

FINDING YOUR GROVE

Small Group Study Guide

This study guide is adapted from our **Growth Track: stepTWO** material. Once you have walked through these four studies, you will have completed stepTWO!

Read through each of the scriptures and the points, make some observations, and then answer the questions at the end of each study.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7

UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

"And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Acts 11:26 (NASB)

Before followers of Jesus were called "Christians", they were known as **disciples**. As disciples, we develop a deep relationship with Christ through:

1. Bible study and prayer

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching ... and to prayer." Acts 2:42

2. Fellowship with other believers

"They devoted themselves to...fellowship." Acts 2:42

3. Living a Spirit-led life

"Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the Apostles." Acts 2:43

4. Giving of ourselves

"They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need" Acts 2:45

HABIT ONE: BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER

"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (LB)

A vibrant relationship with God is sustained through Bible study and prayer.

HOW DO I GET MORE FROM MY BIBLE?

1. I must accept its authority.

We believe that the Holy Bible, and only the Bible, is the authoritative Word of God. It alone is the final authority in determining all doctrinal truths. In its original writing, it is inspired, infallible and inerrant.

- Receive God's Word with an open heart.

"The earth is filled with your love, Lord; teach me your decrees." Psalm 119:64

- Respond to God's word with obedience.

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22

2. I must absorb its truths.

- Hearing God's Word.

"Faith comes by hearing the word of God." Romans 10:17

- Reading God's Word.

"Happy is the one who reads this book ... and obeys what is written in it!" Revelation 1:3 (GN)

- Studying God's Word.

"They accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures every day." Acts 17:11 (Ph)

- Memorizing God's Word.

"Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart." Proverbs 7:2-3 (LB)

- Meditating on God's Word.

"(Those) who are always meditating on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers." Psalm 1:2-3 (LB)

3. I must apply its principles.

"Once you know these things you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:17

- Establish a Bible reading plan via Bible.com (aka, the YouVersion app).
- Gather one truth from your reading to reflect on.
- Record what you learn in a journal or share it with someone.

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22

TALKING WITH GOD

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17(NLT)

Jesus exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer that gave Him great strength. Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed this habit. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to spend time with God daily through prayer.

1. In my daily prayer time, I am:

- Giving devotion to God.

"(Hezekiah) was successful, because everything he did ... he did in a spirit of complete devotion to his God."
2 Chronicles 31:21 (GN)

- Getting direction from God.

"Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me." Psalm 25:4-5 (LB)

- Growing in my relationship with God.

"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." John 17:25-26

2. Use the model Jesus gave us.

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'" Luke 11:1

This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." Matthew 6:9-13

1. PRAISE: Connect with God relationally.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"

2. PURPOSE: Pray for God's agenda first.

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"

3. PROVISION: Ask him to meet your needs.

"Give us today our daily bread"

4. PARDON: Keep your heart right with God and people – forgive, and ask forgiveness.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"

5. PEOPLE: Make a list of people to pray for.

People with spiritual needs, physical needs, people you disciple and mentor, family, leaders, church, etc.

6. PROTECTION: Take a stand against the enemy.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been the greatest obstacle preventing you from having a personal quiet time with God?
2. How have you been able to overcome this obstacle?

3. Pastor Wayne Cordeiro has developed a simple way to study the Bible and journal your time with God. It is called the S.O.A.P. Bible Study. Please review the following short explanation of this method and discuss the merits of the four S.O.A.P. actions:

S = SCRIPTURE: What?

Select the passage of Scripture for today's reading. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Then take your time in reading to hear from God. When you are done, look for the 1-3 verse(s) that spoke to you, and copy into your journal.

O = OBSERVATION: So What?

What is the meaning of what you've just read? What is the author intending to communicate to his readers? What is God saying to you through these verses? Paraphrase and write the meaning in your own words in your journal.

A = APPLICATION: Now What?

Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Write down how you would obey this Scripture in your life today. Include a statement that starts with "I will..."

P = PRAYER

This can be as simple as asking God to help you obey this Scripture, or asking for greater insight into what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out.

What are some possible advantages to journaling your Bible Study and time with God?

HABIT TWO: FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another."

Hebrews 10:25 (GN)

God never intended for us to go through life alone. Throughout the Bible, we see the importance of being in community. In fact, authentic life-change happens in the context of relationships.

At Grace Hills, we believe our church must grow **LARGER** and **SMALLER** at the same time.

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:46-47

"(They met) day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house." Acts 5:42

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." Acts 20:20

How can our church grow larger yet maintain close relationships?

Every member needs to be a part of a **small group**, which we call Grace Groups..

WHY ARE SMALL GROUPS IMPORTANT?

Grace Groups live out God's five purposes of life together as a community:

1. **Discipleship** (Bible study). I understand God's Word better when others help me.
2. **Fellowship**. I need to open up and get to know others and have others get to know me better.
3. **Worship** (Prayer). I need to agree with other people about matters of prayer and praise.
4. **Ministry**. I need to serve other people *beside* other people.
5. **Evangelism**. I need to share my story, live on mission, and bring others into my group.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:34-35 (NLT)

HOW DO I GET CONNECTED WITH A SMALL GROUP?

1. Find a group

- Find a group online at gracehillschurch.com/groups or ask a friend.
- Attend a Small Group Connection event (hosted at the church twice per year).
- Email Danny Kirk, our Community Pastor at Danny@gracehillschurch.com.
- Attend Small Group Leader training and **start your own group**.

2. Commit for a season

New groups start three semesters each year: spring, summer, and fall. Most groups are open to new members throughout the semester.

3. Experience a life change

If you only attend Grace Hills on Sunday morning, you're only experiencing a small part of who we are. Real life change happens in circles, not in rows.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Outside of the church family, what other small group gatherings have you experienced in the past? What did you like most about those small groups and why?
2. Jesus came to earth that the whole world would benefit from His great love for people. Why did He invest most of His ministry with just 12 individuals?
3. If you were to ask an unconnected individual to come and join your small group, what reason(s) would you give for why this could be meaningful to them?
4. What keeps you coming back to a small group gathering?
5. Is there anything you would suggest to help make your small group more effective in supporting each other? What is it?

HABIT THREE: LIVING A SPIRIT-LED LIFE

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
2 Corinthians 13:14

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

In Hebrew (the Old Testament original language), **Ruwach** – a wind, breath, a violent exhalation, blast of breath.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Genesis 1:2

In Greek (the New Testament original language), **Pneuma** – a current of air, blast of breath, a strong breeze.

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."
John 6:63 (NIV 1984)

1. The Holy Spirit is a person (not that he is human, but he is personal).

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever." John 14:16 (NASB)

2. The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." John 14:26 (NASB)

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN OUR LIVES

"Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."" Acts 1:4-8 (NASB)

1. The Holy Spirit enables us to know God's:

- Comfort.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." John 14:16 (KJV)

- Conviction.

"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

John 16:5-8 (NASB)

2. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live with Christ-like:

- Character.

"For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." 2 Corinthians 3:17-18(NLT)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

- Power.

"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." Acts 1:8

3. The Holy Spirit equips us with:

- Spiritual Gifts.

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Romans 12:6-8 NLT

- Spiritual Direction.

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Acts 2:17-21

HOW DO I LIVE A SPIRIT-LED LIFE?

1. Remove all the barriers.

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 2:38

2. Relate to Him daily.

"The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you." 2 Corinthians 13:14 (Message)

3. Remain under his influence.

"Be filled with (influenced by, intoxicated with) the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when you really felt the leading of the Holy Spirit in making a decision. What was the difference between this experience and the times when you felt you acted without His help?
2. What stands in the way of us "leaning into" and "leaning upon" the Holy Spirit? How can we eliminate these barriers?
3. In what particular area of your life today do you need the Holy Spirit's help, power, or leadership?
4. How can we pray for you this week?

HABIT FOUR: GIVING OF OURSELVES

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
John 3:16

The Gospel is the ultimate demonstration of God's generous nature towards mankind. The Bible consistently teaches that God blesses us so that we may bless others. In fact, **we are most like God when we're giving.**

AREAS OF GIVING

1. Give of our time.
2. Give of our talent.
3. Give of our treasure.

"If your gift is... giving, give generously." Romans 12:8 (NLT)

"Yes, you should tithe, but do not neglect the more important things" Matthew 23:23 (NLT)

BENEFITS OF GIVING

1. Giving draws us closer to God.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

2. Giving is the remedy to materialism.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they may take hold of the life that is truly life." 1Timothy 6:17-19

3. Giving strengthens our faith.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding... Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of your income, and he will fill your barns to overflowing." Prov. 3:5, 9-10

4. Giving is an investment in eternity.

"Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity!" 1Timothy 6:18-19 (LB)

BIBLICAL GENEROSITY IS:

1. Willing.

"For if the willingness is there, your gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one doesn't have."
2 Corinthians 8:12

"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion."
2 Corinthians 9:7a

2. Cheerful.

"...for God loves a cheerful giver!" 2 Corinthians 9:7b

3. Sacrificial.

"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service." 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

4. Expectant.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and whoever sows generously also will reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When it comes to giving, what is a pet peeve? How would Jesus respond to your "pet peeve"?
2. We have discussed that there are 3 AREAS OF GIVING. Review and answer the following questions about each area:

1. Give of our time.

When do you know that you have given enough time in God's service?

When giving time, what brings the most enjoyment?

2. **Give of our talent.**

What talent do you have that God has used to benefit others?

How could you improve on those talents and their use?

3. **Give of our treasure.**

When have you benefited from an unexpected financial gift from an individual? How did it make you feel?

If you could make a big financial investment in an area of ministry, what would it be? What small step could you take toward that dream this week?

Congratulations! You've completed stepTWO! Now, you're ready to go to stepTHREE!