

## session 9 study guide

# be a disciplined disciple

### starter

YOUR CHOICE: “Disciple” is not a word most people put on their top-10 favorites list. It just doesn’t have the same ring as “spontaneity” or “free-spiritedness.”

1. If you could develop any talent, what would it be? Why?

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2. If you had to choose between sleeping in on Saturday morning or getting up early to do something difficult yet rewarding (youth group fundraiser? sports tournament? SAT prep?), which would you choose? Why?

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3. Which phrase best describes you?

- ☐ Totally disciplined to the point of boring
- ☐ More disciplined than most
- ☐ Sometimes disciplined, other times not
- ☐ Spontaneous most of the time
- ☐ Flaky

4. In what areas of your life would you like to be more disciplined? In what areas would you like to be more spontaneous?

More disciplined:

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More spontaneous:

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### message

A disciplined daily devotional life is not optional for spiritual growth; it's a must! If we desire to grow closer to God and into spiritual maturity, we must pray, study Scripture and fellowship with other Christians regularly. These are the foundational disciplines for spiritual growth.

1. How would you rate your devotional life right now?

- ☐ Hoping to get started
- ☐ Up and down
- ☐ Boring
- ☐ Getting better
- ☐ Going strong
- ☐ What devotional life?
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the three foundational disciplines is your strongest area? Which is your weakest?

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3. Imagine opening your mailbox and finding an envelope addressed to you. The return address says, "God." Here's what's inside:

*My Dear Child,*

*I love you. I desire to spend as much time with you as possible. I took great joy in being part of your creation and your salvation. I consider My sacrifice for you a sign of My significant love for you. My child, I want the best for you. I believe in you. I look forward to our daily times together. It gives Me great pleasure to spend time with you. Don't forget, I'm always with you.*

*Love, God*

How would you feel if you received this letter?

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4. What decisions would you want to make about your time with God?

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5. It has been estimated that the average person spends more than two hours a day watching television, two hours a day online, one hour a day dressing and grooming, and one hour a day eating. Yet the majority of people spend little or no time each day with God. A wise pastor once asked, “What is so important that you can’t spend 15 minutes a day with God?” What’s your answer?

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6. What makes it difficult to set up a daily time with God?

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### **dig**

Developing a regular and rich devotional life is difficult for many people because they don’t know how. Having a pattern or structure can help them get in the habit of meeting with God every day. Read about the following elements of an effective devotional life as you enjoy some time with God.

#### **Bible reading**

God’s Word is His revelation to us about who He is and who He wants us to be. If you truly want to get to know Him, there is no better place to start. There are tons and tons of Bible study re-

sources available to guide you if you're not sure how to get started reading Scripture; ask your youth leader for some recommendations. Alternately, you might want to begin with one of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) to learn all you can about Jesus.

A good tool for studying Scripture is inductive Bible study, which is explored in session 6 of this book. When you study the Bible inductively, you ask *who? what? where? when? why?* to get to the heart of a particular passage. Try it with the verses below, on your own or with a friend or group. (Tip: Read the entire chapter where the verses are found. You may also want to reference a concordance or study Bible.)

*“All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you (1 Peter 1:24-25).*

1. **Who** are the persons involved in this passage?

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Who wrote this passage?

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2. **What** was happening to cause Peter to write these words?

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What does Peter say men (and women) are like? What is their glory like?

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How long does the word of the Lord last?

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3. **Where** were the believers to whom Peter was writing?

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4. **When** was Peter writing this letter?

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5. **Why** did Peter remind his readers about the word of the Lord?

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Why is it important for believers to know that the word of the Lord stands forever?

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### listening

Once you have read and studied a portion of God's Word, it is time to meditate on the passage, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to you through those verses. Proverbs 2:1-2,5 says, "My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God."

Slowly read the verses from 1 Peter again, thinking about the inductive study questions you answered about the passage. With all you have just learned about Peter's words to the early Christians, how is the Holy Spirit leading you to apply these verses to your life?

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### prayer

Earlier, we discussed some the various components of prayer, including praise and thanksgiving, confession, and asking and listening. Now it's time to put each of these into practice.

1. *Praise and Thanksgiving.* "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD" (Psalm 150:6). Take a few minutes to tell God of His greatness and His majestic power. Adore Him for who He is: the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Then thank Him for

specific things He has done in your life, in your family, in your church and in your friends' lives.

Praise:

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Thanksgiving:

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2. *Confession.* "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). We keep the communication lines open when we confess our sins to God. Take one minute to sit quietly before the Lord. When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, confess it to God. Don't forget to thank Him for His forgiveness.

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3. *Asking and Listening.* “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). Take a few minutes to ask God for specific prayer requests. Pray for your family, church, school, friends, the government and yourself. Spend another minute or so in silence, inviting the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart.

Asking:

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Listening:

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### **apply**

1. Why do you think it is difficult for many people to have a consistent time with God?

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2. Name at least three ways a disciplined quiet time can bring you closer to God.

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3. When is the best time of the day for you to take a few moments to be with the Lord? What other commitments need to be shifted around to make it happen?

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4. How can you integrate your own creativity into your times with God?

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## reflect

Now that you have had a guided devotional time as part of this session, what keeps you from doing it on a daily basis? If you are ready to make a commitment to a disciplined devotional life, fill in the appointment card below.

### a daily appointment with God

What time? \_\_\_\_\_

How long? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

What to bring: \_\_\_\_\_

Consider sharing your appointment card with a friend who will keep you accountable to your commitment. (Fellowship with other Christians is important too, so don't do it all on your own!)

## meditation



Very early in the morning, while it was still dark,  
Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a  
solitary place, where he prayed.

MARK 1:35