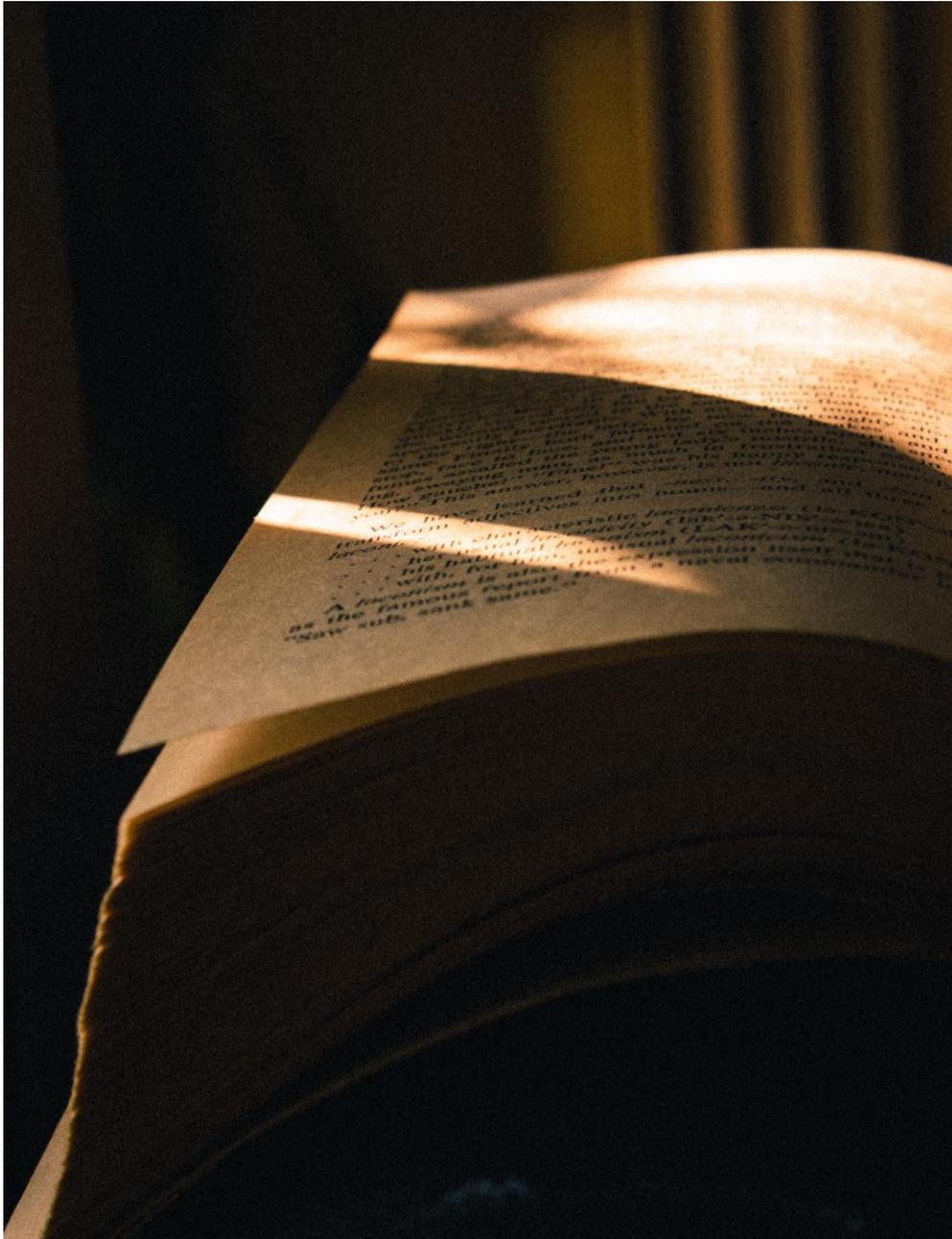


# CTR DISCIPLESHIP STUDY QUESTIONS



**The Unordinary Life**  
**Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>-Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**

**When we begin to follow Christ, we are embarking on a journey...a journey that will change and transform us more and more into the image of Christ. However, sometimes we don't know the best way to go about that change...is it something we have to do ourselves, or is it something God does in us? The answer is a combination of both, and with this series, we will dive into some practical tools that can be used to partner with God in learning to follow His instructions, and in knowing Him more deeply, day by day.**

## **Hide God's Word in Your Heart:**

*Individual:* Take a few days and do your best to memorize, or deeply familiarize yourself with, the scripture passage for the week.

*Group:* Choose one person from the group to commit the week's scripture passage to memory, or thoroughly summarize it in their own words, in order to present it to the group the following week.

## **Read the story:**

*Individual:* After you've committed the passage, or the essence of the passage, to memory, read two different translations of the scripture for the week.

*Group:* At your next group meeting, have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations.

## **Tell the story:**

*Individual:* Recite the story aloud from memory, or tell it to a friend or family member.

*Group:* Introduce the person who has learned the story for this week. Be ready to assist them if they get stuck at any point.

## **Rebuild the story:**

*Individual:* Re-read the story to fact check yourself.

*Group:* Use questions to help the group highlight the main points of the story and correct any omissions or misrepresentations of the story. The point is not to point out the story teller's mistakes, but rather to point people to the Word to ensure everyone understands it accurately.

## **Dig into the Word:**

*Individual:* Work through the questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member, if you choose.

*Group:* Work through the questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

# CTR Group Guidelines

## **This is a Safe Group**

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

## **No Crosstalk**

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

## **Listen**

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

## **No Rescuing or Fixing**

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

## **Use "I" Statements**

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

## **Don't Over-talk**

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

## **Fight for Relationship**

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

## **Prayer and Becoming Like Jesus**

### **Week 1: Read Matthew 6:5-13**

#### ***Discovery Questions:***

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching His disciples?

What are you learning personally?

#### ***Life Application:***

*Read: Mark 1:35-37; Matthew 14:22-24; Mark 14:32-35*

What do we learn about the role of prayer in Jesus' life?

What role does prayer currently play in your life?

#### ***Choose one of the following activities (or if you'd like, all 3) to practice daily this week:***

1. Set aside 5-10 minutes each morning after you wake up, but before starting anything else, and before looking through notifications and news on your phone or computer, to spend time with God in prayer.
2. Pray the same prayer for 10 minutes each day. You could choose to repeat a phrase like "more of you, less of me," or perhaps choose a psalm to repeat, like Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
3. Write an original prayer as a letter to God. Tell Him your hopes, dreams, worries, and needs. Confess your sins to Him and ask for His forgiveness. Be fully honest with Him, and invite Him into open communication with you. Pray this prayer letter every day this week.

As the week concludes, consider what you've learned about God and yourself this week.

#### ***Prayer:***

Father in Heaven, your name is great, powerful, and worthy of praise. May your will be done and the kingdom of Heaven be more and more evident here on earth. Give us what we need for today, and let us be satisfied in that. Help us to forgive others as you have forgiven us. Lead us on the path that makes us more like you, and give us your strength to resist sin in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

## **Studying and Meditating on Scripture**

### **Week 2: Read Matthew 4:1-11**

#### ***Discovery Questions:***

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is the example Jesus is setting here?

What are you learning personally?

#### ***Life Application:***

What role did scripture play in the life of Jesus?

What role does scripture currently play in your own life?

#### ***Choose one of the following activities (or if you'd like, all 3) to practice this week:***

1. Read one of the shorter books of the Bible out loud. Some great options would be Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Titus, James. Imagine what it would have been like as a Christian in the first century, hearing those words read aloud for the first time, and how you would have responded. How should you respond now?
2. Memorize an unfamiliar passage of Scripture. If you need a suggestion, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 8:38-39, Psalm 1:1-2 are great places to start. If it's a struggle, memorize phrase by phrase, repeating it to yourself throughout the day to help it stick.
3. Meditate on a verse or passage about Jesus. Keep it simple, something like John 1:14, Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 John 1:5-7. Read the passage slowly, multiple times. Pause after each sentence to reflect. If a word or phrase stands out, spend some time reflecting on that in particular. Ask questions as you read: What does each phrase mean? What is it revealing about Jesus? About the church? About myself? Look up any cross-referenced verses that may be in the footnotes for further understanding.

As the week concludes, consider what you've learned about God and yourself this week.

#### ***Prayer:***

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for revealing who you are through the pages of scripture, and for using that knowledge to transform us. As we mine the depths of your word, we

pray that you would grant us understanding, both on our own, and in community, along with a clearer picture of who you are and all you have done. In the name of Jesus, amen.

## **Solitude and Silence**

### **Week 3: Read Lamentations 3:22-28**

#### ***Discovery Questions:***

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is the author (possibly Jeremiah) conveying regarding how to seek God?

What are you learning personally?

#### ***Life Application:***

*Read: Isaiah 30:15*

Where does this say our salvation and strength lie? Which is the hardest for you? Why?

What would the practices in Lamentations and Isaiah look like when lived out in your life?

#### ***Choose one of the following activities (or if you'd like, all 3) to practice this week:***

1. Spend 5-10 mins each day in silence. Set aside a time that is free from interruption and noise, and sit quietly with God. Invite Him into this space with you, with no agenda except to be with Him. Enjoy His presence, and let His peace wash over you as you rest in His loving arms.
2. Imagine in your mind that you are removing all barriers that keep God at a distance. Picture each wall that you have constructed around the inner-most part of your being. Then imagine removing that wall either brick by brick, or toppling it like a tower of blocks. Invite God's spirit into that newly opened space in your heart, asking Him to permeate it, and take up residence there.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to purify your heart and mind, then sit quietly and listen. Intentionally release control of your life to God, and ask Him to reveal any sin or activity that He wants you to give up to be closer to Him. If you get a sense of something God wants to remove from your life, pray that the Spirit would help you release it, and that He would remove any desire for it.

As the week concludes, consider what you've learned about God and yourself this week.

#### ***Prayer:***

Father, thank you for the gift of your presence. Thank you for meeting us right where we are, then working with and in us to purify our hearts and make us more like you. Create a longing

within us for deep intimacy with you, and help us to live out of that place of inner quiet as we go about our days. In the name of Jesus, amen.

## **Simplicity and Generosity**

### **Week 4: Read Romans 12:9-21**

#### ***Discovery Questions:***

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Paul teaching the church in Rome?

What are you learning personally?

#### ***Life Application:***

What areas of your outward life need to be simplified in order to serve God more fully?

This passage also describes a way of living a simple and generous inner life by changing your thoughts and attitudes. What are some of your internal patterns that need to shift in order to be more Christ-like in your interactions with others?

#### ***Choose one of the following activities (or if you'd like, all 3) to practice this week:***

1. Write a kind and encouraging letter to someone. Let them know the good things you see in them, the ways they enrich your life, or encourage them through a difficult time. For additional challenge, write a sincere and encouraging note to someone you've struggled in relationship with. Pray for them, and ask God to heal any rift that needs to be reconnected.
2. Volunteer to help at a local food bank, soup kitchen, spend time with someone who is elderly or disabled, or sign up for a Good Neighbor team to aid refugees coming to our city. Generosity of this type benefits the recipients of your care, but also places you in a position where you will likely learn much, gain relationships, and grow in compassion.
3. Go through each day this week with an intentional focus on honoring God and others above yourself. Drive your car in a way that honors God and others. Engage in your daily conversations in a way that honors God and others. Choose your activities for the week to maintain your focus on honoring God and others.

As the week concludes, consider what you've learned about God and yourself this week.

#### ***Prayer:***

Father, thank you for instructing us in ways of living that give you glory. Bless those around us and bring us peace and contentment in their practice. Thank you for Jesus and the example He

set in how to live this life in a way that brings your kingdom to earth. May we grow in goodness, and in kindness, as we practice our faithfulness to you. In the name of Jesus, amen.

## **Submission and Fasting**

### **Week 5: Read Romans 11:33-12:2**

#### ***Discovery Questions:***

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Paul teaching the church in Rome?

What are you learning personally?

#### ***Life Application:***

In what ways do you still conform to the patterns of this world? What do you need to submit under God's leadership?

#### ***Choose one of the following activities (or if you'd like, all 3) to practice this week:***

1. Commit to a 24-hour fast. The easiest way to start is to fast from lunch to lunch, skipping dinner and breakfast in between. After lunch the first day, do not eat a full meal again until lunch the second day, but drink plenty of water. Drink bone broth or fruit juice at mealtimes, if you like. The practice of fasting reveals things in us we may be unaware of: anger, selfishness, need for instant gratification, etc. Focus on a scripture to remind yourself that in fasting, you are relying on Christ, the bread of life and the living water, to sustain you.
2. Practice submission to God by fasting from either verbal negativity or dishonesty for a full day. In the morning, pray Psalm 141:3, "Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips." Ask the Holy Spirit to prevent you from saying anything negative, critical, or judgmental that day, and search for ways to be kind or complimentary. Or ask the Spirit to remove all dishonesty, manipulation, and avoidance of truth from your words that day. Pray that you would be pure, honest, and forthcoming.
3. Fast from TV, the internet, or social media for 24 hours (or longer). Take the hours you normally spend on entertainment to connect with God in prayer and Bible study, spend some time pouring into your family or a friend, or find a way to serve others with that time.

As the week concludes, consider what you've learned about God and yourself this week.

#### ***Prayer:***

Father, you are so wise, knowledgeable, and holy, yet you still care for us. Thank you for accepting us as we are, but calling us to become so much more. Help us to discern where the world still has a tight hold on us, and help us release those things into your care. Shape us, Lord, into the image of your son, Jesus. In His holy name, amen.