

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUP GUIDE

GROW SERIES: *WALK WITH GOD*

***THE HEIGHTS CHURCH RESOURCES***

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**MATTHEW 28: 18-20**

## WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

***Discipleship is a Spirit-led process whereby we are conformed into the image of Christ (see Rom. 8:29), bringing all aspects of our lives under the reign and rule of King Jesus. In a nutshell, discipleship is following Jesus as He brings renewal to all things.***

As the Holy Spirit works to transform our lives along this pathway of discipleship, something always happens; we begin to change. Our desires shift. Our trajectory begins to align with God's intended trajectory for us. We also can't help but want others to walk this pathway with us. The transformation that God is doing in our lives as disciples inevitably begins to multiply as we begin to lead others down this pathway that has impacted our lives.

*For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

ROMANS 8:29

## WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

***Simply put, a disciple is someone who loves and follows Jesus in every area of their life, and helps others to do the same.***

If we claim to be disciples of Jesus, then our lives, priorities, habits, and relationships are to reflect the character of Jesus. When we talk about being a disciple of Jesus, we often talk about the 5G's, five markers or identifiers of those who follow Jesus.

### **GRACE**

*Grace is favor we didn't deserve and could not earn.*

A disciple's life is marked by their understanding of God's grace for each of us. Jesus took our sin and our brokenness upon Himself through the cross and, through His grace, we have full life in Jesus. Therefore, we can approach God with confidence knowing that Jesus' death has freed us and made us alive with Christ.

### **GATHER**

*We are better together.*

A disciple understands that no one can become all that we are called to be on our own, and so we must be intentional to gather together as believers. It is within consistent, committed community that we flourish.

### **GROW**

*Healthy things grow.*

A disciple understands that God desires for us to grow to look more and more like Jesus in every area of our life.

### **GIVE**

*Generosity transforms lives.*

A disciple understands that we have all been given time, talents, and treasures that we are called to use for God and His Kingdom. God has called us to use those gifts to benefit others and to experience the joy of making a difference.

### **GO**

*You were created to go and join Jesus in His Harvest.*

A disciple obeys the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) to take the gospel to people and, for those who respond positively, teach them how to follow Jesus and help others do the same. Jesus told His followers that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. You, Christian, are the laborer!

## WHY DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

As we go through the different seasons of life, that work of discipleship will take many forms. In some seasons, discipleship may look like faithfully changing diapers and rocking crying babies through long sleepless nights so that they will know the love and safety of a Good Parent. In other seasons, it may look like generously giving of your time and talents to help meet the physical needs of the poor and hurting in our communities so that they may know the One Who will always provide. And in other seasons, discipleship may be done in quiet places where prayers for revival are whispered out in faith. This guide is a resource specifically for **discipleship groups**, which is just one way this local body participates in the greater work of discipleship.

***A Discipleship Group is a gender specific, closed group of 2-4 people committed to meeting weekly or bi-weekly for a season of accelerated spiritual transformation.***

Discipleship Groups are marked by:

- Intentionality - A Discipleship Group is not simply meant to help someone follow Christ in their own life (though that is important), but also to train them to be able to help another person follow Christ (who will turn around and repeat this process with someone else). See 2 Timothy 2:2.
- Reproducibility - A Discipleship Group works through a repeatable process and use of a curriculum. This sets up its members to be able to go forward and do with someone else what they experienced with the person who led their Discipleship Group.

## WHAT DO WE DO IN A D-GROUP

A D-Group has four main components that will guide your group's time together each week. Each of these four components are critical to accomplishing the goal of a D-Group, and on the next page, you will see a suggested schedule to help guide your time with your group.

- Fellowship: Your group should be intentional to spend some time each meeting catching up with each other and sharing what has been going on in your lives. The hope is that this group becomes a safe place for you to share your burdens as well as your joys.
- Grow Series Study: Your group has chosen to go through the Grow Series by Craig Etheredge together. This is a three book series with 21 weeks of content across all three books, *Walk With God*, *Reach Your World*, and *Invest in a Few*. Each week, your group will be expected to spend time reading through the study, reflecting on the questions, and memorizing the verse of the week. When you meet, your leader will ask what you learned, how that week's study has impacted or challenged you, and how your scripture memory is coming.
- Accountability: Accountability is how we put what we learn through study into practice in our day to day lives. We want to be not just hearers of the word but doers. As you are learning what the Christian life is meant to be via the Grow Series, your group leader will lead the group through a series of personal questions that are intended to encourage reflection and vulnerability. In this time, you and your group will be help each other discern how to faithfully live out what you are learning in your own lives.
- Prayer: We are only able to live like Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, and so we never want to gather together without praying over each other and asking God to work in our lives as we seek to work alongside Him. Each week, there will be a time to share prayer requests, and pray over each other as a group.

## **SUGGESTED FLOW OF D-GROUP MEETINGS**

Our lives are often hectic and unpredictable, and so we encourage you to find a consistent rhythm and flow for your D-Group meetings so that everyone can show up knowing what to expect. That added level of consistency can help lower the mental barriers to entry, and make D-Group time a welcome break in people's weeks.

In order to ensure all four key components of a Discipleship Group are present in each D-Group meeting, we recommend following the outline below. This will help structure and guide your time, as well as ensuring that it is spiritually fruitful.

### **LOOK BACK**

For the first 10-15 minutes of your time with your group each week, begin by asking about the personal lives of each member ("Looking back" on everyone's week). Talk about how your weeks went, how topics or issues brought up weeks prior have resolved, etc. This time doesn't need to be heavy, intense, or overly structured. This is space for relationships between group members to naturally grow and deepen. This is where fellowship happens.

### **LOOK UP**

This will be the bulk of the time your group spends together. You want to spend the majority of your time "looking up" at what God is teaching you all through the Grow Series. This is also where accountability takes place. The group leader's role in this time is to prompt honest discussions, as well as to ask relevant accountability questions to help group members apply what Scripture teaches to their lives.

### **LOOK FORWARD**

As your group wraps up and begins to "look forward" to the week ahead, take time to share what you each have on your plate, and to pray over each other. Once you have prayed, be sure to touch base on your plans for your next meeting. Life gets pretty chaotic, so it's always helpful to remind your group of what you will be reading and discussing next, as well as confirming the time and place of your next D-Group meeting.

A group of people in a meeting, with a man in the center pointing and speaking. The image is overlaid with a dark blue tint.

# LEADER RESOURCES

*GROW SERIES: WALK WITH GOD  
by CRAIG ETHEREDGE*

## BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

As you get ready to launch a new Discipleship Group, here are some tips to help make that process as smooth as possible:

- Communicate with everyone in your group the logistics of where you'll meet, what time and when you'll be done, as well as who all will be in your group.
- Ask each person to be ready to to share a 5-8 minute version of their testimony with the group at your first meeting. Let them know that this isn't supposed to be their whole life story, but rather the story of how they came to faith in Jesus, and where they are at in their faith journey now. You might want to send them the following questions to help them think through their testimony in preparation:
  - What was your family like spiritually growing up?
  - What was your life like before Jesus?
  - How were you introduced to Jesus?
  - What did it look like for you to surrender your life to Jesus?
  - What does following Jesus look like in your life right now?
- Let them know what to bring to your first meeting (Bible, Grow Series Book, pen, notebook, etc.)
- Be sure to bring a copy of the Discipleship Group Covenant to your first meeting for each person (this document will give you an opportunity to discuss expectations for the group).

## DISCIPLESHIP GROUP COVENANT

Anything worthwhile requires a commitment and the same is true in your Walk with God.

Please carefully read and seriously consider the commitments being requested of you

During the duration of this Discipleship Group, I will do my best to...

- Give myself fully to the Lord as I anticipate a season of accelerated spiritual transformation.
- Commit to this group and consider how I may best spur others on in their relationship with Jesus.
- Meet with my Discipleship Group regularly (60-90 minutes). When unable, I will stay involved through sharing Discipleship Group Guides and prayer requests.
- Commit to the process: Look Back, Look Up, Look Forward.
- Contribute to a group atmosphere of confidentiality, honesty, and transparency.
- Pray every week for the other members of my Disciple Group and those in my life who don't know Jesus.
- Pray and look for others in my life who I can invite into a new Discipleship Group when my current group decides to multiply.

Signed Member:

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Date:

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR D-GROUP

Every discipleship group will be a little bit different, as the process of disciple-making is organic and dynamic. However, there are some key attributes that must be found in any discipleship group if it is going to be successful (by "successful," we mean following Jesus's pattern with His disciples).

- Spiritual Transformation - following Jesus is not simply an academic pursuit. Your disciples should exhibit more and more fruits of the Spirit as you continue to meet and progressively develop a Christlike character.
  - *Discipleship occurs when we answer Jesus's call to learn how to live by his perspective and standards and become the people who naturally act like him.*
  - For us to gain his perspective and standards, we need a **change of the mind**. That change of mind (or repentance) comes only through a complete understanding of the gospel Jesus preached – a gospel that helps us understand our identity and responsibility as a Christ- follower. We will never develop a Christlike character unless God first transforms our mind, because the mind is the seat of the will and desires and directs action.
  - Next, as we yield to the Holy Spirit, He can begin **changing our desires**. He does this by affecting the intentions of the heart and implanting a desire to serve and please God.
  - While changing our mind and will are crucial first steps, they are just that – first steps. The next step that leads to Christlike character are **spiritual practices** (or exercises). Spiritual practices include things like prayer, reading and responding to God's Word, worship, using one's spiritual gifts to serve the church, tithing, confessing sin, submitting to authority, and helping others become disciples.

- Once a person learns and begins to incorporate these spiritual practices into their lives, the next step is for them to become habits. The key for these spiritual practices to become habitual is for a disciple to differentiate between one's feelings and their will. A spirit of self-control and discipline is essential to weave these spiritual practices into the normal rhythms of one's life. Studies have shown it takes at least 3-4 weeks to form a habit and being a part of a community increases the chances of developing habits.
  - Finally, these habits lead to Christlike character. Hull puts it this way, "Character is the result of the will acting over and over again until it is consistently manifested through our bodies in behavior."
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- Life on Life - Discipleship is not simply about information transmission. Your disciples should know that you genuinely love them (*see 1 Thessalonians 2:8 and John 13:34-35*)
  - Equipped to share the gospel - Your disciples should be able to explain the Good News clearly and succinctly to anyone God brings in their path.
  - Leads to Multiplication - Your disciples should have a full understanding of the Gospel Jesus preached - an understanding that includes our responsibility as Christ-follower to obey Jesus's command to make disciples - see Matthew 28:19-20.

## VERSE MEMORIZATION

Each week, in the material from Craig Etheredge, there is a verse to memorize. That verse can be found on Day 1 of each week's material and the complete list can be found in the first few pages of each book.

While hiding God's Word in your heart is always a great idea, we feel that memorizing 21 verses in a short time period of a few months can be daunting. At a minimum, we suggest committing to memory the following 5 verses. The first 2 verses are over-arching verses about disciple-making. The remaining 3 verses correspond with each of the 3 books in Craig Etheredge's material.

### **Overarching Verses:**

- He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." - Matthew 4:19
- Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. -1 Corinthians 11:1

### **Theme Verse for Each Book:**

- Walk With God: My sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they follow me.... -John 10:27
- Reach Your World: All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. -2 Corinthians 5:18
- Invest in a Few: And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. -2 Timothy 2:2

## BIBLE READING ACRONYM

A disciple of Jesus will cherish his inspired Word, which is a key to hearing God's will and his voice to us. Having a method or approach to reading the Bible is useful and helps us gain clear insight in the teachings and commands that the Bible contains. Below are 4 suggested methods. The important thing for a disciple is to adopt a method that let's us hear from our Lord.

- In Walk with God week 3, a method is suggested for how we might more effectively study God's word and hear His voice. The author suggests a L.I.S.T.E.N method.
  - L – Look at a passage of scripture. Ask God like Samuel did to “speak, for I am listening to you.”
  - I – Identify what stands out in the passage.
  - S – Study God's truth. Is there an attitude, a command, a truth, or a sin to avoid?
  - T – Think about how this applies to your life.
  - E – Engage with God in prayer about what you've read.
  - N - Make a note in your book or journal, available to review and remind yourself.
  
- Another method of approaching scripture to see what God is telling us might be a bit simpler:
  - What does the scripture passage say? Consider the context before and after that passage to avoid mistaking its message. What does the actual text say?
  - What does it mean? Look for the truth or command in the passage.
  - How can I apply this in my life? Prayerfully ask God to help with making this scripture applicable and useful in my daily life.

- The 'Scripture Listening' approach:
  - What happened?
  - What stood out?
  - What is God saying? (a sin to Avoid, Promise, Example, Command, Truth)
  - What will I do now with what God said?
  
- The S.O.A.P. Method:
  - Scripture - Make a daily appointment with God to sit down and read His Word. Meditate and ask Him to reveal His truth to you.
  - Observation - What do you see in the verses that you're reading? Who is the audience? What words or phrases stand out to you?
  - Application - Take it personally. How can you apply what you just read to your own life? What changes do you need to make?
  - Prayer - Pray God's Word back to Him. If He has revealed something to you during this time, pray about it.

## PRAYER ACRONYM

Use the ACTS method for prayer.

### **Adoration**

Begin by worshipping God for who He is. Focus on His character and His attributes. (Psalm 96)

### **Confession**

Next, confess your sins to God. List everything that comes to mind, and when you've exhausted that, ask God to search your heart and reveal any hidden sin that you've overlooked. (Psalm 139:23-24)

### **Thanksgiving**

After you've received forgiveness, it's time to give thanks for the many gifts God has blessed you with. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

### **Supplication**

This is the time to case your cares on God. Whatever you're worried about, pour out your heart to Him, and ask Him to move in a mighty way. Ask confidently and boldly, but not demanding. God is not a genie in a bottle but rather a loving Father who gives good gifts to His children. (Matthew 7:11)

## ADDITIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

### GRACE

- In the previous week, did you find your identity in Christ or in other things?
- Did the Gospel live in you this week?
- Did you freely enjoy God this week, or find yourself trying to earn His favor or the worlds?
- Were you quick to extend grace to others just as you were freely shown grace?
- Did you find yourself turning to anything other than God for a sense of security?

### GATHER

- Did you attend worship this week?
- Did you gather with Christian community this week?
- How have you shown love for your brothers and sisters in Christ this week?

### GROW

- How did you practice our chosen Spiritual Discipline this week?
- What did you learn from your practice?
- Did you spend consistent time with God in His Word and presence?
- How was your prayer life this week?
- Have you honored God with your thoughts, words and deeds this past week?
- Have you given in to any addictive behaviors this week?
- Were you fully honest with your words this week?
- Have you intentionally or unintentionally wounded someone by word or deed this week? How do you plan to make peace with them?
- Have you participated in anything unethical this week?

### GIVE

- Have you been generous with your finances this week?
- Have you been responsible with your finances so that you may be generous this week?
- Have you been generous with your time this week?
- Did you spend quality time with your family or friends this week?
- Have you been generous with your talents this week?
- Did you have opportunity to use your talents or abilities to help someone this week? Did you take that opportunity?

GO

- Did you have any interactions with your One this week? How did they go?
- Did you seek opportunities to be a blessing to those outside of the Faith?
- Did you seek opportunities to speak about Jesus to those outside the Faith?
- Were your words and actions a faithful example of Christ's character and heart for the lost this week?
- Did you pray for anyone outside of the Faith this week?



# WEEKLY BOOK NOTES

*GROW SERIES: WALK WITH GOD*  
*by CRAIG ETHEREDGE*

## **BOOK ONE: WALK WITH GOD LEADER NOTES**

Each time you gather with your group, you will want to divide your time into three sections: Looking Back, Looking Together and Looking Forward. Your group time together should last between 60 to 90 minutes each. Plan to balance your time between these three sections. Remember not to spend all of your time just teaching content, so leave plenty of time for all three areas.

### **LOOKING BACK**

***The goal of this section is to provide pastoral care and accountability.***

- Ask questions about the past week such as: “How did this week go?” “What stressed you?” “What went well?” “What’s heavy on your heart?” “Where did you struggle the most?” (Pray for each other as you begin your meeting time.)
- Review last week’s **“I Will”** statement. How are you putting into practice what you are learning? What problems did you have? What success did you have?
- Review the memory verse of the week. “What did God show you through this verse?”
- Ask them to share from their prayer journals how God has spoken to them this week.

### **LOOKING UP**

***The goal of this section is to review the new teaching and practice what you have learned. We want each person to grow in competence and confidence as they put God’s Word to practice.***

- Spend time reviewing the key questions from each day and discussing answers.
- Half of the time should be spent on teaching and half of the time on practicing what you have learned together as a group.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

The goal of this section is to plan how they will practice what they have learned during the week and then commission them to do it.

- Have each person craft an “I Will” statement, setting a goal of how each person will put into practice what he or she has learned this next week.
- Commissioning: Pray for the group as they go out to do what they have learned in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## INITIAL GROUP MEETING

**Looking Back:** Since you haven't met before, spend your time getting to know each other. Have everyone briefly share his or her background information. You, as the leader, start off first, sharing about yourself, your family and perhaps what you do for a living.

**Looking Up:** Hand out the books to everyone. Have someone read aloud the section "How To Use This Book". Explain that there is a daily reading for them to do along with a Scripture memorization for each week. Ask someone to read through the "Memorizing Scripture" section. Discuss any questions they may have. You may want to distribute Verse Packs at this time and show them how to fill out a Scripture memory card. Also read through the "**I Will**" commitment page and ask them to make a commitment to the group by checking the appropriate boxes and signing their name at the bottom of that page. Help your group select prayer partners from within the group and encourage them to exchange contact information. In addition, using the table of contents, briefly give your members an overview of what you will be studying over the next seven weeks.

**Looking Forward:** Clearly set your expectations for the group and confirm the details of when and where you will meet. If a member must miss for any reason, they will need to contact both you and their prayer partner. Ask if there are any questions. Close out in prayer together, commissioning them as they head into this first week. I love asking the group to get on their knees for prayer, if possible, as I pray over them. Encourage them by telling them how you will be praying for them everyday and how excited you are to see what God will teach them during your time together.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK ONE**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask questions like “How did it go this week?” “What problems are you facing?” “Did you run into problems with your daily reading?” After everyone has shared, review the memory verse for the week. Remind the group that you are trying to say the verse word for word as it appears in the Bible... not just a paraphrase.

**Looking Up:** Review the questions at the end of each day’s reading for the first chapter. This week is all about the Gospel. While this week is not focused on a skill to practice, make it your goal to listen for each group member’s testimony. This is a good time to discern if they know Jesus.

**Looking Forward:** Encourage the group to make an **“I Will”** statement that commits to writing out their personal testimony and bringing it to the group next week. Commission them as they are sent out to do this. During the week contact each group member, affirming and encouraging them. If there were questions about their testimony or confusion over the Gospel, this would be the time to discuss it. Pray for them daily.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK TWO**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. This is important because the group will begin to share burdens and concerns during this time. Pray together. Take time to review the memory verses assigned. Collect the testimonies they may have written, but read them privately. This is to help you understand where each group member stands spiritually and how you can pray for them. If you are concerned that one of your group members does not know Christ, then set up an appointment to meet with them privately during the week.

**Looking Up:** Review the discussion questions at the end of each day's reading for Chapter Two. This week is about putting Jesus in the center of your life. Remember to review the questions but also stop and practice. On Day Five, stop and discuss how the priorities of Jesus match up with the priorities of the group. On Day Six, demonstrate what a prayer of surrender might sound like. Pray for the Spirit to fill you and lead you. This demonstration helps each member to know how to practice surrendering to God.

**Looking Forward:** Encourage the group to make an "I Will" statement that commits to praying every day this week, yielding the control of their lives to Jesus and asking the Holy Spirit to fill them and lead them. Contact each group member this week. Remind them to yield control daily to Jesus and ask for the Spirit's help. Try to make a point to meet personally with one member each week for prayer and encouragement.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK THREE**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together, begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” “What struggles are you facing right now?” Pray together. Take time to review the memory verses assigned. Review the **“I Will”** statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” “If not, what hindered you?”

**Looking Up:** Review the discussion questions at the end of each day’s reading for Chapter Three. This week is about hearing God’s Voice through Bible reading and journaling. Remember to review the questions but also stop and practice. As you cover the **i.i.s.t.e.n.** acrostic, you may want to bring a copy of your own prayer journal and show them how you put this into practice. Refer them to the “Sample Journal Entry” page (Page 75) so they can see how to begin to journal as they read God’s Word. The goal of journaling is to hear from God and write down what He says.

**Looking Forward:** Create an **“I Will”** statement where each member commits to reading God’s Word daily using the **i.i.s.t.e.n.** plan. Have them come next week prepared to share what God has spoken to them. Tell them that this week, in addition to their regular reading, they will be reading sections from the Gospel of Luke. Show them how these Bible readings appear in the “Live it out” section during the upcoming week in Chapter Four. Ask if they have any questions. Be sure to pray and commission them out to put into practice what they have learned this week.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK FOUR**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the **“I Will”** statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” “If not, what hindered you?” “What struggles did you have as you practiced the **l.i.s.t.e.n.** plan this week?” Be aware that they are now taking a huge step. Not only are they doing their daily reading and Scripture memory, but they are also reading the Gospel of Luke and journaling. For some, this extra work can be overwhelming. Create a safe place to express any trouble they may be facing. If you see one group member is struggling, work with them during the week to help them pace out their time, or you may need to make some accommodations so they don’t get discouraged and want to quit. Take time to review the memory verses assigned. You may also have them share something God spoke to them through their reading in Luke. Pray together.

**Looking Up:** Read together the questions of each day for Chapter Four. This week is about praying to God. Be sensitive to the questions group members may have about prayer. Stop at each part to model for them praying prayers of praise, repentance, asking and yielding. Modeling is critical! Let different people participate doing each step.

**Looking Forward:** Create an **“I Will”** statement where each member commits to reading God’s Word daily using the **p.r.a.y.** strategy. Remind them to read through Luke and **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God. Challenge them to come back next week prepared to share what God has spoken to them. Be sure to pray and commission them out to put this into practice this week. Follow up with each person this week. Offer to meet one member of your group to model doing a “time alone with God” together at their home or office.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK FIVE**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the **“I Will”** statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” “Did you **p.r.a.y.**?” “How did it go?” “What problems did you have?” “Were you able to **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God each day?” Remind them they are doing this to know Jesus personally – moving what they learn from their heads to their hearts, but also to their hands as they obey what He is teaching them. Review journal entries and memory verses.

**Looking Up:** Go through the questions for each day in Chapter Five. This week is about learning to obey God in every area of life. Be sure to stop and really discuss the resistance they may experience in following Jesus and how they handle temptations. Help them to think about creative ways to overcome temptation. Modeling how to avoid temptation is key! Think through actual examples. Stop and pray as you go through these sections... specifically for temptations or resistance they may be experiencing.

**Looking Forward:** Create an **“I Will”** statement for the week. Some examples might be “I will be obedient to one area God is speaking to me about this week.” “I will address an area in my life that is not producing holiness in me.” “I will not give into temptation this week.” “I will displace my tempting thoughts this week with God’s truth”. Make sure these statements are specific, so you can tell if they have actually been done. Pray and commission them to obey Jesus this week.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK SIX**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the **“I Will”** statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” Review journal entries and memory verses. Remind them they are doing this to know Jesus personally – moving what they learn from their heads to their hearts, but also to their hands as they obey what He is teaching them. Celebrate each time they hear from God and put it into practice!

**Looking Up:** Go through the questions for each day in Chapter Six. This week is about experiencing and sharing God’s Grace. Spend time talking about God’s grace in times of hardship and trial. Model for them how to face difficult times by sharing your own crisis stories. Spend time on how to extend God’s grace to others, starting with their own families. This is a critical week because God will begin to open up areas of hurts that need healing. Be sensitive to where the Spirit is at work among your group. Stop and pray as you discuss these things together.

**Looking Forward:** Create an **“I Will”** statement for the week. Some examples might be “I will extend God’s grace this week by...”, “I will spend time every day in prayer thanking God for His grace in my life”, or “I will find key verses to hold onto during my trial this week”. Be sure to pray and commission them out to stand in God’s grace and reflect God’s grace this week.

## **GROUP LEADER SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK SEVEN**

**Looking Back:** As you gather together begin by reviewing the week. Ask “How has your week been?” Review the **“I Will”** statements they wrote from last week. Ask “Were you able to put this into practice this week?” Review journal entries and memory verses. Take time for the group to share how God is speaking to them. Celebrate each time they hear from God and put it into practice!

**Looking Up:** Go through the questions for each day in Chapter Seven. This week is about the importance of being a part of a local church. These lessons are designed to help you determine next steps for those in your group. Take time to discuss baptism. Does anyone need to be baptized? Are they actively participating in a local church? Are they in a group at their church? Are there any negative church experiences that need to be dealt with? Model by sharing your convictions about the local church and your participation in it.

**Looking Forward:** This is the last session of your group. It is very important that you take time to review what has meant the most to each group member. Have they learned how to walk with God in a deeper way? If so, how? It is also important to remind them that this is just the first step in spiritual growth. Encourage every group member to take the next step, learning how to live on mission with Jesus by completing the next seven-week study called “Reach Your World”. Give them details about when and where the next study will start. You may want to get a commitment from those in the group who want to move forward so you can order books for them. Also challenge them to continue to **l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God and **p.r.a.y.** daily for life!

## **FAQ FOR LEADERS**

### **Q: How should I use the “Leader’s Guide”?**

**A:** I think it is best to read through the “Leader’s Guide” before you meet with your group. Any thoughts or ideas you glean should be written down in your “Walk with God” book. That way, you are not referring to the “Leader’s Guide”; you will be just looking at your own book. The “Leader’s Guide” contains only general suggestions about how to lead your group, and does not contain any additional content to be shared in your group.

### **Q: How long should each group time last?**

**A:** The length of the group time will often be determined by how many are in your group and how engaged your members are in the discussions. Generally, a group time should last from 60 to 90 minutes. I suggest you don’t let it go too much longer than that. Have a clear start and end time in mind. As you approach the end time, bring the group to a close and then make yourself available for discussion for those who want to stay. This way, you honor everyone’s time but allow additional discussion for those who might need it.

### **Q: What if someone misses a group session? What should I do?**

**A:** It is common that someone will miss a session. If you postpone a meeting because one or two have to miss, then the rest of the group will be held back. The book is designed to be completed in seven consecutive weeks. If you skip weeks, then the group will be confused as to what week they are studying and will get out of the habit of being in God’s Word every day. My suggestion is to continue to meet as a group for the full seven consecutive weeks. If a member misses, ask them to continue to do their study every day and attend the next group session. You might offer to meet with them individually to discuss the week they missed. Also, you can see if they would be able to join the group via Skype, Facetime or some other conference call technology.

### **Q: What if you are starting a group but know that your group will end up meeting through the holidays when most members will have to miss?**

**A:** My suggestion is to look at the calendar before you begin a group and plan accordingly. If your group is going to roll through the holidays, make a plan on the front end to meet during that time or just wait to launch your group until after the holidays have passed.

**Q: What if I have a group member who is disruptive or strongly disagrees with the material presented?**

**A:** It would be prudent to personally meet with that member and try to resolve the situation. Let them know that they are loved and wanted in the group. However, they must not be disruptive. If they can't make the group time positive for everyone involved, they may need to step out and try it with another group at a later time.

**Q: What if I have a group member who comes to the group unprepared on a regular basis?**

**A:** Everyone is busy, and you need to show a healthy dose of grace for anyone who is trying to learn to walk with God in a Grow Group. That being said, if they are not doing the basics to learn how to walk with God laid out in this study, then the group will certainly not benefit them. It would be like joining a gym but never working out. You've got the membership, but you won't see the results. I suggest you meet with them privately and encourage them to come prepared. You may have to make accommodations for them such as decreasing the amount of Bible reading to just a few times a week or allow them to use their cards when memorizing scriptures. You want them to be successful and if they are willing to try, you should do all you can to help them. However, if they can't do what's expected of the group, then you might suggest that they step out of the group until they have the time to really put their best effort forward.

**Q: What if there are several weeks between Book One: "Walk with God" and Book Two: "Reach your World"? What should I do during that time gap?**

**A:** I realize that there may be time gaps between books. What you do during that time really depends on you and your group. You might suggest that the group members read through a book of the Bible during that gap time while continuing to **i.l.i.s.t.e.n.** to God and **p.r.a.y.** You might suggest that the group meet once during the time gap to stay connected and pray for one another. You might also suggest that the group stay connected through a group text or social media, and you might provide Scriptures to memorize together. Ultimately, you are the best judge of your group members. Any way you can keep them in God's Word and praying for one another will keep the continuity of the group going.