

FUNDAMENTALS
OF THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE SERIES



Read the Word

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



EVERY NATION
P R O D U C T I O N S

How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

CONNECT (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other’s personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting’s topic

READ THE WORD

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WORD (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need to teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

What: *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely.

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

So What: *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2

Now What: *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says. JAMES 1:22

Tips for Life-Changing Application

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

PRAY (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a “closing prayer,” but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 18:19

Tips for Powerful Prayer

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don’t preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long “sermon prayers.”
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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1 Ultimate Authority

CONNECT

- What recent news do you find most interesting? Why?
- Who do you think influenced you the most? In what area was his/her influence most significant?
- What warning or instruction did you receive in the past but still find very useful today? How has it helped you?

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

WHAT

The Bible is the primary basis of our faith and the ultimate authority of our lives. As Christians, we refer to it as a guideline for living. More than that, we are encouraged to read the Bible regularly and know it by heart. In this lesson, we will look at three reasons the Bible is more than just a simple, ordinary book.

1 The Bible is God's Word.

All Scripture is God-breathed . . . 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

Though written by people, the Bible is the only book that is "God-breathed." This means God Himself made sure that the message He wanted to convey was written down in a way people can understand. Knowing that God chose and used the writers and stories of people in the Bible for His purposes and that everything in the Bible was His idea, we conclude that the Bible is indeed God's Word.

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Share how you began reading the Bible and why you believe that it is God's Word.

2 The Bible has divine authority.

. . . useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness . . . 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

Since it is God's Word, the Bible is our ultimate authority. This means it is the final say on how we ought to live and what to believe. As followers of Jesus, this is the standard by which we can measure whether or not we're following God's ways.

What does "teaching," "rebuking," "correcting," and "training" mean?

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3 The Bible is essential.

. . . so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:17

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. JOSHUA 1:8

Reading the Bible has many benefits, but it is not just a good, helpful book. It is essential for every Christian to read, study, and obey the Bible every day. Living according to God's Word is proof that we are true followers of Christ (John 14:15), and being rooted in the Word helps us withstand life's challenges (Luke 6:47-49).

How has the Word helped you face different situations? Give a recent example.

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¹²For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. HEBREWS 4:12,13

WHAT

God's Word is described as a sword that penetrates our hearts and lives. In this lesson, we will unpack these verses and look at why the Word is depicted as a sword.

1 God's Word is living and active.

For the word of God is living and active. . . . HEBREWS 4:12

God's Word is alive and working powerfully in our lives. It imparts life to us and is a continual source of life (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 1:2,3).

How is God's Word alive in your life?

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2 God's Word is sharper than any double-edged sword.

. . . Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow . . .
HEBREWS 4:12

What images are given in this verse? How do these images help us understand and appreciate God's Word more?

Sharper than any double-edged sword, the Word of God penetrates and probes. It precisely cuts away what needs to be cut and keeps what needs to be kept.

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3 God's Word judges our hearts and changes us.

¹². . . it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. HEBREWS 4:12,13

The Word of God searches our lives and hearts—what lies deep within—and transforms us. It reaches as far as the most intimate and accurate details of our thoughts, feelings, and values. As we read the Bible regularly, we can know God more and be open to correction and change in our lives (John 17:17).

How has God's Word judged the thoughts and attitudes of your heart?

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SO WHAT

- How is the Bible different from other inspirational writing?
- Why do you think the author of Hebrews used the image of a double-edged sword and not another object or image?
- How does God’s Word reveal what’s really in our hearts? How does reading, studying, and obeying it change us?

NOW WHAT

- Do you love and value God’s Word? What can you do to be more disciplined in reading God’s Word this week?
- What ungodly thought or attitude is God pinpointing in your life? What are you going to do about it?
- How can you share God’s Word to others this week? Who can you share it to?

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- Thank God for His Word and how it’s sharper than a double-edged sword.
 - Pray that you would be more like Christ as you spend more time reading the Word every day. Pray for openness, hunger, and devotion to read, study, and obey the Word of God.
 - Pray that you would share God’s Word to others starting this week. Ask God to give you boldness and courage.

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Eternal Truth

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CONNECT

- What item or service do you pay a lot of money for? Why do you pay so much for it?
- What’s one thing you want to be remembered for? Why?
- What were the “hard and fast” rules in your home when you were younger? What were the benefits of these rules?

⁸⁹Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. ⁹⁰Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. PSALM 119:89,90

WHAT

Scripture tells us that God’s Word is eternal. Described as “firm in the heavens,” something eternal endures and will not be affected by things that happen on earth and over time. This assures us that the Bible is trustworthy and it is truth that will endure. Therefore, reading, applying, and relying on what the Bible says is of utmost importance in our lives as Christians—today and forever. In this lesson, we will look further into what it means when we say that God’s Word is eternal.

1 God’s Word is consistent.

Your statutes are forever right; give me understanding that I may live. PSALM 119:144

The Word of God is truth (John 17:17), and it is unchanging. Throughout history, the Bible has gotten every kind of scrutiny possible, but it still proves itself to be true every time. God’s Word is to be the highest authority of our lives as Christians—and it holds true through time.

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What does “forever right” mean? Aside from God and His Word, is there anything or anyone else that can be “forever right”?

2 God’s Word endures.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” MATTHEW 24:35

There was never a time when the Word of God did not exist (John 1:1), and it will never cease to exist (Isaiah 40:8). Against the greatest of odds, it has been passed along to us and it will be here for all generations to come.

What is endurance?

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3 God’s Word will be fulfilled.

... so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. ISAIAH 55:11

Not only has God’s Word foretold the things that are happening today, it also speaks of what will happen at the end of time. Since every prophecy about Jesus’ first coming was fulfilled, we can also anticipate the fulfillment of His second coming as Judge and King (Matthew 5:18). Until then, we are to faithfully follow Him.

How have some of God’s promises been fulfilled in your life?

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SO WHAT

- Is there a difference when we say that God’s Word is “true” and it is “truth”?
- How did God preserve the Bible throughout history? How does the fact that His Word will never pass away help you trust Him more?
- What promises in the Bible are you holding on to? Why/how can you believe that they will be fulfilled?

NOW WHAT

- Do you believe God’s Word? Do you believe that God’s Word is eternal? How can you grow in your understanding of and love for the Word of God this week?
- How can you hold on to and be in faith for what God has promised? How can your faith grow stronger every day?
- This week, how can you encourage others to trust God’s Word?

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- Thank God that His Word is eternal. Pray that you will trust His Word always and it will be your priority.
 - Pray for your specific concerns and needs. Believe that God will respond according to His Word, will, and timing.
 - Ask God to use you to draw others to Him. Pray that your life will be a blessing to others and you will inch people closer to Jesus.

4

Life in the Word

CONNECT

- What was the highlight of your week? What happened?
- If you had a choice, what would you want to eat every day? Why?
- Tell us about one of your unusual habits. How did you develop it? Why do you do it?

¹Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. PSALM 1:1-3

WHAT

The Bible is the standard or guide on how to live according to God’s will. It sustains us in our relationship with God. Knowing how important it is, let’s look at how we can prioritize the Word in our lives.

1 Read the Word daily.

¹Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. PSALM 1:1,2

Long before the Bible was printed and bound as we have it today, it started as the first five books of the Old Testament, also known as the law. By encouraging us to delight in the law, the psalmist was asking us to delight in God’s Word.

How did you develop the discipline and devotion for God’s Word?

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2 Receive nourishment from the Word.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. PSALM 1:3

Just as we are nourished when we eat food every day, reading the Bible daily nourishes us spiritually. God’s Word causes us to mature and grow in our relationship with Him, as likened by the psalmist to “a tree planted by streams of water.”

What is nourishment?
Why is it so important?

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3 Know Jesus through the Word.

³⁹“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” JOHN 5:39,40

People read the Bible for different reasons, but one important reason to do so is to know Jesus more. The verses above say that God’s Word testifies about Jesus and how we may have life through Him. Therefore, let us make it a goal to know Jesus as we read the Word.

What is one thing you’ve learned about Jesus through the Bible?
How has this helped you grow in your relationship with Him?

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SO WHAT

- According to Psalm 1, what are the benefits of delighting in God’s Word? Why do you think the psalmist said we should meditate on the Word day and night?
- How can we be more spiritually nourished and healthy? How does spiritual nourishment affect every area of our lives?
- Who is the Word (John 1:1,14)? Why do you think the Bible refers to Jesus as the Word?

NOW WHAT

- Is the Bible your daily priority? How can you delight in God’s Word every day?
- What is one thing that competes with your daily reading of the Bible? How do you think this can change?
- How can you grow spiritually stronger this week? To whom can you share the truth of God’s Word this week?

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- Thank God for how He nourishes and sustains us through His Word. Ask God to help you make His Word a consistent priority in your life—no matter how busy you get.
 - Pray that you will know Jesus more as you continue to read and meditate on God’s Word.
 - Pray that your habit of reading the Bible will result in obedience and transformation. Pray that your friends and family members will know Him, too.

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Change Agent

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CONNECT

- What’s your favorite game or hobby? Why do you like it so much?
- Do you like change? Recall a specific instance explaining this.
- What’s one thing you’d like to change about yourself? Why?

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2

WHAT

We all crave for change in our lives, circumstances, and world. However, because of sin, lasting change is elusive. We try to change whatever we can on the outside—hoping that the inside will follow—but we know this does not work. The Bible says that true transformation can only happen if we work from the inside out, from the mind to our actions. Only God can change us—and He does this as our hearts are turned to Him and His Word. In this lesson, we will look at how the Word changes us.

1 God's Word transforms us.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2

God wrote His Word for us even if He did not have to. He could have left us aimless, helpless, and hopeless, but He did not. Through the Bible, He made Himself known to us. He made His plans known to us. He showed us how we can be saved. God's Word is not just a history book where we can get information. This Living Word has the power to transform us.

What does transformation mean? How is it different from other kinds of change?

2 God's Word renews our minds.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

ROMANS 12:2

We are used to following the world's ways, although we know that most of these are faulty and will eventually lead to destruction (Matthew 7:13). God's way, on the other hand, will require a change of mind that will result in a change of heart and lifestyle.

What does "renewing" mean?

3 God's Word helps us live a pure and holy life.

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. . . . ¹¹I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. PSALM 119:9,11

As our minds are renewed, the change will eventually be seen in our actions. If we only know God's Word but don't obey it, we are deceiving ourselves (James 1:22).

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What does "pure" mean? How can we hide the Word in our hearts, like the psalmist?

SO WHAT

- Left to ourselves, how do we change? How effective is this? How does God change us?
- What are some of the mindsets in our culture today that are contrary to God's Word? How can we know what is of God and not?
- How can a person "keep his way pure"? Why is this so challenging in our society? How can we say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions (Titus 2:11,12)?

NOW WHAT

- Do you have a time and place for daily Bible reading and prayer? How can you hide God's Word in your heart every day?
- Are you conforming to the pattern of the world or are you becoming more like Christ every day? In what area do you need a renewing of your mind? How can you grow in your relationship with God this week?
- How can you live a pure and holy life starting this week? What do you need to say "no" to?

PRAYER

- Thank God for how He transforms us and makes us more like Himself every day through His Word. Pray that you will read and obey the Word consistently.
- Pray that your mind will be renewed and He would break your old ideas, mindsets, and worldviews that are not pleasing to Him.
- Ask God to help you live a pure and holy life. Pray that your life and testimony will be a blessing to many.

⁹⁷Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. . . .¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. PSALM 119:97,105

WHAT

We all want to make the right decisions. Some choices are minor, but some are pretty big and life-changing. As followers of Christ, though, we are not left to make these big decisions on our own. God gives us unlimited guidance through His Word. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path—it helps us when we face new and intimidating situations. In this lesson, we will look at some of the ways God’s Word guides us.

1 God’s Word makes us wiser.

Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. PSALM 119:98

Some say that experience is what you get from doing things and wisdom is what you get from doing things badly. Though this may have some truth to it, if we follow and heed God’s Word, we do not have to experience the pain and consequences of ungodly choices. Keeping God’s Word in our hearts and minds will make us wise (Psalm 19:7; Proverbs 2:6).

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Recall a time when you were spared from making a wrong decision because you obeyed God’s Word.

2 God’s Word gives us insight.

⁹⁹I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. ¹⁰⁰I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. PSALM 119:99,100

We can get insight from many sources—including people, media, and experience. But the validity and credibility of these sources and the insight they provide can be questioned. Because God is completely credible and His Word is true, we can always trust His insight. As we meditate on and obey His Word, we will gain more insight and develop the habit of making decisions based on His Word.

What is “insight”?
Why do we need it?

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3 God’s Word keeps us from the wrong path.

¹⁰¹I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. ¹⁰²I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. PSALM 119:101,102

¹⁰¹I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. ¹¹I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. PSALM 119:10,11

Walking with God and trusting Him will keep us from evil. He is the only one who can keep us from sin and its consequences—we cannot do this on our own. He has given us His Word to protect us, guide us, and lead us.

Why can we not say “no” to sin on our own? How does God’s Word help us from going off into the wrong path?

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SO WHAT

- According to Psalm 1, what would our lives be like if we prioritized God's Word? What if we didn't?
- What is wisdom? Who gives it? Why do we need it? (Proverbs 2:6-11)
- How does God's Word help us grow in our relationship with Him? Why should it be so important to us as Christians? What is the value of reading the Word daily?

NOW WHAT

- Is reading the Word of God a daily priority for you? What do you think the benefits would be for you to do so?
- In what area do you need guidance, wisdom, and insight? How can you benefit from God's unlimited guidance this week?
- With whom can you share God's Word this week? Do you know someone who needs encouragement and wisdom? How can you help?

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- Thank God for His Word and how He guides us with it. Ask God for wisdom for your situation.
 - Pray that reading the Word of God will be a daily habit, discipline, and priority in your life. Ask God to help you value it more than your daily bread.
 - Pray that you will be a blessing and encouragement to many and that you will lead them to know God more.

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

JOSHUA 1:8

Read the Word is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help believers love, read, and obey God’s Word.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Ultimate Authority
- Double-Edged Sword
- Eternal Truth
- Life in the Word
- Change Agent
- Unlimited Guidance



EVERY NATION
P R O D U C T I O N S