



CROSSPOINTE CHURCH

Discipleship Resources for Possible Discussion

The foundation of your salvation is not based upon the level of your perfection; it is based upon Jesus' sacrifice. Our life in Christ is strengthened by overcoming sin, walking in the truth of scripture, and being baptized by the power of the Holy Spirit. This resource has the following topics:

- God's word
- The Holy Spirit
- Prayer and Fasting
- Stewardship
- How to Love people
- The Battle of the Mind/Holiness
- The Trinity

(Session 1) God's word

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10: 27-28. You cannot develop a relationship without communication that goes both ways. God loves you, and as your Shepherd, He wants to lead you in a personal and relational manner. Just like the physical body needs physical food, the new man in Christ (Spirit man) needs food. Without spiritual food your spirit will starve to death. Spiritual growth is directly related to God's word, will, and work. So how do we take in God's word? Below is the "word hand" illustration to help us:

- a. HEARING the Word from pastors and teachers provides fresh insight into the Scriptures. The weakest finger—the pinkie—represents hearing, because we retain only 5 percent of what we hear. Romans 10:17, in this Scripture, "word" is the Greek word *rhema*. It means "the living voice of God" or "the now word of God." Faith is born in us when God's word comes alive to us and He speaks it to us in a personal manner.
- b. READING gives us an overview of the Bible and is the foundation of a daily quiet time. This is represented by the ring finger. We generally retain 15 percent of what we read. Revelation 1:3. As you read your Bible daily, you are giving God an opportunity to speak a *rhema* word to you. Those nuggets of truth will transform your life as you receive them and obey them.
- c. STUDYING the Scriptures deepens our convictions. It requires greater time and effort but results in increased Bible knowledge. Most people retain 35 percent of what they study. This is represented by the middle finger. Acts 17:11.

- d. MEMORIZING God's Word enables us to use the Sword of the Spirit to overcome temptations and to have verses readily available for ministering to others. The index finger, our strongest finger, represents memorization. We remember 100 percent of what we memorize if we consistently review it. Psalm 119:9-11
- e. MEDITATION is the inward process that accompanies each of the other four methods of Scripture intake. This is why meditation is assigned to the thumb. Only the thumb can touch all the other four fingers. By meditating on God's Word as we hear, read, study, and memorize, we discover its transforming power at work in us. Psalm 1:2,3

(Session 2) The Holy Spirit

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper...John 14:16-17

The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name... John 14:26

When the Helper comes...John 15:26

When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...John 16:13-14

The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all...1 Corinthians 12:7-13

The word "Helper" is also translated as **Comforter**. It means someone who walks alongside us to help us. The Holy Spirit is present in your body to impart power into your daily life. Determine that you will be dependent on the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength in all circumstances. *"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."* (Galatians 5:16) *"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:25) *"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."* (Mark 16:17-18)

We often focus on the power of the Holy Spirit moving through us with what are called the charismatic gifts; words of knowledge, prophetic revelation, healing etc. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). This is true and powerful. This is a significant part of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit empowers believers for holiness. Through the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our life, we move in the spiritual gifts and we can live a holy life.

(Session 3) Prayer & Fasting

Definition: Prayer is a two-way conversation between God and an individual or group of individuals. It is communication with God. 1 John 5:14-15

Do you pray as much as you should? Do you pray the way that you should? Of course, you pray! You offer prayer before mealtimes, at bedtime, during Sunday services, when sickness comes, when trouble visits, and at times when God reveals his power. But do you pray during the quiet time, family meetings, or in the middle of an average day? Is prayer as significant a part of your life as it should be?

1 John 5:14-15, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Jesus often went to a quiet place to pray to his Father. He placed great importance on Prayer and so should we. Luke 11:1-13, Matthew 7:7-11, 6:5-13,

The Lord's Prayer is an outline. Every sentence in the prayer is a heading that allows us to pray particular prayers. When you use the model of the Lord's Prayer as your guide, you will find that when you are finished, you have completely unburdened your heart and have prayed for every area of your life.

Part 1: Thanksgiving, praise, and worship

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Part 2: Surrender and direction

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

Part 3: Daily provision

Give us this day our daily bread.

Part 4: Forgiveness

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Part 5: Guidance and protection

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

Part 6: Acknowledgment of divine right

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

This part of the prayer is simple but profound. We must first of all refuse for ourselves three things that human beings love to claim as their own: a kingdom, power, and glory.

The Bible also reveals that prayer or communication with God can be hindered. Faith is an important aspect in effective prayer. "So, Jesus answered and said to them, Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:21-22). We should learn to identify and avoid hindrances to prayer as revealed in the Scriptures. Isaiah 1:10-20, Psalm 66:18, 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Fasting is often neglected today, but when done out of a right motive it can be a real help in spiritual warfare. Jesus fasted often (Matthew 4:1-11, etc.). Jesus assumed His disciples would fast (note the "when," not "if" in Matthew 6:16). Fasting is a spiritual exercise distinct from prayer, although often done in connection with prayer. It is still something for us to do today (Matthew 9:15). Usually fasting is done from food (all or a certain food group, like sweets, or a certain meal a day, or no food all day). Sometimes drink is abstained from, other times not. Partial fasts can involve eliminating certain foods or meals. Sometimes sleep (II Corinthians 6:5; 11:27) and/or sex (I Corinthians 7:3-5) are included. Be sensitive to how and when God leads you to fast.

The motive in fasting is not to punish self for sin or prove sincerity to God so He will smile with more favor in a certain situation. Hunger pictures humility (Psalm 69:10; Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 11-14; Hosea 13:6). Enduring hunger teaches self-discipline and works against pride (Ezra 8:21; Isaiah 58:3). It

provides an attitude of submission. Fasting also opens up more time to be available to pray and seek God. It shows a willingness to sacrifice anything to get closer to God. It serves notice to demonic forces that you are serious in your pursuit of God's will and glory (Jeremiah 29:13-14). A side benefit of fasting is that one can learn to depend on God for self-control and thus better control their appetite (I Corinthians 6:12-13; II Peter 2:19). This also helps with self-control over sexual sins as well.

Fasting is not a way to force God's hand or get our prayer answered quickly. It must be done for the right motive or there is no benefit (Matthew 6:6-18; Isaiah 58; Luke 8:11-12). Fasting can provide an attitude of submission (desire to please God and not self). It can free up extra time for prayer. The accompanying hunger can be a reminder to pray without ceasing and the hunger itself can be offered as a sacrificial gift to God.

It is best to begin fasting gradually and not embark on an extended period of fasting the first time. Many good books and articles are available helping one learn what is best to eat before and after a fast. Just remember that the focus is on God, not the faster. The enemy can use it as a source of pride and this negates the whole purpose of fasting.

Have you ever fasted for spiritual reasons? How did it help you spiritually? Ask God if He would have you fast in some way now. What would it be for? What would you fast from? For how long? What would be your goal or purpose for the fast? Prayerfully consider these things before starting.

(session 4) Stewardship

God is the creator of everything; therefore, he owns all things. Thankfully, God has chosen to share the goodness of his creation with us. But we must maintain a proper appreciation of our possessions by ultimately recognizing that everything we own belongs to God. Psalm 24:1-2, Haggai 2:8, Deuteronomy 8:18, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Just like when you borrow a tool from your neighbor, even when it is in your possession, you must respect your neighbor's ownership. If we accept that everything belongs to God, then we must submit all we possess to his mastery/control. If Christ is truly Lord of our lives, He must be Lord of everything. Luke 6:46, 18:18-30.

Stewardship means that one recognizes God's ownership and submits to Christ's Lordship, producing great joy. When we practice biblical stewardship, we recognize that God has given us everything we "own" for his purpose rather than for ours. Biblical stewardship is an act of honor and obedience. Matthew 25:14-30. We are to also recognize the needs of others and give generously as God has given to us. 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

In a similar manner, a tithe (10 percent) is a biblical pattern for believers to follow as they fulfill their responsibility to return to God a portion of those blessings, He has given to them. Malachi 3:6-10, Genesis 14:17-20. Tithes should go to your local church, "the storehouse." Give ten percent of your income faithfully to your local church, and not only will you get the blessing of giving; you will also see God move powerfully in your finances. Also remember that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:35.

(Session 5) How to Love People

The Bible teaches that for Christians, God is our Father, other Christians are our brothers and sisters, and the church is like a family and we are to love one another. Like every family, the church is made up of imperfect people who need to ask for forgiveness, receive grace and grow in their love for the other members of the family.

Love One Another Tip #1. Pray

One of the most loving things that we can do for each other as a church family is to pray for one another. Great love can be shown not by merely saying “I’ll pray for you” but by putting a hand on someone’s shoulder right then and there and lifting up the need in prayer. “Brothers, pray for us.” –1 Thessalonians 5:25

Love One Another Tip #2. Community

Loving and showing Christ to the community was the paramount aim of the New Testament church. This church did not only meet at the building of worship, but they also met in their homes. Living in community with one another and in the midst of outsiders is challenging and not for the faint of heart. But we must fight for it because God’s love is reflected in our love toward people. This is why the Great Commandment, according to Jesus, is to love God and love others. In this age of technology and digital “friendships,” one of the most loving things we can do is gather together in person to worship our King Jesus. “Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some.” – Hebrews 10:25

Love One Another Tip #3. Encourage

In this fallen world, trials and hardships are all too frequent. God has put us together as a church family so that we can encourage each other as we face these difficulties. “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” –1 Thessalonians 5:11

Love One Another Tip #4. Forgive

People who are looking for a conflict-free life will not find it in following Christ. In fact, there are many verses warning us to expect bumps and bruises as we live out this life together. However, the one thing we cannot do is bail on each other just because we fight. The family of God can love each other by hanging tough even when we disagree. “Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” –Colossians 3:13

Love One Another Tip #5. Speak truth

God is a truth-speaking God, and as his image bearers, one of the ways that we show love to each other is by following his example. Speaking truth includes, but is not limited to: doctrinal correction, calling to repentance, teaching the Bible, confessing sin, giving wise counsel, not lying or exaggerating or gossiping, and using our words to build up. “Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” –Ephesians 4:15

Love One Another Tip #6. Pursue godliness

God is love (1 John 4:8). As we become more loving, we become more like God. Flee from sin, leave unrighteousness behind, and seek the Holy Spirit’s help to become more and more godly in your words, your thoughts and your conduct. “Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and

virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.” –2 Peter 1:5-7

Love One Another Tip #7. Church Discipline

Church discipline is quite possibly the most difficult form of love for the local church to practice. It can be cloudy, messy, and painful. However, in reading the New Testament, there seems to be no such thing as a church without discipline. This principle is taught by Jesus in Matt. 18:15-17, *“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”* Church discipline seems natural in New Testament churches, most clearly described in Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 5). It is not loving to allow a brother or sister to wallow in their sins. Discipline in the church results in life within the body. The point is not perfection, for Christ has done everything perfectly for us; the point is that we press on toward the upward call of God, pursuing maturity and truth (Phil. 3:14-16). The greatest gift to the world is the love of God through the sacrifice of his Son.

(Session 6) The Battle of the Mind/Holiness

The primary battlefield in our daily lives is in our minds. Jesus died to save us and set us free. Our minds are a central issue in the battle for our salvation and resulting freedom. The truth of the matter is that until our minds are set free, we’re not free. Jesus said concerning freedom, *“If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:31-32). Jesus promises that if we become committed disciples of His Word, we will “know” the truth, and the result will be freedom. The word know means, “to experience intimately.” Therefore, Jesus promised that if we will commit our minds and hearts to His Word, the result will be a personal experience that sets us free.

We also need to realize that the battle is between God’s Word and Satan. Ephesians 6:17 tells us that the Word is the “sword of the Spirit” in our fight against the forces of darkness. To help us understand the battle of our minds and how it is won, the apostle Paul gives us rare spiritual insight. He says, *“Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”* 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5. God has given us powerful spiritual weapons to overcome every stronghold Satan has brought into our lives to keep us in bondage. We also need to realize that there is power in Biblical meditation. Biblical meditation simply means rehearsing God’s Word in our minds. Romans 12:2 says *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern the will of God, what is that good and acceptable will of God.”* God’s word is what renews our minds. Meditating on God’s Word “day and night” means we are committed to occupying our minds with the Word of God

throughout the day. Once you grasp this truth and begin putting it into practice, you will realize how powerful it is. Life is more pleasant and peaceful when you learn to meditate upon Scripture. As you meditate on it, the Word will unfold within you, and you will begin to see its beauty and understand its mysteries. Make up your mind right now that the next time a bad thought comes into your mind you are going to replace it with a Scripture.

A basic definition of **holiness** means to be set apart—distinct (Also read 1 Peter 2:9). Next, we must understand from what, and to what are we set apart, or separated. Romans seven and eight tells us we are separated from the Law of sin and death and to the Law of the Spirit of life and peace. What creates this separation, or holiness? Understand that two actions are taking place. First, Jesus' power that crushed sin and death, and second, our action. It is only through Jesus' death on the cross that the power to be holy is established. As Christians we have all the potential in the world to be holy, but just because Jesus made it possible doesn't mean we live holy lives. Having said that, the transforming power of what Jesus did is activated when we "set our mind" on the Spirit of life and peace (Romans 8:6) and live-in obedience to God (1 Peter 1:14a). This is a heart and mind action. The reason we struggle with sin, even after we are saved is because we set our mind on the selfish desires of the flesh. In doing so, we lose the power of the cross and the power of holiness. The reason is because we have activated a spiritual principle that we have no power to control. This disobedient action, by spiritual law, releases death and we are no longer separated unto holiness. Holiness and sin cannot coexist. We have literally separated ourselves to sin. On the other hand, when we set our heart and mind on the Spirit of God, we activate a different spiritual law—the Law of Life and Peace. This obedient action separates us to freedom, life, holiness, and peace. Remember we don't have any power to produce holiness; rather we release the holiness Jesus purchased on the cross when we decide to be fully "in" Christ and walk "in" the Holy Spirit. In essence, being set apart or holy, has two sides. Jesus alone sets up the potential to live free and holy. Our obligation is to live with our mind set on the Spirit, and our heart obedient to His will. Notice what Paul says in Galatians 5:16 "...walk according to the Spirit and you will not fulfil the desires of the flesh." Time to start walking a separated life!

(Session 7) The Trinity...God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

The Trinity is taught in both the Old and the New Testaments. It is taught by implication in the Old and by direct statement in the New. For instance, the Bible contains numerous clear statements regarding the unity of God: Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us that "*the Lord is one.*" 1 Corinthians 8:4 adds that "*there is no God but one.*" 1 Timothy 2:5 explicitly says, "*there is one God.*" All Christians heartily affirm this truth. However, the Bible also contains clear statements regarding diversity within that unity. For instance, in the very first verse of the Bible we are told that "*In the beginning God.*" The Hebrew word for God is "Elohim," which is actually a plural form of the word el. It's a word that in other contexts is sometimes translated as "gods," referring to heathen deities. Later in the same chapter we have one of the most striking statements of diversity-in-unity:

Then God said, *“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”* So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27. Notice the shift in pronouns. *“Let us ... in our image ... So, God created man in his own image. ... he created him.”* From us, and our, to he. Why the shift? Commentators speak of a literary form called the plural of majesty or the "editorial we." This much is certainly true. If Genesis 1 does not explicitly teach diversity-in-unity within the Godhead, it certainly leaves room for it to be developed later in the Bible.

Isaiah 48:16 seems to explicitly refer to all three Persons of the Trinity: "And now the Sovereign LORD (the Father) has sent me (the Son), with his Spirit (the Holy Spirit)." This is not to suggest that Isaiah fully understood the Trinity or that the Jewish readers would have understood what it meant, but that in the light of the New Testament, we can say that this seems to be a clear statement of the Trinity in the Old Testament. Consider further this line of evidence. All Three Persons are called God in different places in the Bible.

Father – Galatians 1:1

Son – John 20:28

Spirit – Acts 5:3-4

How could the Son and the Spirit be called God unless they somehow share in God's essence? But if they share in God's essence, they are God alongside the Father. Finally, all three Persons are associated together on an equal basis in numerous passages:

- Jesus' baptism–Matthew 3:13-17 (voice of the Father, Son baptized, Spirit descending like a dove).
- Salvation–1 Peter 1:2 (chosen by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, sprinkled with the blood of Jesus).
- Sanctification–2 Corinthians 13:14 (grace of the Lord Jesus, love of God, fellowship of the Holy Spirit).
- Christian Baptism–Matthew 28:19 (baptized in one name, yet three Persons–Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- Prayer–Ephesians 3:14-21 (strengthened by his Spirit, know the love of Christ, filled with the fullness of God).
- Christian Growth–2 Thessalonians 2:13 (chosen by God, loved by the Lord, sanctified by the Spirit).

This list of passages might be extended. It simply shows how easily the writers of Scripture passed from one Person of the Trinity to another, doing so in a way that assumes their equality of nature while preserving their distinct personhood. If the doctrine of the Trinity is not true, it would seem to be blasphemy to speak so freely of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in one and the same breath.

Updated: February 2021

