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# 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 last of the series. The aim is to consciously seek God's heart for the community where they live and obediently put into practice what is heard from Him.

Through this practical engagement disciples will not only learn to obediently follow God's leading but also be challenged to share their faith as well as thoroughly test their spiritual gifts, skills and callings. This booklet contains all you will need to teach this course.

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: Love Your Neighbour Workbook. This is available from the Shop section of the web-site ([www.newbeginningsdiscipleship.wordpress.com](http://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. You will either need to prepare to lead worship yourself (with an instrument, CDs, I Tunes or I-Pod) or brief someone else to do it for you.

7. 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.
8. Always have a small supply of Bibles on hand for those who will forget theirs.
9. Take your diary to arrange the next meeting.
10. 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 from 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: JESUS' GOSPEL & THE DYNAMICS OF HIS KINGDOM**

## **DISCIPLER'S PREPARATION**

1. Lay the table and prepare your portion of this week's food. Remember this is part of your ministry of service. As you lay the table pray for the people you expect to sit in the various seats.
2. Familiarise yourself with the following teaching notes sufficiently so that you can share in your own words from the following sections 4) Jesus' gospel and the dynamics of His Kingdom and 5) Listening exercise.

## **DURING THE SESSION**

1. Start timing the meeting once the meal is over and packed away. Allow a full 2 to 2.5 hours.
2. Welcome: make sure everyone is comfortable. Begin by welcoming the Holy Spirit in prayer [2 minutes].
3. This is the first session of a new series.
  - a. If this group have previously been together through other studies in the Walking with God series then briefly recap on what they have learned so far and allow plenty of opportunity for people to share.



- b. Expect testimonies of how Father God has changed and enlarged people's thinking about Himself and about themselves, e.g., being loved, accepted, sons and daughters, heirs of God's promises to Abraham, seated with Jesus at the right hand of God, etc. [**see Ephesians 2:1-10**] (10 minutes).
  - c. Explain we are now going on to look specifically at how we can let the love of God flow out through us into the communities where we live.
  - d. Whole section 15 minutes.
4. **Walking with God in Relationship: Love Your Neighbour.** Today's study is **Jesus' 'gospel' and the dynamics of His Kingdom.**
- a. Give people three minutes to write down what they consider the gospel message to be. Ask one or two people to share what they have written. Without correcting or critiquing, teach the following:
    - i. The westernized gospel message most of us are familiar with places heavy emphasis on the fact that Jesus was born with the sole purpose of dying to save us (and by this we usually mean Gentiles). Of course, this is true in one sense; Jesus' destiny on earth *was* to shed His blood on the Cross for all humanity BUT that is not the whole message of the gospel.
    - ii. Our Greco-Roman thinking is always egocentric (how this affects me) whereas Hebraic thought is always community centred with the Godhead, the great spiritual 'community' [i.e., the Trinity] the centre around which all of life revolves. Therefore, learning to live the

whole of our lives in ways that please Father God should be central to our understanding of the gospel.

- iii. It should not be purely about being 'saved' in order to get us into heaven when we die. The breadth of the 'whole' gospel message reaches far beyond our personal salvation; it has to otherwise Father God's nature, to love His creation and people forever, would have changed, whereas He is unchanging.
  - iv. Jesus came not only to die but to live an amazing life that successfully proclaimed, demonstrated, illustrated and explained the true nature and message of Father God's heart and Kingdom.
- b. **Read Matthew 4:17 and 23-24** Ask: What was the good news of the Kingdom Jesus preached? To find out, look at some more scriptures.
- i. **Read Luke 6:5-19; 7:12-15; 8:27-36; John 2:1-11.**
  - ii. Discuss together in what ways Jesus' 'gospel' message differs from what people wrote down earlier.
  - iii. The simple fact is that Jesus did not preach the same gospel message that we do. Because He had not yet died, His message did not revolve solely around the Cross; neither is it recorded that He made 'altar calls' or got individuals to pray a 'salvation prayer'. His message was not about evoking an emotional response that is very real on a Sunday but easily forgotten and ignored for the rest of the week – what is sometimes called 'cheap grace'.

- iv. The heart of Jesus' message was the present reality of the Kingdom of God. It was a dynamic power at work to change people's lives and it did exactly that.
- c. Read the following Bible verses and for each one ask: What is Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God here?
  - i. **Read Matthew 13:31-33.** Mustard seed springs up very quickly; it has the potential to grow phenomenally and a great capacity to grow in very arid or rocky places, which means it is a strong and persistent seed. It is also a natural disinfectant that cleanses the land of harmful pests.
  - ii. Yeast is a catalyst for change that affects the whole dough.
  - iii. **Read Matthew 13:44-46.** The truth [that it is 'at hand'] and reality of the Kingdom of God [healing, miracles, etc.] is of such great value that people will give everything they have to possess it.
  - iv. **Remind the group of Matthew 11:12**, which we looked at in group session 1. It does NOT mean using violence or force as in the Crusades. 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. 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.

- v. It is the Father's heart of love in us that carries a dynamic power to change individual lives and the society in which we live.
- vi. Spend some time talking about what this means and what it might look like in your local community.
  - 1. What are the obvious needs you can identify?
  - 2. Can you name what some of the hidden ones might be?
- d. The Kingdom Jesus taught grew gradually but had enormous explosive potential to break out and change the whole of society.
- e. Remind the group of message from earlier studies on Father God's enduring love.
  - i. Ask: What was He looking for? He was looking for a people who would allow Him to be their King.
  - ii. The Kingdom, then, is also a people who will subject themselves to God's Kingship.
- f. Challenge the group as a whole to do something this next week to demonstrate the nearness of the Kingdom of God to their community, e.g., litter picking, take flowers or chocolates into the shops or Council offices to say 'we appreciate you', tidy up some un-owned corner of the town or village that is untidy or graffiti-ed.
  - i. Give some time now to discussion over what, when, where, etc..
- g. Whole section 45 minutes.

## 5. Listening Exercise:

- a. Teach: It is easy to forget that when Jesus was on earth He was fully a man, a human being just the same as us and therefore with the same limitations. Yet we have just been looking at the amazing things He did: He regularly (probably daily) healed the sick, performed miracles, raised the dead and set captives free. All of these were confirming signs of the powerful reality of the presence of God's Kingdom.
- b. Ask How was Jesus able to do all of this when He was just a man?
  - i. Read **Luke 4:18-19**. It was the Spirit of the Sovereign (ruling) Lord that did these things through Jesus who was a fully surrendered, dead-to-self but set-apart-to-God man, controlled by the Holy Spirit.
  - ii. Just as we are called to follow hard in the dust of Jesus' footsteps, so He did with His Father. Jesus knew where to go, what to do, who to talk to, who to heal – not because He was super-human but only because of the very close communication He kept with Father God. It was clearly a two-way dialogue and not just a one-sided monologue.
  - iii. Explain that the purpose of the following Listening Exercise is to begin the process of allowing God to speak, to guide the group into understanding what is on His heart for their community and eventually into letting them know what they should be doing to demonstrate His love.

- c. *N.B. If this is a new group of disciples who have not previously worked through the Walking with God series then refer them to Appendix 1 in their workbook Listening to God's Voice. Encourage them to read it fully during the week and work through the overview below. Alternatively, if this is a group that is already experienced in listening to God, then go straight to the Listening Exercise.*
  - d. Give a very brief outline of the ways in which we hear Father's voice.
  - e. Keep silence for five minutes.
  - f. Ask people to share what they 'heard' from Father God. Interpret pictures as He allows you to.
  - g. Repeat the exercise, encouraging everyone to enter in.
  - h. Repeat the sharing and interpretation process. If God is clearly saying something into someone's situation then pray for them.  
**Take as long as it takes.**
  - i. Finish by praying for the whole group to incorporate some listening time into their daily study time this coming week.
  - j. Whole section 60 minutes.
7. Confirm the date and time of the next group session
8. Ask for two different volunteers to take care of the whole of next week's meal.



# **WEEK 2: GOD'S FAMILY – WHAT IS IT?**

## **DISCIPLER'S PREPARATION**

1. Lay the table and prepare your portion of this week's food. Remember this is part of your ministry of service. As you lay the table pray for the people you expect to sit in the various seats.
2. Familiarise yourself with the following teaching notes sufficiently so that you can share in your own words from the following sections 4] God's family what is it? and 5] Prophetic prayer ministry time.

## **DURING THE SESSION**

1. Start timing the meeting once the meal is over and packed away. Allow a full 2 to 2.5 hours.
2. Welcome: make sure everyone is comfortable. Begin by welcoming the Holy Spirit in prayer [2 minutes].
3. Ask people to share what they have heard from God this week through the After the Session listening exercise.
  - a. Whole section 15 minutes.



4. **Walking with God in Relationship: Love Your Neighbour.** Today's study is **God's Family: What is it?**
- a. Discuss together what the group understands God's family to be. Do not attempt to teach or express an opinion. When the discussion has finished go onto the next section.
  - b. Teach: When we are born again as believers this rarely happens in isolation – although occasionally Father God does act sovereignly outside of all human interaction. More usually, we are born again in a particular context; perhaps one or two believing friends have shared the gospel or shown us the reality of God at work; perhaps we have received a miraculous healing or been taken to a group or body of believers where we have heard the Word of God preached and the Holy Spirit has convicted us of our need of Him. On the occasions when people receive a visitation from Jesus or experience the Holy Spirit completely independently of any other human input, Father God still places an instinctive desire within us to seek out like-minded believing people where we can belong, be nurtured, healed, restored and sent out again. We might call this group of people our spiritual family. This need to belong happens in all walks of life which is why people congregate together in various interest groups like the WI, model railway, gardening or diet clubs. But how much better and how much deeper is the family bond where that group is not just about friendship or entertainment but leads to a living vital eternal relationship with Father God! It was not for nothing that the early Baptists and Pentecostals called one another 'brother' or 'sister'.
  - c. Right from the Garden of Eden Father God has placed His people in families. In fact, He Himself comprises THE perfect example of the family unit in the godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit all

live closely, know each other intimately, relate to one another flawlessly, communicate, interact, have fellowship and coexist as one united whole family unit. They are 'common-in-their-unity' [community] together.

- d. Historically, Gentiles have come to call our believing spiritual family our 'church'.
- e. **Look up Matthew 16:13-18.** There is a play on words in the Greek: *petros* [Peter] means 'piece of stone' and *petra* [rock] means large rock or boulder.
- f. Ask: what do you think Jesus meant? Be prepared for answers relating to the Roman Catholic Church and the institutional church. But as Jesus was speaking 300 years before Constantine institutionalised the church, He cannot possibly be referring to what we have come to think of as the historic 'church' of Christendom. The Roman Catholic understanding of the church being founded on the 'rock' of the apostle Peter who is usually depicted holding the keys to the Kingdom derives from a misinterpretation of this verse.
- g. Teach that Jesus was acknowledging the fact that Peter had received the divine revelation that He was Messiah **[verse 16]**.
- h. **Read 1 Corinthians 3:11.** This verse confirms it was Peter's faith in Jesus as Messiah that was to be the foundational building block on which the new community of faith was to be built NOT Peter himself. It is true that when faith exists in a person's heart and that faith in God is nurtured, stretched, deepened and grows there is NOTHING, absolutely nothing – not even the gates of Hades – that can pull down that stronghold of faith. Right since the beginning of time, God has interacted personally

with those willing to follow Him on a journey of faith (**see Hebrews 11**).

- i. Therefore, the true church comprises those who share a common faith in God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and who believe that Jesus Christ is Yeshua Messiah, i.e., the anointed, promised one; the Son of God, our saviour.
- j. Emphasise that faith in Jesus alone as Messiah is the church's true foundation.
- k. The word 'church' is often a loaded one. Ask: What comes to mind when they hear the word 'church'? Allow time for people to share their thoughts. This will include buildings that have been set apart for worship and the particular services or events that are carried out in those buildings. Others will correctly say that the people are the church but not be sure of what that really means in practice, especially if they are part of a 'normal' church that is service or performance centred.
- l. Teach that the word usually translated as 'church' in the New Testament is *ekklesia* which comes from the verb *ekkaleo*, which means to 'call out'. In the common language of the day, the word was used to describe those called out into a public place to vote on matters of communal concern. In other words, it had semi-political overtones and was concerned with community matters relating to wider society not just its own structure and organisation. In the Septuagint (an ancient translation of the whole Bible from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek), *ekklesia* is itself a translation of the Hebrew word *kahal*, meaning 'gathering together', 'assembly' or 'flock'. The root word is *kol* which means 'voice'. Hence, the church is those

called [or invited] to gather together [as God's flock] by His voice.

- m. Refer back or get people to look back to their notes from week 2: days 2 and 3 where Father God, like a bridegroom, called [invited] the people to gather before Him on the mountain like a bride.
- n. Ask: Can anyone remember what we likened Israel's response in **Exodus 19:8** to? [A marriage vow.]
- o. The words translated in English in this verse as 'all the people' are literally in Hebrew the *kahal*. The gathered community or family of God did not begin on the Day of Pentecost as is commonly taught by the Gentile church but two thousand years earlier on Mount Sinai when God vocally issued a call for a people to set themselves apart to Him in covenant [marriage] relationship with Him. In this they became set apart from all the nations around to be a distinctive people and a prophetic voice for God in the world.
- p. Ask: What does this insight teach us about Father God's true intention for the Jews?
- q. Ask: What does this insight teach us about Father's true intention for the church?
- r. **Look up Luke 9:2.** Where did Jesus send His disciples? He sent them out to go from village to village proclaiming, teaching, demonstrating and illustrating the reality of the Kingdom of God. Wherever they went, people saw the dynamic power of Father God at work; people were saved, experienced miracles, healings and deliverances on a daily basis.

- s. The concept of God's gathered family was born on Mount Sinai at the first Pentecost (**Exodus 19:8**); but it was born again on the Mount of Olives, also at Pentecost (**Acts 2**).
- t. Ask: Why is this continuity from the Old Testament to the New so important? It shows that Jesus and the Holy Spirit's ministry through the apostles continued the existing, established pattern for the family of God. Messiah's coming was meant to be a RE-FORMATION within Judaism, not a separation from it!
- u. Think about this: The first people who received the gospel of the Kingdom were Jews. They received their Messiah. This meant they were already part of Father God's family, the nation He had chosen. They did not have to set out to find a 'church' to join; their community was already meant to be it! BUT, because the majority did not receive their Messiah, they were forced by both Jewish religious and Roman secular persecution to form their own believing communities – but they were still Judaic in their roots, teaching and practices. The only difference was that they now celebrated Yeshua Messiah as the fulfilment of all the rituals and biblical feasts in which He was foreshadowed.
- v. It remained that way for more than 300 years!
- w. Summarize: the church, then, is more accurately described as a gathering together of members of God's family in a covenant of obedience to Him. It is to be a distinctive body with a prophetic voice into political and community arenas.
- x. If time allows, encourage people to talk about what it might mean for your local believing family to be a prophetic voice in its community. Think of the ministries of Jesus, John the Baptist and the apostles.
- y. Whole section 60 minutes.

5. Prophetic prayer ministry time:

- a. Divide the group into small groups of three for a short time of prophetic prayer ministry to one another. It does not matter if they are the same groups as last week or if you mix them up.
- b. Invite the Holy Spirit to come and lead this time.
- c. Get each group to nominate one person who will be prayed for. Ideally this should not be someone who was prayed for last week. This might be someone who is known to have a pressing and relevant matter for prayer; but it need not be.
- d. Reassure them that everyone will get a turn at being prayed for over the next few weeks. This is part of our ministry of service to one another.
- e. Encourage everyone to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit for a word, scripture or picture for this person. Allow two to three minutes for waiting on the Lord.
- f. Invite people to share what they have heard.
- g. Repeat the waiting, listening, sharing pattern twice more.
- h. Ask: Does what has been shared speak into their situation at all? Can they confirm this is Father God speaking?
- i. Get the two to pray for the one in line with what the Holy Spirit has said.
- j. This may be the point where you share the prophetic word, picture or scripture you asked the Lord to give you when you were laying the table for the meal. Share it publicly or privately as you feel led, but do not forget to share it!
- k. Whole section 30 minutes.

6. Confirm the date and time of the next group.
7. Ask for two different volunteers to take care of the whole of next week's meal.

### **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 New Beginnings Discipleship.
2. Telephone anyone you have identified as needing particular encouragement.
3. Pray for each one every day this week and visit individuals as necessary.

### **NOTES**

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