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SERIES



Habits of a Healthy Disciple

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



EVERY NATION
P R O D U C T I O N S

HABITS OF A HEALTHY DISCIPLE

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Published by EVERY NATION PRODUCTIONS

P.O. Box 12229 Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines

email: productions@everynation.org.ph

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Printed in the Republic of the Philippines

How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

CONNECT (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other's personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting's topic

WORD (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

What: *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely

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

Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

So What: *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

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 12:2

Now What: *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. JAMES 1:22

Tips for Life-Changing Application

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

PRAY (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a “closing prayer,” but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 18:19

Tips for Powerful Prayer

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don’t preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long “sermon prayers.”
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. HEBREWS 10:25 (SEE ALSO ACTS 2:42-47.)

WHAT

A healthy disciple knows that this Christian walk is not meant to be lived alone. The Bible exhorts us not to give up meeting together and to live a lifestyle of encouraging one another. More than just developing friendships, fellowship is about sharing in the reality of Christ's life with other believers. In this lesson, we will look at how we can develop a habit of fellowship.

1 Seek the Lord together.

Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.

PSALM 34:3

As important as personal devotions are in developing a relationship with God, there are blessings and benefits we can receive from God only in the context of being in a relationship with one another.

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What are some practical ways we can seek the Lord together?

2 Share your life with one another.

⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. ACTS 2:46,47

Fellowship is “shared life.” How did the early church share their lives with each other?

What did their shared life result in? How are we to be in fellowship with each other?

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3 **Serve one another.**

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 (SEE ALSO HEBREWS 10:24.)

The Bible tells us to serve one another, and Jesus is the best example of this. How are you using your gifts to serve others?

How can we spur one another towards love and good deeds?

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4 **Sacrifice for one another.**

¹²*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”* JOHN 15:12,13

Jesus modeled true fellowship and love for us by sacrificially giving His life for our sins. As we fellowship with other believers, we are called to extend that same love and generosity.

How have you sacrificed for your friends and family?

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SO WHAT

- Why do you think it's difficult for some people to share their lives with others?
- How does the command to serve one another challenge you? Why would most of us prefer to be served, rather than to serve others?
- What does it mean to sacrifice for others? What do you think this would look like in your life?

NOW WHAT

- How can you share your life with others every day? How can you challenge others to know God more?
- How can you serve the people around you this week?
- Are you sensitive to God's voice and able to obey Him when He asks you to sacrifice something for another person? What can you do to develop an obedient heart and attitude?

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- Thank God for showing us what it means to love sacrificially and to serve others through Jesus Christ.
 - Pray that God would help you seek Him, serve, and live graciously with others. Ask God to help you sacrifice for others so they may see His love expressed in your life.
 - Pray that our church would be like the early church, serving and caring for one another, praising God together, and that more people would come to know God through us.

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." JOHN 13:35

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

WHAT

Jesus taught His disciples to serve. He served His disciples first. As we follow Christ, service should be part of our daily lives. In this lesson, we will look at five truths about serving others with our gifts.

1 Our gifts are given to us by God.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. . . .

ROMANS 12:6 (SEE ALSO ROMANS 12:7,8.)

God has given each of us different talents and spiritual gifts.

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What are some of the gifts the Bible talks about?

2 Our gifts should be used.

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. . . .'" MATTHEW 25:23

God has given us gifts so they may be used.

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How can we be found faithful with what God has given us?

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Our gifts should be used to serve others.

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

God has given us spiritual gifts not only for our benefit, but also to serve others.

How have you used your gifts to serve others?

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Our gifts should be used with the strength God provides.

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. . . . 1 PETER 4:11

Share about a time when you experienced God's grace and strength while serving others.

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Spiritual gifts should be used to glorify God.

. . . To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 PETER 4:11

God is pleased when you serve others.

How does God get the glory when you serve?

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SO WHAT

- How do you think you can know what your talents and gifts are?
- What are some of the talents and gifts God has given you?
- How do you think you can use your gifts to serve others?

NOW WHAT

- Are you exercising and using the gifts God has given you? Which gifts do you need to use more? How can you use these gifts for God's glory?
- How can you serve others through your gifts this week?
- How can you experience the grace and strength of God so you can serve others every day?

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- Thank God for the gifts and talents He has blessed you with.
 - Ask God for supernatural grace and strength so you can serve others with your gifts.
 - Pray for God to give you more opportunities and wisdom to serve others this week.

“...It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

ACTS 20:35

WHAT

In a world of materialism where we are taught to “Look out for #1,” ask “What’s in it for me?” and believe that “If you don’t take care of yourself, no one will,” the Bible teaches that it is better to give than to receive. Following Jesus means living a lifestyle of generosity. Let us look at three principles we need to understand as we develop a habit of generosity.

1 Giving is a voluntary decision.

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 9:7

When we give on our volition, it blesses us. Why should we not give reluctantly or under compulsion?

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How have you experienced the blessings of God through your giving?

2 Giving is a privilege.

Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:4

God wants us to be a channel of blessing to others. He wants you and I to be a conduit of His provision.

What is a privilege?
In what ways has
giving been a
privilege for you?

3 Giving is by grace.

But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:7

“... Freely you have received, freely give.” MATTHEW 10:8

Grace is the unmerited favor God gives us. We can give freely because we have received freely.

How is giving
a grace?

SO WHAT

- How does the world's view of money differ from God's? Why do you think the Bible says it is more blessed to give than receive?
- Why do you think God loves a cheerful giver? Why is our attitude toward giving important to God?
- How do you think we can excel in the grace of giving in our own lives?

NOW WHAT

- Are you a cheerful giver? How do you think you need to adjust your life and attitudes so you can develop a habit of biblical generosity?
- The Bible says that "freely you have received; freely give." How can this truth change your perspective of money and generosity beginning today?
- Who can you be a blessing to this week? Pray for opportunities to be generous and to be a channel of God's blessing.

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- Thank God for His blessings in your life and family.
 - Pray that God would make you more generous, and that you would always give with a cheerful heart.
 - Ask God to make you a channel of His blessings wherever you go.

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. COLOSSIANS 4:2-4

WHAT

Paul exhorts us to devote ourselves to prayer. Prayer is our means of communication with God. God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible. We talk to God through prayer. What are some attitudes we need to cultivate in order to develop a habit of prayer?

1 Be watchful.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
COLOSSIANS 4:2

... be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 1 PETER 4:7

What does it mean to be watchful?

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Why do we need to be clear-minded and self-controlled in order to pray effectively?

2 Be thankful.

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:6,7

Why is it important to present your requests to God with thanksgiving?

What will happen when we develop this attitude of gratefulness?

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3 Be purposeful.

³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. COLOSSIANS 4:3,4

We need to pray with purpose, whether for specific people, our family, churches, outreaches, or nations.

How do you pray? What do you pray for?

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4 Be in faith.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. HEBREWS 11:1

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." MATTHEW 21:22

What does it mean to be in faith?

Why is it important to pray in faith?

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SO WHAT

- Why do you think some Christians find it hard to pray?
- Why is prayer an important habit of a healthy disciple?
- How can we develop the habit of prayer every day?

NOW WHAT

- Is prayer a part of your daily walk with God? What are some practical steps you can take to develop the consistent and fruitful habit of prayer?
- How can you be more watchful in prayer this week?
- How can you hold on to God's promises for your life every day? Are you in faith that He is willing and able to answer you?

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- Thank God for His blessings and faithfulness in your life.
 - Ask God to develop the habit of prayer in your life. Be honest about why you sometimes have a hard time with prayer.
 - Pray for those you know who are going through difficult situations and need God.

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" MATTHEW 4:4

WHAT

An athlete who is committed to winning is serious about the nutritional value of his food. A disciple who is serious about fulfilling God's plan for his or her life is one who develops the habit of getting into God's Word. Following are five benefits we receive when we make the Word of God a regular part of our lives.

1 God's Word teaches us to be disciples.

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." JOHN 8:31

What did Jesus say is the proof that we are His disciples? What does it mean to be a disciple?

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What does it mean to hold to His teaching?

2 God's Word teaches us to be obedient.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. HEBREWS 11:8

When Abraham heard God's Word, he obeyed even though he did not know all the details.

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Recall a time when God asked you to do something you didn't completely understand. What happened?

3

God's Word teaches us to be successful.

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." JOSHUA 1:8

God promised Joshua success if he spoke, meditated on, and carefully obeyed God's Word every day. The success and prosperity God promises is according to His standards, not the world's. The Bible is the ultimate success manual, and it teaches us how we should live our lives and run affairs.

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What does it mean to meditate on God's Word? What must we do to be prosperous and successful?

4

God's Word teaches us to resist sin.

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. . . . ¹¹I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. PSALM 119:9,11

When temptation and fear try to pull us down, we are able to resist and overcome by God's Word. What does it mean to hide God's Word in your heart?

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What are some Scriptures you have memorized that have helped you resist temptation?

5

God's Word teaches us to be wise.

Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. PSALM 119:98 (SEE ALSO 2 TIMOTHY 3:15.)

How do God's commands make us wise?

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What does it mean for God's Word to be ever with you?

SO WHAT

- Why do you think some people do not prioritize God's Word? For us to become healthy disciples, how important should the Word be to us?
- Why should we be wise? How do you think a wise person lives?
- How do you think the world's definition of success is different from God's? What do you think it really means to be successful?

NOW WHAT

- Is reading the Word of God a daily habit for you? If not, what's one practical step you can take to begin developing this habit this week?
- Are there areas in your life that you are currently being tempted in? How can you resist this temptation every day?
- How can you grow in wisdom in a practical way? Are you facing situations for which you need God's wisdom?

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- Thank God for His Word that is living and active, and for how God speaks to us and strengthens us through His Word.
 - Pray that you would know God more as you spend time in the Word every day. You can be honest about why you sometimes have a hard time reading, studying, and memorizing the Word. Ask God for His help, strength, and wisdom.
 - Pray that you would follow Jesus and His commands, obey Him, and grow in wisdom every day. Ask God to prosper you and make you successful as you prioritize and obey His Word.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." MATTHEW 16:24

WHAT

At the heart of following Jesus is His call to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him. Fasting is about denying ourselves to focus on our relationship with God. When we fast, we are choosing to have more of God and less of ourselves. Following are four reasons we need to develop a habit of fasting.

1 **We fast because Jesus taught us how to fast.**

¹⁶*"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.*

¹⁷*But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face."* MATTHEW 6:16,17

At the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus used the word "when" and not "if" as He taught on fasting. What did Jesus say we are not to do when we're fasting?

Why did Jesus make a big deal about how we look when we're fasting?

2 **When we fast, we become more sensitive to God's voice.**

²*While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*³*So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.* ACTS 13:2,3

Why are we more sensitive to God's voice during a time of fasting? How has this been true in your life?

3 We fast to humble ourselves before God.

²⁷When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. ²⁸Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ²⁹"Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."

1 KINGS 21:27-29 (SEE ALSO JAMES 4:6.)

Why is fasting a sign of humility before God? Why does God oppose the proud but give grace to the humble?

4 We fast when we're in a crisis because we trust God's sovereignty.

¹⁶David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. ¹⁷The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. 2 SAMUEL 12:16,17

Fasting is acknowledging our need for more of God in our situations.

Recall a time when you fasted and believed God to come through for you. How did God reveal Himself?

SO WHAT

- Why do you think many Christians struggle with fasting? Why do you think others are able to do it?
- How does the spiritual habit of fasting challenge you?
- What are some of the benefits of fasting?

NOW WHAT

- How does your understanding of fasting need to change? What can you do this week to develop a better perspective of this spiritual habit?
- How can you develop a habit of fasting in your life? How can you apply what you've learned today?
- What are you believing God for in this season of your life? How can you seek Him more this week?

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- Ask God to help you develop a greater appreciation for fasting.
 - Pray that you would grow in your relationship with God every day, and that you would desire for more of Him above all else.
 - Commit your action steps from this lesson to the Lord, and ask God for His grace and strength to walk it out.

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴⁷. . . And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

ACTS 2:42,47

Habits of a Healthy Disciple is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help disciples grow together in their relationship with God and in community.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Fellowship
- Service
- Generosity
- Prayer
- God's Word
- Fasting



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