

Study Guide † DNA of a  
Christ Follower

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CHRIST

FOLLOWER

The 8 Essential Traits

DAREN WRIDE

# Study Guide † DNA of a Christ Follower

## Introduction

Introduction prep talk: <https://youtu.be/9fFXe2tByAk>

You may or may not choose to use this introduction as your first small group lesson.

If you use it as your first full lesson:

- Take a look at the study of the first trait to get an idea of the key components for your group time
- You might want to borrow the opener questions from the next lesson on Trait 1, as they are designed to be used for the first meeting of a group. These are listed below. Use one for this lesson and one for the Trait 1 study.
- Your purpose should be to setup the next eight or nine studies and basically cover the first two chapters of the book

### Opener:

If you are leading a new small group, or even a group that has been together in the past and is just getting going again, start with a light ice breaker type question, such as:

- What is your full name (first, middle and last) and what would you be doing right now if you weren't here?
- What was the high point of your summer months (or Christmas season, or \_\_\_\_\_)?
- If you could only accomplish one thing between now and the New Year, (or summer or \_\_\_\_\_) what would it be?

Open in prayer.

You can ask someone else to open in prayer if you know they are comfortable doing so. Ideally ask them ahead of time.

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## The study:

What is your off the cuff, quick answer to the question “What is the DNA of a Christ Follower?”

In sub-groups of 2 or 3, come up with a list of 5-10 essential traits for followers of Jesus Christ.

What are some passages of scripture that give us some condensed lists of traits of followers of Jesus Christ?

Read Matthew 5.1-12. What are the traits listed here?

Read Galatians 5.22-23. What does it mean that this is the “fruit of the Holy Spirit?”

[It is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life, making them more like Jesus.]

Read Romans 12.9-13. What are the traits listed here?

As you can see, there are many places that list traits of followers of Jesus Christ. In the weeks ahead we will be looking at eight traits which summarize them all!

How does a person start following Jesus?

What is the basic difference, the dividing line between someone who is following Jesus and someone who is not?

Read Acts 20.21

What are the two components that show a response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

[Repentance and faith].

What is repentance?

What is faith?

Have a few people in your group share how they began to follow Jesus, how they came to the place of repentance and faith.

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If there is time you may also want to ask:

What is your current growth area? That is, what are the areas or things the Holy Spirit is presently working on in you to make you more like Jesus?

## Prayer:

Share prayer requests related to the above, especially focusing on the areas God is working on in people's lives.

You may also want to make it a habit with your group to pray for people they know who need to come to the place of repentance and faith and begin following Jesus.

Share and pray also for other needs within the group

Hand out the books if they have yet to be handed out.

Encourage everyone to read the first three chapters before your next meeting.

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## Lesson 1: Lover of God

Lesson 1 Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/zMszp6iEXKU>

## Opener:

If you are leading a new small group, or even a group that has been together in the past and is just getting going again, start with a light ice breaker type question, such as:

- What is your full name (first, middle and last) and what would you be doing right now if you weren't here?
- What was the high point of your summer months?
- If you could only accomplish one thing between now and the New Year, what would it be?

Open in prayer.

You can ask someone else to open in prayer if you know they are comfortable doing so.

Ideally ask them ahead of time.

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## The study:

How would you sum up the difference between someone who calls him/herself a Christian but is not walking with God, and someone who is truly following Jesus?

Read Matthew 22.34-40

We sometimes forget that Jesus articulated these two foundational commands in response to a test. He elevated the love of God and others above all the rest of the Law.

Do you think it is actually possible to love God with all your heart, soul and mind?

Why or why not?

Think of a person you would describe as someone who “loves the Lord.” What is it about them that makes you think of them that way?

When and how did you first begin to love God?

What did it look like?

How has the expression of your love for God changed as you have grown?

“Loving God leads to worshipping God.”

What is your understanding of “worship”?

Read Romans 12.1-2

How is worship defined here?

What would it look like, practically, for someone to offer themselves to God as a living sacrifice?

“Loving God Means Obeying God”

Read Deuteronomy 10.1, Psalm 91.10 and John 14.15

The point of those passages is that “loving God means obeying God.”

How is this similar to and different from our other relationships? (That is, are there any other relationships where obedience is foundational to love?) [Daren’s thoughts: Possibly in a child/parent relationship, some might also suggest a wife/husband relationship. However, this close link between obedience and love seems quite unique to our relationship with God, because, well, he’s God. He’s the only one to whom unquestioning total obedience is due.)

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The dangerous logic:

1) A Christ follower is a lover of God. (true)

2) Loving God means obeying God. (true)

Therefore

3) I need to try real hard to obey God and prove my love for him. (false)

Read Psalm 116.1-2; 1 John 4.19

Critical truths to grasp:

The source of our love for God is not ourselves, it is God's love for us

The way we grow in our love for God is by growing in our understanding and experience of God's love for us

What has helped you grow in your love and experience of God's love for you?

When have you, when do you most fully grasp God's love for you?

Is there a Bible verse or a song that especially communicates God's love to you?

What are some things that hinder us from believing and receiving God's love?

More specifically and personally, are there things that hinder YOU from believing and receiving God's love?

**Prayer:**

Share prayer requests related to the above, especially focusing on things that are hindering the reception of God's love by people in your group

Share and pray also for other needs within the group

Be sure to also initiate and call for requests for needs outside the group, including national and international situations

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## Lesson 2: Lover of People

Lesson 2 Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/Un9FrKjR4W0>

Note: [Comments in square brackets are answers or tips for the leader]

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## Opener ideas:

Are you an introvert or extrovert? How does this show up in your life?

Another way to ask the question is “Are you inner-gized or exer-gized?” that is, do you gain energy by being with people or being alone?

What is the most comfortable sized group for you to be in: a group of 1 (just you); 2 or 3; ~10; 100's?

Open in prayer.

You can ask someone else to open in prayer if you know they are comfortable doing so. Ideally ask them ahead of time.

## The Study:

Read Matthew 22.34-40

Why is it harder to love people than to love God? [Is it?]

Do you think we are in the end times?

What are some of the signs of the end times you watch for?

Read Matthew 24.9-12; Read 2 Timothy 3.1-4

One of the signs of the end will be a misplaced love: love for self, love for pleasure, but a lack of love for good, for God and for others.

Using that metric or misplaced love, especially a lack of love for others, what evidence do you see that we may be in the last days?

Why is it so common for Christians to claim to love God but be lacking in love for people? How do we rationalize this to ourselves?

Who is someone you know who is easy to love? Why are they so easy to love?

Think of someone you know who is difficult to love. What makes it difficult to love them?

[Extra question for groups where people know each other well and are secure: Are you easy or difficult to love? Why do you think so? What do others say?]

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Genesis 1.27

What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

[Among other things, we are eternal beings, moral agents (knowing and choosing right and wrong). And an implication of this is that we are valuable.]

One reason we are called to love people is that people have an inherent eternal value.

In addition to being made in the image of God, what biblical truths point to our value?

See 1 Peter 1.18-21. [The price God was willing to pay to redeem us.]

What reason or reasons for loving people is shown in these verses?

1 John 3.11-18; 4.7-12

[Loving people is part of loving God, evidence of loving God.]

The “one anothers” are a summary of all the ways we can actively love people.

Which of the one anothers are most important to you?

[See supplemental list of all the one anothers at the end of this guide> offer people some examples if needed, such as encouraging, accepting, teaching, forgiving each other/one another]

“Loving people means acting in their best interests.”

Is this an adequate summary of that loving people means? Why or why not? How would you summarize what it means to love people?

A Christ follower is a lover of people, someone who acts in the best interests of others, because they recognize the inherent value of people and love the God who loves every person.

## **Application/sharing:**

Who are you being prompted to actively love, and how?

Is there something you can/should do as a group to actively love someone?

Example: A card of encouragement, helping with a physical need, praying for...

Think outside the church!

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[You may want to have a card or cards on hand for the group to write to an individual and sign.

Pray for each other to move out into these applications of active loving.

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## Lesson 3: Holy

Lesson 3 Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/1xjj4PksIYs>

### Opener:

Did you ever see yourself as different from others when you were younger? If so, how?  
or

In what ways are you the same as or different from your parents?

Open in prayer.

You can ask someone else to open in prayer if you know they are comfortable doing so.  
Ideally ask them ahead of time.

### The Study:

Read 1 Peter 1.13-16

Verse 13 talks about Jesus' return; 14-16 talk about holiness.

What relationship is there between focusing on Jesus' return and personal holiness?

What is your current understanding of the meaning of "holy" or "holiness"?

What would it mean to "be holy in all you do"?

What is the reason given for us to be holy in verses 15-16?

Is that a compelling reason? Why or why not?

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The first aspect of holiness was described in this way: When we receive Jesus Christ as our saviour, God sets us apart to and for himself.

What exactly has God set you apart for? (biblically)

[Have people share a bit, then go to Ephesians 1.3-14 and read it if necessary to round out the list of what God has set us apart for.]

How does the truth that from the point of your salvation God has set you apart for his purposes begin to affect your actual conduct? Your plans? Your dreams?

The second aspect of holiness was described this way: When we offer ourselves to God for his service, we are endorsing his declaration of our holiness and setting ourselves apart to and for him.

Read Romans 12.1-2

What does it mean to offer your body as a living sacrifice?

Note: This is written to Christians, the implication being some of have not.

The research cited in the sermon said 80% of Christians have not done this.

Does that sound accurate to you? Explain.

[If you want to put your group on the spot ask: Have you done that? ]

[Or ask, if you have done that, please share your experience of coming to that place.]

The third aspect of holiness is described in this way:

When my behaviour increasingly reflects my set apartness, I am growing in holiness.

In what visible, concrete ways have you grown in holiness since coming to faith in Jesus?

- What if any changes did he make in you immediately when you were saved?
- What are some things that seem to be taking some time?

[Leaders: You can move to close here, or you can delve into this temptation section first, which is below.]

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## Prayer:

Invite people to share needs in relation holiness, whether offering themselves unreservedly to God as in Romans 12, or in overcoming specific areas of unholiness.

## Temptation:

Part of growing in holiness is learning to recognize and overcome temptation.

For progress and growth in practical holiness, in our conduct, we need to understand that a big part of that growth comes from growth in victory over temptation and sin. And to gain that victory, in addition to tapping the holiness and power of Christ himself thru the Holy Spirit, it is helpful to understand out personal temptation and sin patterns.

This has been a revolutionary concept for me (Daren).

(With thanks to Bruce Wilkinson, Personal Holiness in Times of Temptation)

Every Christian has an area or areas where they must fight the fight for holiness in an ongoing way. Some things God delivers us from instantly, but there are other specific temptations that seem to stick around. It has nothing to do with spiritual maturity- even Jesus was tempted.

If you think about it, you will discover that there is a very clear pattern to the recurring temptations you face. And when you reverse engineer the patterns of temptation that you face, especially temptations that lead you to sin, you actually uncover Satan's strategy to take you out. And once you know the enemy's strategy you can take counter measures.

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Write down or mentally note your answers to these questions:

- What is the primary area of struggle for you in personal holiness? I.e.: what is the temptation you face that most often leads you to sin?
- Is there a day of the week in which you most often are tempted in that way and then give into that temptation?
- Is there a time of day in which you are most often tempted in that way and then give into temptation?
- When you commit that sin are you alone or with someone else?
- When you commit that sin, where are you?
- Just before you sin, how do you feel? What is the lack in your heart, what is the need you are trying to fill with that sin? (egs: loneliness, emptiness, boredom, fatigue, down, depressed)

Do you see how the enemy is tripping you up? Once you see they pattern you can break the pattern, you can take counter measures.

One of the things you can do to break the pattern is let someone else know. A common trait of those who break free and gain victory from recurring sin is confession and accountability.

James 5.16

Fasting and prayer about that sin is another powerful countermeasure.

Changing your personal patterns to keep you from those places and contexts and inner states where you sin will also do wonders. > like Joseph are you prepared to drop everything and run?

As Martin Luther supposedly said “Those whose heads are made of butter shouldn’t sit close to the fire.”

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We also need to wake up and understand that we will never gain victory by ourselves; we need both the Spirit of God and the body of Christ. The oldest military strategy in the world is divide and conquer so you can bet the enemy of your soul employs it often and successfully. And if you are floundering in unholy living, recurring sin, my guess is he has used it, is using it on you.

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## Lesson 4: Truth Based

Lesson 4 Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/DuHB20QYyM0>

### Opener:

What's the "best" lie (funniest, most entertaining) you have ever heard or told? (The leader should have an example of one to share, while the others are thinking.)

Or

Play a quick game of "two truths and a lie".

A person shares three statements about themselves, two of which are true, one which isn't. The others try to guess the lie. Have a few people do this.

Open in Prayer

Review: (optional)

The first three traits of a Christ Follower were:

- Lover of God
- Lover of People
- Holy

Of the three, which would you say is a growth area for you?

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[For the leader to share if necessary, to remind people what the traits actually are:

- A lover of God is a person who, experiencing God's love for them is moved to worship and unconditional obedience of Him.
- A Christ follower is a lover of people, someone who acts in the best interests of others, because they recognize the inherent value of people and love the God who loves every person.
- A Christ follower is holy- someone who endorses God's declaration of their holiness by setting themselves apart for him, and by increasingly behaving in ways that reflect that set apartness. More concisely, A Christ follower is holy and growing and holiness. ]

## The Study:

The topic this week is "Truth Based"

Among other things it means to Bible Based.

If a non-Christian asked you why you believe the Bible, what would you say?

[Leaders: Be sure to challenge any churchy answers like "Because it's God's Word" > Why do you believe it's God's Word? Push your people to give an answer that would be at least somewhat compelling for someone who is sincerely seeking.]

This could be a substantial discussion in some groups

How would you challenge this idea if you were with someone who believed it?:

God(purportedly) speaking to Neale Donald Walsch in his book Conversations with God:

What about the Word? "Listen to your feelings. Listen to your highest Thoughts. Listen to your experience. Whenever any one of these differs from what you've been told by your teachers or read in your books, forget the words. Words are the least reliable

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puveyor of Truth.”

[Leaders, be sure to make it clear that this quote is false, unbiblical and irrational]

How does scripture challenge the ideas in this quote?

To be Bible Based means to know it, believe it and apply it.

How many of you have read the Bible through completely?

- Ask those who have to share how the exercise impacted them.
- Challenge those who have not to make a commitment to do so either by the New Year or by the end of 2016 or some other timeline. Or perhaps make a group commitment for everyone to do so by a certain date. Or, perhaps a commitment to read the New Testament by a certain date or whatever variation works for you group.

Part of knowing the Bible is memorizing portions of it.

Who has benefited from memorizing scripture, and what has the benefit been?

Consider memorizing a passage of scripture together as a group over the next few weeks.

Some suggestions:

- Psalm 19.7-11; Keeners: Psalm 19 in its entirety
- Psalm 100
- Matthew 5.3-12 (The Beatitudes)
- Romans 12.1-2
- Galatians 5.22-26 (Fruit of the Spirit+)
- Revelation 21.1-8

Or, different people could select different passages and have them ready to recite by a set date.

Applying the Bible is an essential part of being Bible Based.

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- How have you applied the Bible recently in your life?
- How has it affected a decision or action?
- Is there any area where you have had difficulty or reluctance in applying something you know the Word is calling you to?

What is your biggest question about the Bible?

[Leaders, please collect these and forward them to Daren or Kevin, as this will inform a related message in the New Year.]

## Sharing and Prayer.

You may want to close with the prayer from Ephesians 3.14-21 (another great passage to memorize!)

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## Lesson 5: Evangelistic

Lesson 5 Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/4rdmuLk76Rs>

### Opener:

Who is someone you knew or know who you would consider a real “soul winner” or evangelist?

All of us are called to be witnesses but some people are gifted as evangelists. What’s the difference? [People who are gifted evangelists are like gifted “harvesters”; they have the ability to bring many people across the line to repentance and faith, often without any prior relationship. Those of us who are not gifted in evangelism but called to be witnesses will bring less people across the line, and we will generally need to share our in the context of relationship. Also, we may be instrumental in getting our friends into places where an evangelist can make the harvest.]

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Have you ever had the opportunity to “bring someone across the line” of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ? Please tell us about it.

Open in Prayer

## The Study:

What is your gut reaction or feelings to the idea of being a witness, sharing your faith, engaging in evangelism?

Do you agree that being evangelistic is a basic part of following Jesus Christ?

See Matthew 4.19, 28.18-20, Acts 8.4

How do you feel you are doing in this area?

For you personally to grow as an evangelistic person, what do you need most, what is your greatest need:

- Knowledge and training of how to share your faith
- Motivation to share your faith
- Courage to share your faith
- Relationships with people with whom to share your faith
- Other

[Leaders, please note if there is an area where most of your people feel a need and let the pastor know.]

Luke 15 contains the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost (prodigal) son. What was the situation that prompted Jesus to tell these stories? See verses 1-2.

How were the Pharisees wrong in their condemnation of Jesus?

[Jesus was establishing relationships with those far from God as a means to bring them to God, and also to model for his disciples this trait.]

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What was the main point of Jesus's three parables? What was he trying to communicate to the Pharisees and his disciples and us?

Read 1 Timothy 2.4, 2 Peter 3.9 and John 3.16.

What is God's heart towards those who need him?

How does this help you in your life as a witness?

See also the opening and closing words of Jesus in the Great Commission given in Matthew 28.18-20

Matthew 5.13-16

What relationship is there between these verses and evangelism?

Psalms 51 is a prayer of confession by David after his sin with Bathsheba.

Read verses 10-12.

This is a great little prayer, though we do not need to worry about him taking the Holy Spirit from us.

BUT, look at the result of this prayer in verse 13.

What does this series of verses teach us about evangelism?

[There is a clear relationship between practical holiness and effectiveness in evangelism.]

The pastor says that at least half of the work of evangelism is prayer.

See Acts 26.18

This can be a good outline for praying for the unsaved.

Note from Daren:

Using the ideas in this passage I will pray for individuals or groups of people, asking the Lord to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they can receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those sanctified by faith in Jesus. And I often supplement it with prayer for myself in keeping with Paul's prayer requests for himself, to "declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Ephesians 6.20) and "that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should." (Colossians 4.4)

Do you need more prayer "to declare it fearlessly" or "to proclaim in clearly"?

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Who has the Lord brought into your life that you believe you are called to pray for, for their salvation, and possibly even share the gospel with?

## Prayer:

Make prayer for one another as witnesses, and prayer for those the Lord has brought into your life for you to pray and share with, the focus of your sharing and prayer.

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## Lesson 6: Persevering

There is no Prep Talk for Lesson 6

## Opener:

What is something you have quit and are glad you did?

Or

What is something you quit that you regret quitting?

## Opening Prayer

## The Study:

The opposite of quitting is persevering. And this is a key trait of a follower of Jesus Christ, a trait which might not be obvious until you read through the New Testament looking for traits.

## Read:

Matthew 24.9-13; Hebrews 10.36; Luke 8.15

These verses highlight the trait of persevering as Christians.

List all the reasons you can think of why a Christian needs to persevere.

In what ways, specifically, do you currently need to persevere in your spiritual life?

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Read 1 Corinthians 9.24-27

In his own words, what did Paul do to ensure he persevered?

What would this look like, practically?

Read 2 Timothy 4.7-8

This was near the end of Paul's life. It seems he persevered.

What are the things you think you need to do, perhaps the things you need to change, for you to be able to say what he said here, at the end of your life?

Read 2 Timothy 3.12.

Do you believe this is true?

How have you seen this reality?

All of the above highlight the truth that Perseverance is Essential for followers of Jesus Christ. Let's take a look now at what make perseverance possible.

Read Romans 15.4-6

The things "written in the past" refer to the Old Testament.

What stories or passages from the Old Testament give you endurance, encouragement, hope?

This passage also refers to "the God who gives endurance."

How have you seen God give you endurance?

Read Hebrews 10.32-26

What was it that enabled these people to persevere?

A key passage on perseverance is Hebrews 12.1-3. Read it.

What are the steps given here for perseverance?

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What is the difference between “everything that hinders” and “the sin that so easily entangles”?

What is there in your life that may not be sin but which could hinder your perseverance if it is not kept in its place?

What does it mean to “fix our eyes on Jesus?”

What is it about the example of Jesus that helps you persevere?

There is one very important key to perseverance that we often forget.

Rad John 10.27-29

What does this tell us about perseverance?

Refer back to Romans 15.4-6

Where does perseverance come from?

When it comes to persevering, like many aspects of our spiritual lives, we have a part and God has a part. Our part is to throw off baggage and fix our eyes on Jesus. His part is to infuse us with supernatural strength.

Which of the following things is your next step in persevering?

- Throwing off things that may not be wrong but which hinder
- Throwing off some sins that can entangle you
- Fixing your eyes on Jesus
- Receiving some supernatural perseverance from the Lord

Consider sharing your answer with the group as a prayer request.

A Christ Follower is persevering—throwing off excess baggage, fixing their eyes on Jesus, and resting in the hands of the Father.

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## Lesson 7: God-Dependent

There is no Prep Talk for Lesson 7

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## Opener:

How many of the previous six DNA traits can you remember?

What is your single greatest strength, something you are really good at, better than most people?

What is something you absolutely require others to help you with, at work or in your personal life?

## The Study:

1 Thessalonians 4. 11-12

What is the command given here?

What is the reason for the command?

In addition to the things mentioned here, what are some specific things you can do to “win the respect of outsiders”?

We are told here to live in such a way that we will not be dependent on anybody. At the same time, we see in many part of the New Testament, notably passages about spiritual gifts and Christian community, that we need each other. How do you reconcile these two ideas?

Read these key passages about our topic today:

John 15.5; 2 Corinthians 12.9-10; Galatians 2.20; Philippians 4.13.

These all point to the idea of God-Dependence.

What makes it difficult for us to make ourselves (or recognize ourselves as) dependent on God?

Some suggest that this is easier for women to do than men. Do you agree or disagree and why?

In both the Old Testament (Proverbs 3.34) and the New Testament (James 4.6) we are told that God opposes the proud (OT “mocks proud mockers”) but gives grace to the humble.

How have you seen this truth illustrated in the lives of others or in your own life?

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What does a biblically humble person look like in our time and place?

What is the difference between a humble person and a dejected person?

A God-Dependent person has a humility that says “I need God.”

What kinds of situations in your week move you to a greater awareness of your need for God?

Read Hebrews 11.6.

What is your working definition of faith?

(Some may point to Hebrews 11.1. Push for a simpler, working definition. Ie, what exactly is faith?)

Is someone says “I’m trusting God for a new car” (or some other possession) is that faith or not? What makes the difference?

[Faith is not sincerity; faith is not even being convinced that you will get something you want. Faith is taking God at his word, believing God will do what he has said he will do.]

What is the source of faith- how do we get it and how does it grow?

[Scripture indicates that faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit and that it grows in part from our exposure to the Word of God.]

A God-Dependent person not only knows they need God, but that God can and will help them.

What would you say to someone who desperately needs God’s help in a situation but he doesn’t seem to be coming through for them?

What are some things you do that give evidence that you are God-Dependent?

Less personal: What are some things people do that give evidence they are God-Dependent?

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Here's a list of some things that show up in a God-Dependent person:

- Prayer
- Gratitude
- Peace
- Boldness
- Reliance on the Holy Spirit

Which of these are growth areas for you?

“God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him. Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power.” –Jim Cymbala

Do you agree or disagree with the above statement? What can you point to in scripture to bolster your opinion?

Consider Sharing: Where do you know you need God's power in your life this week?

Pray for one another according to these answers, and any other prayer requests that there may be.

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## Lesson 8: Focused on Eternity

Lesson 8 Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/XD93JUrL4s8>

**Opener:**

What are the various ideas of heaven you have had over the years?

or

What are you most looking forward to in eternity?

or

Who is someone who has passed away who you look forward to seeing again?

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Summarize your end times beliefs according to popular frameworks:

Pre, post or mid-trib?

Pre, post, a-millennial?

Other convictions you have about the end times?

Do you believe Jesus will return in your lifetime?

How would you respond to the idea that a focus on eternity leads people to disengage from the present, care less about our stewardship of creation and basically be less responsible citizens?

**The Study:**

Read: 2 Corinthians 4.16-18; Revelation 21.1-5; Revelation 22.1-5

What jumps out at you from these verses?

The final trait which we are looking at today is this: A Christ Follower is Focused on Eternity.

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How does a focus on eternity intersect with the other seven traits, or help the other traits make more sense? (go through trait by trait, ie: How does a focus on eternity affect our love for God? Etc.)

Possible answers:

- When we see what God has prepared for us we love him more.
- When we see how much God loves his creation, and understand his desire and plan to restore it, we are motivated to love people more and gain a greater sense of our responsibility as stewards of creation.
- The imminent arrival of eternity stirs us to be holy. “All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.” (1 John 3.3)
- The prospect of eternity drives us to the Word, pushes us to be more renewed in our thinking and our priorities so that we are prepared for “the life that is truly life.” (1 Timothy 6.19).
- The reality of eternity, combined with the knowledge that everyone will live forever somewhere, in some state of restored or permanently broken relationship with their Creator, is a massive motivation for evangelism.
- When we know what’s coming, both the challenges and the rewards, we are enabled to persevere.
- When we realize that eternity is a gift from our Creator, and that he sees the beginning from the end, it moves us back to a place of dependence on him for the here and now.

Read Matthew 6.19-21

How do we store up treasures in heaven?

How do we/should we balance the need to prepare for our future here with the need to prepare for eternity? Example: If you receive an unexpected \$1000, how do you decide whether it goes into an eternal investment or a retirement investment?

If Jesus returns and you have millions in cash and assets, will you be in trouble? How much is too much?

Read 1 Timothy 6.17-19

How does this passage describe what it means to store up treasures in heaven?

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Read Colossians 3.1-4

How do we set our hearts and our minds on things above?

What do you hope to do before your death or before the return of Jesus Christ as preparation for eternity?

The final questions:

If your church was to

- 1) Decide to fulfill its purpose of making-disciples (which is the biblical purpose of every church, and
- 2) Use the DNA of a Christ-Follower traits as part of the framework for disciple-making (ie, seek to encourage, support and develop these traits in people) what would have to change in the way church is done?

(Consider recording your group's answers and forwarding them to your pastor!)

When you look at the eight traits, which one would you say is the primary growth area for you?

Lover of God; lover of people; holy; truth-based; evangelistic; persevering; God-dependent; focused on eternity?

Prayer for one another, for your individual growth areas, and for anything else shared.

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## Conclusion

Conclusion Prep Talk: <https://youtu.be/CwAmCDJsWtQ>

**Opener:**

When you look at the eight traits, which one would you say is the primary growth area for you?

Love of God; lover of people; holy; truth-based; evangelistic; persevering; God-dependent; focused on eternity?

Which ones would you say you seem to have quite well developed in your life?

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\*Note: In this lesson it is very important to guard against becoming overly critical of a church or the Church. Work hard to keep the conversation positive and solution based. As a wise man once said “You get points for building arks, not simply for predicting rain!” In other words, it is no great gift to spot a problem with something- especially and organization consisting of imperfect people! The challenge, and the call of followers of Jesus Christ, is to find ways to make things better, and to contribute to such progress, rather than sitting on the outside lobbing grenades.

As a small group, or church as whole, are there certain of the traits which seem to be quite strong corporately?

In need of strengthening?

Which pastors, speakers, authors, leaders have contributed significantly to your growth and development as a follower of Jesus Christ?

Have you ever thanked them for their input into your life?

(As leader of the small group you may want to have a selection of blank cards and envelopes ready for people to pause and write out notes of encouragement to the people they mention.)

What do you love about your church?

What irritates you or drives you crazy?

If you could change one thing about your church, what would it be?

Once people have answered that last question, ask:

Is your preferred change based on a principle of some kind, or a preference?

To put it another way, would your change make the church more effective at making disciples?

Explain...

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Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Other unique abilities?

How can you contribute to making your church more effective in evangelism and discipleship?

Read Matthew 28.18-20

What is the command in this passage? (make disciples)

What is the promise? (The presence of Jesus, who has been given all authority, as we engage in our disciple-making work)

What is our part in making disciples?

What is the Lord's part?

Imagine there were no churches or followers of Jesus in your town, city or region.

Now imagine that your small group has been clearly called by Jesus to make disciples and establish a church.

What are some of the key things you would do? (Think in terms of tasks, ministries, strategies...)

Which of these things could you do right now to strengthen your current church's evangelism and disciple-making?

## Closing:

- Generate a list of prayer requests for yourselves, your church leadership, your fellow believers and your community based on your answer to these questions and the eight essential traits of followers of Jesus Christ.
- Engage in an unrushed season of prayer, asking for direction, and sharing any further ideas for action that come to mind.

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## One Another Verses in the NT In order of appearance...

Mark 9.50- Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.

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John 13.14- If I then the Lord and teacher washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

13.34 (2)- A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

13.35- By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

15.12- This is my commandment that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love...

15.17- This I command you that you love one another. (c/x is branch and vine and fruitfulness.)

Ro 1.12- impart some spiritual gift to you...that is that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

12.5- ...so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

12.10 (2)- be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

12.16- be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly. (NIV: live in harmony with one another...)

13.8- Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

14.13- Therefore let us not judge one another any more, but rather determine this- not to put an obstacle or any stumbling block in a brother's way.

(c/x- strong, weak, meat sacrificed to idols etc)

14.19- So then let us pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another.

15.5- Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another ( NIV- grant you a spirit of unity) according to Christ Jesus

(6- that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.)

15.7- Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

15.14- And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another.

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I Cor 12.25- (body c/x)...that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

(26- if one suffers, all suffer, if one honored all rejoice) 16.20- Greet one another with a holy kiss.

II Cor 13.12- Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Gal 5.13- For you were called to freedom brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (whole law fulfilled)

5.15 (2)- But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another. (...walk in Spirit vs flesh)

5.26 (2)- (walk by Spirit)...Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

6.2- (restore one caught in sin) Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. (ie: love one another)

Eph 4.2- (walk worthy of calling)...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love

(3- being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace)

4.25- (lay aside old self, put on new)...Therefore, laying aside all falsehood, speak truth, each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

4.32 (2)- And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.

5.19 (filled with HS...)speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...

5.21- (filled with HS...) and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Phil 2.3- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself

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Col 3.9- (put aside anger etc)...Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices (10- and have put on the new self...)

3.13 (2)- (put on heart of compassion etc)...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

3.16- Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...

I Thes 3.12- and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you;

4.9- Now as to the love of the brethren you have no need for anyone to write to you for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

4.18- (rapture)...Therefore comfort one another with these words.

5.11 (2)- (resurrection) Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you are also doing.

5.13- (.Live in peace with one another...

5.15- See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for all men.

Hebr 3.13- (take care lest any have evil unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God...) But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "today" lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

10.24- and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

10.25- not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging [one another], and all the more as you see the day drawing near

James 4.11- Do not speak against one another brethren...

5.9- Do not complain brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged...

5.16 (2)- (prayer for healing from elders) Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

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I Peter 1.22- Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love for the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

(23- for you have been born again...)

4.8- Above all keep fervent in you love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

4.9- Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 4.10- As each on has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

5.5- You younger men likewise be subject to your elders; and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

5.14- Greet one another with a kiss of love.

I John 1.7- But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin.

3.11- For this is he message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

3.23- (whatever we ask we receive because we keep his commandments...) And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. (the one who keeps his commandments abides in him and He n him...)

4.7- Beloved let us love one another, for love is form God; and everyone who lives is born of God and knows God. (The one who doesn't love doesn't know God...)

4.11- Beloved if God so loved us we also ought to love one another.

4.12- No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

II John 5- And now I ask you lady, not as writing you a new commandment, but one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.