

Walking with God in Relationship: Prayer & God's Word © Sarah Winbow 2018. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

The emphasis given to scriptures in bold type throughout this book is the author's. Scripture references are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Used by permission of Hodder and Stoughton Publishers, a member of the Hodder Headline Group. All rights reserved.

'NIV' is a registered trademark of International Bible Society. UK trademark number 1448790.

Appendix 1: *The Father Who Delights in You* © 2009 Living Seeds www.livingseeds.org Used by permission

Cover image *Praying* © [Oleg Kalina](#) | [Dreamstime.com](#)

ISBN 978-0-244-09659-5

I would like to thank those who piloted this material as well as Maggie Jones for all her help in the proof work and editing process.

THE WALKING WITH GOD SERIES

The **Walking with God series** of studies encourages disciples to dig deeper in building their personal relationship with God whilst, at the same time, challenging them to nurture a missionary mindset which is to see people as Jesus sees them with a heart to demonstrate His love through various means of service.

The studies in this booklet are the first of the series. The aim is to lay a foundation of worship, prayer and personal study of the Word of God in the life of the disciple.

It is hoped that as disciples enjoy gathering and growing together regularly they will want to carry on in their journey of discipleship by completing other Bible studies in the Walking with God series or other studies within New Beginnings Discipleship. The end-goal is that some will become effective disciple-makers themselves.

GROUP LEADER'S PREPARATION

THIS WILL LARGELY BE THE SAME EVERY WEEK.

1. Make sure group members have a copy of the Walking with God in Relationship: Prayer & God's Word Workbook. This is available from the Shop section of the web-site [www.newbeginningsdiscipleship.wordpress.com].
2. It is advisable to share the group leadership with someone else, ideally a person who has been a member of a previous group. This is an opportunity to apprentice a potential new group leader so ensure you delegate some responsibilities.
3. Contact each group member to confirm the venue, location, date and time of your first meeting. Subsequent meetings should also be confirmed if necessary.
4. Make sure you prepare each week's study prior to the meeting.
5. A list of specific items of preparation required for each week's study is given at the top of the relevant teaching notes.
6. The study for week 6 has an optional video clip. The link to download this clip is in the Resources section of the My Community pages of the web-site [www.newbeginningsdiscipleship.wordpress.com]. Not everyone has access to the internet and the ability to download the clip. If you are unable to download it or decide not to use the

technology please just ignore the references to it. Non-video options are provided in the teaching notes.

7. If you decide to use the video clip then you will need some means of showing it to the group e.g. a DPU, TV or DVD player. Make sure the sound is working before each session begins.
8. You will either need to prepare to lead worship yourself (with an instrument, CDs or I-Pod) or brief someone else to do it for you.
9. People relax, chat and build relationship over the meal table. If you decide to serve a meal of some sort prior to each meeting then think through and plan the logistics of this.
 - a. Will it be a breakfast, main meal or pudding?
 - b. Will you do it yourself, ask someone else or will it be bring & share?
 - c. Be prepared to sit around the table afterwards to share and teach or move to a more comfortable setting.
10. Do not expect brand new or immature believers to have mature concepts about God. Allow them to talk freely but make a mental note of any misconceptions you pick up and ensure you correct lovingly and gently using scripture wherever possible. Be mindful of 2 Timothy 2:23-25!
11. Always have a small supply of Bibles on hand for those who will forget theirs.
12. Take your diary to arrange the next meeting.

13. Pray for the group members and your planned time together ideally with your apprentice group leader. Consider the following points when you pray:
- a. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and sit with you as you talk and share together.
 - b. Invite Him to be Lord of all the conversation and ask for His help to cement your small group relationship with genuine loving care, compassion and lasting friendship.
 - c. Make a declaration out loud to bind the enemy, making him ineffective in interfering, causing confusion or stealing what Father God intends to be achieved through the group meeting.
 - d. Ask the Holy Spirit to apply the protection of the blood of Jesus over the travel arrangements to and from the meeting, the meeting itself and everyone involved.
 - e. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any hidden needs each disciple may have.
 - f. Ask God to give you all a deeper hunger for Him and acknowledge your own desire to grow spiritually through exercising this ministry of discipleship.
 - g. Think: Are you willing to open up and share your own weaknesses, struggles and victories even if that means you become vulnerable?
 - h. Acknowledge your willingness to be used by God.

Week 1: A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

DISCIPLER'S PREPARATION:

1. Prepare to serve a meal before the meeting.
2. Be prepared to sit around the table afterwards to share and teach or move to a more comfortable setting.
3. For section 6: Prepare to lead a short praise/worship time yourself [with an instrument or CDs] or brief someone else to do it for you.

Discipler's tip: I use I-Tunes and have saved separate named playlists for each week of the course with each playlist containing selected songs suitable for that week. On the day I just pick from these prepared playlists whichever song[s] I feel the Holy Spirit leads me to use.

DURING THE SESSION:

1. Start timing the meeting once the meal is over and packed away. Allow a full two hours.
2. Welcome: make sure everyone is comfortable. Begin by welcoming the Holy Spirit in prayer [2 minutes].
3. Review where each group member 'is at' on their journey as a disciple of Jesus.

- a. Has anyone worked through other courses of *New Beginnings Discipleship* e.g. Just the Beginning, Simply Jesus or the Baggage checklist and an individual prayer appointment?
- b. If so, then ask if there is anyone who would like to share something from their experience of working through these things. Do not force this if people are not forthcoming.
- c. Be prepared to share from your own freedom journey in order to encourage, encourage and encourage.
- d. Give lots of opportunity for questions and interaction
- e. Whole section 20 minutes.

4. **Walking with God in Relationship: Prayer & God's Word.** Today's study is **A Disciple of Jesus.**

- a. If it is relevant to your group then spend a few minutes reviewing the lessons from Simply Jesus. See if anyone can name all seven sessions. They were:
 - i. Jesus – the Maker of Heaven and Earth
 - ii. Jesus – the King of the Jews
 - iii. Jesus – the Servant King
 - iv. Jesus – the Sabbath Breaker
 - v. Jesus – the Jewish Rabbi
 - vi. Jesus – the People Restorer and
 - vii. Jesus – the Overcomer.

- b. State: Jesus is the King of a Kingdom. As children of God we are heirs to all His resources and are being changed into the likeness of His son Jesus. The Holy Spirit works in us to bring restoration, the ability to overcome in difficult circumstances and bring changes to our communities. This is seeing His Kingdom come.
- c. Remind the group of the practicalities of this:
 - i. *...in the name of Jesus* i.e. He has authorized us to do His work by giving us His Name.
 - ii. *...not by any right or achievement of our own but only because of His shed blood and...*
 - iii. *...by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
- d. **Read Ephesians 1:18-21.** Ask: What are these verses telling us about the power of the Holy Spirit that is available to us in Jesus? It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. It is far greater and far more powerful than we can ever really think or imagine.
- e. As we know ourselves only too well, it would be foolish to put a fully loaded weapon into the hands of someone who lacked the wisdom, skill and training to use it as it is intended to be used. The Holy Spirit is a mighty and powerful force but also a very Holy person! Therefore in order to correctly handle [or steward] this power as well as the gifts and callings God has placed within us we have to learn how to walk humbly and meekly, following Him.
- f. **Read John 5:19.** Jesus did not step out on His own initiative; He only did what Father God told Him to do. This means He only

went where Father directed Him to go and to whom He was led.

- g. Ask: What might happen to 1) ourselves, 2) God's reputation or 3) God's work if we do not learn to walk humbly with Jesus? If we go off 'half-cocked' doing God's work indiscriminately under our own steam we might well do something that might damage ourselves, His reputation or mar or hinder what He really wants to do.
- h. Explain: There is no doubt that God uses us for His Kingdom from the very first moment we surrender the control of our lives to Him but in order to be truly effective amongst our family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and those who we rub shoulders with in the course of our everyday lives we must allow God's Kingdom to break deeper into our own lives first.
 - i. Our job is to be carriers of the abundant life Jesus offers to those who believe as well as those who work to see His Kingdom extended. This is a great responsibility as well as a real life challenge.
- i. We are all works in progress; we are being worked on and changed by the Holy Spirit ourselves which means we have to learn to be patient with ourselves. Rome was not built in a day neither will God's Kingdom be formed in us immediately!
 - i. As Jesus is the one who should be the exclusive King of our lives, from time to time the Holy Spirit challenges us to reconsider many things that we currently allow to reign and rule over us in our everyday lives.

- ii. Ask the group to identify what some of these things might be for them e.g. our habits, goals, values, mind-sets, belief systems, etc.
 - iii. This Walking with God series allows us to examine some of these things from a biblical perspective and then gives the option to gradually work through the realignments of these things – to bring them in line with God’s Word, so opening the way for Jesus to truly be King in those areas.
- j. **Look up Matthew 11:12.** Ask the group what they think this means. Allow time for answers.
- i. Teach that it does NOT mean using violence or force as in the Crusades.
 - ii. The word translated ‘forcefully’ means with something like centrifugal force. In other words, the Kingdom of God will be flung out to the extremities of the earth by a tremendously powerful unstoppable force.
 - iii. This force is not armaments or holy war but love, humility and servanthood. This love is actually the Father’s heart demonstrated through us to a hurting world. It is the Father’s heart of love in us, not we ourselves, that carries a dynamic power to change individual lives and the society in which we live.
- k. **Look up Matthew 25:34-46.** Ask the group for responses to what has been read.
- i. As we respond in love and compassion to scenes of sickness, death, poverty, famine, etc., we will see the

government of God coming to earth through us as we see Father God release healings, deliverances, miracles and salvations.

- ii. The key is not to seek the power or the force but to seek Father's heart of love; to be holy, fully surrendered and obedient to Him.
- l. This is where we are heading; the Walking with God series of studies is the gradual *process* by which we hope to get there.
- m. Ask: What is a disciple? *[N.B. A small amount of this content will be revision from the session Yeshua – the Jewish Rabbi in Simply Jesus]*. A disciple is a follower or pupil of a teacher or master.
 - i. **Read Mark 2:18.** It was not only Jesus who had disciples. In fact, it was a common term for those who followed very closely in the footsteps of the one they admired or wished to be like. Commonly, a disciple would set aside at least three years to shadow the discipler's every move, watch how he did things, imitate his faith, ask him questions, listen to his replies and basically soak up everything he had to impart.
 - ii. A disciple follows someone who has mastered their craft, one who is recognised as having knowledge, gifts and skills to pass on to others. Today we might call a disciple an apprentice; someone who dedicates a prescribed time [still usually three years] to shadow the master craftsman and drink in every bit of knowledge they can from him or her. But the work of apprenticeship is not over until the disciple acquires

not only the knowledge but also the master's skills and disciplines.

- iii. *You may recount this story or find an example of your own:* the author's father was a joiner and became apprenticed to a master joiner at the age of fourteen. Every night for the first year he came home with bleeding knuckles. When his parents questioned this they learned that he was being taught how to correctly sharpen a saw. When he got it wrong he had his knuckles rapped. He must have got it wrong many times because of the scars that remained on his hands. After he died, my uncle, who worked alongside him for more than forty years, described how no-one could match my father for skill in sharpening a saw. He learned the hard way but eventually he not only gained the knowledge but also the skill to do the job as well as the master he learned from. He went on to become a master joiner and take many apprentices of his own.
- iv. Ask the group to identify different types of disciples in our society today. Answers may include Muslim schools [Imams], nuns/monks, chefs, carpenters, doctors, etc.
- n. **Read Hebrews 13:7.** 'Imitate' here does not mean mimic; it means emulate, duplicate or reproduce the discipler's lifestyle. That lifestyle is usually attained through discipline – training to obey a set of rules or moral code.
 - i. Ask: Who is it we are called to imitate? Our discipler? No. The one we are being called to imitate, the one who is discipling us, is Jesus.

- o. **Look up Matthew 4:19; 9:9; John 1:43.** Ask the group what they think Jesus might be implying in the words 'follow me'. Allow time for answers.
- i. Teach that this was a common term used by a rabbi [teacher] to those he called to learn from him.
 - ii. The words 'follow me' literally mean 'walk after me' which is better translated for us as 'walk in the manner in which I walk'; in other words, note very carefully everything I do and say and then imitate [reproduce] it yourself.
 - iii. The rabbis coined the phrase 'walking in the dust'. We have to follow very closely on the heels of someone to actually walk in the dust of their steps. But this is exactly how Jesus expects His disciples to walk after Him.
- p. Ask: Where did Jesus' walk lead Him? It took Him to the Cross. Allow a few moments for the depth of this to sink in. Of course, glorious resurrection followed but no one knew that at the time and it only came after His very grisly and costly death.
- q. **Read Luke 9:23-24; 14:26-33.** Talk around the issues raised here by Jesus in terms of what the true cost of following Him might be.
- i. The bottom line is that He wants to have first priority in our lives. No person, no thing, no purpose [even the work we do for the Kingdom] must be more important to us than our relationship with God and His will for our lives, His people and His world.

- r. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12.** Again, talk around the issues raised by Paul.
 - i. Only once we are truly 'dead' to the desires and promptings of our flesh can Father God begin to pour His miraculous resurrection life and power into us so that in every situation, wherever we go, we carry His life and bring life to change situations and circumstances in His Name.
- s. **Read John 10:10.** Spiritual dying is going to be an important part of following close to Jesus for us but we must keep in mind that we are not called to walk around with long faces, giving off an air of doom and gloom; we are born to live an amazing life of close relationship with Jesus filled with His glorious resurrection power.
- t. Ask: What image is brought to mind by the word surrender? Hands up; someone giving up control to someone else.
 - i. Our daily spiritual 'dying' is really saying to God "*I take my hands off trying to control my own life and choose to submit my life, my thoughts, choices and actions every day to your control.*"
 - ii. Ever increasing levels of surrender is the process we must constantly go through in order to continually experience His daily resurrection power at work through us.
- u. Ask: What does this really mean and how do we do it? The truth is we may never fully 'get it' because we are still prone to sin, pride and to mess up. However there is a process of learning to listen to God followed by only doing what He tells

us to do which we will learn as we go on through the Walking with God series.

- v. Ask: What single thing characterises the life of someone who truly seeks to walk in Jesus' footsteps? Obedience to God's Word i.e. the Bible and also His revealed or spoken Word into our lives every day.
 - i. The Hebrew word for 'obey' (*shamar*) also means 'to hear'. **Look up Deuteronomy 6:3.** In this one verse the word '*shamar*' is used twice. The repetition is for emphasis. Father God is instructing His people that if they wish to be blessed and prosper in every aspect of life then they must not only hear God's Word with their ears but must also have hearts that leap to accept the moral responsibility to put that Word into practice. This is called accepting the 'yoke [i.e. responsibility] of the Kingdom'.
 - w. **Read Matthew 11:29-30.** As Gentiles, we are not called to take on ourselves all the burdensome minutiae of the Hebraic Torah [the Law]. However, if we truly follow hard in Jesus' dust [or footsteps] then we will find we are fulfilling all the major tenets of Torah [the Law] but without its legalism. The 'yoke' of the Kingdom Jesus came to give us is light; not necessarily easy, but light.
 - x. Whole section 60 minutes.
5. Provide the opportunity for people to share their perceived needs, anxieties or potential problems in embarking on the Walking with God series.

- a. Encourage people to pray for one another as they feel able. If people are still not confident with praying out loud be prepared for you and the apprentice to model how this is done.
 - b. This section 15 minutes.
6. Move seamlessly into a time of worship, reflection and consecration for the journey of surrender and deeper relationship with God that lies ahead.
 - a. This section 20-30 minutes.
7. Confirm the date and time of the next group session. Suggest that some may want to consider working through the 'After the Session' section in the work book.
8. Ask for a volunteer to bring something for next week's meal. There may not be the offer of a full meal at this point but willingly accept all offers of help because it encourages a spirit of service.

AFTER THE SESSION:

1. Try to appraise how the session went. If you found the timings were difficult then record this in your notes as a reminder for when you take the next group through the course.
2. Telephone anyone you have identified as needing particular encouragement.
3. Pray for each one every day this week and visit individuals as necessary.
4. Prepare for the next group session.

5. Consider asking if anyone plays an instrument of any sort. If so, is it portable and would they be willing to bring it along to the next group session and play for the worship time?

Be careful here. *When someone volunteers they may be willing to play but may not actually have the capability without lots and lots of practice and even then their playing may detract from worship not enhance it! Some people play inspirationally whilst others need to read and stick to the music. Where someone is of average musical skill then they will definitely want and need to practise. This means that you, as worship leader for these group sessions, will have to be thoughtful enough to select songs several days ahead of the meeting in order to give the musician fair opportunity to practise. Whilst we want to encourage people to use their gifts, we must be careful not to place anyone under pressure to buy lots of expensive music books or give false encouragement to someone who has a very limited musical ability. Our objective is to draw people into the presence of God.*

NOTES:

Week 2: FATHER GOD'S HEART OF LOVE

DISCIPLER'S PREPARATION:

1. Prepare to serve a meal before the meeting.
2. Be prepared to sit around the table afterwards to share and teach or move to a more comfortable setting.
3. For section 5: Prepare to lead the devotional time. For section 5: Download the I-track The Father Who Delights in You from the My Community section of the website www.newbeginningsdiscipleship.wordpress.com. You may make copies of this track on CD to be given to group members or you can email them the link for them to download the track themselves. The track is not allowed to be sold.

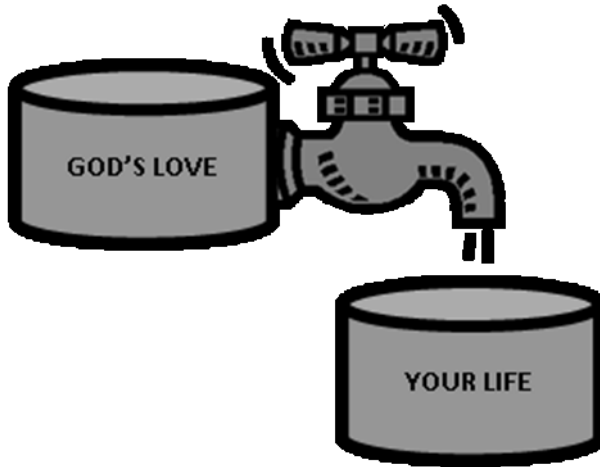
DURING THE SESSION:

1. Start timing the meeting once the meal is over and packed away. Allow a full two hours.
2. Welcome: make sure everyone is comfortable. Begin by welcoming the Holy Spirit in prayer [2 minutes].
3. Review the After the Session exercise from last week's study with the group.

- a. Ask if there is anyone who would like to share something from their experience of working through the After the Session exercise on surrender. Do not force this if people are not forthcoming.
 - b. Be prepared to share from your own freedom journey in order to encourage, encourage and encourage.
 - c. Give lots of opportunity for questions and interaction
 - d. Whole section 10-15 minutes.
4. **Walking with God in Relationship: Prayer & God's Word.** Today's study is **Father's Heart of Love.**
- a. **Skim read Genesis chapters 1-3.**
 - i. God loves us. Period. He created us to have a very close relationship with Him.
 - ii. Ask: What happened to spoil that closeness? Adam and Eve chose to live independently of God.
 - iii. Ask: So how does that affect us? Because we are all their descendants we, too, have inherited a nature that pushes us to live independently of Father God. This is why we have to search so hard for our own significance and work every day to earn money to meet our own daily needs.
 - b. Why do you think Father God longs for us to recognise we need Him? The miracle is that in all this time Father God has never stopped loving us and longing for us to walk, talk and be dependent on Him every day, just as Adam and Eve did in the beginning.

- c. The Bible shows us that because of the depth of Father God's love for us, when the time was right, He took a very serious step in order that we might all be able to know and understand that love for ourselves and restore our broken relationship with Him.
- i. **Read John 3:1-21.** Ask: What was this serious step God took?
 - ii. He sent Jesus, His only Son, to live a sinless life thus demonstrating the power of God's Kingdom at work in someone totally surrendered to God. He then took upon Himself the death sentence – the punishment our sins deserved - by dying in our place.
 - iii. Ask: Why did He do it? To show us the depth of His love in order that we might all be able to know and understand His love for us and restore our broken relationship with Him.
 - iv. Almost all the Bible was originally written down in Hebrew. Scholars have proved that our modern English [Roman] script has evolved over centuries from the Hebrew 'aleph-bet' which we know as 'alphabet'. Originally Hebrew, like all ancient languages, was written as a series of pictures.
 1. The pictures that make up the word 'love' teach us quite a lot about the nature of being a father: that love is the window through which we see a father's heart or that love is a father's heart revealed.

2. Therefore love should be the centre of a father's character.
- d. **Read Luke 15:11-32.** Ask: What is revealed of Father God's heart towards us in this story? He is waiting and watching for us to return to Him. He never gives up on us.
- i. When he returned to his family where did the rebellious son find himself **(verse 20)**? In his father's arms. And this was even before he had said his much-rehearsed speech!
 - ii. Patiently, constantly, steadfastly, lovingly, his father had been waiting, searching the horizon every day, for a glimpse of his son so that he could scoop him up into his arms, swing him round, shower him with kisses and just love him.
 - iii. This is a perfect picture of Father God's heart towards us. Before we even give Him a thought He is already waiting for us. What He wants, more than anything, is for us to position ourselves in the place where we can feel and respond to His overwhelming desire to show us his love.
- e. Look at the tap illustration in the work book. Ask the group to explain what they think it describes.
- i. Father's love is amazing; it never stops pouring earthwards. It is as if God's love is stored up in a vast heavenly reservoir which has a tap that is always open.
 - ii. When we place ourselves beneath that tap His love flows into us; we receive it.



- iii. Father God loves us. There is nothing any of us can do that is so bad that will prevent Father's love from continually flowing down to us; it is a never-ending stream. However, there are often things we say and do which create a barrier between us and God for a while which means we may no longer receive or *FEEL* His love so readily. This is because Father God is totally holy and when we sin this comes between us and Him and forms a barrier.
- f. **Read 1 John 4:9-10.** Ask: What do you think these verses mean? Father God showed the depth of His love for us when He sent Jesus.
 - i. Jesus is the window through which we see and experience Father God's heart. In Jesus, His miraculous birth, spirit-led life, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, Father God's heart for us, for you, for the whole world is revealed.

- g. **Read Luke 3:21-22.** Ask: How did Father God's presence show itself in these verses?
- i. When Jesus was baptised the Holy Spirit came down on Him in the form of a dove.
 - ii. The word translated into English here as 'Holy Spirit' means 'one who comes alongside'. When we enter Father God's family He places the Holy Spirit right inside us. In this way He has 'come alongside' us.
 - iii. Ask: In what form did the Holy Spirit show Himself at Jesus' baptism? A dove.
 1. Ask the group to think of the characteristics of a dove.
 2. Ask: What might this image teach us practically about the intimacy of God's presence with us? It is the Holy Spirit who calls Father God's Word into our ear; words of love, encouragement, comfort, direction, revelation, correction, warning and instruction.
 3. This close proximity of the Spirit can be pictured like a dove sitting on our shoulder; whenever we do or say something wrong it is as if He flies off our shoulder for a while and hovers close by rather than nuzzling right up close.
 4. He is still speaking to us and remains very close at hand but because of the distance created by the barrier of our sin it becomes harder to hear

Father's whispers. The closeness of relationship has been disturbed.

5. This distance will be there until we obey the voice of the Holy Spirit and confess our sin to God. Immediately we do this it is as if the dove flies back into position and the closeness of our relationship with Father God is restored.
 6. All of us have to learn how to walk in a way that does not offend the delicate presence of the Holy Spirit dove; to live in a way that pleases Father God. This is a process that takes time so try not to be too hard on yourself when you keep messing up!
- iv. Ask: In the passage above what was it Father God said to Jesus? *"You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."*
1. **Look up these verses: Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 42:1.**
Ask: Who do you think they refer to? They refer to Jesus.
 2. Ask: What might be the significance of Father God speaking these words at Jesus' baptism? In modern computer-speak, Father God was 'hyper-texting'; He highlighted or 'clicked' on two well-known and important Scriptures from the Hebrew Bible [our Old Testament] that prophesied the coming of Messiah and verbally applied them to Jesus. The Jewish crowd who would have known these Scriptures well, who witnessed this event and heard the audible voice

of Father God, would have been left in no doubt as to what was being said about Jesus. God Himself was declaring this man, this living breathing human being, to be the very one they had been looking for; the Servant, the Anointed One, Messiah. So Jesus' true identity is revealed by Father God. He is Messiah. He is Father's Son. Father is pleased with Him.

3. When we come into Father God's family we do so by acknowledging who Jesus is [that He is God's Son, Messiah, that He is alive today] and our genuine need of Him. As we humble ourselves and confess our sin, Father God forgives and cleanses us. He not only reconnects our spirit with His, we also have the assurance that He is constantly with us by the close warm presence of our companion and helper the Holy Spirit.
- h. **Read 1 John 3:1; Ephesians 1: 3-8.** Ask: Who does **1 John 3: 1** say we are? The good news is that those Father God loves are also His children, like Jesus.
- i. What does that mean? We are never really alone any more. We are a part of one massive world-wide family.
 - ii. Discuss the meaning of the word 'lavish' i.e. extravagant, over the top! **Ephesians 1: 3-8** interprets for us the 'lavishness' of what God has done for us. When someone gives us something and they are overly generous or extravagant we feel blessed, humbled and very special indeed.

- iii. Teach: Father's heart of love towards YOU is so great, so vast, so generous, so abundant and so extravagant. He really wants you to know how much He loves YOU!
 - iv. Spend a few minutes thinking about the enormity of this.
 - v. Get everyone in the group to turn to one another and say HE LOVES YOU! He *LOVES* you! He loves *YOU*!
 - vi. Be aware there are different emphases to be placed upon the different words, which may give particular meaning to someone.
- i. Father God has already pursued us by sending His only Son. Whose responsibility is it to 'work' at the relationship now? Yours and mine.
 - i. In the story of the lost son, the father would still be waiting today if the son had not previously *resolved* to go home **(verses 17-20)**.
 - ii. Ask: What must we do to metaphorically 'go home'? We too must determine to pursue and deepen our relationship with God as Father.
 - j. Whole section 70 minutes.
4. Move seamlessly into the following time of prayer and worship. Be flexible to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- a. Begin by re-reading **Luke 3:22** but encourage group members to hear Father God speaking over them: *"YOU are My Child; I LOVE YOU; with YOU I am WELL PLEASED."*

- b. One by one ask group members to talk honestly about where they feel they have been challenged through today's study. Issues raised may include areas on sin, feelings of inadequacy/low self-worth and/or especially issues relating to a loving 'father' who wants to have a 'relationship' with them. Teach and reassure as appropriate.
 - c. Turn to the After the Session section in the disciple's workbook and the optional exercise. This could be very important for those who are struggling with the concept of a loving father. Although the exercise is optional, encourage everyone to have a go at working through it. Make reference to appendix 1 which is the written words of The Father Who Delights in You.
 - d. Get the group to close their eyes and intentionally listen to the CD or I-track The Father Who Delights in You. Encourage them to allow the words of scripture revealing Father's heart for them to wash over and refresh their spirits.
 - e. Whole section 30 minutes.
5. Confirm the date, time and venue [if likely to change].
 6. Add a little lightness to the end of the session by encouraging people to consider blessing another member of the group with a random lavish or extravagant act of kindness.

AFTER THE SESSION:

1. Telephone anyone you have identified as needing particular encouragement.

