

*Spiritual
Health*

*Financial
Health*

*Transformed Through
Discipleship*

*Relational
Health*

*Vocational
Health*

Small Group Study
and Discussion Guide



Transformed Through Discipleship

— A study & discussion guide —

As we “walk around the block” with people whom God has placed in our hearts and on our path, it is always good to understand how practicing discipleship transforms us as well as the person we want to share our faith with. This transformation manifests in several areas, and these next few weeks we will be looking at four of the essential areas of our lives where this change takes place: *spiritual, relational, financial, and vocational.*



Our **Spiritual Health** improves as we experience a renewed love for Jesus. This happens through our worship and reading of the Bible. We recognize and embrace God's Word as His will for our lives. We work to build this relationship daily and in the process, we learn to love God's people—those believers we are in community with. We begin to serve out of this love and then naturally share our faith—and our stories—with those who don't yet know Jesus.

Scripture Reading

John 15:1-17 (NIV)

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² 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. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ 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.

⁵ "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.

⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is 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 given you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my

love. ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Group Discussion

As you begin this week, reflect on your own Spiritual Health. Give yourself a thorough check-up and then consider:

Spiritually healthy people are fruitful people. They are prepared to tell the reason for their hope and will also share their testimony of faith with others. Our stories are a strong example of God moving in our lives, and they may enable others to open their hearts to Jesus' love too.

Prayer

Ask God to reveal your Spiritual Health, request an accurate reading of your temperature, and determine if there is a cause for treatment of any issues. Are you bearing fruit—are you serving and loving those God puts in your path?

Dear Jesus,

I love how you call me friend and tell me in Your word, "You did not choose me, but I chose you..." Show me how to be Your good friend. Send Your Holy Spirit to guide me as I try to learn what it means to be spiritually healthy. Amen.

Daily Devotions

For more in-depth study and conversation use the daily reading texts and discuss the following:

MONDAY - Mark 12:28-34

Love Jesus completely

³⁰ *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."*

This entire passage is powerful and begs us to ask, "How can I do this? How can flawed humans such as us, love in such a profound way?" What do you think?

TUESDAY – Proverbs 8:32-36

Build this relationship daily

³⁴ *"Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway."*

How do we improve our Spiritual Health? Reading scripture daily is one way. How do you grow your faith? Does recording in a journal help? Share ways you draw close to God daily to fortify that relationship.

WEDNESDAY – 1 John 4:7-21

Love other believers

⁷ *"Dear Friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*

Love is a word we throw around easily, but doing it—loving someone who is not very loveable—is anything but easy. How do you practice building a love relationship with those difficult people in your life? Talk about how being spiritually healthy makes a difference in that pursuit.

THURSDAY – Mark 10:34-45

Serve others unselfishly

⁴⁴ "...and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

What does being a servant mean to you? Is taking on a project, the picture you see? You might find it helpful to read how Jesus served. Serving usually means giving up something, or coming alongside someone, or bending down to assist. Jesus did all these things. How can we do the same?

FRIDAY – Matthew 28:16-20

Share the Good News

¹⁸ "Therefore go."

Go means leave the comfort of your chair, your house, your church building. Go, into the world. Tell someone what you know. It isn't a secret. Spread this truth and make a kingdom difference. Think it over; talk it over.

SATURDAY – Mark 2:13-17

Be a disciple-maker

¹³ "Once again Jesus went out beside the lake...and began to teach."

The only way to be a disciple-maker is to go. Once again, go out—like Jesus—and use your spiritual giftedness to build up the kingdom. What might this look like for you?



Our **Financial Health** is important to our Christian walk and the example we set for others. When people recognize us by our values and our life practices, we show that we are worth following. Financial freedom shows; we can enjoy life and can fill a need when it presents itself. Trusting God is a huge step to achieving this freedom. Once we learn that Jesus promises to take care of us and our physical needs, we can live without the fear which paralyzes us when debt overtakes us.

Scripture Reading

Luke 16:10-15 (NIV)

¹⁰ "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

¹³ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

¹⁴ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵ He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight."

Group Discussion

As you begin this week, reflect on your own Financial Health. Give yourself a thorough check-up and then consider:

There are numerous conversations in the Bible about money. Jesus shared parables on this topic to show us the role our finances should play in our lives. His teachings illustrate the many ways money will get in the way of our love for Jesus and could hinder our peace and joy. If we believe in our "things or possessions" more than we believe in our Savior, everything is upside down. Luke 12:34 points out, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

None of us are strangers to the struggle with finances of one sort or another. This is often an area we are afraid to address, much less talk about in a group setting. Let that fact be a challenge for us to overcome. Share some ways God has used money—or the lack of it—to pull you closer to Him.

- How significant is the contents of your wallet to your personal peace?
- Have personal finances ever been a source of fear in your life?
- How are you feeling about this issue right now?
- Are you confident you are using your resources in a way God would bless?

Prayer

Let's pray for God to guide us in this area. We need to be better stewards of all He has given us. Pray for wisdom and courage to address this difficult and private area of our lives. Share with your group—or with someone you trust—the struggles you have with this area.

God, only You can change me, change my habits, and make me into the financially healthy person You want me to be. Help me to learn the value of a life of stewardship, and to be an example of generosity and kindness to everyone around me. Amen.

Daily Devotions

For more in-depth study and conversation use the daily reading texts and discuss the following:

MONDAY - 1 Timothy 6:6-9

Be content with what you have

⁶ *"But godliness with contentment is great gain."*

What makes you content? Do you find your security is ever challenged by the world?

TUESDAY – Proverbs 3:21-28

Build this relationship daily

²⁸ *"Do not say to your neighbor, 'Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow'—when you now have it with you."*

How do you feel about debt? Consider how free you would be if you owed nothing to anyone. Is this a possibility for you to pursue?

WEDNESDAY – Proverbs 27:23-27

Plan

²⁴ *"For riches do not endure forever..."*

Discuss how having a plan for tomorrow can provide peace and stability today.

THURSDAY – Psalm 62:5-12

Learn where to put your trust

⁵ "...my hope comes from Him."

⁶ "He alone is my rock..."

⁸ "Trust in Him at all times."

As we learn where to put our trust, meditate on the words above. How do they speak to your heart? To your current situation?

FRIDAY – Proverbs 21:5, 20-21

Invest in the future

⁵ "Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity." (NLT)

This proverb is about saving for the future. Easy credit leaves many of us drowning in debt. Fighting our way out of debt isn't easy. Talk about how planning for the future is another way to trust God for tomorrow.

SATURDAY – Proverbs 3:5-10

Practice significant giving

⁹ "Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops..."

When we give of our finances to the Lord and others, we give honor to God. What are first fruits? Challenge: Do you tithe?



Our **Relational Health** begins to improve and we deliberately strive to make friends—and to be friends—by recognizing those traits in others that we want to have ourselves. We understand that listening is important to any relationship. We need to hear one another to truly know one another. We know we are attracted to people who are positive people, smiling, and upbeat. We learn the value of accepting people where they are, not where we want them to be. The love we develop for people enables us to stick with them in hard times as we prepare to get involved emotionally. This is a Biblical friend.

Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 (NIV)

¹² Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you.

¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

¹⁶ Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not put out the Spirit's fire; ²⁰ do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold on to the good. ²² Avoid every kind of evil. ²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through

and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. ²⁵ Brothers, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. ²⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Group Discussion

As you begin this week, reflect on your own Relational Health. Give yourself a thorough check-up and then consider:

This selection of 1 Thessalonians is a powerful how-to for building strong relationships in every setting: workplace, neighborhood, and family life. The commands to respect, love, live in peace, encourage, help, and pray are sound directions for all segments of our life. No matter what hat we are wearing on any given day, we can use this direction to enrich the lives of all we encounter.

How can we apply these truths to our workplace relationships? Discuss your situation and give an example based on the setting in which you work. If you are retired, or self-employed, or a stay-at-home parent, discuss how you can still practice this type of living and relating.

Prayer

Ask God for direction and wisdom as you focus in on one or two individuals who may need faith or peace. Stay close to God, calling on Him anytime you feel inadequate or ill-prepared.

Dear Jesus,

I ask that You guide me to the person You want me to get to know better, and on a different level. Reveal the best way for me to approach this person and give me the courage to step up. Thank You for what You will do in all our lives. Amen.

Daily Devotions

For more in-depth study and conversation use the daily reading texts and discuss the following:

MONDAY - Titus 2:1-15

To have a friend, be a friend

⁹ "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching sow integrity, seriousness ¹⁰ and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned."

A great friendship is based on integrity and setting examples for one another. Have you ever been in a friendship that seemed one-sided? A relationship in which one of you was not living as a believer? What happened?

TUESDAY – Acts 9:26-31

Encourage the discouraged

²⁶ "When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabus took him and brought him to the apostles."

In this passage, Barnabus was a true encourager of Paul. Why do you think he wasn't afraid like the others were? Have you ever been in a situation where you could or should have been an encourager to someone considered an outsider?

WEDNESDAY – Colossians 4:2-6

Be at peace with everyone

⁶ "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

When cultivating relationships, it is wise to speak with gentleness and love. No one will put up with being "talked down" to. There are many ways to be at peace with everyone, but it is not easy. Discuss this and maybe share an example.

THURSDAY – Hebrews 13:7-18**Respect one another**

⁷ *"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."*

When we respect each other, we include our leaders. Leaders can be public figures, bosses, elders, parents, and friends. Strong and enduring relationships include a large dose of respect. What is respect? Share how that word has numerous meanings.

FRIDAY – Galatians 6:1-10**Do good for each other**

¹⁰ *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."*

One way to do good for each other is to celebrate our differences. Let these variances draw us together and not keep us apart. Discuss your thoughts on this.

SATURDAY – Matthew 7:7-12**Help others**

¹² *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

This popular thought was probably one of the first things we were taught as children. Explain how this still holds true for adults. How does this apply to our Relational Health?



Our **Vocational Health**, or sharing our faith in the workplace, is often uncharted territory. Many of us view our faith life as what happens at church or in our small group; it is frightening to consider taking it into the workplace. Some of us hate our jobs and see no value to our time there except for the paycheck it generates. But, what a difference there could be if our places of employment were viewed as a mission field. This is a place we can minister to others so easily by simply being a friend. We must do our jobs exceedingly well so that we are noticed, always learning and going the extra mile. This will become second nature when we realize who we are working for.

Scripture Reading

1 Peter 3:13-17 (NIV)

¹³ Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷ For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Group Discussion

As you begin this week, reflect on your own Vocational Health. Give yourself a thorough check-up and then consider:

Some Christians think their faith is a personal matter and should be kept to oneself. While it is true we shouldn't be obnoxious, we are called to be prepared to give a reason for our hope. Many of us work outside the home and we see our co-workers every day. We interact with and even become friends with these folks. There will be numerous opportunities to share our faith, or at the very least, be an example to others.

While the workplace ministry doesn't speak to everyone, there are enough of us who are a part of this environment every day. For those of us who are stay-at-home parents, retirees, or students, consider who you can apply this to your life. Sharing our faith where we work or interact with others can be tricky. How might this be accomplished without jeopardizing our duties?

- What does your faith look like on Monday morning? The same as Sunday?
- Discuss ways to build meaningful relationships at work.
- How can we be different without being on the outside looking in?

Prayer

Every time we enter our place of work, let's begin our workday by praying for those who we will encounter there. Begin to pray for co-workers, even if we don't know them well. Perhaps pray for an opportunity to build a new friendship, an authentic relationship that will glorify Christ.

Dear Jesus,

I need you to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I need Your love and Your grace to shine through me so that others will see me as a real person and someone they can trust. Bless my work, my vocation, and use me to reach out to someone who needs to hear the story. Let me lead by example. Amen.

Daily Devotions

For more in-depth study and conversation use the daily reading texts and discuss the following:

MONDAY - Colossians 3:23-4:6

Who is my boss?

²³ *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the LORD, not for men."*

Consider: What is the "work" you do and how can you work at it with all your heart?

TUESDAY – Psalm 34:11-14

Build your character

¹³ *"Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies."*

Gossip at work is a festering field of sin which gets in the way of truth. How can we combat this evil tool of Satan?

WEDNESDAY – Proverbs 16

Missionary in the workplace

³² *"Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city."*

Self-control leads to successful relationships. Control your tongue and your temper and you will draw others to want to know you and spend time with you.

THURSDAY – Romans 12:9-21

My attitude determines my joy

¹⁶ *"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."*

Are you willing to reach out a hand to the new person on the job? Can you be someone they feel safe and comfortable around? Let your joy show! A good attitude shines.

FRIDAY – Philippians 2:1-11

Love in daily encounters at work

³ *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."*

Genuine humility will get the attention of others; they will notice something different and may want to have what you have. Regardless if we are the boss, supervisor, or co-worker, our daily interaction with everyone at our workplace will reflect love. What might this look like for you?

SATURDAY – 2 Timothy 2:14-19

Walk co-workers around the block

¹⁵ *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."*

Explore what this verse means: "a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Talk about how embracing this trait will help us walk with our co-workers on a journey around the block.



Our Mission:

To be and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

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