

# A Guide for D-Groups and Disciple-Making

For D-Group Leaders

Updated July 2024



**FULTONDALE  
FIRST BAPTIST**  
LOVE GOD. LOVE PEOPLE. MAKE DISCIPLES.

# Our Mission

The church's mission is to love God, love people, and make disciples. This mission is directly mandated in two main scriptures: The Great Commandment and The Great Commission.

When asked what the most important commandment is, Jesus replies in Mark 12:30-31, *"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

Then, just before He leaves His disciples for good, He shares the following mandate in Matthew 28:19-20: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."*

Since disciple-making is such a major part of what we believe God has called us to do, it's important to understand what this entails and what it looks like. This guide will help you as you seek to be a disciple-maker and as you complete the mission God has given each of us. This guide is intended to give you a structure and path forward as you seek to make disciples. As you get more experience in discipling others, you will find you need this guide less and less. 😊

There is also a companion app you can install and use on your phone. You can find that app at [dgroup.myffbc.com](http://dgroup.myffbc.com).



LOVE GOD.



LOVE PEOPLE.



MAKE DISCIPLES.

# Disciple-Making Road Map

Many times, people will show up at a church or even join a church and not know what to do next. Oftentimes, churches make the process to plug in too complicated. Even worse, many churches don't have a defined process for people to follow to grow and mature in their faith. Instead, they simply offer various ministries and programs and encourage people to get as involved as possible. So, if our mission is to help people love God, love people, and make disciples, then we had better define the path to do that and make it simple enough so people can follow it. That is why we have developed the Disciple-Making Road Map. This pathway gives a clear direction and simple next steps to continue to grow and be a disciple who makes disciples. This is a picture of the pathway we desire for everyone who is a part of FFBC!

## The Disciple-Making Road Map



---

**KNOW**  
GOD

---

WORSHIP  
STARTING  
POINT

---

**CONNECT**  
TO COMMUNITY

---

LIFE GROUPS  
AGE-GRADED MINISTRIES  
SERVING TEAMS

---

**GROW**  
SPIRITUALLY

---

D-GROUPS  
MIDWEEK

---

**CHANGE**  
THE WORLD

---

GIVING  
SHARING  
MISSIONS

# Defining the Terms

## What is a Disciple?

So, we are supposed to be making disciples. The logical next question is, “What is a Disciple?” Rather than invent a definition of our own, let’s look at God’s Word to determine what a disciple really is.

A Disciple is a **devoted follower of Christ**

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. **Luke 9:23**

who is **growing** from the **inside out**.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. **Romans 12:2**

who **loves God**,

Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **Mark 12:29-20**

**loves people**,

“The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” **Mark 12:31**

and **makes disciples**.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:19-20**

## What does Disciple-Making mean?

Since Jesus gave us the mandate to make disciples in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), we need to define what that process looks like.

**Definition of Disciple-Making:** Intentionally entering into someone's life to help them know & follow Jesus & obey His teachings, & to equip them to repeat the process.

Disciple-Making doesn't happen by accident. It's intentional. There has to be a plan, an effort, a path forward. It also doesn't happen at a distance. When you intentionally enter into someone's life, that means you do life together. It's not like a class or seminar. It's a very informal process that is all about life-on-life.

Notice that the process of disciple-making doesn't happen ONLY AFTER someone trusts in Jesus. Part of making disciples means we help people (those who haven't yet followed Jesus) to know Jesus.

One of the goals of course is to help people grow in their relationship with Christ and to walk in obedience. However, the main goal is to multiply by equipping the disciple to replicate themselves.

## What is a D-Group?

A D-Group, or Discipleship Group, is a same-gender group of 3-5 believers that meet regularly for the purpose of being disciples who make disciples. When they gather, they pray, study God's word, memorize scripture, hold each other accountable, and do life together. Each group is led by a trained and equipped disciple leader who has been discipled. We can't disciple others unless we've first been discipled.

Being a part of a D-Group is a high-level commitment. Usually, those you lead will meet your expectations. That means if you set expectations high, they will strive to meet them. However, it also means if you set the bar low, they will probably aim low, too. This group is meant to be an accelerated growth period for both you and those you lead. The goal of each member of a D-Group is to replicate themselves in 12-18 months and in turn lead a D-Group of their own. This is the way we multiply spiritually and grow as believers in a deep way. This is the method Jesus gave us and that the Apostle Paul followed as well.

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. **2 Timothy 2:2***

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. **1 Corinthians 1:11***

## What is the difference between a D-Group and a Bible Study?

First, the D-Group is a closed group, rather than an open group. Sunday school classes and Bible studies are usually open groups (or they should be); that is, they are open to anyone and everyone who would like to attend. A D-Group is, by design, closed to a handful of people. A person joins the group by invitation only.

Second, the purpose of a D-Group is completely different. While Sunday school classes and Bible studies exist for the purposes of growth and fellowship, they have an underlying additional purpose (or they should have): evangelism. Sunday school classes are designed to reach lost people by getting them involved in the group. A D-Group, in contrast, consists of believers who desire a deeper walk with Christ. It is not evangelistic in its form or function, but in its fruit: it makes disciples, who then make disciples.

Lastly, the setting of the D-Group is completely different. It is the shift from a classroom with one teacher facilitating a discussion of a room full of students to an intimate, accountable relationship with a handful of like-minded people. A d-group is about doing life together. A teacher shares information, while a disciple leader shares life; a teacher aims for the head, while a disciple leader aims for the heart; a teacher measures knowledge, while a disciple leader measures faith; a teacher is an authority, while a disciple leader is a servant; and a teacher says, "Listen to me," while a disciple leader says, "Follow me."

This blueprint, sketched by Jesus Christ through His personal example, is how discipleship is accomplished in the lives of believers, and, ultimately, within the local church. When this plan is followed, those involved will participate in three dynamics that result in growth in their personal lives, as well as in the Kingdom: community, accountability, and multiplication.

## How do I choose who to challenge to be in a D-Group?

When you are thinking and praying about who to ask to join your D-Group, it's important to look for people who have FAITH:

**F**aithful – They are faithful to do what they already know.

**A**vailable – They have time and availability to commit to the group time and process.

**I**nterested – They have expressed interest and a desire to go deeper.

**T**eachable – They are willing to learn and display an attitude of humility.

**H**ungry – They show a passion to know God more. You don't have to beg them to be a part.

It's important to remember you aren't looking for perfect people. It's also vital that if the people you are considering don't display most of these 5 attributes, you will be much better off in not challenging them to a discipleship group—at least at this point in time.

## Three Indispensable Relationships

Howard Hendricks taught that every believer should foster three relationships in their life:

- A Paul—an older and wiser believer from whom you can learn
- A Barnabas—a friend who teaches, encourages, and holds you accountable
- A Timothy—a young believer [believers] in whom you are investing

These three relationships allow others to speak into your life, and, at the same time, allow you to speak into others' lives. Notice the wisdom of Solomon: *Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17*

## The Goal in Disciple-Making

You've heard the old adage, "If you aim for nothing, you'll hit it every time." We believe that is true in making disciples. We must have a goal or target of the kind of person produced in this process if we hope to develop mature followers of Christ. There are hundreds of things we would like to see in every disciple, but we believe there are a few things that define a developing disciple. Again, we aren't aiming to produce a perfect disciple, but we want them to be a disciple who is being transformed to be more like Christ. Our goal in making disciples is to help equip and train disciples that consistently employ these practices before each one LEADS.

<b>L</b> ive Generously	They are generous with their money, their time, and their gifts. To live a generous life means they are operating from their gifting and are active in serving and giving.
<b>E</b> ngage in God's Word	They aren't just hearing or reading the Bible, they are living it out in obedience.
<b>A</b> ctive in Sharing the Gospel Story	A disciple who makes disciples can't help but share the love of Jesus with those around them. They share the Gospel through their story and biblical truth in love.
<b>D</b> evoted to Prayer	A disciple understands that nothing happens apart from God and therefore makes prayer a big part of their lives.
<b>S</b> haring Life in Community	A life of a disciple who makes disciples must be lived in the context of close community with other followers of Jesus.

# WHAT DOES A TYPICAL D-GROUP MEETING LOOK LIKE?

Every D-Group will look a bit different because of the varying personalities involved. However, it is a good idea to follow something similar to this:

## TIME TO CATCH UP

1

Spend as much time as possible here. Remember, the most important part of a D-Group is doing life together, so don't feel like you need to rush the relationship-building time.

2

## PRAYER TIME

Spend some time sharing personal issues and prayer concerns. It's a good idea to limit prayer requests to immediate family or close friends. That way the prayer time doesn't go off the rails. Praying for others is important, but it's just not the time or place to do it here.

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY/ACCOUNTABILITY

3

This is a time when you hold one another accountable to the memory verse and any other areas of accountability for the group.

4

## H.E.A.R. JOURNAL DISCUSSION

This is the time when you discuss what you learned together in your personal Bible Study during the week. Make sure to specifically discuss highlights, explanations, applications, and responses.

## EVANGELISM, MISSIONS, & MULTIPLICATION

5

Spend some time talking about people you are praying for and building relationships with that don't know Christ. This is also a time to discuss a ministry project for the group. After a few months, also begin talking about what multiplying the group will look like.

6

## CORE DISCUSSION

This is a time you will always lead and it will be a time you teach or guide them in learning Core Beliefs, Core Practices, and Core Concepts. (See more info on this later in the guide)

## PRAY

Close in prayer.

7

After the first few D-Group meetings, it's a good idea to assign different parts of the group time to each group member. This helps them learn to lead the group and builds experience and confidence. Some things you can assign each week are prayer, scripture memory and accountability, leading the journal discussion, evangelism discussion, ministry project discussion, multiplication discussion, etc...

## H.E.A.R. Journal

The H.E.A.R. journaling method promotes reading the Bible with a life-transforming purpose. It's not about checking off the boxes on your daily reading schedule; your purpose is to read in order to understand and respond to God's Word.

The acronym H.E.A.R. stands for Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond. Each of these four steps contributes to creating an atmosphere to hear God speak. After settling on a reading plan and establishing a time for studying God's Word, you will be ready to H.E.A.R. from God.

For an illustration, let's assume that you begin your quiet time in the book of 2 Timothy, and today's reading is the first chapter of the book. Before reading the text, pause to sincerely ask God to speak to you. It may seem trite, but it is absolutely imperative that we seek God's guidance in order to understand His Word (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). Every time we open our Bibles, we should pray the simple prayer that David prayed: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law (Word)" (Psalm 119:18).

### **H**

After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, open your notebook or journal, and at the top left-hand corner, write the letter H. This exercise will remind you to read with a purpose. In the course of your reading, one or two verses will usually stand out and speak to you. After reading the passage of Scripture, **HIGHLIGHT** each verse that speaks to you by copying it under the letter "H". Write out the following:

- The name of the book
- The passage of Scripture
- The chapter and verse numbers that especially speak to you
- A title to describe the passage

This practice will make it easier to find the passage when you want to revisit it in the future.

### **E**

After you have highlighted the passage, write the letter "E" under the previous entry. At this stage you will **EXPLAIN** what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- Why was this written?
- To whom was it originally written?
- How does it fit with the verses before and after it?
- Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?
- What is He intending to communicate through this text?

At this point, you are beginning the process of discovering the specific and personal word that God has for you from His Word. What is important is that you are engaging the text and wrestling with its meaning.

## **A**

After writing a short summary of what you think the text means, write the letter “A” below the letter “E”. Under the “A”, write the word **APPLY**. This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

- How can this help me?
- What does this mean today?
- What would the application of this verse look like in my life?
- What does this mean to me?
- What is God saying to me?

These questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and your world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you from the specific passage or verse. Answer these questions under the “A”. Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

## **R**

Finally, below the first three entries, write the letter “R” for **RESPOND**. Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you will be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing out a prayer to God. For example, you may ask God to help you to be more loving, or to give you a desire to be more generous in your giving. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you have just read.

Notice that all of the words in the H.E.A.R. formula are action words: Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond. God does not want us to sit back and wait for Him to drop some truth into our laps. Instead of waiting passively, God desires that we actively pursue Him. Jesus said,

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).

Think of the miracle of the Bible. Over centuries, God supernaturally moved upon a number of men in an unusual way that resulted in them writing the exact words of God. God led His people to recognize these divine writings, and to distinguish them from everything else that has ever been written. Then God’s people brought these 66 books together. Then God gave men knowledge to copy and transmit the Bible so that all people could have it. All because God has something to say to you.

## Sample H.E.A.R. Entry

**Read:** Philippians 4:10-13

**Date:** 11-1-2023

### **H (Highlight)**

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

### **E (Explain)**

Paul was telling the church at Philippi that he has discovered the secret of contentment. No matter the situation in Paul’s life, he realized that Christ was all he needed, and Christ was the one who strengthened him to persevere through difficult times.

### **A (Apply)**

In my life, I will experience many ups and downs. My contentment is not found in circumstances. Rather, it is based on my relationship with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus gives me the strength I need to be content in every circumstance of life. I will choose not to find fulfillment in my possessions. No more purchases this week.

### **R (Respond)**

Lord Jesus, please help me as I strive to be content in You. Through Your strength, I can make it through any situation I must face.

While you can use any Bible reading plan with a H.E.A.R. Journal, we recommend using either the Foundations 260 plan that helps disciples discover the comprehensive message of the Bible over a year, The Gospel Thread plan that chronologically covers the Gospel story throughout the Bible in a chapter a day, the NT260 that covers the entire New Testament in a year, or another FFBC churchwide reading plan. You can find those plans at [MyFFBC.com/Bible](http://MyFFBC.com/Bible).

# Kairos Journal

The Kairos Journal method is an alternative to the H.E.A.R. Journal. It is a more simplified version and is based on a core principle called the Kairos Circle that you'll find later in this guide. The thrust of the Kairos Journal method is to learn to engage God's Word in a way that transforms your heart, mind, and life. It's also not about checking off the boxes on your daily reading schedule; your purpose is to read in order to understand and respond to God's Word.

The Kairos Journal method is based on two core questions: 1) What is God saying to me? And 2) What am I going to do about it?

To use this method, we would encourage the following process:

- Pray and ask God to reveal Himself and His truth to you through His word. Ask for understanding and the wisdom to know how to live it out.
- Write the date and the scripture being studied at the top of the page
- Read the passage, taking time to think about the following questions
- Write the question, "What is God saying to me?" Below that, write your notes and observations from that passage. Think through the context, what is being conveyed, and any principles that are taught through that passage. Write in your own words what God is teaching you through that passage.
- Below that, write the questions, "What am I going to do about it?" Below that question, write out your application. Think through how you can specifically live out the truth that God was showing you from the first question. It's a good practice to come up with an application you can live out that day!
- Finish with prayer thanking God for his Word and asking Him to help you live it out.

# Sample Kairos Entry

**Read:** Philippians 4:10-13

**Date:** 11-1-2023

## **1. What is God saying to me?**

No matter what, I can be content in my life.

Whether I have a lot or nothing, God is enough.

I can choose contentment because Jesus is the one who fulfills me.

There are some things in my life that I'm putting too much stock in so I can be happy. I need to choose to be fulfilled by Jesus alone.

## **2. What am I going to do about it?**

I need to stop looking to my possessions for contentment and happiness. I am committing to not purchasing any new clothes or technology for the next 2 months.

God, help me find fulfillment in you alone!

While you can use any Bible reading plan with a Kairos Journal, we recommend using either the Foundations 260 plan that helps disciples discover the comprehensive message of the Bible over a year, The Gospel Thread plan that chronologically covers the Gospel story throughout the Bible in a chapter a day, the NT260 that covers the entire New Testament in a year, or another FFBC churchwide reading plan. You can find those plans at [MyFFBC.com/Bible](https://MyFFBC.com/Bible).

# The Big 3

To help simplify what a D-Group leader should be thinking about during the course of the D-Group and each d-group meeting, it is helpful to think of the Big 3 Questions that every follower of Jesus should be thinking about. It combines some of the Kairos questions with the call to share what God is doing in our lives. If you ever get stuck in discipling others, remember the Big 3!

## 1) What is God teaching me?

If people you are discipling are engaging in God's Word, then God is teaching them something about Himself or themselves. Talking about what God is teaching us is one of the best ways to begin unpacking it for ourselves. It's also an incredible encouragement to others in the group.

## 2) What am I going to do about it?

Hearing from God is important but living it out is essential to life transformation. James tells us to not simply be hearers of the Word, but to be doers of the Word. Discussing how we are going to apply what God has taught us is a key part of actually living it out.

## 3) Who am I going to tell?

As disciples of Jesus grow in their faith, an important habit to form is telling others about Jesus and what He is doing in their life. Asking this question of the group will provide some soft accountability as they learn to form this habit.

# Core Concepts

Over the course of the year in a D-Group, it is vital that you cover some important concepts & principles with your D-Group. In essence, this is our curriculum that we want EVERY D-Group to learn and discuss during the year. This means you will need to be intentional in teaching and leading the discussions on these principles. We encourage you to use the mobile app to help you do this. You can also follow the discussion schedule later in the guide to help you plan for the group.

## Core Concepts



These concepts are gleaned from the life and ministry of Jesus as he taught and developed His disciples. Each concept has an accompanying shape, visual, or acrostic. The reason is simple: visuals help us remember. For example, when you see three circles formed together like this, what do you think of? Micky Mouse, right? Disney knows that this simple visual has imprinted something on your mind. So, in order to make these concepts easy to understand and to replicate, we have shapes, words, visuals, and acrostics to use in teaching them.

## **The Good News (Gospel)**

Sharing the good news of Jesus shouldn't be intimidating or hard. But it is. We get so worked up about what we are supposed to say. To help give you confidence in sharing, you can learn three simple Gospel principles. You can find the video that explains these on our D-Group App.

### **LIFE IN 6 WORDS**

The Gospel is the key to life. The word Gospel means good news. Using 6 words, you can explain the good news like this:

**G**od created us to be with Him.

*Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us & we are His. Psalm 100:3*

**O**ur sins separate us from God.

*For all have sinned & fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23*

**S**ins cannot be removed by good deeds.

*All of us have become like one who is unclean, & all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...  
Isaiah 64:6*

**P**aying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.

*But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8*

**E**veryone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life.

*For God so loved the world that He gave His one & only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16*

**L**ife with Jesus starts now and lasts forever.

*Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3*

## **WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE?**

Are you ready to put your trust in Jesus alone to forgive you of all your sins and bring you new life?

It means receiving **A NEW RELATIONSHIP, A NEW DIRECTION, & A NEW FAMILY**

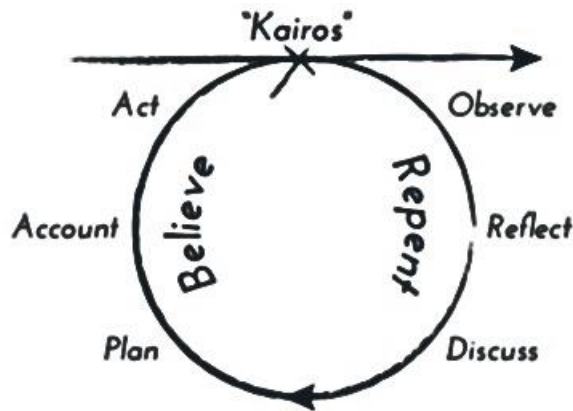
If you want in on this love you might like to talk to God now. Here's the sort of thing you could pray.

*Dear Father, thank you for your love. I'm sorry for my selfishness and sin. I know that nothing I could do would ever change make up for that. Right now, I believe that Jesus died in my place and rose from the dead. I trust in Him to forgive me for my sins. Through faith in Him, I am entering an eternal relationship with you. Thank you for this free gift! Amen.*

---

**You can also download an app to guide you through sharing the Gospel using these 6 words here - <https://li6w.com/app/>**

## The Kairos Circle



The Circle is all about identifying the events in our lives that affect our emotions and actions. These represent an opportunity for learning and growth. The Circle is a key tool in discipleship, whether used personally or in discipling others.

In **Mark 1:15** Jesus describes the process for us: ***“The time [Kairos] is here. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”***

There are several words in the Greek language which translate into the English word for time. Chronos is the one we would find most familiar, meaning successive or sequential time—like the kind you find on a clock.

Another is Kairos, meaning an event, an opportunity—a moment in time when perhaps everything changes because it is the right time. A Kairos moment is when God breaks into your circumstances with an event that gathers some loose ends of your life and knots them together in His hands. In Kairos moments, the rules of Chronos time seem to be suspended.

Kairos moments can be either positive or negative. It could be when you get married, have a child, get a job. It could also be the loss of a job, a financial crisis, the loss of a loved one. The key idea here is that when those moments come, we must recognize them as Kairos moments. Our tendency is to stop and do nothing or to just ignore the moment and bury it. Our response instead should be to enter the circle that Jesus explains for us and walk through the process of repenting and believing. Each of these two parts of the circle has 3 steps each.

### **Repent**

**Observe** – To change our lives, we need to observe where we are. When a Kairos moment stops us in our tracks, this is the time to observe our reactions, our emotions, our thoughts.

**Reflect** – Once we observe our reactions, we need to reflect. Ask ourselves, why did we react the way we did? Why do I feel this way? Why did this event bring these emotions us?

**Discuss** - In order for observing and reflecting to lead to lasting change, we must invite others into the process with us. For repentance to take hold, we need to share it with others.

## **Believe**

Just because we experience something or just because we go through a Kairos moment, doesn't guarantee that we will learn anything. Repenting alone doesn't bring about lasting change. We must continue through the process of belief.

**Plan** – On the basis of our observation, reflection, and discussion, we need to make a plan to lead our inner change. For example, if your growing credit card debt has escalated to the point of crisis, and in reflecting on the cause, God reveals an emptiness of void you are trying to fill through shopping, have a strategy for recognizing the feelings that lead to the binge shopping and for reacting in the proper way. Planning nearly always involves seeking the kingdom of God first, no matter what the issue. Most of us find that Kairos moments lead us to discover we have used someone or something as a substitute for God.

**Account** – If the plan is to succeed, it is important to have at least one person hold you accountable to it.

**Act** – Once a plan is in place and you are being held accountable to it, the natural step is to act on it. Faith always comes to the surface and always produces action. It cannot be contained.

Use the different stages of the Circle to draw out thoughts and feelings about a particular situation. Engage with each area and ask how God might want to change the way you think (repent) and step out in faith (changing the way you act, live and lead) in the new direction (believe) by making a plan for which you are accountable.

The 2 key questions when facing any Kairos Moment in life are these:

**What is God saying to me? (REPENT)**

**What am I going to do about it? (BELIEVE)**

## B.L.E.S.S. – Our Strategy to Change the World



To better understand our plan to reach others for Christ, we use the acronym B.L.E.S.S. We believe God wants to use us to be a BLESSing to those around us. This strategy will outline one way to live a life on mission by equipping you with the five simple practices of BLESS.

Our mission to go and make disciples of all the nations (Matt 28:18-20) finds its roots in the original mission to go and be a blessing to others (Gen 12:1-3). This means that blessing others and seeing people come to know, love and serve Jesus are linked together! If you do at least one of these BLESS practices every day, you will not only look more like Jesus, but you will help others find Jesus too!

### **Begin with Prayer**

Who do you live, work, and play with that is far from God? Pray that God would create spiritual curiosity in them, and then spend time with them. Praying for places: Where does pain exist here? Pray for healing. Who makes the decisions here? Pray for integrity. Who throws the parties here? Pray for community. Where are the pennies spent here? Pray for provision. Pray that God would give you opportunities to BLESS them.

### **Listen**

Before you can help others find Jesus, you need to listen to them first – their hopes, pains, challenges and dreams. In your interactions with others, take the posture of a learner. Lay down your assumptions, and practice being present. Pay attention to the local news and ask God how you can meet those needs.

## **Eat**

Eating is one of the fastest ways to move a relationship from acquaintance to friendship. Who can you eat with (or have a coffee with) that is far from God? A co-worker over lunch? A neighbor during the day? A friend or family member over the weekend? Is there a place that you regularly visit (coffee shop, gym, etc.)? Ask God to grant you opportunities to eat with people.

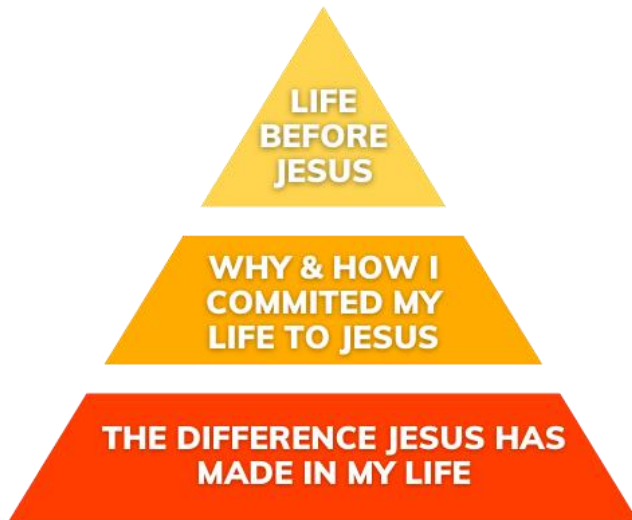
## **Serve**

Before jumping into serving, have you taken the time to pray for, listen to and eat with these people? Doing these things first helps you discover the way that you really need to serve them. Who can you serve this week? Who do you know that has a practical need? Ask them how you can help them.

## **Share My Story**

You can't spell BLESS without the second S. In other words, sharing the story of God with others is necessary to participate in God's mission (Matt 28:18-20). Start by sharing how God has blessed you and made a difference in your life. Share your story in such a way that demonstrates that God is also at work in their life. Don't feel like you have to tell your life story at once. Think "bite-size" stories.

# My Story Pyramid



Your story is one of the most persuasive forms of communication. It is a simple and powerful way to share the truth of the Gospel evidenced by your life-change.

The Bible is full of examples of personal testimonies.

DAVID: *"Come and listen, and I will tell you what God has done for me."* **Psalm 66:16**

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL:

*"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony."* **John 4:39**

THE MAN BORN BLIND: *"I don't know whether he is good or bad, but I know this: I was blind, and now I see!"* **John 9:25**

PETER AND JOHN: *"We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard."* **Acts 4:20**

PAUL: On six different occasions (Acts 22-26) Paul used his personal testimony to share the Good News with unbelievers.

We are even commanded to share our stories in *Psalm 105:1b: make known his deeds among the peoples!* And again in **1 Peter 3:15: Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.**

There are tremendous advantages of sharing our story with others as we seek to share the Gospel. First, it is unique! There are no others just like it. Your story is unique to you because you are different than anyone else. Secondly, it is personal and easy to understand. Rather than sharing some huge doctrinal statement for pre-Christians to comprehend, you are simply sharing your story. Third, you are the authority on it. It's difficult to argue with. Fourth, people love to hear personal stories and they remember them. Many times, people forget a scripture or a point you make, but everyone remembers stories. They are powerful and they are the way to capture hearts. Fifth, people can relate to it. It builds a relational bridge, which is our first goal in evangelism. And finally, in a postmodern world, it may be your most effective witness. In a culture where people claim, "That may be true for you, but not for me," your story transcends that kind of objection.

The way we build our personal story is very important. We want to make sure to keep the focus on God, not ourselves as we share our story. The My Story Pyramid helps us to remember this. The goal is to spend the least amount of time on part 1, more on part 2, , and the most time on part 3. Using this model, you can guide those in your group to prepare and practice sharing their personal story.

## **The 3 Parts of Your Story**

### **1. My life BEFORE JESUS.**

- What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?
- What were your attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?
- What was most important to you?
- What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life?  
(sports/fitness, success at work, relationships, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/alcohol, having fun, entertainment, popularity, hobbies)

### **2. Why & How I COMMITTED MY LIFE to Christ.**

- What significant steps led up to your conversion?
- What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God?
- How did God get your attention? What motivated you?
- What specifically did you do? Where did it happen?
- Was it through a prayer? What did you say in your prayer? Be specific.

### **3. The DIFFERENCE JESUS HAS MADE in my life.**

- What benefits have you experienced or felt?
- What problems have been resolved?
- How has Jesus helped you change for the better?
- How has it helped your relationships?
- Give a current example.

# Multiplication

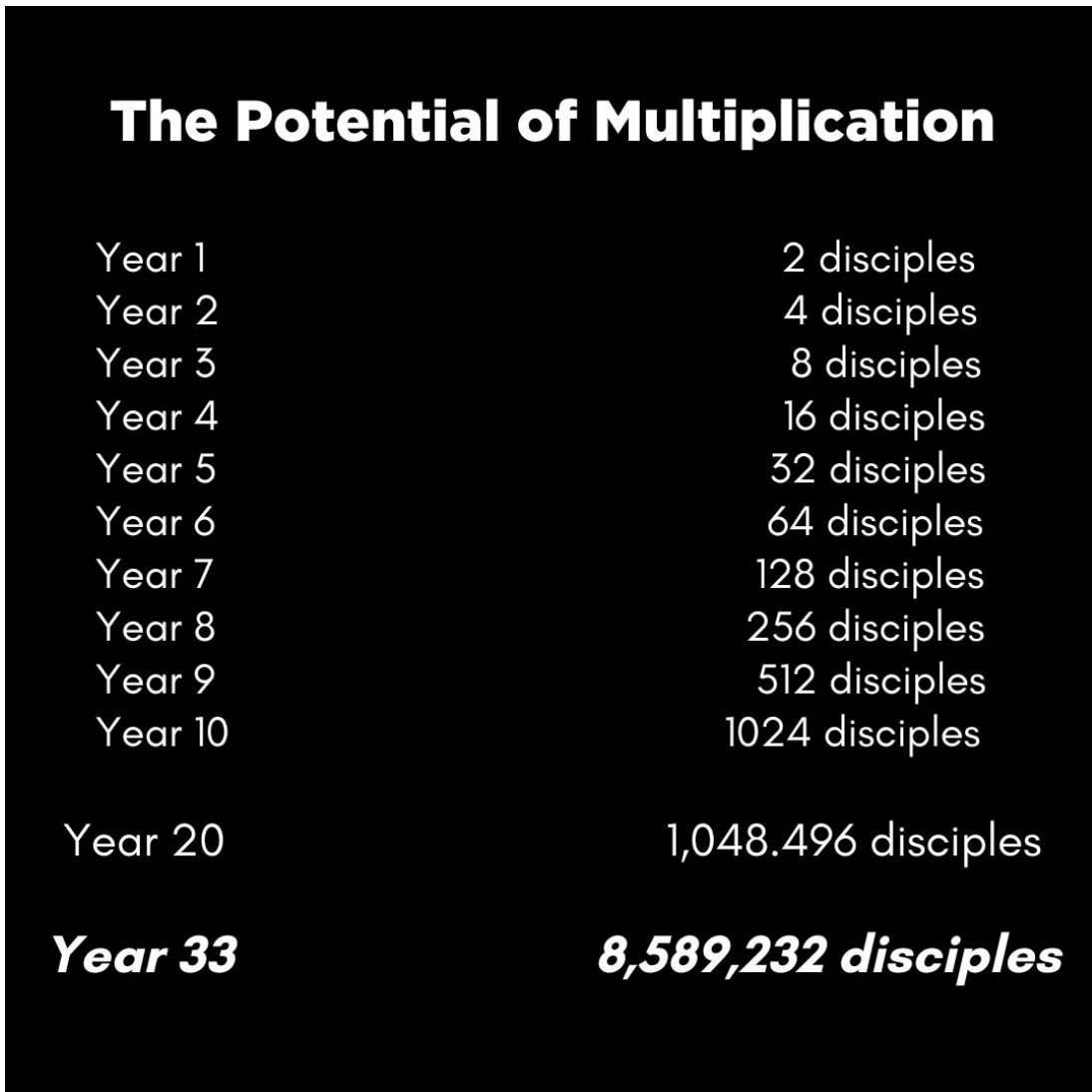
Jesus told us in Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples of all nations. Then, in 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul gives us the process of multiplying disciples by investing in others:

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

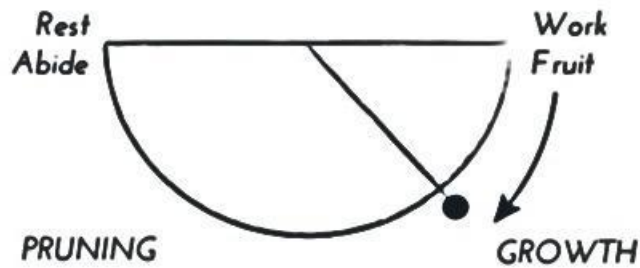
Essentially, we are not called just to make disciples—but to make disciples who make disciples. This process is called multiplication.

## The Potential of Multiplication in Disciple-Making

Assuming you only disciple two disciple-makers per year, check out the potential impact you could have:



## Rhythm of Life Semicircle



*"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. **John 15:1-8***

To fully understand this passage, we need to know that every Hebrew had a vine. The vine would grow for three years. They would keep pruning the vine over that time so that no fruit would come. Then, they cut the vine back to within a millimeter. The vine grows over the branch, creating a stump. Then the branch spends three years being nourished and growing in strength. This is called the "abiding time."

As soon as the fruit come (and it is gigantic and can last on the vine for 6 months), it is pruned again. So, vines develop this rhythm: Abide for year, then bear fruit, abide for a year, then comes fruit.

This is the fundamental rhythm that Jesus says His disciples are to have. The truth is, if we don't have abiding time, we can't produce the fruit we are called to produce.

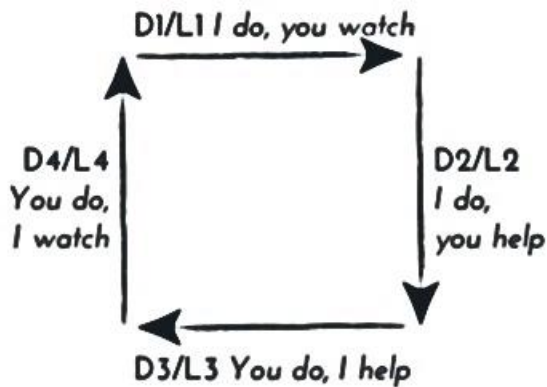
So, the argument that Jesus makes is this: We are called to bear lots of fruit. We can't bear fruit unless we spend time abiding (not bearing fruit). Therefore, in order to bear lots of fruit, we must abide in the vine, being nourished and strengthened.

Think about the Creation account in Genesis 1. God makes man and woman in His image. They get their marching orders—work! Be productive! The very next thing that happens is God rests on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. If man is made in God's image, who else would rest that day? Adam & Eve. So, mankind's very first full day after getting their marching orders is spent resting!

The fundamental revelation Jesus gives in John 15 is that while we are created to do work, we are designed to work from rest—not rest from work.

The semicircle helps illustrate the balance we should find as we develop a rhythm of rest & work, abiding & bearing fruit.

## Discipleship Square



Jesus was the best leader the world has ever seen. He was also the greatest leadership trainer and disciple-maker. If we follow His example and His teachings, we can be the leaders and disciple-makers He intends us to be. Jesus' leadership is seen in four stages or phases. So, we use a square to help easily recall the four principles.

The Square helps us to recognize four different stages of discipleship, leadership &

team development modelled by Jesus. These are the stages that result in any person or team pressing on to reach maturity, fruitfulness and multiplication. The 'D' stands for the stages for a Disciple, and the 'L' for the stages for a Leader.

At every stage of His ministry, you can see Jesus calling the disciples to follow Him, to learn from Him, to grow through the hard times in their life together. Ultimately, He calls them to take what He has taught and shown them, His message of love, out to the world.

But how did He get them to that end point? As we read the Gospels we see Jesus take the disciples through a process akin to the Square. We need to be asking how Christian community members are growing in their discipleship, and how Christian leaders are raising up team and new leaders to take on new responsibilities of leadership within the community and, essentially, to grow into the leadership to which God calls them.

### Stage One - D1/L1

*and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. **Mark 1:15-20***

This passage describes one of Jesus' early encounters with His first disciples. It does not appear that Jesus chooses these men on the basis of their resumes or their spiritual gifts inventories. He simply offers them a relationship with Himself and a vision to follow. Their enthusiasm fuels their confidence and immediately they step out, put down their nets and follow Him. They are confident but incompetent. They have no experience to base their confidence on. Are they scared? Probably.

In this stage, Jesus is very directive in His leadership style. He simply says, “come follow me.” This is very straightforward language. It’s not the language He uses later on in His ministry.

### **D1 Disciple Style – Confident & Incompetent**

- High enthusiasm
- High confidence
- Low experience
- Low competence

### **L1 Leadership Style – Directive**

- High direction
- High example
- Low consensus
- Low explanation

*This stage can be characterized from the leader’s perspective as: **I do, You watch.***

## **Stage Two – D2/L2**

*Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also, the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” So, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. **John 6:10-13***

Eventually the disciples become aware that they really have no idea what they are doing. The pressure begins to mount from outside as well as from within. The confidence of these previously successful entrepreneurs hits rock bottom. Worse yet, they suddenly realize they are following someone who is totally opposed by everybody in charge!

The disciples aren’t having fun anymore. They start questioning and doubting their call and their decision to follow. At this point, Jesus begins saying, “I’ll do, but you help.” He sends them out to do things He has been doing while they watched: preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, casting out demons. They are involved in ministry while opposition increases. They feel overwhelmed. Their early confidence is lost and they fall into despair.

Notice Jesus’ leadership style, experience comes before explanation. He tells His disciples, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after killing the body, has the power to throw you into hell.” (Luke 12:4-5) He gives them further instructions in Luke 12 not to be afraid because God has a plan. In essence, Jesus is telling them to let go of their old securities. He wants them to find their security in Him.

## **D2 Disciple Style – Unenthusiastic & Incompetent**

- Low enthusiasm
- Low confidence
- Low experience
- Low competence

Stage two is the more important in the development process for a disciple. What we tend to do at this point as leaders is to try to regain the enthusiasm experienced at the D1 stage. However, D2 is inevitable. You may be tempted to give up. Without an L2 leader who is prepared to offer time, vision, and grace, the D2 disciple will never make the turn to D3.

## **L2 Leadership Style – Visionary Coach**

- High direction
- High discussion
- High example
- High accessibility

The second stage is the testing point of any leader. During this stage, the leader should clear his or her schedule and spend time down in the pit with the individual or team going through D2. Leaders need to be there to offer God's grace and encouragement. The two rungs on the ladder out of the pit are grace and vision.

***This stage can be characterized from the leader's perspective as: I do, You help.***

## **Stage Three – D3/L3**

*“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. **John 15:12-17***

Jesus begins to use their time away from the crowds to teach His disciples. This produces in them a renewed confidence based on experience. In this phase, we see a new period of growth. Jesus did not begin His ministry by calling the disciples with this kind of message. They needed to go through the pressures, discouragements, and threats until they reached their low point. Once there, they would cleave to Jesus and to one another. There would be consensus. During this phase, Jesus has all the time in the world for them.

Then He drops the bomb. He tells the disciples He will be leaving them soon.

### **D3 Disciple Style – Growing Confidence**

- Increasing enthusiasm
- Growing experience
- Intermittent confidence
- Growing competence

When disciples are in stage three, the concept that sets them free is “God is in charge.” They have to acknowledge grace and begin to work it into their lifestyle. That’s not easy for most of us, but it is the one thing that will move us on to growth and maturity. As they live out the lessons learned in stage two, they once again grow in confidence and find that their enthusiasm is increasing.

At this stage the disciples were spending a lot of time with Jesus. Growth and development as a person are mirrored by growth in intimacy. There is a growing intimacy between those being led as well as between the follower and the leader.

### **L3 Leadership Style – Pastoral Consensus**

- Lower direction
- Higher consensus
- High discussion
- High accessibility

In stage three, strong friendships have been formed between the leader and those he or she is leading. Time spent with the disciples has created an intimacy they had not previously felt with Jesus. He calls them His friends at this stage. This is the kingdom in action.

***This stage can be characterized from the leader’s perspective as: You do, I help.***

### **Stage Four – D4/L4**

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:19-20***

Sure enough, Jesus is taken away. He comes back again, yes, but this time as the resurrected Lord. He doesn’t hang around with them all the time like before. He just turns up every so often in the most surprising ways.

Jesus is preparing the disciples to spend less time with Him. He is reducing their hours of contact with Him because now He is delegating authority.

### **D4 Disciple Style – the End Is in Sight**

- High enthusiasm
- High confidence
- High experience
- High competence

When this stage is reached, the high enthusiasm is not just bubbly excitement. It has deep roots in confidence, brought about by a strong feeling of competence. At this point, Jesus says “Go and do what I have done—make disciples like I have.”

#### **L4 Leadership Style - Delegation**

- Low direction
- High consensus
- Low example
- High explanation

Growth has taken place through the third stage, experience has been gained, and confidence that once was lost now has begun to return.

***This stage can be characterized from the leader’s perspective as: You do, I watch.***

If we don’t raise up new leaders within our Christian community, the potential for personal growth for people is limited, along with the church’s capacity for numerical growth and ability to come to a place of multiplication.

## Suggested Discussion Schedule

While circumstances may change and the context of your group may force you to alter this schedule, this is the suggested guide for when to discuss each of the concepts above.

### **Week 1: HEAR Journal Method**

Spend as much time as you need teaching the group how to use the HEAR Journal Method (or the Kairos Journal Method). We even encourage you to use part of your group time the first few weeks to journal one of the Bible Reading chapters TOGETHER in the group so they become more comfortable with the process.

### **Week 4: The Gospel**

Introduce this concept early. Go over it twice the first time you introduce it. Then ask if they have any questions. Then challenge them to memorize it. Over the next few weeks, ask each member of the group to share the 6 Words (6 sentences) with the group. Wait until each member has presented it clearly 3 times before moving on.

### **Week 10: KAIROS**

Spend several weeks explaining Kairos and then asking them to pinpoint and discuss their own Kairos moments with the group. Wait until you're confident the group has understood this concept before moving on.

### **Week 16: B.L.E.S.S.**

Discuss the simplicity of using this strategy to change the world, one conversation at a time. You could even spend a few weeks reviewing it until everyone is confident in how God wants to use them to bless others.

### **Week 20: My Story**

Go through the elements of our story the first week you introduce it and then ask them to begin thinking through & writing out their own story. Encourage them to keep it short and simple. Then, over the next several weeks, have each D-Group member share their story for the group. Use this time to coach and encourage.

### **Week 26: Multiplication**

We encourage you to share this concept at the midway point of the group so they can begin thinking through and praying for those they may want to challenge to be in their group. Be ready for some resistance. Lovingly encourage them to be faithful to the process and trust God to get them ready to multiply. 😊 Go back to this concept the next few weeks to remind them of the vision. Add the multiplication time to your group each week from here on out.

**Week 30: Rhythm of Life**

Spend several weeks on this concept, discussing how they find rest in God. Use this truth to hold each other accountable to abiding in Jesus.

**Week 36: Discipleship Square**

At this point, they should be ready to discover the process they are in and will continue through. They will begin to see the reason why the group has functioned the way it has up to this point. The first time you introduce the square, we suggest you only go over the basics and the “I do, you watch” phrases. Go back to this concept for several weeks, explaining in more detail each time. Ask them where they see themselves at the moment.

**Weeks 40 – 52:** Revisit all the concepts during the rest of your group. We would even encourage having the members of your group present and lead the discussion of each concept from this point forward.

# Conclusion

Our hope is that this guide will help you as you seek to obey the command of Jesus to make disciples. This guide is not intended to be comprehensive. As you step out to disciple others, you must always remember that it's relational. Therefore, when you have questions, ask the person who gave you this guide. Seek to learn from the wisdom and experience of the person who invested in your life!