The Beautiful Fight

“The Great Invitation”

Inside This Addition

The Call to Discipleship

The Cost of Non-Discipleship

Growing as a Disciple

Disciple Making Begins at Home

Disciples Making Disciples

Book Six of Eleven
International Mission

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

The purpose of The Salvation Army is to love God and man, to preach the good news of Jesus, and to express practical concern for the needs of humanity. This is referred to as having a “blood and fire spirit” for the mission of The Salvation Army.

Salvationist of the USA Southern Territory are...

Answering God’s call to make radical followers of Jesus Christ who love inclusively, serve helpfully and disciple effectively in the communities where they live.

Men’s Ministries Mission Statement

Leading men into a relationship with Jesus Christ, and into community with other men who love and serve Him.

The Beautiful Fight

A men’s Bible study intentionally designed to continue the process of transformation in a small group setting, The Beautiful Fight is designed to equip men in The Salvation Army...

- with the message of the Bible
- with the ministry motivated by the love of God with the mission to preach the gospel

Ephesians 4:11–13

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
Introduction

Jesus came to bring a new Kingdom to earth. Jesus’ initial call is, “Come, follow me.” His desire is for His disciples to become like Him, literally to re-present Him to a lost and dying world. The disciple of Jesus is called to be conformed to the image and character of our Master. The Army’s expression of this call of Christ is unique. The Beautiful Fight is created to equip Salvationist men to live out the daily, dynamic expression of our faith. The purpose of the study is to equip men with the message of the Bible, to live in ministry motivated by the love of God, and to carry out the mission to preach the gospel. The Beautiful Fight provides a biblical foundation to nourish and cultivate life as a disciple of Christ in a relational context. This material is best used in the local corps, the ARC, and in your Army outpost.

As our first doctrine teaches, Scripture is the primary foundation for our study. We’ll examine the Word of God and its implications for our lives and for the world. All aspects of our study will build upon this Scriptural foundation, all explored and lived out both personally and communally.

Our one-year study will require you to fight, but it will be a beautiful fight. God is at work right now, turning your ashes into beauty and your mourning into dancing. He is at work redeeming, restoring, and resurrecting lives. His work in you is beautiful, but it’s also a fight. One of the greatest sins of men in our day is the sin of passivity. We see its roots in the Garden of Eden, but its offspring lives wildly in our world today. To counter this temptation, you’ll be asked to study, you’ll be asked to share, and you’ll be asked to serve. The Beautiful Fight will call you to continually give your heart to God and your hand to mankind, starting in your home, moving to your neighborhood, continuing in your corps, and extending into your world.

This curriculum contains homework. You’ll want to create space in your week to study and reflect in order to allow the Holy Spirit to freely work in you, and then you’ll want to share the insights He gives you with your The Beautiful Fight study group. Be sure to make notes of the ways the Spirit is calling you to deeper places with Him as you as you move through this study. And celebrate! In this fight, it’s imperative that we celebrate the ways in which God is constantly making all things new.
Comrades & Conditions

Jesus called twelve disciples to come and do life with Him. These twelve disciples experienced deep intimacy with Christ, both personally and communally, as they lived and served together. Jesus invited three of the twelve into an even closer relationship with Him. Peter, James, and John were invited into the inner parts of Jesus’ life, sharing both His suffering and His pain.

The ideal context for our study is one that closely resembles that of the disciples: a committed group of men who are willing to journey and fight together in a growing relationship with Jesus.

Groups consist of 12 men with 2 co-facilitators (●).

Participant Expectations:

We will fight for truth.
We will fight to understand Biblical directives. We will fight for Biblical koinonia.

We will fight for each other and advocate for each other’s families. We will refuse to settle for passivity.
We will commit to completing our homework and participating in our weekly studies.

Our weekly/monthly gatherings are essential to our transformation process. Quarterly social gatherings and overnight retreats help deepen relationships, as well. It will also be imperative that we spend time together outside of these weekly/monthly group studies in our one-on-one meetings. The matrix to the right is designed to help you stay accountable to one man per month. Use the matrix to coordinate get-togethers with your monthly prayer and accountability partner. Schedule a coffee/breakfast/lunch meeting with each man in your study.
# LUNCH/BREAKFAST/COFFEE MATRIX

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## Instructions

- Write names in alphabetical order across the top and alongside the table.
- If a group has fewer than 12 members write “NC” for non-Christian and try to meet with an unbelieving friend.
Syllabus for *The Great Invitation*

*The Beautiful Fight* full study curriculum takes a year to complete, but we have broken it into eleven books with six to eight weeks of study. This will provide your men the flexibility to frame each study in a way that best works into your overall schedule. Our prayer is that the Spirit will lead you deep into His word. You’ll also be guided by a variety of resources specifically chosen to encourage and equip Salvationist men, including our eleven doctrines.

**Doctrine VI**

*We believe* that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

**INSIDE THIS STUDY:**

- Introduction/Battle Lines
- The Call to Discipleship
- The Cost of Non-Discipleship
- Growing as a Disciple
- Disciple Making Begins at Home
- Disciples Making Disciples
- Vespers
Doctrines of
The Salvation Army

1. *We believe* that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

2. *We believe* that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

3. *We believe* that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

4. *We believe* that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

5. *We believe* that our first parents were created in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

6. *We believe* that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

7. *We believe* that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.

8. *We believe* that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

9. *We believe* that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

10. *We believe* that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. *We believe* in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.
INTRODUCTION

My Story: “Battle Lines”

Your life was designed by God. Who you were, who you are, and who you will become are all part of your transformation process. God is conforming you to the image and character of His Son. As brothers and comrades in the Army, we join each other on this journey of transformation. One of the best ways we can begin our journey together is to share our stories. Everyone has a story to share. Your story, and sharing it, matters.

For the first couple of weeks, we want to create a space for you to share your story—your real story. There will be temptation to simply share your resume or your successes and accomplishments, but your brothers are more interested in your heart than they are your title. With that in mind, here are a few questions to consider as you prepare to share your story.

1. Where are you in life right now?
2. What went into making you the man you are?
3. Who (positive and negative) has had the greatest impact on your life?
4. What events (positive and negative) have had the greatest impact on your life?
5. What are a few of your heaviest burdens? How can your brothers help you fight? How can your brothers carry your burdens to the cross?

As you prepare to share your story, ask God to lead and affirm you. While acknowledging that rich relationships as well as great battles and pain have gone into weaving your story, ask God to remind you that you are a part of His bigger story. Allow the Spirit to guide you as you prepare, share, and live out your story.

You may want to write out your story to help you better prepare to share with your brothers.

Remember, as always, that the content shared in your study is confidential.
### Battle Lines

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Discipleship is about answering the simple call to come and follow Jesus. This call is for everyone. Every person that Jesus calls to become His student and apprentice He also equips, commissions, indwells, and empowers. His call is for us to become like Him - to live like Him, to serve like Him, to care like Him, to forgive like Him, and to love like Him.

Discipleship begins with a personal, daily response to Jesus’ call. It is lived out in our homes, at work, and in the places we serve as we strive to reach a lost and dying world.

In this module, you will be challenged to walk in the narrow way. You will be called to take up your cross and follow Jesus. We’ll memorize Matthew 11:28–30 and examine our 6th doctrine.

Listen to the voice of our Savior calling you: “Come, follow me.”
THE Call TO Discipleship

God’s Word—2 Corinthians 6

**Context:** What’s the specific context of this passage? What comes before it, and what follows it? Note the writer and the primary audience.

**Themes:** What’s the primary focus of the text? What speaks to you as you read? Note any directives or commands in the text.

**Implication:** How is this passage calling you to live? How will you build your life on this foundational truth?
When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. 

Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—

to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

the people living in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

In your own words, write out the message Jesus is preaching.

__________________________________________________________________________

Jesus calls Peter and Andrew to “follow me.” He says, “I will send you out to fish for people.” What is at the heart of this invitation?

__________________________________________________________________________

Matthew makes Peter and Andrew’s occupation an obvious part of his narrative. Jesus also references fishing as He calls them. What’s the importance of highlighting their occupation?

__________________________________________________________________________
Peter and Andrew respond in immediate obedience. There is no apparent hesitation. They hear the invitation and follow. In what areas of your life do you practice immediate obedience? Are there areas in which you hesitate before acting in obedience?

With Peter and Andrew enlisted as followers, Jesus now invites James and John to follow Him. These two brothers also immediately respond to Jesus’ call. While the scenes are similar, here Matthew notes that James and John were fishing with their father. When James and John leave their boat, they also leave their father. What’s the importance of this dynamic?

What have you “left” to follow Jesus?

The call to follow Jesus is a call to be His disciple. What exactly is a disciple?

Timothy Keller describes Jesus’ invitation and the response of a follower this way:

> From the time Jesus’ identity is revealed, he begins to say, “Follow me.” If he is who he says he is, what does it mean to follow him? Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means setting a new priority, finding a new identity, and living a new mercy.¹

Describe:

setting a new priority

finding a new identity
living a new mercy

How does Keller’s definition of a disciple complement your understanding of discipleship?

The call of Scripture is not merely to “be a Christian.” In fact, we only find the word “Christian” used three times in the Bible. The word “follower” or “disciple,” however, is used almost 300 times in the New Testament. What is the difference today between a cultural Christian and a follower/disciple of Christ?

At a recent men’s gathering in the Atlanta area, one man commented, “Everybody I know is a Christian. But I don’t know anyone who actually lives and loves like Jesus.” We are called to discipleship. We don’t pray a prayer inviting Jesus into our world; we pray a prayer that says, “I receive Your invitation to follow You. I receive Your life, Your way, Your heart, Your love.”

What would discipleship look like if, instead of “inviting Jesus into your life,” you simply accept His invitation to simply “come, follow Him”?

Reflect and meditate on the Army chorus “To Be Like Jesus” (SASB CS107).

To be like Jesus!
This hope possesses me,
In every thought and deed,
This is my aim, my creed;
To be like Jesus!
This hope possesses me,
His Spirit helping me,
Like Him I’ll be.
Ministry Motivated by the Love of God—Sharing & Caring

Read Matthew 11:28–30.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”


By memory, write the verses.

One of our greatest challenges in relationships today is not a lack of knowledge. It’s not an inability to communicate; it’s not financial strain. The greatest struggle in most relationships is weariness. We have become so busy and preoccupied that we have little to give to others. Jesus invites those who are weary to come to Him for rest. If you could diagnose your weariness quotient, what would it be?

What would “rest for your soul” feel like? What would it not feel like?

The call of Jesus is for your soul to be at rest in Him. If the greatest indicator of true discipleship were having a soul at constant rest, what would need to change in your perspective and in your heart?
Jesus quotes Jeremiah in His invitation to you to receive rest for your soul. Read Jeremiah 6:16.

This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”

In what ways are you at a crossroads? In what relationships are you at a crossroads? In what ways are you unsure how to proceed? How does the directive in Jeremiah give you clarity?

The people of Israel heard this same instruction: to “find rest for your souls.” Their response was, “We will not walk in it.” Have you made similar refusals? What was the outcome?

As a disciple, how can you encourage those around you to live out the promises of Jeremiah 6:16?

Jesus invites us to take on His yoke. His original hearers would have known that Jesus was referencing the yoke of a Rabbi; it’s an invitation to take on His way of living, doing, and being. They would also know that a yoke is used in farming. A yoke is placed upon an ox to guide it as it plows the hard ground. In effect, Jesus is saying, “Come and put your head in my yoke, beside me. We’ll walk and talk together. I’ll guide you...and you’ll learn a new way of living and loving and being. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

How does this invitation release you from the guilt and condemnation of not getting everything right? How does this invitation free you from always trying to please God or to get everything right?

The simplest form of discipleship is just being with Jesus. More than anything else, the way we grow as a disciple is by just being with Him, living in Him, remaining in Him, being led moment by moment in intimacy with Him, and by allowing His Spirit to grow in us.
In his book *The Gospel Disciple Journey*, David Putman observes:

As I come to comprehend God’s love, I become more loving.
As I come to experience God’s forgiveness, I become more forgiving. As I come to understand God’s provision, I become more trusting. As I come to understand God’s generosity, I become more generous.  

In what specific ways is God drawing you to Himself? What is He teaching you? How are these lessons being expressed in your life?


“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

**Mission to Preach the Gospel—OTHERS**


*But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.*

*If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

*“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

*37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

*39 He also told them this parable: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.*
The relationship of a teacher and his disciple in the first century was a powerful bond. Rabbis would invite young men into their schools, enlisting them as disciples. A young disciple would begin to learn how his master kept the commands of the Torah. Among other things, he would note the way his master practiced the Sabbath and the way he fasted, prayed, taught, and treated others.

Let’s start with the end of the passage and reread Luke 6:40: “The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.” What is the expectation of Jesus, the Rabbi, for His disciples?

Are the expectations Jesus had for the original twelve disciples any different than the expectations He has for you? If so, how so? If not, how are the expectations similar?

In what areas of discipleship do you feel ill equipped? In what ways do you feel “fully trained”?

The etymological origin of the word “disciple” is the word “learner” or “apprentice.” In his book Choose the Life, Bill Hull writes about the purpose of being a learner–disciple:

If we are following the New Testament model, discipleship should look like this today:

1. A disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her how to follow Jesus.
2. A disciple learns Jesus’ words.
3. A disciple learns Jesus’ way of ministry.
4. A disciple imitates Jesus’ life and character.
5. A disciple finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus.

As you look at this New Testament model, how are you encouraged in your apprenticeship?

The heart of Jesus’ message is that we are to love. Reread Luke 6:27–28: “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”
As a disciple, is it possible for you to love others in the same way your Master loves them?

Here Jesus teaches His disciples how to love their enemies. He says, “...bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you.”

How is Jesus calling you to bless and pray for others? How did He do it?

John, the beloved disciple, gave us this command: “The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” (1 John 2:6, NASB)

Is there one relationship, one person, or one people group toward which Jesus is asking you to follow Him?

John was one who literally followed Jesus. John saw Jesus touch lepers, forgive the adulteress, and command Lazarus to “come forth.” He watched the way Jesus loved and the way Jesus lived. John’s directive to us is as much about our own moral transformation as it is about ministry.

As you have walked with Jesus, whom have you seen Him touch, forgive, and love?

How has Jesus touched, forgiven, and loved others through you?

In his series In the Dust of the Rabbi, Biblical scholar Ray Vander Laan notes that the first-century Jews had a blessing that beautifully expresses a disciple’s commitment to stay in the presence of the one he followed: “May you always be covered by the dust of your rabbi.”

Ask Jesus to cover you in His dust today.
Reflection & Prayer

As you conclude this week’s study, answer the following questions. Note the ways your brothers can join you in prayer.

† Lord, what are You saying to me?

† How do You want me to respond to You?

† I am burdened in the following areas:

† I’m thanking God for His work in the following ways:

† Use this space to note the praises and petitions of your brothers.
THE Cost
OF Non-Discipleship

God’s Word—Luke 14

Context: What’s the specific context of this passage? What comes before it, and what follows it? Note the writer and the primary audience.

Themes: What’s the primary focus of the text? What speaks to you as you read? Note any directives or commands in the text.

Implication: How is this passage calling you to live? How will you build your life on this foundational truth?
Message of the Bible—Sealed Orders


Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? 29 For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, 30 saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’

31 “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

34 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

“Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

Jesus mentions two qualifications for those who choose to be a disciple. What are they?

In this text, Jesus uses the word “disciple.” He’s differentiating between those who are casually following Him and those who are becoming His apprentices or students. Remembering our definition of a disciple, how do you see yourself separating from the crowd of “casual followers?”

Jesus makes certain that His followers understand the significance of what’s being asked of them by including the requirement that they “carry their crosses.” This would serve as a very literal picture for His hearers. People would have actually seen condemned men carrying crosses to their own crucifixions. There was nothing casual about Jesus’ command.

Warren Wiersbe distinguishes the contrast this way: “Salvation means coming to the cross and trusting Jesus Christ, while discipleship means carrying the cross and following Jesus Christ.”


What specific cross does Jesus ask you to personally carry? Be prepared to share your response in your next group study.

Jesus uses strong language in this text. Does Jesus actually expect you to “hate” your family? What is Jesus saying here?

Is it possible to put your marriage before your relationship with Jesus and still be His disciple? Is it possible to place your kids and their well-being before your relationship with Jesus and still remain His disciple?

Has your family ever become an idol in your life?

A former officer in the South recently shared a portion of his story.

When Jesus said to “hate your family,” I thought He was nuts. I figured it was akin to “unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood…”

It wasn’t until my wife left me that I more clearly realized the meaning of what Jesus was saying. I knew our marriage was rocky. We just fell into a weird vacuum. Camp, corps life, training school, and then officership. My wife never wanted to be an officer. She did it because that’s what I wanted. But soon I knew things weren’t working—not with the Army per se, but in our marriage. She wasn’t happy. She just wanted to be happy. She would say it all the time: “I just want to be happy.”

So I did my best to make her happy. I made excuses for everything… literally, everything. I went into debt taking her on trips, buying gifts, or going to concerts. I know now I was always just trying to keep her satisfied so she wouldn’t leave. I was so afraid she’d leave. I worried about the effect it would have on my career, the effect it would have on my current ministry. What good would I be in ministry if my wife left me?

I kept trying to pacify her, kept promising that things would change in the next appointment, but they never did. I kept juggling the kids, their sports, their school; I even did the
laundry and cleaned the house so she wouldn’t have more to worry about. I figured the more I could take off of her, the happier and secure she’d become. Man, I was so wrong.

And then after 19 years, she left. She said, “I don’t want this life. I’ve never wanted this life.” If an idol is anything you put before God, she was it.

I know it’s not over. Even though I lost everything, I know it’s not over. God is healing me, and I’m finally out of the way enough for Him to heal her. I don’t know what the future holds, but even though we are separated, we are better. God is at work.

If it takes this to make me dependent on Him again, I can honestly say I’m glad for all of it.

How does this story resonate with you?

Jesus shares two parables to reinforce His message. The first parable would once again evoke a vivid, realistic picture of an unfinished tower or building in the region. People were considered “foolish” if they started to construct a building but ran out money before completing it.

The second parable was also practically applicable, as Israel had historically been ravaged by war. Jesus summarizes, “In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.”

Did Jesus literally mean “everything”? How does that translate to your life today?

The last two verses reference “salt.” Salt was a very important commodity in the ancient world. Jesus’ hearers would know that salt, when it loses its saltiness, is worthless. The Lord then concludes with a statement of implication: “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” There is an invitation, there is a cost, and there is a choice.

Today the invitation comes to you: “Follow me.” There is a cost associated with your acceptance of Christ’s invitation. The cost is a cross.

Write your response to Jesus’ invitation in the form of a prayer.
As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

28 Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Jesus uses His encounter with the wealthy man to reinforce the necessity of commitment to discipleship. Exasperated, Peter says, “We’ve left everything to follow you.” Have you ever experienced this kind of exasperation in your own discipleship?
There is a great cost to discipleship. In 1937, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the classic book *The Cost of Discipleship*. It railed against the notion of casual Christianity or “cheap grace.” How would you define “cheap grace”?

Bonhoeffer said, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.” How is the idea of “cheap grace” popularized in our day?

Dallas Willard writes about a cost that is higher than the cost of discipleship. Willard says the cost of non-discipleship is far greater than the cost of discipleship. He writes:

> Non-discipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, non-discipleship costs you exactly that abundance of life Jesus said He came to bring (John 10:10). The cross-shaped yoke of Christ is after all an instrument of liberation and power to those who live in it with Him and learn the meekness and lowliness of heart that brings rest to the soul...The correct perspective is to see following Christ not only as the necessity it is, but as the fulfillment of the highest human possibilities and as life on the highest plane.\(^5\)

How does the cost of non-discipleship make discipleship look more compelling?

As you consider the benefits of discipleship—of a life following Jesus—how do you summarize the cost?


> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel \(^{30}\) will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. \(^{31}\) But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”
What are the tensions Jesus raises here?

How are these tensions lived out in your most important relationships?

Willard offers this perspective on the need for discipleship:

The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as “Christians” will become disciples—students, apprentices, practitioners—of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence.  

How is God calling you from “being a Christian” to becoming a disciple?

Mission to Preach the Gospel—OTHERS

Read Matthew 13:44–46.

“\textit{The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.}"

45 “\textit{Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.}”

Jesus tells two parables. The first parable describes a man who discovers a treasure hidden in a field. In his joy, he sold everything he had to buy that field—including the hidden treasure.

How does this picture of discipleship complement “carrying your cross”?
Jesus says the man “in his joy went and sold all he had.” How is this kind of joy lived out in your life as a disciple?

What is the greatest inhibitor to you living a life of joy today?

The Psalmist wrote, “This is the day which the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it” (118:24 NASB). How can you live in this truth today in the midst of the challenges in your life?

In the second parable, Jesus tells His disciples that a merchant finds a pearl of great value. The merchant knows the value of the pearl when he sees it. He is compelled to purchase the single pearl. He goes away and sells everything he has to raise the money. What he gives up pales in comparison to what he receives. What one way have you seen this truth lived out during the last six months of your life?

Dallas Willard comments on these parables.

These little stories perfectly express the condition of soul in one who chooses life in the kingdom with Jesus. The sense of the goodness to be achieved by that choice, of the opportunity that may be missed, the love for the value discovered, the excitement and joy over it all, is exactly the same as it was for those who were drawn to Jesus in those long-ago days when he first walked among us. It is also the condition of soul from which discipleship can be effectively chosen today.

Only with such images before us can we correctly assess the famous “cost of discipleship” of which so much is made. Do you think the businessman who found the pearl was sweating over its cost? An obviously ridiculous question! What about the one who found the treasure in the field—perhaps crude oil or gold? No. Of course not. The only thing these people were sweating about was whether they would “get the deal.” Now that is the soul of the disciple.
Where is there an opportunity for you to live out the truths of these parables?

Our world is too easily satisfied. God’s call to discipleship—for The Army, for your corps, and for you—is to share this treasure with those around you. Note the comments of Paul Rader, the former International leader of The Salvation Army:

“The proliferation of false ideologies and religious options, and the far greater ease of access to these options in a pluralistic climate of growing fascination with varieties of religious experiences and systems, requires that our own people have a clearer grasp of their own faith and the capacity to support it through the word of God.

“The complexity of moral and ethical issues in these times requires more thorough instruction in the implications of Christian discipleship in today’s world and an ability to apply the truth of Scripture to contemporary ethical concerns.”

How could you embrace the foundation of discipleship and share it with those around you? How can you and your brothers live out these truths collectively?

Is there something practical you and your brothers could do together that would allow the world to see the cost of non-discipleship—or the great worth of following Jesus? Brainstorm some ideas here.

Spend a few moments thanking God for the blessing of being His disciple.
Reflection & Prayer

As you conclude this week’s study, answer the following questions. Note the ways your brothers can join you in prayer.

† Lord, what are You saying to me?

† How do You want me to respond to You?

† I am burdened in the following areas:

† I’m thanking God for His work in the following ways:

† Use this space to note the praises and petitions of your brothers.
Growing *AS A* Disciple

God’s Word—John 15

**Context:** What’s the specific context of this passage? What comes before it, and what follows it? Note the writer and the primary audience.

**Themes:** What’s the primary focus of the text? What speaks to you as you read? Note any directives or commands in the text.

**Implication:** How is this passage calling you to live? How will you build your life on this foundational truth?
Message of the Bible—Sealed Orders

Read John 15:1–8.

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.* 2 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 3 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

4 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

In Scripture we see a progression in the relationship of God with His people. We see God for His people; then we see God with His people. Here, Jesus invites His people to be in Him.

Jesus invites us to live in the true Vine. Life is found in the Vine. In your own words, describe your relationship with God using the metaphor of the vine and the branch.

More than anything else, Jesus just wants to be with you. He invites us to “abide” or “remain” in Him. In John 15:1–8, the word “remain” is used eight times. What is the purpose of such repetition?

Is it possible for you to be a disciple, yet not to “remain”? From your own experience, write the outcome of not remaining in the Vine.

To “remain” in Christ means to cultivate intimacy through loving obedience. The outcome of such a process is the bearing of fruit. In *Prayer and the Devotional Life*, editor Jim Burns quotes George Arthur Buttrick’s perspective on this process:

> Prayer is friendship with God. Friendship is not formal, but it is not formless: it has its cultivation, its behavior, its obligations, even its disciplines; and the casual mind kills it. 9
How do you cultivate your friendship with God without it becoming formal? How do you protect your friendship with God without it becoming casual?

Life as a disciple is life that bears fruit. What is necessary in order for you to bear fruit?

Have you ever tried to manufacture spiritual fruit without being grafted into the Vine? What did your efforts produce?

In his article *The Moscow Fruit Stand*, Kenneth Johnson writes:

> It is important to remember that spiritual fruit is not the result of anything that we do. We grow more of God’s fruit not when we try harder, but when we stay connected to the Source. We need to stay connected to Him in order to bear His fruit. If we begin to shut God out of our hearts, we will cease to be fruitful. Jesus cautioned, “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4, 5). Like a farmer who looks back over his shoulder to see the fields he has plowed, reflecting on our Christian walk can bring an assurance that God is at work in our lives. In addition, when people see the fruit of our lives, it makes them long to be like Him, just as I long for the beautiful fruit in the market. How is your fruit cultivation coming along? Are you bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Are you filled with selfishness instead of love? What’s replacing your joy and peace? Have kindness and goodness been replaced by malice and manipulation? Is there harshness in your heart instead of faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?
> Spend time in prayer today allowing the Holy Spirit to show you the current state of your spiritual health. If you have ceased bearing fruit, seek God’s forgiveness and commit to seeking His filling presence every day. “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” John 15:8

What kind of spiritual fruit would your wife or kids say you are currently producing?

*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

What does “remain” mean to you? What’s your greatest challenge with Jesus’ call to “remain”?

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Jesus affirms His love for His disciples so that His “joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” Nehemiah says, “The joy of the LORD is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10) How are you experiencing the joy of God? In the last two weeks, how has His joy strengthened you?

In John 15:12, Jesus says, “Love each other as I have loved you.” How are you growing in your ability to love your wife as Christ has loved you? How is this love currently being expressed?

How are you growing in your ability to love your children as Christ has loved you? How is this love currently being expressed?

Jesus says, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13) What does laying down your life for your friends look like in your own community?

You have been chosen to be His disciple. Jesus says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.” You have been chosen to bear fruit that will last. You’ve been called to love. Examine your calendar for the next three days. As you look at each day, how could you intentionally begin the fruit-bearing process?

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3
Mission to Preach the Gospel—OTHERS


_One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”_

2 _He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father,_

_hallowed be your name,_

_your kingdom come._

3 _Give us each day our daily bread._

4 _Forgive us our sins,_

_for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’_”

Of all the things the disciples could ask Jesus to teach them—how to have the power to heal, how to walk on water, how to preach with authority, how to forgive—they only ask Jesus to teach them to pray. What is the significance of this request?

What three words would you use to describe your prayer life? Describe each here.

1. 
2. 
3. 

The disciples were learning and growing in relationship with Jesus. Their character was being conformed to His, their process of transformation was occurring, and now they were in a position of becoming more and more dependent on God. Disciples pray because of their dependence upon God and His Person, not just to know His power or His plan. We pray to intimately connect with our Lord.

David Platt consistently teaches that prayer is an act of utter dependence on God. In his blog, Platt shares his perspective on prayer:

_Most everybody prays when they’re desperate. I mean, really desperate; even most atheists or agnostics would admit that when they get into a circumstance where there’s no way out, there’s at least a desire to pray to a god they may not even believe is there. There are things we do when it comes to praying that are based on desperation._

_One of the most famous sports plays in all of history is rooted in prayer. It’s what happens at the end of a football game when your team is down and you’ve got one_
chance left to go 50 yards. You throw up a what? “A Hail Mary.” You throw up a prayer. One of the most famous plays in all of sports history is based on that.

The whole rationale is that you get to a point where you can’t accomplish something without divine intervention, so you throw up a prayer. You throw up the “Hail Mary.” I think the reason why we bring Mary in at the end of the football game is because we’re convinced at that point, you’ve played the game up until that point, with the best of your resources, your personnel, you tried to implement your game plan. You’ve gotten to the end. Now you’re out of time, now you’re out of opportunity; you have no other options and so you bring Mary in. You throw up a prayer. You throw up a Hail Mary and that’s when maybe, just maybe, something will happen.

The question I want to ask you, though, is what if our entire Christian life was intended to be lived in complete and total desperation upon a holy God? What if desperation was not supposed to mark the tragic circumstances we face alone? What if desperation was at the center of everything that being a Christian is about? What if leading your marriage and leading your home and leading your job, what if every single thing you do today, as a follower of Jesus Christ, was not possible without divine intervention? I’m convinced that’s the case.

I’m convinced that the folks in the New Testament knew that to be true and we need to realize that the core of praying is desperation for God to show up every moment of every day of our Christianity.\footnote{11}

How convinced are you that personal prayer is a priority for your life?

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Platt uses the word “desperation.” John Gowans once wrote, “When men in desperation come, that’s when miracles begin.” Is it possible or practical to live in constant desperation? How would living desperately differ from the way you lived yesterday?

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In his account of Jesus teaching His disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5–13), Matthew records Jesus as saying, “...your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We can glean that Jesus is asking for God’s will to reign on earth as His will reigns in heaven. From a relational perspective, answer the following:

How can you love your family “on earth as it is in heaven”? 

____________________________
How can you treat the oppressed “on earth as it is in heaven”?

Notice the communal implications of Jesus’ prayer in Luke 11:1–4. How many times do you read the words “us” and “we” in this prayer? Write each “us” or “we” phrase here.

What’s the significance of praying for “our daily bread?” Why “our” bread? Why “daily” bread?

How often are your prayers focused around either past problems or future concerns? Here Jesus teaches us to just pray for the present. What would change in your relationships if you were able to let go of the past, release the burden of the future, and live in the present?

Jesus includes forgiveness in this prayer. “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.” Relationally, forgiveness can be extremely difficult. We often struggle to forgive—and to receive forgiveness. What’s your greatest struggle in this area?

The inability to extend or receive forgiveness is at the root of many of the challenges men face. One of the greatest ways a lack of forgiveness is expressed is through our anger. Anger stems from us not getting what we want. Many men live with a sense that something has been taken from them. Anger comes from an unquenchable appetite for payback. “Someone somewhere has taken something from me, and they owe me, and I will not be at peace until I’m paid back.”

In his book It Came From Within! Andy Stanley makes note of “…a debt-to-debtor dynamic that always causes an imbalance in any relationship.” Stanley postulates that anger says, “You owe me,” greed says, “I owe me,” guilt says, “I owe you,” and jealousy says, “God owes me.”

Do you struggle with one or more of these attitudes? How would extending or receiving forgiveness cleanse you in these areas?
At a Men’s Retreat in the Northwest Division, one man shared his struggle with anger:

I have been angry since I was a kid. It wasn’t just one thing; it was a series of things. I realized that my life wasn’t turning out the way I thought it would. God didn’t do what I thought He should. And I just had no peace. I became vindictive and manipulative. I was controlling, using people as utilities, not human beings. I was just angry. And then I met Jesus and He forgave me. He forgave me.

My corps officer explained to me that the people who hurt me would never understand how hurt I was, just as the people that crucified Jesus would never understand or even say they were sorry. “Sorry.” I waited for that for a long time. I waited for someone to say they were sorry. It never happened. I kept looking for it, and it never came.

But Jesus said, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do.” That’s what He did for me. He forgave me even though I don’t fully understand the price He had to pay. So that’s what I’m trying to do. I’m trying to forgive. I’m forgiving others. I’m forgiving my dad. I know it sounds dumb, but I needed to forgive God. And then I was finally able to forgive myself.

I still get angry, but I don’t stay in that emotion. I deal with it. The Bible says to “get rid of all your anger.” I used to try and manage it. Now I’m getting rid of it. And it only comes through giving and receiving forgiveness.

How would your relationship with your wife and kids change if you were able to daily extend and receive forgiveness?

There are times when our wounds are so deep or our shame so great that we are not able to extend or receive forgiveness on our own. How could your brothers come alongside you as you deal with forgiveness?
The last section of Jesus’ prayer deals with temptation: “Lead us not into temptation.” Jesus is not suggesting that God leads us toward sin; He is rhetorically teaching us to ask God for protection from sin and from the evil one. Again, this directs us to a posture of dependency upon God in every dynamic of life.

In what ways are you most tempted to build your kingdom and dismiss the necessity of partnering with God in living out His coming kingdom?

How are you tempted to focus on your own needs, i.e., your own “daily bread,” vs. the needs of your community?

What is the one area of temptation you are experiencing today in which your brothers could pray with and for you?

Spend a few moments meditating on the truth of Hebrews 4:14–16:

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Since January 2011, Salvationists from The Salvation Army worldwide have been called to pray unceasingly, crying out day and night for justice as part of the Global Call to 24–7 Prayer. For more information, go to www.salvationarmy.org/csld/247prayer.
Reflection & Prayer

As you conclude this week’s study, answer the following questions. Note the ways your brothers can join you in prayer.

† Lord, what are You saying to me?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

† How do You want me to respond to You?

__________________________________________________________________________________

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† I am burdened in the following areas:

__________________________________________________________________________________

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† I’m thanking God for His work in the following ways:

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† Use this space to note the praises and petitions of your brothers.

__________________________________________________________________________________

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__________________________________________________________________________________
Disciple Making Begins AT Home

God’s Word—Deuteronomy 6

Context: What’s the specific context of this passage? What comes before it, and what follows it? Note the writer and the primary audience.

Themes: What’s the primary focus of the text? What speaks to you as you read? Note any directives or commands in the text.

Implication: How is this passage calling you to live? How will you build your life on this foundational truth?
**Message of the Bible—Sealed Orders**

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–3.

*These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.*

How is Moses being faithful to teach God’s Word to the Israelites?

Moses speaks generationally. In your own words, summarize Moses’ directives.

The implication here is that blessing comes through obedience. How has obedience produced blessing in your life over the last month?

How does the promise “that it may go well with you” bring you hope and confidence today?

Read Deuteronomy 6:10–12.

*When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, 11 houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, 12 be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*
Is it possible for you to “forget the Lord”? Describe a time when you lost focus on God and His daily provision for you.

Paul writes to the church at Colossae about this same dynamic. This is what he says in Colossians 1:21–23 (NLT):

_This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions._ 22 _Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault._

_23 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God’s servant to proclaim it._

The voice of Moses echoes through Paul’s words. _You’ve been rescued from your sin, so stand firm in your faith._ Paul then says, “Don’t drift away.” Like the Israelites, we have a tendency to forget. We forget what God has brought us through and how He has proven Himself to us. For many men, our “for-getting” comes more in the form of drifting. We don’t intentionally forget or reject God or His Word; instead, we slowly drift away from Him.

Have you ever experienced a drift in your relationship with God? What was the outcome?

In 1757, a 22-year-old kid named Robert Robinson wrote the great hymn “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” (SASB 313). Robinson heard the evangelist George Whitefield preach a sermon that burned Robinson’s heart. Three years after first wrestling with the Spirit, Robinson became a Christian. Yet his fight continued. “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” is representative of his inward struggle. Here’s verse three:

_O to grace how great a debtor Daily I’m constrained to be! Let thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee._ Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here’s my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above._
How can you protect yourself from drifting?

What role do your brothers in this study have in keeping you centered and at home with God’s truth?

Spend a few moments meditating on Deuteronomy 6:14–18 (NLT).

“**You must not worship any of the gods of neighboring nations,** 15 **for the LORD your God, who lives among you, is a jealous God. His anger will flare up against you, and he will wipe you from the face of the earth.** 16 **You must not test the LORD your God as you did when you complained at Massah.** 17 **You must diligently obey the commands of the LORD your God—all the laws and decrees he has given you.** 18 **Do what is right and good in the LORD’s sight, so all will go well with you. Then you will enter and occupy the good land that the LORD swore to give your ancestors.**”

Thank God for His promises and His power to live them out.

**Ministry Motivated by the Love of God—Sharing & Caring**

Read Deuteronomy 6:5–9 (MSG).

*Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that’s in you, love him with all you’ve got!*

> 6–9 Write these commandments that I’ve given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates.

Discipleship begins at home. We cannot, must not construct a life of discipleship that does not first begin at home. Your spouse and your children are where discipleship has it is greatest power and expression. Moses commands the Israelite community to teach the truths of God to the next generation. “Write these commandments that I’ve given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children.”
How—specifically—are you writing God’s commands on your heart? How are God’s commands being expressed relationally from your heart to others?

What specific ways are you “getting them inside your children?”

Moses reminds us of very practical ways to engage our children. He doesn’t ask us to lead a Bible study with our kids or teach them theology. He just commands us to talk to them.

_Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates._

No matter the age of our children, we are called to disciple them—to talk to them about the ways of God. What is your strategy for discipling your children? How can simply talking with them when you are driving, eating, going to soccer, or headed to the store be part of the discipleship process?

It’s imperative that we teach our children the commands of God. They must hear from us about God’s love, His plan, and His purposes. It is from us that they must also learn about sin and frustration and failure.

It can be challenging to lead your family because they know your imperfections. They’ve seen you lose your temper; they’ve felt your words of shame, and they’ve seen you both at your best and at your worst. But these lessons are crucial to the formation of faith in your children. They too will fail. They too will get frustrated and sin. Not only must they know the truths of the Gospel, but they must know how to receive forgiveness when they do not keep the commands. They learn these truths best from us.

Author and speaker Brené Brown suggests that being the adults we want our children to become begins with embracing our own failures. She states:

_It’s actually our ability to embrace imperfection that will help us teach our children to have the courage to be authentic, the compassion to love themselves and others, and the sense of connection that gives true purpose and meaning to life._13
How has admitting your imperfection to your wife and children actually propelled the discipleship process?


How is your marriage relationship a crucible for your own discipleship?


In his book *Sacred Marriage*, Gary Thomas submits that marriage is the primary relationship that God uses to produce holiness in our lives. In the book’s description, the publisher writes:

Your marriage is more than a sacred covenant with another person. It is a spiritual discipline designed to help you know God better, trust him more fully, and love him more deeply.

Scores of books have been written that offer guidance for building the marriage of your dreams. But what if God’s primary intent for your marriage isn’t to make you happy . . . but holy? And what if your relationship isn’t as much about you and your spouse as it is about you and God?14

What are four ways in which your marriage is making you holy?
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________

At times, it may actually seem easier to disciple someone else than it is to lead your own family in the ways of God. What is at the root of this dynamic?


Describe a conversation in which you’ve lived out true discipleship by asking your wife or child for forgiveness. How was it received? How has that confession drawn you closer relationally?


Thank God for loving you when you keep His commands and for not leaving you when you don’t.
Mission to Preach the Gospel—OTHERS

Read Deuteronomy 6:20–25 (MSG).

The next time your child asks you, “What do these requirements and regulations and rules that GOD, our God, has commanded mean?” tell your child, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and GOD powerfully intervened and got us out of that country. We stood there and watched as GOD delivered miracle-signs, great wonders, and evil-visitations on Egypt, on Pharaoh and his household. He pulled us out of there so he could bring us here and give us the land he so solemnly promised to our ancestors. That’s why GOD commanded us to follow all these rules, so that we would live reverently before GOD, our God, as he gives us this good life, keeping us alive for a long time to come.

25 “It will be a set-right and put-together life for us if we make sure that we do this entire commandment in the Presence of GOD, our God, just as he commanded us to do.”

Moses challenges the Israelites to simply “tell the story.” He says that the next time our children ask us what God’s commandments, requirements, rules, and regulations mean, we are to “tell them the story.” Tell them about slavery, tell them about redemption, and tell them about the goodness and grace of God. Tell them about His promises. Tell them about His love and blessing.

Take a few moments and outline your story in a way in which you could share it with your children or the kids at the corps. They may have heard how you came to be a disciple, but share with them about what God is doing in this chapter of your story. Plan a meaningful time and place to “tell the story” to your family.

Telling your story is a form of blessing. How would sharing your story bless your wife and children?

David Platt describes how Jesus and His disciples followed the pattern Moses taught the Israelites:

This is the pattern that was set between Jesus and his disciples from the beginning. Jesus loved these twelve men, served them, taught them, encouraged them, corrected them, and journeyed through life with them. He spent more time with these twelve disciples than he did with everyone else in his ministry put together. They walked together along lonely roads; they visited together in crowded cities; they sailed and fished together on the Sea of Galilee; they prayed together in the desert and on the mountains; and they worshiped together at the synagogues and at the Temple. During all of this time together, Jesus taught them how to live and showed them how to love as he shared his life with them.15
Our model for discipling our families is not unfamiliar as much as it is unpracticed. What are some specific ways you could regularly seek to disciple your spouse and children?

Historically, the Army has been structured to disciple children and youth. The primary vehicle for discipleship is relationships.

Janet Munn describes it this way:

The Salvation Army has a tradition of discipleship built right into the structure. Have you been a part of the following, consider:

- Cradle Roll
- YP Company
- Junior Soldiers
- Corps Cadets
- Senior Soldiers
- Soldiers’ Meetings
- Local Officership
- Candidateship
- Officer Training

From birth through adulthood, including every age group and vocation, The Salvation Army has already in place a context for discipleship. Add to this list, Women’s Ministries, social service recipients, children’s and youth programmes galore, as well as musical sections, and the potential for highly effective discipleship of the multitudes that come within our influence, is profound—were there intentional effort applied systematically and in authentic relational ways.

There was in place in 1922, a remarkably systematic strategy for disciple-making in The Salvation Army in the form of Wards and Ward Sergeants. These were “for the purpose of following up, encouraging, and helping the Converts, making them into Soldiers.” Every seeker at the Mercy-Seat would immediately be introduced to the Ward Sergeant, who would “look after their spiritual welfare in every possible way.” This responsibility for spiritual development by the Ward Sergeant of the Seeker/ Convert would continue “both before and after . . . enrolment.”

Every Soldier was also to be involved in a Ward, according to neighbourhood, and the Ward meetings were to take place once a week, and were “for the unconverted people as well.” Each Soldier and Recruit present was to speak of their spiritual condition and their work for the Lord in soul-saving. The Ward meetings would end with an invitation as needed. The Ward Sergeant was to “keep the Ward Meeting on strictly spiritual lines” and in the hope that every person was able to “go away feeling right with God and man.”

The Ward system was intentional, systematic and relational, and that, nearly one hundred years ago. The Ward system demonstrates Salvation Army DNA coming
from John Wesley’s methodical small group accountability system that brought about societal transformation.\textsuperscript{16}

With such a strong strategy in place, many men tend to allow the Army to be responsible for making disciples of their children. Yet the Army’s role is only supplemental to the parent’s role. How do the commands of Deuteronomy and the pattern of Jesus’ life help you better understand both your role and the supplemental role of the Army in making disciples in your family?

As you minister communally, how could you begin to model Deuteronomy 6 and 1 Corinthians 11:1? Be specific.

The Israelites had a practice of creating reminders of the power and presence of God in their lives. 1 Samuel 7 describes the Israelites building an “Ebenezer.” It was a stone altar set up on the side of the road after a victorious battle with the Philistines. The Ebenezer was a visual reminder that “thus far the Lord has helped us.”

What kind of visual Ebenezer could you set up to remind your family or those to whom you minister that, “Thus far the Lord has helped us”?

Meditate on 1 Samuel 7:12–13 (NLT). Give God praise for His help in building your story.

\textit{Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah. He named it Ebenezer (which means “the stone of help”), for he said, “Up to this point the LORD has helped us!”}

\textit{13 So the Philistines were subdued and didn’t invade Israel again for some time. And throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the LORD’s powerful hand was raised against the Philistines.}
Reflection & Prayer

As you conclude this week’s study, answer the following questions. Note the ways your brothers can join you in prayer.

†  Lord, what are You saying to me?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

†  How do You want me to respond to You?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
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†  I am burdened in the following areas:

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†  I’m thanking God for His work in the following ways:

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†  Use this space to note the praises and petitions of your brothers.

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____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
Disciples Making Disciples

God’s Word—Matthew 28

Context: What’s the specific context of this passage? What comes before it, and what follows it? Note the writer and the primary audience.

Themes: What’s the primary focus of the text? What speaks to you as you read? Note any directives or commands in the text.

Implication: How is this passage calling you to live? How will you build your life on this foundational truth?
Message of the Bible—Sealed Orders


Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Who came to share the Good News with you? How were you discipled? How did you learn to live as a disciple?

In what ways do you sense you may still need someone to come alongside you and show you the way?

The Great Commission begins, “Go and make disciples.” The Greek word for “go” can literally be translated “in your going.” Jesus says, “In your going, make disciples.” Think about your next 24 hours. How can you begin, “in your going,” to make disciples? Be specific.

What’s your strategy to “teach them to obey everything”?

Jesus said He will be with you always. How does knowing that Jesus will be with you give you courage to be a disciple who makes disciples?

In his book Radical Together, David Platt gives us a picture of how Jesus calls us to live.

When he came to his ascension, Jesus had no buildings or programs to point to and no crowds to boast of. Indeed, most of the crowds had walked away. Just 120 unschooled, ordinary people were gathered—a small group with a small band of leaders.
And he had given them one command as their commission: make disciples. Do with others what I have done with you, Jesus had said. Don't sit in a classroom; share your lives. Don't build extravagant places; build extraordinary people. Make disciples who will make disciples who will make disciples, and together multiply this gospel to all peoples. This is the simple command that was to drive the church. And this is the simple command that is to drive each of our lives.17

How is your life being driven by this command?

Men often feel inferior or unsure as to how to make disciples. The greatest gift the disciple has to give a lost world is love. The Great Commandment and the Great Commission must go together. They cannot be separated. We are called to love the world that God loves. If we follow Jesus and have received His love, we have a starting point for discipleship.

In the book Henri Nouwen: A Spirituality of Imperfection, Wil Hernandez shares Nouwen’s perspective on how we begin to love God’s world:

“The closer we come to the heart of God, the closer we come to the heart of the people of God...[W]hen we are in the most intimate corner of our being, we find ourselves most intimately connected with the people of the world.”

How do you make sure your motivation for discipleship is based on love and not based on duty? Describe the difference.

David Platt gives us a specific model for discipleship. He outlines it very simply. Here he uses the example of prayer and studying God’s Word:

What would be the most effective way for this new follower of Christ to learn to pray? To sign her up for a one-hour-a-week class on prayer? Or to invite her person-ally into your quiet time with God to teach her how to pray?

Similarly, what would be the most effective way for this new follower of Christ to learn to study the Bible? To register her in the next available course on Bible study? Or to sit down with her and walk her through the steps of how you have learned to study the Bible?18
How do these two examples change the way you view discipleship?

What hesitation do you have in teaching someone to pray or to study the Word the way you do? What stands in the way of you doing this now?

Read Acts 1:1–5.

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Luke writes to Theophilus about “all that Jesus began to do and to teach.” How are Luke’s writings a form of discipleship for Theophilus?

Luke highlights the fact that Jesus appeared over a period of forty days and “spoke about the kingdom of God.” What’s the central message of the kingdom of God?

After His resurrection, what truths do you think Jesus taught about God’s kingdom? Specifically, what are two kingdom truths that you continue to wrestle with living out in your daily life? As you look back on the last six months, where do you see growth in these areas?

1. 

2. 
The disciples were asked to wait. They wouldn’t immediately receive the Spirit; they would have to wait. Describe a time when Jesus asked you to wait. What was the outcome?

We can be assured that God always answers our prayers. There is no prayer He does not answer. God always hears, and He always answers. God’s answers typically fall into one of three categories: “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait.” How has God answered your prayers in each of these ways?

Yes

No

Wait

In Isaiah 40:28–31, the prophet reminds us of the kind of God we serve and the promised outcome we’ll experience when we wait on Him:

Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

2 He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.

30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;

31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.
Describe a season of life when you were weary and worn out. How did God meet you in that season? How did He restore and renew you? How did waiting prepare you for renewal?

Identify someone you know who is in a season of waiting. How can you be an encouragement to this person during this season? How can you be a source of renewal in the midst of his or her weariness?

Mission to Preach the Gospel—OTHERS

Read Acts 1:6–11.

Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Jesus doesn’t say you will receive “knowledge” or “wisdom.” Jesus says you will receive “power.” In your own words, describe this power. How is this power being displayed in your life?

The power Jesus gives us allows us to be His witnesses. The indwelling power of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to represent Christ to a lost and dying world. The concept of being a “witness” is incredibly prominent in Acts. Thirty-nine times we find the word “witness” or its form in the Acts narrative.
What is the immediate implication of you receiving power to be His witness?

What are the differences between the power of God and the kind of power pursued by the world? How is this power exhibited in ongoing daily interactions with others?

How do you determine to whom you will be His witness? How do you know where to “go”?

Where is your “Jerusalem?” Your “Judea?” Your “Samaria?” Where are “the ends of the earth?”

There can be a great temptation to assume that the disciple must leave his neighborhood, office, or playground and move to Africa in order to be His disciple. How can you be a witness in your Jerusalem—in your neighborhood?

Many of the people in your neighborhood are just as lost as the people in the inner city or in distant lands. What does “lostness” look like in your neighborhood? In what practical ways could you begin to be His witness in the middle of that lostness?

David Platt depicts the difference between Jesus and the typical American Christian in living out the Great Commission. He writes:

If we were left to ourselves with the task of taking the gospel to the world, we would immediately begin planning innovative strategies and plotting elaborate schemes. We would organize conventions, develop programs, and create foundations. ...

But Jesus is so different from us. With the task of taking the gospel to the world, he wandered through the streets and byways ... All he wanted was a few men who
would think as he did, love as he did, see as he did, teach as he did and serve as He did. All he needed was to revolutionize the hearts of a few, and they would impact the world.¹⁹

How is it possible to ensure discipleship doesn’t become another program, but instead becomes a part of your life?

Spend a moment thanking God for loving you enough to call you to follow Him. Ask Him to continue to revolutionize your heart. Record how and what Jesus speaks to you in this moment of prayer.

Review our 6th doctrine:

_We believe_ that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.²⁰

Christ’s suffering and death made a way for the “whosoever” to be saved. _The Salvation Army Hand-book of Doctrine_ says:

The benefits brought about by the death of Jesus are not limited to a chosen elect, since through grace it is possible for anyone to respond to the offer of salvation through the death of Christ on the Cross. The possibility of salvation for ‘the whosoever’ is foundational to The Salvation Army’s belief, history and ongoing mission. It must be seen to be a core motivating factor in Army policies, programmes and pastoral concern.²¹

Who are “the whosoever” in your community? What are their characteristics, their hopes and their needs? What difference, if any, does this make to the way in which you present the doctrine of the Atonement to them?
Like salvation for “the whosoever,” discipleship is a natural next step. There is no one who comes to Christ who is not also called to be a disciple. Ask God for the ability to see “the whosoever” in your corps. Then ask Him for the strength and courage you need to disciple that person in the faith and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Reflection & Prayer

As you conclude this week’s study, answer the following questions. Note the ways your brothers can join you in prayer.

† Lord, what are You saying to me?

† How do You want me to respond to You?

† I am burdened in the following areas:

† I’m thanking God for His work in the following ways:

† Use this space to note the praises and petitions of your brothers.
**Vespers**

Suggested resources for further study:

**Study:**

*Not a Fan: Becoming a Completed Committed Follower of Jesus,* Kyle Idleman

**Read:**

*The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’ Essential Teachings on Discipleship,* Dallas Willard

*Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live.* David Platt

*The Cost of Discipleship,* Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than To Make Us Happy?* Gary Thomas

**Listen:**

*The Death of Death,* Charlie Hall
Intermission

If your Men’s Ministries made the decision to do the entire study, then you will want to do the following:

In the middle of any great game or stage production, there is an intermission. The intermission is typically a time to pause and catch your breath, to reflect, to go back and review, or even to strategize for the remainder of the event.

We want to invite you to pause and rest. These next two weeks are designed for you to pause. You’ll have a chance to reconnect and to be refreshed.

Here are some suggestions as to how you might spend your intermission.

Reconnect

Look back and discuss the highlights:

- Discuss areas in which you’ve grown, both personally and relationally.
- Point out one specific area of your character that God is transforming.
- Celebrate the work God is doing in your family.

Assess your current reality:

- Take time to share your battle Lines with your group. Use the intermission to go deeper in both what you share with your brothers and how you share it.
- Acknowledge the areas of your life where you need God to meet you. Identify areas in which you want to grow deeper with God. Identify the ways you desire to grow deeper with the other men in your group.
- Take time to pray for and bless each member of the group.

Look forward:

- With your brothers, collectively determine how you want to grow together as a group.
- Establish the specific content you want to learn and the questions you want answered.
- Record any specific goals for the ministry in which you serve.

Refresh

Jesus often invited His disciples to “Come away with me and rest.” Take a retreat as a group, or take a personal retreat. Use the time to fellowship and relax. Read, pray, listen to music, eat good food, or sleep! Create space in your world to contemplate His grace.

Some men are refreshed by serving others. Plan a day to serve in your corps or city. You may want to throw a party for the children of the guys in your group or host an evening where you publicly bless your wives. Use your time creatively and effectively!
THE GREAT INVITATION


2 David Putman and Brent Harrison, The Gospel Disciple Journey: Rediscovering the Simplicity of Jesus and His Way. (publishing pending, 2014)

3 Bill Hull, Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith That Embraces Discipleship (Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2004), 36

4 Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Courageous (David C. Cook , 1989), 26

5 Dallas Willard, The Great Omission (Monarch Books, 2006), 9, 12

6 Ibid., xv


8 Robert Street, Called To Be God’s People: The International Spiritual Life Commission—Its report, implications and challenges (Salvation Books, 1999), x

9 Jim Burns, Editor, Prayer and The Devotional Life: High School Group Study (Gospel Light, 2010), Session 1


12 Andy Stanley, It Came From Within! (Multnomah Books, 2006), 48

13 Brené Brown, The Gifts of Imperfect Parenting—Audiobook (Sounds True, 2013)


15 David Platt, Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live. (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2013), 153


17 David Platt, Radical Together (Multnomah Books, 2011), 73

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