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# Discovering Jesus Christ

Exploring together who Jesus Christ is  
and what He thinks life is all about



A joint initiative of Healthcare Christian  
Fellowship International (HCFI) and International  
Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA)

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## Introduction

### Unrivalled impact on history

Any student of world history is confronted with the fact of the unrivalled impact that Jesus Christ has had on mankind. No other person has ever made such a difference. More hospitals, schools, universities, development efforts, and humanitarian projects have been started in His name than of any other historical figure. More books, movies, videos, broadcasts, and other media messages about Him have been published in more languages and in more countries than about anybody else.

### Astonishing amount of responses

Yet, there are so many different responses to Jesus Christ. Some hate Him, others ignore Him, some admire Him, others love Him, some think He is a prophet, others think He is a good example, some think He is a liar, others think He is a lunatic, some think He is Lord. Who is right?

### What did Jesus Christ really say about what is important and about Himself?

Let us discover the truth about Jesus Christ in His own words and explore what He wants us to do with our lives. Let us go on the journey of Discovering Jesus Christ together.

## Discovery Groups

The small group approach we will use for our journey is known as a Discovery Group and is served by a facilitator.

- **Size:** Three to five persons (including the facilitator): This is the optimal size for a group of busy people, especially for online meetings. Face to face groups may have one or two persons more. With a larger group, there is the risk of people missing out on important encounters. In a larger group, there would also not be enough time for deep sharing and personal involvement. If other people would like to join a group, it is better to aim for multiplication by creating another group rather than by increasing the number of people in the first group.
- **Membership:** Start your journey together with people whom you already have a trust relationship.
- **Venue:** If you meet face to face, meet in places where people normally meet (at home, in a restaurant, in a park, at work, etc.). Otherwise, you might meet online, for example using Zoom.
- **Learn together:** all participants help one another to learn about and from Jesus Christ
- **Frequency:** meet once a week or once every two weeks as a rule. During holidays or emergencies, the time between meetings might be longer

- When: it is very important to meet only when all the members of the group can be present. This is the best way to develop depth of relationships between the participants
- Meeting elements: each meeting has three parts – Look Back; Look Up; Look Forward. This will be described in more detail further on
- Duration: Each of the three parts takes about 30 minutes → 90 minutes in total

### Role of the facilitator:

Each Discovery Group has a facilitator who initiates the meetings. After a facilitating a few times, the group members start taking turns to facilitate the meeting. This way they learn how to facilitate their own groups once that becomes possible. The facilitator:

1. Provides an example of some-one who wants to learn as much as possible from Jesus Christ and who applies what has been learnt in daily life and work
2. Promotes a culture of honouring one another in the Discovery Group
3. Is a co-learner together with the rest of the group; not the “great expert”
4. Is a meeting organizer/scheduler; not the “spiritual superstar”
5. Makes sure all Discovery Group members participate; not the “centre of attention”
6. Facilitates learning experiences by asking questions; not the “great preacher”
7. Furthers formation of new Discovery Groups; not the “gatherer of admirers”
8. Makes sure each Bible passage is read aloud two times and that the participants try to rephrase it in their own words
9. Lets the participants take turns to read the meeting notes so that they get practical experience in being active in the group. It will help prepare them to facilitate their own group meetings in the future

### Suggestion:

Print out this document for easy reference. Write down your notes about these sessions in a separate notebook. This will help you to remember what you have learnt, to record your intended action steps and what you have prayed about. Later you can refer to your notes for prayer if you want to.

## Exploring who Jesus Christ is and what life is all about

During the first seven meetings we explore what Jesus Christ said about Himself. It might be good to know what other people say about Jesus Christ, but it is much more important to know what He said about Himself.

During meetings eight to sixteen we explore what life is all about. Philosophers, professors, poets, and people have all kinds of proposals about what the most important aspect of life is. Let us examine what Jesus Christ Himself said about this vital topic.

## Meeting 1: Jesus says I am the Bread of Life

This series of meetings commences by exploring seven statements that Jesus Christ made about Himself and Who He really is. These statements are commonly referred to as the “I AM” statements of Jesus Christ. One “I AM” statement is explored per meeting.

As we go through these “I AM” statements, we will quickly discover that Jesus Christ made very high claims about Himself. Claims that challenge us to rethink whatever we believe about Him. He courageously tells the truth as it is, not holding back anything that could be helpful to us.

If this is the first meeting of the group, invite the participants to introduce themselves and share why they have decided to join this Discovery Group

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Each participant shares as much as they feel free to do:

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- What are our deepest hungers as human beings? Think about the meaning and purpose of life, hope, worship, etc. Each participant shares their answer while the others listen attentively. The answers are not discussed.

### Look up: Listen to God’s Word (1/3 of your time)

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about the deepest hungers of human beings. Read John 6:32 – 58 aloud please. It is taken from the ESV (English Standard Version).

*Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

*They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”*

*Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*

*So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?”*

*How does He now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'*

*Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me — not that anyone has seen the Father except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

*The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"*

*So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*

*As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."*

### Digging Deeper

Jesus addresses His first few I AM statements to religious Jews. In this case He reminds them of how God miraculously provided for the needs of their forefathers in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt. Israel had moved out of Egypt where although they were oppressed and dreadfully treated, they knew where their next meal was coming from. They were able to cultivate their own food and sustenance and they had ready access to water. In the desert they had no way of cultivating and supplying themselves with food and water. Without food or water, they would die in the desert. Moses tells the story of how God provided a bread-like food for the people every morning for forty years. They had no need to plant and cultivate food because God provided. The truth is that having become a nomadic people, they were simply not able to provide for themselves and satisfy their needs. If God had not done so, they would have perished.

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about our hunger as human beings and about what He wants to do / could do about that hunger?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?



## Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles (family, friends, faith community, workplace, neighbourhood); E = exalting God

## Meeting 2: Jesus says I am the Light of the World

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- What has been the darkest period of your life and/or the lives of the people you love?  
Each participant shares their answer while the other group members listen attentively.  
The answers are not discussed.

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about times of darkness

### Look up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Please read the following quotes from the Bible aloud together. It is found in John 8:12-18 and Matthew 4:13-16.

#### John 8:12-18 ESV

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

*So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true."*

*Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent Me. In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness about Me."*

#### Matthew 4:13-16 ESV

*And leaving Nazareth He went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned."*

### Digging Deeper

Jesus addresses His first few I AM statements to religious Jews. In identifying Himself as the Light of the World, Jesus reminds these Jews of the important role that light played in the history of the Jewish nation. When God used Moses to deliver the people of Israel from the land of Egypt, God provided them with a pillar of cloud by day to protect them against the hot sun, and a pillar of fire by night, to help this now nomadic people to move about in the dark. In fact, in the Bible we are told that God Himself was present in the pillar of cloud and in the pillar of fire. See Exodus 13:21: *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.* ESV

For these Jews light not only represented God's protection in the midst of a hostile and unfamiliar environment, but it especially represents God's presence among His people. Even in their temple worship there was always a lampstand providing light. This lampstand represented the presence of God among His people.

When Jesus refers to Himself as the Light of the World, He is making it clear to His original audience that He is in fact the very presence of God, not only amongst the Jewish people, but to the whole world.

Light is revelatory – it shows or reveals what otherwise would not be seen in the darkness. We have all at some time stumbled over an object when we were trying to negotiate our way in the dark. Light protects because it exposes what is hidden in the darkness.

### Group interaction and discussion

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about the darkness and uncertainty in our lives and about what He wants to do / could do about that darkness?
- If these words were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?

## Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

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## Meeting 3: Jesus says I am the Door / Gate

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?
- What is the key to an abundant life? Each participant shares their answer while the other group members listen attentively. The answers are not discussed.

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about an abundant life.

### Look up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Please read the following quote from the Bible aloud together.

#### John 10:1-10 (ESV)

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To Him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."*

*This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them.*

*So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."*

### Digging Deeper

Jesus addresses His first few I AM statements to religious Jews and in this case to the Jewish leaders. In identifying Himself as the Door of the sheep, Jesus is reminding them of what God told their forefathers through the prophet Ezekiel, that He expects the leaders of His people to help them to get closer to God. God appoints leaders to be His representatives to care for, support, protect and provide for the people as He would do it. In fact, Jesus describes this blessed life as an abundant life. In this passage Jesus actually accuses the Jewish leaders of being a hindrance and in fact of stealing from the people the opportunity of finding and knowing God.

When Jesus refers to Himself as the Door to the sheep, He is saying that He is the only way into this abundant life. He is not only claiming to be God, but He is claiming to be the only way to God. In the same way that the door enables access to the sheep's pen, so Jesus says that He is the one through whom there is access to God. Jesus is making it clear to the Jews that He is the way to God. In referring to Himself as **THE** door, Jesus implies that there is no other door and no other way to God.

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about the abundant life and the way to get there?
- If these words were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?

### Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
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- When and where do we meet again?

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## Meeting 4: Jesus says I Am the Good Shepherd

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?
- What would it mean to you and your loved ones if you were deeply loved, protected, and cared for? Each participant shares their answer while the other group members listen attentively. The answers are not discussed.

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about such a kind of life.

### Look up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Please read the following quotes from the Bible aloud together.

#### John 10:11-18 ESV

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."*

#### Numbers 27:15-17 ESV

*Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd."*

## Psalm 23:1 ESV

*A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

### Digging Deeper

Jesus addresses His next I AM statement to the Jewish leaders. When God had miraculously delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, they spent 40 years as a nomadic people with no home and no way of providing for themselves and protecting themselves in a dangerous environment. As Moses prayed for this people, he reminded God that they need a leader who will take care of them, provide for them, and protect them so that they would not be like sheep without a shepherd. About 400 years later, David, who started out as a simple shepherd boy, but ended up as king of Israel and a forefather of Jesus, calls God his Shepherd and beautifully describes how God takes care of his every conceivable need.

When Jesus refers to Himself as the Good Shepherd, He is clearly claiming that He is able to take care of every need of those who are His sheep, those who know His voice and follow Him. Jesus especially contrasts Himself as Good Shepherd with other shepherds who are not capable of protecting the sheep from wolves.

With this I AM statement Jesus also refers to laying down His life for the sheep, which clearly distinguishes Him from any other possible shepherd, and is a reference to the fact that He will in fact die on the cross and be raised up from the dead, thereby providing what no other shepherd could provide, forgiveness of sins, resurrection from death, and eternal life – a life filled with purpose. Through His death and resurrection this Good Shepherd makes possible the restoration of all our relationships – with God, with others, with ourselves and with God’s creation. We will begin to experience His love, protection, and care in this life, and we will experience it fully in the new heaven and new earth.

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about sin and death in our lives and about what He wants to do / could do about sin and death?
- If these words were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?



## Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

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## Meeting 5: Jesus says I Am the Resurrection and the Life

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?
- What would it mean to you and your loved ones if you knew you would meet one another in God's presence one day, even though some of you may have died? Each participant shares their answer while the other group members listen attentively. The answers are not discussed.

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about such a kind of life.

### Look up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Please read the following quotes from the Bible aloud together.

#### John 11:17-27 ESV

*Now when Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.*

*So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You."*

*Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

*Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."*

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

*She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, Who is coming into the world."*

## Digging Deeper

Jesus addresses this I AM statement not to the crowds who gathered to hear Him speak and see His miracles and also not to the Jewish religious leaders of the time. He doesn't even address this I AM statement to His chosen disciples. Instead, Jesus chooses to address arguably the most profound of His I AM statements, to a broken family at the grave of a loved one. John tells us that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were siblings who were also followers of Jesus. Lazarus had fallen ill and died. Jesus arrives in their hometown, Bethany, four days after Lazarus' passing, to find a mourning family.

What ensues is a conversation between Jesus and the two sisters in which Jesus states that He is the Resurrection and the Life and that if someone believes in Him, even if they are dead, they will be resurrected, and that those who are living and believe in Him, will never die!! Martha and Mary, and those of Jesus' disciples who may have heard these words, did not yet know that Jesus would be crucified and then three days later rise from the dead and in so doing offer eternal life to those who believe in Him.

In this I AM statement Jesus tells this hurting family that through His death and resurrection, everyone who believes in Him, will also rise from the grave, and live eternally with Him. They will meet one another in His presence and enjoy life together forever.

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about life after death and what we could look forward to?
- If these words were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?

## Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles (family, friends, faith community, workplace, neighbourhood); E = exalting God

## Meeting 6: Jesus says I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?
- What would it mean to you if you knew the truth about the way to God, and about the meaning and purpose of your life? Each participant shares their answer while the other group members listen attentively. The answers are not discussed.

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about the way to God, and about meaningful life.

### Look up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Please read the following quote from the Bible aloud together.

#### John 14:1-7 (ESV)

*"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going."*

*Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?"*

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him."*

#### Digging Deeper

Jesus addresses this I AM statement to His disciples. He claims to be more than a prophet, more than an example, more than a teacher, more than a philosopher, more than a priest, more than a leader – He Himself is the Way to God; He Himself is the Truth itself; He Himself is Life itself.

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about the way to God, about the truth and about eternal life?
- If these words were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?

### Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

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## Meeting 7: Jesus says I Am the True Vine

### Look back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?
- What would it mean to you if you had access to unlimited resources to help you face all the difficulties you encounter in this broken world? Each participant shares their answer while the other group members listen attentively. The answers are not discussed.

Let us discover together what Jesus Christ has to say about access to unlimited resources to face the challenges of life.

### Look up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Please read the following quote from the Bible aloud together.

#### John15:1-17 (ESV)

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

### Digging Deeper

Jesus also addresses this I AM statement to His disciples. Just as branches draw all their resources from the vine, we can draw all the resources we need to live fruitful lives from Him. He will provide what He thinks is best. We need to make sure we remain connected to Him all the time.

- What if these words of Jesus Christ were true? What would that say about our access to the resources we need to live fruitful lives?
- If these words were true, what did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
- If these words of Jesus Christ were true, how could you respond to Him?

### Look forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's - Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles (family, friends, faith community, workplace, neighbourhood); E = exalting God

## Meeting 8: The Great Commandment Part One

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?

### Look Up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

#### Luke 10:27 (ESV) (Please read aloud twice)

*You shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, with all your soul,  
with all your strength and with all your mind  
and your neighbour as yourself.*

Pay attention to the order and sequence that Jesus uses.

- Order:
  - a. First commandment is about loving God in a comprehensive way
  - b. Second commandment is about loving our neighbour and loving ourselves (two in one)
- Sequence:
  - a. First love God.
  - b. Then love your neighbour.
  - c. Then love yourself.

The construction of these two love commandments reflects Jesus Christ's vision of life, including His view of spirituality. In short, He declares that life is about relationships in which God clearly takes first place. Together we look up to learn from Him.

Note: The Great Commandment has three elements: Love God, love your neighbour, love yourself. We will explore these three elements spread over three meetings. We begin with the first element: Love God



## Love God:

Why should we love God?

- He loves us first
- He deserves our love with His perfect character
- He created us for Himself
- He bought us for Himself through the blood of Christ
- He adopted us to Himself

To love God: what does it mean to you? Something to prayerfully explore in the time to come.

## What could we do to help us grow in loving God?

### A. Spend time with God daily in our Devotional Time: S.O.A.P.S.<sup>1</sup>

S = Scripture: Read one chapter of the Bible daily. Write down the verse(s) that strike you.

O = Observation: What does God say through these verses?

A = Application: How does God want me to do respond to what He said?

P = Prayer: Lord, help me to put Your Word into practice in my life

S = Share: Who could I bless by sharing what I learnt today?

How is it going with your daily devotional time? Would it be possible for you to try out SOAPS if you have not been using this approach?

### B. Once a week, take some extra time to do in-depth Bible Study.

Use a free digital Study Bible, such as e-Sword. You could study a topic, or a Bible book. Write down the results of what you have learnt on paper or digitally.

### C. Periodically spend an extended period with God

Begin your year with an annual week of prayer / retreat  
Half/whole day of fasting/prayer once a month / quarter

What would be do-able for you? Something to explore prayerfully...

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<sup>1</sup> See Addendum 1: SOAPS

## Discussion based on the Scripture and the related input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

## Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles; E = exalting God

## Meeting 9: The Great Commandment Part Two

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?

### Look Up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

#### Luke 10:27 (ESV) (Please read aloud twice)

*You shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, with all your soul,  
with all your strength and with all your mind  
and your neighbour as yourself.*

In Part One we looked at the order and sequence that Jesus uses.

- Order:
  - a. First commandment is about loving God in a comprehensive way
  - b. Second commandment is about loving our neighbour and loving ourselves (two in one)
- Sequence:
  - a. First love God.
  - b. Then love your neighbour.
  - c. Then love yourself.

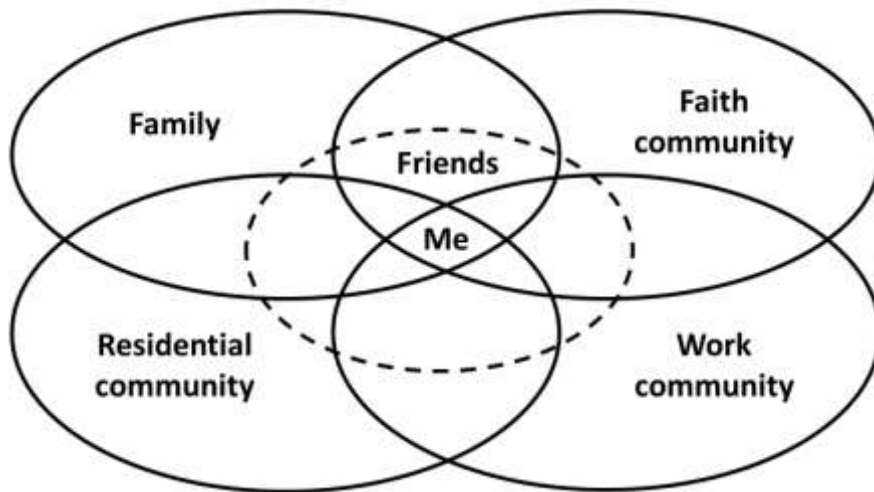
The construction of these two love commandments reflects Jesus Christ's vision of life, including His view of spirituality. In short, He declares that life is about relationships in which God clearly takes first place. Together we look up to learn from Him.

Note: The Great Commandment has three elements: Love God, love your neighbour, love yourself.

In this meeting we explore the second element: Love your neighbour.

**Love your neighbour:**

*Where is my neighbour? In my five social circles. I am a neighbour to these people...*



*Let us take a closer look at our five social circles:*

Social Circle number	A: Nearest neighbour	B: Neighbour	C: Neighbour further away	D: Neighbour (inter)national
1. Family	Direct family	Extended family	Tribe / People group	All tribes (inter)national
2. Friends	Closest friends	Good friends	Friends	Acquaintances
3. Faith community	Discovery Group	Home group / cell group	Local congregation	Body of Christ (inter)national
4. Workplace	Direct colleagues	Other colleagues	Institution/ Business / Clinic / etc	Professional world (inter)national
5. Neighbourhood	Direct neighbours	Neighbourhood / suburb	Town / city	Country / World

My responsibility to love my neighbour starts with my nearest neighbour in each of my social circles. I am learning to have more and more room in my heart for more and more people = the heavenly antidote to the deadly poison of selfishness/egoism. The real question to ask is this: Whose neighbour am I? In this way we become disciples of Jesus Christ who share His heart for the whole world.

**Personal action point:**

Indicate per social circle who is closest to you and who is furthest away from you. What does the Lord want to make clear to you about this? Is somebody too far away? Is somebody taking the rightful place of another? You might want to prayerfully explore these questions.

### Discussion based on the Scripture and the related input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE criteria:

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## Meeting 10: The Great Commandment Part Three

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now?
- How did it go with your "I will..." statement?

### Look Up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

#### Luke 10:27 (ESV) (Please read aloud twice)

*You shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, with all your soul,  
with all your strength and with all your mind  
and your neighbour as yourself.*

Pay attention to the order and sequence that Jesus uses.

- Order:
  - a. First commandment is about loving God in a comprehensive way
  - b. Second commandment is about loving our neighbour and loving ourselves (two in one)
- Sequence:
  - a. First love God.
  - b. Then love your neighbour.
  - c. Then love yourself.

The construction of these two love commandments reflects Jesus Christ's vision of life, including His view of spirituality. In short, He declares that life is about relationships in which God clearly takes first place. Together we look up to learn from Him.

Note: The Great Commandment has three elements: Love God, love your neighbour, love yourself.

In this meeting we will explore the third element: Love yourself.

...

## Love yourself

### Unhealthy self-love

- Interpreting / considering everything in relation to yourself and not to other people or things
- Tunnel vision for one's own interests and no eye for the other
- Put yourself on the throne of your heart as a matter of course; my will must be done
- Pride (comparing yourself with others and finding yourself superior)
- Inferiority (comparing yourself to others and finding yourself inferior)
- ?

### Healthy self-love

- Legitimate and appropriate attention to your own interests
- Good stewardship of your health in four areas: physical, psychological, spiritual, social
- Accepting your responsibility to grow to maturity by loving God and your neighbour as yourself
- Aim to grow in wisdom, maturity, and Christlikeness
- ?

### Some questions to help you discern between healthy and unhealthy self-love

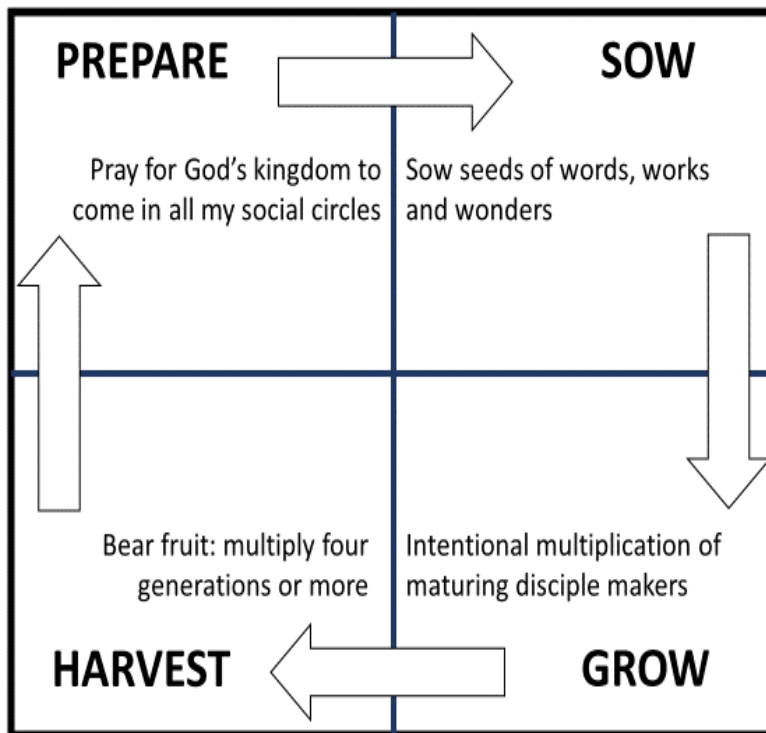
- Do you want to make yourself look better than others?
- Are you more concerned about how good you look on the outside than about your inner beauty?
- Do you act in order to be praised by others?
- Do you tend to have too high expectations of others, thus making sure they fall short of the mark?
- Are you more interested in people doing things your way than in working together to find the best ways?

Suggestion: Include enough re-creation / relaxation in your schedule to charge your batteries and prevent burn-out

What could you do to improve your health in these four areas (physical, psychological, spiritual, social)? Something to prayerfully explore in the coming period.

## What will be the result if I love God and my neighbour as myself?

We will see growth moving through continuing cycles of prepare, sow, grow and harvest. God will give the growth as we prepare, sow, disciple, and harvest.



What progress are you making in these four process areas?

### Discussion based on the Scripture and the related input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:



- For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
- For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
- For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE criteria:

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## Meeting 11: The Great Prayer: Pray “Our Father...”

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that makes you grateful?
- How did it go with the implementation of your “I will...” statements?
- What challenges/struggles are you facing right now?

### Look Up: Listen to God’s Word (1/3 of your time)

Read Matthew 6:9-13 (own translation) (Please read aloud twice)

Father of us who is in Heaven

**Your Name** be hallowed

**Your kingdom** be coming

**Your will** be done on earth as it is in heaven

*Give us* this day our daily bread

*Forgive us* our debts as we forgive those that trespass against us

*Lead us* not into temptation but

*Deliver us* from evil

**Your kingdom** it is

**Your power** it is

**Your glory** it is

For ever and ever, Amen

**Key points to discuss about praying as Jesus taught us to pray**

All the key elements of what prayer is really about are included in this inspired prayer.

Father of us who is in Heaven	←	God exists, He is where He was when He created the universe = outside it
Your Name be hallowed	←	His character is revealed in His Name – it is glorious!
Your kingdom be coming	←	Therefore, only His rule is acceptable
Your will be done	←	His rule comes when we do what He wants
On earth as it is in heaven		
Give us	←	Petition 1: We come with empty hands for everything we need; we are poor
Our daily bread today		
Forgive us	←	Petition 2: We need to be reconciled with God and with our neighbor
Our debts as we forgive our debtors		
Lead us	←	Petition 3: We need God’s guidance in the right ways and wisdom to avoid the wrong
Not into temptation but		
Deliver us	←	Petition 4: We need to be delivered from everything that prevents us from doing the will of our Father: our flesh, sin of ourselves and others, devil and demons, world and its seductions
From evil		
For:		
Your kingdom it is	←	We seek His kingdom first
Your power it is and	←	We can do this only in the power He gives
Your glory it is	←	Therefore, He gets all the glory
For ever and ever, Amen	←	In all eternity. Yes, so it is!

**Discussion based on the Scripture and related input**

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today’s Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

## How you could pray for the coming of God’s kingdom in your five social circles

Ministry Social Circles	Preparing Field Pray for God’s kingdom to come in all social circles	Sowing Field Sowing seeds of God’s kingdom through words, works and wonders	Growing Field Intentional multiplication of maturing disciple makers	Harvest Field Multiply four spiritual generations or more
	➔	➔	➔	
1. Family				
2. Friends				
3. Faith community				
4. Workplace				
5. Neighbourhood				

You could also use the above table for a prayerful evaluation how much progress you have made toward multiplication of maturing disciple makers in each of your social circles. Maybe something to do when you are alone with the Lord?

### Lost List:

Start with one or two persons (your V.I.P.’s) from your social circles 1, 2, 4 and 5. Grow the list gradually as your personal prayer life develops

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. “With the Lord’s help I will...” Participants share and write down one another’s answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord’s help to implement your “I will...” statements
  - For one another’s challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP’s – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your “I will” statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria

## Meeting 12: The Great Commission: Make disciples of all nations

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that makes you grateful?
- How did it go with the implementation of your "I will..." statements?
- What challenges/struggles are you facing right now?

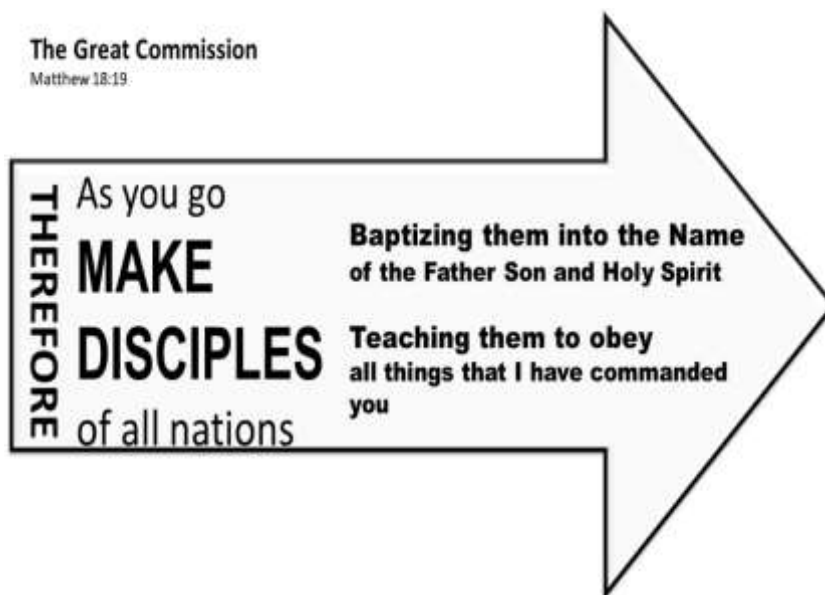
### Look Up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Read Matthew 28:18-20 aloud twice

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

*Therefore, as you go, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into 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;*

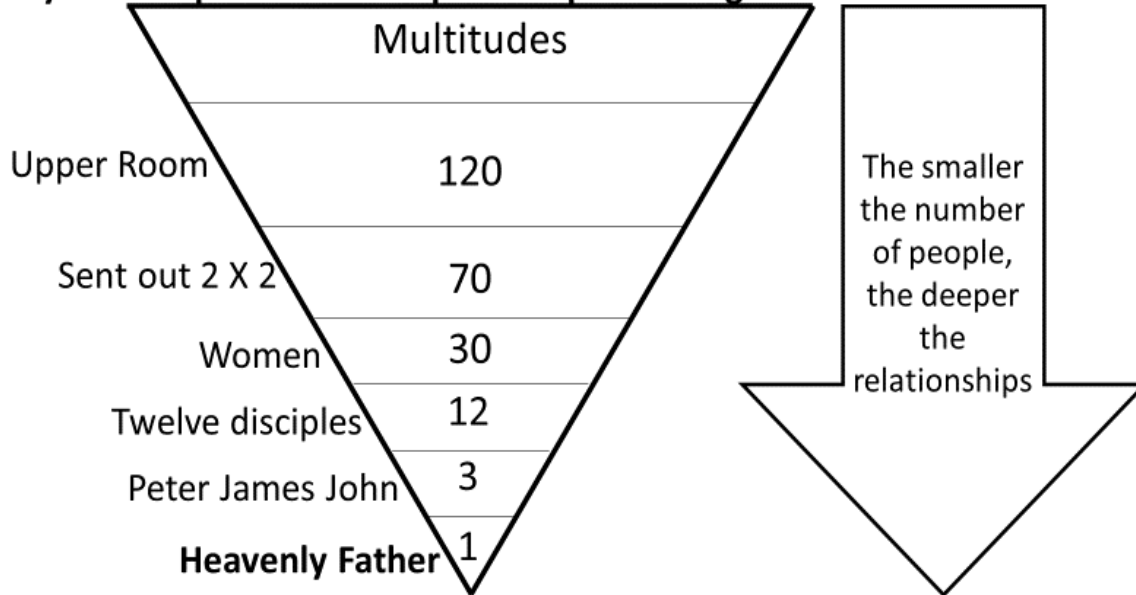
*and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*



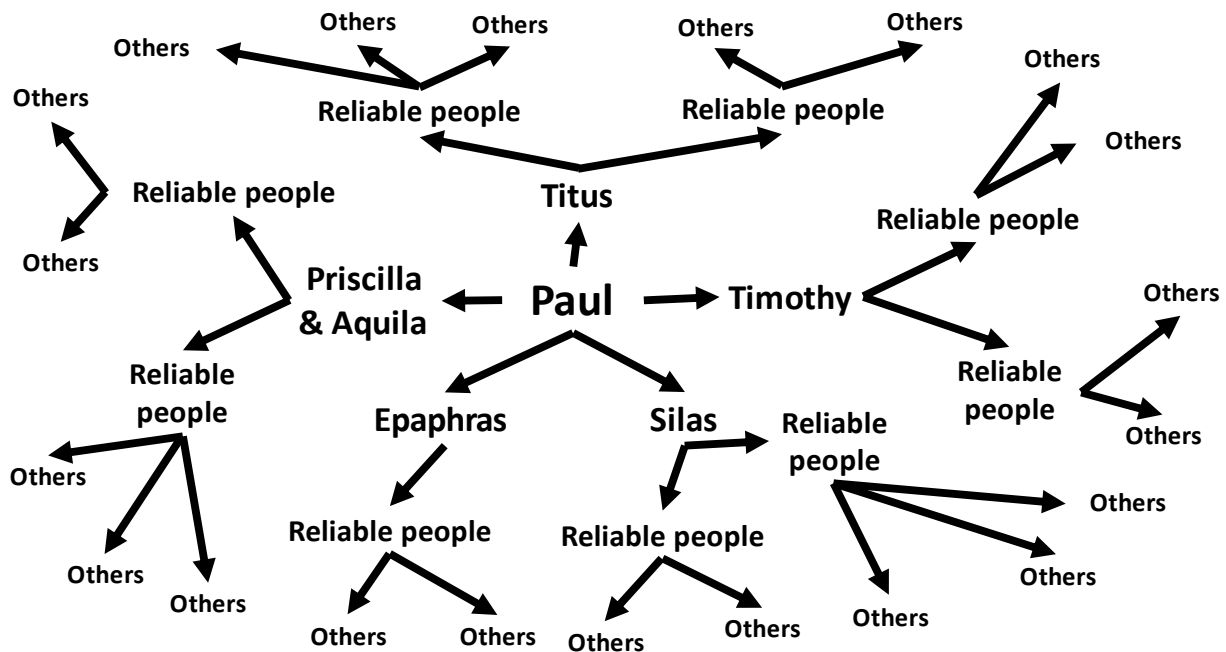
## Why the Great Commission?

### 1. The power of In-depth disciple making

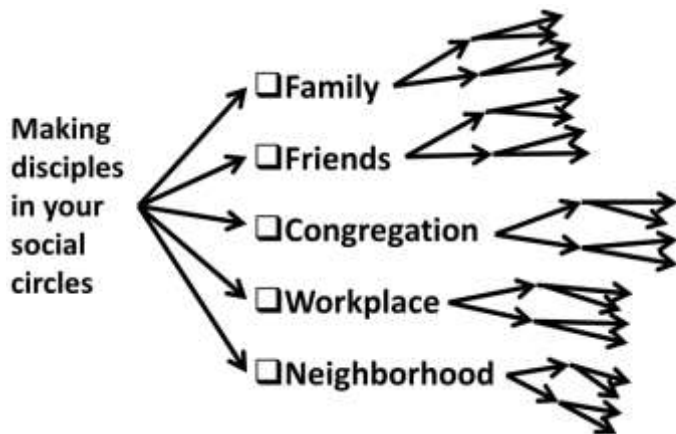
#### Why? 1. The power of in-depth disciple making



### 2. The power of multiplying of disciple makers (inter)nationally



### 3. The power of multiplying disciple makers in your social circles



Why does the Lord want you to become involved in the intentional multiplication of disciple makers?

#### Discussion based on the Scripture and related Input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

#### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria

## Meeting 13: The Great Priority: Seek first God’s Kingdom

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that makes you grateful?
- How did it go with the implementation of your “I will...” statements?
- What challenges are you facing?

### Look Up: Listen to God’s Word (1/3 of your time)

Read Matthew 6:32b-34a aloud twice

*For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things...*

The purpose of this meeting is to help you focus on two Kingdom of God priorities:

1. Preparing the field through prayer, and
2. Sowing seeds of God’s kingdom

#### 1. Seek first God’s kingdom through prayer:

How do you pray for His kingdom to come in your social circles? Any progress? Helpful discoveries? Do you have encouragement or advice you can share with us? Group members share with one another.

Ministry Social Circles	Preparing Field	Sowing Field	Growing Field	Harvest Field
	Pray for God’s kingdom to come in all social circles	Sowing seeds of God’s kingdom through words, works and wonders	Intentional multiplication of maturing disciple makers	Multiply four spiritual generations or more
1. Family				
2. Friends				
3. Faith community				
4. Workplace				
5. Neighbourhood				



## 2. Seek first God's kingdom through sowing:

### You can sow seeds of God's kingdom through sharing Good News

Sharing Good News has three elements: Their Story; Your Story, the Big Story.

Their Story = their situation; Your Story = your testimony; the Big Story = the Gospel.

First find out what Their Story is. Then share appropriate elements from Your Story. When the Lord gives the opportunity, share the Big Story.

### Their Story

We need to learn to listen well because we want to connect to what God is already doing in their lives. Do this by asking open-ended questions such as the two key questions we ask at the beginning of each meeting:

- What happened this past week that makes you grateful?
- What are you struggling with? What challenges are you facing?
- Please tell me more about yourself
- How do you see the purpose of your life?
- Where do you go for answers when you face difficult decisions?

### Your Story

You need to learn how to share Your Story in fifteen seconds and in two minutes. It is helpful to learn to share your story in two ways.

- The first way is the **Three-Part Story**: A. Before Jesus, my life was like this. B. Then Jesus became involved. C. Now my life looks like this.

The main point here: you want to emphasize the significant difference Jesus Christ has made in your life.

- Application: Share the fifteen second version of your Three-Part Story with one another in the group right now.
- The second way is the **Why Jesus Story**: The reason why I am a disciple of Jesus Christ is...

The main point here: you want to explain why it made sense to you to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

- Application: Share the fifteen second version of your Why Jesus Story with one another in the group right now.

### How to make a good connection between Their Story and Your Story

The flow of the conversation: Everyday topic → meaningful topic → spiritual topic. Avoid the mistake of jumping into a spiritual conversation before people are ready for it. Remember, we are witnesses of Christ who share about Him with permission, respect, and sensitivity.

First, listen to Their Story until you get an impression of what God is already doing in their lives.

Then select an appropriate part of Your Story and share it in fifteen seconds. The Three-Part Story works well here.

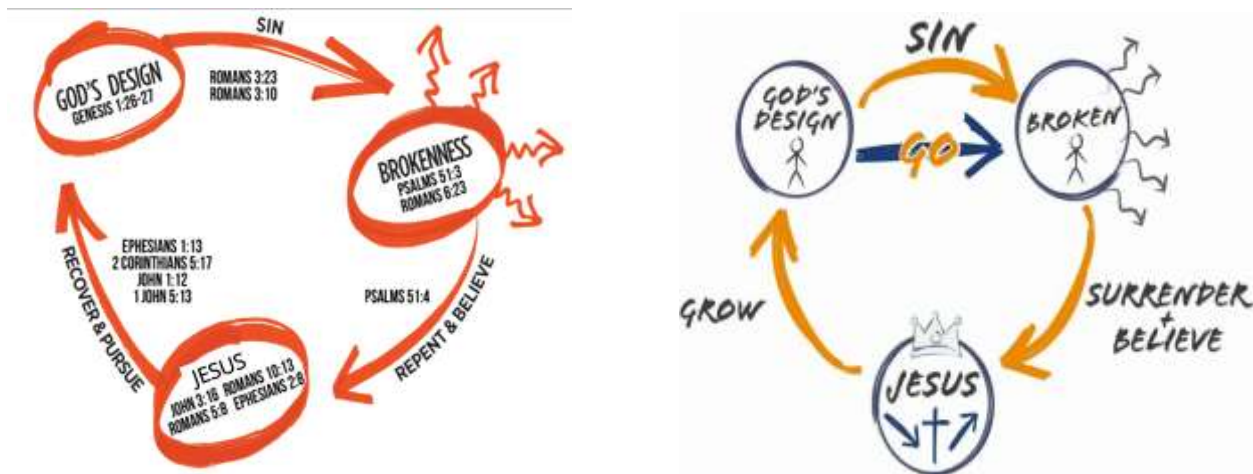
Get their feedback about what you shared. If their response indicates that they are interested, ask whether they would like to hear the Big Story.

If they agree to hear the Big Story, share it with them.

## The Big Story

A helpful way to share the Big Story is to use the Three Circles presentation. You can watch various versions on YouTube. This is one possibility:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W8ynRMr59k>



Application: Watch the video and practice how to share it on some of your friends and/or family members. Next time each member of the group will get the opportunity to share the Three Circles Big Story with the group

You can sow seeds of God's kingdom through B.L.E.S.S. prayers

If they agree to be prayed for, pray a B.L.E.S.S. prayer for them.

- B = Body → Healing, physical well-being
- L = Labor → Work / finances
- E = Emotional → Psychological well-being
- S = Social → Relationships in 5 Social Circles
- S = Spiritual → Growth in knowing / loving God

Make it a habit to pray BLESS prayers for the people in your five social circles or whenever somebody asks you to pray for them. A BLESS prayer demonstrates an integral approach to prayer

### Discussion based on the Scripture and input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles (family, friends, faith community, workplace, neighbourhood); E = exalting God

## Meeting 14: The Great Lifestyle: Live the Beatitudes

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that makes you grateful?
- How did it go with the implementation of your “I will...” statements?
- What challenges are you facing?

### Look Up: Listen to God’s Word (1/3 of your time)

Read Matthew 5:3-11 (Please read aloud twice)

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The main point of this Meeting is to make clear that blessedness/happiness is not a goal to aim for. Rather, it is the fruit of having a Christlike character. That is what we should aim for! In the Beatitudes we learn about eight key characteristics of Christlikeness.

### What does it mean to be blessed?

“Blessed” = ‘makarioi’ in original Greek language of New Testament. Root words of ‘makarioi’ = ‘me’ (not) + ‘ker’ (death / fate) → not enslaved by death or fate.

Two-fold meaning of ‘Blessed’:

1. The profound eschatological religious joy of the citizens of the kingdom of God that transcends even adverse circumstances
2. A person of whom Jesus Christ says:
  1. You are singularly favoured
  2. You are graciously approved
  3. You are a liberated heir of My abundant life

Note: Jesus said, "Blessed are..." and not "Blessed will be..."

In summary: In Christ we already have fulness of blessing. We already "are blessed" if we have Christlike character. This is where we need growth – to become more like Jesus.

### Eight characteristics of Christlikeness

Instead of reading this whole page aloud, take some time to pray read this page silently and prayerfully for yourself. Ask the Lord what He wants to say to you personally about these characteristics. Anything He wants you to repent of? Priorities you should put right? Restitution to make? Forgiveness to be extended? Forgiveness to be asked? Reconciliation to be pursued?

#### Blessed are **the poor in spirit**

*The poor in spirit deeply realize they are unable to save themselves, unable to buy their salvation, unable to merit their salvation. They also deeply realize that Jesus Christ is the only one who can save them. Therefore, they repent of their sin, they accept His rule as Lord and Saviour, and give their lives to seek God's kingdom first*

#### Blessed are **those who mourn**

*Those who mourn are grieving because of the destructive power, presence, and impact of sin, sinful nature, Satan, and the world*

#### Blessed are **the meek**

*The meek are those who persevere in using the minimum power needed in to bring about justice and agape love in relationships, thus promoting the coming of God's kingdom*

#### Blessed are **those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**

*Those who seek, proclaim, and demonstrate God's kingdom and His righteousness with everything they have and are*

#### Blessed are **the merciful**

*Those who extend mercy and forgiveness because they have received the same from the Lord, and as a result demonstrate the Lord's compassion with words, works, and wonders.*

#### Blessed are **the pure in heart**

*Those who have been cleansed from sin and sinful behaviour on the inside and who have been set apart for God to be used for His purposes, and who have given themselves fully to Biblical processes of becoming more Christlike.*

### Blessed are the peacemakers

*Those who in the power of the Holy Spirit bring God's shalom into situations of conflicts, problems, hindrances, alienation, and enmity.*

### Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake

*Those who persevere in obeying the Lord and in doing what is right in God's eyes, regardless of the amount of persecution they experience in the process of doing so.*

### Discussion based on the Scripture and related Input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's - Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles (family, friends, faith community, workplace, neighbourhood); E = exalting God

## Meeting 15: The Great Calling: As the Father has sent Me...

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that makes you grateful?
- How did it go with the implementation of your "I will..." statements?
- What challenges are you facing?

### Look Up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

John 20:21 and Luke 4:16-21 (Read aloud twice)

*"Shalom!" Jesus repeated.*

*"Just as the Father has sent Me,  
even so I myself am sending you."*

-----

*So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:*

*"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED; TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."*

*Then He closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

The main point of this Meeting is that Jesus Christ is sending each one of us out to continue in the calling He Himself has received.

Every one of us is called to full-time service in the Kingdom of God: in family, among friends, in the congregation, in the workplace, in the neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth – wherever He wants to place and use us.

The calling of Jesus included four pillars of ministry that are automatically part of our calling. We will explore these elements briefly.

As you explore the four pillars, remember to consider the four aspects of integral ministry: physical, psychological, spiritual, social.

### **Pillar 1: Preaching (Preach the Gospel to the poor)**

Proclaiming and demonstrating the Good News of the Kingdom of God through words, works and wonders.

Wise witnesses who are Christ's ambassadors with respect, permission, and sensitivity

### **Pillar 2: Healing (Heal the broken-hearted; recover sight to the blind)**

Integral healing: physical, psychological, spiritual, and social

We cannot always heal, but we can always care

Good palliative care turns a deathbed into a doorway of hope

### **Pillar 3: Deliverance (Liberty to the captives)**

Setting people free from the power of sin, self, Satan and the world

### **Pillar 4: Justice (Set at liberty those who are oppressed)**

Proclaiming and demonstrating God's justice in personal and corporate life

Furthering Biblical Christian ethics in healthcare



For personal application: Take some time alone with the Lord and ask Him what He wants to say to you about these four pillars of ministry in your life and calling. Make sure you promote and practice integral ministry: physical, psychological, spiritual, and social.

### Discussion based on the Scripture and related Input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord's help to implement your "I will..." statements
  - For one another's challenges/struggles shared in Part One
  - For the people on your Lost List (VIP's – Very Important Persons)
- When and where do we meet again?

**Note:** make sure your "I will" statements meet the SMARTIE goal criteria:

S = specific; M = measurable; A = attainable; R = result-oriented; T = time-limited; I = in line with the vision to see God's kingdom come in your five social circles (family, friends, faith community, workplace, neighbourhood); E = exalting God

## Meeting 16: The Great Focus: You have done this to Me...

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of your time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that makes you grateful?
- How did it go with the implementation of your "I will..." statements?
- What challenges are you facing?

### Look Up: Listen to God's Word (1/3 of your time)

Read Matthew 25:31-46 CJB aloud twice

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, accompanied by all the angels, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The 'sheep' he will place at his right hand and the 'goats' at his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you made me your guest, I needed clothes and you provided them, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the people who have done what God wants will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you our guest, or needing clothes and provide them? When did we see you sick or in prison, and visit you?'*

*The King will say to them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you did these things for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did them for me!'*

*Then he will also speak to those on his left, saying, 'Get away from me, you who are cursed! Go off into the fire prepared for the Adversary and his angels! For I was hungry, and you gave me no food, thirsty and you*

*gave me nothing to drink, a stranger and you did not welcome me, needing clothes and you did not give them to me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they too will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, needing clothes, sick or in prison, and not take care of you?' And he will answer them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you refused to do it for the least important of these people, you refused to do it for me!' They will go off to eternal punishment, but those who have done what God wants will go to eternal life.*

Main point of this meeting: Our Lord takes it very personally how we treat other people. He focuses our attention on target groups that are very important to Him. We need to understand His heart for people so that our lives and ministries reflect His focus.

**The target groups that are important to Jesus Christ**

Go through the list of target groups below. What examples of these target groups do you see in your family, among your friends, in your workplace, in your neighbourhood/city? Remember to consider their needs in an integral way: physical, psychological, spiritual, and social.

- The hungry: Those who need healthy food
- The thirsty: Those who need safe drinking water
- The stranger: Those who need social integration
- The naked: Those who need to have their shame covered
- The sick: Those who need compassionate care
- The prisoner: Those who need to face the consequences of their sin, make restitution, be reconciled with those they have harmed and eventually be reintegrated into society

INTEGRAL NEEDS	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Psychological</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>	<i>Social</i>
Hunger/food				
Thirst/water				
Social isolation / integration				
Clothes / covering				
Sick / Compassion				
Prisoner / deliverance				

### Discussion based on the Scripture and related Input

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today's Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3 of your time)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. "With the Lord's help I will..." Participants share and write down one another's answers
- Pray with one another:
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- When and where do we meet again?

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## Now that you have completed this Discovery Group Series:

You could discover more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

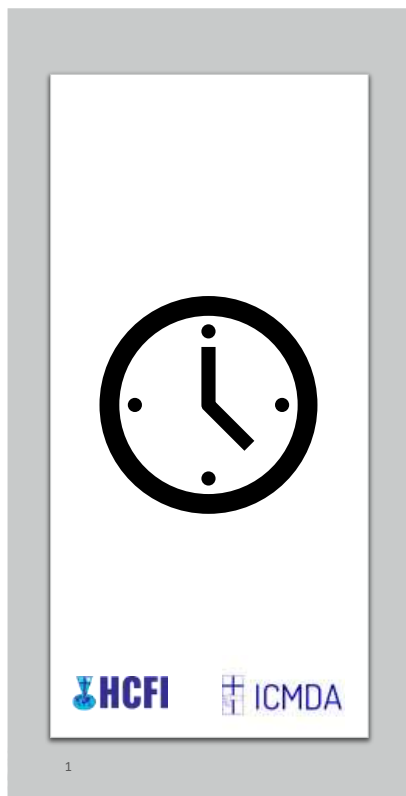
Available materials:

- Discovering God (the Big Story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation)
- Discovering God's kingdom (the teachings of Jesus Christ about God's kingdom)
- Discovering Integral Health and Healing (Exploring key aspects of health and healing)

The latest versions of these materials are available on:

[www.hcfglobal.org/discipleship](http://www.hcfglobal.org/discipleship)

## Addendum One: SOAPS



# S.O.A.P.S.

## Daily Devotional Time

Use a systematic approach to go through the whole Bible in your daily devotional times

To start with, prayerfully read one chapter a day and use a devotional notebook to write down your SOAPS notes

*Option one:* Start at the beginning of the Bible and proceed from there

*Option two:* Switch between a chapter in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament on alternate days

*Option three:* The Seven Sections Approach, which is explained later

Choose the option that works best for you

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## Use a Devotional Notebook to record the five elements of your SOAPS

1. **S = Scripture:** Prayerfully read one chapter of the Bible. Write down the portion of that chapter that speaks to you
2. **O = Observation:** What does this portion of the Bible say about God, His ways, people, you?
3. **A = Application:** How does God want you to respond to what He said to you through His Word?
4. **P = Prayer:** Ask God to help you to respond to Him in a way that brings Him joy.
5. **S = Share:** With whom will you try to share what you learnt during your SOAPS time?

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## The Seven Sections Approach



1. Genesis to Deuteronomy
2. Joshua to Job
3. Psalms
4. Proverbs to Song of Solomon
5. Isaiah to Malachi
6. Matthew to Acts
7. Romans to Revelation

*Practical Tip:*

*You might want to make seven book markers  
one for each section*

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## How to go through the Seven Sections:



- **Week 1**

**1<sup>st</sup> day:** Read chapter 1 of section 1

**2<sup>nd</sup> day:** Read chapter 1 of section 2

**3<sup>rd</sup> day:** Read chapter 1 of section 3, etc.

After one week you will have read the first chapter in each of the seven sections

- **Week 2**

**1<sup>st</sup> day:** Read chapter 2 of section 1

**2<sup>nd</sup> day:** Read chapter 2 of section 2

**3<sup>rd</sup> day:** Read chapter 2 of section 3, etc.

At the end of the second week, you will have read the second chapter in each of the seven sections

- In week 3 you read chapter 3 in each of the seven sections. Continue using the same systematic approach to read the whole Bible

Once you have completed a section, go through it again. You will read some sections more frequently but that is fine

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## Addendum Two: Three-Part Approach in Discovery Groups

### Look Back: Celebration and Fellowship (1/3 of time)

Welcome everybody and open with prayer.

- What happened in the past week that you are thankful for?
- How did it go with the implementation of your “I will...” statements?
- What challenges / struggles are you facing right now? (take notes, you will pray for one another in the third part of the meeting)

### Look Up: Listening to God’s Word (1/3 of time)

#### Scripture portion taken from the Scripture List

#### Discussion based on the Scripture

- Share your answers to one or more of these questions:
  - What did you discover in today’s Bible input?
  - What did you learn about God / His ways / Jesus Christ?
  - What did you learn about people / yourself?
- What could Jesus be saying to you about what He has taught you in this meeting? How could that affect your family, friends, congregation, workplace, and neighbourhood?

### Look Forward: Bless one another to obey (1/3)

- What does Jesus want you to do about what He taught you? Pray about it now and write down your answer. “With the Lord’s help I will...” Participants share and write down one another’s answers
- Pray with one another:
  - For the Lord’s help to implement your “I will...” statements
  - For one another’s challenges/struggles shared in Part One
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- When and where do we meet again?

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