

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.*

The **Discipleship Tracks**

TRAINING MANUAL



Grace
Evangelical Free Church

Discipleship Track Training

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 28:18-20

intro.

There are certain things that every church talks about: the gospel, ministry, worship, etc. Discipleship is one of those things and various churches have different ideas and definitions of what discipleship is, or is not.

First, what is a disciple? A disciple is a student or follower of someone else. When the New Testament talks about disciples, it means students or followers of Jesus Christ. Children naturally imitate their parents. The more they imitate, the more they will think, talk, act, and live like mom and dad. This is the idea behind discipleship. Jesus modeled the Christian life for his disciples. And then the disciples modeled to others around them. Paul called for people to imitate him as he did Christ (1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 3:17).

The most famous description of discipleship is from Matthew 28 in his Great Commission. Discipleship requires acknowledging Jesus as Lord (v18), being baptized (v19), and learning and keeping all that Jesus commanded (v20). Just like a child imitates a parent, a disciple imitates his teacher.

Second, what is discipleship? Discipleship is the process of helping Christians become followers of Jesus. Again, the Great Commission tells us discipleship is to teach others all that it means to follow and obey Jesus. It means learning both what Jesus commands in the Bible and learning how to follow his commands.

Third, who is discipleship for? Discipleship is for all Christians. It is not merely pastors, overachievers, or people who decide to do discipleship. It is for everyone who believes in the gospel and considers themselves a Christian. If you are a Christian, discipleship is not optional. We all must be both disciples of Christ, and help others become disciples of Christ. The work of discipleship is an ongoing process that will fill the rest of our days until all nations are disciples of Christ.

There are many different pieces to discipleship and many ways it can be done. We made this booklet as one simple way to help people get started with discipleship in a small setting, either one-on-one or with a couple of people. It explains the discipleship tracks at Grace Church along with some things to keep in mind as you meet with someone else.

The discipleship tracks have existed at Grace for a few years and many people have gone through at least one track. If you are looking to get started with the discipleship tracks, simply ask someone else at Grace for more information.

My prayer is that as you begin doing discipleship, you would grow in your ability, desire, and love for discipleship. May we be a church filled with disciples who make disciples.

using this booklet.

1. New to the tracks? Use this booklet to learn about discipleship and how to use the tracks.
2. You've done a track, but it has been a while? Get a quick refresher on the discipleship tracks and what may have changed over the years.
3. Are you looking to lead others through the tracks? This booklet will provide several helps and tips to take someone else through a track.

We hope that by the end of this booklet you will have greater confidence and ability to both participate, and lead someone else through discipleship. If you still have questions or need more help, please talk to any of the elders at Grace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When you hear the word 'discipleship' what comes to mind?
- What is your experience with discipleship (at Grace or another church)?
- Have you been disciplined by someone before?
- Have you disciplined someone else before?
- What are some obstacles keeping you from discipling someone else?

The Discipleship Tracks

foundational ideas.

The discipleship tracks are built on a larger foundation for understanding ministry. We call it *Ministry City* and we'd be happy to explain more. For now here are some quick bullet points that make up the foundation of the tracks.

1. God's Word is the standard for all things. It is our authority and we want to submit to what it says in all areas of life (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. God's Word tells us that all things exist for the glory of God. This is our motivation for anything we do (Col. 3:17).
3. Discipleship takes place within the context of the local church. Pastors and elders don't do all the discipleship, they equip the church so that everyone is doing discipleship (Eph. 4:11-13).
4. God's Word tells us that God means to be glorified by his people (all of them) engaging in the intentional discipleship of the world. That is, God's people glorify God by intentionally calling people to follow Jesus both to the cross in conversion and to glory in sanctification.
5. The process of discipleship consists of: living, reaching, growing, training, releasing, and challenging.

6. The marks of discipleship consist of: seeing God and his Word rightly, becoming a lover/worshiper of God, becoming a debtor/lover of people, functioning as a part of the body of Christ, recognizing dependence on God, growing in godliness, and being a suffering servant.
7. This process of discipleship seems to happen most effectively when done life-on-life. In other words, though the various ministries of the church are essential and the use of individual giftings are indispensable, we have biblical command and precedent as well as practical observation and experience suggesting that sharing both the gospel and our lives with people is the most significant way we can help them follow Jesus.
8. We are also assuming that most people have never been intentionally disciplined in this way and, therefore, need some help and guidance.

the discipleship method.

1. It is very lightweight. It is meant to be able to be changed and adapted very easily (all we have to do is print out a new sheet of paper!). We didn't want to have to purchase large quantities of curriculum or go to a great deal of cost to print our own or a great deal of trouble to make changes. If you have suggestions, we want to hear how to make them better too.
2. It is very transferable. It is designed to make it easy for us to explain it to you and then for you to lead others through it and explain it to them. The goal is to see this replicated. The method shouldn't trip people up.

3. It is systematic. It is meant to cover the spectrum of what it means to follow Jesus. While we believe these tracks provide a really solid and systematic foundation, there is so much more to learn about following Jesus.
4. It is a reasonable commitment. Many tracks are designed to be completed within 6-8 meetings.

track format.

1. **Suggested order.** The ordering is carefully thought out but is not meant to be an absolute rule. For example, the baseline in discipleship is understanding the gospel, which is our first track. And they progress from there. Our foundational tracks have the following suggested order:

Gospel> Spiritual Growth> Manhood/Womanhood> Marriage> Family
2. **Track explanation.** This section is designed to explain the purpose and scope of the track.
3. **Consider.** There are no wrong answers. All you're trying to do with these questions is introduce the topics that will be covered in the track and get a baseline on where people are currently at regarding them.
4. **Pray.** The idea here is to ask God from the outset and throughout the process to do what only he can do—change our hearts to respond to the truth presented.
5. **Read.** We purposely picked books that were theologically sound but also readily available through Christian booksellers or our church library, relatively inexpensive, and manageable in length

even for those who are not accustomed to reading a lot. You'll need to distinguish between different types of people you might take through the track. Some need to be taught the material. Some already know it well and mainly need to be trained to lead someone else through it.

The beauty of going through solid books is that the book acts as the teacher. The leader of the track simply keeps the conversation moving but doesn't have to be the expert. Keep in mind that not every book or author is going to hit everyone in the same way. We all have preferences. The key is allowing the content and the main points of the book to shape us to be more like Christ.

6. **Do.** This might be the most important section for our church. You are not going to simply tell people what to believe and do, you are going to show them how to do it. This will likely be challenging to many, but we hope it will also be rewarding.

In other words, make sure that people aren't merely focusing on the reading. Discipleship is not merely imparting information. These tracks are not merely a reading list. Do the things on the list with the person you are discipling. Some doing is easy to do in a meeting in the office. Some need to be planned to be done outside of closed doors.

7. **Further reading.** We chose one or two main books for most of the tracks and then list several more for each track at the bottom. Many of these books go deeper into specific aspects of the topic. For example: If you are taking someone through the Spiritual Growth track, you might realize the person wants or needs to know more about evangelism or studying the Bible. The Further Reading list might be a good guide for the next book you go through.

8. **Covenant on the back.** First, take it seriously. Both this and the next point are meant to help us focus on people who genuinely want to grow as Christ-followers. Many will agree to meet with us on their terms in a comfortable environment as long as they have a way out and not too much is expected of them. The Church will be judged for making it seem like this is an option for followers of Jesus.

Second, lead someone else through it. This might be the most challenging aspect of the discipleship method. Many people will not feel adequate to do this. Part of the method is teaching the principles, modeling them, and training others to lead someone else.

Thoughts On Leading

1. Understand that you are not the expert or the one who has arrived at perfection. Rather, you serve others best when you are low and humble, acknowledging that wherever you are truly following Jesus, it is because of the grace of God.
2. Similarly, you do not need to fret not knowing all the answers. Oftentimes, the best thing you can do for someone is to share your shortcomings and ignorance with them and then show them how you handle things when you don't know.
3. You ought to care very much about being holy, but you ought to care just as much about modeling repentance and running to the gospel when you do sin.
4. Focus on those in your own DG, home, and neighborhood as the people you have most access to.
5. Go as fast or as slow as you need to go. Keep in mind that there are two main groups of people you will disciple. One group will be learning a lot of the content of the tracks for the first time. It is good to talk through the books in greater depth.

The second group is someone who might be new to Grace or new to the tracks, yet already familiar with the basic content of the tracks. In this case, you might encourage him or her to explain the content to you. This helps them practice taking someone else through the tracks—which is the goal anyway.

what's next?

1. Ask God to give you a right heart, to protect you from pride (of feeling overly adequate on one end or unusable on the other), to give you courage, to give you commitment, and to help you evaluate your priorities (is this worth cutting something else out of your life for?).
2. Make a list of three people you feel most drawn to take through the gospel track. Give particular emphasis to their faithfulness, availability, reliability, and teachability. Care less about their current level of theological knowledge, perceived level of spiritual maturity, or level of church involvement.
3. Begin to pray for them and for God's Wisdom.
4. Talk to your elder and share with them who you are thinking about and seek their advice.
5. Ask one of the people on your list to begin meeting with you in order to go through the gospel track, focusing on the covenant on the back, and particularly focusing on the commitment to take it seriously and lead someone else through it.
6. Establish a regular time and place to meet. Weekly or every other week is good.
7. During the initial meeting:
 - a. Go over the questions to consider.
 - b. Pray together over the prayers.
 - c. Give them the first book on the list (either "What is the Gospel?" or "Following Jesus to the Cross.").
 - d. Agree on what you'll read and do before the next time.
 - e. Find out how you can pray for them.

8. Before each subsequent meeting:
 - a. Pray for the person you're meeting with, including the specific prayer requests they shared.
 - b. Carefully read the agreed upon material, focusing on application. Be well-prepared to discuss it.
 - c. Make a plan to do together whatever you agreed to do at the previous meeting.
9. At each subsequent meeting:
 - a. Check in on prayer requests, pray and get future prayer requests.
 - b. Discuss the previous reading.
 - c. Do what you agreed to do together.
 - d. Decide what you'll read and do next time.
 - e. As time goes on, begin to help them think about who they might take through this track when you're done. Have them make a list of three people that might work and begin praying through that list.
10. In order to make your time most fruitful, try to connect with the person you're meeting with outside of your formal meeting times. Share with them not only the gospel, but your life as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8)
 - a. Have the person over for a meal.
 - b. Share your family and routines with that person and their family.
 - c. Connect at other Grace functions to check in.
 - d. Send the person texts or emails for prayer requests, encouragement, etc.

11. When you finish a track, make sure they feel adequate to take someone else through it (take them through this training). Make sure they have a plan to ask and begin, and then continue to follow up with them as they do. Be willing to go with them to their first meeting if they prefer that.

We pray that the Discipleship Tracks and this booklet are a blessing to you and a means of grace to help you grow in Christ!



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