

Discipleship Helps

I look forward to reading the Bible daily.

- Make room for it in your daily schedule in a quiet place.
- Complete the New Testament first, reading at least a chapter/day, then complete the Old Testament, then the New Testament again etc. using a translation you can understand with helps (e.g. Life Application Bible, NIV Study Bible).
- Daily **write down** in 1-3 sentences at least one life application.

I look forward to spending time with God in prayer daily.

- Make room in your daily schedule for at least 10 minutes/day of prayer in a quiet place.
- Balance your prayer among praising God, expressing trust, confession of sin, yielding to God, expressing thanks and making requests for yourself and others.
- Verbalize your prayers to keep your mind from wandering.

I daily deny myself by offering God my body to use as He desires.

- Memorize Romans 12:1, NIV-- Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.
- Daily ask God for his Spirit to control and empower you --e.g. "Lord, I yield to your control right now. Apart from your life flowing through me, I can do nothing that will make any difference for your Kingdom. Bless me to be a blessing. May rivers of living water flow from my innermost being today for your glory."

I forgive, pray for, and ask God to bless those who have hurt me.

- Make a mental list of everyone whose name can't pass through your mind without causing a ruckus.
- Pray for God to bless each one specifically by name every day.
- When you encounter your enemies, do for them whatever love requires, not what your emotions require. Love chooses

to bless. Over time your negative emotions associated with their offenses against you will continue to diminish.

I spend at least four hours each week feeding my spiritual life and serving God by serving others.

- Calculate how much time you spend each week feeding your spiritual life, through Bible reading, listening to Christian radio, prayer, reading Christian books, time in small groups/worship services, preparing to teach Bible lessons, etc.
- Calculate how much time you spend serving God by serving others such as time spent at the food bank, helping your neighbor clean up after a snowstorm, preparing for teaching Sunday school, etc.
- What changes in your priorities do you need to make so your life reflects God's priorities?
- Treat feeding your own spiritual life and serving others as equally important.

Using my gifts and abilities to serve God through a specific ministry in my church gives me joy.

- If you've no specific ministry yet, with whom do you need to talk in your church that can help connect you with a ministry for which you have passion?
- If you've a joyless ministry, with whom do you need to talk to find a ministry that's a better fit?
- Your team needs you. Don't put it off!

I generously and cheerfully support the Lord's work financially.

- Memorize 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NIV) --Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- What percentage of your income did you give to God last year?
- How will your generosity and cheer grow this year?

I daily allow God to love others through me.

- YOU can't do it alone. Recognize your inability on your own to love God and others as you ought (John 15:5).
- You have to say NO to your own selfish desires and agenda before you can say YES to loving others by meeting their needs.
- HE can do it through you. When the Holy Spirit controls you, HE loves others through you (Galatians 5:22-23).

Each week I could write at least one way I loved my neighbor as myself.

- Set a daily goal of being an instrument of God's blessing in the life of at least one person. Pray for discernment to embrace the opportunities God provides.
- At the end of each day, review who that was and how you were a blessing or how you could have been a blessing but weren't.
- You don't become a more loving person by accident. It's intentional and requires dying to yourself so you can live in the land of love, joy and peace.

Each week I could write at least one way I loved another believer as Jesus loves me.

- A practical way to do this is to use your gifts and abilities to serve God through a specific ministry in your church that gives you joy.
- Using your gifts to benefit others in the body is a practical way to love other believers.
- From him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:16).

Each week I could write at least one way I loved an enemy.

- Pray for God to bless your enemies specifically by name every day. That's an act of love.
- When you encounter your enemies, seek to bless them by some concrete act even if your feelings tell you to do otherwise. Listen to Jesus, not your feelings. Love chooses to bless. Over time the strength of your negative emotions associated with their offenses will continue to diminish.

I promote the gospel by praying for the salvation of lost persons I know, living a Christ-centered life, praising God enthusiastically in our worship service, giving financially to support evangelism, and being prepared to share my hope in Christ with others who ask about it.

- Develop a list of at least six unsaved persons for whose salvation you will pray daily.
- Follow Jesus is job with no vacation time!
- If you're more committed to Jesus than your favorite sports teams, let it show both inside and outside the sanctuary.
- Many organizations appeal for money. Give to at least one organization (hopefully, your own local church!) that is effectively reaching people for Christ.
- Think about, organize and write your personal journey to faith focusing on what your life was like before following Jesus, how you decided to follow him, and the difference following him has made. Know it cold. That will prepare you to share your hope in Christ with others.

I look forward to and attend the worship service every week.

- To experience inspiring worship every week, come inspired!
- To come inspired for the worship service, worship God privately every day and publicly by living for him in all you do.
- If you show up inspired, you'll leave inspired and look forward to doing it all over again next week!

Weekly, I actively participate in at least 1 small group (includes Sunday school)

- As believers we need one another as much as the parts of the human body need each other (1 Corinthians 12:21).
- Start attending a small group in your church and soak and participate in the Jesus-life you find there.
- Don't put it off! Not being part of a small group is hazardous to your spiritual life.

Gratitude motivates me to serve God.

- Meditate on the hopeless forever you deserve from God for your sin and on Jesus' taking that judgment, condemnation and punishment on himself.
- Count the ways God has blessed you today, and give thanks.
- Give thanks for his blessings in the endless eternity ahead – "Now if we are children, then we are heirs —heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17, NIV).
- Choose to overflow with thankfulness (Colossians 2:7) rather than complaints!

I feel a deep need for God's grace every day.

- You don't need God's grace to serve yourself.
- You can't successfully serve God and make an eternal difference by your own efforts. God doesn't expect you to serve him apart from his grace. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5, NIV).
- Realize how great the resources are through Christ and his grace to do everything God has appointed for you to do for him. "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13, NIV).

I balance speaking the truth and speaking it with love.

- Speaking the truth in love is necessary for us to become the mature body of Christ (Ephesians 4:15).

- Since that's so, why do you withhold the truth? Is it more important to you that people like you than that they be like Christ?
- Do you see the underlying selfishness?
- Using the truth like a policeman's billy club to correct another is equally self-centered.
- Jesus speaks the truth in love and he wants to do that through you.
- God uses the truth as a surgical scalpel to cut away what's not Christ-like in us – but that truth needs to be delivered under the warm, bright operating room light of love.

I give regularly to meet the needs of the poor.

- Jesus loved the poor and equated your treatment of them with your treatment of him (Matthew 25:31-46)
- Jesus is your life (Philippians 1:21), so his concern (for the poor) should be yours as well.
- How can you demonstrate consistent concern for the plight of the poor? (For example, donate items to the food bank, volunteer at the food bank, minister to the homeless, give to organizations such as World Vision to support the poor, sponsor orphans, transport needy people, build houses for the needy through Habitat for Humanity, provide gift cards for the needy, deliver meals on wheels to senior citizens, do chores for a needy person, send cards to nursing home residents, donate your good used shoes and clothing).
- Commit yourself to doing one or two things regularly that will minister to the poor and needy.

I'm helping one or more other people become more like Jesus.

- Not everything in your life is worth imitating. The part that's like Jesus is the part that others can copy. You don't have to be perfect to bless others.
- Helping others become more like Jesus is God's spiritual Miracle Grow in your own spiritual development.