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INTRODUCTORY NOTES

THE GOAL

New Beginnings Discipleship covers many aspects of Christian discipleship. Over the course of approximately two years a new follower of Jesus is trained and equipped to understand and deepen their personal relationship with God; to be someone who brings their life in line with God's Word and who continues to make godly Kingdom-based life choices. Following the Holy Spirit's leading the disciple is encouraged to love, serve and be the hands and feet of Jesus in their local community so that by sharing Jesus with others the whole discipleship process can start all over again with brand new believers!

The underlying shared core values are found in Jesus' twin commands:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40

The biblical background and basis for New Beginnings is grounded in the Hebraic roots of our faith and the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God, which is one of the underlining themes that runs throughout the whole of scripture from the first chapter of Genesis to the final chapter of Revelation. We have been taught to pray *"Thy Kingdom come... on earth as it is in heaven"* but what are we saying? What does it mean? New Beginnings is a tool to help us understand the meaning and workings of the Kingdom of God; to live it out and boldly influence our communities for God's Kingdom until Jesus' final return when the New Jerusalem appears and the Kingdom of God is fully established upon the earth.

New Beginnings is a life-training life-changing course that is taught and experienced over several distinct parts. It involves study but is not limited to just learning facts about God or the Bible like a Bible college course, the disciple is expected to obediently apply all that is learned. The goal is to become a multiplying disciple; one who sees God's Kingdom break out, grow and transform people and circumstances all around them.

THE DESIGN

The group emphasis throughout is on building biblical community and being the family of God together. Therefore:

1. New Beginnings is designed to be taught in small groups in an informal setting, ideally having been preceded by a meal. Exactly how and when the material is taught is completely up to the group discipler who is free to reinterpret the course design and structure to fit his or her own context.

2. The group may be as small as one plus the discipler and apprentice or it may be as large as 14 [12 + discipler and apprentice]. Twelve should be considered the maximum as meaningful relationships can only really happen in small units and part of the ethos of New Beginnings is to provide an intimate context for growth and service. The ideal number is 4-6 people in total.
3. All teaching timescales are to be considered as guidelines, intentionally flexible. They can be adapted or extended to suit the needs of particular groupings. If necessary, one week's teaching can be spread over as many weeks as the discipler feels is appropriate to keep the majority of the group actively engaged with the discipleship process. Each group must find how it works best for them.
4. Where there are a number of small groups that are fairly local to one another it is hoped groups will gather together occasionally for corporate worship, teaching and prayer.

THE PROCESS

New Beginnings has three distinct parts. These are:

Part One:

Just the Beginning and Simply Jesus are focused on working with new believers or those who admit to being 'stuck' in their Christian growth; who might want to make a fresh start. Where you begin is entirely up to the needs of those involved. There are two options:

1. To nurture the disciples using the Just the Beginning booklet in complete acceptance and love. This course runs over a minimum of 10 weeks. To follow this with Simply Jesus, a 7-week Bible study through which believers go on to become established in an elementary understanding of core biblical truths and what it means to be God's family together and Kingdom lifestyle.
2. Because the people God brings across our path do not always fall neatly into the above, sometimes we find ourselves befriending those who are seeking God but are not yet ready to make a commitment to Jesus; they need to explore the facts for themselves first. Therefore, it is entirely possible to run these two short courses the other way around e.g., you can run Simply Jesus as a means of exploring Christianity and use Just the Beginning for follow up discipleship as individuals come into God's Kingdom.

Part Two:

There are two very different ways to teach this material. These are:

1. The slower way: the **Walking with God series** of small group bible studies: Prayer & God's Word, Redeeming the Heart and Soul & Strength. Over one or two years of weekly bible studies, disciples are encouraged to build a deeper consistent relationship with God whilst at the same time being challenged to nurture a missionary mindset – of looking outwards beyond themselves - to see people as Jesus sees them with a heart to demonstrate His love through various means of service. *N.B. The teaching notes for the Walking with God series are not in this manual.*

Once the group has come to the end of the three bible study courses above, they are encouraged to enter into **Love Your Neighbour**. This is a practical course that uses bible study, teaching, worship, prayer and listening to God in order to seek His heart for a specific local community. The challenge is to put into practice what has been received from God.

2. The faster way: the **Discipleship School**. Using the same themes as the Walking with God series but presented in a 13-week self-study manual, disciples are expected to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth on a day-to-day basis. The content is life-changing.

Whilst each disciple studies separately they are still part of a group that comes together weekly. Using bible study, teaching, worship, prayer and listening to God they learn about the gospel of the Kingdom as well as what the church really should be and do. The group are encouraged to engage with the teaching's practical challenges by being fully involved in whatever God asks them to do. This could be anything drawn from such things as prayer assignments, prayer vigils, fasting, preaching, healing on the streets, prophecy, etc. as well as redemptive social action and local community projects. Through this practical engagement disciples will not only learn to obediently follow God's leading but also thoroughly test their spiritual gifts, skills and callings.

Part Three: Ongoing Discipleship:

Whichever route is taken for Part Two – faster or slower - ongoing discipleship is extremely important. So, disciples are encouraged to continue working at deepening their personal relationships with God by using the 6-week daily devotional contained in the booklet **Walking with God Through the Storm**. There is no group leader's guide for this but many have used it within small group context.

For those who have enjoyed learning more about prayer, there is the option to join in the itinerant prophetic Prayer School that runs from time to time. The objective is to be equipped in how to pray effectively for the communities in which we live.

The Prayer School combines monthly online teaching with twice-yearly residential gatherings. These gatherings are usually in fully or self-catered conference centres, church buildings or private homes.

There is no charge for the Prayer School but attendees are expected to purchase a copy of *Setting Your Community Free* by Sarah Winbow as well as contribute towards accommodation, food and any other sundry expenses that may arise in the process of facilitating a physical gathering. A free-will offering is usually taken on these occasions for New Beginnings Discipleship ministry.

If you would like to register your interest in being part of a Prayer School in the future, then please do so by visiting the Prayer School page on the New Beginnings website:

<https://newbeginningsdiscipleship.com/prayer-school/>

Where groups, or clusters of groups are located relatively close geographically, there is also the option of gathering together regionally two or three times a year. These are opportunities to come together informally to worship, listen to God and pray accordingly. These Gatherings usually fall loosely within the time frame of the biblical feasts: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. over three weekends spaced throughout the year.

ORIGINS

The broad structure for New Beginnings is based on two associated prophetic pictures given to me in 2008. The first picture was of John Wesley on a white horse accompanied by the words *“the word must go out”*. After years of being engaged in strategic prayer Father God showed the core team of our Prayer House through this picture that it was now time to go out, to begin to build. But what were we to build? The answer to that question is the same it has always been – the house of the Lord.

“Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”¹

This sanctuary [or spiritual house] must first be built within each of us and then be released through us to influence and change God’s world. This spiritual house is a vehicle for Father God’s presence and Kingdom to be seen and experienced on the earth. In Jesus we have an example of someone who was a living, breathing, walking, talking, spiritual house full of God’s Holy Spirit presence. Wherever there is the gathering together of two, three or more believers, the Kingdom of God is powerfully present and at work.

Having leapt to faulty conclusions and interpretations of Father’s instructions in the past, my question to God at that time was *“So what does your house look like for us today Lord?”* The answer surprised even me. First I saw the word H.O.U.S.E with the letter U struck through. As I watched, the letter R dropped down to replace the U so that the new word read H.O.R.S.E! Over the next few weeks, the Lord began to teach me a great deal about the horse’s positive characteristics, especially that it is itinerant, powerful, strong, disciplined, directed, obedient, flexible, meek, reproducing and

¹ Exodus 25:8-9.

faithful. The white horse is, in fact, a beautiful picture of the ultimate servant in the Kingdom of God: someone emptied of self who is set apart for Father God's purposes, consecrated, purified and made holy. The PowerPoint slide I created in order to best explain to others what I saw is below. You will see that various parts of the horse's body also represent various parts of the ministry of the Jesus' body:

Head: this represents the eyes, ears and mouth of the prophetic. The head goes in front of the rest of the body. God's Word says that He does not do anything without first telling His prophets.²

Front legs: the first leg is worship; the second is prayer. Worship is the door through which we position ourselves before Father God's throne in a place where our prayers are then heard and answered. The front legs dig up the ground and provide a spring-board for where the back legs can safely land. Everything we do in God's Kingdom must be preceded by ground-breaking worship and prayer – personally and corporately.

Back legs: The proclamation of the message of Father's love and the presence of the Kingdom of God. For the message to be truly authentic it must be followed by the tangible signs and wonders of Father God's reality to save, heal, release and restore. The horse's back legs always land in the exact spot where the front legs have previously been, which demonstrates the validity of my point about worship above.

Tail: Wherever God's Kingdom is breaking out our enemy Satan will use his 'flies' [demonic forces] to try to bring infection or kill. The horse's tail is there to swish the flies away. Spiritually this is done through the ministry of the intercessory 'watchmen'. The tail is also there to protect the vulnerable parts of the body which again speaks of protective prayer for those who are weak, helpless, at risk or in danger.

Body: This 'horse of the Lord' cannot be built by the hand of man; it must be created by the Spirit of God because it is a living, breathing entity. Its total purpose, as it moves from place to place, is to carry the presence and glory of the King of kings accompanied by visible signs of the reality of His



² Amos 3:7.

Kingdom. This horse appears in the scriptures: **please read Revelation 19:11-end.**

This passage confirms to me that the Horse of the Lord is a picture of a new wineskin of Jesus' body for this end-time season and He is its rider, the One under whose direction it rides out across the earth.

The horse represents a body made up of passionate, obedient, surrendered lovers of Father God, who exist solely and seriously to glorify the name of Jesus and to carry His presence and His Kingdom [righteousness, justice, truth, love, peace and much joy in the Holy Spirit] into villages, towns, cities and nations. The horse has an end-time mandate and Revelation 19:19 reminds us that the way will be costly. True disciples are called by Jesus to deny themselves, take up their cross daily³ and follow hard in the dust of His footsteps; His own obedience led Him to the Cross. New Beginnings, then, is not an easy ride. We must expect it to be tough in places because of its end-time context in the face of a mounting spiritual battle. Therefore, let me encourage you to persevere when the going gets difficult. I assure you there is much to be gained by those who are serious about pursuing a deeper relationship with Father God and becoming a part of Jesus' end-time army.

PREPARING TO RUN NEW BEGINNINGS

Jesus called His first group of disciples so do not be surprised if the first ones to work through the process are those you definitely know Father God has already called and may well be people you are already involved with in some way. There may be a mix of relatively new believers and/or those who have been in the Kingdom longer but who have never been taught to follow and obey God wholeheartedly. Remember: Jesus is the one who is calling them to follow Him so expect to see Him at work.

Ideally the leadership of each group should be shared between an experienced discipler and an apprentice, i.e., one who has worked through the course themselves, is consistently applying the lessons learned and is spiritually gifted to teach others. The disciplers must discern between themselves what part each is to lead in the group sessions.

When writing something down for others to follow, it naturally falls to the author to place it in some form of structure otherwise it would be almost impossible to pick up and run with. However, I would like to re-emphasise what has already been said: there is no ideal time scale for running the varying content of New Beginnings; all time scales are to be seen as guidelines and it must take as long as it takes for everyone to be given maximum opportunity to fully engage in the discipleship process. There is a lot of ground to cover and a lot of material to get through. The temptation is to rush to complete all the exercises in the minimum time. If you do this then you may find that some people will have skirted around the issues raised and not really done very much effective personal 'business' with God. Therefore, pace yourself and be flexible; perhaps give everyone an extra week once a month to catch up or deliberately set out from the start to take one week's materials over

³ Luke 9:23.

two weeks. If you decide to do this, then maintain a weekly group meeting and also spread that content over two weeks.

BEING A DISCIPLER

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Immediately before Jesus was taken up into heaven He passed the responsibility to carry on the work of seeing God's Kingdom proclaimed, demonstrated and reproduced to the small group of people into whose lives He had invested His love, time and heart for the previous three years. Because they were obedient the mantle of responsibility has successfully been passed on through the generations and now lies with us.

What is your experience of discipling another believer?

Perhaps you have walked the journey with many and had the blessing of seeing people grow spiritually from one degree of glory to another. Or is this your first time? If so, then how do you feel about the prospect? A little daunted, anxious or excited? At the beginning of this journey, it behoves us to spend a little time looking at the example Jesus left us.

THE MASTER'S MODEL

In the scripture at the top of the page the Greek word translated 'disciple' [*matheeteúsate*] is a command to teach and instruct with the implication that the one discipling has pupils or students who, having been taught to obey Jesus, then go on to instruct others themselves. There is meant to be a multiplication of people who carry out the discipling.

What do you think of when you read the words 'teach' or 'instruct'?

The image normally conjured up by these words today is of someone perhaps standing by a black or white-board speaking as they write or of someone standing at the front lecturing sermon-style. However, these are teaching methods we have inherited from the Greeks and Romans and although there are definitely instances recorded where Jesus addressed the crowd, it was not how he generally taught His disciples at all. We tend to overlook or forget he was a Jewish rabbi teaching other Jews in an Hebraic manner!! Read on...

Read Matthew 4:19.

In Jesus' day it was the custom for Jewish teachers to have pupils called disciples. The call to 'follow' or 'walk after me' is better translated as 'walk in the manner in which I walk' and was a common term used by a rabbi to his pupils. The disciple would live in the master's house and observe

everything he did. So, there was no place for the master to hide; he could not be double-minded and say one thing and do another. His whole life had to be a consistently good example. It was common for the disciple to set aside at least three years to shadow his master's every move: to watch how he did things, imitate what he did, ask him questions, listen to his replies and basically soak up everything he had to impart. The rabbis described the pupil as someone who was 'walking in the dust'.

Write below what you think the phrase 'walking in the dust' implies about the master/pupil relationship.

Read Hebrews 13:7.

'Imitate' does not mean mimic or ape like our TV comic impersonators of today; it means emulate, duplicate or reproduce the leader's lifestyle. That lifestyle is usually attained through discipline – training to obey a set of rules or moral code. The one we are called to imitate, our discipler is, of course, Jesus. The discipleship process was not deemed to be complete until the disciple acquired not only the master's knowledge but also his skills and disciplines and then reproduced the process by taking disciples of his own.

The verb 'to disciple' is not really used outside of religious meaning any more. Use the spaces below to write down some modern words that embody elements of what it means to disciple someone:

Words like apprentice, train, advise, counsel, coach, mentor, guide, model, befriend, encourage, equip – even guru – embody part of what it means to be a discipler but each one falls short of the whole. The example Jesus gives us is tremendous but also an awe-inspiring challenge for us to follow:

He *shared* His life with His disciples.

He *showed* them a better way.

He *modelled* how to be and what to do.

He *led by example*.

He *knew* the scriptures.

He *applied* God's Word.

.He *served*.

He *demonstrated* love, care and compassion at work.

He *nurtured and encouraged*.

He *trained and released*.

He was *open and honest*.

He *rejoiced* with...

He *showed no fear*.

He *spoke* into lives.

He was in *constant communication* with Father God.

He *listened* to Father's voice.

He knew He was *significant* to Father's purposes.

He *witnessed* to Father's reality.

He *sacrificed* for others.

He *lacked nothing*.

He *reproduced and multiplied* disciples.

He *taught, explained and illustrated* the Kingdom in parables, stories, questions and answers.

He *walked, talked and breathed* the whole message of the Kingdom of God.

He was *a friend*.

He *listened*.

He *equipped*.

He *influenced*.

He was *humble*.

He *identified* with...

He *challenged*.

He *saw* people's potential.

He was *secure* in His Father's love.

He *obeyed* Father's instructions.

He *glorified* Father's name.

He *took a stand* against injustice.

He *enabled* others to grow.

He *passed on* the ministry.

Write down any more examples from Jesus' life that come to your mind:

The disciples followed Jesus as He followed Father God. There are a number of biblical examples of other people using the same model. One of the best known is the relationship between Paul and his disciple Timothy. The New Testament contains two letters written by Paul to Timothy when he was in prison expecting to be executed. Paul's pastoral heart literally overflows as he sets out to pass on his final words of instruction, counsel and advice to one he looks on as his spiritual son.

If time allows, read the whole of 1 and 2 Timothy. If not, then just read 2 Timothy 2:20-26. List below some of the qualities Paul hopes Timothy would show in his life [verses .24-25].

From your own experience write down the name of one person who has discipled you in some way.

THINK: Was it what they SAID, what they DID, or HOW THEY WERE that made the most impact on you?

It is certainly the latter for me. We can all say things and not follow through with our actions. We can even do things but our motives or attitudes might be skewed or misguided. But if Father God's love is flowing through us then it will be seen and affect others.

A COUPLE OF PERSONAL LESSONS

Ever since I began on my own journey of discipleship one of the gifts Father God has given me is to be able to see people not as they are now but as they have the promise to be in the future. It is almost as if I see them from God's perspective because I see their potential in the Kingdom which encourages me as I commit to walk hand-in-hand with them on what may only be a stage of their life-journey to achieve their destiny.

1. The first great lesson of discipleship I learned is that it is not my responsibility to get anyone to that place where they are walking in their destiny; it is THEIR responsibility. I can teach, love, model, in fact do anything Jesus did, but if they themselves choose NOT to follow where Father leads, however frustrated or sad that might make me, it would be wrong to attempt to cajole or push them any further. They have to make the decision to follow for themselves. It is not unusual that after a period of spiritual growth or busy time of involvement in church life that someone might need a bit of time camping out on the plateau before attempting to 'climb' any 'higher'.

2. The second great lesson I learned was from a retired Baptist minister. He taught me never to expect someone else to do something I was not willing to do myself. I was deeply impacted by the story he recounted to me of his having camped out in a tent on a grass verge for the best part of a month in the cold and frost of February in order to tend and care for a recently widowed gypsy mother, her new-born baby and her children. He washed, bathed, cooked, shopped and provided for this precious little family in his 'spare time' whilst maintaining his ministry and busy growing church. Of course, others in the church helped too but he was the hands and feet of Jesus to her. Of course, her life was changed forever by this man's self-less example of Christ-like love! He also told me that in over 40 years in ministry and despite growing one of the largest Baptist churches in the south of England, he never allowed himself to become so 'important' that he stopped being the one who cleaned the toilets each week! What a model of discipleship he was to me. This is why it is so important to the New Beginnings process that we not only learn facts and increase our knowledge but also put it into practice by letting Father's heart of love flow out to others. You can guess who cleans the toilets in our ministry centre!!!

BEING AN EFFECTIVE DISCIPLER by Chris Mills

Chris Mills is a great personal friend of mine; she and I have shared the exciting journey of discipling one another and others together over a number of years. I value her counsel so highly that she has been my 'sounding board' throughout the writing of New Beginnings. Therefore, it is good for me to pass on to you some of her down-to-earth northern tips for what it takes in practical terms to be a good discipler:

LISTEN... more than you talk. Listen to the whole person with empathy. Be a friend.

BUILD... a healthy relationship with care and sensitivity.

USE QUESTIONS... effectively. You, as the discipler, are not expected to be an expert in every area of life and ministry! It may be helpful to recommend someone to do further training to hone a specific ministry gift or skill or draw from a wide range of resources found elsewhere in Jesus' body.

DEVELOP... the whole person. We are body, spirit, heart, soul, mind and strength.

LEAVE THE BALL... in the disciple's court. Aim to bring them to reach their own decisions and conclusions in order that they will take strength from, and responsibility for, their own actions and future plans.

REMEMBER... Discipleship is NOT counselling. Counselling looks to the past; discipleship looks ahead. Discipleship is a relationship experience in which one person sows what they have from God [personal experience and gifts] into another's life.

Discipleship does not imply that it can be undertaken by one designated person or that this person must be older than the disciple. The only qualification needed is to admit to still being a disciple themselves. Everyone should be both a disciple and a discipler.

THE CHALLENGE

Having read all of the above, it behoves me to point out some of the serious challenges of becoming a disciple-maker. Your life will be watched closely by those you teach so you need to face this responsibility right now before you begin. Below you can read a set of simple statements that comprise much of the heart values and ethos of the New Beginnings Community. Please STOP and READ through them slowly now.

1. To commit to a lifestyle of being a multiplying discipler according to Jesus' Great Commission [Matthew 28:18-20].
2. To understand that every discipler must first be a disciple themselves. Therefore, commit to humbly seek to love God with more of your heart, soul and strength and continue on your own journey of personal cleansing, healing and greater consecration [Matthew 22:37].
3. To understand that God has ordained you as His vessel to let the living water He has placed within you flow out to influence and change the people and environment where you live by the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God [Matthew 22:39; John 7:38].
4. To understand your responsibility to listen to Father God for His heart. Then by meekly following and obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit implement His will, to see the Kingdom of God break out around you [Matthew 7:21; John 14:15-17].
5. To understand that your life is a living testimony of what you teach. Therefore, commit to live as an example through obedience to Jesus' challenge that you are called to be both salt and light to those around you [Matthew 5:13-16].
6. To understand that your responsibility as a discipler is not only to teach, train and equip disciples but also to nurture, pray for, LOVE and be willing to meet, as He enables, the practical needs of those Father God has given you [John 15:17; Galatians 6:2].
7. To understand that the goal of true discipleship is to see disciples released to become multiplying disciples themselves [Matthew 28:19-20]. Once fully grown they must be released to 'fly'.
8. To understand that the Kingdom of God is a Jewish concept and Jesus was a fully-observant Jew. Therefore, the Kingdom and its message are not just for Messiah's Body but also for the Jews. They are the spiritual olive root [Romans 11:16-18] onto which we, the Gentile wild olive, have

been grafted in order to provoke them into fruitfulness. Paul writes God has made one new man out of the two [Ephesians 2:15].

9. To understand that Father God's heart is one of everlasting covenant love. Therefore, as members of Messiah's Body through the New Covenant in His blood, we have a responsibility to pray for, protect and provide for ALL God's people, regardless of gender or race, especially in time of need and obvious persecution [Galatians 3:28; 6:2].
10. To understand your responsibility as a member of Messiah's Body to pray for:
 - a. Those in authority in your nation [1 Timothy 2:1-3];
 - b. The '*shalom*'⁴[completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquillity, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord] of Jerusalem [Psalm 122:6].

Spend some time talking to Father God about your role as a discipler. Give Him your doubts and fears; receive His assurance. The Holy Spirit is the equipper, not you; so, ask Him now to come and fill you afresh, to anoint you with every gift you will need to meet the challenges involved and the love to be able to love everyone unconditionally and to play your part in helping others in His strength.
