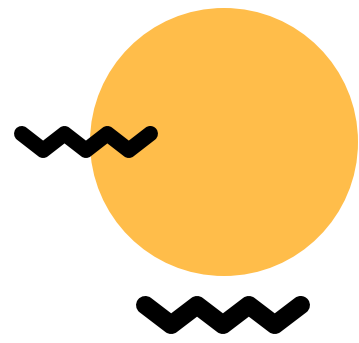


# Pathway to Spiritual Growth

Intentional Relational Discipleship



Pathway 4  
Participant





## How to Run a Discovery Bible Study Group?

- A. Meal and catch up time (Please NOTE: Meals can become very complex. We would suggest a simple plan. For example: hot dogs and chips, cereal and juice, soup and bread, etc. By doing this, it keeps the focus on God's Word and sharing not on preparation of the meal.) *Realize that the facilitator needs to take charge otherwise the meal time will be about chit-chat and not get to the questions below. Maybe mention to the group that we have set aside this much time for our group and we want to hear from everyone.*
  1. How are you doing?
  2. What good things are happening/are you thankful for?
  3. What are your challenges/stressors?
  4. What gospel initiative did you take this week? (Examples: did a DBS with another person, told my spiritual story to someone, shared gospel somehow, put out some feelers to someone to see if they had spiritual interests, prayed for someone in their presence without knowing their spiritual condition)
- B. Vision:
  1. Reminder about why we're meeting—*as part of our mission to make, to mature and to multiply fully committed followers of Jesus Christ by equipping each other to move from being spiritual children (learners) to spiritual parents and to do the same for others.*
  2. Explain why we're covering today's lesson—the particular spiritual dynamic we're covering and the group action/outcome.
- C. Passage: (use either the Quadrant 0 simpler form or the Quadrant 2 and following blank Bible study form based on the maturity of the people studying. Quadrant 2 drops writing the scripture out and in your own words and adds observation and interpretation columns)
  1. Observe: it is often hard to keep this as observation as people tend to move into explaining what the passage means as opposed to observations as to what they see in the passage. As lead facilitator, keep a separation between observations and interpretations.
  2. Interpret- What does it mean?
- D. Break down to men/women in separate areas for privacy:
  1. Apply/I will (leader for next time writes down the "I will" statements)
  2. Look back: What did you do with the last "I will statement" and person you were going to tell about it?
  3. Ask the question: Who will I tell about this "I Will"? (Note for follow up next week—"Were you able to tell....?")
  4. Any other prayer items.
- E. Next lesson:
  1. Who will lead?
  2. When will we meet?
  3. Remind them to keep the menu simple.
  4. Next leader summarizes the "I will" statements and who you will tell from this week.

- F. Time Considerations: There are basically 3 sections of each evening. One group reported that 45 minutes for the meal, 30 for the study, and 45 for the men/women breakouts worked for them. If you include a training segment, cut down to 30 minutes each.
- G. After Quadrant 0, make sure everyone in the group has an accountability partner to check in with during the week. As lead facilitator be looking for the FAT people in your group. These are the people that will need to be challenged to begin to disciple others and the ones you might want to meet with.
- H. Context: In quadrants 1-4, it will be helpful to offer some context to the passage that will be studied. This can be accomplished by asking the person/group to read the chapter prior to and right after the passage being studied as well as the whole chapter that the segment comes from. This will need to be mentioned the week before the passage is assigned.

### Pathway 4 - Introduction for the Group

In this quadrant you will be applying the mechanics of observation, interpretation and application to your Bible study skills as well as equipping yourself with ministry skills and understanding that will prepare you to “parent” others to follow Jesus. This quadrant of training includes:

- A week by week study of the book of Ephesians as well as a background study of the history and context of this book.
- Learning from one another about how we meet with God.
- Deeper discussion and understanding of the “Spirit Filled Life”.
- Discussion and deeper understanding of the meaning of being “In Christ”.
- Deeper understanding of repentance and confession of sin and the impact that has on our relationship / fellowship with Christ.
- Share our testimonies with one another.
- Learn a gospel presentation and practice it.
- Learn how to enter a gospel presentation.
- Learn more about spiritual warfare.

You will also notice in the Bible Study template that you will learn and practice another step of researching the passage by doing some word studies and referencing other like passages.

Would you begin to pray to meet a person of peace (open to spiritual discussions)? Would you begin searching for a disciple to take through the pathway of discipleship? Let’s pray for one another and join the adventure of helping others find King Jesus!

## Fundamental Principles of Biblical Interpretation and Application

The following principles for Bible interpretation and application can be very useful to make our Bible study more effective. This is not an exhaustive list.

**Before starting the study, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, wisdom and illumination.**

Then ask yourself the following questions:

1. What kind of conditions existed at the time and in the place the text was written that exist in our time and place? (Historical Context)
2. To whom was the text written, and how does they relate to us today? (Specific context)
3. What does the text say to the original readers? (Interpretation)
4. What does the text say to us today? (Interpretation)
5. Are there other passages that relate to this one (Biblical context)
6. What does the text command us to believe? (Application)
7. What does the text forbid us to believe? (Application)
8. What does the text command us to do? (Application)
9. What does the text forbid us to do? (Application)
10. As the result of studying the text, what changes do we need to make in our lives? (Application)

## Small Group Covenant

### **Love one Another – Care Intentionally**

John 13:34, 1 Peter 4:8, Ephesians 4:15

Be earnest in my love at all times

Always speak the truth in love

Listen to understand, don't assume or accuse

Pray for one another with compassion

### **Forgive One Another – Pursue Unity**

Ephesians 4:1-32, 1 Corinthians 1:10; Matthew 18:15-20

Be quick to forgive and ask forgiveness

Let personal offenses roll off my back or to God in prayer

Model unity by resolving conflict quickly

Get the whole story, including both sides in personal conflict.

### **Serve One Another – Minister Actively**

Galatians 5:13, Exodus 17:11-12, Proverbs 19:20; 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

Be intentional in blessing others

Stay teachable and show deference

Be flexible to meet situational needs

Maximize my strengths and recognize my constraints

Be committed to the whole, not just the part

### **Submit to One Another – Esteem Others Highly**

Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5, Philippians 2:3-4, Matthew 7:3-5

Be the first to lead in humility and honor

Serve others' interests before my own

Check my motives and expectations before speaking

Know my limits and respect the boundaries of others

### **Encourage One Another – Cultivate Redemptive Relationships**

1 Thessalonians 5:1, Romans 1:12, Ephesians 4:29

Be a safe person to get real with

Seek to build up always and never tear down

Complement other's character when I think it twice

Value the person more than their performance

Point to Christ for hope and help

### **Be Devoted to One Another – Commit Wholeheartedly**

Romans 12:5-10, Proverbs 17:17, Proverbs 13:3

Be there in the hard times

Seek reconciliation between others

Guard my relationships with truth and love

Go gently if correction is needed

I will avoid speaking or listening to unhealthy criticism of others and solve conflict biblically. I will be discrete in my communication, correct slander and gossip immediately, and speak directly with those involved. I am committed to living out the values outlined above and will model Christ-like character and build up the church for Christ's glory.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

## **The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians**

### **Introduction**

**AUTHOR:** The apostle Paul,

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT:**

The letter was written from Rome during his imprisonment in Rome, probably between AD 60-63. During the same time Paul wrote Colossians, Philippians and Philemon.

At its height Ephesus was the most important city along the coast of Asia Minor. Two hundred and thirty cities dotted the coast line of Asia Minor. Many had ideal harbors, but Ephesus was the queen among these coast communities. The city had been founded to command one of the main highways of Asia Minor. Its attraction was not only its natural harbor, but the rich, fertile land that covered the inland area.

Ephesus was, of course, a great commercial city. Its natural harbor and strategic location on one of the main roads of the world made it such. However, in the middle of the first century, the harbor had silted up so badly that trade had declined astronomically from the days of Ephesian glory. There had been attempts to drag the silt out, but the efforts were half-hearted and finally abandoned. The people's hearts were just not in the effort. Part of the reason for this attitude was the successful and profitable trade Ephesus enjoyed from its religious cult. The great temple of Diana, or Artemis, was there. Diana was the goddess who had a grotesque head and many breasts and focused upon the sensual pleasure of the flesh. The worshipping pilgrims found their satisfaction in prostitution with a host of priestesses who promoted the cult of the goddess. A great trade of silversmiths had developed over the years, and tourist commercialism boomed year-round. This accounts for the guild of silversmiths finding the crowds an easy mark for arousing opposition against Paul ([Acts 19:24](#)). As the years went by, the great harbor silted up more and more, and the Ephesians depended upon the trade that came from their religion and superstition. The natural harbor of Smyrna, which lay close by, became a more suitable port and began to take away the commercial traffic of Ephesus. As a result Ephesus became a dying city, living on its past reputation as a religious and philosophical center. The great city of Ephesus had a disease, the disease of sensual unrighteousness, and the disease did its work: it corrupted the people. The people, sensual and self-centered, lost their will and willingness to ply a commendable trade.

**THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS**

The church in Ephesus had a small beginning. When Paul visited Ephesus, he found only twelve believers in the city. They had been won to the Lord by the immature but impressive preacher Apollos. As a result they had been misinformed on the presence of the Holy Spirit; they seemed to lack a consciousness of the Spirit in the life of the believer and the awareness that He had already been sent into the world ([Acts 19:1-7](#)). After Paul's instruction to these twelve, he began to teach in the synagogue. He taught for three months, but the Jews were hardened and

refused to believe the gospel. They murmured against the message. Therefore, Paul moved the church into the school of a philosopher, Tyrannus. There he preached Christ for two whole years. During this time it is said that the church was instrumental in sounding forth the Word throughout all Asia: "So all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks ([Acts 19:10](#)).

The Lord worked special miracles by Paul in Ephesus and the church witnessed some amazing things. From all evidence, the spectacular was necessary in order to get through to the people. As always, God did everything He could to reach the people. These experiences show the great love and movement of God toward people (see [Acts 19:11-20](#)). In viewing these accounts, we must keep the background of the city in mind. Ephesus was a hot bed of Oriental magic and superstition. The people were an emotional and sensual lot, easily moved to feelings. They were a devoted people, an expressive people, a loving people, and equally a lovable people ([Rev. 2:1-7](#), esp. [Rev. 2:4](#)).

As Paul preached and God worked miracles, many believed and the church grew mightily. The believers gave great evidence of changed lives by living for Christ right in the middle of an immoral and pagan society. On one occasion, the church demonstrated its new found faith by building a great bonfire and setting aflame all of its pagan and magical literature. (For the Biblical account of the founding of the Church at Ephesus, read Acts chapter 19)

#### **TO WHOM WRITTEN:**

Although some commentators believe that the oldest manuscripts do not contain the words "at Ephesus" in verse 1, most scholars accept that the letter was written to the church at Ephesus.

**PURPOSE:** The letter was addressed principally to Gentile Christians.

1. To bring them to a just appreciation of the plan of redemption, as a scheme devised from eternity by God, for the manifestation of the glory of his grace.
2. To make them aware of the greatness of the blessing which they enjoyed by sharing its benefits.
3. To lead them to enter into the spirit of the Gospel, as a system which ignored the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and united all the members of the church in one living body, destined to be brought into full conformity to the image of Christ.
4. To induce them to live as suited a religion which had delivered them from the degradation of their heathen condition, and exalted them to the dignity of sons of God.



## **MAIN THEME:**

The Great Message of Ephesians is "Reconciliation." Paul deals with the major human problems—the problem of division, disunity, and disharmony. He deals with the major divisions and dissensions throughout the universe.

Christ is the answer to division, to disunity, and to disharmony. He is the One who breaks down all barriers; He is the One who reconciles all things.

### **Ephesians Outline**

(The following general outline is adapted from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, page1302)

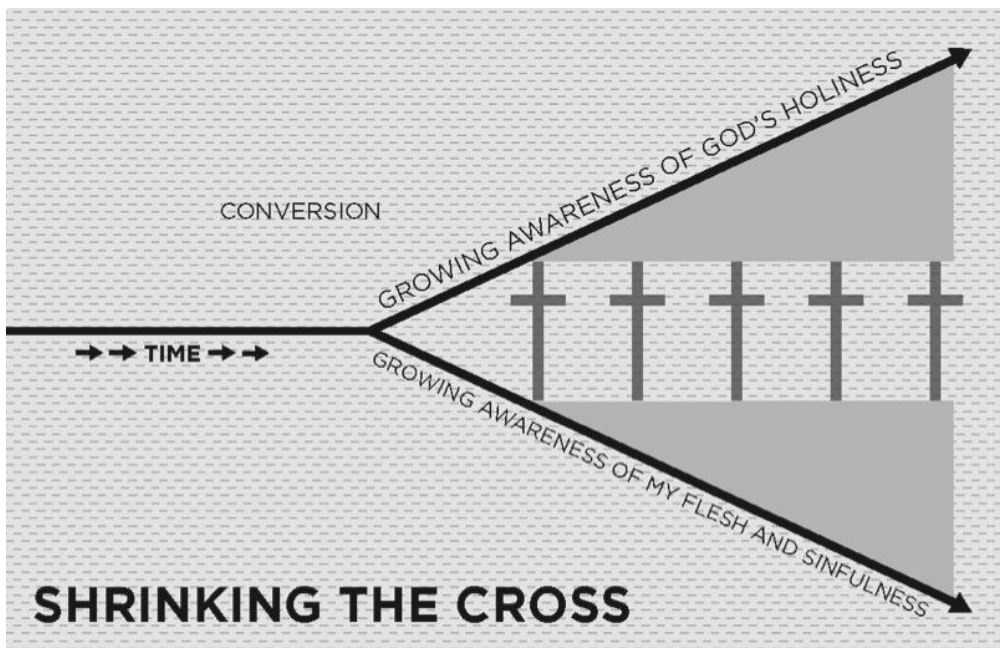
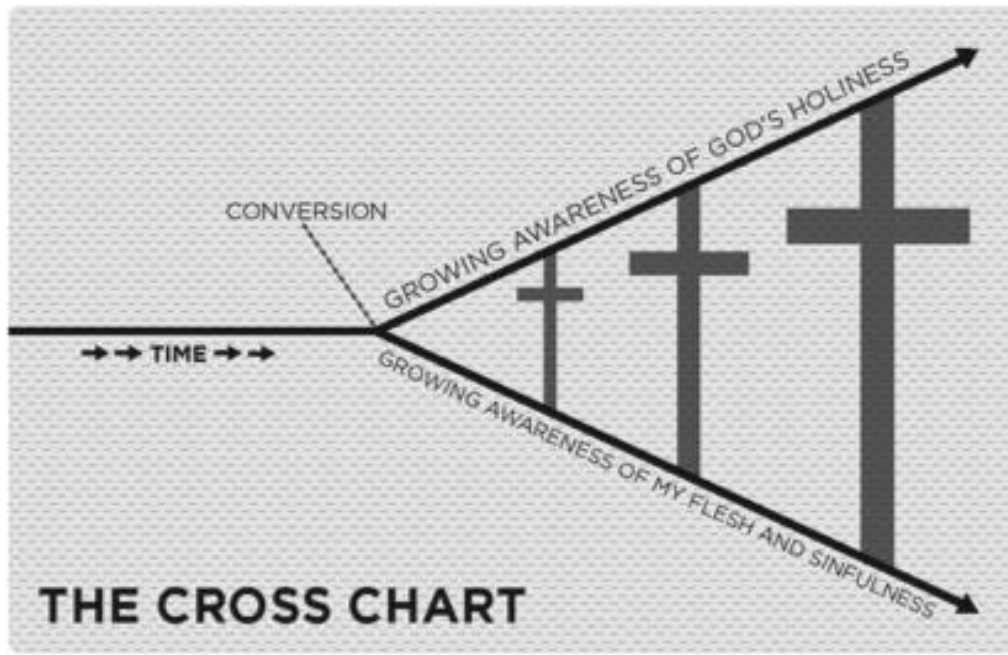
1. The Believer's Position in Christ: 1:1-3:21
  - a. Salutation: 1:1,2
  - b. All spiritual blessings: 1:3-14
  - c. Paul's prayer: 1:15-23
  - d. Salvation by grace: 2:1-10
  - e. Oneness of Jews and Gentiles in Christ: 2:11,12
  - f. The revelation of the mystery: 3:1-13
  - g. Paul's second prayer: 3:14-21
2. The believer's conduct in the world: 4:1-6:24
  - a. The worthy walk: 4:1-16
  - b. The different walk: 4:17-32
  - c. The loving walk: 5:1-14
  - d. The wise walk: 5:15-6:9
  - e. The Christian walk as a warfare: 6:10-20
  - f. Closing greetings: 6:21-24

## Discovery Bible Study

### Pathway 4 —Train to Disciple

<b>Who We Are in Christ:</b>	<b>Study Passage:</b>	<b>Application Exercise:</b>
<b>Week 1:</b> Chosen by the Father	Review handout on Principles of Bible Interpretation and Introduction to Ephesians. Then read Acts 19 and briefly discuss this as background.	Review the coming weeks. Make a list of possible people to challenge to a Three Column Form or an intentional discipleship group.
<b>Week 2:</b> Redeemed by the Son	Ephesians 1:1-10	Have people share what they have been doing in their Quiet Time, how they do it and their rhythm for doing it.
<b>Week 3:</b> Our purpose	Ephesians 1: 11-23	Have people share what they have been <i>obeying</i> from their Quiet Time. Pray together and update non-believer prayer lists, then share lists with one another to pray for each daily.
<b>Week 4:</b> Salvation by Grace (what we were and what we are and will be in the future)	Ephesians 2:1-10	From <u>The Gospel Centered Life</u> . Use the “Cross Chart” Diagram and explain the “Shrinking Cross” (following pages)
<b>Week 5:</b> The revelation of the mystery (the dispensation of God’s grace)	Ephesians 2:11-22	Review the prior discussions of the gospel grids and how confession/ repentance work as to our position in Christ. Assign writing your 3 minute gospel testimonies.
<b>Week 6:</b> The revelation of the mystery (the fellowship of the mystery)	Ephesians 3:1-13	Have the group read their 3 minute gospel testimony; discuss spiritual gifts; <a href="https://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_Discover_Your_Spiritual_Gifts.pdf">https://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_Discover_Your_Spiritual_Gifts.pdf</a>
<b>Week 7:</b> The Worthy Walk (the unity of the Spirit)	Ephesians 3:14-21	Have the group share their testimonies from memory. (offer feedback) Assign opportunities to share it.
<b>Week 8: The Worthy Walk</b> (the gift of Christ and the unity of faith and knowledge)	Ephesians 4:1-6	Hand out a gospel presentation and review the content. <a href="https://www.cru.org/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html">https://www.cru.org/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html</a>
<b>Week 9: The different walk</b> (the Gentiles walk; putting off the old; putting on the new)	Ephesians 4:7-16	Discuss the gospel presentation and model using it.

<b>Week 10: The different walk</b> (practical application)	Ephesians 4:17-24	Finish discussing a gospel presentation, and have people pair up and practice.
<b>Week 11: The loving walk</b> (walking in love)	Ephesians 4:25-32	Have several people do the “Your Story, My Story and God’s Story” by memory.
<b>Week 12: The loving walk</b> (walking in light)	Ephesians 5:1-14	Have people share their explanation of the “Spirit Filled Life” concept and share any gospel opportunities.
<b>Week 13: Submission in practical relationships</b> (wives/husbands)	Ephesians 5:15-20	Role Play, “Your story, My story, God’s Story- and share any gospel opportunities you have had.
<b>Week 14: Submission in practical relationships</b> (children/parents; workers / bosses)	Ephesians 5:21-33	Role Play, “Your story, My story, God’s Story- and share any gospel opportunities.
<b>Week 15: Christian Walk</b>	Ephesians 6:1-9	Bondage Breaker Concept 1a: Discuss: “Who was I before Christ” and “Who am I now”. Assign Action Item #1
<b>Week 16: Spiritual Warfare</b>	Ephesians 6:10-20	Bondage Breaker Concept 1b: Review assignment of action items #1-2 Discuss: Where do I place my faith?-- Assign action item #2
<b>Week 17: Debrief and challenge to parent others</b>	Ephesians 6: 21-24  Review the pathway to discipleship circle. Debrief this Quadrant 3 experience.	Make a list of people to challenge to a Three Column Form and when you will speak with them-share as prayer requests.



The Gospel Centered Life by World Harvest Mission

## Week 15 Application Exercise

### Bondage Breaker Concept #1a

Ephesians 6:10-20—Put on the Armor of God: What does that look like?

#### 1. Key Truths:

##### a. Who was I before Christ:

- i. God designed us to be secure, significant and accepted but original sin changed everything and Jesus came to restore this to us.
- ii. When we become Christians we become secure, significant, and accepted in Jesus even if we don't always feel like it.
- iii. Significant (I am special!):
  1. Chosen and appointed by God- Jn. 15:16
  2. I am a temple of God Spirit- 1 Cor. 3:16
  3. I am a minister of making peace for God- 2 Cor. 5:17-21
  4. I am God's workmanship to do good works- Ephesians 3:12
  5. I can do all things through Christ- Phil. 4:13
  6. I am part of God's family and have a role to play- 1 Cor. 12:27
- iv. Secure (I am not alone or unprotected):
  1. I am assured that in every circumstance God works for my good- Rom. 8:28
  2. I cannot be separated from God's love Rom. 8:31-34
  3. I am sure that the good work God started in me will be perfected- Phil 1:6
  4. I am a citizen of heaven- Phil. 3:20
  5. I am safe with Christ in God- Col. 3:3
  6. I am a child of God and safe from any evil- 1 John 5:18
- v. I am accepted (no longer rejected as in Christ I am completely accepted):
  1. I am God's child- John 1:12
  2. I am Jesus' chosen friend- John 15:15
  3. I am holy and acceptable to God- Rom. 5:1
  4. I am a saint, a holy person- Ephesians 1:1
  5. I have been completely forgiven- Col. 1:14
  6. I am complete in Christ- Col. 2:10

##### b. Who am I now?

- i. I was a sinner but have now become a saint, transformed by Jesus, I am a child of God! As a child I have a brand new identity and heart but if I don't believe it, I will act as I use to act.
- ii. We now have God's Spirit in us and can live free from the old self.
- iii. I now turn away from thinking lies about God such as:
  1. He is distant and not interested in me.

2. He is stern and demanding
  3. He is too busy for me or not there
  4. He is impatient, angry or never satisfied with what I do
  5. He is mean, cruel or abusive
  6. He is trying to take all the fun out of life
  7. He is condemning or not forgiving
  8. He is looking for faults or expecting me to be perfect
- iv. I joyfully accept and act upon the truth about who God really is:
1. He is close and involved in my life- Ps. 139: 1-18
  2. He is kind and caring- Ps. 103: 8-14
  3. He is accepting of me and is filled with joy and love- Rom. 15:7; Zephaniah 3:17
  4. He is patient and slow to get angry and delights in those who put their hope in his unfailing love- Exodus 34:6; 2 Peter 3:9; Ps. 147:11
  5. He is loving and gentle and protects me- Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 42:3; Ps. 18:2
  6. He is to be trusted and wants to give me the best possible life- Lamentations 3:22,23; John 10:10; Romans 12:1-2
  7. He is kind and forgiving; His heart and arms are always open to me- Ps. 130:1-4; Luke 15: 17-24
  8. He wants me to grow and is proud of me- Rom. 8:28; Hebrews 12:5-11; 2 Cor. 5:17

2. Action Items #1:

- a. First review these lists each day for a week
- b. Pick one verse from above that particularly stands out to you, write it on a 3x5 card and say it out loud, and memorize it this week.

Week 16 Application Exercise

Bondage Breaker Concept #1b

Ephesians 6: 10-20—Put on the Armor God: What does that look like?

3. Key Truth:

- a. Where do I place my faith, based on what is true for me?
  - i. We all live by faith so where do we place our faith?
  - ii. Our actions really show what we truly believe. If we trust in the truths of God's Word, it will show in our daily actions.
  - iii. What can I do to make this practical?
    1. Don't say, "I can't" when the Bible says I can- Phil. 4:13

2. Don't be in lack of anything when God says He will supply my needs – Phil. 4:19
3. Don't be afraid when the Bible says God has not given me a spirit of fear- 2 Timothy 1:7
4. Don't be weak when the Bible says that the Lord is my strength- Ps. 27:1; Daniel 11:32
5. Don't allow Satan supremacy over my life when the Holy Spirit in me is greater than Satan- 1 Jn. 4:4
6. Don't be depressed when I can call to mind God's lovingkindness, compassion, and faithfulness and have hope- Lamentations 3:21-23
7. Don't worry and fret when I can cast my anxiety on Christ who cares for me- 1 Peter 5:7
8. Don't be a slave to what holds me back knowing that where the Spirit of God is there is freedom- 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1
9. Don't feel condemned when the Bible says I am not condemned in Christ- Rom. 8:1
10. Don't feel alone when Jesus said He with me always and will never leave me- Mat. 28:20; Heb. 13:5
11. Don't be discontented when I can learn to be content like the Apostle Paul- Phil. 4:11
12. Don't feel worthless when Christ died for me that I might become the righteousness of God in Christ- 2 Cor. 5:21
13. Don't be confused when God is the author of peace and gives knowledge through the Holy Spirit in me- 1 Cor. 14:33, 2:12
14. Don't feel like a failure since I am more than a conqueror in Christ- Rom.8:37
15. Don't let the pressures of life bother me when I can take courage knowing that Jesus has overcome the world and its tribulations- John 16:33

Action Item #2:

Pray the armor of God each day this week. Put on the above truths and reject the lies you have been thinking and feeling about yourself!

Practice the verse you have chosen to memorize and/or memorize another verse that is key for you.

## Three Column Study

<p><b>Content:</b> What do you see in the passage? (observations)</p>	<p><b>Analysis:</b> What do the verses mean? (interpretation)</p>	<p><b>Reflection:</b> How can I apply these verses? (application)</p>
		<p><b>Action:</b> What will I obey this week?</p>



I will through the help of God...

Have everyone share an "I will statement"

Name	I will through the help of God





