

Study Guide



Week 3 - Invite

April 22, 2018

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

We have been looking at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, sitting at His feet, and we have learned how to be disciples and disciple-makers. We have challenged everyone to share the gospel as we have been sent to share the good news of Jesus with others. The next four weeks is planned to equip our members practically as we are sent to live on mission and to be intentional with our relationships and time. The material used for this study comes from North American Mission Board's book, *Life on Mission: Gospel. Mission. Ministry* (2013).

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Prayer & Missions

June— Serve Shreveport

July— Community Outreach

For further information visit

norriferrychurch.org or contact Jared Clary (clary@norriferrychurch.org)

Calendar

April 29th— Baptisms and Picnic

May 6th— Member's Meeting

June 11th-16th— Youth Camp

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[I Stand Amazed](#)":

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean.

O how marvelous! O how wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!
Is my Savior's love for me!

He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own;
He bore the burden to Calvary,
And suffered and died alone.

When with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see,
'Twill be my joy through the ages
To sing of His love for me.

Chapter 6: Intentional Discipleship

A missionary is committed to making disciples who make disciples.

Intentional Discipleship

The 11 disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw Him, they worshiped, but some doubted. Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (See Matthew 28:16-20).

Our role in the mission of God is to introduce people to Christ, actively be part of their journey to become like Christ, and teach them to repeat the process with others. We are to make disciples that multiply themselves—disciples who make disciples. Disciple-making happens best in the context of relationships and biblical community.

Here are some characteristics of a disciple who is making disciples:

- He invests deeply into relationships with those around him.
- He places an emphasis on teaching people to study and be obedient to Scripture.
- He learns to use "teachable moments" in the midst of life, showing how the gospel impacts all areas.
- He models what it means to walk with Jesus and is honest about his failures. He clearly displays what it looks like to walk in grace.
- He sees ministry as a way to "get people done" rather than simply using people to get ministry done.

Life on Life

It is noteworthy that Jesus' ministry strategy was to pick 12 guys and spend a ton of time with them. He didn't give them an instruction manual or send them to a conference— He just did life with them. For three years they traveled together, ate meals together, slept near each other and did ministry every day. And then, after the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus stood before them and basically told them to keep doing what He taught them, that He would be with them. (See Matthew 28.)

And they did. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the gospel spread from 12 men to millions upon millions of people for the next two thousand years. What started as an intense three-year flame of life-on-life discipleship turned into a forest fire of epic proportion.

"You teach people what you know, but you reproduce who you are."

- Wayne Cordeiro

You Reproduce Who You Are

We are a fiercely relational people. From the time of childhood, we begin to replicate what we see our parents doing. This carries forward into school age as we are influenced by friends and the winds of peer pressure. We are continually being shaped one way or another by our environments, especially the people around us.

Think about it: odds are at some point in your life you've heard a parent, teacher or coach say something to the effect of, "Don't do what I do, do what I say!" And when you hear that statement, there is a natural push back because we realize that is not how things work. Like mirrors, we tend to reproduce what we see those around us doing.

Maybe you've been a part of discipleship classes before, and unfortunately those environments sometimes consist only of the imparting of information. As we grow in our faith, we should also be growing in knowledge. However, by itself, knowledge is not enough.

Discipleship cannot be divorced from community, because discipleship happens in community.

Discipleship happens as we watch people and imitate them. Many times throughout the New Testament, Paul tells the recipients of his letters to imitate him as he follows Jesus. (See 1 Corinthians 11:1.) Just as we have been served by following those who are more mature than we are, we have the great task of helping those behind us take the next steps toward Jesus.

Going Up the Mountain Together

Like a line of hikers ascending a mountain, we keep our eyes on those ahead of us to imitate them and to follow in their footsteps. We listen to the advice they throw back to us to avoid missing the next step. And as we do so, we also look over our shoulders to those behind us. We tell them what to watch out for, where the sure steps are found. We reach back and pull them along when necessary, trying our best to make sure they reach the top of the mountain.

As we pursue the mission of God we have to focus on following those ahead of us, while at the same time helping those behind us stay on track. This is what discipleship is all about—helping one another take the next steps toward being like Jesus.

Chapter 10: Invite

Invite people into disciple-making relationships.

Invite

“By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Gospel Thread

Ephesians 2:11-22 beautifully expounds upon the fact that Jesus has reconciled us to God through the cross and made us into one family, or one household with God. The passage starts off with an important reminder: remember.

Verse 12 goes on to say: “At that time you were without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”

So the call to remember points us back—to remember that we didn’t always have the hope we presently have in Jesus. Once we were orphans outside the family of God. We were hopeless in our sin and in desperate need. Not only were we without relationship with God, we were outside the community of the church.

The gospel calls us to remember this, because it reminds us that there are many others out there who are still separated from God. There are many hopeless orphans, still lost in their sin, who need to be invited into God’s family. Remember what it was like to be on the outside, and your desire to see those on the outside brought in will grow.

Additionally, the gospel not only compels us to make converts, but disciples. We invite people into discipling relationships for the purpose of presenting “everyone mature in Christ.”

“We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Colossians 1:28).

Who has made a major investment in your spiritual growth? How have they helped you become more like Christ?

Inviting: Both/And

Just as methods of investing in relationships may look different depending on the situation, the same is true for methods of inviting. Inviting people into discipling relationships will look different in different contexts.

Think back to Paul and Jennifer. They moved to a community of Hispanic people and began to invest their lives in the people there. They invited other like-minded people from their church to join them in the mission and did get some help from them, but no one else actually moved there like they did.

Slowly but surely, they began to see some results. Several people became willing to explore Jesus with them. So they invited them into their home where they explored Christianity and studied the Bible. Two of them eventually came to know Jesus, and they celebrated like they'd won the lottery. But they soon realized something—they were unsure of what to do next. Because there was not a church in the community that contextually fit the Hispanic neighborhood, they began meeting to do Bible study, answer questions, worship, pray and push toward spiritual growth. In other words, to make disciples.

What they noticed was that pursuing these disciple-making relationships eventually led to genuine biblical community among the believers. They became a family. And in the midst of this happening, the disciple-making environment provided a context for more people to meet Jesus, because people invited their friends and relatives who were skeptical about Jesus to come and investigate Him. What resulted from this was a beautiful community of both growing disciples and curious seekers. Paul and Jennifer had no idea that something so beautiful could happen in a community they never would have placed themselves in without the Spirit's prompting.

For Paul and Jennifer, the disciple-making relationships created biblical community where it formerly didn't exist.

*As we invite people into disciple-making relationships,
biblical community is formed.*

On the other hand, in another situation, inviting someone into disciple-making relationships will look different. Patrick led a small group of guys for years, and he noticed that they were growing stale. It felt as though they were at a dead end, so he prayed and decided that they needed to use their community as a tool for missions. Several of the guys really enjoyed playing disc golf, so once a month, instead of having their small group meeting on Wednesday night, they would play disc golf and invite friends they were investing in to come play.

Steve, a co-worker of one of the guys, came to play a few times. Steve really enjoyed hanging out with them, and eventually he figured out that they met the other Wednesday nights as well. Even though he wasn't a Christian, he expressed interest

in coming to hang out with them during their small-group time. He came to the group and was amazed by the way the guys really treated each other like family. They fought for, supported and even rebuked one another in love when necessary.

These guys truly cared for one another and Steve could see this. Steve was observing the very idea Jesus presented to his disciples in John 13:35. Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." The notion of loving one another well while inviting those on the "outside" to come "in" is an ancient idea that if truly applied would appear to some as a ground-breaking evangelistic practice. But it's not new—Jesus said it would work and it does. Jesus reveals Himself to the spiritual orphan through His sons and daughters who love one another with intentionality.

After a few months of hanging out with the guys every week, Steve became a believer in Jesus. Not long after, he started inviting some of his other friends who didn't know Jesus to hang out with the group. One by one, several of his friends also came into the group and eventually all of them came to know Jesus.

For Patrick, the small-group leader, the biblical community that already existed formed the perfect environment for disciple-making relationships.

As we invite people into biblical community, disciples are made.

Again, it's not one or the other; it's both/and. Like a two-headed coin, the results should be the same either way you flip it.

Sometimes biblical community exists that fits the culture and context of the people in whom we are investing. Other times it does not, yet we are still commanded to make disciples and help form biblical community that does fit their culture and context.

Man on a Hill vs. City on a Hill

Make a concerted effort be on mission in community with others. Too often the road of evangelism and missions is one people attempt to travel alone. But we read in the New Testament that believers are called to live out this life as the unified body of Christ. (Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 both give great illustrations of this idea.) You need the encouragement, support and accountability of community while you are on mission.

In Matthew 5, as Jesus was teaching a large group of followers what has now been termed the "Sermon on the Mount," He gave great metaphors for what missions could and should look like. Some of these metaphors have evolved into classic children's Sunday School songs. Sing along if you know it.

"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine ... this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine ... this little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine."

If you didn't grow up in church and you are wondering what you missed, well, you missed a song that had great intentions, but its simple lyrics actually mislead people toward a wrong idea about missions. The song repeatedly uses the words, I and mine, which would tend to lead one to believe that mission work is about what they can do as an individual in and of themselves.

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus gives three main ideas: salt, light and city. One of the keys to understanding this passage is in understanding that Jesus is addressing a community of people, and He illustrates the carrier of this great hope as a city.

There has never been a city on planet Earth that had a population of one. One person on a hill does not qualify as a city no matter how hard he or she may try. A city is a city because it has a large number of people who make up its population. We are inviting people into biblical community so that they can experience the "city"—the family of God.

People need to see the grace of God lived out among a group of people. They need to see other believers repenting, confessing, rejoicing in God's grace and forgiving others. They need to see the gospel applied to life. People desperately desire to belong to something bigger than themselves, and despite being more connected than ever (social media), many people are incredibly lonely.

You are not meant to simply show off the light that you have as an individual, but rather you are meant to display the light of the gospel through a community of people who are unified in Jesus. Biblical community is like a city on a hill that emits a great light to those who are wandering around in a dark desert.

Getting Practical

If you are like Paul and Jennifer, pressing out on mission into the fringes where biblical community is not readily available, you need to have a laser focus on discipleship. Invite those you are investing in to meet with you as often as possible and pour into them. Study the Bible together, teach them the basics of the faith and talk about the gospel continually, showing them how it applies to their lives.

As you pursue Jesus, the hope and goal is that those around you would also be moving toward Jesus and spiritual maturity; that unbelievers would come to know Him as their Savior and that new or immature Christians would be sharpened by your growth, taking steps toward maturity. This is what discipleship is all about—helping people take the next step toward Jesus no matter where they are. In whatever way you can, be intentional about helping people take steps toward Jesus. Continually ask yourself (and the Holy Spirit in prayer):

- What can I do to help this person take the next step toward Jesus?
- How can I serve them and push them to grow?
- What do they need to hear or learn?

Just like the apostle Paul, pour out your life to this end; love people and strive to foster their love for Jesus and their spiritual growth.

Share your life with people so they can see how you handle situations and apply the gospel to your life. Humbly and openly repent of your sin to testify that your righteousness is in Jesus and model that Christians are not perfect, but covered in grace. Apologize when necessary and don't let yourself become a puffed up, prideful "super Christian" who is above doing any wrong. Remember: you can teach people what you know, but you are going to reproduce who you are.

Is your life highly visible to those you are discipling? Are they able to see you grow, repent and change?

What steps can you take to be more intentional with those you are raising up?
How can you foster biblical community with those you are discipling?

If you are like Patrick, investing in people whom you can invite directly into your biblical community, you are set up to use your existing community as a tool for discipleship.

Talk to your community about being on mission together. Cast the vision of being a city on a hill that you invite others to join.

Have a discussion about the people in whom your group is investing. How can you invite them to become part of your community? Are any of them interested enough in Jesus to want to come to your group meeting? If so, go ahead and invite them.

Some people might not be interested in taking that step yet (or might be uncomfortable being around people who are praying and talking about the Bible), but there are other great ways to invite them into relationship.

One way is to establish relational rhythms for your group, such as planning a weekly activity that a skeptic would be interested in participating in and that would still build community. For example, your group could grab lunch together on Wednesdays every week. The options are endless—you can turn anything your group enjoys doing into an opportunity to invite others into relationship.

Name a person you have been investing in that you could invite into your biblical community.

How can you cultivate an environment in your community that is accepting of new ideas and people?

What rhythms could your local church establish to serve as relational avenues to invite others to join?

Notes:

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased	Celebrate recovery
Young life	Samaritan counseling
Heart of hope	Last call ministries
First priority	Golden age ministries
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center	Rescue mission
Community renewal	Luke's lighthouse
Grief counseling	FCA

Here is a list of missionaries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Shannon & Carrie Lewis (South Sudan)
Matt & Angie Johnson (Panama)
Meggie Hickson (Tanzania)
Kyle & Suzy Jagers (New Orleans)

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!