

Chapter 1 - Getting the Right Focus

Two objectives of this Phase 1 training:

1. To discover the big picture of God, His Kingdom, and what it means to be His disciple.
2. Enter into true discipleship with God.

Your #1 Adversary =

Your #1 Attitude =

- We do this training with all our _____.
- We do this training for _____ alone.
- We do this training with the expectation of great _____.

Getting the Right Focus through the Parable of Sower (Matthew 13:1-23)

The Message of the Kingdom: That anyone who follows Jesus Christ can interactively participate in God's Kingdom!

1. The Path- Hears the message but _____.

Point:

2. The Rocky Soil- Hears the message but as soon as trouble comes, _____.

Point:

3. The Thorny Soil: Hears the message but is choked by _____ & _____.

Point:

4. The Good Soil: Hears the message and _____.

Point: The Kingdom of God is so _____ that if you can come to understand it, you will bear its fruit.

Therefore, according to this parable, what should our focus be?

What does it mean to understand something?

The Path to understanding:

IF YOU:

- _____ my words.
- _____ my commands.
- _____ your ear to wisdom.
- _____ your heart to understanding.

- _____ for insight.
- _____ for understanding.
- _____ for it as for silver.
- _____ for it as for hidden treasure..

THEN YOU WILL:

- _____ the fear of the Lord.
- And _____ the knowledge of God.

Conclusion:

Our Goal = Understand the message of the Kingdom

We will apply Proverbs 2:1-5 as we seek out the following: **Discipleship, The Kingdom of God, The Epic Story, The Cost of Discipleship**

End Notes:

Main Points:

- The message of God's Kingdom – you can actively participate in the Kingdom of God today!
- Hearing isn't enough.
- We must count the cost of following Jesus.
- We must see the treasure of God's Kingdom.
- We must understand the message of God's Kingdom.
- If we understand, we will produce God's fruit.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways does the *deceitfulness of riches* (Matthew 13:22) have a grip on your life?
- Which soil does your life relate to the most? How?
- What must a person do to be the good soil?
- Review Proverbs 2:1-5. Which aspects of these verses are the most absent in your life?

The Discipline of Study:

Jesus gave us many parables concerning His Kingdom. Read the parables below and write down any observations and questions that come to mind. Additional meditations and exercises are also given. Do all of these things while sensing and relying upon God's presence. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you the truths of His Kingdom.

Read the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23)

- Take some time to list your more common worries.
- Now confess that you were wrong to worry about these things. Take time to entrust them one by one to Jesus. Ask Him to open your eyes to His provision.

Read the Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43)

- Many experts claim that the weeds and the wheat spoken of in this parable are extremely similar in their appearance, yet extremely different in their interior. What sins or worldly thinking in your own life have the appearance of being good or harmless and yet are actually destructive?

Read the Parable of the Treasure in the field (Matthew 13:44)

- Why do we fail to see Jesus and His Kingdom as the greatest treasure ever?
- What are some of the *treasures* that our culture holds as most valuable?

Read the Parable of the Fish (Matthew 13:47-50)

- According to this passage, what determines our eternal destiny?
- Compare this parable with 1 John 3:10.

Summary questions:

- What similarities do you find in these kingdom parables?
- Summarize these parables into a few statements of your own.

The Discipline of Meditation:

Meditate on Matthew 13:44. Imagine that you discovered buried treasure in a neighboring plot of land that was for sale. Consider how you would react. See yourself doing whatever it took to buy that land. Imagine giving up even your most prized possession to gain the treasure. Then turn your thoughts toward God and His Kingdom. Ask Him to open your eyes to the treasure of His Kingdom. Imagine yourself doing whatever it took to find His Treasure.

The Discipline of Memorization:

Proverbs 2:1-5

"My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God."

Matthew 7:7

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

Matthew 13:23

"As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The Discipline of Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to humbly recognize the condition of my soil, and by Your grace become that good soil that bears the fruit of Your Kingdom. Help me to believe that You can be found. Teach me to fear You. Teach me the secrets of Your Kingdom. I cry out for Your insight and I cry aloud for Your understanding. Amen.

Chapter 2 - Discipleship

What is the Great Commission?

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

“Therefore go and...”

What the church has been doing.	what the church should be doing.
<p><i>“Make disciples of all nations...”</i></p> <p>Making _____</p> <p>Making _____</p> <p>The Church teaches that being a disciple is _____.</p>	<p><i>“Make disciples of all nations...”</i></p> <p>Making _____</p> <p>What is a disciple?</p> <p>John 8:31- A disciple _____.</p> <p>John 15:8- A disciple _____.</p> <p>John 13:35- Disciples _____.</p> <p>Christian=</p> <p>When does discipleship begin?</p>

<p><i>“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”</i></p> <p>Baptism =</p> <p>Immersing people into _____.</p>	<p><i>“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”</i></p> <p>Immersing people into _____.</p> <p>To be immersed into God means to walk in light of the fact of who He is.</p>
<p><i>“Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”</i></p> <p>Teaching people _____</p> <p>that Jesus commanded.</p>	<p><i>“Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”</i></p> <p>Teaching people _____</p> <p>that Jesus commanded.</p>

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” - Matthew 28:20

End Notes:

Main Points:

- A disciple is a student, follower, and apprentice.
- Disciples bear fruit, love each other, and hold to Christ’s teaching.
- We need to go beyond making converts who are dunked into water and are filled with a bunch of head knowledge, and instead make disciples who are immersed into God and are taught how to obey everything He commanded.
- In order to make disciples, I must first be a disciple.

Questions to Consider:

- How has the church typically applied the phrase, *go and make disciples*?
- What is the danger with this interpretation?
- What has been your personal belief regarding the words *Christian* and *disciple*?
- Which aspect of the main points given is your favorite? Likewise, which one is the most convicting?

The Discipline of Study:

We discussed that a disciple, according to Jesus, is someone who obeys His teaching, bears much fruit, and loves others. Allow the exercises below to help you in your understanding of these truths.

- **Read Psalm 119:56-72 and 1John 2:3-6** as you meditate on the reality that disciples obey Jesus' teaching. Then answer the questions below:
 - According to 1 John 2:3-6, do your actions reveal anything important about who you are?
 - According to 1 John 2:3-6 what is the test to know whether or not we are in Christ?
- **Read John 15:1-8** as you meditate on the truth that disciples bear much fruit. Then answer the questions below:
 - According to Jesus words in John 15, what must we do in order to bear fruit?
 - How do we remain connected to the Vine? (You will find this answer in John 15, but after verse 8)
- **Read Romans 12:9-21** as you meditate on the fact that disciples love each other. Then answer the questions below:
 - Why do you think that Paul stresses the point that 'Love must be sincere.'?
 - How is the love of God's Kingdom that read about here different from the love of this world? Be specific.
 - Reflect on verse 21 and share any insight God might give you.
- **Read the following passages.** Allow Jesus' devotion to His Father help you understand and correctly define discipleship. Record any questions/observations:
 - Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." - John 5:17
 - Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." - John 5:19
 - "Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does." - John 10:37
 - "but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. Come now; let us leave." - John 14:31
 - "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." - John 15:15

The Discipline of Meditation:

Think about some of the different trades that involve a master/apprentice relationship. Picture in your mind the apprentice following the master from job to job as they learn how to do their job well. Now turn your thoughts to Jesus as your Rabbi and Master. Confess to Him that He is the Master of all things. Confess to Him your need for Him to teach you how to live and love and act and think. Picture Him going with you throughout your daily activities. See Him offering His wisdom and guidance as you interact with people and your surroundings. Picture yourself submitting to His direction and experiencing the Kingdom life.

Read through John 17 meditatively. Focus on Jesus' devotion to His Father and to others. Picture yourself there, praying with Him with the same determination, focus, and love.

The Discipline of Memorization:

John 8:31,32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Matthew 28:18-20

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Discipline of Prayer:

Almighty God. Thank you that in Your grace You have given me Your master plan of church growth. May I submit to Your leadership and learn from You in all things. May I humbly follow You down Your path of discipleship. Open my eyes to this amazing opportunity. Immerse me into You, and teach me to obey everything You have commanded. Amen.

Chapter 3 – The Kingdom of God

Characteristics of a kingdom:

- It has a _____ (Matthew 28:18)
 - A King owns everyone and everything in his kingdom.
- It has a _____ (Matthew 28:18)
- It has a _____.
 - (American culture vs. Kingdom culture)
 - People rule vs. King's rule
 - Segregation vs. Integration (Galatians 3:28)
 - Materialism vs. Generosity (Matthew 6:20)
 - Sinful activity vs. godly activity
- It has a _____.

In order to follow God correctly we must _____ Him correctly

'What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.'

- A.W. Tozer

What does it mean to *know* something?

John 17:3-

Characteristics of God:

1. All-powerful-
2. All-knowing-
 - a. God is the _____.
 - b. God knows _____.
3. All-present-

Who is the ultimate expression or revelation of who God is?

Hebrews 1:3

Colossians 1:15

John 14:9

Conclusion: God has made Himself and His Kingdom both known to us and available to us.

End Notes:**Main Points:**

- What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.
- In order to correctly understand discipleship we must correctly understand the Epic Story of Scripture.
- God is not an event in the Epic Story, but rather the Author and main character. He is the Prologue.
- In order to follow God correctly we must know Him correctly.

Questions to Consider:

- Do you agree with A.W. Tozer's statement in this chapter?
- What comes into your mind when you think about God?
- Regarding the truth that your ideas about God are the most important thing about you, what false ideas of God do you see in yourself revealed by the way you live and act?
- What are some of your favorite characteristics of God seen specifically through the life of Jesus? Explain where in the life of Christ you see it and why you love it so much.

The Discipline of Study/ Meditation:

Read Job 38-42 and note any questions/observations. As you read through this amazing passage, imagine that it is you standing in the presence of God as He reveals Himself. Meditate upon His infinite might and wisdom.

Read the following passages. Record any observations you find concerning the Kingdom of God and its culture:

- **Psalm 145:13**
- **Matthew 4:23**
- **Mark 1:15**
- **Matthew 6:33**
- **Matthew 7:21**
- **Matthew 13:44**
- **Matthew 18:3**
- **Matthew 21:43**
- **Mark 10:24**
- **Luke 9:62**
- **Luke 12:32**
- **Luke 17:21**
- **Luke 22:29-30**
- **John 3:3**
- **John 18:36**
- **Acts 28:31**
- **Romans 14:17**
- **1 Corinthians 4:20**
- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**
- **2 Thessalonians 1:5**

The Discipline of Memorization:

John 17:3

“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Psalms 145:13

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The Discipline of Prayer:

Great Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may I see You as You really are, and not how mankind has deemed You. Open my eyes to the beauty of Your splendor, the majesty of Your might, and the vastness of Your power. I want to know you correctly so that I may follow You correctly. You are infinite. You are above all else. May You be praised forevermore. Amen.

Chapter 4 - God gives Mankind Dominion Part 1 in the Epic

The Identity /Purpose of Man:

Identity of Man =

What does it mean to be *made in God's image*?

- Mankind was God's _____ on earth.
- Mankind was a reflector of God's glory and love on this earth.
- Mankind was God's sons and daughters.

- **Made in God's image = We are _____ beings.**

- **Made after God's likeness = We can _____ like God.**
 - Reason-
 - Will-
 - Emotions-

Purpose of Man =

What does it mean to rule?

1. To have authority.
 2. To be responsible for something. (To be accountable.)
 - 3.
-
- Mankind was created to rule over this earth.
 - This is why we were made in God's image- to rule.
 - Mankind was the _____, and earth was his _____.

Psalm 8:5,6

The question we are left asking:

End Notes:

Main Points:

- You were made in God's image.
- You are capable of doing amazing things.

- You were made to rule.
- To rule is to serve.

Questions to Consider:

- Until now, what had you drawn your identity from? What was your identity? How did your idea of your identity affect you?
- How should knowing your true identity affect/change your life?
- What was your initial reaction to mankind's purpose? What did you think your purpose was before reading this chapter?
- What is the biggest challenge for you regarding the topics presented in this chapter?

The Discipline of Study:

Read Hebrews 11. Consider these men and women who did amazing things because they rightly understood their identity and purpose. Then read and meditate upon Hebrews 12:1,2. Consider Jesus as our perfect example of a human ruling with God (verse 2). Consider how you should therefore live (verse 1). Record any questions/observations.

The Discipline of Memorization:

Genesis 1:26

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Psalms 8:5,6

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

The Discipline of Meditation & Prayer:

Try to find a quiet and solitary place in nature. Imagine that you are Adam or Eve and this place is your Eden. Imagine that all of the trees, plants, and animals belong to you. They are your responsibility. Imagine God coming to you in the cool of the day and spending time with you. As you meditate in this calm place read Psalm 8.

Thank God that He made you *a little lower than the heavenly beings* and that He *crowned you with glory and honor*. Praise Him that you are His greatest creation and pray a prayer such as the one that is written here: 'God, I praise you that I am made in Your image. What a privilege! I thank You Lord that I am given the honor to rule with You. May I live my life in light of the fact that this is who I am. May I never listen to what the world says about who I am, but only to You. You are my King and my God. Amen.'

Chapter 5 - The Fall of Mankind Part 2 in the Epic

What all did mankind lose in **The Fall**?

Consequence 1:

- Physical
- Spiritual
- Eternal

Consequence 2:

- Genesis 3:17-19
- Romans 8:20-23

Consequence 3:

- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- ‘prince of this world’
- 1 John 5:19

End Notes:

Main Points:

- You can't rightly understand Genesis 3 until you understand Genesis 1 and 2.
- At the Fall...
 - Mankind died physically, spiritually, and eternally.
 - Satan became the god of this age.
 - Creation was cursed.
- Without knowing what we lost through the Fall you can't understand the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Questions to Consider:

- What aspect of the fall were you unaware of before today?
- Which consequence saddens you the most?
- In the story of the fall, who do you see as the main culprit?

The Discipline of Study & Meditation:

Make a list of sins, misfortunes, and natural disasters that you have witnessed from both near and far. Consider your own life, the lives of your friends/acquaintances as well as the stories you view in the news as you make this list. Then go through each of these items in the context of the command that God gave to Adam; ***'If you eat, you will die'***. Focus on the reality that all of the things that cause sin, pain, and death are a direct result of mankind's choice to disobey God.

The Discipline of Memorization:

Romans 5:12

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The Discipline of Prayer:

Great King. You are to be praised and feared for Your holiness and splendor. Because of our sin You struck us down with the very consequence that You Yourself promised. I confess my sins oh Lord (*take your time with this*). I also confess the sins of this world. Have mercy oh Lord on Your creation. Save us from the sins that our hands have committed. Teach us to fear You. Teach us to tremble in the awe of Your judgment. Amen.

Chapter 6 - Jesus' Role in the Kingdom of God Part 3 in the Epic

The Role of Jesus:

1. His Past Role:

Matthew 4:23

And he went throughout all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues and **proclaiming** the gospel of the kingdom and **healing** every disease and every affliction among the people.

- Proclaiming-
 - Mark 1:15
 - John 8:12
 - John 10:10
 - Matthew 23:13
 - Matthew 21:43
 - Luke 16:16
- Teaching-
 - Matthew 11:28-30
 - Matthew 5-7
- Healing-
 - Luke 4:18,19
- Death & Resurrection-
 - Colossians 2:13-15

Jesus' Role is not finished.

2. His Present Role:

3. His Future Role:

- 1st Corinthians 15:21-23- Our new _____.
- 1 Corinthians 15:24/Revelation 20:10-15- Destruction of _____.
- Revelation 21:1-6- A new _____.

Why did Jesus come?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

End Notes:

Main Points:

- Jesus' past mission was to preach the Kingdom, teach the Kingdom, and pay for the sins of the world.
- Jesus is currently leading a military campaign against the forces of Satan.
- Jesus' future mission will be to destroy all evil and create a new heaven and earth.
- The work of the cross was the end of our separation from God, not the end of the war between light and darkness.
- Jesus' mission is to destroy the Devil's work (all that we lost at the fall).
- Without rightly understanding Jesus' role we can't rightly understand ours.

Questions to Consider:

- Why did the Savior have to be human? What scripture reference would you use to back up your answer?
- How does a correct understanding of Jesus' mission change your view of your life as a Christian?
- Why do you think that this teaching is so crucial?

The Discipline of Study:

Read the book of Mark (in one sitting if possible). Focus on the work of Christ (preaching, teaching, healing, crucifixion, resurrection) and how all of these were necessary for fulfilling His mission. Then read Revelation 19:11-21:6, and focus on Jesus coming one day to complete His mission.

Now answer these questions:

- **Why was preaching and teaching an absolutely essential part of Jesus' ministry?**
- **What aspects of The Fall will Jesus fix when He returns? Include scripture references from Revelation to support your answer.**
- **How does this change your view/understanding of your King?**

Preparation for next week:

Read the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 and answer the following questions:

- Why did the Master give his servants different amounts of money?
- What did the slaves do to merit their Master's favor?
- What did the servants receive for being faithful?

The Discipline of Meditation:

Meditatively read Revelation 1:10-18. Try to picture Jesus as John describes Him. Consider the reality that this is Jesus as He is today, leading the military campaign against evil. This is Your King. Be sure to take your time with this exercise.

The Discipline of Memorization:

Mark 1:15

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

The Discipline of Prayer:

Dearest Lord Jesus, I give you great thanks for Your commitment to save mankind from our sins. I praise You for Your wonderful preaching and teaching. May Your words be a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Your teaching is worth more than silver and gold. I also praise You for Your amazing work on the cross. Your love is amazing. May I continually look to You and Your life as my example and ambition. And may I join with You in Your quest to defeat evil once for all. I long for the day when Your mission is complete! To Your glory and honor. Amen.

Chapter 7 - Mankind's Role in the Kingdom of God Part 4 in the Epic

What is my Role?

My kingdom (stewardship):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

How do I rule with God today?

Why do I need to be a disciple of Jesus?

Examples of Stewardship:

Parable of Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

2nd Corinthians 5:9,10

Revelation 22:12

End Notes:

Main Points:

- My role is to actively participate in God's Kingdom.
- I actively participate in God's Kingdom by ruling well the kingdom that He has entrusted to me.
- The only way that I can learn to rule my kingdom well is through discipleship to Jesus.
- Forgiveness is not God's goal for mankind, but rather only a means to God's goal of stewardship.

Questions to Consider:

- What is your role/opportunity in the Kingdom of God?
- We discussed how each of us has a kingdom/stewardship (made up of you, family, material possessions, work, and community). How is your kingdom doing?
- If you are faithful with little God will entrust you with more. What are your thoughts concerning this principle?
- What are your thoughts concerning 2 Corinthians 5:9,10?

The Discipline of Study:

Take some time to consider your own *kingdom*. Take an inventory of your kingdom below.

You:

Your Family:

The Ecclesia:

Your Money/Possessions:

Your Work:

Your Community:

Now read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) three times in one week. Take an honest evaluation of each ring of your kingdom according to Jesus' teaching in this sermon. As you do this, take time to consider the questions below:

- How well is your light shining in each ring of your kingdom?
- In what rings of your kingdom have you lost your saltiness?
- According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5, in what ways are you committing the sins of murder and/or adultery?
- How do you treat those who curse you?
- Do you do your righteous deeds to be seen by others such as a spouse or pastor?

- Is your heart focused more on worldly things or heavenly things?
- What rings of your kingdom do you worry about the most? Why?
- Do you judge others shortcomings in order to feel better about your own?
- If someone only looked on your *fruit* that you produce, would they judge you to be a good tree or a bad tree?

The Discipline of Memorization:

2 Corinthians 5:9,10

"So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

Revelation 22:12,13

"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

The Discipline of Meditation:

Meditate upon Ephesians 5:1-5. Meditate on each ring of your kingdom in light of this passage. Allow God to show you what must change in order for your kingdom to be holy and pleasing to God. Invite your Master into every part of your domain. Ask Him to bless it. Take your time with this.

The Discipline of Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father. In Your grace You have given me an Eden of my own to govern on Your behalf. May I rule it in a way that pleases You, so that You may be glorified in my life and so that I may stand before You someday without shame. May I live a life that results in hearing You say, *Well done, good and faithful servant.* Amen.

Chapter 8 - Our Eternal Destiny Part 5 in the Epic

The reality of Revelation- 19:6,7 –

Chapter 21

Vs 1- New Heaven & New Earth-

Vs 6- 'It is done.'

Vs 8- The second death

Vs 10-21- The New Jerusalem

Vs 24- What nations? Who are the kings?

Chapter 22

Vs 3-5- What two things will you do for eternity?

Once upon a time...-

And they lived happily ever after...-

Conclusion:

End Notes:

Main Points:

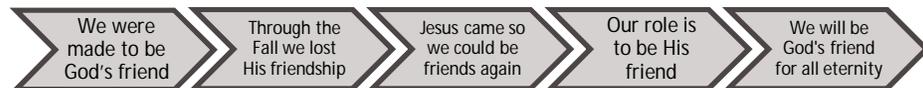
- You will serve God forever.
- You will rule (reign) with God forever.
- Your reward will be the responsibility that God entrusts to you.
- You (disciples) win!

Questions to Consider:

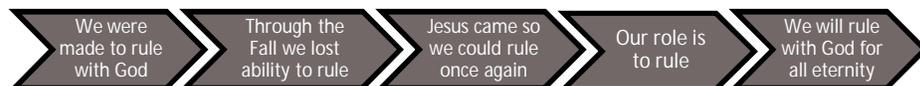
- Try to recite from memory the five parts of this Epic Story.
- What is your favorite section and why?
- How does understanding the Epic Story change your Christian paradigm?
- In what ways has your understanding of what it means to be a disciple improved or changed?
- How should understanding your Eternal Destiny change the way you live your life?

The Discipline of Study:

- **Read** through the *bookends* of the bible: Genesis 1 and 2, Revelation 21 and 22
- Notice the similarities between the two. Meditate on God's original plan for mankind described in the beginning and its fulfillment in the end.
- Read Appendix B- The Narrative on page 128. As you read it, focus on all the principles and truths that we have thus far learned concerning *The Epic Story*.
- Observe the visual below depicting the importance of getting this story right. Meditate upon the reality that getting the beginning of this story wrong completely changes the focus and outcome.



An **insufficient** beginning:



The **complete** beginning:

The Discipline of Meditaion:

Meditate on Revelation 22:1-5. Try to picture the river and tree of life within the immense City of God. Envision seeing Jesus there, upon His throne, shining in all His glory. Imagine visiting with others, both human and angelic. Think about all the good things you love doing on this earth and imagine doing them on the new earth where sin will be no more and where you will live forever. Take your time with this. Try to guess what your job might be and picture yourself doing it for your King.

The Discipline of Memorization:

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Revelation 22:3-5

"No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

The Discipline of Prayer:

Lord, I thank You that You will one day end this war. You will make a new earth and we will live there with You forever and ever. Please help me to live my life in light of this reality. Take my eyes off of all the meaningless and temporary things that this world has to offer. Help me to fix my eyes completely upon You and Your Kingdom. Amen.

Chapter 9 - The Cost of Following Jesus

The question we will answer today- *How much does it cost to follow Jesus?*

Luke 14:25- Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,

Luke 14:26- ""If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Requirement #1: In order to be a Disciple of Christ I must

_____.

Principle:

Luke 14:27- Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Requirement #2: In order to be a Disciple of Christ I must

_____.

Luke 14:28-32

- 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to complete it?
- 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,
- 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'
- 31 "Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?
- 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

Luke 14:33- So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Requirement #3: In order to be a Disciple of Christ I must

_____.

How much does it cost to follow Jesus?

Matthew 13:44

End Notes:**Main Points:**

- In order to be a disciple, I **MUST** put Jesus before all other people including myself.
- In order to be a disciple, I **MUST** die to myself and do whatever my King wants me to do.
- In order to be a disciple, I **MUST** relinquish control of everything I have.
- Being a follower of Jesus will cost me everything.

Questions to Consider:

- According to Jesus, how much does it cost us to be a disciple?
- What does it mean then to *give up everything*?
- Are you willing to give up everything to follow Jesus?

The Discipline of Study:

- In accordance with the three categories below; take some time to record what you will personally have to give up in order to follow Jesus:

Requirement 1: Relationships:

Requirement 2: Activities:

Requirement 3: Everything:

- **Read the teachings of Matthew 25.** Record any questions / observations. Answer the questions below.
- **Read the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)**
 - What do you think might have been the foolish virgins' faulty assumptions regarding the bridegroom?
- **Read the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)**
 - What misconceptions or sinful ideas keep you from investing in God's Kingdom?
- **Read the Account of the Sheep & the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)**
 - In what ways does this account challenge current Christian theology?

Summery Questions:

- Refer back to the four parables you studied after chapter one. What similarities do you see between those parables and these teachings?
- Are there any current teachings of the church today that these teachings of Jesus challenge?

The Discipline of Memorization:

Luke 9:23-25

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"

Luke 14:33

So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

The Discipline of Meditation:

Meditate upon Luke 18:18-30. Imagine yourself standing before Christ and Him asking you to give up everything. Take your time to lay down everything you have at His feet. Then picture yourself leaving everything behind as you follow Him. Recite verses 28-30 slowly and thoughtfully.

The Discipline of Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ. I thank You that You have set before me this amazing opportunity of serving You and being a part of Your Great Kingdom. I also thank You that You have made very clear to me what it will cost me to follow You. You desire all of me. Lord Jesus, please help me to pay that cost with every fiber of my being. Help me to relinquish complete control that I might please You and be Your disciple. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Chapter 10 - Counting the Cost

How much does it cost to follow Jesus?	How much does it cost NOT to follow Jesus?

Conclusion:

End Notes:

Main Points:

- Following Jesus will cost me everything.
- Not following Jesus will cost me even more.

Questions to Consider:

- How did *counting the cost* in this chapter affect your perspective?
- Is there anything keeping you from believing that Jesus is the smartest man ever?
- Is there anything keeping you from being fully convinced that following Jesus is the greatest opportunity ever?
- Is there anything keeping you from following Jesus?

The Discipline of Study/ Meditation:

Take some time to sit down and count the cost in your own life. Imagine yourself part of the crowd that was following Jesus when He turned around and drew a line in the sand with His teaching. Meditate on the fact that He doesn't want just some of you, but rather all of you. Try to come to a decision of whether or not you will give up everything to follow Him.

The Discipline of Prayer:

If you feel that it is appropriate: What an amazing situation I find myself in Oh Lord! You have set before me eternity. May I put my hands to the plow of Your Kingdom and never look back! May I choose to follow You with all that I am, to Your glory. I give myself to You oh Lord. I give you my entire person, possessions, and relationships. I lay them all down so that I might gain You. You are my Treasure. God be praised! Amen!