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DAY 1

Introduction

Orientation and Introduction

I'm glad you are serious about your role as a disciple. It is crucial that we align ourselves to what God has revealed about discipleship and, how it should impact us at the core of our identity. As you spend the next month/30 days evaluating your own commitment and calling, I pray that you will carefully examine the material that we have prepared. Each day is designed to give you a clearer picture of some aspect of a disciple's role at Yosemite Church. The effectiveness of our church will be determined by how well each of us is growing and becoming the person Christ wants us to be as members of His body. The great evangelist, John Wesley said, "Without God, we cannot. Without us, He will not."

The journey of discipleship was never intended to be done in isolation. Discipleship is the pursuit of becoming like Christ. It is the conviction that follows our conversion. When we accept a relationship with Christ, we are no longer living life independent of God. Instead, we are admitting to and accepting our dependence upon God and the body of Christ, of which he calls us to be an active participant.

As you work through the Discipleship Devotional, there are several terms that I will use to describe the kind of person Christ calls each of us to be. Each of these terms is used in Scriptures for those who followed and committed themselves to Christ.

The first term is "Disciple." This is the most prominent term used in the New Testament to identify Christ followers. The word "Disciple" is used 269 times. The word "Christian," in contrast, is used only 3 times and is always referring to the disciples. Dallas Willard says, "The New Testament was written about disciples, by disciples, for disciples."

The second term is "Partner," or "Partnership." This is the term we use to describe those who have committed themselves to be "part" of our church family. Even though this term is used infrequently in Scripture, we believe it strikes a better chord than the more traditional term "member" or "membership." What we like about the term "Partner" is the implication of participation with others within the body of Christ. One of the first passages

we will look at this week will help to explain why this term fits so well as a description of those who have "joined" or "committed themselves" to cooperate with God's people for God's work.

The final term that I will use frequently is "Servant," or "Servanthood." There is probably no better term to describe how Christ lived and how He calls every disciple to live. Servanthood stands out as the chief attribute of all Christ followers regardless of their giftedness or position in the ministry of the Church. As disciples, who are active participants in the ministry of the church, we are all called to model a life of servanthood.

This devotional is the introduction to being a Partner of Yosemite Church and a disciple of Jesus Christ. As Partners in our church, we are assuming a position of responsibility. We are seeking to become examples of growing, committed believers.

How to Use this Devotional

You will need your Bible to accompany this study. The material is divided into 25 days and takes 20-30 minutes per day to prayerfully work through, so please prioritize some time daily. We suggest you set aside 20-30 minutes per day Monday through Friday, and use your weekend days to "catch-up" if you need it. Please do not try to cram multiple days into one. The more you prioritize your time to work daily on this devotional, the more you will be forming a healthy habit of study.

Be sure to dialogue with your leader, coach, or accountability partner any questions that arise out of the study. At the end of each week you will find a section titled "Your Week in Review." Use this section to facilitate a time of reflection and dialogue with an accountability partner or leader. Please be prepared to share what you have learned about disciples, servant-hood, and Partnership.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jeff

DAY 1

Devotional/Preparation Time

Preparation Time

To make the most of this devotional, find a quiet place to work through each day's material. Psalm 46:10 reminds us, *"Be still and know that I am God."* Once you have quieted yourself, take a few minutes and prayerfully consider the following:

- Are there any attitudes or perspectives I need to submit to Christ's Lordship in my life?
- Are there areas of sin that I need to confess?
- After you have surrendered the above areas, ask the Lord to reveal His purposes to your heart and mind through this study.

Before you finish today, write your first gut reaction toward each of the key terms below, i.e., scared, excited, intimidated, etc.

1) Disciple: _____
2) Partner: _____
3) Servant: _____

Prayer Focus:

I have written a prayer focus for each day. I want to encourage you to simply engage the Lord in prayer, a conversation between you and your Savior, your Friend, the One you are learning to follow. Use my Prayer Focus, or make your own, or make it a combination. I want to help you establish a habit of submitting everything you learn to Him in prayer.

"Lord, I want to be a better follower. Help me to know you more so that more of who I am will reflect who you are." Amen.

DAY 2

Christ Follower

Week One

For the remainder of this week, we will look at seven qualities that are crucial for our spiritual development. Jesus is the picture of servanthood. He illustrates a life driven by service, not status, and by humility instead of a hunger for power.

As you examine these seven qualities, you may not feel like your life reflects a perfect match. That's okay so long as your heart desires to do what it takes to pursue them.

Allow the Lord to draw you into a more focused pursuit to be His servant/disciple. Today we will look at the first two of the seven qualities: 1) being a "Christ Follower"; and 2) your "Character."

Christ Follower – Disciples Have A Passion for Christ

Christ is the single most distinguishing factor from all other religious systems within Christianity. Jesus makes all the difference. His life is the life we work to emulate. His words are the transcript of our faith. His death and resurrection are the greatest apologetic to our beliefs. C.S. Lewis said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

Today, the most predominant characteristic of a disciple is being a "Christ follower." Jesus' words, to the early disciples, left no doubt in their minds, *"Come, follow me."* (Mark 1:17), was a clear invitation to make Jesus the guiding light of their lives. After looking up the passages below, answer each corresponding question about how you are learning to follow Christ.

- Turning from sin in my life to follow Christ. (1 John 1:9, Romans 6:6)

  ☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

DAY 2

Christ Follower

- Spending time in God's Word and in prayer to know Christ better. (Colossians 3:16, 1 Peter 2:2)
  ❑ Poor ❑ Fair ❑ Good ❑ Excellent

- Being filled with His Spirit – learning to give Him control in my life. (Romans 12:3, Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25, Ephesians 5:18)
  ❑ Poor ❑ Fair ❑ Good ❑ Excellent

- Using my gifts in ministry as an expression of my passion to follow His example of service. (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Peter 4:10-11)
  ❑ Poor ❑ Fair ❑ Good ❑ Excellent

- Learning to persevere in adversity, as I trust Him to work all things for my good. (Romans 5:3-5, Philippians 1:29, 1 Peter 4:12-14)
  ❑ Poor ❑ Fair ❑ Good ❑ Excellent

DAY 2

Character – Disciples Pay Attention To The Heart

Character

Depth of Character is a matter of becoming more like Christ and less like the world. Oswald Chambers, the beloved author of My Utmost For His Highest, said: "God can give us a pure heart in an instant but He cannot quickly bring us Christian character. That takes time and can come only through a series of right moral choices." Don't be discouraged, my friend, if your character development is not where you think it should be. The more critical question is not where you are now, but which direction is your character going? What area in your life has God been transforming to Him instead of the world?

Response:

1 Timothy 1:5 says *"The goal of our command is love which comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith."* What do you think Paul means when he tells Timothy that our goal, or target, is "love"? To hit the target or goal, Paul says three things are necessary: a pure heart, good conscience and a sincere faith. How do you maintain these in your life?

Response:

Prayer Focus:

"Lord, I know that I want to follow you. Thank you for giving me a new spirit—your Spirit. Thank you for your forgiveness. Help me to submit my heart and life to you. Change my character, Lord. Use this study to make me more like you. Amen."

DAY 3

CALLING AND COMMITMENT

Calling

Disciples Are Called to Care About People

Disciples have a heart for others. They see others with compassion, as Christ saw them in Matthew 9:36-38:

> *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

How has God impressed upon you the call of being compassionate or the conviction to use what you have for the care of others? The size of the need—"the harvest" is what Jesus says should compel us to be a part of the solution. That is the call. Jesus is asking, "Will you help?" Mother Theresa said, "When I look at the masses, I'll never act. When I look at the one, I will." How are you doing at answering His call to care about others?

Response:

Disciples Are Called To Be Responsible

Disciples are willing to assume responsibility for a task. They take the time to develop the life skills needed to effectively participate in service and community. Disciples also possess the ability to have some area of ministry "turned over" to them (Acts 6:3). As you read through the following list, check areas where you feel the most competent, and where you feel the least competent.

Most	Least	
❑	❑	Time management
❑	❑	Conflict resolution
❑	❑	Good listening skills
❑	❑	Understanding the Old Testament
❑	❑	Understanding the New Testament
❑	❑	Can easily explain how to become a Christ Follower
❑	❑	Healthy boundaries with others

DAY 3

Commitment

Commitment– Disciples Do What It Takes

Servanthood requires commitment, not convenience. We will never advance God's kingdom because it is easy or convenient. It will only happen as we take measures to draw upon Him for the strength to follow through on our commitments. Disciples are committed not only to grow themselves but to see others grow in Christ, as well as reaching new people for Christ. How do the following passages call us to contribute to reaching others? Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 16:1-4, 2 Timothy 2:2.

Response:

Do you see yourself as a "servant" or "minister" of Christ? If so, how have you been stretched in your commitment to ministry? Has God dealt with any attitude of "convenience" that has challenged you to be more committed? If so, please describe.

Response:

Prayer Focus:

Harry Fosdick, a pastor from the last century said, "No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated and disciplined." Ask the Lord to help you to grow a great life. Spend a few minutes praying for your focus, dedication and discipline.

"Lord, use me to be a blessing to others within the body of Christ and help me to refuse to disengage or choose not to serve just because I may not be 'good enough.' Help me, Lord, to get better at the things that matter most. Amen."

DAY 4

COOPERATION AND CAPACITY

Cooperation

Disciples Learn to Cooperate With Those they Serve

Today, we will look at your ability to cooperate with others and your capacity as a disciple. Being a disciple requires making room for ministry and doing whatever it takes to make your contribution. This means prioritizing the time, energy, and resources to serve. Servants must have the capacity (spiritual, emotional and physical resources) to do what God has called them to do.

Serving in ministry requires cooperation with those in leadership and with those with whom we serve. Teams are successful when people with different gifts and skills work together. All of us disciples are called to serve and be a participant. What do the following passages tell us about partnering and cooperating with others to create a stronger team/church body? Please read 1 Corinthians12 and Romans 12:4-8. As you read these passages, make note of how the word "part" is used.

Response:

What do you believe makes an effective team?

Response:

What part of Christ's body do you think you are?

Response:

DAY 4

Capacity—Discipleship Requires A Capacity To Serve

Capacity

Capacity. This important area is often overlooked. Some individuals may have the other six qualities (Christ follower, character, calling, competence, cooperation and even commitment) and yet have a plate so full, they are unable to serve. Steven Pauls said, "The space for what you want has already been filled with what you have settled for instead." Peter Drucker said, "We must know the value of planned abandonment; we must decide what not to do."

What do the following passages ask its original reader to "give up"? (Matthew 8:21-22, 16:24-26; and Philippians 2:3)

Response:

What have you said "no" to (given up), so you can say "yes" to ministry? Describe the experience.

Response:

Is there something you need to say "no" to, so you can say "yes" to ministry?

Response:

Prayer Focus:

To exercise "planned abandonment" is not an easy task but when we realize that there is something better that we can be doing, we then, have a better motivation. God wants to give us a life of peace, joy, mercy, community, friendship and fulfillment; but until we are ready to make space for Him and for His kingdom, we will continue to hold on to things and activities that just make us stressed and tired. Tell the Lord today what you want to let go of, so you can get a better grip on Him and His kingdom.

DAY 5

Motivation

Motivation

In Luke 6:45 Jesus said:

> *"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."*

Zig Ziglar said: "People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing—that's why we recommend it daily."

Today we will be looking at two lists; one will focus on "healthy" motives, and the other "unhealthy" motives for service. As you do so, remember that none of us operate at a level of 100% purity all of the time. Serving in ministry is a constant atmosphere of development. Psalm 51:6 (MSG) says, *"What you're after is truth from the inside out. Enter me then; conceive a new, true life."* Each day requires an intentional focus on the best that is within us.

Healthy Motives

Under each of the following passages, explain how you can apply this passage to your own life.

Glorify the Lord

> "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*" (Colossians 3:23-24)
>
> **Response:**

DAY 5

Motivation

Bear Fruit in your Life

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." (John 15:8)

Response:

Use your Gifts to Serve One Another

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Response:

Be Gracious to those who Fail

". . . God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:19-20)

Response:

DAY 5

Wrong Motives / Hindrances To Service

Motivation

Wrong or unhealthy motives are a part of our "flesh." Every one of us has wrong motives, but only those willing to face them can change them.

Explain how you could be vulnerable to one of the following motives. How does it manifest itself in your life?

Self-Exaltation

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips." (Proverbs 27:2)

Response:

To Feel Important or Gain Prestige

"We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else." (1 Thessalonians 2:4-6)

Response:

Having a Short Fuse or Exhibiting Outbursts of Anger

James tells us that the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:19-20). God's work is accomplished by one who listens attentively, speaks only when necessary, and is slow to anger. We need to manage our anger appropriately. (Galatians 5:19-20, Ephesians 4:31, Colossians 3:8).

Response:

DAY 5

Unconfessed Sin

We are called to confess our sins. John says, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*" 1 John 1:9. Any sin that has control of us (Romans 6:16) must be confessed and brought under the lordship of Christ (Acts 2:38). If there is any outstanding sin in our life and it is not dealt with appropriately, it can cause our growth to stagnate or even derail our progress.

Response:

Motivation

After reading this section, how would you say you've learned to deal with any wrong motives or hindrances to your life with Christ? Sometimes through failure, when I "speak too soon" or fall into "mind reading," God gives me greater insight into areas that need some adjustment. Usually, it is then that the learning and surrender (or resurrender) is the greatest. Describe a time when you had to make a "heart" or attitude adjustment.

Response:

Prayer Focus:

As you close your time, please remember to lift up in prayer anyone you know who is currently going through this material. Pray specifically that our church Council, elders and staff will have wisdom and be protected and strengthened as they lead. Pray for your leader or coach, and ask that God would knit our hearts together as you learn from one another.

Ask the Lord to show you any motivations that need adjustment to become more healthy.

WEEK IN REVIEW

END WEEK 1

1. On day 1 Pastor Jeff introduced three key terms that will be prominent throughout this study. What were your first "gut reactions" to each word/term? How are these terms or concepts similar and how are they different?

2. From Day 2 to Day 4, we looked at seven areas of development: Christ Follower, Character, Calling, Competence, Cooperation, Commitment and Capacity. Which area spoke to you the most and why?

3. Looking specifically at your observations from Day 3, under "called to be responsible," in which areas were you the most competent, and why?

4. On Day 5, we looked at right and wrong motives. All of us are guilty from time to time of having a wrong motive. Which wrong motive did you feel most vulnerable to and why?

After sharing your answers to the above questions with your accountability partner, mentor, leader or small group, take a few minutes to pray for one another. If you are new to praying out loud, just try to pray one sentence, like this: "Lord, thank you for _____, their friendship and acceptance. Amen."

WEEK 2
DAY 6

The Inspired Word, Intrinsic Worth, Intimate Walk, Investment Work and Intentional Witness

Five Values

The Five YC Values

This week we will focus each day on one of our five values. An organization's values are its guiding principles. They are non-negotiables that ring true regardless of cultural fluctuation. The YC values were articulated several years ago and are easy to remember. In order for our values to have a significant impact on our church, we must embrace them and communicate them at every level of our church's structure and life. Today we will ask ourselves how we personally express the values of our church. Find that quiet place again, then reflect on the value for the day, answer a few questions of personal application and then take a minute to copy the "memory verse" for that value onto a 3x5 card for the purpose of committing it to memory. You cannot do what you cannot remember. One of our goals as a church is that we are all becoming more skilled in out ability to navigate the Scriptures. By committing to memorize each key verse that goes with each value, you will begin to build a stronger connection to God's Word.

As you read the Scripture and comment, try to guess the "I.W." words that go in each blank for that value. As you close your time, remember to pray for those in leadership, asking that God will protect and keep them focused on Him.

1. We value the _____ of God.

Memory Verse: *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

After reading the Scripture, can you guess the value that it represents? The "Inspired Word," (the answer to #1) the Bible, is not just a book; it is a living expression of God, revealing Himself to mankind. Read Hebrews 4:12-13 and then answer this question: How do you practically seek to let the Scriptures serve as your personal authority?

Response:

DAY 6

Read 2 Timothy 2:15. What do you think the author is challenging us to do or be, and how does this Scripture fit into that?

> *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15)

Response:

Five Values

A young believer was discouraged in his attempts to read and remember the Bible. He said, "It's no use. No matter how much I read, I always forget what I have just read." His pastor gave him this perspective, "When you pour water over a sieve, no matter how much you pour, you don't collect much water. But you do end up having a clean sieve."

I'd like to suggest a couple of thoughts to help you raise the value of the Inspired Word of God in your own life.

Getting into the Word:

1) It is not as important that you get through the Bible as it is for the Bible to get through you. If you never put the Scriptures in, God has nothing to bring out. We have implemented a devotional opportunity that can ripple throughout our whole church. We are utilizing a reading schedule that will take you through the Bible in a year - that's you, getting through the Bible. As you use your Journey Journal and the tool of the acrostic below to hear and know God better - that's the Bible getting through you. Here's how it works. Each day you read, open your Journey Journal and respond to the SOAP acrostic by writing:

   S = Scripture for that day
   O = Observation from the text
   A = a personal Application from the text that you can apply directly to your life, and
   P = is what you will Pray about, or better, your recorded prayer stimulated by your reading and study.

DAY 6

Five Values

Getting the Word into you:

2) Conviction is worthless unless it is converted into conduct. I may be inspired to read and know the Scriptures. I may want to be able to articulate what I believe; but until meditation of truth is woven into the fabric of my life, I'll never achieve the spiritual life to which God is calling me. If you can consistently dedicate 5-15 minutes of the best part of your day (when you are the most alert and sharp) and fill it with God's truth, I guarantee it will impact your choices and behavior. As we move forward as a church, it is crucial that we, as the individual members, live out our value of the Inspired Word of God.

PRAYER FOCUS:

I'd like to introduce you to a concept called "pray the Scriptures." The idea is to take a given passage and simply put the text into a prayer. This week as you close each day, try to pray through the memory verse for that day. Today's prayer might go something like this: "Lord, all Scripture is breathed out by you. As I read and meditate on your word, teach me what I need to know. Redirect me if I am falling away from you. Correct me if I am straying from the path I should be on, and train me to stay the course, so that I may become thoroughly equipped for every good work. Amen."

DAY 7

The Inspired Word, Intrinsic Worth, Intimate Walk, Investment Work and Intentional Witness

Five Values

Today, as you examine our second value, I hope you will be comforted and encouraged by what you learn. Today's value fits nicely with a quote from St. Augustine — one of the earliest Church fathers (300 A.D.), "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

2.We value the _____of every person. (The "I.W." answer is below the verses for this value.)

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Memory Verse: *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."* (Psalms 139:13-14)

"Intrinsic Worth" (the answer to #2) are the "I.W." words for this value. If each person has been made in God's own image and if each of us is valuable enough for God to send his Son to die for us, then each of us has value, Intrinsic Worth, at the core of who we are.

How would this value impact the way you see and treat others?
Response:

What implication do you see for our church because of this value?
Response:

DAY 7

All of us wonder from time to time if we would be missed if we did not show up. We can feel insignificant in such a busy world.

Sir Michael Costa was conducting a rehearsal in which the orchestra was being joined by a great chorus. About half-way through the session, with trumpets blaring, drums rolling, and violins singing their rich melody, the piccolo player muttered to himself: "What good am I doing? I might as well not be playing. Nobody can hear me." So he placed his instrument to his lips but did not engage it with his breath. Within moments the conductor cried out: "Stop! Stop! Where is the piccolo?"

Five Values

I'm sure that many who were in attendance did not realize the piccolo was missing, but the most important one did. Why? Because his ears were trained to hear each instrument. He had developed an awareness of what was needed to most powerfully communicate the heart of the musical expression.

When we value the Intrinsic Worth of people, we are seeking to develop an ear to the sound of people who feel insignificant, who question if anyone will notice them or whether they are missing.

We can effectively love people as we commit to building relationships where others are welcomed into a place to be heard, listened to, valued and cared for. You can't hear everyone, but you can hear someone. Maybe your phone call, your encouragement, your interest in their presence or absence will be what draws them back into the music of God's purposes.

Prayer Focus:

Look back over the Scriptures that we considered today. Praying through Scripture is a great way to apply it directly to your heart. For example: Psalm 139:13-14, might sound like this as a prayer: "Lord, thank you for creating me, for knowing me before I knew myself. Lord you know me better than I know myself. Even when I doubt my worth and value, I am comforted by the truth that you see me as wonderfully made. Amen." Let the truth of God's knowledge and purposes for you sink a little deeper into your heart.

DAY 8

The Inspired Word, Intrinsic Worth, Intimate Walk, Investment Work and Intentional Witness

Five Values

Today's value is at the heart of all that we do. Don't forget to write out each memory verse on a 3x5 card to carry with you as you work to prioritize what we value.

3. We value an _____ with God. (The "I.W." answer is below the verses for this value.)

   "Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God's Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God." (1 John 4:15 (MSG))

   "What you're after is truth from the inside out. Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life." (Psalm 51:6 (MSG))

Memory Verse: *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."* (John 15:11-14)

An "Intimate Walk" with God is at the center of our values. The first two values flow into this value and the last two values flow out of it. From the Scriptures, what do you see and how would you describe this value in your own words?

Response:

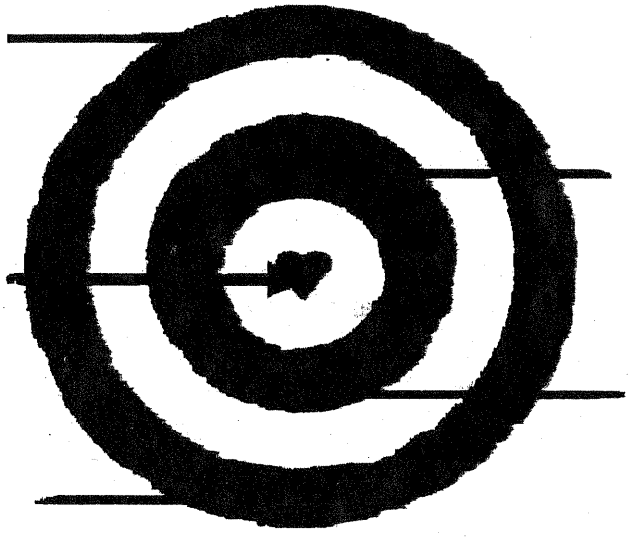
What have you recently experienced from your intimacy with God?

Response:

DAY 8

Five Values

As the third of five, it is the middle and center of the other four YC Values. When we help people discover intimacy with God, we hit the bullseye.



A four-year-old girl ran to her mother with a look of consternation. Hugging a small doll with her pudgy little arms, she said: "Mama, I love her and love her, but she never loves back!"

God loves us, and loves us, and loves us with the hope that we would love him back. We, like the four-year-old girl's doll, often remain unresponsive to God's embrace. Not because we are incapable, as the doll, of loving, but because we are preoccupied with other things.

Ephesians 5:1-2 says: "*...as dearly loved children,* ***live a life of love...***" God doesn't want to have a loving encounter with us. He wants a loving relationship. Intimacy must be an ongoing target. Unfortunately, in our busy culture, it can often seem to be a moving target.

DAY 8

When the Psalmist wrote, *"...be still and know that I am God..."*, in Psalm 46:10, he wasn't thinking of aiming at a target, but he was aiming (zeroing in on) a more accurate relationship with God.

What are three things that you can do to foster your intimacy with God?
Response:

Five Values

Prayer Focus:

Ask the Lord to remind you today what the bullseye value can do for you as you go through your day. Ask him to show you how you would make better choices if you could keep in mind how much he loves you. "Lord, as we seek to walk in intimacy with you, help us to remember that holding still and clearly focusing on our relationship with you is the best way to hit the bullseye."

DAY 9

The Inspired Word, Intrinsic Worth, Intimate Walk, Investment Work and Intentional Witness

Five Values

As a young adult, I worked for a small furniture refinishing shop called The Master's Touch, in Gresham, Oregon. I came to the business with some experience. I had refinished antique furniture at my family's antique store for years while I was growing up. My new boss was extremely pleased that he could turn me loose on several projects with very little supervision.

It wasn't long though before both he and I knew where I needed considerable improvement and coaching — the finishing booth. I had never used a spray gun and had never known all that could be accomplished with shading to manipulate the final look of a product.

Over and over, my mentor would show me how to mix, shade, tint, and spray different applications. I loved the chance to improve my part-time trade and found myself watching his seasoned discernment in multiple areas.

Two things were crucial for the growth I experienced as a finisher in the four years I worked for The Master's Touch: 1) I had to be open and receptive to being taught; and 2) I needed someone who was willing and persistent (and often patient) to teach me. Likewise, in your spiritual journey, you need the Master's touch. The Master Jesus has devised a plan, a mission, and a means by which He wants to develop and improve your ability to love and lead others to a loving relationship with God.

Most of us come to God like the furniture that came to me at The Master's Touch — scratched up, worn down, and sometimes broken. Unfortunately, we cannot heal ourselves. We do not experience the mending and rebuilding that God desires without the time and attention and patience of someone willing to lovingly instruct and guide us in our journey.

Our church will only accomplish God's calling as we prioritize our time to invest in discipling relationships. When we do, we will powerfully experience the Master's touch.

Today's value is the driving force behind this Devotional and the work it calls us to.

DAY 9

4. We value the _____of discipleship.

Memory Verse: *"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 to you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:19-20)

"Investment Work" (the answer to #4) is our description of the Great Commission. No other Scripture captures the essence of the assignment that Jesus gave. In a single sentence it is the clearest instruction of what we are to be about.

Five Values

How are you or how would you like to see this value expressed in your life?
Response:

How do you think "discipling" would be an investment?
Response:

Have you ever been "discipled" in any way by anyone? If so, describe the experience.
Response:

Prayer Focus:

As you pray through Matthew 28:19-20, start your prayer by saying, "Lord, help me to learn to invest in the Great Commission to go and make disciples . . . " Lord, show each of us what our next step should be to make this value a personal reality.

DAY 10

The Inspired Word, Intrinsic Worth, Intimate Walk, Investment Work and Intentional Witness

5. We value the _____of unity. (The "I.W." answer is below the verses for this value.)

Memory Verse: *"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."* (John 17:20-21)

> *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."* Ephesians 4:3

Five Values

After reading the above Scriptures, what words do you think we've chosen to describe this value? Jesus prays for our unity; He commands our unity, and even tells us why it is of such importance, *"so that the world may believe that you have sent me."* (John 17:21) We must be very "intentional" about our "witness" of unity; it's not just going to happen. Therefore, "Intentional Witness" (the answer to #5) is our last core value.

What do you think are the barriers to unity in the body of Christ?
Response:

How could our church communicate this value?
Response:

As individuals, how can we promote unity among believers?
Response:

DAY 10

Five Values

The tactical saying, "divide and conquer," is one of Satan's primary approaches to nullify the effectiveness of any group of believers. It could be a cluster of Christians in the marketplace, a Christian couple or family, or a local church. When Satan can tempt us to be more concerned with our opinion, idea, or agenda than we are with unity, cooperation, and concern for others, he has been successful.

Jesus prayed for the "Intentional Witness of unity." In John 17:20 he said: "*...I pray also for those who will believe in me...*" Notice His future tense. He is praying for us, all of the Christ followers, who would join the family of God after his resurrection. He goes on to say in verse 21[a], *"...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us..."* Okay, here is where it gets very **"Intentional."** What happens when we are expressing "oneness"? He finishes verse 21[b] *"...so that the world may believe that you have sent me."* WOW! When we illustrate the ability and commitment to "build up" rather than "tear down," we magnify an unbeliever's exposure to Christ, and we take away a primary obstacle to faith.

Nothing disheartens children more than parents who cannot resolve their past differences. When they witness the two most important people in the world embroiled in divorce, arguing with no commitment to reconcile, it compromises their core belief system. In a similar manner, when believers fail to "*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace*" (Ephesians 4:3), we send a compromising message to those wondering how a spiritual family could be a viable alternative to the world's system.

What can you do this week, even today to express the Intentional Witness of unity?
Response:

Prayer Focus

"Lord, today we will rub shoulders with believers and unbelievers. We ask for your power and presence to be seen in us. Lord inspire in us an intentional (choosing to act) demonstration of our commitment to *"...love one another. As you have loved us..."* (John 13:34). Thank you Lord for our spiritual family. Draw others to you through our relationships. Amen."

WEEK IN REVIEW

END WEEK 2

1. Have you ever taken the time to articulate what your values are? Why would such an exercise be of any value and what would you say are your top three values?

2. What is the evidence in a person's life that points to their values?

3. The five values we have looked at this week are in their order for a reason. They build on one another and have a natural movement to them. Why is the "Inspired Word of God" our first value? How is this value being lived out in our church and in your life?

4. What is the significance of the "Intrinsic Worth of Every Person"? How can this value be cultivated in my life as an individual and as a community of believers?

5. What is the point of the "bullseye" value, and how do you nurture this value in your own life or how would you like to see it nurtured more?

6. We will be talking a lot about discipleship in the weeks to come. What does the wording around this value infer, and how prominent should it be to each of us and why?

7. Concerning our 5th value, how does John 17, impact you and what you can do to respond more effectively to what Jesus prayed?

WEEK 3
DAY 11

THE YC MISSION

"Meeting People Where They Are and Loving Them To Where Christ Wants Them To Be"

The well-respected consultant, Peter Drucker, said "Mission comes first. The mission of non-profits, including churches, is changed lives." How very accurate he is. We must be about the business of helping people change in order to become more like Christ.

Today, we will spend some time meditating on our Mission Statement. Meditation and memorization are two of the most powerful tools for a growing believer. Let's ask God to work into our lives the calling He has given us. As you read the Scriptures, consider your personal role as a disciple and try to envision how you can personally contribute to the accomplishment of our mission.

YC Mission

Our Mission

Our Mission is to "Meet people where they are and love them to where Christ wants them to be." We cannot accomplish together what we do not embrace individually. Look up the passages below and describe how you believe Jesus modeled our Mission Statement.

John 3:1-21: The religious teacher, Nicodemus

Response:

John 4:4-42: The Samaritan woman

Response:

John 8:1-11: The woman caught in adultery

Response:

DAY 11

Describe how the following verses' connect to our Mission Statement:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

Response:

YC Mission

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matthew 5:43-47)

Response:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2)

Response:

DAY 11

How has our study today impacted your perspective of our church and your personal commitment to our mission?

Response:

YC Mission

Prayer Focus:

How are you praying for the people around you? Take a moment to ask the Lord to guide you to those you can be loving to a better place. Ask God to help you be intentional about these relationships.

The following prayer comes from Ephesians 1:17-18. Pray this prayer specifically for the relationships God has placed on your heart.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give ____ (name) the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that _____ may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of _____'s heart may be enlightened in order that _____ may know the hope to which He has called them. Amen"

Watch these relationships closely and continue to ask yourself how you can be a part of God's purposes in their lives.

DAY 12

THE YC VISION

YC Vision

DEFINITION OF A VISION: A picture on the screen of your mind that compels you to move forward despite obstacles

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."
(Proverbs 29:18 (KJV))

While visiting my parent's home for a holiday, I was amazed at the tireless work my mother put into family photo albums. Close to a dozen albums grace coffee tables and shelves. Each one reflects the value my mother places on family and heritage. Relatives, neighbors and friends will sit around for hours looking through the web of connections and hearing the stories that complement each photo.

I do not personally believe that "every picture is worth a thousand words." In fact, if one gives a camera to the wrong person, the film may not be worth the price to develop it! My son has taken some doozies. What do you do with multiple pictures of one's ceiling, a person's head being left out of the picture, or a photo of your dog's nostril from five inches away? On the other hand, some pictures are "priceless."

I also believe that pictures fill a need. I know that's a pretty strong statement but I think it's true. Pictures communicate; they reveal valuable things that could easily be forgotten or overlooked. They remind us of past experiences that hold significance and they disclose to us what someone or something looks like.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "Man's actions are the picture book of his creeds." Every life paints a picture. For some of us, we are still very much in the process of development. Others are already over-exposed, and still others feel as if their image has been damaged because of the negatives in their life. What do others see in your actions? Every choice we make puts color and definition on the canvas of our life. Our challenge is to have a vision of what we want; or better yet, what God would want others to see in us.

I do not think we should be preoccupied by what others think of us. On the other hand, we do need to be very preoccupied by what God has called us to communicate. Jesus said: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:34-35)

Would anyone be convinced about the love of God by your love for others? Our Vision Statement is a written description of what we believe it would look like if we, as a community of faith, are loving God and others as we are called to.

DAY 12

THE YC VISION STATEMENT:

YC is a community of grace where Christ is at the heart of all we do,
a center of activity where Jesus is discovered through relationships,
where we connect people to spiritual development at all levels,
where God's healing brings balance to life's hurts,
where the faithful are connected to the fallen,
where those who minister are ministered to, and
where we are equipped to extend Christ's love to the community and world around us.

Take a few moments and think through each of the components of this statement, put a checkmark ☑ by the two phrases that most resonate with you and your own spiritual journey.

YC Vision

- ☐ "YC is a community of grace where Christ is at the heart of all we do
- ☐ A center of activity where Jesus is discovered through relationships
- ☐ Where we connect people to spiritual development at all levels
- ☐ Where God's healing brings balance to life's hurts
- ☐ Where the faithful are connected to the fallen
- ☐ Where those who minister are ministered to, and
- ☐ Where we are equipped to extend Christ's love to the community and world around us."

Now write a short statement about why you selected the phrases you did.

Response:

DAY 12

The Desired Result of the Vision Statement...

We believe with God's help, as we passionately pursue our vision, the following will be accomplished by 2020:

> 75% of all attendees are actively pursuing spiritual growth by using a formal discipleship plan.
> Sufficient resources and leadership are functioning on and off site to minister to 5,000 attendees.
> Intentional partnerships are being formed with the larger Christian community to reach out and serve those in need.
> Offsite venues are being planted and opened throughout central California.

YC Vision

In order for Yosemite Church to "meet people where they are and love them to where Christ wants them to be", we must be a community of grace. Grace means "undeserved favor" — getting something you don't deserve. That is exactly what God does for us and what He calls us to do for others, as it says in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 "*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...*"
Now go back and circle "not counting men's sins against them."

The first line of our Vision Statement says "Christ is at the heart of all we do ..." Notice how just a few verses earlier in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, it makes the same point: "*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*" Christ is at the heart of all we do when we choose to no longer live for ourselves, but to live for Him who died for us and was raised again. When we are effectively doing that, it is the most natural thing in the world for "Jesus to be discovered through relationships..." (the second line of our Vision).

As we work to make our campus a "center of activity" (line two of the Vision), more and more people will be led into an intimate walk with God.

Jesus was the Master at meeting people where they were, and then loving them to a better place. That journey happens as people are able to "connect" to opportunities for "spiritual development" (line three of the Vision). We are the "ambassadors" 2 Corinthians is talking about. Others will be connected as we connect them. We are the ones who have the ability to make our Vision Statement a reality!

DAY 12

YC Vision

It's simply connecting the faithful with the fallen (line five of the Vision). We've all fallen and learned that the Lord promises (Philippians 1:6) to use every place of stumbling to equip us to help someone else (2 Corinthians1:3-5). We connect individuals to Christ through care and love and with a commitment to nurture them so they will in turn become increasingly faithful.

Sometimes when people are serving, giving, and trying to make a difference, they become *"weary in well doing"* (Galatians 6:9). We are committed to building an ever improving support structure that creates a safety net of relationships that will serve as a protection to those who are serving. I want to ask you to choose to commit to becoming a committed partner of our church family. I am confident that as we do, we will become the change we seek in in the world.

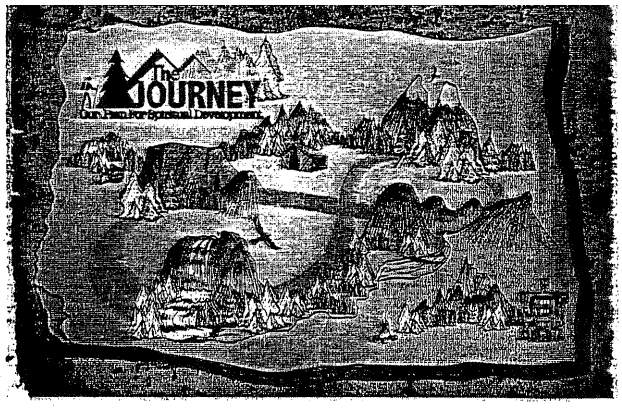
No one aspires to be mediocre, but God's way to greatness is different than that of this world. Look up Mark 10:43-45 and write a brief statement about where you think God might be giving you a vision to serve.

Response:

Prayer Focus:

Simply pray through our Vision Statement as a way of saying to God, "your kingdom come, your will be done."

DAY 13



MILE MARKERS

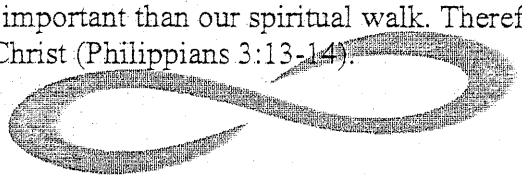
Mile Markers

Definition: A mile marker is a sign post, an indicator that you are making progress toward a desired goal or destination.

To fulfill our Mission and realize our Vision we must have a plan—a way to assess our direction and progress. We must answer the question, "how will we get people to where Christ wants them to be?" How will we be a place of grace and how will we bring into reality God's love and purposes for each person?

Over several years we have been working to clarify a clear and Biblical action plan for spiritual growth. In order to insure that we are not just generating motion without movement we need to be able to measure our progress. Can you imagine driving to Alabama without road signs, maps, mile markers, and no certainty that you were even going in the right direction? That would be extremely frustrating. Well, that's how many of us are living our spiritual lives. We keep going through the motions but we really aren't sure if we're making any significant movement in the direction Christ wants us to go.

Our Journey Map and Discipleship Plan is that resource. We ask every leader to work this plan and to lead those within their ministry team to make an intentional written plan on an annual basis. (See examples of a written plan in the Appendix, page 101.) There is no area in our life that is more important than our spiritual walk. Therefore, let us press on toward the goal of being like Christ (Philippians 3:13-14).



The infinity symbol is our road map for helping us know that we are going in the right direction and making healthy progress. It divides the spiritual growth process into four stages (Explore, Discover, Rely, and Surrender). Each stage has several "mile markers." Each mile marker represents a critical area of development that continues through each stage of growth.

Philippians 3:13-15 *Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you."*

DAY 13

Over the next several days, we'll be looking at six mile markers that every believer needs to incorporate into their spiritual journey to get to the place where Christ want them to be. I hope you will commit, along with hundreds of other YCers, to incorporate these Biblical principles into your life and ministry. To get a more in-depth perspective on how each mile marker evolves through the 4 stages of growth, pick up the Journey Discipleship Plan and begin to follow the suggested steps.

To help you get an overview of the Biblical basis of the Six Mile Markers, look at each of the following Scriptures and circle the mile marker word or variation of the word in the verses below.

Mile Markers

In the space below each point's verse or verses, write your own brief definition of each Biblical purpose from what you observe in the verse(s) about each mile marker.

1. The Worship mile marker

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:1-2)

"But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration." (John 4:23-24 (MSG))

Your definition:

Response:

2. The Fellowship mile marker

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42)

"All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another." (Acts 2:44 (TEV))

Your definition:

3. The Discipleship mile marker

"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 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 every I commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20)

Your definition:

4. The Partnership mile marker

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now..." (Philippians 1:4-5)

"Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:27 (NLT))

Your definition:

5. The Relationship Outreach mile marker

"God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships. In other words, God was using Christ to restore his relationship with humanity. He didn't hold people's faults against them, and he has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (GW))

Your definition:

6. The Stewardship mile marker

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:" (1 Peter 4:10 (ESV))

"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' [18] But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

Your definition:

Prayer Focus:

Let's ask the Lord to open our spiritual eyes this week to see how each of the six mile markers will help us as individuals and collectively to be the Church God is calling us to be.

DAY 14

THE WORSHIP MILE MARKER — Responding appropriately to our Spiritual connection to God

The nuances and details of faith are many but the fundamental, guiding principles are few. This was exactly what Jesus was saying when he was being quizzed by the Pharisees who were attempting to trip him up over the details of the Law that they prided themselves in knowing so well.

> *"'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?' Jesus replied: '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 neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* (Matthew 22:36-40)

Worship

Jesus was clearing up the confusion that can sometimes be experienced in the midst of an overload of material. *"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* Wow, now that's "Cliff-notes." We are often impotent to articulate what we believe because we struggle to get a handle on the basics of our faith. That's what our "Mile Markers" are all about, to aid us in knowing and articulating what we believe, and even better, the ability to assist others to a fuller devotion to Christ.

It all starts with Worship. If one word or concept could capture what we are commanded to do as believers, it would be the Worship Mile Marker. The "Greatest Commandment" referred to above, nails it: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* Worship covers the whole spectrum of who I am. It's not what I do at church, Sunday school, or Bible study; it's not what I'm doing one hour on Sunday but hour by hour throughout my week.

How can you know if you are worshipping? It's actually rather simple—ask yourself in any given circumstance if you are responding appropriately to your spiritual connection to God. The Old Testament account of King Hezekiah's resistance to God says it clearly; 2 Chronicles 32:25 (NLT) *"But Hezekiah did not respond appropriately to the kindness shown him, and he became proud. So the Lord's anger came against him and against Judah and Jerusalem."*

DAY 14

Worship

Worship will never fill our lives if too much of "us" is in the way. Like Hezekiah, we can become proud or stubborn and fail to respond appropriately to our Heavenly Father. I compare the discipline of worship with a camera that requires a manual focus. When we are unresponsive to Christ in our life, it's because we are automatically focusing on ourselves. It is as natural as "point and shoot." Our culture says, "do your own thing" while God calls us to do His thing. Romans 12:2 in the Message contrasts the two when it says:

> *"Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."*

To *"fix my attention on God"* requires a manual focus of my choices, and when I do so, I am worshipping.

Take a few minutes and look at each of the following passages and circle the word "Respond." Below each verse write what the effects were to an appropriate or inappropriate response to God.

> *"You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But, if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it!"* (Genesis 4:7 (NLT))

Response:

> *"But Hezekiah did not respond appropriately to the kindness shown him, and he became proud. So the LORD's anger came against him and against Judah and Jerusalem."* (2 Chronicles 32:25 (NLT))

Response:

DAY 14

"My sheep respond to my voice, and I know who they are. They follow me." (John 10:27 (GW))

Response:

"What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God's giving. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met." (Luke 12:29-30 (MSG))

Response:

Worship

Visual Reminder

As a way to remember each of the Mile Markers of the church, use the four fingers and thumb on your hand as symbols to represent each mile marker. For the Worship Mile Marker, I think of what the Lord promises to say to each of us who respond appropriately to him throughout our life. It's recorded in Matthew 25:23, "... *well done, you good and faithful servant!"* I could just see Jesus giving you a THUMBS-UP to your responsiveness to him.

Now, go back and look at the way you defined "worship" on page 39. How would you define worship now?

Response:

Prayer Focus:

Our ongoing connection to God; our awareness of his presence is crucial to developing a life of worship. Spend a few moments asking the Lord to help you focus on him today. Think through your day and try to schedule 2-3 times where you can remind yourself to fix your attention on God.

DAY 15

THE FELLOWSHIP MILE MARKER — Relate Lovingly to the Spiritual Community

Fellowship

As our children were growing through their more intense season of sibling rivalry, we were particularly intolerant of fighting, hitting and name calling. It would break our hearts to hear our children fight. Therefore, Debbie and I put some pretty stiff penalties in place for the child that would rather fight than switch, in hopes of deterring the bickering. We were not always successful but, for the most part, they caught on that their negative behavior to one another was first of all, destructive, and secondly, not only hurt their sibling but their parents as well.

I believe the same thing is true for the spiritual family. God is anything but silent when it comes to His thoughts on His family, the body of Christ and most intimately called the bride of Christ. Use any synonym you'd like for the Church but don't tear her down, unless of course, you're wanting to insult the Savior.

I can hear the critics already lifting their voices: "Who is going to confront the sloppy saints if someone doesn't speak out?" Yea, yea, I'll agree that there are some bad teachers and naughty believers. But the map (Bible) says there is a very clear process to be followed (Matthew 18:15-18) if you've got the maturity to appropriately deal with those things. (See also Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:2 and 29; Romans 14:1 and 19; and 1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Just think how powerful it would be if we were caught regularly bragging about other believers. Telling others about what great people are at the church down the street and across town. Meeting together for community prayer and worship. Going on mission trips. Sending financial love gifts to parts of the church family that could really use a lift. And—of course, seeing and speaking the best about the fellow strugglers in our own local fellowship. Wow! That gets me excited. That is precisely what we mean when we talk about improving the communication that supports the body of Christ. Believe me, if you want a thumbs up from Jesus, that's a guaranteed way to get it.

We are committed to be a community of grace where Jesus is discovered through relationships, as well as a fellowship where we assertively embrace the wider Christian Community. The beauty of the body of Christ is enhanced when we can model and teach believers to relate lovingly to others regardless of race, denomination or economic status. Examine closely the passages below to get a better understanding for God's perspective on how he wants us to relate to other believers. Write down under each passage how we are called and challenged to treat each other.

DAY 15

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Romans 15:7)

Response:

Fellowship

"Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:26-28)

Response:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:20-23)

Response:

DAY 15

VISUAL REMINDER

To remember the Fellowship Mile Marker, to remind ourselves to relate lovingly to the spiritual community, raise your INDEX FINGER and agree with the prayer Jesus prayed in John 17, that we would be "one" in Him. No wonder the Apostle Paul said to the Ephesian believers in Ephesians 4:2-3: "*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*" The heart of God always intends that the life of one believer will build up the life of another. That's Fellowship as stated in Romans 14:19: "*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.*"

Fellowship

Now, revisit the definition you wrote for Fellowship on Page 43. How would you change that definition now?

Prayer Focus:

If the quality of our fellowship is dependent on our ability to be mindful of others' needs, take a few moments to pray for a greater awareness of those around you and what you can do to communicate acceptance and encouragement.

End of Week 3

WEEK IN REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What stands out to you the most about our Mission Statement?

2. Our Vision Statement is a collection of seven snapshots, or descriptions of the church (people following God) we want to be. Which of the seven descriptions do you think we are most successfully living up to and which one are we the furthest from?

3. What do you think your vision of serving should be? How does God want to be seen through your service?

4. What, if anything, about your understanding of "worship" changed from our study this week, and specifically from Day 14?

5. What influence do you think "fellowship" has on a person's spiritual growth or progress? Where are you finding, or discovering a healthy place for "fellowship"?

WEEK 4
DAY 16

THE DISCIPLESHIP MILE MARKER — Restore Spiritual Identity

Discipleship

I can almost guarantee that when someone disconnects from the church and becomes inactive in attendance, they are probably trying to live and manage their faith without support. I spoke to a friend recently who had not been attending weekend services. I was particularly concerned because I was under the impression that he was quite committed to weekend attendance and also to small group participation. Just a few minutes into our phone conversation he revealed that when they stopped doing their small group, they began to miss weekend services too. The wisdom of Proverbs 27:17 tells us that, "*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*" This is true with our faith and spiritual walk.

The Bible makes it very clear that when we commit to Christ we become a new person inside. "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" 2 Corinthians 5:17. Yet to live out the new life we've been given is another story. We believe new Christians need to be discipled in order to grow effectively and that mature believers need to be discipling others in order to not become ineffective in their faith. The Great Commission is not just for some of us; it's for all of us.

Look closely at Matthew 28:16-20. Write down everything the passage says either about the disciples or what Jesus was asking them to do.

Response:

Early on your list you should have written down that "some doubted" and toward the end that they "obeyed everything Jesus commanded." Which end of this spectrum do you most often find yourself?

Your answer should tell you if you need to invest more of yourself into receiving discipling or doing discipling. What can you do to respond appropriately to this observation from our study?

Response:

DAY 16

Discipleship

VISUAL REMINDER

To remember the Discipleship Mile Marker, do you recall the chewing gum jingle--"Double your pleasure, Double your fun, with Doublemint, Doublemint, Doublemint gum." That's just what I'd hope you would remember when I lift up TWO FINGERS IN A PEACE SIGN. That's the hand sign I'm encouraging us to use to remind ourselves that DISCIPLESHIP requires a minimum of two people. I cannot be discipled alone. It requires that I'm willing to yield myself to another believer in order to advance my own spiritual development. As the early Church grew, the apostles worked alongside one another to strengthen and support the development of the believers. Notice how Paul and Barnabus are described in Acts 14:21b-22a. They (Paul and Barnabus) *". . . returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,* ***strengthening*** *the disciples and* ***encouraging them*** *to remain true to the faith."*

Okay, so what has changed from your earlier definition and perception of discipleship? (Page 40) Write down any additional insights you received today.

Response:

Prayer Focus:

Pray that our church will become more intentional to this part of our calling. It is easy to simply attend services. But when two or more are gathered for a focused time of praying, studying and sharing, we find ourselves participating in the discipleship process.

If you are not in a discipling relationship, ask the Lord to direct you to someone you could mentor or be mentored by. If you already are, pray for that person now. Remember to check out our "Journey Discipleship Plan."

DAY 17

THE PARTNERSHIP MILE MARKER
Reproduce Spiritually-Committed Servants

When we first moved to California from Oregon, I had no idea where we were going to attend church. We visited four churches and felt most excited about Yosemite Church. We didn't think it was perfect for a moment. It wasn't the biggest church in town and it wasn't doing some of the things we thought it could be doing. But we loved the spirit of the place and soon fell in love with the people and their commitment to reach Merced for Christ. That's all it took. The five months we spent getting settled before connecting to YC was a spiritually lonely time. I was a fish out of water. If you haven't yet committed to partnering in ministry, maybe the dryness in your life has just been diagnosed. Albert Schweitzer said: "Those among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

Partnership

We believe every believer has been called and gifted to serve in some area of ministry. It is our job to help each one discover his or her gift and then to be placed on a ministry team and equipped to serve. How do each of the following passages influence your thinking in this area? Write a response under each passage, answering the question: What does this text say about my connection and participation with other believers?

> *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."* (1 Peter 4:10)

Response:

> *"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."* (Romans 12:4-5)

Response:

DAY 17

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27)

Response:

Partnership

"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Ephesians 4:16)

Response:

Write down what gifts you believe you have and how you would like to serve, using those gifts, in the months and years to come.

Response:

DAY 17

Partnership

VISUAL REMINDER

As we use our hand as a visual reminder of our six mile markers, we can literally name them off: the thumb stands for Worship. The index finger—Fellowship. The peace sign—Discipleship. And three fingers up—Partnership. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of* ***three*** *strands is not quickly broken.*" I know that I am taking God seriously if I am committed to doing my part. I find this so incredibly fulfilling. There have only been a few months in my Christian life when I was not serving in some way. At sixteen, I began to teach a Bible study. As a senior, I was given my first chance to preach to an adult congregation. I've been an usher, Sunday school teacher, child care provider (that was scary) and, a youth worker. I've been a camp counselor, maintenance man, and even receptionist. I can't say I enjoyed every job, but I learned from each one. You may have to serve in several different areas before you discover your niche. We don't want you doing things you don't enjoy. The Bible is very clear that, "*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.*" (1 Peter 4:10) So what is your gift, and are you using it to serve God's purposes?

So, how are you seeing the concept of Partnership? How is your definition that you wrote on page 40 changing? What would keep you from committing yourself to Y.C. (The community of believers)? What do you think your next step is to become a committed partner?

Response:

Prayer Focus

If you serve on a team, let's pray for the participants of that team today. If you haven't yet joined a team, ask the Lord to guide you to the best fit for you in this season of your spiritual journey.

"Lord, there is so much for us to do. Draw willing and committed people to our teams. Help us to serve you with gladness. Amen."

DAY 18

THE RELATIONSHIP OUTREACH MILE MARKER — Reach Out to the Spiritually Unconvinced

Relationship Outreach

We live in a society that has traded the value of relationship for the escape of pleasure, the compulsion to work, and the illusion that possessions can bring happiness. The Christian life, if lived with a radical abandon to Jesus and His purposes, has the supernatural power to revolutionize one's perspective and acquire authentic joy and peace. Nothing in your life will be as powerful as the relationships you develop throughout your life, unless you are deceived by addictive toxins. And if you are deceived, these toxins have the power to destroy all of your meaningful relationships.

When we say in our Vision Statement that we are a community of grace, we are saying anyone and everyone is welcome. We all need grace and without saving grace we'd all be lost in our sin. Our fifth mile marker is about building a relationship with those outside a relationship with Christ. The Bible says that we are God's ambassadors to a lost and hurting world—a world that has lost its connection to God. As ambassadors we get to introduce them to the most significant relationship they could ever have—a relationship with Christ.

My old college professor used to say: "You've got to be good news before you can share good news." Some Christians claim to be "saved," but somebody ought to tell their face! I believe the reason a significant portion of God's joy eludes us is that we've not given a significant portion of our attention to His purposes. Arguably, one of the most awesome things we are experiencing at YC is the alignment of all of our ministries to the core purposes for the Christian life. It has become increasingly clear to me and to our staff that we have to help our church family live out our core Christian principles. Hence, our six mile markers. The call is going out, the banners are being raised, and the intentionality is becoming more intense than ever. Why? Because nothing less will satisfy your spiritual calling. Every one of these six principles are spoken and re-spoken of throughout scripture. Each one has been given as an imperative; a command, not a suggestion, to be followed. The imperative to tell those disconnected from God about the grace connection to God happens best in the context of relationship.

As a church, we work in two primary ways to accomplish this in our lives together. One, by providing excellent services which will also be appropriate for the seekers (Explorers) you have in mind as future guests. We won't embarrass them (or you). We won't pressure them to give or sing if they are not ready, and the message will always be relevant to real life. Therefore, you can be confident and bold in your invitation for them to come and be our guest; to come and begin to evaluate their own life and their own relationship with God. The second way is to provide training for you to become more equipped in sharing your faith. We must all learn to develop skills and a willingness to share a verbal testimony of our relationship with Christ. We know that we can help you do this, and we are committed to do so. Why? Because God will hold us accountable for what we did with the Good News. Did we keep it to ourselves or did we learn to give it away? This is a process and you are not in it alone. We are excited about your growth and development in this fundamental aspect of your faith.

DAY 18

Relationship Outreach

Look back at the title of today's study and circle the words "Reach Out" and "Unconvinced".

Read each of the following passages and comment on what Paul, the author of these passages, was "convinced" of. How do you think each of these truths might have motivated him to focus on "reaching out" to people who were unconvinced? Write your answer under the passage.

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

Response:

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

Response:

"That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." (2 Timothy 1:12)

Response:

DAY 18

Relationship Outreach

VISUAL REMINDER

Every business knows that the best advertising is a satisfied customer. This is also true in our faith. We, as a church, advertise very little. We will probably do more in the future but our growth, to this point, has been primarily word of mouth. The relationship that our people have with those around them is the best connection I could ever hope for. That is what RELATIONSHIP OUTREACH is about. You know people that I don't know. You have influence in their lives that I do not have. You are important to them because of your relationship with them. To help us remember this principle to our mile markers, open your hand and notice your fingers and your thumb. If I were to ask you to give up one of the small appendages to your hand—to just cut off one of your fingers or thumb—which would it be? Whether or not you could answer which one you could most easily do without, I bet your gut would say, "Pastor, you're screwy. I'm not giving up any of my fingers. I want them all!" Notice what 2 Peter 3:9 says about people, God does not want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to come to repentance. Just like everyone of your fingers matters to you, so every person matters to God.

Look back at page 41 at how you first defined this mile marker. Would you now make any changes? Is there anything that you would tweak?

Response:

Prayer Focus:

As an ambassador for Christ, God has put you into relationships where you can have an impact for Him. Who in your life do you know that you can pray for right now.

"Lord Jesus, use me to reach out to _____; draw _____ to yourself and open a door for me to share my faith, and your love. Amen."

DAY 19

THE STEWARDSHIP MILE MARKER - Resource our Spiritual Mission

Stewardship

A steward is one who has been entrusted with the resources of another. The Bible tells us that we are stewards. We have been given our time, our giftedness, our relationships, our ability to work and produce wealth; not for our comfort, but for His cause. It belongs to God. Moses wanted the Israelites to understand this principle so in Deuteronomy 8:17-18 he challenged their self-talk by saying, *"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth..."*

When it comes to our money and possessions, we do a lot of self-talk. We tell ourselves how hard we have worked; how much we deserve; and how little we have compared to other people. There are all kinds of things we do to try and condone our spending and desires to have more. The problem is that it will never satisfy, because we were not designed to find happiness in possessions, but in a personal relationship with God. C.S. Lewis said it like this: "God designed the human machine to run on himself. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn. The food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. God cannot give you a happiness and peace apart from himself because it is not there."

The compulsion to consume is particularly evident in America. Today we consume twice the goods and services per person as we did 50 years ago, and the average home size has tripled. The term that one sociologist has given to describe our obsession with possessions is "affluenza." We've contracted the disease of materialism.

Are you aware of your own self-talk? What do you tell yourself about what you have or don't have? Have you ever caught yourself measuring your value by your valuables? Does the cancer of comparison ever rob you of your joy? I can still remember years ago driving by a new home with a three-car garage and immediately becoming disenchanted with my home—thinking that if I were really successful, I'd possess a bigger house with a three-car garage. That was so stupid! I had to realize that my earnings would probably never match my yearning. Therefore, if I was going to experience contentment, I was going to have to submit my heart and all of its desires to Him.

DAY 19

Stewardship

Scripture calls us to give and tithe (giving 10%) as a way to maintain our focus as stewards, keeping God and his purposes as a priority in our lives. Someone has appropriately asked, "If God owns it all, maybe instead of asking how much we should give, we should be asking how much we should keep."

Consider each of the following quotes and select one or two on which to write a reflection:

- Bill Graham: "A checkbook is a theological document. It tells who and what you worship."
- Martin Luther: "I have held many things in my hands and have lost them all; but that which I have placed in His hands, that I still possess."
- Winston Churchill: "We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."
- Lynn Miller: "Stewardship is the act of organizing your life so that God can spend you."
- Barbara Bush: "Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our minds to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others."
- Jesus Christ: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Personal Reflection 1:

Personal Reflection 2:

What do the following Scriptures teach us about stewardship? Write under each verse what it says to you about being a steward.

"The earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;" (Psalm 24:1)
Response:

DAY 19

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

"*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*"
(1 Corinthians 4:2 (KJV))
Response:

"... The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives." (Deuteronomy 14:23 (LB))
Response:

Stewardship

Being a giver—one who contributes—is fundamental to your faith. What are you learning about becoming someone who makes a commitment to give faithfully?
Response:

VISUAL REMINDER

The last visual very appropriately incorporates all of the previous five. Just as each finger, and the thumb helped to symbolize one of our mile markers, so each of these are a part of stewardship. Open your hand and think of all that you can do and accomplish with your hand. Your WHOLE HAND is the symbol for stewardship: with our hand we embrace God's word and one another. We write checks, serve food, wash dishes, and extend help to one another. Probably more than any other part of our bodies, other than our heart and mind, we use our hand to steward what God has given us.

How would you now re-define "stewardship" based on today's study? (Page 41.)
Response:

Prayer Focus:

How are you doing as a steward of your resources? Ask the Lord what He would have you give back to Him as a way to keep your focus on putting Him first in all that He has given you to manage.

DAY 20

The Power of Alignment— Increase your Effectiveness

Power of Alignment

Before we move on to our next section, let's look at one more principle that will help us maximize what these principles can do. It has been called the POWER OF ALIGMENT.

Ephesians 4: 4-6 *"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*

This section of Ephesians starts off with the declaration of our oneness: "ONE BODY." The author Paul then goes on to give a very clear expression of what I refer to as ALIGNMENT,"*...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one Father of all, who is over all and in all."* When we are on the same page we have an increased opportunity for success. Paul is telling us we must have a degree of solidarity and a set of fundamental principles to fulfill our spiritual mission. Most of chapter 4 in Ephesians, revolves around the work of this "ONE BODY." The concept of the Body of Christ is so significant that three of our six mile marker principles are impossible without it, and the other three work best within it.

Fellowship, Discipleship and Partnership are all accomplished only through the Body of Christ. Worship, Relationship/Outreach and Stewardship can be done individually, but have the most significant impact when done in community.

The person trying to live their spiritual life apart from the Biblical concept of the church (Body of Christ) will be frustrated and spiritually sluggish. It would be like riding a bike with flat tires. I mean you could do it, but who'd want to?

On the other hand, alignment within the body creates an increased level of effectiveness. I can be a church attendee (even be involved in groups and activities), but if I do not understand my purpose for being there and the difference the Lord wants to make through me, I may be going against the flow.

I just had a front-end alignment done on my car. Prior to doing so I literally had to muscle the steering wheel to keep the car going straight—a constant fight at what should be natural. When parents can't agree on a parenting style, their kids know it. They do what any red-blooded child would do–they work one parent against the other. If mom says no, they go to dad and vice-versa. That's a marriage out of alignment.

It is true of any business, any marriage, and especially any church. When we are on the same page and have the same set of goals and commitments, we will be amazed at what God will do.

As our staff and Council (elders) deliberated over things that we could do to build a stronger alignment to God's purposes (the six markers of growth), we wanted to identify one clear achievable objective that every YCer, indeed every child of God, would be able to do. We have therefore assigned a strategic goal for each of the mile marker principles. Rick Warren, author of The Purpose Driven Life, says, "Nothing becomes dynamic until it becomes specific." You cannot illustrate that you are loving if there are no specific loving behaviors that flow from your life. I can say all day that I love my wife but, if there are no specific actions coupled with my proclamation, she's not going to be very convinced.

This was exactly what James, the brother of Jesus, was driving at when he said: *". . . faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."* (James 2:17) For many believers their faith lacks luster because it lacks intentionality. Their spiritual wheels are spinning and they feel the frustration of not going forward in their growth. A Godly goal puts rubber to the road. It gives traction to the spiritual concepts that can easily spin in our heads but have no traction to life.

The problem with many who go to church is that they can be fooled into thinking they have done their spiritual duty for the week. Attending church is a great goal if it empowers me to worship (respond appropriately to God), which leads me to fellowship (relate lovingly to others) which strengthens my commitment to being a disciple, which facilitates my understanding of how to do my part, and motivates me to reach out to the lost. But if I walk away, with no clearer perspective of what specific things I am called to do, I have only played a religious game. I have had motion without movement.

The following six "I" words correspond to the mile markers and give a specific action that we can all do individually and collectively to "Meet People Where They Are And Love Them To Where Christ Wants Them To Be." 1) Inspire everyone to do a Discipleship Plan, 2) Improve communication that supports the body of Christ, 3) Include others into groups, 4) Involve more people in service opportunities, 5) Invite seekers to services, and 6) Invest more resources into life-changing ministry.

SIX MILE MARKERS, 6 CHURCH-WIDE OBJECTIVES

1. WORSHIP – RESPOND appropriately to our spiritual connection with God.
   Church-Wide Objective—INSPIRE everyone to complete an annual Discipleship Plan.

2. FELLOWSHIP - RELATE lovingly to the spiritual community.
   Church-Wide Objective—IMPROVE communication that supports the body of Christ.

3. DISCIPLESHIP - RESTORE spiritual identity
   Church-Wide Objective—INCLUDE everyone into a discipling relationship.

4. PARTNERSHIP - REPRODUCE spiritual ministry
   Church-Wide Objective—INVOLVE everyone in service opportunities.

5. RELATIONSHIP OUTREACH - REACH the spiritually unconvinced/ unchurched.
   Church-Wide Objective - INVITE those disconnected from Christ and His church to Christian faith and community.

6. STEWARDSHIP—RESOURCE our spiritual mission.
   Church-Wide Objective—INVEST our resources into ministry through generosity.

I want to invite you to commit with me, to God, and to our church that you will take the challenge to complete a Discipleship Plan and begin to work that plan with at least one other person, while seeking to grow in each of these 6 critical areas. (See an example of a "Discipleship Plan Worksheet" in the Appendix, page 100.)

Prayer Focus:

"Lord, we can do a lot of things but, unless we are being aligned to what you are doing, we could miss why we are here. Help us to find ourselves in you and your purposes. Amen"

WEEK IN REVIEW

END WEEK 4

1. Look back at how you answered the questions on Day 16 (page 49). Based on your own observations, would you say you should be seeking someone to mentor or someone to mentor you? Is there anyone who comes to mind as you consider that question? If so, who?

2. On Day 1 of your Devotional, Pastor Jeff said that, "Partnership is our church's term for what is traditionally known as "membership." Why do you think we have chosen this term over the more traditional one?

3. Relationship Outreach: how did Day 18's focus challenge you to think about sharing your own connection to God with someone far from God? Do you feel equipped to share your faith with someone who isn't a believer? What would help you to be better prepared?

4. Someone has said, churches don't have money problems, they have stewardship problems. What do you think that means, and what has been your experience in learning to be a more generous person?

5. What did you glean from Day 20's material on Alignment? Do you think you are becoming more aligned with what disciples are called to do? If so, how?

WEEK 5
DAY 21

STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY DISCIPLESHIP

A flourishing disciple has learned the balance between concentration and elimination.

To foster a culture of growing disciples, we recognize that it is not just a focus on what we want to become (our vision), but also to realize what could keep us from becoming what we are called to be.

Steven Pauls says, "The place for what you want is already filled with what you've settled for instead." To successfully make room for Christ and his call on our lives, we not only have to concentrate, we have to eliminate.

Peter Drucker calls this "knowing the value of planned abandonment." This week we will be looking at several areas where disciples/Christ followers can easily be blindsided. Scripture tells us that Satan is crafty (Genesis 3:1), that he is a liar (John 8:44) and a thief (John 10:8), and that he is analogous to a lion looking for lunch (1 Peter 5:8), and if you are not careful, you will be it.

The best way not to be blindsided is to know where you are vulnerable. We first have to recognize where we are vulnerable and then work to develop the skills and habits to be prepared for the inevitable attack that will come. I will be calling these habits and skills "standards for healthy disciples." Before we dig into each area in more depth, look over the list below and circle which areas where you may be most vulnerable and write a brief reason why under each topic:

> Overly busy and distracted from my faith

> Unresolved hurt and conflict

> Prone to gossip or mismanage what I say

> Vulnerable to relational compromise (sexual or emotional)

DAY 21

Even a quick review of these four categories could cause a little anxiety to rise in your heart. A person could easily think, "What are they trying to do here, get into my business?!?" The answer to that is both "No," and "Yes." Being "real" and being "healthy" are both characteristics we should all deeply value, but one does not guarantee the other. There are lots of folks who are very real, but not very healthy. Jesus wants you—we want you—to be really healthy, but you cannot have the latter without the former. To become a healthy disciple, I first have to be a real disciple, an honest disciple, willing to let truth into my life in order to free me from any lies that could be holding me captive. We believe what Jesus said, that the *"...truth will set you free."* (John 8:32b) The scary thing is that it might first make you miserable, scared to death or very anxious. This last week might be the most invasive, but that is what Jesus does. He invades our private world and begins to conquer our fears, hurts and points of resistance.

Today I want you to look over two statements. The first is a definition by John Maxwell of a disciple; and the second is an acrostic I've written that describes the heart of a servant. Spend a few minutes meditating on each one and then make a couple of observations from the questions under each one.

> "A disciple is a learner under discipline who has voluntarily submitted him or herself to be taught. Discipleship is not (designed) to bring people into legalism, but into liberty. It's not to manipulate people, but to mature them spiritually. Discipleship is not to dominate but develop them to their full potential for God. It is not to restrict people, but to release them to their own ministry. A disciple is one who has learned to submit to authority and is therefore able to exercise authority."

What stands out to you from this definition of a disciple?

Are you more or less convinced that God is calling you to be this kind of disciple, and why?

If we are to be servant-disciples, we need more clarity as to what that looks like. Read through the acrostic below, which is our attempt to define what our S.E.R.V.I.C.E. should look like as we seek to become more like Christ. What parts of this acrostic do you feel the most and least capable of, and why? Write your response under the characteristics you selected.

Sincere love: We illustrate a genuine love for Christ and others.

1 Peter 1:22: *"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart."*

1 Timothy 1:5: *"The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."*

Excellence: We demonstrate a commitment to do our personal best and seek to improve wherever possible.

Ecclesiastes 9:10: *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom."*

Colossians 3:23 *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."*

DAY 21

Standards for Healthy Discipleship

Respect: We demonstrate through good communication and conflict resolution that every person matters.

Romans 12:10 (GW): *"Be devoted to each other like a loving family. Excel in showing respect for each other."*

Romans 12:17 (CEV): *"Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others."*

Ephesians 4:2 (LB): *"Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love."*

Vulnerability: We share authentically about our ups and downs in our life and ministry.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

Inclusivity: We create an atmosphere that welcomes, reaches out to, and includes others.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (MSG): *"Gently encourage the stragglers, and reach out for the exhausted, pulling them to their feet. Be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs."*

Connecting: We illustrate the commitment to connect others to the next level of growth.

Romans 12:5 (GW): *"In the same way, even though we are many individuals, Christ makes us one body and individuals who are connected to each other."*

Encouragement: We encourage through good listening and supportive words and actions.

Hebrews 10:25: *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..."*

James 1:19: *"...Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ..."*

If these descriptions of discipleship and servanthood are a little daunting, don't feel bad. I'm sure every honest believer or person ever called by God has felt under-qualified. Remember, all of this effort is not intended to inspire us to kick back, but to step up. I will leave you today with a quote I like from Norman J. Peal:

> "In any worthwhile endeavor, there is an element of risk. You may run into opposition. You may be laughed at, but you have to be willing to be vulnerable to be, if necessary, a fool, for God. Knowing that the rewards for righting a wrong or improving your world far outweigh any possible risks or hazards."

Prayer Focus:

Take a few minutes and look back over what you circled as your most "vulnerable areas." Spend some time simply asking God to speak to your heart this week concerning what needs greater concentration and what needs elimination.

DAY 22

STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY DISCIPLES— TACKLING YOUR TIME

If we make time for what matters, what does your time say about how much your faith and relationship with Christ matters?

The apostle Paul told both the Ephesians and Colossian believers to "Make the best use of their time." (Ephesians 5:15-16, and Colossians 4:5.) If we are going to be effective as stewards of our time, we have to evaluate how we manage it.

We do not all have the same talents, the same opportunities, or the same amount of resources; but we do all have the same amount of time. What you do with your time, your 24 hours a day, your 1440 minutes a day, makes you who you are. Today I want you to simply ask yourself what kind of steward you are of your time and then make a commitment to obey the above passages of scripture to "make the best use of your time."

Dartmouth College Professor E. B. Osborn, said it like this, "Besides the task of acquiring the ability to organize a days work, all else you will ever learn about management is child's play."

In order to effectively manage your time, you need to do three things:

1) Analyze your activities: If you don't control your activities, your activities will control you. Ephesians 5:15 says, *"pay close attention to how you live. Don't live like ignorant men, but like wise men."* And Psalm 90:12 says, *"Teach us to number our days."*
2) Utilize your opportunities: The Ephesians 5 passage goes on to say, in verse 16, *"Make the most of every opportunity . . ."*! Whitney Young, Jr., said, "I would rather be prepared for an opportunity and not have one, than to have an opportunity and not be prepared." The task of disciples is to be disciplined with our preparation so we can be ready for any opportunities for explanation. 1 Peter 3:15 says, *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."*
3) Prioritize your responsibilities: Our Ephesians text in the Philips translation says, *"Live life with a due sense of responsibility, not as those who do not know the meaning of life, but as those who do."*

Okay, let's do it. Let's analyze first, and then we'll utilize and prioritize. Look at the following Scriptures and answer the corresponding question.

- For what purpose did God create you?
  Ephesians 2:10

- What does God want you to do?
  Mark 10:43-45

- How has God gifted you?
  Romans 12:3-8, 1 Peter 4:10

When we realize that God has made and gifted us to bring honor to Him, we are on the way to discovering the life for which He made us. When this truth becomes a reality in our lives, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. When ordinary people become zealous about the task before them, they are no longer ordinary. Martin Luther King, Jr., said:

> "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

Now let's look at where you are called to shine. We each have "key areas" of responsibility. On the following page, there is a worksheet to help you organize your week, one day at a time. Before you go to work organizing your time, think about the key areas of your life. For most of us, these areas are similar: your walk with God; your emotional and physical health, marriage, parenting, work, ministry, hobby, etc.

DAY 22

Now go to the worksheet on the next page and fill in your "key areas," in order of priority. You may have 4 to 7 areas. If these areas are indeed part of your responsibility and values, then they must show up on your calendar of activities.

Once you've done this, under each "key area," write 3-4 things, or tasks, you want to be sure is happening in that area. (See my example.)

There are three or four lines under each key area. Write the activities that you believe need to happen under each "key area" and then give it a letter of priority.

"A"	=	Something you "must do."
"B"	=	Something you "should do."
"C"	=	Something you "could do."

This will help you to recognize if you are putting what is truly important in the right place of priority. For instance, if I say that my "walk with God" is my highest priority of all my "key areas" and I am not giving any of the tasks in that area an "A" or a "B", then I don't really believe I need to do it. Therefore, If I put down an "A" next to "memory work," I'm saying I <u>must do</u> this to make my walk with God a priority. An "A", "must do," doesn't mean I will die if I don't do it; but I guarantee you, any key area will die if it is not supported by real and faithful action.

KEY AREA WORK LIST
WEEK BEGINNING:_____

1. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

2. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

3. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

4. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

5. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

6. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

7. _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____
   - ___ _____

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 8 9 10 11 12						
1 2 3 4 5						
6 7 8 9						

KEY AREA WORK LIST
WEEK BEGINNING: March 21, 2011

1. Walk with God
   - A Journal/Prayer
   - A Memory Cards
   - B Read

2. Family
   - B Lunch wi/ Deb
   - B Dinner w/ Debbie
   - B Play a game w/ kids

3. My Miinistry
   - A Guys Discipleship
   - C Discipleship Hike
   - A Small Group
   - B Meet w/ Fred

4. Exercise
   - A Aerobics
   - B Exercise Prep
   - B Walk w/ Deb

5. Work
   - B Meet w/ Staff
   - A Study
   - A Strategic Planning
   - B One-on-Ones

6. Home care/Domestic
   - B Mow lawn
   - C Clean house
   - A Take car in for repair

7. Sabbath Rest
   - B Spend day w/ Debbie
   - C Read
   - C Hike

SAMPLE

	Monday Aerobics	Tuesday	Wednesday Aerobics	Thursday	Friday Aerobics	Saturday Memory Wk.	Sunday Review
7	J.J. & memory	J.J. & memory	J.J. & memory	Men's Discipleship	J.J. & memory	Walk w/ Deb	Church
8	wk	wk	wk		wk		
9	Study	Study	Study	Mow lawn	Spend day	Study	
10				&	With		
11				Yard work	Debbie		
12	lunch w/	Lunch Meeting	Lunch Meeting			Lunch	Lunch
1	Deb		Finish Sermon			Meeting	Meeting
2	Study	Strategic		Clean house		Study	
3		Planning Meeting	Meeting/ Coun-		Sabbath		Have kids
4	Meeting		seling	Make Dinner		Pre-service	Over for dinner &
5	Dinner w/				Read	meeting	play
6	Deb	Dinner	Council Dinner &			Sat. Church	A game
7	Study	Evening w/ Deb	Meeting	Small Group		Meeting	
8							
9							

DAY 22

Before you drop your list of "tasks" into your calendar, it is helpful to think about your day in blocks of time: morning, afternoon, and evening. You may do something, like a quiet time with God, every day. Other things, you may do only once a week, or once a month. After you have finished your lists, transfer those things that are most important into the timeframe you will do them for that week.

Here are four things to consider as you do this work:

1) Learn to say "no." Every time you say "no" to something limiting, you create space for something better.

2) Control your phone so it does not control you. When doing an important task, or when you are with someone, make them the priority, not your phone. Schedule a block of time to return phone calls.

3) Write it down—Important things that we say we are going to do, or people we meet need to be documented quickly before we forget, then go back and review them or put them on your calendar.

4) Get your rest! Studies show that we need between 7-9 hours of sleep to function at our best. Try to be as consistent with your schedule as you can. Routine and predictability are critical steps for stability.

5) Review your calendar at the beginning of each month, week and day to always keep your focus on what matters most.

Prayer Focus:

Lord, help me to manage my time well. Open up doors of opportunity where I can be used by you. Give me discernment to know if there are activities in my life that I need to let go of so I can take hold of your purposes for my life. Help me to grow in my ability to use all that you have given me for your glory. Amen.

DAY 23

STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY DISCIPLES — MANAGING YOUR MOUTH

Jesus said: *"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart. The evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks."* (Luke 6:45)

Two things stand out from Jesus in this passage. First, our mouth is connected to our heart; and, second, it reveals what is inside. If we can effectively monitor our mouth, we can discern the temperature of our heart. If cold, insensitive things are rolling off our lips, you can be sure that our passion to live as Christ is also growing cold. Ephesians 4:29 says, *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

Today we will be evaluating what we say and how we say it. Before we examine several areas of potential danger, take a quick survey to see if this is an area of strength or weakness for you.

1 = No or Never 3 = Sometimes 5 = Yes or Frequently

1. I complain about others.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I have complimented someone today.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I have recently participated in gossip (spoke about others negatively).	1 2 3 4 5
4. I look for ways to build others up with my words.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I exaggerate when I tell a story.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I have expressed gratitude to someone today.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I have been told I talk too much.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I have excused myself from a conversation that was gossip.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I rationalize why I'm not completely honest.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I have expressed thankfulness to God today.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I speak my assumptions before checking the facts.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I think about the impact of my words before I speak.	1 2 3 4 5

DAY 23

Now, add up your score for the even numbered statements and record it below, and then add up your score for the odd numbered statements.

Even Number Score _____ Odd Number Score _____

From 21-30	This is an area of strength	From 6-13
From 14-20	This needs improvement	From 14-20
From 6-13	Improvement is critical	From 21-30

For a little deeper reflection/self-examination, have someone you know well take the survey on you and ask them to be relentlessly honest. (Second copy of survey in Appendix, page 104.)

Managing our mouth and what we say is not easy, but it is worth the effort because it shows at what depth we are submitting ourselves to Christ and his indwelling spirit.

From your score on the above survey:

- Is there an area of strength or weakness for you, and why?

- Describe a time you were complemented or built up by someone's words and its effect on you.

- Describe a time you were insulted or torn down by someone's words and its effect on you.

DAY 23

Christian Community should be a place where we are built up. As we pursue meeting people where they are and loving them to where Christ wants them to be, our words will be a critical tool for our success. Our trust and confidence within community is directly connected to how we communicate. There are four major areas where scripture is very clear about how we must learn to manage what we say:

(1) Expressing gratitude	instead of	grumbling
(2) Building others up	instead of	tearing them down
(3) Confidentiality	instead of	gossip
(4) Speaking the truth	instead of	being deceptive

Read through the following passages and write 1, 2, 3, or 4, next to the text to match it up with one of the 4 categories above.

_____ *"A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble."* (Proverbs 17:20)

_____ *"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."* (Proverbs 10:19)

_____ *"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret."* (Proverbs 11:13)

_____ *"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."* (Proverbs 12:18)

_____ *"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."* (Proverbs 16:24)

_____ *"He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends."* (Proverbs 17:9)

_____ *"He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame."* (Proverbs 18:13)

DAY 23

_____ *". . . the LORD . . . has heard your grumbling . . . Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.'"* (Exodus 16:8)

_____ *"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."* (Ephesians 4:15)

_____ *"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

_____ *"Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down."* (Proverbs 26:20)

_____ *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."* (Ephesians 4:29)

An old Indian proverb says, "to speak without thinking is to shoot without aiming." Today we want to not only recognize the power of our words, but also our responsibility to use our words to hit the target of his glory. From now on, establish five healthy ground rules for how you manage your mouth:

1. Whatever you're told in confidence, do not repeat.
2. Whenever you're tempted to deceive, do not yield.
3. Whenever you're discussing people, do not gossip.
4. Whenever you're prone to disagree, do not slander.
5. Whenever you're tempted to grumble, choose to be grateful.

Based on today's topic and scriptures, write your own "prayer focus." Take some inspiration from King David's prayer in Psalm 19:14, and then pen your own prayer.

<u>Prayer Focus:</u>

DAY 24

STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY DISCIPLES — BUILDING BETTER BOUNDARIES

As a church, we are committed to develop and refine a community of faith where all those entering into service are provided support, encouragement and accountability.

One slogan that has risen out of our deliberation of who we are as a community of disciples, and should be recognized as a part of our vision statement is: "No one ministers without being ministered to." We can only fulfill that as each of us begin to see ourselves connecting authentically with others.

This devotional is your invitation to not just consider but commit to this noble calling. As we continue to look over the "Standards for Healthy Disciples," please realize that these standards are not points of legalism, but boundaries for effective ministry and life.

A boundary is a person's ability to let good things in, and keep bad things out. Boundaries are not about keeping rules, but embracing principles. There is a big difference. I choose not to smoke—not because there is a rule which says, "you shall not smoke," but because I believe in a principle that says, my body is God's temple and I want to take care of it.

A person with an absence of boundaries is regularly compromising and conflicted in their ability to live out what they might "say" are their values. They find themselves either overly committed—living out of balance; or unable to commit, living irresponsibly. Fear and anxiety feel like weights on their ability to say "yes" or "no," and they are inordinately concerned with how they "think" others view them.

As you seek to understand, create and refine better boundaries, it is natural to feel challenged and even vulnerable to failure, especially as you open yourself up to accountabity. If you have been around me for any time, then you've probably heard me say, "We'll never become what we need to be by remaining what we are."

It is within community that we begin to expand our objectivity and discover how to embrace healthier boundaries. Loving accountability forms an increased resolve to live differently—and by living differently, we increase and boost our efforts to change.

DAY 24

We need a combination of two things to make accountability an effective ally. I told a young man that I recently led to make a commitment to Christ that I would walk with him as he steps into the journey of discipleship. In so doing, I was committed to do two things consistently with him: one, to accept him unconditionally; and two, to challenge him passionately.

In order to foster a culture of growing disciples, there must be a climate of radical acceptance where we can be honest about who we are as well as who we have been. Peter Scazzero, in his book Emotionally Healthy Spirituality says, "A church committed to emotional health is a messy place. Skeletons come out of the closet, and we face problems and tensions honestly and directly rather than ignoring them, hoping, or pretending they will somehow go away."

That means we have to nurture the kind of acceptance where our ego can die. I don't have to be right all the time. I don't have to be perfect and fear failure. I can take risks, be honest, make mistakes, and accept responsibility for what I have done, knowing that I am accepted as a child of God, in the process of becoming more like Christ. Sometimes that occurs one victory at a time, and on other occasions, one failure at a time.

The first phrase of our Vision Statement, you might remember is "Yosemite Church is a community of grace, where Christ is at the heart of all we do . . ." "A community of grace. . ." Henry Cloud, in his book, "How People Grow," reminds us that "Grace may be available to us but we might not be available to grace. We can be around a lot of acceptance and grace, but until the hurt and guilty places of our hearts are exposed, we do not experience grace, and the gap between our head and our heart continues."

When we put in print these "Standards for Healthy Disciples," and seek to create clarity for better boundaries, we are not setting you up to fail, we are pointing you toward success. Spiritual success is not arriving at a place where we don't fail, but learning from our failures and being refined by the ongoing reminder that we not only need God's grace—getting what we don't deserve, but also the grace, love and forgiveness of other believers.

DAY 24

The process of being "loved to where Christ wants us to be," becomes a reality, not only as the fruit of His presence fills our life, but also as we are successfully moving away from where He doesn't want us to be.

Read through the "acts of the flesh" listed in Galatians 5:19-20, and ask yourself where you feel the most vulnerable. What are the behaviors and unhealthy habits that you are recognizing as needed points of departure; attitudes and actions that you are committed to leave behind.

> *"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."* (Galatians 5:19-21)

Go back now and circle any of the words that describe an area that you are seeking to leave behind.

Someone has said: "A bad habit is an easy bed to fall into and a hard one to get out of." How true is that? And even more true if there is no one to give us a hand to help us pull up and out of such behavior.

Look up Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and write down the benefits that King Solomon says comes to people who refuse to live in relational shallowness.

Response:

Where are you currently experiencing these benefits, and how do you think you could foster these relational advantages more?

Response:

DAY 24

Developing healthy boundaries, setting appropriate limits and the ability to say "no" to behaviors that threaten your spiritual stability is an essential skill for growing disciples. We often find ourselves compromising in some area because we have never been coached to recognize and build healthy boundaries where we are susceptible to compromise.

By recognizing where we are weak, or where others are vulnerable, we can build stronger, healthier relationships. Our culture is rampantly compulsive. Over-working, drinking, eating and using drugs, sex or chemicals to manage our stress and anxiety is commonplace. But what is common in culture can be corrected through Christ. How does the following passage call us to set healthy boundaries?

> *"Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. . . If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. . .It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall."* (Romans 14:13,15 and 21)

* What kind of challenges have you faced in learning to live in a way that would not "cause your brother to fall"?

* What does it mean to you to walk in accountability with others, and how is that working for you? Would you say you need more accountability or less and why?

* From the Galatians 5 and Romans 14 passages, where do you need support and accountability?

DAY 24

RELATIONAL BOUNDARIES

Standards for Healthy Disciples

The following Relational Boundaries are important because in their absence we unwittingly entangle ourselves in relationships that threaten our growth and stability. Read through the following seven standards and answer the questions below.

1. I will avoid ongoing one-on-one care for the opposite sex by referring such a person to a more appropriate care-giver.
2. I will refer and encourage man-to-man and woman-to-woman care and support among our body. I will not be involved in inappropriate physical contact, discuss sexual problems or my marriage problems with any person of the opposite sex.
3. I will make other team/group members my protective allies for relationship accountability.
4. I will pray for the integrity of other team/group members.
5. I will be honest about my life and actions with appropriate team/group members.
6. I will be open for dialogue concerning any possible discrepancies in my moral integrity.
7. I will seek to live out my sexuality in a manner that is consistent with Scripture and the guidelines above.

* What do you think is at the heart of these guidelines?

* Do you have any questions as to the appropriateness of these guidelines? If yes, make some time to process your questions with your ministry lead or a staff member.

Prayer Focus:

"Lord, help me to not fear accountability, but rather what can happen without accountability. Make me the kind of person who is growing in my ability and insight to set healthier boundaries. Help me to accept others radically and challenge them passionately to live with a greater abandonment to you. Help me to build the kind of trust in my relationships that welcomes and models vulnerability to others. Amen."

DAY 25

STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY DISCIPLES — CONSECRATING YOUR CONFLICT

"Consecration" is not a term we use often and, dare I say, never in conjunction with the word "conflict." It is because these terms are somewhat antithetical that I've put them together for today's subject title.

The word "consecration" was used frequently in the Old Testament to refer to people, places, or things that were set aside for God's use. The word means to associate with what is sacred. (See Exodus 13:2; 19:10; 29:37 and 44.) "Conflict," on the other hand, is not setting apart, but breaking apart. And we do not usually associate it with anything sacred. What if we could change the way we view and deal with conflict so instead of making us weaker relationally, it made us stronger? One of the clearest passages in the New Testament expressing the concept of consecration is 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought for a price. Therefore honor God with your body."*

Another passage that calls us to consecrate our relationships is Colossians 3:12-13: *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy (consecrated) and dearly loved, cloth yourselves with kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another..."* Do you see the word "conflict" in this passage? No, but if you look carefully, you will see how we are to deal with one another due to our sacredness—our being a part of his chosen, Holy people.

That is our focus today, consecrating our conflict. Making sure that we make sacred our relationships with one another in the most difficult of circumstances, when we have hurt one another. Believe me, it's not "if," it's when."

Resolving conflict is often the price that we pay for deeper levels of intimacy. You don't really know how much someone loves you until you have offended or hurt them deeply. Because most of us either have an acute aversion to conflict or we are gifted at instigating it but not resolving it, we must address this topic head on. Unaddressed conflict turns into a land mine in the terrain of relationships. If it is not faced, it will remain a barrier to the growth and development of who you are as a disciple and who we are as the body of Christ.

As disciples of Christ, we must learn how Jesus wants us to handle our hurts and disappointments from others. Knowing this would take place, Jesus gives us the following instructions:

> *"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church. If he won't listen to the church, you'll have to start over from scratch; confront him with the need for repentance and offer again God's forgiving love"*
> Matthew 18:15-18 (MSG)

As you work through this last day of material, I want to thank you for working through these important discipleship principles. Ephesians 4:3 says: "*Make every effort to keep this unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.*" Relationships falter and the bond of peace is broken when we fail to *"make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit."* Romans 12:18 says: "*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*" Our final day's work will focus on the reality of interpersonal conflict and relational challenges. When we follow God's standards, we learn to practice the presence of God when we need it the most—when we experience our own or someone else's shortcomings.

To consecrate our conflict, we need both a commitment and a process; a resolve to address our hurts and a way to go about it. In accordance with God's Word, we hope to equip our church family (Partners) to develop a deepening conviction about how to handle and manage any conflicts that arise as we work, serve, and grow together. We, therefore, ask you to make the following commitment.

COMMITMENT:

- In all conflicts, I will seek to act in a Christ-like manner and not give in to my natural human feelings and emotions.
- I will pray and seek the Lord's comfort and guidance in the matter. I will not share an offense with another person, unless it is a single (as in one) mentor who can help me approach the matter with accountability, maturity and expediency.
- I will not seek to find others who have been offended, nor will I seek to validate my hurt by finding other potential mediators before meeting with the person who has offended me.
- If I hear another person being criticized I will exhort the individual criticizing to either go to the party in question and deal with it directly, or refrain from speaking against them. I will encourage them to deal with the issue so it won't interfere with the unity of the body.

PROCESS (as defined in Matthew 18):

- First, I will go to the person alone who has offended me and seek to resolve our differences and restore the relationship. I will value the restoration of the relationship rather than expose that person's possible sin. I will listen to his/her point of view and seek to understand his/her perspective on the issue.
- If going to the person first does not resolve the conflict, I will seek the help of a third party to help both of us to determine what we need to do to glorify God in our relationship. I will make sure that this third party is a spiritually mature person who is neutral in regard to this issue. I will keep an open mind to the advice of the third party and seek to change my attitude and actions as I am advised.
- If the third party cannot effect a resolution, and agrees with my concern, I will seek the help of two or three other witnesses who can intercede in the matter and seek God's glory in this conflict. (See step-by-step process for conflict resolution in Appendix, page 96).

As a last resort, if the conflict cannot be resolved through the support of church leadership, I will act in a manner pleasing to God, even if it means distancing myself from the source of the conflict, while also trying to extend an openness for reconciliation.

* Have you ever experienced someone coming to you to confront some aspect of your walk? If so, what went well, and what didn't?

* What do you think keeps people from following the Biblical process for resolving conflict?

* Do you feel equipped to follow the Biblical process? If not, what would keep you from pursuing it?

DAY 25

MINISTERING TO A STRUGGLING OR FALLEN BROTHER OR SISTER IN CHRIST (DISCIPLE)

In order to create better boundaries in our church family, we have added the following principles to help us to proactively prepare ourselves to help one another recover from a time of rebellion, or distraction that could pull any one of us off course. Both Matthew 24:10 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5, tell us that many will fall away. In Mark 4, Jesus was very clear that some seed (the Word) would fall on ground that has so many weeds (cares and worries of this life) that it chokes out God's truth. Fortunately, God's Word also tells us how we can reach out to one another to help confront the things that choke out our spiritual life. Read through the following principles and standards and make any comments that you would like to process during your "Week in Review" meeting.

1. Time to Change

The Matthew 18 passage would suggest that the progression in the efforts to reconcile a broken relationship comes over a period of time. Any struggling party needs time to process each discussion, and make the needed changes.

> *"...be patient with each person, attentive to individual needs."*
> (1 Thessalonians 5:14 (MSG))

2. Levels of Ministry

We have sought to rate each of our ministry positions in a manner consistent with the level of maturity needed to participate.

-Level 1: A "seeker" or "Explorer" level, where those who are still searching can find a place to participate and serve at an entry level.

-Level 2: A "new believer" or "Discover" level, where those who are newly converted may find a higher level of spiritual participation compatible with the new beginning.

-Level 3: An "adolescent" believer, the "Rely" stage, who is showing clear growth and needs to be given more and greater responsibility to develop their walk and service.

-Level 4: A "mature" believer at the "Surrender" stage, who has shown faithfulness and displayed Christ-like attitudes in a variety of experiences. They are equipped or ready for equipping of any task that fits their gift mix.

3. Humility and Restoration

> *"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*
> Galatians 6:1-2

Paul helps us see that our attitude should always be humble and our approach gentle. The goal for any admonishment should be reconciliation, which must include a willingness to provide support (carry one another's burdens) for the party in question.

4. Confidentiality Confusion

When an individual is endangering oneself or others, the issue needs to be brought to the most appropriate person or persons for greater protection for those involved. If someone is bringing others into a clear compromise of values, follow the Managing Conflict model to create stronger support, encouragement and accountability.

5. Restoration Guidelines

If a believer is struggling or fallen they may be asked to step back from one or more levels of service (described under #2.) until the problem area has been resolved. We will pursue restoration with all parties as much as they are willing. Regardless of their responsiveness or lack thereof, we will seek to maintain support, encouragement and accountability. (See appendix page 96.)

Following the principles outlined in Matthew 18 and Galatians 6, a leader who has fallen away could be asked to step back from ministry involvement, if the area in question compromises their moral or ethical integrity, or their ability to effectively lead. Because each person and situation is unique, the leadership team overseeing the given person and situation will provide a restoration plan for support and direction for the emotional, spiritual and relational needs of those involved. Because we are commanded in Scripture to submit to those in leadership, restoration to ministry involvement can only be accomplished through cooperative relationships.

Today we have focused on one of those challenging realities that, if we ignore, we are sure to be blind-sided; but, if we are prepared, we can actually utilize conflict, or the knowledge of someone struggling, as a way to proactively extend God's grace and kindness.

* At which level of ministry do you see yourself ? (See #2 on page 88.)

* What would help or equip you to be able to come alongside a fallen friend and help them move toward restoration?

Okay, it's time to take a deep breath and say, "Yes! I did it! I made it through the Discipleship Devotional!" Now that you understand more clearly what it means to be a Disciple of Christ and a Partner to your church family, you are ready for the next step. Look over the following list of "Next Steps" and choose which ones you are ready for. You may be at a place where you can do all of them, or possibly only one or two. The most critical thing is to keep moving. Remember that nothing becomes dynamic—powerful in your life—until it becomes specific.

— NEXT STEPS —

☐ Go to the Appendix and fill out the "Partnership Committment," then drop it off, or fax (209-383-2709) it to the Church and ask for a Partnership interview.

☐ Ask your accountability partner, leader or mentor what they would suggest as the next class or material to go through.

☐ Choose a ministry or small group, or both to commit to.

☐ Pick up the "The Journey," and work through it with your leader, mentor or accountability partner to create a "Discipleship Plan" for the next season or year. (See the Appendix, pages 100-101, for some examples of a Discipleship Plan.)

☐ Do you know someone that would benefit from going through this material? If so, Maybe now is the time to help someone else grow in Christ by asking them to go through the devotional with you.

Prayer Focus:

As you go to prayer today, let's intercede together for a growing number of Partners/disciples who will not only embrace our mission and vision but also be committed to live the life. Maybe you know of a fallen brother or sister in Christ who needs support – take a minute or two and ask God to draw them back to Himself. Ask if there is anything He wants you to do to help them move forward.

WEEK IN REVIEW

END WEEK 5

1. What did you think of John Maxwell's definition of disciple? Do you see your life reflecting his definition? Why or why not?

2. What aspects of the SERVICE acrostic inspires or challenges you the most from Day 21?

3. Describe how you manage your time and how Day 22's material will impact your time management? How has the study affected your priorities?

4. How did you do with your Managing Your Mouth Survey? Where are you the weakest? How did this study impact you?

5. What did you learn about healthy boundaries from Day 24? Are there any adjustments that you want to make to improve your boundaries?

6. Conflict is not easy, but if we can see it as a sacred part of our life, together we can face it with gentleness, compassion and respect. How did this last day influence your own perspective on conflict and helping those who have fallen?

7. Look over the resources in the Appendix for Resolving Conflict and Relational Hurt and process or practice the suggested steps and tips with your accountability partner, leader or mentor.

GLOSSARY

BIBLE REFERENCES

All references are to the New International Version (NIV), unless otherwise noted, as below:

CEV ..... Contemporary English Version
ESV ..... English Standard Version
GW ..... God's Word
LB ..... The Living Bible
MSG ..... The Message
NLT ..... New Living Translation
TEV ..... Today's English Version

Appendix

Statement of Faith

What We Believe – Yosemite Church, Merced CA

In essential beliefs– we have unity.

> *"There is one Body and one Spirit... there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all." Ephesians 4:4-6*

In non-essential beliefs– we have liberty.

> *"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God." Romans 14:1,4, 12, 22*

In all our beliefs– we show love.

> *"If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains– but have no love I amount to nothing at all." 1 Corinthians 13:2 (Ph)*

About God

God is the creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1,26,27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

About Mankind

We are all made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. We are the supreme object of God's creation. Although mankind has tremendous potential for good, we are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude separates us from God.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 2:23; Isaiah 59:1-2

About Eternity

We all were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. The place of eternal separation from God is called Hell. Heaven is the place of eternal union and eternal life with God.

John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15 (Hell); Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:27 (Heaven)

About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; John 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13

About Salvation

Salvation is a gift from God to mankind. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can we be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment we receive Jesus Christ into our life by faith.

Romans 5:1; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6; John 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26

About Eternal Security

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in the salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives this security.

About The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make mankind aware of our need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily.

1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; John 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:13, 5:1; Galatians 5:25

About The Bible

The Bible is God's word to all mankind. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 1:13, 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5, John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

Appendix

General Ministry Description

General Description

Seek to understand and live out the healthy standards of discipleship. Commit to uphold our values, mission, and vision for ministry and pursue a lifestyle that reflects the Biblical principles described in the 6 Mile Markers.

General Conduct

* Be open to the input of others.
* Be on time to meetings.
* Be prompt in returning phone calls.
* Be a learner, i.e. taking advantage of leadership development opportunities and training.
* Be quick to resolve conflict.
* Be committed to speak positively about others.
* Be committed to the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, journaling, church attendance, meditation and memorization, financial giving, fellowship, and reaching out to those far from God.
* Be a team player. Serve in an area of ministry that reflects your giftedness and connection to others in service.

Appendix

Resolving Conflict and Relational Hurt

When Hard Things Need to be Said

1. Ask for some time with the person in question.
2. Speak about your concern directly to the person involved.
3. Check out the situation from their perspective to make sure you've interpreted the details correctly.
4. Listen and confirm any significant details with paraphrasing.
5. Express your perspective. Be clear if any change of behavior is needed. If they have articulated the issue well and identified what could be adjusted, you can confirm their observations, but be clear as to how things would look different in the future.
6. Ask if they have any other thoughts or input. Ask them to tell you what you are saying, to ensure understanding.
7. Thank them for working on this valuable relationship.
8. Ask if you are both OK with each other.
9. Touch base within the next 24 hours to be sure you are both OK.

Tips for Keeping Things on Track

1. Remember to talk using "I" statements, instead of "you" statements.
2. Ask for a time out if emotions become too intense.
3. Slow down the conversation and mutually seek to speak with grace.
4. Seek first to understand their perspective before being understood.
5. Ask if you have it right or if you are missing something.
6. Once you think you have heard them, use reflective listening* to be sure you understand their message and their emotions.
7. Always end by thanking the person for their effort and work.
8. Remember that you may need more than one meeting to get things resolved.
9. If it appears the situation is not being resolved, ask the party to pick a person to join the discussion.

Breaks are particularly important if one party is emotionally flooded.

* Reflective listening: Such as, "So what I hear you saying, …"; "Let me see if I got this right?"; or rephrase their statement as a question.)

Appendix

Creating a Restoration Plan

The following steps provide an outline for writing/documenting and facilitating a Restoration Plan, and the communication that needs to accompany the process.

Preliminary Steps:

1. Party in question will be asked to step back from one or more levels of leadership, depending on the issue at hand. Be sure all areas of involvement are considered and appropriate leaders are informed via phone or personal contact.

2. A written plan of restoration will need to be crafted by the supervising leader following the steps below:

Outline: To serve as a template in building a specific restoration plan.

1. Identify a support person to walk with, pray, listen to, and care for the individual stepping back from ministry.

2. Select an appropriate tool: curriculum, group, or counselor for the needed emotional and spiritual healing; define the time and commitment necessary for completion.

3. Re-evaluate by support person, ministry lead and staff contact, after a minimum break of 3 months to evaluate if reinstatement is appropriate or more work is needed. This process should include a review of the healthy standards of disciples.

4. Communicate to the appropriate leadership the gist of the issues and upcoming reinstatement of the individual into leadership.

5. Reinstate the leader with a formal blessing, i.e. leadership group, encouraging and praying with the individual.

Appendix

Restoration Plan and Behavioral Agreement

Name: _____

As a Pastor of Yosemite Church, I want you to know that I value you and your relationship with Christ. I appreciate that you have been honest about your past and have agreed to respect several boundaries that are very important for Yosemite Church to maintain an environment that communicates God's love and a confidence that children, families and individuals are important, safe, and respected.

We at YC are all broken-followers of Christ in need of accountability. This Restoration Plan and Behavioral Agreement is designed to help you grow in your relationship with Christ while you fulfill your obligations. You have already been asked to step down from any leadership role and responsibility in accordance with our leadership standards; however you are allowed to serve in your ministries.

Therefore, I am asking you to read this document and agree that you understand the boundaries. Signing this document will indicate that you are willing to adhere to these requirements.

Boundary #1 – Immediately cut all ties of communication with any relationship(s) that was/were inappropriate and promptly report any communication attempt on their behalf to you to your spouse, your pastor and your accountability partner.

This will demonstrate your desire to turn from your mistake and begin repairing correct relationships. This also ensures that you are taking the necessary steps to hold yourself accountable in the sight of God and man.

Our Motivation: To know that you are working to be faithful to God, to grow spiritually and to develop healthy relationships.

Name of Pastor: _____

Name of Accountability Partner: _____

Boundary #2 – Seek professional counseling for your marriage.

Marriage is a sacred union between a man and a woman that is held up as an example of Christ and His church. Seeking help is a powerful demonstration of your love and devotion to this union.

Our Motivation: To know that you are passionate about pursuing a healthy marriage relationship, one that is rooted deeply in a commitment to Christ and one another.

Boundary #3 – Meet with your pastor or accountability partner on a regular basis for reports and support.

You will meet once weekly with your pastor, ministry leader and/or accountability partner(s) to discuss progress, report on challenges, and receive prayer and encouragement.

Our Motivation: To know that you are here for the purpose of growing spiritually and creating healthy accountable relationships.

Boundary #4 – Church Designated Leader

Yosemite Church will designate a leader to observe your behavior, to come alongside you, to support your growth and to ensure that the requirements stated here are being honored. If the requirements are not being honored, we will ask you not to attend or participate in church activities, ministries and weekend services.

Our Motivation: To know that you are taking our concerns seriously and that you are focusing on making healthy choices and building trust with those to whom you are accountable.

Designated Leader(s): _____

_____

Name of individual: _____
Address: _____
Home Phone:_____ Cell Phone:_____
Email Address:_____

Date: _____ **Date of next review:** _____

Discipleship Plan Worksheet

Identify areas you want to work on, choose or select a resource, accountability partner, set your goals and start your journey.

Areas for Training Growth Mile Markers	Potential Training Resources	Planned Training/Goals
Worship • Learning to respond appropriately to God from a heart of devotion. • Learning to develop my "Intimate Walk with God."		
Fellowship • Learning to relate lovingly to other believers. • Learning to show an "Intentional Witness of Unity."		
Discipleship • Learning to be mentored and to mentor others to be Christ-like. • Learning to participate in the "Investment Work of Disciple-ship."		
Partnership • Learning to serve/use my Spiritual Gifts and financial resources for God's Kingdom. • Learning to show an "Intentional Witness of Unity" and the "Investment Work of Discipleship."		
Relationship Outreach • Learning to share my faith with others far from God. • Learning to value the "Intrinsic Worth of Every Person."		
Stewardship • Learning to give faithfully and generously. • Learning to support the "Intentional Witness of Unity" and the "Investment Work of Disciple-ship."		

My Connection Plan

Out of my commitment and love for Christ I will seek to build a stronger spiritual connection this year in the following ways:

Connect to CHRIST through Scripture by ...

- ☐ Setting aside a daily time to focus on Christ and His Word
- ☐ Memorize one theme passage of Scripture a month
- ☐ Journey Journal (reading portions or all of the Bible in a year)

Other: _____

Connect to COMMUNITY by ...

- ☐ Joining a Small Group
- ☐ Joining a ministry team

Connect to SERVICE by ...

- ☐ Serving regularly as a part of a ministry team
- ☐ Serving at a seasonal or special event
- ☐ Serving spontaneously as the Lord leads me

Connect to PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT by taking the following INSTITUTE classes ...

Class #1: _____

Class #2: _____

Class #3: _____

Connect to ACCOUNTABILITY by asking the following people to hold me accountable to these commitments:

Name: _____

Name: _____

My Name (Print): _____ Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

YC Partnership Commitment

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Address: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____ Birth date: _____

Began attending YC: _____

Current Ministry Involvement: _____

Leader: _____

Most significant part of this study for you personally: _____

_____

Made commitment to Christ? Yes ☐ No ☐ When?_____

Baptized as an adult? Yes ☐ No ☐ Follow-up ☐

How did this study impact your commitment? _____

_____

1. By pursuing partnership, I intend to practice the following as a growing disciple of Christ:
   a. Worship—Learning to respond appropriately to God in all I do. This is how we develop a more "Intimate Walk with God". Yes ☐ No ☐
   b. Fellowship—Learning to relate lovingly to other believers. This is how we illustrate the "Intentional Witness of Unity". Yes ☐ No ☐
   c. Discipleship—Learning to be mentored and to mentor others to be like Christ. This is how we accomplish the "Investment Work of Discipleship". Yes ☐ No ☐
   d. Partnership—Learning to do my part to serve Christ, his body and his purposes. This is how we accomplish the "Investment Work of Discipleship" and the "Intentional Witness of Unity." Yes ☐ No ☐
   e. Stewardship—Learning to give financially as an act of worship. This is how we contribute to an "Intimate Walk with God" and the Investment Work of Discipleship." Yes ☐ No ☐
   f. Relationship Outreach—Learning to invite others into a relationship with God. This is how we illustrate the "Intrinsic Worth of Every Person". Yes ☐ No ☐

If "no," on any of the above, why: _____

3. I affirm our Mission, Vision, Values: Yes ☐ No ☐

If "no," why: _____

4. I affirm our Statement of Faith: Yes ☐ No ☐

If "no," why: _____

4. Every believer is a sinner, saved only by God's grace. Each of us struggles daily with sin. Until we reach heaven, each day we will fall short of obeying God and need his forgiveness. With this in mind, do you acknowledge that you lived a life of sin before coming to faith in Jesus, but that you will endeavor to live a surrendered life by the power of the Holy Spirit and with the support of your fellow believers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If "no," why: _____

_____

Having completed this form, you are now ready to confirm your commitment to partnership at Yosemite Church. If you are unable to stay after class for the interview, we want to encourage you to call us at your earliest convenience to schedule your confirmation interview.

Respondent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix

MANAGING YOUR MOUTH SURVEY
(You as evaluated by someone else.)

Take a quick survey to see if this is an area of strength or weakness.

1 = No or Never 3 = Sometimes 5 = Yes or Frequently

1. I complain about others.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I have complimented someone today.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I have recently participated in gossip (spoke about others negatively).	1 2 3 4 5
4. I look for ways to build others up with my words.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I exaggerate when I tell a story.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I have expressed gratitude to someone today.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I have been told I talk too much.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I have excused myself from a conversation that was gossip.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I rationalize why I'm not completely honest.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I have expressed thankfulness to God today.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I speak my assumptions before checking the facts.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I think about the impact of my words before I speak.	1 2 3 4 5

Now, add up your score for the even numbered statements and record it below, and then add up your score for the odd numbered statements.

Even Number Score _____ Odd Number Score _____

From 21-30	This is an area of strength	From 6-13
From 14-20	This needs improvement	From 14-20
From 6-13	Improvement is critical	From 21-30