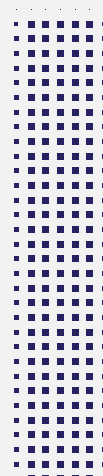




A SIX-WEEK  
DISCIPLESHIP  
MINISTRY  
FOR STUDENTS

# STARTING POINT



# INTRO PAGE

## **WHY STARTING POINT?**

Whether you have recently accepted Christ or you have been walking with Him for a while, we pray this six-week study will give you a foundation and an outline as you begin a discipleship relationship. When you are finished, we also pray that this will be something you can use to disciple someone else.

## **WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?**

Let's define it by looking at one of the most well-known passages in Scripture, the Great Commission, in which Jesus says, <sup>19</sup>“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20).

Here we are commanded to do three things:

- Evangelize (“make disciples”)
- Baptize (“baptizing them”)
- Teach (“teaching them”)

*Discipleship* can be defined as “investing into others by teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded of us in order to multiply ourselves into them.” This is what *Starting Point* is designed to do!

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THIS?**

First, you are going to get out what you put into it. If you invest yourself into this and read/study what you are supposed to each week, you will get much out of it. If you come unprepared and don't spend any time on it, you won't get much out of it.

Second, you will memorize a verse each week. You may be thinking, “I don't know how to memorize six different verses!” In order to help you accomplish this, scan the QR code to the right and you will find helpful apps and methods to aid you in your memorization.



Third, communicate. If you are going to be late or miss a session, text and communicate that. If you need to reschedule, call and let us know. If you have questions about something in this book, ask about it.

Lastly, you will be launched to disciple a younger believer after this. Begin thinking and praying about whom that will be.

# CONTENTS

**SESSION 1:** *page 5*

Faith Formation

**SESSION 2:** *page 17*

Can You Trust the Bible?

**SESSION 3:** *page 43*

Can You Be Secure in Your  
Relationship with Christ?

**SESSION 4:** *page 57*

Knowing Who You Are in Christ

**SESSION 5:** *page 71*

Talking with God

**SESSION 6:** *page 85*

Making Disciples

**TALKING  
WITH GOD**

**5**

If you want to break this session into days, use this guide:

Day 1: 72-74      Day 4: 80-82  
Day 2: 75-77      Day 5: 83-84  
Day 3: 78-79

Student-led pages: Empower your students to lead by giving them the following pages to lead during this session:

- Pages 75-76
- Pages 80-82
- Pages 83-84

## HERE WE GO

### Be Accountable for Your Bible Reading

- Be sure to discuss your Bible reading time with your discipleship partner before you begin this session.
- What did you read?
- How did God speak to you?
- How did you apply your reading to your life?

The purpose of this session is to equip you to develop a more effective and intimate prayer life. While prayer is the way we communicate with God, it is not just the act of asking for what we want or need. Prayer is also listening to God so that we may develop a deeper relationship with Him.

### MEMORIZE *Philippians 4:6-7*

Write the verse to help memorize it.

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Fill in the blanks to help memorize it.

<sup>6</sup> do not be \_\_\_\_\_ about anything, but in \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ and supplication with \_\_\_\_\_ let your requests be made known to \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>7</sup> And the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, which \_\_\_\_\_ all understanding, will \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus.



Write the memory verse from last week on the lines below.

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**FAITH DEFINITION:**

Fill in the blanks from memory: “\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ as though \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ regardless of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.”

“And without *faith* it is impossible to please him (God)...”

—Hebrews 11:6

“...whatever does not proceed from *faith* is sin.”

—Romans 14:23

“for we walk by *faith*, not by sight.”

—2 Corinthians 5:7

## CONSIDER THIS

Catherine was living the senior year she had always imagined she would. She was captain of the volleyball team, in the top 10 percent of her graduating class, and had already been accepted to college and been granted multiple academic and athletic scholarships. In the afternoons, she volunteered with younger children who needed help with their homework and helped take care of her younger brother. She was thankful for her loving family and how well they all got along.

Her spiritual life, however, was a different matter. She felt restless in her Christianity because she never felt connected to God. At church, people would talk about their relationship with God, but she did not feel as though she had her own personal relationship with Him. During church, she enjoyed singing worship songs, but she still felt disconnected. She tried spending time with God because she felt as though it was something she needed to do,

but she never knew what she should do once she opened her Bible.

“What does God want from me?” she thought. “Why does a relationship with God have to be so much work?” she asked herself.

One day, while driving home from practice, Catherine was listening to a podcast from one of her favorite Christian speakers about prayer. She learned that the reason she felt disconnected was that she spent very little time in prayer. Rather than taking the time to be still and quiet, her prayer life consisted of quick one-liners like, “God, please get me through this test with a B or better,” or “God, please help me play well in our tournament today.”

Catherine also learned that her time communicating with God was important to every area of her life. She began to set aside a few minutes every morning before school to read her Bible and talk to God about the day ahead. Soon, as her relationship with God became deeper, she found herself getting up even earlier so that she could spend more time with Him.

Before too long, Catherine’s restlessness was gone, and her relationships with her friends and family grew even stronger. She knew this was a discipline she needed to uphold, not just for a short time, but also as a priority from now on.

**On a scale of 1 to 10, how strong is your connection with God?**



**In a different color pen/pencil, mark where you want your connection with God to be.**

**Now take five minutes to pray and ask God to help you work on your connection this week in a very practical way.**

**What impression do you get when you think of the word *father*? Circle all that apply.**

- |              |             |             |           |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Detached     | Accessible  | Preoccupied | Adoring   |
| Affectionate | Intolerant  | Accepting   | Cold      |
| Present      | Severe      | Strict      | Concerned |
| Gentle       | Intentional | Sincere     | Loving    |

**Read the following passages and respond.**

**1 Peter 5:6-7** - Circle the words used to describe God.

*<sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

**Matthew 7:7-11** - Circle the words used to describe God.

- |          |         |          |
|----------|---------|----------|
| Provider | Helper  | Absent   |
| Listener | Avoider | Uncaring |

**Psalms 149:4** - List any words used to describe God.

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Consider the previous three passages. Below fill in your experience with your earthly father on the left side of the page. After that, fill in who our heavenly Father is on the right side of the page. Feel free to use your previous answers to help.

**Your Experience**

**What God's Word says in  
1 Peter 5:6-7; Matthew 7:7-11  
Psalm 149:4**

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Knowing that 1 Peter 5:6-7, Matthew 7:7-11 and Psalm 149:4 are true, how do you live them out? Write your answer below.

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What do the following verses say about prayer?

Psalm 62:8

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Hebrews 4:14-16

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James 1:5

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**Why is prayer important?**

Too many times, people think of prayer as a last resort. How many times have you heard someone say, "All I can do is pray"? Any energy you devote to prayer will accomplish more than anything else you might try to do to solve any of your problems because prayer is powerful. Other than the power that prayer can bring to your life, there are other reasons why it is important. A few of those reasons are listed below:

- **Prayer glorifies God.**  
Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13).
- **Prayer builds intimacy with God.**  
Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you (James 4:8).
- **God commands us to pray.**  
Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- **Make prayer a part of your daily experience.**  
Continue in steadfast prayer (Colossians 4:2).
- **Prayer enables us to have an impact on the world.**

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

—James 5:16

**List any other reasons you believe prayer is important.**

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*“To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God, the more we desire to be conformed to Christ. To pray is to change.”*  
—Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*

*“Prayer lays hold of God’s plan and becomes the link between his will and its accomplishment on earth. Amazing things happen, and we are given the privilege of being the channels of the Holy Spirit’s prayer.”* —Elisabeth Elliot, Author and wife of slain missionary Jim Elliot

### **How are we to pray?**

Since prayer is basically conversing with God, we have not been given a set of guidelines to follow, and there are no certain words or phrases that we have to say. It can be helpful, however, to follow a certain pattern in prayer to become familiar with the different aspects of communication. The acrostic **ACTS** is one such pattern. It stands for:

**A**doration      **C**onfession      **T**hanksgiving      **S**upplication

We will explore the **ACTS** acrostic in further detail.

## **ADORATION**

Adoration is simply praising God. It means honoring and praising our Father and offering Him recognition for all of His marvelous characteristics.

Read Psalm 145:1-9 and circle the characteristics of God that cause you to want to praise Him.

- <sup>1</sup> I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.*
- <sup>2</sup> Every day I will bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.*
- <sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,  
and his greatness is unsearchable.*
- <sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts.*
- <sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your majesty,  
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*
- <sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,  
and I will declare your greatness.*
- <sup>7</sup> They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant  
goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.*
- <sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*
- <sup>9</sup> The LORD is good to all,  
and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

**Give an example of a time when you were overwhelmed with the desire to praise God.**

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## **CONFESSION**

The word *confess* means “to agree with God about our sins.” When you become aware of an action or an attitude that is displeasing to God, you need to confess it. We need to admit our sin to God because our sins are, ultimately, against Him. That way we can maintain sincere and candid conversations with Him.

King David expressed his heart's desire in Psalm 139:23-24:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

King David also cried out for God's forgiveness in Psalm 51. Read all of Psalm 51.

There are times when we will be aware of a sin immediately or soon after we commit it. However, it is also necessary to ask God to search through every crevice of our hearts. If we do so, He will be faithful to show us any sin we may have disregarded that needs to be confessed and of which we need to repent.

A prayer of confession does not have to be elaborate or wordy. Once God has revealed a sin, you merely have to talk to God about it. You might say, "God, I agree with You that when I did \_\_\_\_\_, I sinned against you."

**Spend a few minutes right now asking God to search and cleanse your heart. If He brings anything to mind, confess it and accept His forgiveness and move on. Share any thoughts you have concerning any disregarded sin God revealed to you.**

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### **THANKSGIVING**

**Read the following Scriptures and note what they say about expressing thanks to God.**

**Psalm 92:1**

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1 Thessalonians 5:18

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 **TALK IT OUT**

How can you be “thankful in all things?” What keeps you from feeling thankful?

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A prayer of thanksgiving will include the things in your life for which you are thankful. For example: “God, I thank You for the life You have given me. Thank You for Jesus, and all the changes You are making in my life. I also thank You for my family and friends who love me.”

In an attitude of thanksgiving, write a list of things you are thankful for that God has blessed you with.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLICATION**

Supplication is what happens when you make requests of God, and when you pray for your needs as well as the needs of others. Read the following passages and underline the requests we can make of God:

- **Matthew 6:11** – Give us this day our daily bread,
- **Matthew 6:13** – And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
- **Colossians 4:3** – At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison

A prayer of supplication might look similar to the following:  
*“God, please guide my pastor and church staff as they face the challenges of directing our church. Please guide our country’s leaders to make the decisions that You want them to make. Please help me to overcome the guilt that Satan has been trying to place on me for not being a better Christian.”*

**Following the ACTS method, write a prayer to God for today below.**

**A**doration \_\_\_\_\_

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**C**onfession \_\_\_\_\_

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**T**hanksgiving \_\_\_\_\_

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**S**upplication \_\_\_\_\_

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**What hinders our prayer life?**

Satan does not want us to communicate with God, so he will attempt to throw many obstacles in our paths to hinder our prayer lives. Some of these things include the following:

- Doubt (James 1:6-8)
- Unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18)
- Relational problems (1 Peter 3:7)
- An unhealthy fear of God (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- Past struggles (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Lack of accountability

**How have any of these hindrances affected your prayer life?**

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**Who can you ask to hold you accountable with your prayer life?**

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### **What is prayer?**

**Prayer is simply having a conversation with God.**

When you enter into a relationship, the only way to keep it healthy and vibrant is to give sufficient time and energy to it. When you became a Christian, you entered into a relationship with God. That relationship needs time, energy and communication, too.

It is still not uncommon for believers to struggle with their prayer life. The list of reasons why Christians struggle in their prayer life can include:

1. Some hold on to unconfessed sin.
2. Some have difficulty putting words to their thoughts, especially to someone they cannot see.
3. Some have been discouraged by previous failed attempts at communication with God.
4. Some do not believe that God cares enough about them to communicate with them.

**Being honest with yourself, what are some ways in which you struggle with your prayer life?**

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Whatever may be hindering our prayer lives, the Bible is clear that God wants to communicate with us through our prayer lives. Let us take a closer look at the characteristics of a healthy prayer life.

### **CHARACTERISTIC 1**

**Your communication with God is like a child communicating with his or her father.**

Psalm 103:13 states that “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.” Unfortunately, the term “father” sometimes leaves many people with the impression of someone who is harsh, disconnected or unavailable.

The next characteristic of a healthy prayer life is:

### **CHARACTERISTIC 2**

**You can talk to God about anything, at any time and in any place.**

Read the following passage that Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6-7:

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

No matter what is going on in your life, God wants you to communicate with Him. You can talk to God about the good things as well as the bad things. You can go to Him when you have a pressing need, when you just feel like sharing a thought, or when you feel you need to hear from Him.



What does Hebrews 4:14-16 say a believer should do if he or she is afraid to approach God?

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What hindrances seem to affect your prayer life most?

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## **BEFORE YOU FINISH**

Take a few minutes and discuss the following questions with your mentoring partner:

In what area of prayer do you need to grow?

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Share a time when God answered a prayer that concerned you.

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What are some steps you can take to help make prayer a greater priority in your life?

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# RESOURCES

After reading this guide, you may have further questions. That's not unusual! Salvation is just the beginning; most Christians spend the rest of their lives growing in their relationship with Christ. Below are some wonderful resources that will help you navigate this journey as a Christ-follower.

## **PRESTONWOODSTUDENTS.ORG**

The Prestonwood Students website is a great resource when it comes to your walk with the Lord, the church, and other believers. With resources from salvation to baptism to devotionals, it's a one-stop shop for many of your questions and needs.

## **PRESTONWOOD STUDENTS DEVOTIONALS**

Need somewhere to begin your daily walk with Jesus? Take out your phone and text DEVO to 74788. When you do this, we will send a short devotional to your phone every morning Monday through Friday. This is just the beginning but we pray it's a launching point for you each day.

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