

WMU of Texas
Missional Disciple-Making Bible Study



ENGAGING IN A FAITH COMMUNITY

The Power of Community

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BIBLE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Teri Ussery is a wife, mom, and "Gigi" to five grandchildren. Teri has a passion for sharing the transformative power of God's Word. Her heart for discipling others has led her to teach Bible studies and speak at women's events and conferences for over four decades. Teri holds a Master's in Theology from Dallas Baptist University and serves as the Adult and Young Adult Strategist for WMU of Texas in Dallas, Texas.



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INTRODUCTION

What is Your Mission in Life?

How has God called you to live as a Christ-follower? What is His challenge for your life's journey?

Some question why God doesn't immediately dispatch us to heaven when we become a Christ-follower. Why would He leave us here on this fallen earth to endure the hardships and trials this life brings?

Jesus provides the answer as He tells His disciples, who are being left behind, that they are to bring the Gospel message to the lost. What we call the **Great Commission**.

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 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

We are commissioned to make disciples of Jesus. He leaves us with the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the task of bringing others into a saving faith, and then discipling them in how to live out the Christ-life.

To learn more about WMU of Texas and national WMU's missions disciple-making curriculum for all ages, visit wmutx.org/resources.

To download our mentoring resources and missional disciple-making Bible studies, visit wmutx.org/mentoring.

The Principles of Missional Disciple-Making

WMU of Texas has created Bible studies to help you on your disciple-making journey. We hope to equip you in the following ways to accomplish the task for which God has called you.

Consider the following four foundational principles as you begin your disciple-making experience.

MISSION

Luke shares the departing words of Jesus before He ascended to the Father, leaving His followers to consider His mandate.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

Jesus assured His followers that the power coming of the indwelling Holy Spirit would surely compel them to be His Witness. He instructed all Christ-followers to be on mission to share the Gospel locally, regionally, and to the ends of the earth.

MENTORING

While the mandate to share the Gospel with the whole world seems overwhelming, we are also given instructions for how we are to fulfill such a great command. The writer of Proverbs gives us a hint.

“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.”

Proverbs 27:17

This Proverb refocuses our disciple-making. Here, we are encouraged to build relationships one by one. We are instructed to sharpen each other as we invest in missional relationships through mentoring. So the question becomes, *whose life are you pouring into? Who are you discipling?*

METAMORPHOSIS

What is the purpose of disciple-making? Paul tells us that our goal in disciple-making is to equip and encourage another to realize the heart-transformation God longs to bring.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform 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 12:1-2

The purpose of our investment in others is to bring about transformation. We derive the word “metamorphosis” from the Greek word for transformation, which is best seen in the life cycle of the caterpillar. Metamorphosis allows realization of the full potential within the caterpillar to become a butterfly.

Our goal of investing in the lives of others through mentoring relationships is to lead them to experience a true transformation, becoming the person God has created them to be.

MULTIPLICATION

The result of the transformation we experience is the need to share our transformation with others. The Great Commission tells us clearly:

“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.”

Matthew 28:18-20

Much like His departing words in Acts 1:8, Matthew records Jesus' command that, as we are going about our daily lives, we are to be about His business of disciple-making. He empowers and equips, but we become the hands, feet, and mouth of Jesus to invest in disciple-making. We are to teach others to obey His commands and baptize others into His Kingdom, until the very end of the age.

May you find Christ and His purpose for YOU as you walk this missional disciple-making journey.

Getting Started

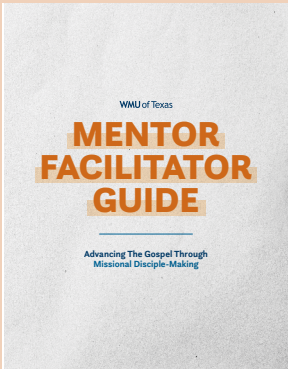
As you begin your journey, either solo, with another person, or in a small group, here are some next steps to help you get started.

You will find five missional disciple-making resources that will help you on your disciple-making journey at wmutx.org/mentoring. You may start with any of the five. There is no anticipated order to the studies. You will find that they all equip you in specific ways to be a missional disciple-maker.

As you embark on your study, consider that God may want you to invite someone else to join you. Feel free to study on your own, but allow space for God to show you others whom you could encourage through the study as well.



Scan to
download the
Mentoring Guide
for Leaders.



MISSIONAL DISCIPLE-MAKING BIBLE STUDIES

Here is an overview of the five spiritual practices you will experience in each Bible study to equip you as a missional disciple-maker.

Each Bible study includes a Bible passage, a short commentary, and a practical tool to help you practice what you have learned. Download at wmutx.org/mentoring

Bible Study	Goal	Application
SURRENDERED PRAYER <i>Matthew 6:9-13,</i> <i>Luke 11:1-4</i>	To deepen intimacy with God and submit every aspect of life to His will.	Learning to use God’s Word to pray.
READ THE BIBLE & APPLY IT <i>2 Timothy 3:16-17,</i> <i>James 1:22</i>	To renew one’s mind and gain wisdom for living in His truth.	To study God’s Word and put it into practice.
PRAYING FOR OTHERS <i>1 Timothy 2:1-4,</i> <i>Colossians 4:2-4</i>	To partner with God in intercession, asking for His work in the lives of others.	Identify people to pray for and include them in your daily prayer time.
SHARE YOUR FAITH <i>Matthew 28:19-20,</i> <i>Romans 10:14-15</i>	To boldly and lovingly proclaim the hope and salvation found in Jesus Christ.	Practice sharing your testimony and the Gospel with others.
GATHER IN COMMUNITY <i>Hebrews 10:24-25,</i> <i>Acts 2:42-47</i>	To grow as disciples within the Body of Christ and be equipped for missional living.	Gathering with other believers for worship, study, fellowship, and service.

How To Use This Study

As you step into each of these Bible studies, you will implement a method of study easily remembered by its acronym: SOAP.

SOAP OVERVIEW

Sometimes studying God's Word can be overwhelming and intimidating at best. However, Jesus tells us in **John 14:26** that the "Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

As a Christ-follower, you have the Holy Spirit teacher within you to help you understand and apply God's Word. Sometimes it just helps for us to have a structure within which to work.

There are a number of different study methods. The method we will use is the SOAP Method. It provides a framework to read the scripture, observe what the text says, apply the scripture personally, and pray for God to speak through His Word.



SCRIPTURE

Read the passage out loud or write it down. Read it slowly and thoroughly for context.



OBSERVE

What does the passage say?

Read the passage again, focusing on observation. You might ask the who, what, where, when, why, and how questions as you observe. Note key details like repeated words, people involved, locations, and major events. Journal your observations.



APPLY

What does the passage mean to me?

Read the passage again and consider how it applies to your life. This step answers, ***"How does this passage apply to my life?"*** As you journal, ask yourself if any of the things you see in the passage apply to a current situation or struggle in your life.



PRAY

Ask God to speak clearly through His Word and guide you as you seek to live out the truths you learned from the passage.

A Note on Bible Study Translations

The Bible, originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, has been translated into English many times. This study will primarily use the New Living Translation (NLT). But reading the same passage of Scripture from more than one translation can be a helpful study tool. You can find a variety of translations on a Bible app or websites such as biblegateway.com.

BIBLE STUDY

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BELIEVERS

⁴²All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

⁴³A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

ACTS 2:42-47



SCRIPTURE

ENGAGING IN A FAITH COMMUNITY

The Power of Community

By: Meghan Hendrickson

What does it mean to engage in a faith community? Often, we may consider that a faith community has to be a church building with a staff, activities, Bible studies, missional opportunities, and Sunday morning worship.

But perhaps God defines it differently. Perhaps a faith community is just that – a community of believers who gather together to seek the Lord, worship Him, and challenge each other on the journey of becoming Jesus’ disciples for this generation.

This Bible study will help guide you as you consider the possibilities of a faith community based on what the earliest church experienced. As you look at the characteristics of the first New Testament church, think about the opportunities you may have to gather in community.



READ ACTS 2:42-47

I’ll be honest. Whenever I read this passage from Acts, I feel like I’m reading about some fairy tale community where the grass is always green, the birds continue to sing, and nothing can keep the sun from shining. I can hear Snow White whistle as various woodland creatures come together to help clean the house.

The second chapter of Acts closes with what feels like a biblical version of how we first learned to finish telling stories as children – *“and they all lived happily ever after.”*

As fantastical as Acts 2 may seem, it is no fairy tale. These are real stories of real people who were really filled with the same Holy Spirit who really raised Jesus from the dead. When the Holy Spirit of the Living God appeared, people were filled with fresh boldness and abundant love.

Earlier in this chapter, Peter speaks of a promise that is “to you, to your children, and to those far away – all who have been called by the Lord our God,” (vs. 39). The promise is the gift of the Holy Spirit – the One who is continually making all things new.

Part of the reason this passage seems like a scene from a 1930s animated film rather than a 2,000-year-old home video is because of the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit.

The only thing natural about this chapter of Acts is the onlookers' assumption that those who were filled with the Holy Spirit were filled with a few too many mimosas at brunch that morning. Apart from that one faulty assumption (which Peter addresses in verse 15), Acts 2 is entirely supernatural. But even that word, *supernatural*, can cause us to drift into Never-Never Land.

*For these people are not drunk,
as you suppose, since it is only
the third hour of the day.*

Acts 2:15

By very definition, whatever is supernatural is beyond what is natural. Whatever is supernatural cannot be explained by anything we perceive in the natural world. And here, in the heart of all things supernatural, we find the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit Who chooses to indwell us, terribly natural as we are. Rather than the familiar whistle of Snow White and her forest friends, the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit comes to make a home within us, cleaning house with every breath.

When God pours out His Holy Spirit upon those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus for rescue, the Holy Spirit is infused into entire communities formed around this “flame of love” – as theologian Clark Pinnock describes the Holy Spirit. This personal indwelling and communal infusion of the Holy Spirit is the foundation upon which this fairy tale community at the close of Acts 2 is built.

But once again, this is no fairy tale. This idyllic community is, in fact, the early church.

In Acts 2, God shows us exactly what God had in mind for God's church filled with God's Spirit. Not only is the community depicted in this passage of Acts endearing, but it is also enchanting and enthralling, as some 3,000 people were welcomed into this community of faith in one day.

This same Jesus who was worthy of fishermen dropping their nets and leaving their livelihood behind at once to follow Him when He offered the three-word invitation, “come follow me,” was still being revealed through his people gathered – and soon to be scattered to invite many and many more into this real and everlasting faith community.

So, now that we can agree this incredible story from Acts is, in fact, credible, let's dig in one verse at a time.



OBSERVE

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

Vs. 42: All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

How would you describe devoting yourself to something?

What is the distinction between simply doing something and devoting yourself to something?

What were all the believers devoted to?

*What is the significance of the word **all** in this passage?*

*How often do you find variations of the word **all** (every, each) in Acts 2:42-47?*

What would you consider to be the apostles' teaching back then? What about now?

What exactly does fellowship mean to you? In today's cultural context, what sets fellowship in the church apart?

What is the difference between the Lord's Supper and other meals? Why is it special that both are included in this description of what all the believers in the early church were devoted to?

Lord's Supper:

Other Meals:

What is prayer? How does prayer impact your life personally? How might communal prayer impact the life of a community?

Vs. 43: A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

What do you think **a deep sense of awe** means in this context? Why might it be noteworthy that the author writes, "*a deep sense of awe came over them all*"?

How does the reality that *a deep sense of awe came over them all* reflect the character, presence, and activity of God?

How might the apostles' ability to perform *many miraculous signs and wonders* be tied to the deep sense of awe that came over them all?

Jesus performed *many miraculous signs and wonders* during his few short years of ministry (service) on earth. Why could it be important for the early church to continue to be known by signs and wonders? What about now?

A *sign*, by definition, is an advertisement or evidence of something. What was Jesus advertising or giving evidence of when he performed *signs*?

To *wonder* is to possess – or better yet, be possessed by – an awesome sense of curiosity. What value does *wonder* possess in relationship to Jesus?

Vs. 44: And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.

Why do you think it matters that all the believers *met together in one place*?

What do you think they were meeting about? What is the purpose and potential of meeting together in one place with fellow believers?

What may have been the motivation behind all the believers *sharing everything they had* with one another?

In what social environment do you tend to freely share everything you have with others?

Vs. 45: They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

Why do you think the early church was motivated to provide for those in need?

Do you think this generous provision was limited to those who had already trusted in Jesus for rescue, or do you think the early church's generosity extended to those who did not yet know Jesus?

What belief could compel people to sell their property and possessions to help provide for those in need? In other words, what would someone need to believe to freely give away that which the watching world would say rightfully belongs to them?

How does this attitude of generosity in the early church reflect the character of God?

When you think of God's generosity, what do you think of?

Vs. 46: They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity

How would you define *worship*? What do you think qualifies as worship? What is the beauty in *worshipping together*?

Why do you think the early church felt the need to worship together each day?

What do you take away from the fact that the early church both worshiped together in the Temple each day and gathered in each other's homes, sharing meals together throughout each week?

What do you appreciate about the attitude of great joy and generosity the early church shared in their times together?

What is special about sharing our home and table with others? How do you feel when someone shares their home and table with you? What does their hospitality communicate to you?

Vs. 47: all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

What do you think it means to praise God? How might the early church's commitment to praise God with every breath be connected to their ability to enjoy the goodwill of all the people?

How would you compare this attitude of the early church and toward the early church, to the attitude of the church and toward the church today?

What is the defining characteristic of those who were joining the fellowship of the early church each day?

Why is it noteworthy that the Lord was the one who was growing the church?

How does it sit with you when you consider the reality that this early faith community was growing every day?



APPLY

WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN TO ME?

I believe God's heart for God's church in Acts 2 is still God's heart for God's church today. In 2,000 years, culture has changed, but God has not. Jesus said Himself in **Matthew 16:18** that He will build His church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

The church was always designed to be God's church. Christ is the Cornerstone (**Acts 4:11**) – the foundation upon which the whole church is built – and God is the builder (**1 Peter 2:5**).

When we look at **Acts 2:46** as it was originally written in Greek, we see the language of the church continuing together with one mind and passion. This is not a picture of uniformity, but of unity in Christ. The church should be the embodied truth of loving because Christ first loved us (**1 John 4:19**). The church is designed to be the body of Christ. And as seen in the final verse of Acts 2, just as a healthy body is designed to grow, so is a healthy church.

For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.'

Acts 4:11

And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.

1 Peter 2:5

They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity

Acts 2:46

We love each other because he loved us first.

1 John 4:19

After studying this passage about the reality of the early church, why do you think it can sometimes read as too good to be true?

<p>What does that tell us about where we may have lost our way along the way?</p>	<p>What do you think will help us recalibrate and remember our true identity as a faith community?</p>

When you consider the faith community described in Acts 2, what value do you think the church has to offer in our culture today?

What characteristics of the early church do you admire?

Are you currently engaged in a faith community? If so, how would you describe your faith community, and how does it compare to the early church? If not, why not?

Why do you think God desires for us to engage in a faith community?

After studying the early church in Acts 2, how is God inviting you to cultivate a faith community where you are?

Who do you know who you can invite to join your faith community?

What step of faith and obedience is God inviting you to take now that you have spent some extra time in Acts 2?



PRAY

God, thank you for loving us like you do. Thank you for giving us the gift of Your Son, Your Spirit, and Your church. Thank you for giving us a reason to praise You with every breath. Thank you for coming to rescue us when we did not deserve Your rescue. Thank you for loving us while we were living as Your enemies. Teach us to love like You love. May we not neglect time with You and with one another. Inspire us to freely share the home we have found in You with others who are still searching for the truest family we will ever know. When we lose our way, remind us You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life – and that no one comes to the Father except through You.

NEXT STEPS

Now that you have seen and experienced the gathered community of the early church, **what do you believe God might be calling you to do to encourage others to gather in community?**

Young adults seem to have a hunger for community. They desire authenticity and relevance. Often, they are even longing for a faith community to grow alongside others as they dig into the Word of God and seek to uncover *the* truth. In a culture of moral and spiritual relativism, many people of all ages are looking for an anchor – something to help center them in a world of uncertainty and perceived chaos.

It has often been said that the church isn't walls, brick, and mortar. The true church is where the Holy Spirit dwells – within the heart of every believer. **In other words, the people are the church.**

Consider how God may be calling you to be on mission to build a faith community.

ADDITIONAL BIBLE STUDIES & RESOURCES



Ready to continue your disciple-making journey? Explore our other Bible studies and mentoring resources available at wmutx.org/mentoring. These resources provide valuable guidance and support for deepening your faith and helping others grow in theirs.

Bible Study	Goal	Application
SURRENDERED PRAYER <i>Matthew 6:9-13,</i> <i>Luke 11:1-4</i>	To deepen intimacy with God and submit every aspect of life to His will.	Learning to use God's Word to pray.
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SHARE YOUR FAITH <i>Matthew 28:19-20,</i> <i>Romans 10:14-15</i>	To boldly and lovingly proclaim the hope and salvation found in Jesus Christ.	Practice sharing your testimony and the Gospel with others.
GATHER IN COMMUNITY <i>Hebrews 10:24-25,</i> <i>Acts 2:42-47</i>	To grow as disciples within the Body of Christ and be equipped for missional living.	Gathering with other believers for worship, study, fellowship, and service.

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