



**Glow**



# **Discipleship Course**

**Term Three**

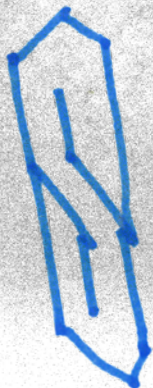




# Welcome to the Discipleship Course!

Every study has a short video, study notes and discussion points. Our prayer is that as we study together, we are transformed by His Word and His Spirit, strengthening our relationship with God and one another.

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>WEEK 1</b> | <b>Introduction + Father</b><br>The Father Heart of God                                       |
| <b>WEEK 2</b> | <b>Son</b><br>The work of Jesus on the Cross  |
| <b>WEEK 3</b> | <b>Holy Spirit</b><br>The person and power of the Holy Spirit                                 |
| <b>WEEK 4</b> | <b>Community Accountability</b><br>Following Jesus together                                   |
| <b>WEEK 5</b> | <b>Reflective Reading and Persistent Prayer</b><br>'Why' and 'how' we read the Bible and pray |
| <b>WEEK 6</b> | <b>Total Stewardship and Sabbath</b><br>Everything we have from God/ Rhythms of rest          |
| <b>WEEK 7</b> | <b>Praying for the sick + dealing with the demonic</b><br>Continuing Jesus' ministry          |
| <b>WEEK 8</b> | <b>Expanding the Kingdom of God</b><br>Making disciples, serving the poor                     |





THE DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

# WEEK 5: Reflection Reading + Persistent Prayer



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**Discipleship  
Course**



# Why Read The Bible?

"Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him."

## COLOSSIANS 3: 1-10

Renewed means 'to be changed into a new kind of life as opposed to the former corrupt state'. This is what God is longing to do in us. Sin corrupted us, but God has given us a new nature. His ongoing work in our life is to make us more like Jesus. In this verse, 'know' refers to our foundations (know the Father) and 'become' refers to the continued transformation. In other words, 'knowing leads to becoming.'

Paul writes to Timothy:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."

## 2 TIMOTHY 3: 16-17

**The world can shape you, but only God can transform you.**

Our lives are just like clay – they are easily shaped and formed. The big question is: who or what have you allowed to shape or form it? We continually experience moments and processes that shape and form us. Positive and negative events. Things under our control and outside it. Choices we make and the choices of others.

No matter how your life has been shaped, there is no life God can't transform.

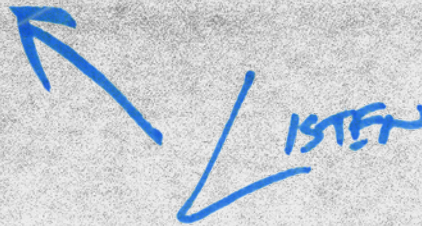
When we say yes to Jesus and entrust our lives over to Him, we receive the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, but there are some things we need to do. God's transformation of our lives is a willing partnership we enter into. Our faith causes us to do this, not out of demand but out of a desire to change; to become more like Jesus. One of the greatest ways God transforms your life is through his Word – through reflective reading of the Bible.

In the verses above Paul writes to Timothy and wants him to understand how important it is to read the Bible.

## HE STATES THE BIBLE IS:

1. **Infallible - Completely trustworthy**
2. **Inerrant - it does not have mistakes**
3. **Transformative - able to change you**

## SO WHY SHOULD WE READ THE BIBLE?





# 1. The Bible is from God

"All Scripture is inspired by God (God-breathed)."

2 TIMOTHY 3: 16

The Bible is not just about God, it is from God. One way to think of it is as a long letter written from Him to us so we can know Him more.

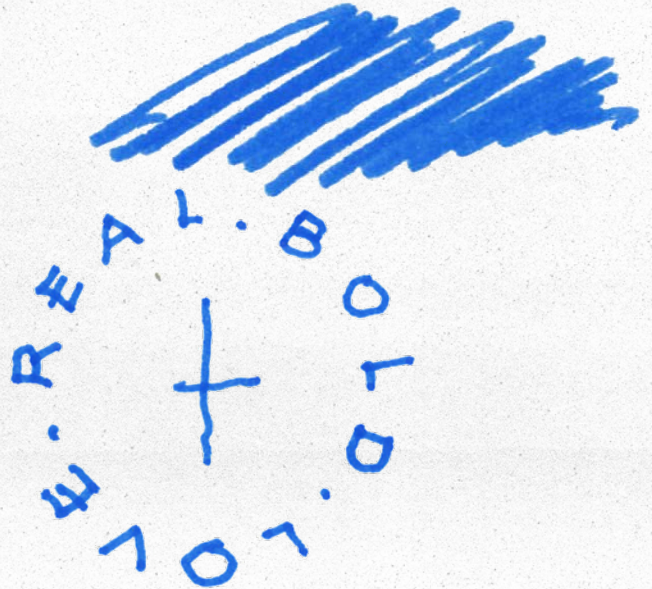
This tells us that the Word of God is:

## 1. God Revealing

You can never truly know someone until you talk to them. We can say we know a famous person but until we speak to them we never truly know them. We only know of them. When God speaks to us through His word it reveals who God is. We no longer speculate but we know who God is when we read His word.

## 2. Life Giving

All scripture is God-breathed. When God made Adam from the dust in the book of Genesis it says He breathed into him and his life started. The same breath of God that brought Adam to life, brings life to His word. It is God breathed and life giving. Scripture brings life. When you read the Bible you KNOW God and you RECEIVE life.





# 2. The Bible Reveals Right and Wrong

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives."

2 TIMOTHY 3: 16-17

We live in a world right now that has abandoned absolute truth in the pursuit of 'my truth'. We look for sources to back up our belief system or our desires. We look for authorities to give permission to our behaviours. But relative truth is no truth at all. This is why we need the Bible.

The Bible reveals truth, which also reveals what is false. It is like a mirror. We look at it to reveal what is right or wrong, not just about the world, but about our own lives. We look in a mirror when we are getting ready for the day because we want to actually correct and adjust ourselves externally. The Bible is the mirror that corrects and adjusts us internally – our thoughts, motives, feelings and desires.

We need to allow the Word of God to adjust us internally at the start of every day.

We are all looking for truth, but we must remember, it's not a *truth* that sets you free, it is *the truth* that sets you free. When you read the Bible it reveals truth that brings liberation. The only way to know what is right and wrong is to go to the Word of God. He wants to reveal what is wrong in us not to condemn us, but to transform us.

SAY IT AGAIN!

# 3. The Bible Corrects and Directs

"It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. When you go against God's word, you are not hurting God, you are hurting you."

2 TIMOTHY 3: 16-17

When we go against God's word it hurts us not God. As a good father, God has given us His Word, the Bible, because it's good for us. It corrects and directs us for our protection. When you read the bible it is like going to the chiropractor and a coach at the same time.

Chiropractors adjust what is out of alignment, what is causing us pain. The word of God corrects us to bring us back into alignment with who we are designed to be. At times it doesn't feel good, just like when a chiropractor adjusts us, but we know it is beneficial for us. Those moments of pain are there to bring correct alignment that brings relief, not more pain.

The Bible also coaches. It teaches us how to live in the abundant life Jesus promised. It gives directions on how to engage in every facet of life – including work, family, relationships, finances – in the most life-giving way. It also shows us how to navigate pain and suffering, to endure and grow. It provides direction for every area of our life. The Bible corrects and directs us.

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# 4. The Bible Prepares and Equips

"God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."

2 TIMOTHY 3: 17

Prepare means to get ready. Equip means to provide and resource.

If we were preparing for war we would need a strategy for battle, and to be equipped with the gear to fight the battle. Every time you read the Bible it prepares and equips you for life and ministry. It not only prepares us by giving examples of how to journey through life, but it equips us by showing us how to handle life situations that come our way.

So many of us are not prepared or equipped to live God's way because we do not go to His Word. We haven't allowed it to prepare and equip us for, not only life, but for every good work. Ephesians says God has good works He wants to do through us but we need to be prepared and equipped by His Word working in our hearts and minds.

Psalm 119 says "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." God's desire for us is not just to read His Word but to meditate on it and to fall in love with it. It's one of the greatest tools given to us for transformation. We don't just need shaping, we need transforming through reflective reading of the Word.

## LET'S TALK

- Q. Do I love to read the Word of God? If not, why not?
- Q. Is the Word of God a priority for me every day?
- Q. What are some life situations I could apply the Word of God to right now?
- Q. What is God revealing to me through His Word?



JESUS  
LOVE



# How to Read the Bible

“Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

JOHN 8: 31-32

## Freedom is found in the truth.

A+

We can live our whole life unknowingly believing a lie. If we have always been told something is true, or believed it is true of ourselves or our circumstances, we don't know it's a lie until the truth reveals itself. Truth actually reveals the lies. In our previous study, we learnt that the Bible shows us what is right (truth) and what is wrong (lie). The Bible reveals the truth that leads to freedom. “...and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

The more you read and apply God's Word, guided by the Holy Spirit, the more free you become. Because of this revealing truth, there is an enemy to our soul who tries to distract us from reading the Bible. But Jesus came to give us life in abundance (John 10:10). The enemy is trying to deter us and make it hard for us to read the Word. He tries to distract us with devices, busyness, relationships – things that may not be bad in themselves, but are negative when they become a distraction. He knows the power God's Word has to change us. It is God's Word that brings freedom.

**WHAT IS A GREAT WAY TO READ THE BIBLE?**





# 1. Read it

**Read it through this scripture  
3-4 times:**

"The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever."

**PSALMS 23: 1-6**

Part of reading is not just reading it once. It is repeatedly reading it. It's like chewing food. The more we chew it the more the flavour and nutrients come out. When we read over God's Word repeatedly we are bringing out the most in it. The scripture will start to fill our minds.



# 2. Reflect on it

Once we've read the scripture, allow some time to reflect. Reflection simply means fixing our thoughts on something - giving it careful consideration.

**WE CAN TAKE VERY  
SIMPLE PRACTICAL  
STEPS TO DO THIS:**

- 1. List everything the scripture says about God**
- 2. List anything the scripture says about us.**

Practise this with Psalm 23 above. Most people read scripture to find themselves in it. But scripture is first and foremost to point us to God. The Bible reveals Him. His nature and His character. So writing what it says about God helps us to know who He is. Take a moment to ask 'what does this scripture say about God?' and then take a moment to ask what this scripture says about us.





# 3. Respond to it

Responding is something that is often missed in Bible reading by believers. To respond means to ask 'where do I need to be obedient?'. Obedience is not a popular word in modern society; we don't like to be told what to do. But here is the thing: everyone is obeying something or is a slave to something. The Bible says we are slaves to whatever we obey. What are we obeying the most? Scripture calls us to a place of obedience. Reading the Bible is not just about attaining intellectual knowledge, it's meant to lead us to Holy Spirit-fuelled obedience.

"The Bible was not given for our information but for our transformation."

D.L. MOODY

How does true transformation happen? Through obedience. Not just reading, but putting it into action and applying the Word of God to our lives. Jesus said this is what it means to follow Him: to listen and obey.

"...Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

LUKE 11: 28

The goal of reading the Bible is to OBEY. This is where the blessing and freedom comes.

## WE CAN TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS TO OBEY BY LISTING THE FOLLOWING WHEN WE READ SCRIPTURE:

- Q. What **EXAMPLES** need to be followed?
- Q. What **COMMANDS** need to be obeyed?
- Q. What needs to be **AVOIDED**?

All of these things start to help us find transformation through the Word of God. It's not just in reading, but in obeying. It's not just about information, it's about transformation.

# 4. Rest in it

Rest means to meditate.

## THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF MEDITATION IN THIS WORLD:

1. **Worldly meditation** is emptying your mind.
2. **Christian meditation** is filling your mind.

The Bible says we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). We are not transformed by the emptying of our minds. Christian meditation isn't about emptying your mind but filling it with God's thoughts and we start by meditating on his Word. Let these thoughts fill your mind. Our lives tend to head in the direction of our strongest thoughts. So make Godly thoughts your goal.

## Take practical steps to meditate on scripture:

Choose one or two things that are most important in the scripture.

*Highlight* one key thing that I can learn or have learnt from the reading.

"Meditation is talking to yourself about God, in the presence of God."

TIMOTHY KELLER

## LET'S TALK:

- Q. Have you been believing a lie? What does God say about it?

Find a scripture that can apply truth to the lie and practise reflective reading with it.

## PAUSE + REFLECT

For the next seven days try a reflective reading challenge. Choose one scripture and read it repeatedly for seven days, practising the practical steps provided in this study. Watch what God will reveal to you. This is where transformation starts to happen. It will produce a whole lot of freedom because the truth will set you free.





# Persistent Prayer

SAY IT AGAIN!

"Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him."

**COLOSSIANS 3:1**

"Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." Jesus said, "This is how you should pray: "Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation."

**LUKE 11: 1-4**

What are you really good at? Have you ever heard anyone say "I am really good at prayer"? What is it about prayer that is so hard?

## WHEN WE THINK OF PRAYER, THE TRUTH IS IT CAN FEEL LIKE:

1. **It's boring.**
2. **It's hard work.**  
-I can't concentrate.  
-I don't have the discipline.
3. **God seems hard to talk to.**
4. **I don't know how to do it.**
5. **I don't have time to do it.**

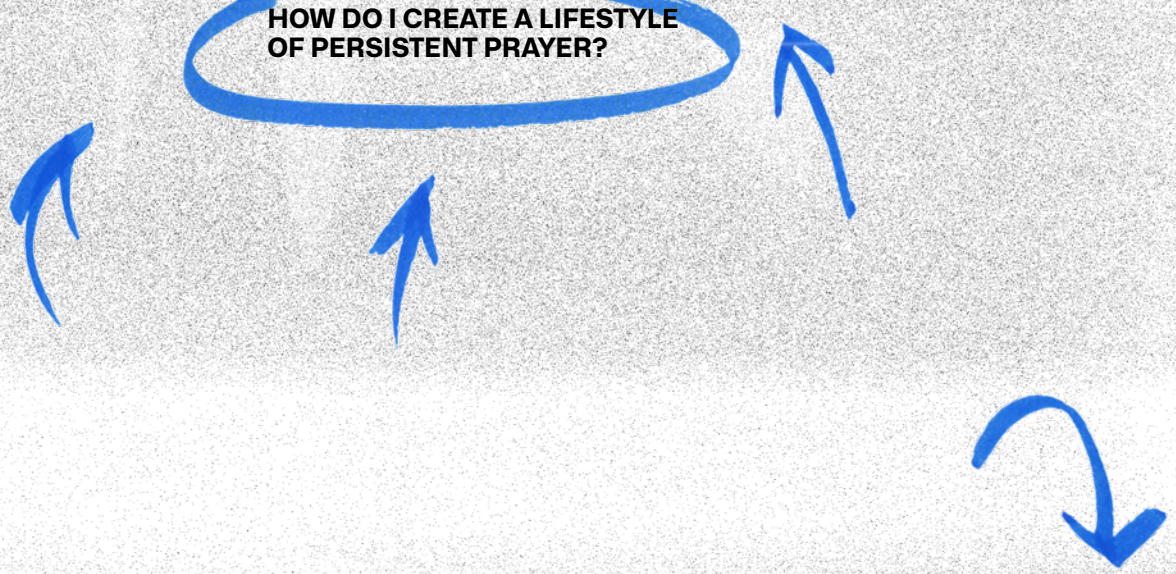
All of these things can run through our minds when it comes to prayer. The truth is most of us probably feel we are not good at prayer. We want to get good at it because we are followers of Jesus. It is obvious to see Jesus was really good at prayer, in fact He enjoyed it and depended on it! While He was fully God and was fully man, in His humanity He recognised that there is a beautiful power, humility and privilege to be able to talk with His Heavenly Father.

In Luke, we see that Jesus' disciples recognize a pattern in His life. Jesus regularly took Himself away to pray. The disciples recognise a correlation between Jesus' prayer life and His ability to live the life He lived, to perform the miracles He performed, and to love the way He loved.

The disciples were with Jesus all the time and of all the things they could ask Him about, they asked Him, 'how should we pray?' They asked Jesus about His persistent prayer life. They asked how He did it, because they recognised something powerful about His prayer life.

As Jesus followers, we need to recognise that persistent prayer is one of the most powerful tools we have in our lives. Persistent prayer is talking and connecting with your Heavenly Father, who is all-loving, all-knowing and all-powerful.

**HOW DO I CREATE A LIFESTYLE OF PERSISTENT PRAYER?**





# 1. Find your place

## Prepare a Place and Prepare Yourself

You can pray anywhere at any time but it is important to carve out a time and a place where you daily connect with your Heavenly Father. Jesus had a prayer place He went to often. It was a place where Jesus knew He could connect with God.

### YOUR PRAYER PLACE NEEDS TO BE A PLACE WHERE:

1. You are present and distraction free - don't take your phone with you.
2. You can be alone with God - press into relationship with Him.

"But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

LUKE 5:16

# 2. Connect with your Heavenly Father

When Jesus prayed, He prayed:

"Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy."

Matthew 6:9

So when you pray, remind yourself of the intentional closeness and proximity God has to you. He is not far off, he is incredibly near and present with you.

### B. He is Holy

God is holy. Holy means unique, special, complete and without parallel. God is so different. He is not our idea of an earthly father, he is a different and perfect Father. There is no one like Him. He is holy.

There are two things we need to understand about God:

### A. He is Everywhere

When we think of our Father in Heaven we can think of Him as distant, but the actual term in the Greek was 'ouranos' meaning 'in the air'. When Jesus prayed 'our Father in Heaven' he was saying 'Our Father in air.' Air isn't far away, air is everywhere, including inside you. You cannot escape the presence of air. In the same way, God cannot be absent. He is present everywhere! He is our ever-present Father.

The most mind-blowing part is sin and holiness cannot co-exist. God in His love didn't require us to be holy on our own, but made us Holy through Jesus' work on the Cross. So we can enjoy the company of our Heavenly Father.

"God is the reality whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."

AUGUSTINE





# 3. Ask your Father in Heaven

Our prayer life can become a little tainted at times.

## IT IS EASY TO THINK:

1. What will happen will happen
2. God is going to do what He wants anyway
3. Everything happens for a reason.

This approach can sabotage what your prayer life can be. But what if our prayers can change reality?

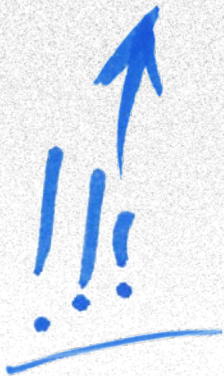
As one great theologian put it:

"God's response to our prayers is not a charade. He does not pretend that he is answering our prayer when he is only doing what he was going to do anyway. Our requests really do make a difference in what God does or does not do. The idea that everything would happen exactly as it does regardless of whether we pray or not is a spectre that haunts the minds of many who sincerely profess belief in God. It makes prayer psychologically impossible, replacing it with dead rituals at best."

DALLAS WILLARD

In other words, when you pray some things happen, when you don't pray some things don't happen.

## YOUR PRAYERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



## SO WHEN YOU PRAY, ASK:

1. For the Kingdom of God to come into your life  
"For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."  
Romans 14:17 NLT
2. For forgiveness - the forgiveness of our sins, and strength to forgive others.
3. For provision - daily bread.
4. For strength - not endure temptation.

Persistent prayer is about us connecting with our Heavenly Father. Our Father in the air who is everywhere. When we come to Him we can come with confidence because He is our loving Father. We can connect with Him and ask Him to help us, So pray some bold prayers!

So pray

## PAUSE + REFLECT

- Q. How is your prayer life? Do you pray daily to our Heavenly Father?
- Q. Is there anything stopping you from praying?
- Q. How do you feel when you connect with God? How does it affect your day?
- Q. What are some things you would like to ask God about or for? Write them down and pray over them in your prayer time.