



CHURCH at THE CROSS

Profile of a

**DISCIPLE**



|    |                                  |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 4  | Introduction                     |
| 6  | Value 1: Centered on Jesus       |
| 12 | Value 2: Driven by Grace         |
| 18 | Value 3: Shaped by Scripture     |
| 24 | Value 4: Renewed as Community    |
| 30 | Value 5: Sent on Mission         |
| 34 | Value 6: Empowered by the Spirit |
| 38 | Conclusion                       |





# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Discipleship Groups is to learn to be a “disciple” of Jesus. A disciple is someone who follows a teacher, learns His ways, and practices them. When you commit your life to Jesus, you begin your path of discipleship. The purpose of this curriculum is to help you walk that path by exploring the basic profiles of a disciple.

When you enter into a relationship with the person of Jesus, you also enter into a relationship with the church, the body of Christ, of whom Jesus is the head. This is part of God’s plan to help you grow as a disciple. Therefore, the majority of this curriculum is intended to be done together, in the context of community where we will find Jesus at work in our lives through others. This curriculum contains six lessons but it may take more than one session to finish a lesson. That’s okay, give each lesson the time that it needs.

## **Rule of Life**

As you learn what it means to follow Jesus, you will likely discover habits that get in the way and new habits that might help. To aid in your development, you will have an opportunity to develop a Rule of Life throughout this curriculum. Ken Shigematsu defines a rule of life in this way, “Like a trellis, a rule of life supports and guides our growth. It supports our friendship with Christ so that we bear the fruit of his character and are able to offer his nourishing life to others. The purpose of the rule, in this sense, is not to be harsh or confining. It is to cultivate fruit. It serves as a pattern for life that enables us to experience the presence of Jesus in each moment of our lives, empowering us to become people who embody his love to others.”<sup>1</sup>

In order to benefit from your rule of life it must be two things: Grace-driven and helpful. First, if a rule of life is a way to earn God’s favor, then the rule of life will fail you. Second, it might sound obvious but a rule of life must also be helpful to you. Don’t embrace a habit just because someone else does or because it sounds fun. If a specific rule is not going to help you, don’t do it. You should be asking yourself questions about your stage of life and your personality as you think about habits you want to develop. Also, what helps you today might not help you tomorrow so be flexible and change it when necessary.

## **Memorizing Scripture**

This curriculum will rely heavily on content from Romans 8. In order to maximize the impact of this powerful chapter, you are encouraged to begin memorizing it. If you’ve never practiced scripture memory before, see the article titled “Scripture Memory” at [CATC.Church/articles](http://CATC.Church/articles) by clicking the “Scripture” category in the dropdown menu.



# **CENTERED ON JESUS**

**Our truest identity is who we are in Jesus  
We become like Jesus as we behold Jesus**

## Notes

When we enter into a relationship with Jesus, the Bible refers to it as becoming a disciple. A disciple is a student, which means we are students of Jesus. From Him, we learn the purpose of life and how to live rightly in His world. In other words, to be a disciple is to be centered on Jesus. In this first session, we will explore the implications of centering our life on Him.

Our truest identity is who we are in Jesus....Centering our lives on Jesus impacts the most essential aspects of our lives, including our identity. We all have different identities which help us to know who we are and what we are called to do. If you are an elementary school teacher, your responsibility is to teach children. If you are an auto mechanic, your responsibility is to fix cars. Some of our identities will stay the same, some will constantly change. Some of our identities are true, some are false and some are dreams. Whatever we understand our identity to be or hope our identity to become, will determine what we do. Therefore, nothing is more important in this life than understanding our identity and no one has a higher claim on our identity than the one who made us.

### **What are some of your identities?**

### **What identities do wish were yours?**

### **Who we really are**

We are a part of a story bigger than ourselves. A story that goes back to the creation of the first humans.

### **Read Genesis 1 & 3**

What do these chapters teach us about ourselves, God, and our relationship to Him?





## Notes

Watch 3 Circles Presentation by visiting [namb.net/evangelism/3circles](http://namb.net/evangelism/3circles)

**Summarize** what you heard.

**Where do you fit in God's story?** Take turns sharing your story with the group. After you've shared your story, see if you can identify each of the "3 Circles" in your story?

## New Identities

Jesus has given you a new story and with that story, new identities. These identities are more than just facts to store in our heads. They are objective truths about us that function as a road map for our lives. Who we are guides what we think, feel, and do. Remembering who Jesus is and what He has done for us has a transformative effect on our lives.... We become like Jesus as we behold Jesus.

Let's take a look at the identities we receive when we place our faith in Jesus. Read each identity and the corresponding verse.<sup>2</sup>

**I am in Christ** – 1 Corinthians 15:22

**I am justified** – Romans 8:1

**I am adopted** – John 1:12

**I am secure** – Romans 8:38-39

**I am free** – Romans 6:5-6

**I am unfinished** – Philippians 1:6

- How might these identities strengthen your confidence in Jesus' love for you?
- Do you struggle to believe any of these identities?
- What would change in your life if you were to fully embrace these identities?

**Sharing your story.** Before your group meets again, make a commitment to share your story with someone else who does not know Jesus.







# **DRIVEN BY GRACE**

**The Gospel not only saves us, but it also changes us.  
The more we “get” grace, the more we give grace.**

## Notes

In the previous lesson, we learned about God's story and where we fit in. We learned that we were created for a relationship with God and we begin that relationship when we place our trust in Jesus. The story doesn't end there. We are now disciples of Jesus and that means we are destined for more than forgiveness. We are learning to become like Him. As we center our lives on Jesus, God is at work to shape our hearts so that we live and love like Him. Grace started the journey and grace will carry us through.

### Read Revelation 21:3 and Romans 8:29-30

What end is God working toward and what does it mean for you?

We will be in the presence of God and that will change everything. We will be His people and He will be our God. We will live fully as He created us to live, perfectly human. In other words, we will be like Jesus.

### The Real Jesus

Read John 10:7-18. What do we learn about Jesus in this text? What is His heart like? What does He do?

What thoughts and feelings do you have when you think about God's desire to conform you to the image of Jesus?

The Gospel not only saves us, but it also changes us...For most people the idea of becoming like Jesus feels overwhelming. We are fully aware that we just don't match up. There is good news. The Gospel not only saves us, it changes us...Just as we are saved by grace we are also changed by grace. We don't leave grace at the starting line of our journey.

### Re-cap what is the Gospel message?

Let's explore how the Gospel brings change.

To become a disciple of Jesus is to trust that He lived the life we could never live and paid the price we could never pay. Jesus bridged the gap between our sinfulness and God's holiness.



## Notes

Jesus not only secures a new life of freedom for us, but He also models a different way of life that is entirely driven by grace. Read the following passages and see if you can identify examples of Jesus motivating a grace-driven life.

### **Philippians 2:1-8** **Ephesians 5:25-30**

Let's focus on a story of someone who experienced the grace of God and how it changed them.

One sure way to know whether or not we're resting in the grace of Jesus by looking to see the grace and compassion we offer to others. The more we "get" grace, the more we give grace.

### **Read Luke 7:36-50**

Contrast the character of the woman and the pharisee in this passage. What do their actions seem to say about their beliefs about themselves and Jesus?

We all wish we had the kind of devotion that this woman demonstrates to Jesus. She believed that God was holy and that she was a sinner yet she was convinced that Jesus had come for sinners just like her and this prompted a response of love.

Evaluate your own life. Do you demonstrate grace and compassion to people you interact with? What about those closest to you?

Think about a recent moment when you lacked grace and compassion. What were you believing about yourself and the other individual at that moment? How would remembering the grace of Jesus have altered your interaction with them?





## Notes

### **REJOICE**

Let the full weight of the Gospel weigh on your heart and thank Him.

### **MOVE**

What specific actions or behaviors do you need to change? Commit to correcting these actions along with the lies and hopes that accompanied them.

### **Rule of Life**

What habits could you embrace that would help you to be driven by grace? What habits do you need to let go of that keep you from being driven by grace?

### **Memorize Romans 8:6-11**



# **SHAPED BY SCRIPTURE**

**The Bible is a necessity for intimacy with God**  
**We align our lives with the Bible, not the other way around**

## Notes

As we continue in our discipleship with Jesus we remember that He has granted us new life and placed us in a new story with new identities. We enter into a relationship with God and begin to know Him more and trust His ways. As with any relationship, the way we begin to know someone better is by hearing them speak. God has given us His Word through the Bible so that we might know His heart and desires. Building a life with the Bible as our foundation is vital to truly knowing God and enjoying our relationship with Him. In this session, we aim to learn what the Bible is and how to embrace it.

### What the Bible says about itself?

#### Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

What do we learn about the Bible from this passage?

#### Attributes of the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16-17 reveals four important attributes of the Bible. Read the attributes below and see if you can identify where each attribute is listed in the passage. <sup>5</sup>

**God's Word Is Sufficient**

**God's Word is Clear**

**God's Word is Authoritative**

**God's Word is Necessary**

What implications do these attributes have for how we treat the Bible?

The Bible is a necessity for intimacy with God....AW Tozer said, "The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men [and women] to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself is the core and center of their hearts." <sup>6</sup>

**What have you learned about God from reading the Bible?**

**How has this impacted your relationship with Him?**







# **RENEWED AS COMMUNITY**

**Spiritual formation is a community project**  
**Our life together is an evangelistic event**

## Notes

Our world is full of broken relationships. Whether it's with family, nations, or neighbors, relationships often break down. When sin entered the world, it broke not only our relationship with God but also our relationship with others. Instead of loving and serving people, we turn inwards and elevate our desires above theirs. Now, because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, not only is our relationship with God restored but our relationships with others are being restored as well. This is seen most clearly in our relationship with the people of Jesus. When we become disciples of Jesus, we enter a relationship with all of His disciples. Together we are being made into a beautiful community of people who love with the same love that Jesus loves us. Like Bible reading, community is another tool that God has given us to experience power and growth in the Christian life. When we embrace this, we flourish. Let's take some time to look at what a Christian community is and how to enjoy it.

### Read Genesis 3:1-12

Describe Adam and Eve's interactions with one another after they disobeyed God. What does this tell us about the effect of sin on human relationships?

**Are there certain situations in your life that make it difficult for you to love and serve others?**

**Can you think of a relationship that has helped you become a better version of yourself?**

### Read Ephesians 2:19-22

How does Jesus restore our relationships?

What new identities do we see given to those who put their trust in Jesus?

What responsibilities come with these identities?

What benefits come with these identities?

### Read Ephesians 4:11-16

What will be the defining characteristic of the new community that God is building?

What connection exists between an individual's Christian maturity

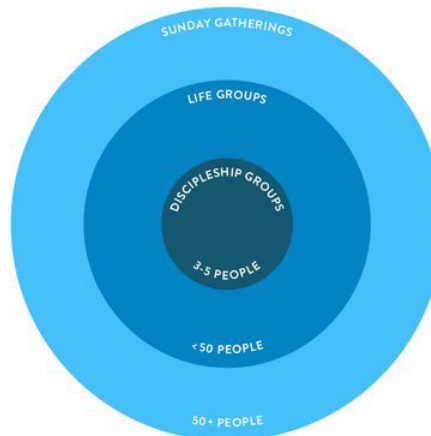




## Notes

## Spaces of Community

Different elements of spiritual formation happen in different community spaces. At Church at the Cross, we have created 3 spaces to help community have maximum impact on our lives.



### **PUBLIC SPACE**

- Evangelism
- Instruction
- Exhortation
- Sacraments

### **SOCIAL SPACE**

- Care/Prayer
- Fellowship
- Encouragement
- Evangelism

### **PERSONAL SPACE**

- Accountability
- Bible Study
- Confession
- Friendship

### **Sunday Gatherings**

In these spaces, the whole church is brought together on a Sunday morning to be encouraged through preaching, singing, and communion.

### **Life Groups**

Here we can know one another better and care for physical and spiritual needs. We can also invite our unbelieving friends and neighbors in to experience what it looks like to be redeemed by Jesus.

### **Discipleship Groups**

This space meets needs that can only be accomplished in smaller groups. In Discipleship Groups, people can talk more in-depth about a portion of scripture, share their joys and struggles, confess sin, and encourage and pray for one another more deeply.



## One Anothers

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash [one another's](#) feet. **John 13:14**

A new command I give you: Love [one another](#). As I have loved you, so you must love [one another](#). By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love [one another](#). **John 13:34, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:11 (etc.)**

Be devoted to [one another](#) in brotherly love. Honor [one another](#) above yourselves. **Romans 12:10**

Live in harmony with [one another](#). **Romans 12:16**

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love [one another](#), for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. **Romans 13:8**

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on [one another](#). Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. **Romans 14:13**

Accept [one another](#), then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. **Romans 15:7**

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct [one another](#). **Romans 15:14**

Greet [one another](#) with a holy kiss. **Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Peter 5:14**

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with [one another](#) so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. **1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 4:2**

Serve [one another](#) in love. **Galatians 5:13**

Bearing with [one another](#) in love. **Ephesians 4:2**

Be kind and compassionate to [one another](#), forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32**

Speak to [one another](#) with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. **Ephesians 5:19**

Submit to [one another](#) out of reverence for Christ. **Ephesians 5:21**

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against [one another](#). Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **Colossians 3:13**

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish [one another](#) with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **Colossians 3:16**

Therefore encourage [one another](#) and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. **1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:25**

But encourage [one another](#) daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. **Hebrews 3:13**

And let us consider how we may spur [one another](#) on toward love and good deeds. **Hebrews 10:24**

Brothers, do not slander [one another](#). **James 4:11**

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with [one another](#); be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. **1 Peter 3:8**

Offer hospitality to [one another](#) without grumbling. **1 Peter 4:9**

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward [one another](#), because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. **1 Peter 5:5**

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with [one another](#), and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. **1 John 1:7**

Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with [each other](#). **Mark 9:50**

So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for [each other](#). **1 Corinthians 12:25**

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying [each other](#). **Galatians 5:26**

Carry [each other's](#) burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **Galatians 6:2**





# SENT ON MISSION

Missions exist because worship doesn't.  
The question is not if I'm called but to whom and to where.

## Notes

Hopefully, it's become clear through this curriculum that becoming a disciple of Jesus changes everything in our lives. As we follow Jesus, we become what God created us to be. But those who trust in Jesus don't just sit around and wait for the end of it all. We are sent out in partnership with God to tell the good news of what we've experienced, inviting others in to join us. In this session, we will see that disciples make disciples.

### Read Genesis 3:1-9

What does Adam and Eve's decision communicate about their view of God?

Missions exist because worship doesn't...Worship is not only about singing songs on a Sunday morning. To worship God is to acknowledge that He is our creator and that life doesn't work without Him. The main issue with Adam and Eve's sin in the garden was that they denied God His due worship. Since that time, we have all followed suit and as a result, we experience the brokenness that comes with that decision. God is now on a mission to make all things right. He is on a mission to create worshipers who thrive as they trust in His loving care. All of history is moving toward the end where people from all nations will worship God.

### Read Genesis 3:14-21

What consequences are given as a result of Adam and Eve's decision?

What promises does God make?

What expectations do you think Adam and Eve had when they heard these promises?

Verse 23 is a devastating statement. Humanity is removed from the presence of God, their creator and the source of all their needs and truest desires. But God does not send them out before offering a promise of restoration.





## Notes

### Read Acts 17:26

What does this verse teach us about where we live?

Who has God sovereignly placed in your life to influence?

What would it look like for you to be intentional about influencing the people in your circles?

### Rule of Life

What habits could you initiate that would help you be more intentional with the people God has placed in your life?

### Memorize Romans 8:26-30



# **EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT**

**God's power is for God's purposes**

**Prayer precedes power**

## Notes

God is writing the ultimate redemption story. He rescues people and places them into the body of Christ, the church. Together, we are learning to live and love like Jesus, inviting others to join us in the process. When Jesus' disciples heard that Jesus was leaving this earth, they were in despair. They knew they couldn't possibly become more like Him if He were not there. Now that we are Jesus' disciples, most of us feel overwhelmed by the Christian life and wonder silently how we could ever be anything close to what we're called to be. Jesus addresses their fears and ours by announcing that He would be sending His Spirit as a helper. But Jesus would have to go to the cross in order to send the Spirit. The Spirit is so vital to our Christian life that Jesus died to give Him to you. In this final section, we will spend some time understanding who the Spirit is and how He empowers your discipleship.

### **Who is the Holy Spirit?**

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-13**

What does this passage teach us about the Spirit's relation to God?

“With the Father and the Son, Christians praise the Holy Spirit; and for good reason. The Spirit of the Father and the Son is one God with the Father and the Son, the third person of the Trinity, and the crowning agent of God's undivided purpose and power.”

– Scott Swain

The Holy Spirit is the answer to a long-awaited promise.

#### **Read Ezekiel 36:25-27**

What does this passage teach us that the Holy Spirit will do when He comes?

No wonder Jesus tells us in John 16:7, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you.” The book of Acts is ordered immediately after Jesus' resurrection and true to His word, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit. For those who trust in Jesus, the stain of sin has been removed and we have been credited with His righteousness. We now live in a new age where the Spirit dwells not around or next to us as if He were afraid to



## Notes

## Rule of Life

What habits of prayer would you like to implement in your life?

The disciplines of solitude and prayer can be helpful practices to aid your prayer life. Find articles on these topics by visiting CATC. Church/articles and click the “solitude” and “fasting” categories in the dropdown menu. Consider how you might implement these disciplines into your rhythm.

### Memorize Romans 8:31-39



**CONCLUSION**

A decision to follow Jesus is a decision to become a disciple and learn from Him how to live in this His world. Throughout this series, we have looked at 6 profiles of a Christian that will help guide your discipleship. With the conclusion of these lessons, you are equipped to enter into long-term discipling relationships with others who God has placed in your life. Together you will have ups and downs but the goal is to help one another stay focused on Jesus so that over time you all grow. The Discipleship Group Guide will help you with this process.

Throughout this curriculum, you have been developing a “Rule of Life”. You have thought through different habits that can help you in your discipleship. Take some time now to recall these habits and consider writing them down in a journal. Share with the group the habits you want to commit to. As a reminder, these habits are not a law to follow. These habits are intended to help you keep your eyes focused on Jesus. They will likely need to be adjusted as you go.

## **NOTES:**

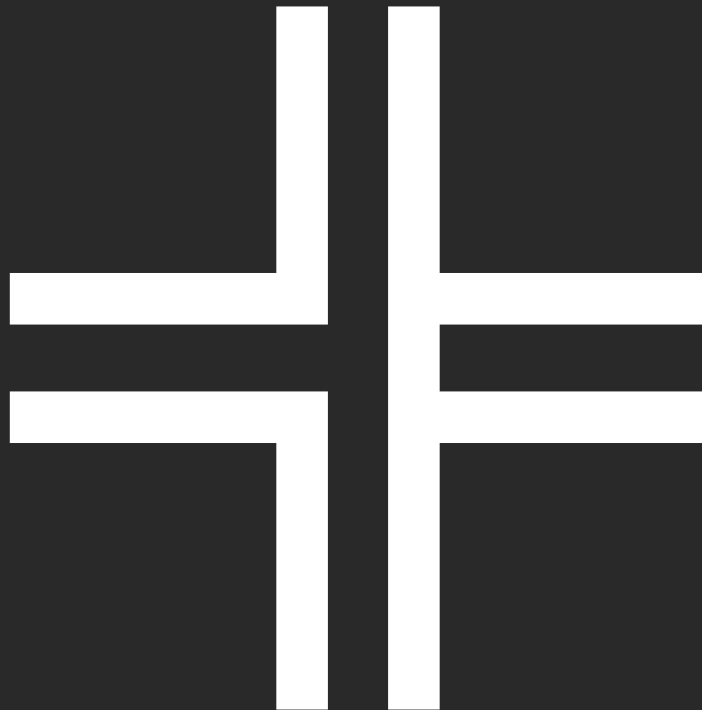
1. Ken Shigematsu, *God in my Everything* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), p. 21.
2. Tim Challies, *Visual Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), p. 31.
3. Robert H. Thune & Will Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life* (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2009), p.13
4. Robert H. Thune & Will Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life* (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2009), p.13
5. Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), p.44
6. Ken Shigematsu, *God in my Everything* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 71.











CHURCH at THE CROSS