find our purpose apart from God.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW PURPOSE



## Context :: John 17

Before Jesus' death, knowing that his time was short, he had supper with his disciples and imparted his last words of wisdom. He then ended with a time of prayer for his disciples: both present and future. This prayer is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer.

## Look

Read through John 17:9, 13-21 in the margin. As you read, look for how Jesus defines our purpose. Underline or circle the phrases.

## Observe

What are some of the requests that Jesus makes to the Father on our behalf? See verses 15, 17, and 21.

Based on Jesus' prayer, what would you say is our new purpose?

Read John 13:34-35 as a group. What is another way that the world will know we are his disciples?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 as a group. According to these verses, what is our new job title?

## John 17:9, 13-21 ESV

9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. 20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 2.

*You can find the video on YouTube/Closer Discipleship*

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

2

### Words to Know

joy:

minister:

reconciliation:

ambassador:

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new purpose, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH #2

Our new purpose is to be ministers of reconciliation to both unbelievers and believers.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW PURPOSE

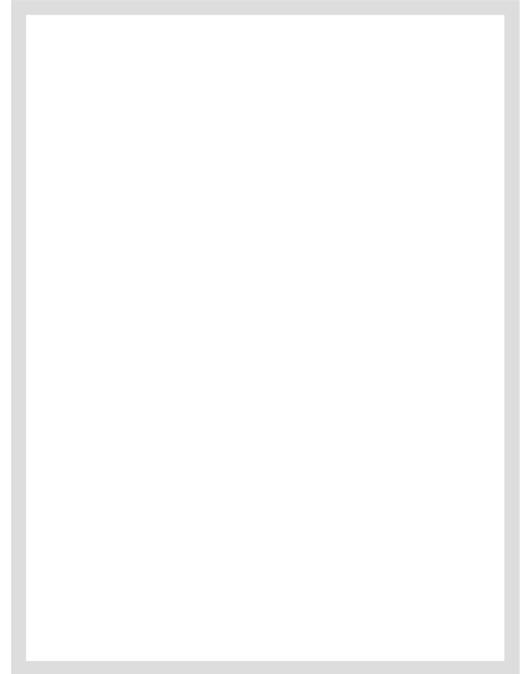
## Expand

Is it easier for you to be a minister of reconciliation with believers or unbelievers?

What are some ways you can be a minister of reconciliation in everyday life?  
*Think about your family, coworkers, neighbors, and classmates.*

How does it encourage you to know you are an heir to the Kingdom? How does that change your outlook in life?

## Leader Generated Questions



## Remember

Write 2 Corinthians 5:18 here and commit it to memory this week.

Be on the look out for how God wants to use you as a minister of reconciliation this week. Recount any experience here:

# WEEK 3 NEW POSITION



## OPENING QUESTION

What does it mean to be part of God's family?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## *The Law and Sin*

Before Jesus came and reconciled all people to God, the Israelites were considered to be God's people. God chose them out of all the peoples of the earth to show the world His holiness and justice. Sadly, even with this great privilege and position, they sinned gravely against God.

Yet God made a way for them to be made temporarily right with him. It was the sacrificial system of the Law described in Leviticus. Part of this Law included animal sacrifice to atone for their sins. The Jewish nation lived by this Law for centuries in order to keep God's favor.

Under the New Covenant through Jesus, we are given a new position that does not require the sacrificial system of the Law. Through Jesus' sacrifice, we have a new position of permanent favor.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW POSITION

## Context :: Hebrews

Hebrews was a book written to Jewish believers. Due to intense persecution, they were returning to the rights and rituals of Judaism for sanctification.

## Look

Have someone read Hebrews 10:1-9 in their Bible to give you context. Then, read through Hebrews 10:10-18 in the margin. As you read, look for the words *perfect* and *holy*. Underline or circle them.

## Observe

According to Hebrews 10:11, why did the priests have to continue to offer sacrifices?

According to Hebrews 10:12, for how long is Christ's offering for sin effective?

According to Hebrews 10:12, how many offerings did Christ have to make?

According to Hebrews 10:14, how long will you be perfect?

In your own words, what is our new position?

Read 1 John 1:8-9 and answer these questions:

- Does a believer still sin?
- What are we supposed to do when we sin?
- What does God promise to do?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-10. According to these verses, what does godly grief lead to?

## Hebrews 10:10-18 NLT

10 For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time. 11 Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. 12 But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. 13 There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet. 14 For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy. 15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,<sup>16</sup> "This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." 17 Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds." 18 And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 3.

*You can find the video on YouTube/Closer Discipleship*

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

3

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new position, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### Words to Define

perfect:

positional perfection:

holy:

sanctify:

cleanse:

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH #3

As a member of God's family, we have a position of forgiveness and favor.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW POSITION

## Expand

How do the verses from Hebrews 10 and 1 John 1 change your perspective on your position?

Guilt can be a destructive emotion. How have you seen guilt work negatively in your life or the life of someone you know?

We say that God convicts us, not guilts us. What do you see as the difference between the two?

The Jewish believers were turning back to the Law for their sanctification. What external "laws" do you find yourself turning to look, feel, or be good?

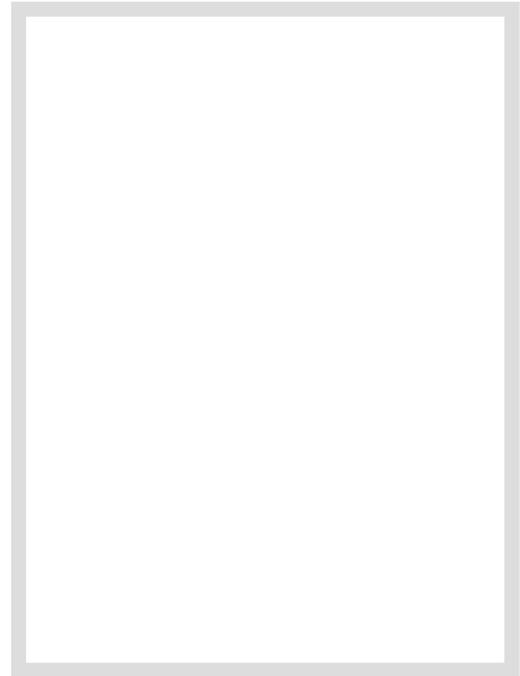
## Remember

Write Hebrews 10:14 here and commit it to memory this week.

Take some time in confession. Make sure you end your prayer thanking the Father for the forgiveness you have through Christ.

Pray and ask the Lord to send someone who needs this truth your way. It may be a family member or friend. Be open to His leading and then share when the time comes.

## Leader Generated Questions



# WEEK 4 NEW IDENTITY



## OPENING QUESTION

What do you think of when you think of a person's identity?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

### *Identity*

How do you define yourself? Maybe like many, you define yourself based on your job title or your role in your family. Or maybe you are caught in the trap of defining yourself based on your struggles and sinful habits. Do you see yourself as the same sinner you were before you came to faith, only now you have forgiveness? It is common for new believers to define themselves based on either their past or the current struggles. They have yet to fully realize the truth that they have been given a new identity.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW IDENTITY

## Context :: Romans

Romans was written by Paul, an apostle, to the believers in Rome. Some were teaching that believers could continue to sin because they had forgiveness through their faith. Not only was Paul teaching that this was not the way believers were to behave, but he also wanted them to know that this was not consistent with their new identity in Christ.

## Look

Read through Romans 6:1-11 in the margin. As you read, look for the phrases *old self* and *body of sin*. Underline them or circle them.

## Observe

What does Paul want believers to know (vs. 3,6,9)

What happened to our old self?

What happened to our relationship to sin? (vs. 7)

What does Paul want us to believe or consider (vs. 11)?

What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 tell us we are now?

What does Galatians 2:20 teach us about our new identity?

## Romans 6:1-11 ESV

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 4.

You can find the video on YouTube/Closer Discipleship

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

4

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new identity, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### Words to Define

old self:

body of sin:

power of sin:

presence of sin:

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH #4

We are new creations in Christ. Through our co-death with Christ, the power of sin is broken.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW IDENTITY

## Expand

How do you typically define yourself and how have you seen this to be destructive? Consider the following possibilities:

- Your job
- Your role in the family
- Your relationships
- Your success
- Your work for the Kingdom

Why do you think we tend to define ourselves in these ways?

How could we begin to define ourselves as Christ does?

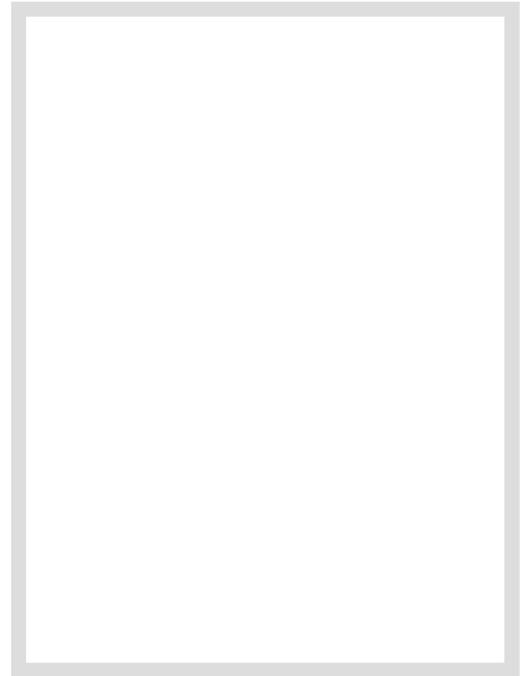
How will this the truths in Romans 6 and Galatians 2:20 change the way you handle temptations to sin?

## Remember

Write Romans 6:11 here and commit it to memory this week.

Consider any sinful habits that you may have. Are these habits defining you? Write a prayer claiming the truths of Romans 6 and asking the Father to show you how to walk in the path of freedom.

## Leader Generated Questions



# WEEK 5 NEW POWER



## OPENING QUESTION

What do you know about the Holy Spirit?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## *The Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is one part of the Trinity we don't spend much time on. Perhaps the words 'Holy Ghost' spooked us. But, the truth is, it is just as important as God the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit was active in creation. He was also the source of Jesus' power during his ministry on earth. Jesus was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is our new power source for living this new life.

The Holy Spirit was promised to dwell in man all the way back in the days of Joel the prophet (2:28-29). Jesus comforted his disciples by letting them know that his death must come to pass so *that* the Holy Spirit could come (John 14:25-29). He is going to lead us in truth, lead us in how to pray, lead us in how to get our needs met by God, and lead us in our walk with the Lord. He is our power for sanctification.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW POWER



## Context :: Galatians

The church in Galatia was started by Paul during his second missionary journey. After Paul's departure, the same false teachers that were in Jerusalem came to Galatia. In Galatians, Paul teaches the believers about the true power for sanctification: the Holy Spirit.

## Look

Read through Galatians 5:16-26 in the margin. As you read, look for the words *Spirit* and *flesh*. Underline them or circle them.

## Observe

What does Paul say is the answer to not indulging our sinful desires ("the flesh") in vs. 16?

What is the problem with our flesh according to verse 17?

Read Galatians 5:13-15 in your Bible.

- How does Paul sum up the work of the Spirit in vs. 14?
- What is a practical way to practice walking in the Spirit as mentioned in vs. 13?

## Galatians 5:16-26 ESV

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 5

*You can find the video on YouTube/Closer Discipleship.*

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

5

### Words to Define

flesh:

work:

fruit:

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new power, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH #5

Our new power source is the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW POWER

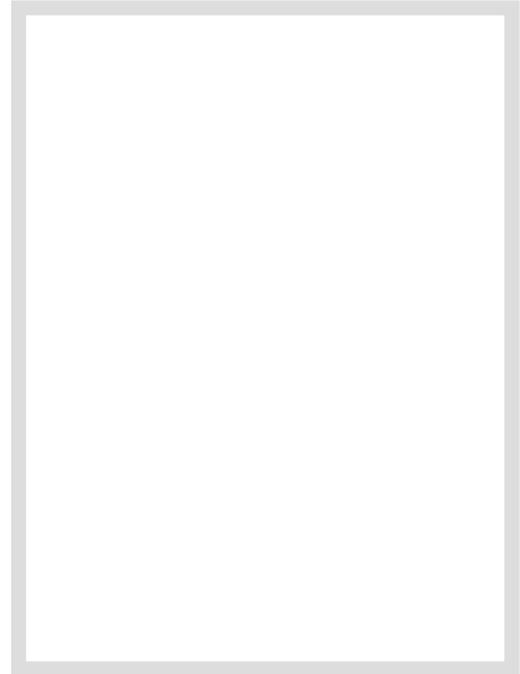
## Expand

How have you seen the Holy Spirit guiding you in your life?

How have you seen yourself using your own effort to "perfect" you rather than listening to the Holy Spirit guiding you?

Based on these verses, how would you describe walking by the Spirit? How is this different than just being good? See vs. 25.

## Leader Generated Questions



## Remember

Write Galatians 5:16 here and commit it to memory this week.

Watch for the Holy Spirit nudging you to do or not do something. Share an experience of walking by the Spirit this week.

# WEEK 6 NEW PRIVILEGES



## OPENING QUESTION

What are some things in your life that you consider to be a privilege?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## Privileges

Learning to live a life for God takes a renewed mindset and a will that is dependent on the Lord. In other words, it takes us saturating ourselves in His Word and in prayer so that we will know which way He is leading us. We could say that the Word and prayer are our new lifelines for living a righteous life.

*That is one way to look at it.*

Another way is to see the Word of God and prayer as two very great privileges. Think about it: the God of the universe wants to communicate with you! He has shared His heart, His will, and His character with mankind and written it all down for us to read and listen to whenever we want! He has also made a way for us to talk to him. When we are hurt, scared, sorrowful, or just plain need something, we can go to GOD. That's amazing grace!

Just like in our relationships with others, most of us tend to lean more towards listening or speaking. Both of them are needed, but it is not good when they get out of balance. Just like Bible study and prayer.

Lee Turner says, "Balance prayer with Bible study. Bible study without prayer leads to intellectual coldness. However, prayer without a knowledge of the Word leads to fanaticism and mysticism that will not radiate the beauty of Christ in our life."

We need to understand and practice both equally in order to live this new life well.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW PRIVILEGES

## Context :: The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus teaches His disciples about the Word and about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5 he gives guidelines for interpreting God's Word. In Matthew 6, Jesus gives guidelines for prayer.

## Look

Read Matthew 6:9-13 in the margin. As you read, look for phrases that could be considered praise, confession, prayer for self, and prayer for others. Underline or circle them. Discuss as a group.

## Observe

What are some guidelines for prayer that Jesus gives in Matthew 6:5-8?

Take a few minutes to read through Matthew 5, then answer the following questions.

- Did Jesus seem more concerned with knowledge or understanding? How do you know?
- Did Jesus want God's Word to evoke outward rule following or inward transformation? How do you know?

According to Romans 12:2, what happens when we renew our mind?

What does John 17:17 teach us about God's Word?

## Matthew 6:5-13 ESV

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 6.

You can find the video on YouTube/Closer Discipleship

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

6

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new privileges, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### Words to Define

praise:

confession::

intercession:

petition:

meditation::

### FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH #6

Studying the Word of God and prayer are our new privileges.

# A CLOSER Look at Our NEW PRIVILEGES

## Expand

What are some practical ways to renew your mind?

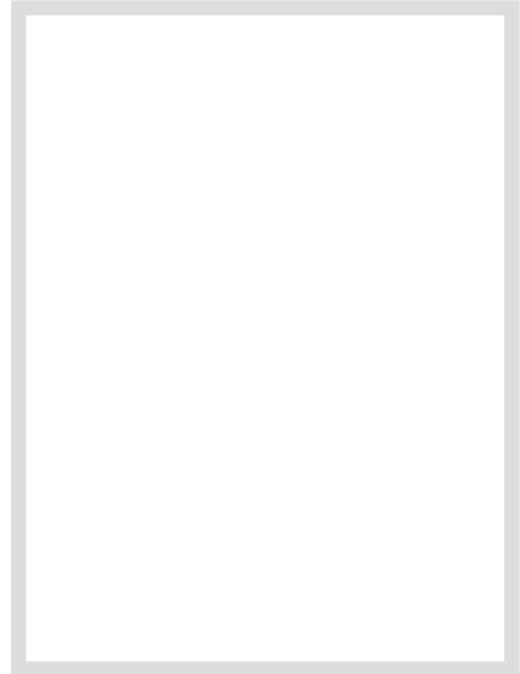
How can you use the types of questions you see in this study (Line by Line, Observe, Remember, etc.) to help you study God's Word?

How has this study shown you the importance of understanding God's Word?

What are some practical tips for making prayer a priority?

Devotions, also known as quiet time, is taking time each day alone with the Lord to read your Bible and to pray. What are some of your biggest obstacles to having your devotions or what do you think your obstacles will be? What can you do to help yourself?

## Leader Generated Questions



## Remember

Write Romans 12:2 here and commit it to memory this week.

If you don't already, start having your devotions. If you are new to Bible reading, find a partner in your group to help you get started. Make sure to balance your time between Bible study and prayer.



# FOR THE DISCIPLE MAKER

**CONVERSATION  
STARTERS**

*Page 27*

**DISCIPLESHIP TIPS**

*Pages 28-32*

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# TO THE DISCIPLE MAKER:

GO MAKE  
DISCIPLES...  
TEACHING THEM  
TO OBEY ALL  
THAT I HAVE  
COMMANDED  
YOU.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

At its core the CLOSER method is a way of studying your Bible. 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 learning to follow Jesus so that we can teach others to do the same.*

Since we know that effective discipleship doesn't always come naturally, we have provided you with discipleship tips and conversation starters on the next few pages. These pieces of the CLOSER method are designed to equip you to be an effective disciple and disciple-maker of Jesus. They contain ideas, truths, and prompts that will guide you into more meaningful discipleship connections. These, in partnership with the truth in God's Word, will bring you closer in community and closer to Him and His plan for you.

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

When and how did you come to know Christ? Where are you in your walk with Christ?

What is your goal through this study? What are you hoping to gain by the end?

In what area of life are you most in need of prayer? Areas to consider: work, school, Marriage, parenting, parents, Friendships, or personal holiness.

How do you draw near to God? What are some practical things that you do each day to grow closer to Jesus?

What gets in the way when you are trying to connect with God? Is it responsibilities, distractions, doubt, or something else?

What themes do you see being repeated in your life? Why?

What is your life story? What important events in your life seem to define you?

With whom do you need reconciliation? Pray through the situation together and ask the Lord for the right time and the right words.

Share a time that you felt cared for by a friend. What did that friend do that was special? Was it a thoughtful gift, a sacrificial act of service, or something else?

What sin pattern do you find yourself falling back into the most?

What truths about God do you often forget and need to be reminded?

What dreams do you have for your life? How would you like to be used by God?

What has God been teaching you lately?

# DISCIPLESHIP TIPS

## #1

Creating a safe environment to share is crucial for your discipleship relationship.

Transparency will happen when your disciples know that you are human and you struggle, too.

They need to see that Jesus is not just their Shepherd, but yours, as well. Consider sharing with them something that you had or have struggled with and what the Lord taught you through it.

## #2

We all want meaningful relationships. The key is to ask good questions that let conversations unfold. As you discuss each others' responses to the weekly questions, listen for the heartfelt need or the unspoken struggle. Ask more questions if needed and then let the conversation go from there.

## # 3

All sin is an attempt to fill a legitimate need (love, acceptance, purpose) in an illegitimate way (comfort, people pleasing, selfish ambition, control). Sin hinders spiritual growth and effectiveness. Therefore, discipleship seeks to point another to a healthier path that is free from the entanglements of sin (Hebrews 12:1-2, Galatians 6:1-2).

Prayerfully consider how you can do that for your disciple.

## # 4

Goals are good to have when starting something new. In Matthew 4:19, Jesus called the first disciples and then told them His goal for them. He said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Based on Jesus' example (also see Matthew 28:19-20), the ultimate goal of discipleship is to produce more disciples.

Don't let your discipleship become stagnant. Keep seeking to grow and to make more disciples. There should be an exit point where the teacher releases the student to go and do as they did for them.

# DISCIPLESHIP TIPS

## # 5

Discipleship isn't just about head knowledge. It's about a change of heart that initiates and eventually sustains a change in behavior. Remember that change is hard and doesn't happen overnight. Pray patiently for each other, remembering that you, too, are still on the journey.

## # 6

Talk about ways to serve in the body of Christ. What are each of your spiritual gifts? Do they overlap in a way that you could serve together? Part of discipleship is helping someone to grow in the use of their spiritual gifts and discovering their ministry within the church. Make this a regular part of your conversation.

## #7

Jesus is Our Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). When discipling someone, always remember to point them to Him as their ultimate Guide, Protector, and Sustainer. Encourage them to see God's loving hand in all things and to ask Christ to fill them full.

## #8

Spend time reflecting with your disciple about what you have learned and how you still want to grow. Set a plan for what is next in each of your journeys. Remember, the ultimate goal is growth for the purpose of multiplication.

How are each of you going to fulfill the commission to "go and make disciples"?