



LEADER GUIDE



Laurie Cole



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LETTER TO SMALL GROUP LEADERS

My Dear Sister,

Thank you, thank you for responding to God's call to lead a small group for ***Are You a Disciple?*** I wish I could hug your neck for your willingness to encourage, disciple, and minister to the women in your group!

Whether you are a new or experienced, confident or not-so-confident leader, I hope these words from one of my favorite Christian authors will encourage you as they've encouraged me:

Beware of any work for God which enables you to evade concentration on Him. The one concern of a worker should be concentration on God... There is no responsibility on you for the work; the only responsibility you have is to keep in living constant touch with God, and to see that you allow nothing to hinder your concentration with Him.

—Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

If serving the Lord and ministering to others depended upon my own skill, knowledge, and ability, I couldn't do what God has called me to do—and neither can you. But it's so easy to take God's responsibility upon ourselves, isn't it? And when we do, we begin stressing and striving, feeling inadequate or over-confident—evidence we're focusing upon ourselves instead of concentrating on God.

I sincerely pray this Leader Guide will be a helpful tool for you as you lead your small group. But never forget, it's just a resource. God is your real source. May He fill and use you in a mighty way for His glory as you keep your eyes on Him first and lead others second.

Your sister,

Laurie



STUDY AND LEADER GOALS

GOALS of *Are You a Disciple?*

The goals of this study are:

1. **To enable** women to study the Bible and encounter God through the pages of His Word in a life-changing way.
2. **To encourage** women to become spiritually sensitive and responsive to the work of the Holy Spirit as they apply God's Word to their lives.
3. **To equip** women to become disciples and make disciples.

GOALS for Small Group Leaders

Your goal as a small group leader is:

1. To facilitate a scripture-based discussion from the weekly Bible study homework.
2. To facilitate a Hebrews 10:24 environment where group members can share and encourage one another to grow in their relationship with the Lord and to apply His Word to their lives.

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

— Hebrews 10:24



WEEKLY PREPARATION TO LEAD YOUR SMALL GROUP

Each week, prepare to lead your small group by:

1. Keeping your heart and life spiritually cleansed and pure so that you will be “an instrument for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:21).
2. Praying for your group members faithfully and diligently. Each time you meet with your group, you will ask them to share their prayer requests. Lovingly pray over these requests throughout the week. Also, as the Holy Spirit brings a group member to your heart during the week, ask Him how to pray for them and you’ll find your prayers going beyond the requests they’ve shared with you in class.
3. Writing your group members a brief note or email as the Lord leads you. Encourage them by letting them know of your concern and prayers.
4. Completing your Bible study homework each week. Be cautious, however, not to get caught up in just the “doing” of your homework. Ask the Lord to do a fresh work in your life each day as you study.
5. Reading through the leader guide for the lesson after you’ve completed your own homework noting the following:
 - a. The weekly goal(s) stated for that lesson. These goals will help you keep your small group time focused and on target. Don’t state the goal(s) at the beginning of your share time, but you may want to use them as you conclude and wrap up your group time each week.
 - b. The questions given for that lesson. Customize your discussion by asking the Lord to show you which questions to use in your discussion. Check the boxes beside the questions you feel led to include in your small group time.
6. Estimating how much time you plan to spend on each question you’ve chosen. Make a note beside the questions you’ve chosen of the specific amount of time you plan to spend on it. You may choose to spend more time on some questions than others.



7. Claiming the following scriptures and resting in God's promises as you lead your small group (you may even want to post one or more of these scriptures on your refrigerator or near the place where you prepare for small group to serve as a source of constant encouragement to you):

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

—John 15:5

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.

—1 Corinthians 1:26-27

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

—2 Corinthians 12:9-10

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

—Philippians 4:13

Faithful is He that called you, Who also will do it.

—1 Thessalonians 5:24 (KJV)



HOW TO LEAD AN EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Small group discussion time should be interesting, inspiring, and enjoyable. Yet you've probably been in a small group that was just the opposite: boring, irrelevant, and a real drag. What makes the difference? Effective leadership.

Whether you've ever led a small group before or not, you can facilitate an effective, enjoyable small group experience by practicing the following top ten tips:

1. Keep your discussion time focused on the two primary goals for small group leaders (as stated on the previous page).
2. Strive to establish a comfortable, conversational atmosphere so your members will feel free to share what they've studied and learned. Think of your discussion time as a group conversation where everyone has the opportunity to share freely and receive encouragement.
3. As the leader, facilitate the discussion but don't dominate. And if a group member is dominating the discussion, encourage others to participate by saying, "I'd really like to hear from some of you who haven't shared today."
4. Ask questions from the weekly leader guides, but don't read or give them the exact question and page number from their workbooks. This will encourage them to restate not repeat (or read) what they've written in their homework. Unless they are unresponsive or directly ask you for the question and page number, try to keep their heads out of their workbooks. Of course, they can use their workbooks to follow along through the discussion, but encourage them not to read their answers verbatim and not to limit themselves to sharing only what they've written.
5. Be an example of a sincere and eager student of God's Word. Openly and honestly share what God is doing in your own heart. Seek to be transparent, genuine, and real in your leadership.
6. Encourage your group to respect the boundaries of your group discussion. Ask them not to repeat personal information other group members have shared in the weekly discussion time with anyone outside the group.
7. Encourage your group to complete their weekly Bible study homework, but assure them that no one will see or "check" their homework. Also, encourage them to attend small group even if they've been unable to complete their homework.
8. Your group will appreciate it if you will monitor and use your time wisely. Begin and end your group on time each week.
9. Be sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. If your group gets off track from the questions you've chosen from the leader guide but you sense the Lord is leading the discussion in a different direction, let Him lead!
10. Finally, if someone in your group is hurting or has spiritual questions or needs, please approach them privately and let them know of your concern for them. Offer to listen, share scripture, and pray with them. If needed, you also may offer to assist them in seeking Christian counsel from a minister or Christian counselor.



WEEKLY LEADER GUIDES



LEADER GUIDE - INTRODUCTORY WEEK

Goals:

- To allow your group members to get to know you and one another.
- To prepare your group members for their first week of homework.
- To introduce them to the topic of this study: how to become a disciple.

Leader Preparation:

1. Pray, pray, pray for those who will be in your group. Ask God to prepare a Hebrews 10:24 environment as you meet together with your group for the very first time.
2. Complete your Week One homework.
3. Make a list of the information you need to share with your group during your first week together (weekly schedule/format, small group guidelines, homework requirements, your phone number/email address, etc.).
4. Gather half-sheets of paper for each member of your group. Bring these with you to use during your first small group discussion.
5. Review the Small Group Time instructions listed below. Make a few brief notes of your own personal answers to questions 2a, c, & d. If your group is reluctant to share during the discussion time, you will be prepared to share your answers which will encourage them to be open and share as well.

Small Group Time:

1. **Introduction and Information** (10–15 minutes):
 - a. Briefly introduce yourself and welcome your members to small group.
 - b. Share information about the weekly schedule, homework, and any other necessary information with your group (see 3 above).
 - c. Ask your group members to open their workbooks. Guide them through the weekly format for each lesson (each week's lesson is broken into five days of homework).
 - d. Encourage your group members to attend small group even if they fall behind in doing their homework or are unable to complete it.
2. **Discussion** (30-35 minutes):
 - a. Begin your discussion by giving each group member a half-sheet of paper. Ask them to: 1) draw a vertical line down the middle of the paper; 2) on the top left-hand side, write the words "Hats I Wear"; 3) on the top right-hand side, write the words "Hobbies & Fun Stuff I Enjoy."

Ask them to record a very brief description of themselves under each category to share with the group (nothing formal, just a quick list of descriptive phrases will do). "Hats I Wear" refers to their roles, responsibilities, titles, etc. "Hobbies & Fun Stuff I Enjoy" can be anything they enjoy. Give them a couple of minutes to complete this assignment.

Ask everyone to share their names and the descriptions they've just written with the group. This should be a light-hearted time of getting to know one another better.

- b. Ask your group members the following questions:
 - Why did you enroll in small group Bible study?
 - What are the benefits of doing a Bible study with a group?
 - What are the challenges of doing a Bible study with a group?

NOTE: Encourage your group members that the benefits of Bible study will far outweigh the challenges.
- c. Share the goals of this study with your group members:
 - To help you understand that being a disciple is a responsibility – a “hat” – Jesus calls you to wear.
 - To help you understand how to become a disciple of Jesus.
 - To help you help others become disciples.
- d. Have them turn in their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 11:1 and Philippians 3:17. Read both passages to your group, and ask the following questions:
 - Why could Paul tell others to imitate him?
 - In Phil. 3:17, Paul says we’re to “observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” Take a quick look at the verses before and after verse 17 (vs. 7-21) to get the context. What specific patterns do you think Paul was referring to?
 - In your own life, who have you observed imitating Christ? Who are some of your spiritual role models and why? Who has shown you how to follow Christ and be a disciple, and what did you learn from them?
 - Who is observing your life? What positive spiritual patterns do you want them to observe?
- e. Briefly assure your group that this study will take us into God’s Word and teach us how to become disciples so that we, too, can say: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,” (1 Cor. 11:1 KJV).

3. **Share Prayer Requests** (5-10 minutes):

- a. Ask your group members, “How can our group pray for you this week?”

NOTE: Please write down their requests and encourage your group members to make note of each request, so they can pray for one another in the days ahead.

- b. Lead your group in a time of prayer.

4. **Closing:**

- a. Thank your group members for sharing, and encourage them to complete their Week One homework.
- b. Dismiss your group and let them know you’re available if they have questions or other needs. Be encouraging, approachable, and available as your group dismisses.

Optional: Watch the *Are You a Disciple?* introductory video together. Use the Listening Guide on p. 1 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and Completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 1 : BACK STORIES AND YOUR STORY

GOALS

- To overview the back stories of Jesus and the disciples.
- To understand why you should follow Jesus.
- To encourage those who haven't placed their faith in Christ to do so.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Day One:

- 1. What did you learn about Jesus' back story from John 1:1-18? When did it begin? What is His relationship to God, and how are they alike? What response did He receive when He came into the world? (*ques. 2ab, de, p. 6*)
- 2. John 1 and Genesis 1 both begin with the phrase, "in the beginning." How does Gen. 1:1-2 reinforce John 1:1-5? According to Gen. 1:2, 26 and John 1:1, who was with God in the beginning? (*ques. 3abc, p. 6-7*)
- 3. According to your study of John 1 and Gen. 1, what makes Jesus and Christianity unique from other religions? (*ques. 4, p. 7*)

Day Two:

- 1. The back-stories of Jesus' very first disciples are recorded in John 1:15-51 (p. 9-10). Who were they and how did they meet Jesus? (*ques. 2, p. 11*)
- 2. Before they became disciples of Jesus, some of them were disciples of John the Baptist. What does this reveal about them spiritually? (*ques. 3, p. 11*)
- 3. What had John already taught his disciples about Jesus? (*ques. 4a-d, p. 11*)
- 4. Would John's disciples have been baptized? Why or why not? (*ques. 5a-c, p. 12*)
- 5. Why was Jesus' baptized? **What does His baptism teach us?** (*ques. 5d, p.12*)
- 6. You studied a beautiful chain reaction in John 1:35-51: John the Baptist encouraged two of his disciples to follow Christ, one of them brought his brother to Jesus, and Philip brought Nathanael to Christ. **Who did God use to direct and bring you to Jesus?** (*ques. 8, p. 14*)

Day Three:

- 1. How did Nathanael describe Jesus (John 1:49), and how did Jesus describe Himself? (*ques. 1b, p. 15*)
- 2. How did Jesus describe Himself to Thomas? (*ques. 2c, p. 16*) How did Jesus fulfill His promises to Nathanael and Thomas? (*ques. 2d, p. 16*) **What does this teach us about why we should follow Jesus?** (*ques. 2e, p. 16*)

Day Three (continued):

- 3. What was Jesus' first miracle, and how did it affect the disciples and their faith? (*ques. 3a-d, p. 16*)
- 4. What other miracles did Jesus perform? (*ques. 4a-c, p. 17*)
- 5. What are some of the ways Jesus fulfilled prophecy? (*ques. 6a-d, p. 17*)
- 6. According to all that you studied in Day 3, why should you follow Jesus? (*ques. 5, 8, p. 17-18*)
- 7. How has Jesus proven to you that He is who He says He is? (*ques. 8, p. 18*)

Day Four:

- 1. As you studied Jesus' reunion with his disciples, what did you learn about the call of Christ? What did you learn from the response of the disciples? (*ques. 1a-c, p. 19*)
- 2. After Peter's second fishing trip, what did he realize about himself and about Jesus? (*ques. 2b-e, p. 20*)
- 3. How has Jesus surprised you by doing something you never expected or thought possible? (*ques. 3, p. 20*)

Day Five:

- 1. In Day 5, you studied how Matthew became a disciple. How was he unique from the other disciples, and what did he have in common with them? Immediately after becoming a disciple, Matthew gave Jesus a reception and invited many of his friends. What do you think that reveals about Matthew? (*ques. 1a-c, p. 21-22*)
- 2. Who does Jesus call, and what does every Christian and disciple have in common? (*ques. 2, p. 22*)
- 3. Who were some of the women disciples, and what did you learn about them that blessed you? (*ques. 5-6, p. 23*)
- 4. What about your back-story? Where were you, what were you doing, and what were you like when you met Jesus? (*ques. 7, p. 24*)

Closing Question:

- How did Jesus speak to your heart this week? What was the most significant thing you learned through your study this week?

Note:

Before closing in prayer or dismissing your group, please let your ladies know that you would love to visit with them if they have questions about The Most Important Question in their homework this week: Are you a Christian? Encourage them that if Jesus is drawing them to salvation, to tell you today so you can help bring them to Jesus – just like Andrew and Philip did.

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple?* Week 1 video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 27 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 2 : CASUAL CHRISTIAN vs. DEVOTED DISCIPLE

GOALS

- To understand the requirements for becoming a disciple.
- To understand the difference between a disciple and a casual Christian.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Day One:

- 1. What does the word "disciple" mean? How did you define it? (*ques. 1a-d, p. 30-31*)
- 2. Let's go over the results of the true/false quiz and make sure we're all on the same page about what a disciple is and is not. (*ques. 2a-e, p. 31*)
- 3. What did Jesus teach about the requirements for discipleship? What did you learn from your study of Luke 9 and 14? (*ques. 3 chart, p. 32*)
- 4. What did Jesus mean when he invited the disciples to "follow Me"? How did you define it? (*ques. 4a-c, p. 33*)
- 5. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' invitation to "follow Me," and how did their response meet the requirements for becoming a disciple? (*ques. 5a-c, p. 33-34*)
- 6. What changes to your life and routine would be necessary for you to follow Jesus? What did God show you? (*ques. 6, p. 34*)

Day Two:

- 1. Discuss the three Disciple Wannabees in Luke 9:57-62. What did Jesus' response to each of them reveal about His requirements for following Him? What disqualified them from becoming disciples? (*ques. 1a-d, p. 35-36*)
- 2. What are some of your favorite "but first" excuses? (*ques. 2, p. 36*)
- 3. What about Disciple Wannabe #4? What disqualified him from following Jesus? (*ques. 4c-e, p. 37*)
- 4. Paul was no Disciple Wannabe. Discuss Paul before, during, and after his crossroad experience with Jesus. How did Paul meet the requirements for discipleship? (*ques. 5 chart, p. 38*)

Day Three:

- 1. Following Jesus means taking up your cross and following Him. It's not an easy road. But what are the blessings and benefits of following Jesus? What did you learn from your study? Which of these blessings have meant the most to you in your walk with Jesus and why? (*ques. 1-3, p. 40-42*)

Day Three (continued):

- 2. Which of these blessings do you most need now and why? (*ques. 4, p. 42*)
- 3. How is Phil. 3:6-14 similar to what Jesus taught about the requirements for discipleship? According to Paul in Phil. 3, what makes following Jesus so worthwhile? (*ques. 5a-b, p. 42*)
- 4. Paul said pressing on and following Jesus involves “forgetting the past” (Phil. 3:13). What did Paul have to forget to press on? What do you have to forget to press on and follow Jesus? (*ques. 6, p. 43*)

Day Four:

- 1. What is a Casual Christian? What did you learn from your study of 1 Corinthians? What are some of the characteristics of a Casual Christian? (*ques. 1-2, & 4 p. 44-46*)
- 2. What does the word “carnal” mean? How did you define it? (*ques. 5a-d, p. 46-47*)
- 3. Let’s review the true/false quiz. Cover each question. (*ques. 6a-e, p. 47*)
- 4. What other ways were the Christians at the church of Corinth exhibiting carnality/Casual Christianity? (*ques. 7a-d, p. 48*)

Day Five:

- 1. Your last day of study was all about Peter. What did Peter proclaim and what did Jesus promise him in Matt. 16:13-19? When Jesus made that promise, what did He already know about Peter’s future? (*ques. 1, p. 49*)
- 2. What did Peter have to forget in order to press on and follow Jesus? (*ques. 2-6, p. 49-50*)
- 3. What did you learn from Peter about being a disciple? What did you learn about Jesus from the way He responded to Peter? (*ques. 7-8, p. 50-51*)

Closing Question:

- What is the most challenging truth you learned this week, and what is the most encouraging one?

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple? Week 2* video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 55 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 3 : DEVOTED DISCIPLES: DISTINCTIVES 1 & 2

GOALS

- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will know and obey God's Word.
- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will experience freedom from their sinful nature.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Day One:

- 1. In your Day One homework, you overviewed all seven of the Distinctives of Devoted Disciples. As you look at the chart you created, what are these Distinctives? What did you learn about them from the scriptural references you studied? (p. 59)
- 2. Were you encouraged to see that you are experiencing some or all of these in your life? Why do you think some of these Distinctives are stronger than others in your life? (ques. 2a, p. 60) Which of these Distinctives do you most need to develop? (ques. 2b, p. 60) What did the Lord reveal to you about your own spiritual life through your initial study and review of these Distinctives? How did He encourage, and challenge you?

Day Two:

- 1. Your Day Two homework focused on Distinctive #1 of Devoted Disciples and Casual Christians. What are some of the specific ways these two groups differ when it comes to God's Word? (ques. 1 & 2, p. 61-62)
- 2. What did Jesus teach about the Word of God? (ques. 3a-d, p. 63) According to the scriptures you studied, why is God's Word so vital to us? What are some of the ways He uses it in our lives? What promises and assurances does Jesus give us regarding His Word?
- 3. What did Jesus teach about the relationship between the Word and obedience? (ques. 4ab, p. 63) How are the lives of those who hear and obey the Word different from those who hear but ignore it? (ques. 4ab, p. 63)
- 4. What did Jesus teach about His relationship with those who obey or disobey His Word? (ques. 5a-c chart, p. 63-64)
- 5. The verses you studied from John 14 (ques. 5c, p. 64) reveal that we prove our love for Christ through our obedience to His Word. What choices have you faced lately that have tested your love for Christ? What differences do you notice in your life and relationships when you spend consistent time in God's Word? (ques. 6, p. 64)

Day Three

- 1. As a disciple, what are some of your responsibilities to know God's Word? (*ques. 1 chart, p. 65*) According to Titus 2:5, how can we honor or dishonor God's Word? (*chart, p. 65*)
- 2. What did you learn from Hebrews 5 about the trickle-down effect of the Christian who does not know God's Word? (*ques. 2a-e, p. 66*) How does it impact the Christian, the church, the family and others?
- 3. But what happens when we **do** know God's Word? What are the results of knowing God's Word? (*ques. 3 chart, p. 67*)
- 4. We can all relate with Mary and Martha, can't we? When you think about the requirements for discipleship, what price did Mary pay to sit at Jesus' feet that day? (*ques. 4a-b, p. 67*) But what about Martha? What price did she pay that day? Have you had any Mary or Martha moments recently? Describe the results. (*ques. 4de, p. 68*)

Day Four:

- 1. John 8:32 is a very familiar verse. As you studied it this week, what did you learn? (*ques. 1a-c, 2a-d, p. 69-70*) Why can't a Casual Christian experience the freedom John 8:32 promises? (*ques. 3a-c, p. 71*)

Day Five:

- 1. What can you do and what choices can you make to experience and protect your freedom in Christ? (*ques. 3a-e, p. 74*)
- 2. As you studied Romans 8, What did you learn about the Holy Spirit and the sinful nature? (*ques. 4, p. 74-75*) What was your favorite verse from Romans 8 and why? (*ques. 5, p. 76*)

Closing Question:

- As you think about your own life and walk with Jesus, what are some of the specific ways He has set you free? What progress have you seen Him make in your life? When you think about your walk with Him right now, in what specific ways is He calling you to freedom?

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple?* Week 3 video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 79 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 4 : DEVOTED DISCIPLE: DISTINCTIVES 3 & 4

GOALS

- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will pray at all times.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Day One:

- 1. According to what you learned in the very first day of your homework, who controls the life of the disciple vs. the Casual Christian? (*Distinctive #3, p. 83*)
- 2. What did you learn about the Holy Spirit? (*ques. 2a-e, p. 83-84*)
- 3. How have you experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in your life recently? How has He helped, taught, or spoken to you? (*ques. 3, p. 84*)
- 4. What promise did Jesus make to the disciples and early believers in Acts. 1:8, and what would it enable them to do? (*ques. 4a-c, p. 84-85*) When was that promise fulfilled? (*ques. 6, Acts 2, p. 85*)

Day Two:

- 1. When and how do we receive the Holy Spirit? What did you learn from Titus 3? (*ques. 1, p.87*)
- 2. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we also receive the **power** of the Holy Spirit. But what prevents us, at times, from experiencing that power? What are the symptoms and causes of a spiritual power shortage in our lives? (*ques. 2ab, p. 87-88*)
- 3. You also learned some of the positive symptoms of the Spirit-filled and empowered life which includes the fruit of the Spirit described in Gal. 5:22-23. Did anyone memorize that passage this week? Invite one or two of your group members who memorized it to quote it. (*ques. 3, p. 88*)

Day Three

- 1. According to Rom. 15:13, what does the Holy Spirit give you power to do? (*ques. 1a, p. 90*) Do any of you need hope today? How are you struggling with circumstances or situations where you really need hope from God through the power of the Spirit?
- 2. According to 2 Tim. 1:7-8, what kind of spirit has God *not* given us? (*ques. 1b, p. 90*) What worries or fears often prevent you from experiencing God's power, love, and strength?
- 3. According to Eph. 5:18-21, what are some of the ways we can allow the Holy Spirit to flow through our lives and minister to others? (*ques. 2, p. 91*)
- 4. What did you learn about the Holy Spirit in Eph. 4:29-32 and 1 Thess. 5:16-22? How can we "bring sorrow" to or "stifle" the Holy Spirit? (*ques. 3a-c, p. 91-92*)

Day Four & Five:

- 1. In your Day 4 & 5 homework, you studied Distinctive #5 of Devoted Disciples: A disciple prays at all times. How many of you struggle with prayer? Why do you think so many of us struggle with prayer?
- 2. How did the parable of the Unjust Judge encourage you in your prayer life? (*ques. 1, p. 94*)
- 3. Have any of you been practicing "And God Prayers" to help you to pray without ceasing? (*p. 96*) Encourage them to share a few examples.
- 4. When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, He gave them the Lord's Prayer. This week you used it as a model for your own prayer. (*ques. 1, p. 96*) How did that help or encourage you especially if you struggle with prayer?

Closing Share & Prayer Time:

In your homework this week, you were asked to record The Most Pressing Need in your life. As we close our small group time today, let's take a few minutes to share our needs with one another so we can bear one another's burdens and pray for each other. (Lead your group in a time of sharing, then close in prayer.)

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple?* Week 4 video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 101 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 5 : DEVOTED DISCIPLE: DISTINCTIVES 5 & 6

GOALS

- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will bear much fruit by abiding in Him.
- To understand that loving one another proves to the world that we are His disciples.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Special Note Re: John 15:1-8 – Your group may have questions about what Jesus meant in some parts of this passage (ex: vs. 2a & 6). Please explain that when figures of speech are used in the Bible (metaphors, allegories, parables, symbols, etc., and John 15 is an allegory), there are rules for interpreting them correctly. One of those rules is that we “should not always attempt to ascribe a specific spiritual meaning and application to each detail”¹ of a figure of speech. When details within a figure of speech are not clear or seem to contradict the clear teaching God’s Word, we must be very careful not to assign them meaning and, thus, contradict God’s Word.

Day One:

- 1. Many times in Jesus’ teaching, He used illustrations about farming, seeds, sowing, and reaping, etc., to teach spiritual truths. As He met with His disciples on the night of His arrest, what illustration did He use? (*ques. 1, p. 105*) Were all 12 of His disciples with Him when He shared this illustration? (No, only 11; Judas had already departed to betray Him) So, who is Jesus specifically addressing through this illustration? (*True believers.*)
- 2. In the illustration of the vine, who is the vine, the branch, and the vinedresser? (*ques. 1a, p. 105*)
- 3. What did you learn about abiding? What did you learn about branches? What did you learn about bearing fruit? (*ques. 1b-e, p. 105-106*) What is the only command in John 15:1-8? (*ques. 1c, p. 105*)
- 4. What about the promise in John 15:7: “Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”? Apart from the context, that phrase sounds very broad. But what are the conditions to that promise? What do these conditions mean? (*ques. 3, p. 106*)
- 5. What does bearing fruit mean or prove in the Christian’s life? (*ques. 4, p. 106*)
- 6. Are any of you gardeners? Please share any spiritual lessons you’ve learned from your own gardening experiences especially regarding abiding, pruning, and fruit-bearing.

Day Two:

- 1. Is it possible to serve the Lord (through your spiritual gifts, giving, etc.) without abiding? What are the results? (*Discuss Casual Christians in Corinth, ques. 3, p. 109*) Describe the differences you've seen in your life when you're abiding in Him and when you're not. Share a personal illustration or experience about what it is like to live and serve the Lord in your own strength (apart from abiding in Him) and what it is like to live and serve Him while abiding and drawing from His power. (*ques. 4-5ab, p. 110*)
- 2. What did Jesus teach in The Parable of the Sower regarding spiritual fruit? What "seed" is Jesus referring to in this parable? (*ques. 6a, p. 110*) You saw some of the things that prevent soil from receiving the seed and bearing fruit; does this also apply to the life of the Christian? What are some of the specific things that prevent God's Word from bearing fruit in our lives at times? (*ques. 6b, p. 110*)
- 3. How is the Lord nourishing you through His Word? What evidence of spiritual fruit are you seeing your life as a result? (*ques. 7, p. 111*) How did Psalm 92 encourage you? (*ques. 8, p. 111*) Did you enjoy your Reflection exercise in Day 1 & 2? How did the Lord encourage you through it; did you share what it meant with anyone in your family?

Day Three:

- 1. Is there a brave soul here who will volunteer to quote Gal. 5:22-23? (*ques. 1, p. 112*)
- 2. Let's discuss the fruit of the Spirit: lead them in a brief discussion of each fruit and ask them to describe what they learned about how to apply each one to their lives. (*ques. 2a-i, p. 113-117*)

Day Four:

- 1. What is Distinctive #6 of the Devoted Disciple? How does this kind of love differ from the way love is usually defined by today's culture? (*ques. 1&2, p. 118*)
- 2. Did the Casual Christians in Corinth meet the standard for love that Jesus set? Why or why not? (*ques. 4, p. 119*)
- 3. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am giving you a new commandment"? How does this command differ from the command to love in Lev. 19:16? (*ques. 5a-b, p. 119*)

Day Five:

- 1. As you observed and studied 1 Cor. 13, what did you learn about love? What insights did the Holy Spirit reveal to you? (*ques. 1, p. 121*)

Closing Question:

- As you studied what it means to abide, bear fruit, and love as Jesus loved, what was the #1 truth or application that you learned? (*ques. 2, p. 122*)

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple?* Week 5 video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 125 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

¹Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994), p. 88.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 6 : DEVOTED DISCIPLE: DISTINCTIVE 7

GOALS

- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will exhibit Christlike character.
- To understand that Christlike character includes: Truthfulness, Compassion, Meekness, Boldness, Mercy, Forgiveness, and Servanthood.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Day One:

- 1. This week we studied the final Distinctive of Devoted Disciples and Casual Christians. What were these Distinctives? How are they described in Luke 6:40 and 1 Cor. 3:3? *(ques. 1, p. 128-129)*
- 2. What was the first Christlike Characteristic that you studied? *(ques. 2, p. 129)* What did you learn about Nicodemus as you studied his encounter with Jesus? Who initiated the conversation? How did Jesus respond to him and treat him? What were some of the specific characteristics you noticed about the way Jesus communicated and dealt with Nicodemus? What did you learn from Jesus about the importance of being truthful? *(ques. 2a, p. 129)*
- 3. As you studied Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, how was it different from His conversation with Nicodemus? Who initiated the conversation and why is that important: What was the woman's background and how did Jesus treat her? What were some of the specific characteristics you noticed about the way Jesus communicated and dealt with her? What did you learn from Jesus about how to be truthful? What did you learn from Jesus' example about the importance of being truthful? *(ques. 2b, p. 130)*
- 4. What was the second Christlike Characteristic that you studied? *(ques. 3, p. 130)* What caused Jesus to feel compassion: What did He instruct His disciples to do and why? *(ques. 3a, p. 130)* What similar circumstances do we experience today that should cause us to exhibit compassion?
- 5. Describe the scene in Matt. 20:29-34? What did Jesus teach the multitude and His disciples that day through His example? *(ques. 3b, p. 130)*
- 6. What did you learn about compassion from Luke 7:11-17? We may not be able to raise the dead like Jesus did, but what can we do to express compassion to those who are grieving? *(ques. 3c, p. 131)*
- 7. What story did Jesus share in Luke 10:29-37, and why did He share it? What is He teaching us through this story? *(ques. 3d, p. 131)* How can we practice this kind of compassion?

Day Two:

- 1. What were the next two Christlike characteristics that you studied? (*intro, p. 132*) What does it mean to be meek? (*ques. 1, p. 132*) How do you struggle with meekness? (*ques. 2, p. 132*)
- 2. What did you learn about meekness and boldness from Jesus in Matt. 11, 18, 23, and John 10? What specific instructions did Jesus give to His disciples regarding meekness and boldness? (*ques. 3a-d, p. 133-134*) How can we exhibit boldness and meekness like Jesus did?

Day Three:

- 1. How can meekness help us when we deal with conflict? (*ques. 1, p. 135*)
- 2. You studied several passages regarding meekness and how it applies to our relationships with others. What did you learn about when, why, and how to practice meekness? (*ques. 2a-d, p. 136-137*)
- 3. What did you learn from Eph. 4 regarding conflict between Christians? How does it relate to meekness? (*ques. 3, p. 138*)
- 4. How and when are we to practice boldness? What did you learn from the passages you studied? (*ques. 5a-d, p. 138*)

Day Four:

- 1. It is not always easy to practice the Christlike Characteristics of mercy and forgiveness is it? Have any of you struggled with this? When you demonstrate mercy and forgiveness, what will it look like? (*ques. 2ab, p. 140*)
- 2. What did Jesus teach you about mercy in the passages you studied? (*ques. 4a-c, p. 141*)
- 3. What did Jesus teach you about forgiveness in the passages you studied? (*ques. 5a-c, p. 141-142*)

Day Five:

- 1. The final Christlike Characteristic you studied this past week was servanthood. What did Jesus teach you about servanthood through His own example and through the passage you studied in John 13? (*ques. 1a-e, p. 143-144*)
- 2. Did you enjoy accessorizing with your dish towel? What was that experience like, and what did Jesus teach you through it? (*ques. 2, p. 144*)

Closing Question:

- 1. How is Jesus calling you to practice Truthfulness? Compassion? Meekness? Boldness? Mercy? Forgiveness? Servanthood?
- 2. Which one of these characteristics does He most want you to begin practicing?

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple?* Week 6 video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 147 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.

LEADER GUIDE - WEEK 7 : DISCIPLES MAKE DISCIPLES

GOALS

- To understand that a disciple of Jesus will make disciples.
- To enjoy a sweet time of fellowship and thanksgiving to Jesus as you and your group share what He taught you about discipleship.

Prayer Requests and Prayer (5-10 Minutes)

Discussion (45-50 Minutes)

Please check the boxes beside each discussion question you have prayerfully chosen to use in your small group time. **NOTE: Application-based questions are shaded.**

Day One:

- 1. As we conclude our study today, where do we go from here? What did Jesus teach the disciples before He ascended, and how does it apply to us today? (ques. 1-2, p. 151)
- 2. Does the Great Commission seem a little overwhelming to you? What promise does Jesus give us to encourage us as we obey Him and make disciples? (ques. 3, p. 151) How does His promise parallel what you studied in John 14? (ques. 4, p. 151)
- 3. What is the primary command of the Great Commission and how do we fulfill it? (notes on p. 152)
- 4. Where did Jesus command His disciples to be His witnesses? What did you learn as you looked at maps of Israel during the time of Christ? (ques. 5b-d, p. 153) Where is your Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria? How can you be a witness in each of these areas AND in the remotest parts of the earth? (ques. 6, p. 153)
- 5. How and/or who is Jesus calling you to make disciples? (ques. 7, p. 154)

Day Two:

- 1. In Day Two, you studied the beautiful example of disciples making disciples at the Church of Thessalonica. How did they originally come to Christ, and what circumstances did they face because of their decision to follow Christ? What did you learn from studying their backstory in Acts 17? (ques. 1, p. 155)
- 2. 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 describes the disciples at the Church of Thessalonica. What did you learn from them about how to become an effective witness for Jesus? Did you notice any of the Distinctives of Devoted Discipleship in their lives? How did they make disciples? What insights and encouragement did you gain from their example? (ques. 3, p. 156) How is God calling you to serve Him in your local church? (ques. 3, p. 157)
- 3. Who has God used to disciple you? How has He used other Christians to train and teach you to follow Him?

Day Three:

- 1. As you learned in Day Three, following Christi will require us to experience the same hard reality that He faced: suffering and persecution. What did you learn about suffering and persecution from your study of Matthew 10, and John 15 and 17? As disciples, how does Jesus instruct us to respond to suffering and persecution? (*ques. 1, a-c. 158*)
- 2. Is there an upside to suffering? What did you learn from Luke 6, 2 Cor. 1, Phil. 1, and 1 Peter? (*ques. 2a-d, p. 159*)
- 3. How did your study of the rewards of discipleship bless and encourage you? What did you learn? What was your favorite passage/promise and why? (*ques. 3a-e, p. 160*)

Day Four & Five:

- 1. Let's spend the rest of our time just sharing the Top 2 Truths Jesus taught us each week of this study. Review the charts they completed (*pages 162-168*), and let this be a time of affirming one another and praising the Lord.

Closing Question:

- 1. I hope all of you are now able to answer the question that is the title of this study – *Are You a Disciple?* – with a great, big, confident *Yes*. My final question for you is this: With this study behind you, how do you plan to continue growing in God's Word as His disciple?

Optional:

- Watch the *Are You a Disciple? Week 7* video together.
- Use the Listening Guide on p. 171 of your workbook to take notes. Blank and completed Listening Guides are also included with this Leader Guide.