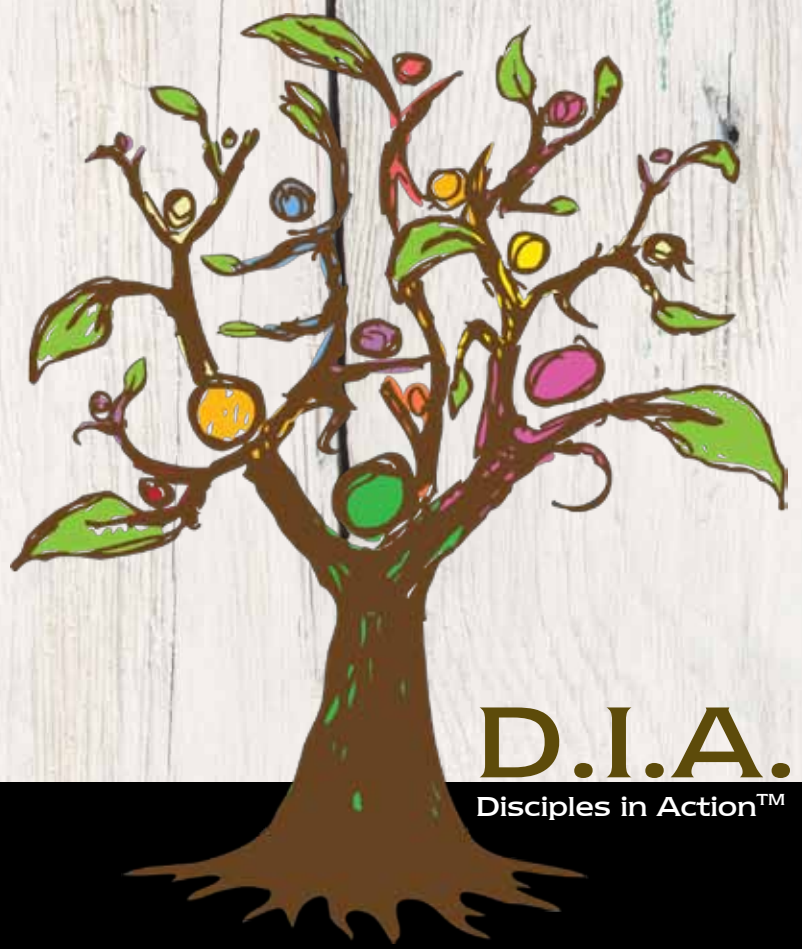


SERIES FIVE

witnessing



D.I.A.
Disciples in Action™

GROW REFLECT REVEAL

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST



participant's guide

fifth in a five series course to help you on your discipleship journey

P1

D.I.A.

Disciples in Action™

series 5

a five series course to help you on your discipleship journey

Produced by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists® Youth Ministries Department

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how to use this book

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with some general instructions to meet your individual needs.

The main body is written like a conversation you would have with a friend. It is designed to assist you in your discipleship journey. While it is recommended that you follow the process as set out in the book, please feel free to reorganize the material to respond to and maximize your own circumstances and opportunities.

The *Together Growing Fruitful Disciples* (TGFD) framework, on which this curriculum is based, is the scope of learning. While it does not necessarily describe all the tools considered valuable for you in your spiritual journey, it identifies a core of learning that is essential for everyone. There are many different ways to approach this curriculum, but regardless of the approach, it will represent the beginning point of a discipleship journey! However, the completion of this book should not be viewed as the culmination of the discipleship process, but rather as an essential step in your ongoing discipleship journey. It should answer the questions, “What will life look like after this series?” “What is the expected outcome?”

The suggested length of each session is 90 minutes.

Growing Disciples Inventory (GDI): This suggested pre and post session activity can be found at www.growingfruitfuldisciples.org/gdi. This eighty-four-question inventory is aligned with the TGFD framework to aid in determining areas of growth that have taken place in a disciple’s life and areas in which one needs to grow. The online version includes a graphic representation of the inventory results as well as a Spiritual Growth Action Plan. For those of you who may not have access to the Internet or would like to allow others to experience the inventory without having to go through the entire online version, the “short form” version, available on page 87, is an excellent alternative.



connector

This is the Bible text: the power base of each study. Whether it is one verse or several chapters long, this will provide the link between the mind and the heart. (“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” 2 Timothy 3:16, NIV.)



themes

The themes for each session are derived from the indicators that are listed for each commitment.



big idea

This is one statement that sums up the essence of the session. It serves as the intersection between the themes and the topic.



journey (60 minutes)

- **Exploration** (30-40 minutes) is the biblical and philosophical exploration of the main ideas on which the session is built. Each session will include interactive learning to help lead the group in the most effective way possible. **Note:** The leader should make sure to make the interactive sessions exciting and natural. Feel free to adjust each exercise to the size of the group. Familiarize yourself with the “interaction” segments before the session and make sure to infuse excitement into each illustration.
- **Reflection** (10-15 minutes) should focus on helping the participant reflect and respond to the truths they have just discovered. Questions are included in this section.
- **Application** (10-15 minutes) shows how the lessons can be applied to everyday life.



dig deep

Dig Deep is optional and may not be found in all lessons. It provides informative sidelights that add insight to a particular passage, word, fact, or Core Belief. These can also provide insights on youth culture, current events, and philosophy throughout each study.



from the pen of Ellen G. White

Where appropriate, relevant quotes from the writings of E. G. White are included throughout each session.



disciples in action

This is where the writer pulls a challenge from the lesson for the participant to act on using what they have learned during this session.



mentors

Before beginning, identify someone you can trust and respect to be your mentor. Information on the mentoring program can be found on page 88, and the application on page 96.



leader's note

This is handy information that will help coach the leader throughout the meeting.



debriefing

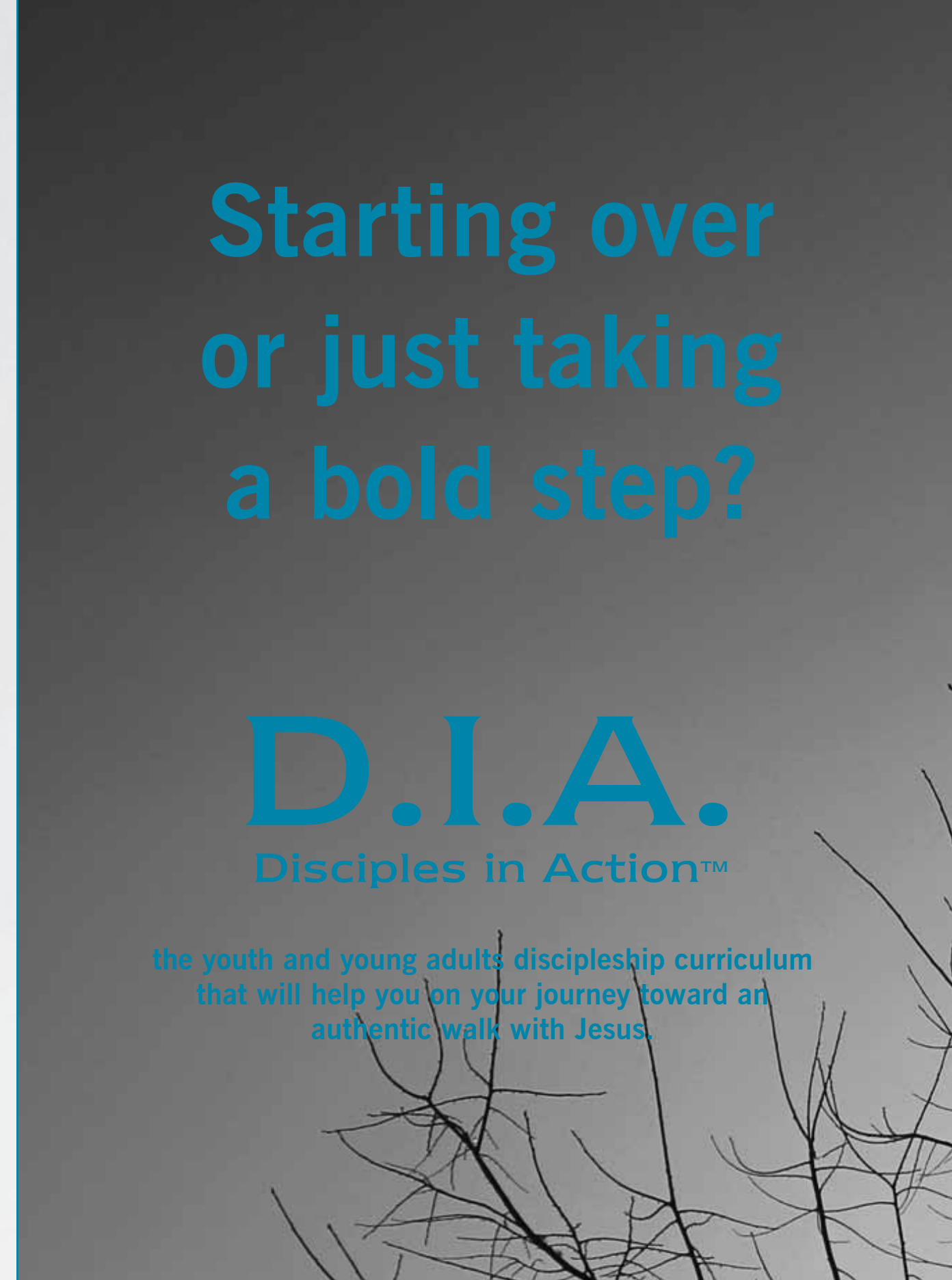
This session intends to summarize and invite responses to the previous sessions and tie them all together. By this time you should have already been putting into practice some, if not all, of what was studied and suggested in the previous sessions. Now you can discuss what works and what does not work for you and examine if you are embracing the life changing habits or disciplines that have been presented and discussed.

Plan the Work. Work the Plan!

**Starting over
or just taking
a bold step?**

D.I.A.
Disciples in Action™

**the youth and young adults discipleship curriculum
that will help you on your journey toward an
authentic walk with Jesus.**



introduction

“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1, NKJV).

It’s often believed that being a disciple of Jesus is an “automatic” event. Once you’ve accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, all you have to do is read the Bible and pray and all will be well. Of course, those are imperative to the Christian journey. But *how* do we read the Bible? *How* do we pray? *How* do we best open our hearts and minds so that the Holy Spirit can do His work in us? That’s what *Disciples in Action* (DIA) is all about!

DIA is built on the Together Growing Fruitful Disciples (TGFD) framework. This framework is the foundation of a discipleship model designed to help us think more clearly and deeply about the spiritual growth and maturity of ourselves and others as disciples of Jesus Christ. It identifies four growth processes around which we believe the disciple’s journey occurs:

- **Connecting:** Growing in relationship with God, others, and self
- **Understanding:** Growing in knowledge of Jesus and His teachings
- **Ministering:** Growing in participation of God’s mission of revelation, reconciliation, and restoration
- **Equipping:** Growing in the body of Christ by walking alongside other disciples in order to support, nurture, and strengthen in love

All four processes in this model are centered on and accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Separating these processes may seem artificial, but it does allow us to bring clarity to vital aspects of discipleship that might otherwise be overlooked.

In this model, *commitments* for the growing Christian are articulated for each of the individual processes. Within each process, *commitments* are further divided into key aspects of spiritual growth called *indicators*. These *indicators* represent behaviors through which, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. They also represent a lifetime of following Jesus.

Spiritual Mentors (or Partners, Companions) are crucial in our discipleship journey, as revealed in the *equipping* aspect of this model. Actually, the support, nurture, and strengthening derived from our walking alongside each other in this journey is foundational. Thus, you'll find in this DIA curriculum that each participant is to be assigned a mentor right from the start.

Whether the person is much older or just a little older, the mentor should be someone who the participant can trust and look to as a role model for learning how to live the Christian life. Some qualities of a mentor should include:

- a willingness to share his/her walk with God.
- sincerity and honesty in sharing their faith stories.
- openness in communication.
- a willingness to provide support and encouragement by listening and giving honest feedback without trying to force change. (Spiritual accountability is not about giving up control. It is about allowing another person to help us accomplish spiritual goals that we have set for ourselves.)

Another element of growing is that of assessment. It answers the question, "How am I doing?" Of course, each person's journey is unique; the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be replicated in a lab as we do vitamins and pharmaceuticals! "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8, NKJV). However, it is possible to assess the direction of one's life. Thus, the DIA curriculum directs leaders to utilize the Growing Disciples Inventory (GDI), located at www.growingfruitfuldisciples.org/gdi. This eighty-four-question inventory is aligned with the TGFD framework to aid in determining areas of growth that have taken place in a disciple's life and areas in which one needs to grow. The online version includes a graphic representation of the inventory results as well as a Spiritual Growth Action Plan.

The inventory is also available on page 87 as a "short form" that contains only twenty questions. For those of you who may not have access to the Internet or would like to allow others to experience the inventory without having them go through the entire online version, the short form is an excellent alternative.

Scripture encourages us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12b, 13, NKJV). While it is God's work in us through His Holy Spirit, the DIA curriculum is an excellent tool to help young people experience God's work in their lives and to assist them in trusting Him to that work.

SESSION TWENTY-ONE

by *Kimberley Tagert-Paul*

Developing Relationships

developing positive relationships
with those outside the church



Kimberley Tagert-Paul writes from Michigan, USA. An internationally published author, her passion is writing for young people. She loves crafts, photography, and reading. She has been married to the love of her life for 30 years and has two sons. When not gainfully employed, she can be found chasing her four-year old grandson until he catches her, or enjoying the sounds and beauty of Lake Michigan with her husband. Her life goal is to make it to heaven and take as many people with her as she can.

PREAMBLE

Many Christians are sometimes hesitant to share their faith with people outside of the church. Discipleship assists in overcoming that hesitation. Reaching beyond the church doors is essential in discipleship.

A short skit is included in this lesson. You may want to have your group prepare for this ahead of time by assigning parts in advance. It is very simple and requires your audience to use their imagination. Be ready with other suggestions to help your group reach beyond its borders and bring the light of Christ into their world.



theme

To develop positive relationships with those outside the church, I am:

- showing respect to and praying for non-Adventist and the un-churched because all are of infinite value to their Creator.
- being a good neighbor, participating in community life, and helping those in need.
- being ethical in all my business dealings and in my professional and personal life.
- reflecting the character of Christ in all my interactions with others.



big idea

As Christ's disciple, I am called to minister God's love to others outside the church as well as inside of the church. My life can be an example that will bring others to Christ and then to the truth of God's Word.



connector

Look: Colossians 2:6-10, 2 Corinthians 9:13, John 17:23

Memorize: "I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23 NIV).



THE JOURNEY

exploration

God Loves Me as Much as He Loves Jesus

Have you ever been asked a question you were *sure* you knew the answer to—so confident that you knew there could be only one answer—yours? A co-worker asked me one of those questions one day. It was really quite simple, or so I thought. She asked if I thought God loves us as much as He loves Jesus. What? Was she crazy? Could she truly believe that God loves us as much as His only Son? Could it be?

I read and reread John 17:23. I had belonged to Jesus, His son, for a very long time, but the concept of just how much God loved me was about to change. A six-month study to prove this concept wrong ended not as I expected. Everything I read pointed to the fact that God does indeed love us as much as He loves Jesus. Amazing. It took a while to let the beauty of this truth sink in, but once it did, I had something more to face.

If God loves me as much as He loves Jesus, how should I love others?

Some people make it easy to love them. Others . . . well, I'm sure you know what I mean. I began looking around me. There were people everywhere—people who thought they didn't need to change out of their pajamas before going to the store, people who thought shouting on their cell phone while walking in public was acceptable—even when they were using words that shouldn't even be whispered—people who lived a very different lifestyle than I did. Yet, looking at them, I had to acknowledge that God loved them as much as He loved me—every one of them—no matter how I felt.

Answer the following questions:

- If God loves us as much as He loves Jesus, what does that say about how we should love others?
- Are there any exclusions?

If you are doing this as part of a study group, then do the following skit. If not, read each scenario and answer the discussion questions that follow.

SKIT: WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Setting: A busy national store. (Tell your audience this is the setting and let them use their imaginations if it's not possible to put up shelves, aisles, carts, etc.)

Cast: Five different shoppers: four females, one male. (See description of each below.) Some one in a robe to portray Jesus and a young man standing with Him, watching the scene from the side of the stage.

- **Shopper One is on her cell phone, shouting into it while pretending to push a grocery cart.**

“Yeah, I just got a bargain. You won't believe it. Three extra pair of underwear in the bag. Yeah, only four bucks. They are all white, but I can live with that. Want me to pick some up for you? Yeah, I think they have size 12.” (Pushes cart off the stage while still talking.)

- **Shopper Two has a pretend cart with a pretend child in it; shopper is yelling at the child.**

“Would you stop that? I keep telling you. I'm not saying it again. You got it? You do that once more and I'm going to tell your father. Stop that. I told you. I'm not telling you again. If you don't stop, you won't get any candy when we are done. Stop that. I already

told you. I'm not telling you again." (Pushes cart off stage.)

- **Shopper Three is pushing a pretend cart and reaching for groceries on the shelf. This shopper has on P.J. bottoms and a crazy top and is talking to a friend who is dressed in shorts and a tight fitting top.**

"Yeah, I know. I probably shouldn't have slept with him. He said he loved me, but I don't know. I've only known him for two weeks.

"Can you fall in love that fast?

"I'm worried. What if I'm pregnant?

"What then?" (Pushes cart off stage.)

- **Shopper Four is pushing a pretend cart and struggling to reach things—looking around but not meeting anyone's eyes. This shopper is muttering to himself and has mental issues.**

"Used to be easy. Not now. I know they want to hurt me. Don't look at them. It's in their eyes. I can see it. They think I can't see them. But I can. Got to hurry before they get me."

- **Shopper Five is pretending to push a cart and watching over several children.**

(She picks up items, looks at the price, and puts them down.) "We'll find something we can afford for Mommy to cook. Let's just keep looking. Maybe some cereal, or how about macaroni and cheese? I know we had it last night. Maybe some eggs. Let's just keep looking." (Pushes cart off stage.)

Jesus (Putting His arm around the young man standing beside Him.)

“You ask, ‘Who are my neighbors?’ Here they are, my son. Take care of my sheep, will you?”

Young Man: “But they are so. . .”

Jesus: “Different than you?”

“Yes, I know. But you have something in common: I love you all. Very much.”

(Lights go out slowly.)

discuss

Read John 17:23.

- What does this verse mean to you?
- What does loving others mean in the context of this verse?



“We each have a work to do. We may be of different nationalities, but we are to be one in Christ. If we allow peculiarities of character and disposition to separate us here, how can we hope to live together in heaven? We are to cherish love and respect for one another. There is to be among us the unity for which Christ prayed. We have been bought with a price, and we are to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits” (MS 20, 1905. 2 MCP 426.4).

- Read the quote above from Ellen White. Are we only to respect those who are different if they are church members and therefore part of our family?
- How will treating others with respect and love change their perception of us?
- How do you love a difficult person? How do you love them if they are in the church? How do you love them if they are not yet a follower of Christ? Should there be a difference? If so, why?

reflection

Applying God's Love in All Areas of My Life

"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light" (Luke 11:33).

So you have the light—what are you doing with it?

When we are called to Christ, our wants and desires begin to change, but we still have to live in the world. How do we share our light with others who don't necessarily see what we have to share in a good light?

- Have you ever been in a situation where being a Christian wasn't very popular?
- Have you ever had to respond in a way that you knew Christ would want you to, only to be made fun of?

Let's say you are in a store. You are happily shopping away and it comes time to pay for your purchases. The cashier gives you your change, and you see that they have given you more than you should have received. Do you return it?

- What if it is more than \$20?
- What if it is less than \$5?
- What if it is less than \$1?
- What if it is less than .25?

Now, what if the cashier knew that you are a Christian?

What if she wanted to see how you would react?

What if the slip-up wasn't a slip up at all?

What if it was a test?

Would the amount matter?

Would your reaction matter?

Turn the tables. What if the store overcharged you by \$20?

Would you go back for them to make things right? Would you do it for \$5? How about if it were less than \$1?

Others are watching us to see what the light of Christ looks like. In this world of darkness, they really want to see light. But they want a true light—one that is consistent and dependable, one they can throw themselves at, one that will change their lives. Jesus is that light. How we show Him to others matters. Not just at church, but in every aspect of our lives, including the minutest detail.

The world watches to see how we will react in many situations. They listen to our words. They watch us at work to see if we will be faithful, to see if we'll "borrow" things that don't belong to us. They watch us when we least expect it. Sitting down to eat in a crowded restaurant, do you take time to pray? Are you nice to the waitress even if she is having a bad day and not being friendly?

Our lives of light are made up of many little details. You can be sure that others are watching—and not just for the big stuff. They are ready to pick apart every little thing we do. Is that fair? Probably not. But it is a surety that you take on when you become a Christian—just as an athlete does in professional sports and ad branding. It is a choice to promote your brand, in this case, the love of Jesus.

We won't be perfect, at least not until Christ comes again and transforms us. But the world is watching for a consistency that they need.

"The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12, NIV).

journal time

Answer the following questions in your journal:

- Do you feel that the "night is nearly over"?
- How important is it to you personally that the "day is almost here"?
- What "deeds" in your life are closer to darkness than light?
- What can you do to let Jesus turn them to light?

application

Today, more than ever before, the opportunities to witness are at the touch of your finger. The Internet and social networking puts us in touch with the whole world easily. One touch of the “Enter” key on our computer, and our words can and will be read by literally thousands.

That’s good, right?

It can be. Social networking on the computer and other electronic devices can be a wonderful way to share the gospel with other seekers. Sometimes, a short note typed with the intention of encouragement can change lives we probably won’t meet in this lifetime. We can influence people to stay encouraged, to look to God’s Word, and draw closer in their relationship with our gracious Savior.

On the other hand, venting in the heat of the moment can also be read by those same thousands. A careless word or thought can turn our witness into smoke that vanishes before our eyes. Once entered, it usually can’t be taken back. And that becomes a tragedy. We need to be careful in our choice of words and topics in this electronic age so that others will be turned to Christ, not turned away.

The world has a right to hear the gospel from us. After all, Jesus has changed our lives from darkness to light. We have received His grace and, as His disciples, we are told to share this gift with others. It is a gift so precious, we need to guard it in our lives so that others won’t be turned away from desiring its redeeming power.



dig deep

Even youth lead a busy life. It is one of the devil’s favorite tricks to keep us from doing the work God has called us to. It is much more convenient to ignore witnessing outside of church than to actively engage in it, but each community has people who are hungering for truth, and they want to see it lived out, not just spoken of. Making mistakes is part of growing, and we shouldn’t expect instant perfection. As a Christian, our lives will be under “the microscope of the world.” They will look for any

imperfection, but showing consistent Christian love will help others see that we are truly trying to live God's love. Being a Christian and a Seventh-day Adventist isn't just religion, it is a lifestyle. It should and must affect every area of our life: our work, our study, and our recreation.



“There is something for all to do besides going to church, and listening to the word of God. They must practice the truth heard, carrying its principles into their every-day life. They must be doing work for Christ constantly, not from selfish motives, but with an eye single to the glory of Him who made every sacrifice to save them from ruin” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 92).

disciples in action

We are reborn with a purpose. We are saved to share His grace. The world is waiting to hear, see, and know true Christians that live and breathe the love of God. Will they be disappointed if we aren't perfect? Some may. They've been hurt by others under the name of Christ and, unfortunately, turned off by what some have to say. Showing them God's love in our imperfect lives with consistency and grace can restore hope to many who are hopeless.

Questions

- In what area of your life do you have interaction with the most people outside of church?
- How can you share the light of Christ in that situation?
- What other areas of your life do you “rub elbows” with others outside of the church? How would a quiet but faithful witness work in those areas?
- Make a list of other ways you can have an impact for truth. Can you do things like visit other churches for musical concerts and show them what a true Seventh-day Adventist Christian looks like? How about at community events? Take the challenge to take the list that you made and put it into action. Each step forward counts for Christ!

SESSION TWENTY-TWO

by *Debbonnaire Kovacs*

Restoration

understanding that God has provided everything needed for my restoration.



Debbonnaire Kovacs has been writing since she could hold a pencil and sold her first story to Junior Guide when she was eleven years old. By her twenties, she recognized that writing and speaking were not just what she loved to do, but what God wanted her to do. She has written off and on for most of her life, but has been writing full time since 1990, having written four-

teen books including the first, second, fifth, and sixth grade Bible textbooks used in Adventist schools in North America and more than 150 stories and articles for all ages. She speaks at camp meetings, women's retreats, and other events, and also does copyediting. She urges everyone to take their dreams to God and see whether they are more than just dreams. They may be assignments from the King of Heaven.

You can reach her at debbonnaire@debbonnaire.com or on the Web at www.debbonnaire.com



theme

To understand that God has provided everything needed for my restoration, I am learning that:

- Jesus died to redeem me from sin and now lives to restore me to physical, mental, and spiritual wholeness.
- through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ will live in me and I will live in Him.
- because every person is created in God's image, my relationships will be based on love, forgiveness, and respect.
- the Holy Spirit daily prompts me to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.
- God expects me to be a steward of all He created.
- the great controversy ends when God brings an end to sin and restores earth to its original perfection.



big idea

God is not satisfied with simply saving me from the consequences of my sin; He wants to restore me to the life of love for which I was created.



connector

Look: John 4:10-14, 21-24; Micah 6:8; Revelation 21:1-7

Memorize: “Those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14, *Today's New International Version*).



THE JOURNEY

exploration

Through the Tomb to the other Side

The way to the glory of God often leads through darkness. Have you ever noticed that? In the midnight of a trial we don't think we will survive, that's when we truly learn to trust God. And in the end, there is often a blessing we never could have imagined.

So it was with the cross of Jesus. He “couldn't see through the tomb,” we're told (DA 753). In other words, even Jesus wasn't sure He would survive this trial. We can see that for ourselves, both in what He said on the way to Gethsemane, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Matt. 26:38), and in His pleading prayers to be freed from this “cup.” He knew He would die. At that moment, as a human being, He had only His trust and faith, just as we do, to help Him cling to the promise that He would then be reunited with His Father. But He did cling. He held to “Thy will be done,” and He conquered. And on the other side of that cross and silent tomb, there was glory that perhaps even the human Jesus couldn't imagine, at least on that night in the garden.

And He did it for us. He had a far larger idea than just rescuing us from this fallen world and from death. He wanted to give us the full, rich lives we were meant to have, even here. He wanted us to “live abundantly” (John 10:10).

How does that happen? What does it even mean? The full answers to these questions are greater than our grasp of them, but there's one simple answer: Love. Simple—but not easy! Jesus' days were filled from the moment He awoke until the moment

He slept, and even in His dreams, with love. He loved His Father and spent hours in communion with Him through reading the scrolls He had available to Him, repeating the old stories His mother had taught Him, and prayer.

Because of that, He loved everyone around Him, too. With His heart full of God's love for Him, as lowly as He may have felt as a Galilean carpenter, it was easy for Him to see the beloved child of God in the faces He saw daily.

That's what He wants to do for us. He did go through the tomb, He did come back more than a conqueror, and He does live for us this very moment. He says He'll bring us life, victory, joy, and that the vehicle for all of that is love, love, and more love.

- Think of, and perhaps share, a time in your life when great blessing came through great trial.
- How can you express some of your enormous gratitude for what Jesus chose to do for you?
- What do you think are some of the features of “abundant life” that you would like to make real in your life? How do you see God working to make these things a reality?
- Who has shown love to you this week? What was the effect on you?

Immanuel

Immanuel means “God with us” in more ways than one. It means that God, who has always been with us, came to live visibly with us so we could be more aware of His presence. It means that God has a human face like ours now—even a body like ours. Jesus still has His physical form and always will. He will be the only one with scars in the new reality God is creating. How, then, can God be “with us” as Jesus promised?

John 14:16-20, one of the clearest passages on the truth of the triune Godhead, explains how it works: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But

you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

Let’s break this down:

Step 1: Jesus asks the Father.

Step 2: the Father sends the Spirit.

Step 3: the Spirit, who is invisible to the world, lives “with us and in us,” and because of that, we know Him.

Step 4 gets interesting: Jesus has already said He is leaving, but now He says He won’t leave us as orphans, but “I will come to you.” Even though the world won’t see Him, we will. Clearly, He’s seeing the Spirit as nearly interchangeable with Himself. In fact, He later says the Spirit “will not speak on his own,” but “will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you” (John 16:13, 14). The trinity is so unified that we can’t begin to understand it. What God says and does, Jesus says and does, what Jesus says and does, the Spirit says and does, and what the Spirit says and does, God says and does.

And sure enough, the result, which we could call **Step 5** in our list, is that we will realize that Father, Son, and we are all one in the Spirit. So now, Immanuel/God with us creates a whole new way of living. Now it’s even more complicated than a three-way God—we’re in the mix, too!

The little book *Steps to Christ* is one of the clearest treatises on the life in Christ that has ever been written. On pages 62-3, Mrs. White describes the result of abiding in Christ and learning to continually surrender the will to Him. First, she describes the instantaneous process we call justification or “imputed righteousness:”

“If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.”

In other words, He did the work, and we get the credit. His character is *imputed*, or credited, to us. Next, she shows what Immanuel, the indwelling Spirit, accomplishes in the way of the lifelong process of sanctification, or becoming holy:

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.

“So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.”

This is a moment-by-moment process and, like all things we learn by practice, it involves some falling and forgiveness. But God never gets tired of picking us up, dusting us off, and starting again. The question is, do we keep reaching out for Him?

How would you describe the threefold Godhead and what their actions are in your life?

Have you intentionally invited the Holy Spirit into your heart and your daily moments? What would help you to remember to maintain the connection and constantly surrender your will to His?

Mrs. White mentions “works of righteousness and obedience.” We tend to make lists, but the Bible keeps it pretty simple. What is the one, great work of righteousness and obedience according to what Jesus taught His disciples during their three years with Him and reiterated in His last hours? (See John 15:12, 13.) How would it help with obedience if we could keep that one command before us every day?

Justice, Mercy, Humility

When God begins to set the world right, which He tends to do one person at a time, He begins by setting right the foundational thing that’s wrong—your two-way relationship with Him. He loves you. That’s a fact as immutable as the law of gravity. He’s been loving you since before you were born, and nothing you’ve done will ever stop Him. So He comes in love and calls you, and when you respond, He begins to teach you that you are safe in that love and always will be. For some people, just this one thing takes their whole life to really settle into, and that’s okay because it’s the one and only thing we really cannot do without. At all!

But if you have responded to Him and felt that opening, brightening, thawing inside that shows His love is active in you, He then begins to set your outer world right, too. He wants to teach us to love as He does—all the time, everybody, no conditions. Because those people mentioned above, who have such a hard time learning to trust God’s love, generally got that way because they have been so hurt by other humans. The fact is, the main way that He shows His love on this earth is through us. That’s why we’re called the body of Christ. We’re His hands, His eyes, His feet, His mouth. So when we are doing the devil’s legwork for him instead (and there are a *lot* of people doing that), what happens is hatred or indifference instead of love. Then, when somebody comes along and says, “Hey, did you know God loves you?” the person who has been the target of this hatred and indifference doesn’t even know what that means, let alone how to believe it.

- So, Spirit-filled Christians set out to **do justice**. They pay attention when people are being marginalized and made powerless, and they do something about it. They notice when children are told, in words or actions, that they are worthless, and they counteract that with all the love they have. They work actively for issues of peace and fairness, for ways of caring for those who need care in ways that maintain their dignity and worth as humans and children of God.
- Spirit-filled Christians **love mercy**. They always can imagine a reason why someone might be acting in hateful or indifferent ways. They seek to love the oppressor as well as the victims and to empower both in ways that will make them both more human, not less. They are well aware of their own weaknesses and have no time for backbiting or judging the weaknesses of others, though they do hold each other accountable.
- Spirit-filled Christians who are working for justice and loving mercy can get so excited at the results (or so frustrated at the lack of visible results) that they can get caught up in pride—either “look what I’m doing for God!” or “why is this not working when I’m trying so hard?” So they pay particular attention to **walking humbly with their God**. They make sure, as Jesus did, that their devotional relationship comes first and foremost because they know they cannot succeed at any of the things they’re trying to do if that vertical relationship is not in place.

But when it is. . . watch out! Spirit-filled Christians turned the entire known world upside down in the first century after Jesus was so briefly here. And they’re doing it again. They’re noticing what is going on with the planet God so lovingly created for us, and they’re moving to protect and steward it, knowing we will

be held accountable for its treatment, not to mention the fact that the health of God's beloved children depends on the health of their environment. They're penetrating jungles, both concrete and rainforest, and finding people who don't know the Good News yet, and they're spreading the joy. They're quietly working in neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces, letting people see and hear and touch that the love of God is real.

Because one of these days, the universe will be set really *right*, once and for all. And they want *all* God's children to be there, when. . .

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love" (GC 678).

1. Are you certain that God loves you? How do you know?
2. Are you certain that you love Him back? How can you tell?
3. Of all the voices competing for your attention, how can you discern the ones that are calling you to work for God? What are some of your own, personal tasks in the Great Commission?

reflection

There simply is no way to express the gratitude and love that wells up in us when we really get a glimpse of God's amazing love and grace. When we are aware of the Spirit moving in us, and even when we're not, we can see God's fingerprints and footprints all around us. Each of us have personal ways of help-

ing others to see those touches of God's love and grace in our daily world. It is the most exciting thing in life when we catch on to one of those ways, act on it, and see what God does in our lives and others' lives. That's generally even more of a blessing to the giver than to the receiver, and if giving helps the other person become a giver, too, then the results are exponential.

If you have a journal, here are some things to reflect on, or you could discuss them with your friends or with your group.

- Read the stories of Jesus' betrayal and death at the ends of the four Gospels. Then spend some time in intense meditation on those events. Write about your feelings.
- Have you intentionally asked the Holy Spirit to live in and through you? What do you see happening? If not, do you find yourself resisting? Are there fears you might pray about and talk to your accountability partner about?
- Write about your ideas of justice, mercy, and humility. How have you seen these things active in your life? How have you seen the effect when they are absent or distorted?

application

After having reflected on these things, challenge yourself to find ways to make them real and visible in your daily life.

- What are some specific ways I can be Jesus' hands, feet, or mouth this week?
- How can I work for justice and peace this week?
- How can I show that I love mercy this week?
- In what ways do I make sure that I am walking humbly with my God?

SESSION TWENTY-THREE

by *Balvin Braham*

Evangelism

embracing the evangelistic mission of the church



Balvin Braham has more than twenty-seven years of experience working with young people both within and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He served as Youth Director of the West Jamaica Conference for more than ten years, as Youth Director of the West Indies Union Conference for five years, and as Associate Youth Director of the Inter-American Division for five years.

Presently he serves at the Inter American Division as: Administrative Field Secretary, Assistant to the Division President, Director of Human Resources, Leadership Development Coordinator and Associate Ministerial Secretary, responsible for Evangelism and Church Growth.

Dr. Braham has earned a diploma in Education, Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology, Master of Arts degree in Religion, and Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership. He is married to Anett nee Simms, his soul mate and a registered nurse, and together they have two grown daughters—Shavannie and Julaine.

Dr. Braham loves young people and commits his life to encouraging others to join him in empowering the youth on the journey to the Kingdom of God.



theme

To embrace the evangelistic mission of the church, I am:

- praying for the Holy Spirit to prepare me to reach others for Christ.
- choosing to be aware of the spiritual climate locally and globally.
- using my spiritual gifts to help tell the world the story of Jesus.
- able to give a reason for my faith when asked.
- sharing the story of my personal relationship with Jesus with community members, family, friends, and co-workers.



big idea

Participants should know that the natural tendency of human beings is to waver between trust in God and the persistent tendency to disobey Him. However, through constant prayer, they can witness effectively to others, and the Holy Spirit will give them power over the natural and persistent tendencies. They should feel the need to accept God's invitation to utilize their spiritual gifts to evangelize others who have not yet committed their lives to following Jesus. They should respond by participating in evangelistic initiatives to influence those who are yielding to the persistent tendency to disobey God to turn to Him instead.



Ellen White says, “The work above all work,—the business above all others which should draw and engage the energies of the soul,—is the work of saving souls for whom Christ has died. Make this the main, the important work of your life” (*Messages to Young People*, page 227).



connector

Look: Matthew 28: 18-20; John 15: 16; Acts 2:38; Revelation 3:20

Memorize: “If you remain in me and my words remains in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15: 7, 8, NIV).



THE JOURNEY exploration

Effectiveness in witnessing is emboldened through prayer.

Colossians 4:2-6—Amplified Bible

“Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer [life], being [both] alert and intent in [your praying] with thanksgiving. And at the same time pray for us also, that God may open a door to us for the Word (the Gospel), to proclaim the mystery concerning Christ (the Messiah) on account of which I am in prison; that I may proclaim it fully and make it clear [speak boldly and unfold that mystery], as is my duty. Behave yourselves wisely [living prudently and with discretion] in your relations with those of the outside world (the non-Christians), making

the very most of the time and seizing (buying up) the opportunity. Let your speech at all times be gracious (pleasant and winsome), seasoned [as it were] with salt, [so that you may never be at a loss] to know how you ought to answer anyone [who puts a question to you].”

- **In this text, the apostle Paul suggests that as Christians we should devote ourselves to prayer.** Through such strength and persistence as conveyed by the word in the Greek language that he uses (*kartereite*), prayer becomes the continual duty of Christians that enables active watchfulness both for us and for others, rather than engaging in lethargy (4:2).
- **In 4:3, Paul implies that as Christians our awareness of our need for prayer and our actual persistence in prayer are the basis of our strength to succeed in whatever we do for the Lord.** Whenever as Christians we convince ourselves that we are capable of doing things on our own, we are in serious spiritual danger. That conviction leads to loss of power and minimal effectiveness.
- **According to the apostle (Col. 4:5), when as Christians we are intentional and constant in prayer, opportunities come to us for witnessing.** In response to our prayer, the Holy Spirit empowers us to relate to others with tact and sensitivity. We should not antagonize others for not following the principles of the Lord, and neither must we blame them for failing to accept the gospel.
- **Prayer enables us as Christians to elevate our conversation to a high level through the Holy Spirit that takes full control of our lives (Col. 4:6).** As persistent, praying witnesses of Christ, the Holy Spirit directs us to become attractive, pleasant, and winsome in our conversations. Such attitudes open opportunities for us to get the

attention of others who are not of the faith, maintain their interests, and open up opportunities for us to answer questions about the Christian faith.

Share: Discuss the dynamic impact that the relationship between prayer and the Holy Spirit can have on the personal life and witness of young people.

Prayer in evangelism may be practiced through A.C.T.S. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication)

Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication are practices integral to effective prayer for evangelism and soul winning.

1. In **A**doration, we tell God how much we appreciate Him, adore His holiness, express our love for Him, and praise Him for His power and majesty. In adoration of God, we recognize His transcendent greatness both in heaven and on earth. *“How awesome are your deeds!”* (Psalm 66:3).
2. In **C**onfession, we acknowledge our weaknesses, tell Him where we have fallen short, and ask for help and strength to turn away from future temptations. We likewise acknowledge to Him the failings of other persons whom we would like to see in His kingdom when Jesus comes to claim the righteous. *“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).
3. In **T**hanksgiving, we thank God for His love, His faithfulness, His patience, and for sending Jesus, His son, to die on the cross for us. Thank Him for the Holy Spirit’s indwelling in our hearts and for His being our conscience, our counselor, and that “still small voice.” We thank Him for the opportunity to be involved in witnessing and for those whom He will enable us to reach and impact through the power of the Holy Spirit. *“Glorify him with thanksgiving”* (Psalm 69:30).

4. In **Supplication**, we express our reliance on Him for material needs, for our repentance over failures in faithfulness and our renouncing of mercilessness as a way of life. We seek forgiveness for our own failings, and like Moses speaking on behalf of the children of Israel (Exodus 32:11-14), we supplicate on behalf of those whom we would like to see saved in His kingdom. Through supplication, we tell the Lord what we want – SOULS! Be specific! – call them by name. None of our requests is too big for God to manage. *“Make your requests known to God”* (Philippians 4:6).

Share: How can Seventh-day Adventist young people be more intentional and constant in prayer for soul winning?



“Those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the scriptures will be connected to heaven and will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them” (5T 112).

“God’s workers must be men and women of prayer... that they may be light and strength to others” (RH Nov.10, 1885).

“There are souls who have lost their courage; speak to them, pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the Word of God. There is a soul sickness no balm can reach, no medicine heal. Pray for these, and bring them to Jesus Christ. And in all your work, Christ will be present to make impressions upon human hearts” (CME 22.5).

“Let the stewards of the manifold grace of God seek out these souls, visit their homes, and through the power of the Holy Spirit minister to their needs. Study the Bible with them and pray with them with that simplicity which the Holy Spirit inspires. Christ will give His servants a message that will be as the bread of heaven to the soul” (COL. 235).

“Let us also pray earnestly in behalf of those whom we expect to visit, by living faith bringing them, one by one, into the presence of God. The Lord knows the thought and

purposes of man, and how easily He can melt us! How His Spirit, like a fire, can subdue the flinty heart! How He can fill the soul with love and tenderness! How He can give us the graces of His Holy Spirit, and fit us to go in and out, in laboring for souls!" (ChS 169.2).

Share: What about prayer gets your attention most from the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy?



dig deep

Spiritual Gifts: Getting it Right!

The apostle Paul addressed the question of spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12: 12–31.

- A warped concept of spiritual gifts infested the church at Corinth. Some members had inflated ideas of their personal importance because they thought they possessed more public and spectacular gifts of the Holy Spirit than others. Others coveted wrongfully some of the gifts that were conspicuously exercised by others.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit that were intended for uniting the members of the church in Corinth became the foundation for division among the Christian believers. This schism over spiritual gifts among the members gave rise to the need for the apostle Paul to bring some perspectives to the question of spiritual gifts among the members of the church.
- Paul emphasized that basic to an acceptable appreciation of spiritual gifts is an understanding that the church is the body of Christ and He is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:22). As a body, the church has many interdependent parts (1 Corinthians 12: 12–26). The way the gifts of the Holy Spirit are intended to function is synonymous to the way the body with its various parts functions.

- When Christians are baptized into the body of Christ, they receive gifts from the Holy Spirit that enable them to participate in the body of Christ, the church, in a manner to build up and keep the church united. Paul says, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12: 13). This is what is referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as according to Prime, “no one can be a member of the body of Christ without the experience of the baptism by the Holy Spirit” (Prime, D. 2005. *Opening up 1 Corinthians* 111–114, Leominster: Day One Publications). Paul says, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (Rom. 8:9). When an individual receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he or she therefore is considered as being born again.

The apostle Paul emphasizes in 1 Corinthians 12: 14-20 that each member of the body must be involved in the functioning of the body, otherwise the body does not function optimally. In this interdependent relationship, every member of the body is needed and has a job to do in order to maintain unity, growth, and functionality (verses 21-26). For this task, each is given a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Each believer is expected to be able to identify his/her gift(s) as endowed by the Holy Spirit and to utilize such gift(s) within the body, realizing that everyone does not get the same gift (1 Cor. 12: 27–30). In the same manner, the spiritual gift that each member possesses must not be regarded as his or hers to be used only for his or her personal/limited church interest. The gift(s) of each believer belongs to the entire church and should be used to fulfill the God-given purpose for which it was given.

Share: How do spiritual gifts properly appreciated and used enable Seventh-day Adventist young people to act?



- “The Holy Spirit commits to every Christian some gift or talent which is to be used to advance the kingdom. The present is our day of trust. To every person is committed some peculiar gift or talent which is to be used to advance the Redeemer’s kingdom. All God’s responsible agents, from the lowliest and most obscure to those in high positions in the church, are entrusted with the Lord’s goods. It is not the minister alone who can work for the salvation of souls. Those who have the smallest gifts are not excused from using the very best gifts they have, and in so doing their talents will be increased. It is not safe to trifle with moral responsibilities nor to despise the day of small things. God’s providence proportions His trusts according to the varied capabilities of the people. None should mourn because they cannot glorify God with talents which they never possessed and for which they are not responsible” (*Testimonies for the Church Volume 4*, p. 618).

- “Every gift that the Lord has entrusted to us is to be valued and used. The smallest gift is not to be overlooked. The Lord gives to every man according to his several ability to use the gift bestowed. Each should be encouraged to use his gift. The least talented may enlarge his capabilities by doing his best. The church of Christ is made up of vessels large and small. The Lord can use the smallest gift to advance His cause, if the possessor has faith in Him” (6MR, p. 107-108).

reflection

What is your spiritual gift(s)?

Divide yourselves into small groups of seven or eight. In your group, pray earnestly for the aid of the Holy Spirit and then explore Romans 12:1–13, 1 Peter 4:8–11, and 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31. Make a list of all the spiritual gifts mentioned in these texts and do the following exercises:

- Discuss what each of these passages adds to your understanding of the proper use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Identify which of these gifts you think each member of the group possesses. There may be other gifts possessed by members of the group that are not included in the passages studied. It would be good to identify such gifts.
- Each group member should indicate whether or not they acknowledge possession of the gift(s) attributed to them by the members of the group.
- If any member of the group does not confirm the gift(s) attributed to them by the other members of the group, they should indicate what they think is their gift from the Holy Spirit.
- A list should be made of the spiritual gift(s) that each member of the group possesses.
- As a team, the group may determine how they should utilize their gifts, both individually and corporately, to tell others about the story of Jesus.

application

Sharing the story of my personal relationship with Jesus with community members, family, friends, and co-workers

Considering the Natural Tendency of Human Beings:

- At age sixteen, King Uzziah began his reign in Judah and continued for fifty-two years. He started off well, honoring the Lord and doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. However, after he became powerful, he allowed himself to be controlled by pride and succumbed to the persistent tendency to disobey the Lord. That led to rebellion in his later life (see 2 Chronicles 26: 1-22).
- Uzziah usurped the priestly roles of authority by inappropriately offering incense, which was a function of the priests only. Uzziah's leadership also influenced and encouraged the people of Judah's persistent tendency to disobey. The Scripture says that Uzziah failed to remove the high places and *"the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there"* (2 Kings 15:4). As judgment from the Lord, Uzziah was struck with leprosy for his violations of the law of the God.

As a Friend and yet as Father and Creator, God made the first move to reach out to all human beings even when they were enjoying the pleasure of their delight and giving in to the persistent tendency to disobey Him. Here is how Isaiah characterizes the debut:

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!' And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'" (Isaiah 6:1-5).

Share: Discuss how God develops relationships with human beings as implied in this text.



dig deep

The security of the people of Judah under the military genius of Uzziah, their commander and chief, lulled them into complacency. They spurned the warnings of the Lord and became corrupted in their prosperity. At that point, Uzziah, a good king for fifty-two years who had then become arrogant, profaned the temple, contracted leprosy, and died in shame. Now at the point of his death, a powerful army of Assyrians was advancing on the people of Judah. Instead of seeking the Lord, the nations turned against Him to idols.

Throughout history, it has been true that kings competed with God but fell in shame; people turned from Him to worship idols, but their false Gods crumbled. **Amidst all the apostasies, the Lord revealed Himself to Isaiah as the sovereign Lord—with a promise to preserve a remnant through which the Savior should come.** Acceptance of the Savior would lead to the creation of a community of believers who would be His covenant people to reach the world with the saving gospel message of Jesus.

God is the one who reveals Himself to human beings. Without His revelation, no one would know Him. He revealed Himself to Isaiah in a time of national crisis and constantly reveals Himself to individuals to serve Him and to witness for Him. When Isaiah met the Lord, he could not resist the Lord's invitation to take His message to others. He said: "Here am I Lord, send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Share: How Does God reveal Himself to young people today for them to become involved in witnessing for Him and how should they respond?

How many people will be in heaven because of you?

C. H. Spurgeon, the renowned 19th Century English preacher, told this story about King Cyrus, the man who conquered Babylon and freed the Jews from captivity: A visitor who was admiring Cyrus' gardens said it gave him much pleasure. "Ah," said Cyrus, "but you have not so much pleasure in this garden as I have, for I have planted every tree in it myself." Spurgeon then commented, "One reason some saints will have a greater fullness of heaven than others will be that they did more for heaven than others. By God's grace they were enabled to bring more souls there."

Seventh-day Adventists do not believe that anyone will go to heaven having a greater fullness of heaven than others because they did more for heaven than others. Everyone who goes to heaven will go based on the grace of Christ—a free gift, rather than by merit. None will have a greater fullness of the Kingdom than another. When we get to heaven it will be such a joyous occasion that nothing that may cause jealousy and feelings of unhappiness and inferiority will surface. We will all rejoice in knowing that we made it.

However, each of us should engage in serious thinking about how many people will be in heaven because of our efforts under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White said, "A solemn responsibility rests upon everyone to engage in the work of saving souls. We cannot afford to fold our hands, and engage in interesting nothings, gratifying our tastes and inclinations. We are to win souls for the Master" (*Signs of the Times*, 1889).

If we are able to reminisce about experiences that led to our presence in the Kingdom, then probably some will say to us, "I'm so thankful for you. It was your testimony, your life, your invitation to accept Christ that accounts for my being here today." The apostle Paul anticipated the joy in heaven of seeing people who were there as a result of his ministry. In 1 Thess. 2:19–20 (ESV) he says: "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy." According to Paul, the Thessalonians will be his hope, joy, and crown of boasting at the public manifestation of Christ because they are the fruit of his ministry as an apostle of Christ.

Share: How many persons would you like to see in the Kingdom because of your evangelistic ministry? How many of those persons can you name right now?

COMMITMENT

Influenced by this study, I am committed to intercede with the Lord for a personal lifestyle of prayer so I can receive the outpouring of His Holy Spirit to be an effective witness for Him.

I am ready to participate in group interactions with others in my church that will help me to identify my spiritual gifts and strengthen my confidence for witnessing.

I am ready to share my faith in Jesus with others who do not know Him and will actively participate in outreach witnessing activities.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____



leader's note

According to Peter Bloch, presentation and participation are two important aspects in the process of training the youth to be effective witnesses for Christ. By presentation, theoretical instructions on “how to do...” is given to them. By participation, they are given the opportunity to be actually engaged in what they will do when they go forward to witness. **Bible surfing and members' evangelization exercises are two initiatives that actually fulfill the demands of presentation and participation.**

Step 1: Bible Surfing

Bible surfing is a method by which individuals challenge themselves to open their Bible, read a passage, look for the main character of the passage, then dig deeper through critical thinking and a curious mind to get meaning from the passage. They may utilize other relevant resources in the process such as Spirit of Prophecy writings, Bible commentaries, and other inspirational writings to substantiate meanings.

In Bible surfing, we search through cross references, looking at maps or thinking about stories from the Word that highlight a point in Scripture.

Bible surfing experiences take the surfer through memorizing the names of each of the fundamental doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and then a study of selected biblical or doctrinal topics that they will cover when they go out to engage prospects in their faith sharing endeavors.

If this is an Adventist Youth Society (AYS) initiative, at least twice per month the special feature for the AYS program may be designated for Bible surfing on selected topics. This study in AYS small group units could encourage small group involvement that enhances the Bible learning process of each youth. Through Bible surfing, each member of the AYS studies and is able to explain specific biblical or doctrinal topics of the Bible.

Step 2: Members' Evangelization Exercises

In order to build confidence for witnessing to others, each member who participates in the Bible surfing experience may be involved in members' evangelization exercises where they are expected to witness to other members of the church on topics discussed in the Bible surfing experience. This will also include sharing personal experiences and expressing praises to the Lord for His goodness. Where possible, they should utilize their spiritual gifts in order to improve their witnessing ministry.

Benefits of Bible Surfing and Members' Evangelization Exercises

Bible surfing and members' evangelization exercises will help the youth to develop confidence in utilizing their spiritual gifts and Bible knowledge to contact others and share the gospel story about the love of God and the faith of Jesus.

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SESSION TWENTY-FOUR

by *Kimberley Tagert-Paul*

Discernment

helping believers discern where God is
working



Kimberley Tagert-Paul writes from Michigan, USA. An internationally published author, her passion is writing for young people. She loves crafts, photography, and reading. She has been married to the love of her life for 30 years and has two sons. When not gainfully employed, she can be found chasing her four-year old grandson until he catches her, or enjoying the sounds and beauty of Lake Michigan with her husband. Her life goal is to make it to heaven and take as many people with her as she can.

To help believers discern where God is working, I am showing others how to:

- pray for a clear understanding of what God wants to accomplish through them.
- recognize the work of the Holy Spirit within and around them.
- discern where God is calling them to serve.
- assess the needs of those God has called them to serve.
- evaluate the culture they are called to serve in in order to find and reach others.



big idea

God is working in my life and the lives of others who I am helping to disciple. I am called by God to assist those I am discipling, to help them discern His will for their particular mission/service to others, and to help them develop an understanding of the needs and cultural context of the people they are called to serve.



connector

Look: Psalm 32; 1 John 1:9; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Peter 1:1-10

Memorize: “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 JOURNEY

exploration

Eagles are great parents

By now, you must be feeling like a parent. You've embraced the concept of discipling and have used all that you have learned to reach out to others with the good news you have found.

And there they are, those precious ones who have chosen to follow Jesus, partly because you have been faithful and He has worked through you to minister in their lives.

Now what do you do?

Just like rings in a pond, the circle must go on and on and on, ever widening. But the thought hits you . . . they are just babies, so new in the Word, how can they be expected to go back out into the world? What plans does God have for them? How will they serve and to whom?

Before you get too worked up, let's take a look at how eagles raise their young.

Imagine a tiny chick being born from an egg the size of a goose's egg. Every four to five days, about a pound of weight is added to its growth. By three weeks of age, this growing bird is about one foot high and its feet and beak are almost adult size. By its eighth week, the parents, who have carefully kept their talons balled into a fist so they wouldn't accidentally skewer their young, know it's time to help their children along.

Junior perches on the nest's edge, stretching his large wings, when Mom, without ceremony, shoves her precious child off the protection of the nest. Junior may only make it to the next limb down. Looking up, he must wonder about what his mother has just done. Soon though, after he has recovered

from his booting, he practices with his parents' encouragement and learns to spread his wings and fly.

So, parenting is finished for Momma and Poppa eagle, right?

Not a chance.

This is when the young eagle's real education begins. The parent birds continue to feed their babies, but they also teach them hunting skills. The fledglings learn from their parents for months, and even then, Mom and Pop stay around the area watching from the sidelines for a long time, helping to make sure that their precious babies are safe and learning the skills they need to be an eagle. Unlike most animals, eagles have learned that the survival of their young depends on them staying nearby for a longer period of time to help them when needed.

If eagles can get it right, shouldn't we?

The people whom you have disciplined need your help and guidance. They need someone to talk to about problems they might encounter when sharing their faith. They need help to know how to answer difficult questions. They just need to know that you are there to walk beside them as they in turn seek to make new disciples.

reflection

As a group, answer the following questions:

- What is one of the first areas that a new disciple must access?
- What tool is best used to accomplish this?
- What gift did Jesus give us to aid in leading us to the answers for these questions?

As an individual, answer the following questions:

- Make a list of the people you are mentoring in this discipling process.
- Schedule specific time to pray for them.
- Schedule specific time to pray with them.

- Be sure to ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance in helping them develop ideas where God might be calling them to serve.



“There is work for you to do in the church and out of the church. “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” The fruit we bear is the only test of the character of the tree before the world. This is the proof of our discipleship. If our works are of such a character that as branches of the living Vine we bear rich clusters of precious fruit, then we wear before the world God’s own badge as His sons and daughters. We are living epistles, known and read of all men” (*Testimonies for the Church Volume 5, p. 348*).



disciples in action

Are you missionary material? What about those you are mentoring?

- Have you traveled to a land far away and made great sacrifices for God’s kingdom? If so, then you probably call yourself a missionary. It is a noble calling. It is a God-given calling that few are equipped to fulfill.
- If not, what is your ministry, then? Do you work through your local church to reach out to the youth in your area? Are you involved with prison ministries? Do you help your local center serve food to the homeless or provide other aid to hurting families?

Guess what—that makes you a missionary, too!

- Anything involved with the ministry is a mission—one that God has especially equipped you for. And in equipping you, He is using your gifts to draw others to Himself. Why? Because you have uniqueness that someone else can relate to.
- As others are drawn to you and what you believe and live, they will be transformed by God’s grace. You will feel a special connection to them because of this.

You will become their coach, encouraging them as they in turn reach out to others.

- As you pray for your mission field, they too are finding theirs. It may be as close as their next door neighbor. It may be as far away as the setting of the sun in another time zone. Each individual has a unique mission plan mastered by . . . well, the Master.
- How do you, and they, determine where to serve?
- God hasn't left us wanting. He has given us tools that help in finding our mission field and in serving the people that it contains.

Some of these tools include: Bible study, prayer, fasting, worship, giving. Discipleship has to become intentional. We have to use the tools that God has given us. If we don't, they become rusty, and so do we. God calls us to call others; the Bible is clear on that fact. Our tool boxes need to be utilized if we are to help others.



dig deep

Answer the following questions in a journal or as a group.

- What do you feel is the most effective tool for you to use in helping the people you disciple?
- Can the most effective tool be different for different people? Why or why not?
- Which tools in your tool box get the most workout? Which ones do you need to pick up and use more?
- What convinced you that you were following God's plan for your life in your mission field? How can you help that translate to those whom you are discipling?

reflection

Do disciples ever make mistakes? Let's look at the Bible to find our answer.

1. First, take a look at Jacob. He knew that God had a plan for him . . . and then he took matters into his own hands. He fooled his brother into a hasty oath and then

planned the deception of his father. Did God use him later—after he repented from his mistakes? Absolutely.

2. Moses' life was planned by God, too. Moses, nurtured by his birth parents, finally went to live in the palace with the king and his adoptive mother, the princess. Being groomed in the best schools available didn't stop his impulsiveness or prevent his sin. He killed a man. We all know that God led him in one of the greatest stories of the Bible. Even then, he still made mistakes. But remember who buried him (Deuteronomy 34:4-7). God loved Moses.
3. Others followed. There was David and his adultery, Peter and his denial of Christ, the list goes on and on. Yet, every one of these individuals sought to serve God and, when they repented of their mistakes, were forgiven and guided.

Are you any different?

You will make mistakes. It is inevitable. The only way not to make a mistake is to not try—keep things status quo, ride under the radar and enjoy life as you know it. God's promise of a more abundant life doesn't mean just in the heavenly realms. He means for it to start here—on this earth. The only way that abundant life can be reached is to reach out and beyond our comfort zone into the world, scary as it is, and grab those seekers who are looking for what you have.

Like all good parents, you will make mistakes with your disciples. You'll push them too hard, or not enough. You might not always have the answers to every question. You'll mean well, but caught up in your own busy life, you may neglect them at some point.

It's O.K. Mistakes can challenge us to become better. But it takes action to have reaction. So don't be afraid to start . . . and using God's tools, you will find success with God.



dig deep

Discuss

- Have you made mistakes in your discipling? How have they impacted your ministry?
- Do you feel God can use you, mistakes and all? Can He use those you are mentoring, even if they aren't perfect?
- Is there anything holding you back from full service to God?
- How can you break through this obstacle and abandon yourself into God's leading and His loving?

application

What if I told you, "I love you with all my . . . liver"? Would you think you must not be loved all that much? In some parts of Africa, that's exactly how they would express their love. The liver is thought to be the seat of emotions. Therefore, loving you with all the liver would be a whole heaping lot of love!

It is very important when discipling that you consider those to whom you are working with. People are different based on many things. This is most obvious if your discipling involves another culture. Understanding cultural influences and patterns must be a part of preparing for the field, but there are less obvious differences that must be considered in discipling. It may not be something your new disciples will think about, so you must make it a point to help them.

Witnessing in the workplace is another example where discipling must be clearly thought out. Knowing the company rules on sharing of one's faith will help, but they don't have to be a deterrent. Encompassing God's love and character into your life will naturally witness to others. Make sure you point this out to those you are discipling. Help them to understand that studying the culture of those whom they want to reach ahead of time will help them know better how to witness, whether it's someone next door, in the next cubicle, or around the world. Remind them that Jesus used this method. He spoke to each individual and their needs. He looked at the heart first, and then began His teaching. We need to learn to follow that example for more effective discipleship.

Discuss

- Thinking of those you are discipling, where do their God-given talents lead you to believe they can be the most effective inside of the church and outside of it?
- How can you help them see that individuals have different needs and learn to discern them and react to them?



dig deep

Ellen White was shown that discipling would happen as God's workers came closer to Him. Read what she wrote and see how God will lead His workers as long as we surrender the guiding to Him. Be encouraged.



“Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness. Those who are accounted good workers will need to draw nigh to God, they will need the divine touch. They will need to drink more deeply and continuously at the fountain of living water, in order that they may discern God's work at every point” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 300).



disciples in action

Using the list of those whom you are mentoring in your discipleship journal:

- Specifically pray for each of them to find their mission field. Pray that God will reveal clearly what His plans for them include.
- Spend time reaching out in prayer with them. Make time to either meet personally, over the phone, or on electronic media to pray together for each other's mission field.
- Help them bear the yoke, just as Jesus helps us bear ours.



“It is the power of the cross alone that can separate man from the strong confederacy of sin. Christ gave Himself for the saving of the sinner. Those whose sins are forgiven, who love Jesus, will be united with Him. They will bear the yoke of Christ. This yoke is not to hamper them, not to make their religious life one of unsatisfying toil. No; the yoke of Christ is to be the very means by which the Christian life is to become one of pleasure and joy. The Christian is to be joyful in contemplation of that which the Lord has done in giving His only-begotten Son to die for the world, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (*Messages to Young People*, p. 138).

SESSION TWENTY-FIVE A

by Michelle Riley-Jones

Spiritual Gifts

helping believers use spiritual gifts to fulfill a personal call to mission and ministry



Michelle Riley-Jones currently serves as the Minister of Music and Worship at the Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D. C. (www.chcsda.org). For this multi-generational congregation, she leads a nearly 200-member ministry—a vehicle of evangelism and discipleship. She is also a prayer facilitator for the church's 24-hour prayer line, and a Bible study leader for its weekly virtual Bible study. In addition, she serves

as a consultant to pastors and their music and worship teams and is a project team member and liturgist for the ecumenical project, the African American Lectionary (www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org), funded by Lily Endowment. Michelle owns a human resource consulting practice based in Bowie, MD. She attended Washington Adventist University (formerly Columbia Union College) in Takoma Park, MD, and graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor's in Personnel and Labor Relations. She is currently completing masters courses in Christian Ministry at Union Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH.



theme

To help believers use spiritual gifts to fulfill a personal call to mission and ministry, I am showing others how to:

- confer with fellow believers to confirm and refine their areas of spiritual giftedness.
- be prepared for mission and ministry by participating in training programs.
- choose and participate in ministries that use their gifts and talents.
- find ways to support Adventist mission and evangelism, ministries, and education.



big idea

You are a child of God—created by Him with your own unique heart, abilities, personality, and spiritual gifts. God brought all those elements together in you so you could serve Him and the world, sharing His love and helping people make personal commitments to Him in your own unique way as He has made you.



connector

Look: Psalm 9: 1, 2; Psalm 57:9, 10; Psalm 96:3; John 8: 26b; 1 Peter 4:10

Memorize: “Each of you has been blessed with one of God’s many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well!” (1 Peter 4:10, CEV).



MATTHEW 5:13



THE JOURNEY exploration

God wants us to participate with Him in His evangelistic mission.

Church is important, but all church activity is secondary in importance to sharing the love of Jesus Christ with people. Sharing the love of Jesus is much more important than church programs and activities because it is the relationship people have with Jesus that will determine whether or not they are saved. In sharing the gospel—Jesus' love to others—you share that He is the answer to their needs.

Sharing the gospel, or being a witness, is not *something we do*—it is *someone we are!* Jesus asks us to “be witnesses” (Acts 1:8). Some people think we should just live our lives, be examples, and love people unconditionally while we meet some tangible need they may have. They think the church should only be a witness in its social and humanitarian programs.

But have you ever stopped to think that our calling is different than just influencing people positively?

Think about this—even people who don't believe in Jesus can be a positive influence while doing good to others. Our calling is so much more. We are called not only to go, not only to love people and feed the hungry, help the poor, etc., but also to share the gospel and make disciples for Jesus Christ.

“Making known the gospel” is also another way of describing evangelism. Webster's Dictionary defines *evangelism* as “the promulgation (or “making known”) of the gospel” or “the winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ.” Our being a witness, sharing of the love of Jesus so that others make a commitment, is what evangelism is all about!

To make the gospel known to others, He has given you certain abilities, and these are called spiritual gifts. Some people think evangelism is a spiritual gift that is only given to certain people. It is true that evangelism is listed as a spiritual gift, and Paul says, “some [are] evangelists” (Eph. 4:11). However, like faith and prayer, evangelism is also a universal gift to every Christian. There are some who are particularly gifted in these areas, but all must participate in them with Jesus. Your spiritual gifts are given to you by God so that you can be equipped to effectively share your Christian faith with others – to do the work of *evangelism*.

Surprised? We are told:

- to choose to join Jesus (John 5:20)
- to go everywhere and share the gospel with every one (Mark 16:15)
- that God has gifted us all to do this work (1 Peter 4:10)
- that God will give us the power to witness (Acts 1:8)

Jesus always takes the initiative to involve His people in His activity—and God's invites you to join Him!

Having a relationship with God, a willingness to be molded into the person He has prepared to join Him, will cause Him to reveal to you the special qualities and abilities He has gifted to you for His glory, where He is at work, and what He wants to do through you.

Share: What have you always understood about evangelism? Are you surprised that EVERYONE is called to God's evangelistic mission? How have you witnessed or shared Jesus' love with others?

dig deep

Preparing to reach others for Christ

One of the greatest ways in which we can prepare to share the good news is to allow God's love to abide in our hearts and then be ready to faithfully express that love to everyone we meet. If we want to be a soul-winner and a disciple-maker, we must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He will always be faithful to speak to us and tell us what to do. As we are empowered and guided, we will be enabled to use the moments of our lives to be effective witnesses for Jesus.

There are many benefits that being led by the Holy Spirit brings to our lives and our witness.

- For one, the Holy Spirit's power **WILL ENABLE YOU** to be a witness. The Bible tells the story of Barnabas as he travelled to Antioch. He encouraged the people in the Lord, and the Bible tells us that he was full of the Holy Spirit (and of faith) and that many people believed on the Lord.
- Another benefit is that the Holy Spirit **WILL SPEAK THROUGH YOU** as you witness. You do not have to worry about how or what you should say. The Holy Spirit, at the right moment, will tell you just what to say.
- The Holy Spirit **WILL GUIDE YOU**. He has done it through so many others already. He spoke through Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch who had come to Jerusalem. As a result, the eunuch asked to be baptized. There was also a man named Agabus (see Acts 11:28) that the Holy Spirit spoke through to let people know there was going to be a famine.

And guess what else?

- You don't have to do any of this by yourself. The Holy Spirit **WILL ASSIST YOU**. The Holy Spirit will work through us so that others can benefit.
- Preparation for evangelism is key and involves spending time in the presence of God. Prayer, worship, and meditation on the Word of God will

prepare our hearts for daily divine encounters with the people who cross our paths. Jesus, who has commissioned us to “go” and “be,” will be faithful to lead people into your path.

Share: Look up these texts to identify some tips on making preparations to share the gospel. Think about your own experiences and consider what preparations you have made.

- 2 Timothy 2:15
- Acts 1:8
- Acts 4:31; 1 Timothy 2:1-4
- Psalm 51:12-13; Mark 4:19
- 1 Peter 3:15
- Matthew 28:19-20; Hebrews 10:25

What are Spiritual Gifts?

So if everyone is called to evangelism, to share the gospel with others, what are the spiritual gifts God has given to us? Do you know what your spiritual gift is?

In simplest terms, a spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every believer, according to God’s grace, to help us in our own walk of faith and to bring others to Christ.

Share: The Bible gives us key information about spiritual gifts. Fill in the blanks:

1. Every Christian has at least _____ Spiritual Gift (1 Peter 4:10)
2. No Christian has _____ the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28-30)
3. We cannot _____ our gifts; God does that job (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)
4. There is _____ gift that every Christian possesses (1 Corinthians 12:29-30)
5. Believers must be good _____ of their gifts and will account to the Lord for how they use their gifts (1 Peter 4:10)
6. Spiritual Gifts indicate God’s call and purpose or _____ for a Christian’s life (Romans 12:2-8)

7. Gifts used without _____ do not accomplish God's intended purposes (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
8. Spiritual Gifts are for the common good to build up the _____ (1 Corinthians 12:27)

The bottom line is that all we have is from God, so in that sense they are all gifts from God. Scripture, however, appears to set apart spiritual gifts as something different from talents and natural abilities. Perhaps we could say that talents are natural abilities that seem to be hereditary, to run in the genes. Unbelievers, as well as believers, have talents. Perhaps we could say that natural abilities are either talents or skills that have been learned through conditioning from the environment we lived in or training we have received. Again, both believers and unbelievers have natural abilities. Spiritual gifts, however, are an empowerment of divine origin, not a result of genetics, training, or conditioning. Only believers have spiritual gifts.

Ignorance Is Not Bliss!

There is a story about a certain sea captain and his chief engineer who were having an argument as to which one of them was the more important to the ship. Failing to agree, they resorted to the unique idea of swapping places. The chief engineer ascended to the bridge and the captain dived into the engine room.

After a couple of hours, the captain suddenly appeared on the deck covered with oil and soot.

"Chief!" he yelled, wildly waving aloft a monkey wrench.

"You'll have to come down here; I can't make her go!"

"Of course you can't," replied the chief. *"She's aground!"*

Clearly the captain and the chief engineer wanted the best result. But by working in areas where they were not suited or gifted, the outcome was a lot of effort, a lot of sweat, but not necessarily the best result.

Maybe you have looked around in your own church. Some people are just spectators, unwilling to get involved in ministry. Others are actually involved but not necessarily where they are best suited. So the outcome is a lot of programs, a lot of activities, but not necessarily true evangelism – sharing the

gospel so that people make a commitment to Christ. Perhaps you too are uncertain about how to get involved, or are involved but not sure it's where you belong.

Because God has called you, not knowing how God wants to work through you is no excuse. One way to know how God wants to use you for the work He has called everyone to, evangelism, is a proper understanding of the special abilities He has given to you. Earlier in the lesson (Big Idea), we pointed out that God created you with these special abilities, called spiritual gifts, so that you can serve Him and the world to help others make personal commitments to Christ. There are several reasons why you should know what your spiritual gifts are:

1. God inspired many references to spiritual gifts in the Bible. If it was important enough to God, then it should be important to us. See 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14; Romans chapter 12; Ephesians chapter 4; and 1 Peter chapter 4.
2. When the book of I Corinthians was written, it was addressed to those who were obviously not very mature in the faith. Paul addressed these as elemental truths, fundamental to the Christian life.
3. We are asked to be good stewards of our gifts. (Read 1 Peter 4:10.) Now it is very hard to be a good steward of something we know nothing about, and of something which we do not even know we possess.
4. Since your spiritual gifts equip you uniquely to serve Him and others, knowing your gifts helps you to plug in to the ministry of your local church where God wants to use you.
5. Paul states that you should make the use of your spiritual gifts a priority in your life. So simply, when you have too many things to do, you must choose to function in the area of your spiritual gifts. You must know your spiritual gifts to set these priorities.
6. Knowing your spiritual gift(s) can be of great help in discerning the will of God. Choices in all aspects of your life can be taken into account whether it will help or hinder the exercise and development of your spiritual gift. For example, if

you are not gifted to teach, you have a valuable insight into God's will when you are considering which major to select for college.

Going back to the story about the sea captain and his engineer—because they were working outside of their gifts, their efforts to make the ship go, no matter how hard they worked, were futile. Not knowing your spiritual gifts can cause discouragement, insecurity, frustration, disinterest, stagnation, etc. You could end up spinning your wheels in activities, roles, and positions that aren't suited for how God wants to work through you. You could also end up being involved in so many things, but all the wrong things.

As the story illustrates, not realizing and utilizing your gifts isn't exactly an enjoyable way to live.

Share: Can you think about a time when you have been involved in the church and have been frustrated, but didn't know why? Are you currently uninvolved but want to know where you can best be used? Do you know what the spiritual gifts are? Share your thoughts with the group.

What are these Spiritual Gifts?

The Bible lists various gifts of the Spirit, which are mentioned in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. It should be noted that there is much discussion among Christians as to exactly how many spiritual gifts there are. As you read the Bible chapters, you will realize that along with the gifts listed, there are gifts mentioned in one chapter that are also mentioned in another chapter. None of these lists are intended to be complete lists in and of themselves of all the gifts God gives.

ROMANS 12 MENTIONS THE FOLLOWING SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS THE SPECIAL ABILITIES THAT GOD GIVES TO CERTAIN MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

1. **Encouragement:** Romans 12:6-8; Titus 1:9; Acts 11:23-24; Acts 14:21-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

Offer comfort, words of encouragement, hope, and reassurance to discouraged, weak, or troubled Christians in such a way that they are consoled.

- 2. Exhortation:** 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 13:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Help others reach their full potential by means of encouraging, challenging, comforting, and guiding. To present truth so as to strengthen or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

- 3. Giving:** Romans 12:6-8; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; 2 Corinthians 8:2-5; Mark 12:41-44; Matthew 6:3-4

Recognize God's blessings and respond to those blessings by generously, sacrificially, and cheerfully giving of one's resources (time, talent, and treasure) without thought of return.

- 4. Leadership:** Romans 12:6-8; Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 13:17

Cast vision, motivate, and direct people to harmoniously accomplish the purposes of God.

- 5. Mercy/Compassion:** Romans 12:6-8; Luke 7:12-15; Luke 10:30-37; Matthew 20:29-34; Matthew 25:34-40; Mark 9:41; Matthew 5:7

Feel exceptional empathy and compassion for those who are suffering (physically, mentally, or emotionally) so as to feel genuine sympathy for their misery, speaking words of compassion, but more so caring for them with acts of love that help alleviate their distress.

- 6. Prophecy:** 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-31; 14:1-5, 24-25, 30-33, 37-40; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-13; Deuteronomy 18:18-22

Reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance, or edification. There may be immediate or future implications.

- 7. Teaching:** Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Hebrews 5:12-14; Acts 18:24-28

Explain the truths of the Word of God clearly and to apply them effectively so that those taught understand and learn. To instruct others in the Bible in a logical

and systematic way so as to communicate pertinent information for true understanding and growth.

1 CORINTHIANS 12 ADDS THESE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS THE SPECIAL ABILITIES THAT GOD GIVES TO CERTAIN MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

8. Administration: 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Luke 14:28-30

Understand the immediate and long-range God-given goals and to devise and steer the others toward the accomplishment of these goals and directives by planning, organizing, and supervising others.

9. Apostle: 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Matthew 10:1-8; Acts 2:42-44

Ability to start and oversee the development of new churches or ministry structures by the proclamation and the teaching of true doctrine.

10. Discernment/Discerning of Spirits: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 1 John 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 2 Chronicles 2:12; Psalm 119:125; Proverbs 3:21; 1 Kings 3:9; Hebrews 5:14

Know with assurance whether certain behavior or teaching purported is from God, Satan, human error, or human power. Enablement to distinguish between truth and error, to discern the spirits, differentiating between good and evil, right and wrong.

11. Faith: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Mark 5:25-34; Acts 27:21-25; Hebrews 11; Romans 4:18-21

Be firmly persuaded of God's power and promises to accomplish His will and purpose and to display such a confidence in Him and His Word that circumstances and obstacles do not shake that conviction.

12. Healing: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 14:8-10; James 5:14-16; Luke 9:1-2

Serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the

use of natural means. To be God's means for restoring people to wholeness.

- 13. Helps/Serves:** 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Romans 16:1-2; Acts 9:36; Mark 15:40-41; Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:11; Philippians 2:19-23; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:14

Invest your talents in the life and ministry of others enabling them to increase the effectiveness of his/her spiritual gifts.

- 14. Knowledge:** 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 2 Chronicles 1:7-12; Colossians 2:2-3; 2 Corinthians 11:6; Daniel 2:20-21; Proverbs 2:6; Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 119:66; Jeremiah 3:15

Understand in an exceptional way the great truths of God's Word and make them relevant to specific situations in the church. Also, the desire to seek out and learn as much about the Bible as possible through gathering much information and the analysis of that data.

- 15. Miracles:** 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-31; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 9:36-42; Acts 20:9-12; Hebrews 2:4; Romans 15:17-19; Acts 8:13; Acts 19:11-12

Serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by others to have altered the ordinary course of nature.

- 16. Tongues:** 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 12:28-31, 13:1, 14:1-40; Acts 2:1-12, 10:44-46, 19:1-7; Mark 16:17; Romans 8:26-27

Speak prayer or praise in a language you have never learned or to communicate a message from God to His people. To speak in a language not previously learned so unbelievers can hear God's message in their own language.

- 17. Interpretation of Tongues:** 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 12:28-31, 14:1-40

Translate the message of one who speaks in another language the interpreter had not previously learned.

18. Wisdom: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 ; James 3:13-18; 2 Chronicles 1:7-11; Acts 6:3-10; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13; James 1:5-8; 1 Kings 3:16-28

Know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising for others. To apply knowledge to life in such a way as to make spiritual truths quite relevant and practical in proper decision making and daily life situations.

EPHESIANS 4 ADDS THE FOLLOWING SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS THE SPECIAL ABILITIES THAT GOD GIVES TO CERTAIN MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

19. Evangelist: Ephesians 4:11-16; Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:36-40; Acts 8:5-6; Acts 14:21; Acts 8:26-40; 2 Timothy 4:5

Proclaim the gospel of salvation effectively so that people respond to the promises of Christ through conversion to Christianity and move towards discipleship.

20. Pastor (caring for God's people): John 10:1-16; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 Peter 5:1-4

Assume a long-term personal responsibility for leadership and the spiritual care, protection, guidance, and feeding (teaching) of a group of believers. To nurture, care for, and guide people toward on-going spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ.

ADDITIONALLY, THE NEW TESTAMENT LISTS SOME OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS THE SPECIAL ABILITIES THAT GOD GIVES TO CERTAIN MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

21. Celibacy: 1 Corinthians 7:1-9; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; Matthew 19:10-12

Voluntarily remain single without regret and with the ability to maintain control over sexual impulses so as to serve the Lord without distraction. Persons remain single because they feel they can serve the Lord better that way.

22. Hospitality: 1 Peter 4:9-10; Romans 12:9-13; Acts 16:14-15; Luke 10:38; Hebrews 13:1-2

Provide an open home and warm welcome to those in need of food, lodging, and fellowship. It involves a readiness to invite strangers to your home (or church) for the sake of the gospel.

23. Martyrdom: Acts 7; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Undergo suffering for the faith even to death while consistently displaying joyous and victorious attitudes that bring glory to God.

24. Missionary: Ephesians 3:6-8; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:2-5; Acts 22:21; Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Minister whatever spiritual gifts you have in a different culture or community. Have a stronger-than-average desire to be a part of the fulfillment of the Great Commission around the world.

25. Voluntary poverty: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-35

Renounce material comforts and luxuries and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in order to serve God more effectively.

SOME SCHOLARS ALSO ADD THESE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS THE SPECIAL ABILITIES THAT GOD GIVES TO CERTAIN MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH TO.

26. Craftsmanship/Artist: Exodus 28:3-4; Exodus 31:1-11; Exodus 35:30-35

Create artistic expressions that produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration and/or to create, build, maintain, or repair items used within the church to be used for ministry or the divine enablement to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms.

27. Deliverance or Exorcism: Matthew 5:28; Luke 10:16-24; Acts 8:7; Acts 16:18; Luke 11:14-28

Confront demonic forces within the lives of spiritually oppressed people, and to help such people find spiritual freedom in Christ Jesus.

28. Intercession: Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Kings 13:6; Luke 11:1-10; Matthew 6:6-15; Mark 11:22-25; James 5:14-16; Colossians 4:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 3:10

Pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and seek frequent and specific answers to your prayers to a degree much greater than that which is expected.

29. Music: 1 Samuel 16:14-23; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Psalm 33:1-3; Psalm 96:1-2; Psalm 100:1-2; Psalm 149:3; Psalm 150:1-6; Colossians 3:16; 2 Chronicles 5:12-13; 2 Samuel 6:14-15

Present personal witness and inspiration to others through instrumental music, singing, or dancing; to praise God through music in such a way as to enhance the worship experience of others. Those listening or watching become inspired to feel the presence and majesty of God when music, song, or dance uplifts their soul in a manner that brings them closer to their Lord.

30. Writing: Luke 1:1-3; 1 John 2:1, 2:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; Jude 1

Express truth in a written form; a form that can edify, instruct and strengthen the community of believers. To formulate thoughts and ideas into meaningful written forms (stories, sermons, devotions, histories, prayers, songs, or poetry, etc.) so that the reader will find courage, guidance, knowledge, or edification through the words shared with them.

Jesus Used Spiritual Gifts in His Ministry

God gives many gifts to help you in your walk of faith and to bring others to Christ. Jesus was our example and used spiritual gifts in His ministry to help others.

Share: Think about the following stories of Jesus' ministry in the Bible. For each of these stories, looking at the lists of spiritual gifts above, what spiritual gift/s would you say Jesus used?

- Woman at the well
- Encounter with Nathaniel
- Man at the Pool of Bethesda

Unwrapping Your Gifts – DISCOVER!

When you were little and your parents gave you a gift, what would have happened had you left the gift aside without opening it? How would they have felt? Well, you have been given spiritual gifts that Jesus wants you to discover! Not everybody has spiritual gifts. Unbelievers do not. Spiritual gifts are only given to those who have committed to Jesus. Jesus said that one day Christians would do even greater ministry than He did. While this does not mean that any of us are greater than Jesus, it does mean that Christians who are also gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit can minister to more people than Jesus did because there are billions of Christians today spread across the earth. So your personal ministry, using your spiritual gifts, is the continuation of Jesus' ministry.

You have at least one gift, and quite possibly more. Before these gifts can be developed and used, you must first discover what they are. Jesus wants you to know what your spiritual gifts are so that you can know His will for you. Remember, these spiritual gifts are received from the Holy Spirit and are not achieved based on our work. They are a gift to you!

Share: Use your laptop or iPad to take an online spiritual gifts test for youth (See <http://www.kodachrome.org/spiritgiftityouth/>). There are several of these tests on the web. If you have been a Christian for a few years, you should use your personal experiences as the basis for your responses. If you consider yourself to be a new Christian, then your responses should be based

on how well each statement describes the desire of your heart (even if you have not yet done what the statement talks about). The “test” should be used as a starting place to begin to discover your spiritual gifts, but not as an absolute indicator.

reflection

Our spiritual gifts are an expression of God's love to the world, given to help you in your walk of faith and to bring others to Christ. Just as Jesus used His gifts, the good news is that we can do the same by obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit to go and be His witnesses, seek to bless people, love them, and lead them to faith in Christ.

- What are the top three or four highest rated gifts identified through the gifts test?
- If you were to ask others who know you, what one or two spiritual gifts would they say you had?
- How does this line up with your view of yourself?
- How does this line up with what you are currently involved in or want to be involved in?
- How might you use these gifts identified to share the gospel with others and lead them to Christ?

application

There are opportunities all around you – every day.

- There are opportunities that are given to us EVERY DAY that we can use to share Christ with others. As the list of spiritual gifts suggests, not everyone is called to be an evangelist—to go out preaching to the world. BUT, everyone is called to *do evangelism*—to share your faith with unbelievers and lead them to Christ whenever the opportunity presents itself. “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; *make the most of every opportunity*” (Colossians 4:5, NIV).
- God created you—your unique self—so that He can work through you to reach and bring others closer to Him. The Holy Spirit has already enabled you by giving you spiritual gifts. He has promised to speak

through you, guide you, and assist you as opportunities to share the gospel present themselves to you.

- Whenever you are with someone, consider it a “divine appointment” to share the good news of God’s love and forgiveness. Evangelism is only one responsibility Jesus wants all His children involved in. Because Jesus is Lord and we want to obey His leading in our lives in the use of our time, Jesus wants you to take advantage of whatever opportunity you have to share His love and forgiveness with others.
- God wants you to have the joy of being actively involved in ministry and of seeing God’s work through you in the exercise of your spiritual gifts. And, as you pray and ask for His guidance, He will strengthen you in the gifts He has given to you and help you to function in ministries that correspond to your spiritual gifts.
- The greatest gift you can give God and others is sharing the love of Jesus Christ with others. Jesus said *“Give, and it will be given to you.”*



disciples in action

Share with your accountability partner one or two of your top spiritual gifts. Talk about specific things you could do in the following areas to put your gifts to work. Come up with at least two ideas for each area:

- Home
- School
- Youth Group
- Church (outside of youth group)
- Community
- Work
- Other (your choice)

Form an “exploration group” of persons who share your top one or two spiritual gifts and share your ideas for where those gifts can be put to work. Look for how you can partner with others in the group to continue exploring the spiritual gift through implementing the ideas shared.

God invites you to join Him

“You must get involved to have an impact. No one is impressed with the won-lost record of the referee.” --Napoleon Hill

Remember that we are in a love relationship with God. In His time He will reveal to you where He is working so you can join Him. God always takes the initiative to involve His people in His activity.

Pay attention to these principles modeled by Jesus:

- The Father has been working all along.
- Now the Father has me working.
- I do nothing on my own initiative.
- I watch to see what my Father is doing.
- I do what I see the Father is doing.
- The Father loves me.
- He shows me everything that He, Himself is doing.

prayer time

You must be living in an intimate love relationship with God for Him to reveal your spiritual gifts and to show you where you should be at work.

Pray:

- ask God to open your spiritual eyes so you can see what He is doing.
- that as you strengthen your relationship with Him, He shows you the spiritual gifts He has given you.
- that He will mold you into the person He wants, and that you will obey His call and use your spiritual gifts to make the most of the opportunities to share the gospel in your daily life.
- for His power to respond in obedience, so when God shows us what He is about to do, we can step out, assured that the Lord will accomplish His purposes.



leader's note

Introducing Youth to Spiritual Gifts

Identify a *Spiritual Gifts Inventory* designed specifically for youth. You may want to divide the spiritual gifts activity into two sessions: Session 1 for taking the inventory; Session 2 to review and discuss the results. If the youth you are working with have been Christians for a few years, encourage them to use their personal experiences as the basis for their responses. If a youth considers himself/herself to be a new Christian, then advise them that their responses should be based on how well each statement describes the desire of their heart (even if they have not yet done what the statement talks about).

To introduce youth to their spiritual gifts, explain each gift and challenge them to begin thinking of a specific ministry or ministries where they can put their gifts to work. Each time you explain a specific spiritual gift, you might have everyone who has that gift to stand so that others can see who has what gift. This will also relate back to the earlier activities. Perhaps you could divide everyone up into groups according to their top spiritual gift and have someone else lead them in a short study of their particular gift.

resources

General information on spiritual gifts

- SDA Fundamental Beliefs: <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>
- Spiritual Gifts List with Definitions and Scriptural References: <http://mintools.com/ministries.htm>
- Spiritual Gifts: How Do You Fit Into God's Plans? <http://www.adventistreview.org/article.php?id=451>

Spiritual gifts inventory for youth

- SDA Youth Spiritual Gifts Test: <http://www.gnycyouth.com/article/view/259/1/13>
- Ministry Areas Using Your Spiritual Gifts: <http://mintools.com/ministries.htm#outreach>



Books

- Fields, Doug and Erik Rees. *Congratulations...You're Gifted!: Discovering Your God-Given Shape to Make a Difference in the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Youth Specialities. 2008. Available through AdventSource: <http://www.adventsource.org:80/as20/product.aspx?ID=35741>
- Smith, Wendell. *From Zero to Eternity in 60 Seconds Flat – Influencing Others for Christ at a Moment's Notice*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House. 2004. Available through Christian Books: www.christianbooks.com

SESSION TWENTY-SIX

by *Debbonnaire Kovacs*

debriefing sessions 21 - 25



Debbonnaire Kovacs has been writing since she could hold a pencil and sold her first story to Junior Guide when she was eleven years old. By her twenties, she recognized that writing and speaking were not just what she loved to do, but what God wanted her to do. She has written off and on for most of her life, but has been writing full time since 1990, having written fourteen books including the first, second, fifth, and sixth grade Bible textbooks used in Adventist schools in North America and more than 150 stories and articles for all ages. She speaks at camp meetings, women's retreats, and other events, and also does copyediting. She urges everyone to take their dreams to God and see whether they are more than just dreams. They may be assignments from the King of Heaven.

You can reach her at debbonnaire@debbonnaire.com or on the Web at www.debbonnaire.com



debriefing sessions 21 - 25

Time: 90 minutes. *Try to spend approximately 15-20 minutes discussing each section below, leaving time for small group prayer and commitment at the end.*

discipleship begins and ends with Jesus—the focal point!

As we wrap up this series of Disciples in Action, we are looking outward more clearly than ever. Early sessions focused on internal things like our relationship with God, our prayer lives, and understanding salvation. From the first we have also explored what it means to be mission-minded, to share this great and awesome news about God and grace, but in this last series we have gotten down to the practical basics of leading others.

First, we have noticed that loving God more deeply and loving other believers has also led us to love those we may have considered “outsiders.” They may be unbelievers, or they may be spiritual seekers but in ways we are not familiar with. We realize more clearly that God loves them, Jesus died for them, and the Holy Spirit is actively working for them, and we have joined in that love and work. This has made our lives richer and fuller, and we’ve learned that it’s really true that God has all we need for complete restoration to an abundant life, even here in this sorrowful and difficult world. So we wanted to get involved. We became evangelists in our own right, learning our spiritual gifts, using them together, and then reaching out to disciple others into this rich and abundant life. If there’s one thing we’re sure of by now, it’s that the story isn’t over yet. God has astonishing blessings in store for us, and we’re never going to get go of His hand!

Here is an overview of the Big Ideas we've explored in Series 5:

1. "As Christ's disciple, I am called to minister God's love to others outside the church as well as inside of the church. My life can be an example that will bring others to Christ, and then to the truth of God's word."
2. God is not satisfied with simply saving me from the consequences of my sin; He wants to restore me to the life of love for which I was created.
3. Ellen White says, "The work above all work, —the business above all others which should draw and engage the energies of the soul, —is the work of saving souls for whom Christ has died. Make this the main, the important work of your life" (*Messages to Young People*, page 227).
4. God is working in my life and the lives of others who I am helping to disciple. I am called by God to assist those I am discipling, to help them discern His will for their particular mission/service to others, and to help them develop an understanding of the needs and cultural context of the people they are called to serve.
5. You are a child of God—created by Him with your own unique heart, abilities, personality, and spiritual gifts. God brought all those elements together in you so you could serve Him and the world, sharing His love and helping people make personal commitments to Him in your own unique way as He has made you.

Session 21: Loving "Outsiders" Too?

In session 21 we examined the importance of developing positive relationships with those outside the church; being ethical in all our relationships, both business and personal; and the importance of reflecting the character of Christ in all my interactions with others.

1. Did you do the shopping skit? What did you think of it? Did it give you any new ideas? Most importantly, has your life changed in the interim? Share some ways.
2. Share some times when you've tried to reflect Christ when it wasn't popular. Also share times you've seen someone else do that. What were your emotions in either case?
3. Have you seen some of your wants, desires, and values change? What about your deeds?

4. As the author points out, we are not perfect. Sometimes our mistakes cause others to look poorly on the cause of Christ. On the other hand, one of the things the world wants most is authenticity. Have you ever seen a mistake, and the genuine repentance that followed it, cause someone to look *more* favorably on God? Share that story if you are free to.

Session 22: Restoration

In session 22 we saw that God has already provided everything needed for our restoration—Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice on the cross. And because everyone is created in God’s image, my relationships will be based on love, forgiveness, and respect. The great controversy will end when God brings an end to sin and restores the earth to its original perfection.

1. What do you think of the statement that blessing and glory often come through darkness? When have you seen that to be true for yourself?
2. Have you seen your life grow more abundant since studying these sessions? How? What are you still waiting and praying for?
3. Have you and your accountability partner prayed together for the Holy Spirit to live in both of you? What results do you see? How do you help each other “abide in the Spirit”?
4. In what ways have you seen the setting right of your inner life reflected in your outer life?
5. How have you “done justice” this week or month?
6. How have you shown this week or month that you “love mercy”?
7. In what ways are you learning daily to “walk humbly with God”?

Session 23: Evangelistic Mission

Session 23 looked at embracing the evangelistic mission of the church. We also examined the importance of staying in tune with the Holy Spirit through constant prayer in order to overcome the natural and persistent tendencies toward sin and to witness effectively about Jesus.

1. Why do you think there was so much emphasis on prayer in this session? What happens when people attempt to evangelize without effective, fervent prayer? Have you personally experienced this? Have you also experienced what happens *with* prayer? Share the difference.
2. If you did not already know them, was your group able to help you discover what your spiritual gifts are? How have you used them lately for God, both individually and as a group?
3. How has God revealed Himself to you? Have you had a vision like Isaiah? If not, how can you know for sure that He is present in your life?

Session 24: Discernment

Session 24 reviewed ways to see how God is working in my life and the lives of others who I am helping to disciple.

1. How are your disciples/mentees doing? Did this session's practical tips help you to help them? Discuss with the group other questions you may have and tips you have learned.
2. Have you learned more about your discipling "tool box"? Have you made any changes in your tools?
3. Discuss any mistakes you feel you have made and encourage and pray for each other. You can also pray that these mistakes will not harm the people you are trying to help, but that instead they will be drawn even closer to God as they see you modeling repentance and learning to do better next time.
4. Can you describe some different "cultures" that exist within the same ethnicity or even the same family? (Example: How about the difference between youth and elders?)

Session 25: Spiritual Gifts in Mission and Ministry

We are all children of God—created by Him with our own unique heart, abilities, personalities, and spiritual gifts. Session 25 explored how God brought all those elements together in us to be used to bring others to the Kingdom.

1. Do you now have a clear sense of not only your gifts, but some ways God wants you to use them? This will change and grow as you do, but you can know enough to begin.
2. Have you ever tried to work in some capacity that turned out to be clearly not your best gift? What happened? Have you ever tried to work in some capacity you *thought* was not your gift, but you were surprised? What happened?
3. Have you been successful in helping someone else determine his/her spiritual gifts and mission? What are the results so far? How did that feel?
4. Have you tried forming the suggested “exploration group” of people whose gifts are similar and discovering ways of using your gifts together? What are the results so far?
5. What would you think about forming small groups of new believers, each led by a team of two prayer partners who have similar or complementary gifts? You will want to work with your pastors and elders in setting up and evaluating these groups over time.

Growing Disciples Inventory

A disciple is one who responds in faith and obedience to the gracious call of Christ to follow Him. Discipleship is not something we do alone, only on Sabbath or during a seminar. Discipleship is about growing spiritually. Closer to God, self, and others. Daily. Forever.

Take an Inventory of your spiritual walk today. Here's how: Respond to the 20 statements below. Score your answers. Ask the Holy Spirit and Christian friends to guide you. Serve and equip others using the two processes you score higher in. Plan to grow in the two processes you score lower in.

How often is this true of you? Circle one number for each commitment.	Rarely /Never	Not Often	Quite Often	Regularly /Always	Write the number you circled in the white space.
I am developing a dynamic relationship with God.	1	2	3	4	
I keep learning more about what it means to be a growing Christian.	1	2	3	4	
I am seeking opportunities in all my daily activities to minister to others.	1	2	3	4	
I am teaching others how to build Christ-like relationships.	1	2	3	4	
I am discovering who I am in relationship to Christ.	1	2	3	4	
I keep learning more about who God is.	1	2	3	4	
I am helping one or more friends to grow in their relationship with God.	1	2	3	4	
I am helping others to study and obey God's Word.	1	2	3	4	
I am developing Christ-centered family relationships.	1	2	3	4	
I keep learning more about the human fall from God's original plan	1	2	3	4	
I volunteer to serve in my community without reward, outside my family.	1	2	3	4	
I am showing others how to live as committed, healthy Christians.	1	2	3	4	
I am developing Christ-like relationships with church members.	1	2	3	4	
I keep learning more about God's grace and plan of salvation.	1	2	3	4	
I am supporting my church's ministries with my time and/or money.	1	2	3	4	
I am helping others discover where God is working in their lives and world.	1	2	3	4	
I am developing positive relationships with those who are not part of my church or family – at work, in my community.	1	2	3	4	
I keep learning more about how God has provided everything needed to restore me to His image.	1	2	3	4	
I am helping my church tell the story of Jesus e.g. friendship evangelism.	1	2	3	4	
I am teaching others how to use spiritual gifts in God's work.	1	2	3	4	
TOTALS	To score, total each column →				
Processes: C=Connecting; U=Understanding; M=Ministering; E=Equipping					
Learn more: growingfruitfuldisciples.org Full GDI: inventory.growingdisciples.info					
Disciple others through strengths.					
Plan to grow in 2 weaker areas.					
					C U M E

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encouraging youth to be disciples of Christ and mentors to others



Pastor Mark McCleary began his pastoral career in 1974 after receiving his Bachelor of Arts in theology and a minor in history from Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. He earned his Master of Divinity degree in 1978 from Andrews University Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Ministry degree from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1998. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from NOVA Southeastern University.

Dr. McCleary continued to gain experience in spiritual leadership through the years, beginning in 1974 as an associate evangelist in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas. He now serves as the senior pastor of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C.

Dr. McCleary is affiliated with the Faith-Based Community Association Partnership (FBCAP) and the Metro Area Ministerium of Seventh-day Adventists. He has written several publications: “A Guide to Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts,” “Gospel Presentation,” “A Comprehensive Study Guide: Back to Basics,” and “A Study Guide and Workbook: Daniel and Revelation.” These are available online at <http://www.firstsdachurch.org/pastor/books.html>.

Pastor McCleary is the loving husband of Queenie and their union has been blessed with two sons, Brian and Michael, and a daughter, Michelle. Pastor McCleary says his sincere goal is to be a role model of Christian values in order to inspire positive lifestyle transformation in others.



DISCIPLESHIP—MENTORING FOR YOUTH

By Dr. Mark McCleary

objectives

- To encourage youth to be disciples of Christ and mentors to other youth
- To provide basic understanding of discipleship and mentoring as correlating endeavors
- To inspire youth to be productive stewards in view of social well-being and Kingdom building

big idea

As a youth, you are uniquely wired to reach other youth with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Scriptural Connection: Matthew 28:18-20; 1Timothy 4:12-16

the journey

The following guide has been produced primarily, but not exclusively, for youth and young adults. It comprises a format that focuses on discipleship and mentoring of young people on their journey toward an authentic relationship with Jesus.

I want to highlight the congruence between the concepts of discipleship and mentoring. Discipleship involves following a teacher as Peter, James, John, and the others followed Jesus. On the other hand, mentoring highlights the role of the teacher or coach toward his followers, such as a basketball coach to his players or someone with a particular expertise to his or her student/mentoree. Thus, this guide emphasizes the dual roles of following and leading—discipleship and mentoring—in the context of youth-to-youth interaction.

how can I benefit from a discipleship-mentoring experience?

- Start with family members (i.e., parents, guardians, siblings).
- Seek same-sex role models who have demonstrated their effectiveness in discipleship and/or mentoring.
- Practice discipleship and mentoring with youth who want your involvement.
- Learn what discipleship or mentoring ministries are available at your church.
- Research successful discipleship and mentoring programs.

what can I do to help someone begin the discipleship journey?

Why not use a functional tool like my *Gospel Presentation* guidebook? This booklet consists of twelve steps for leading someone to a conscious relationship with Jesus. This method is more directed and purposeful in its approach to making disciples of Jesus. Of course if another approach works better for you, feel free to use that method. But, we must go beyond the notion and practice of merely leading an individual to complete a set of Bible lessons and pass an oral examination in order to be baptized and voted as a member of a congregation.

Rehearse the steps (on page 65 of the *Gospel Presentation* guidebook) and reflect on their key phrases and intent. They comprise a tool for helping you lead other unsaved youth to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Memorize these twelve guidelines, listen actively, and you will become a youth-fisher of men and catcher of born-again individuals, many of whom will be youth like yourself. Is not this the essence of discipleship? The fulfilling of Jesus' Great Commission in a one-to-one approach.

the youth-mentor

“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,” stated the 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, during his inauguration speech. He was challenging Americans to seek to work and live for the common good and not by an ethos of rugged individualism that espoused personal interest by any means necessary at the expense of others.

It might seem ironic to exhort youth to be mentors because often they need the same themselves as they mature into productive adulthood. Nevertheless, their personal need for mentoring does not negate the need for youth fulfilling the same for other youth. Someone said, “When you learn, teach,” and “When you receive, give.” Both statements are indicative of mentoring. In fact, the best mentors are those who learn and receive from others and in turn share their life lessons with their peers during informal and formal times of giving and teaching.

Gospel Presentation Steps:



1. Obtain permission to enter the other person's space.
2. "May I share something with you?"
3. If "Yes" to # 2, "Do you have the assurance of eternal life?" (1 John 5:11-13)
4. Check up question, "If God asked you, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' What would your response be?" (Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 5:15-17)
5. "Why do you think it is a free gift?" Use an illustration of breaking the law (eg. traffic)—establish guilt.
6. Bible references for human guilt (1 John 3:4; Romans 3:23; 6:23)
7. "Could I/you pay our sin-guilt penalty?"
"Yes—consequences?" "No, Alternative?" (John 3:16)
8. Accepting Jesus' sacrifice pays our debt. It justifies us before the Father and reconciles our relationship with Him.
9. "We need more than Jesus' death" (Romans 5:10,19)
10. "Do you want to accept Jesus' provision for you receiving eternal life?" By faith and prayer of confession and acceptance.
11. "Welcome!" (John 1:12; 6:37)
12. Caution:
 - "Don't look to your goodness—legalism; Pharasism (Ephesians 2:9; Titus 3:5)
 - "Don't look to your badness—discouragement (Hebrews 12:2; 4:14-16)

(McCleary, 2006: 31, 32)

For information on getting a copy of the *Gospel Presentation* guidebook contact the author, Dr. Mark McCleary, at QMacbmm@aol.com.

how can a youth take advantage of mentoring opportunities?

- Begin by forming genuine friendships with other youth.
- Connect with another youth by suggesting and scheduling a Bible study session.
- Suggest and establish, with pastoral blessing, a youth prayer ministry (i.e., group meeting or prayer line).
- Start a youth book reading group.
- Coordinate a discipleship training ministry for youth to use *The Gospel Presentation* tool to lead other youth to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

to the discipleship and/or mentoring leaders

It is likely your church does not have nor ever has had a ministry specifically focused on youth fulfilling the roles of discipleship and/or mentoring. Well, “To be or not to be, ah, that is the question,” according to Macbeth. In other words, dare to be a youth discipler or mentor like explorers Lewis and Clark, who blazed a trail to the Northwest United States; or Booker T. Washington, who walked 100’s of miles to attend Hampton University and eventually began Tuskegee University; or James Naismith, who invented the game of basketball at a youth recreation facility so boys and girls could develop their physical, mental, and social skills; or Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who invested all she had into His formative training so that He might “increase in wisdom and stature and in favor of God and man” (Luke 2:52). She disciplined and mentored Him so well, He one day commissioned His disciples and mentors to “Go into all the world and do likewise” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

practical ways to lead out in discipleship and/or mentorship training

1. Recruit youth disciples via public and private media.
 - Use church announcement periods, bulletins, bulletin boards, and flyers.
 - Use face-to-face, email, phone, or other electronic media.
2. Determine a meeting schedule that is best for the group of trainees.
 - Distribute, collect, analyze, and report the individual group member’s multiple meeting options.

- Use the same media options for recruiting and announcing the meeting schedule.
3. Maintain an updated roster of all disciplers and mentors (i.e., name, address, phone, email). Use this list for mass communication.
 4. Use this roster for your prayer list also. Without their personal information, share this list with your prayer ministry leaders and group for systematic intercession.
 5. Establish a meeting format—this can be at church, home, or other informal settings. Meetings should not last more than 45-60 minutes—one half for discipleship and the other half for mentoring. Leave about a third for actual practice, questions, and answers.
 6. Maintain summary records of meetings and activities to report to pastor, assigned or elder-sponsor, youth ministry, and church board and business meetings.

discippler/mentor connecting with disciple/mentoree

1. Invite disciple/mentoree to church or church-sponsored event with you (Hebrew 10:25).
2. Encourage disciple/mentoree to enroll in Sabbath school class or other church-sponsored youth activities that appeal to their interest (2 Timothy 2:15).
3. Delegate disciple/mentoree to proactive, hospitable, and Christ-centered individuals.
4. Encourage disciple/mentoree who would like to be baptized after completing the Gospel Presentation and/or Bible studies to respond to the appeal for baptism (Acts 2:41).
5. Offer to accompany disciples/mentorees who are ready for baptism as they make their public response to accept Jesus as Savior and join His church (Acts 2:47).
6. Encourage and offer to educate disciples/mentorees of the importance of continuing in prayer (1Thessalonians; Matthew 17:21).
7. Encourage the disciple/mentoree to practice the habit of reading God's word for knowledge and growth (2 Peter 3:18).

reflection

1. What do you think about yourself as a disciple and/or mentor?
2. What do you think others might say are the primary factors that make you suitable as a discipler and/or mentor?
3. What would others say are your major priorities that make you suitable or unsuitable as a disciple and/or mentor?
4. What do you think it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?
5. What do you think it means to be a mentor?
6. What factors might prevent you from being a good disciple and/or mentor?

application

As a growing young man in my neighborhood, I used to hear people say of a hot issue or during a confrontation, “Talk is cheap.” In other words, what we say needs to be backed up by what we do. Our actions need to be where our mouth is. Researchers make a distinction between one’s “espoused theory” and one’s “theory in use.” This analysis is similar to my previous two descriptions above. My point is that all that has been shared concerning discipleship and mentoring is espoused theory, profession, or talk unless you apply it, move beyond profession to action, and put it to use.

Ask God to help you and guide you to fulfill your call to discipleship and/or mentoring. The following are questions you might ask yourself to express such help and guidance:

- How can you change your schedule to ensure proper discipleship and/or mentorship training?
- What and who are positive influences in your life that are helping you develop into a productive disciple and/or mentor?
- What is the single most important factor for increasing your success as a disciple and/or mentor?
- How, when, and where is it best for focusing on God’s grace for electing and empowering you as a disciple and/or mentor?

personal prayer time

- Thank God for expressing His love to you by calling you to faithful stewardship as a disciple and/or mentor.
- Pray that God will give you discernment to avoid pitfalls and take advantage of opportunities to fulfill your discipleship and/or mentorship.
- Ask God to use you to effectively and positively reach other youth to His glory, for social edification, and the Devil's horrification.

REFERENCE:

McCleary, Mark (2006). *The Gospel Presentation: A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Lead Someone to Jesus*, Burtonsville, MD: McCleary Publishing.

APPLICATION FOR A MENTOR



Participant, if you would like to work with a mentor during the period of these discipleship sessions, please fill out this form and send it as an attachment to _____

(Name and phone number of facilitator/contact person)

Your Contact Information	
Name	
Street Address 1	
Street Address 2	
City, State & Zip Code	
Preferred Phone	
E-Mail Address	

How can your mentor help you?	
Please check any of the following topics that you would like your mentor to specifically address.	
<input type="checkbox"/> To begin a relationship with Christ	<input type="checkbox"/> Managing my resources (stewardship)
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthful living	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer (can be for yourself, family members, friends, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the Bible	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding my relationship with myself and others
<input type="checkbox"/> Time management (stewardship)	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding my relationship with God
<input type="checkbox"/> Transforming my devotional life	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing positive relationships outside the church
<input type="checkbox"/> Leading others to Christ	<input type="checkbox"/> Embracing the mission to bring others to Christ

<input type="checkbox"/> Learning to trust God	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizing the needs of the less fortunate
<input type="checkbox"/> Discipling others	<input type="checkbox"/> Committing to live by biblical standards of sexual morality
<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding biblical truths	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding that God forgives sin and restores brokenness

What is your primary motivation for attending these discipleship sessions?

Please describe how a mentor could best assist you.

Do you have any special requests for a mentor?

How would you prefer to communicate with your mentor?

<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Skype
<input type="checkbox"/> IM	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Commitment as a Mentee

Participants who wish to have a mentor are asked to carry on a regular conversation with the mentor. Mentees should try to respond to a mentor’s emails at least once a week. This regular contact helps to build the relationship between the mentor and the participant. Persons in the mentor program should contact the session facilitator/coordinator or their pastor if they need assistance beyond the help of their mentor. If a participant no longer wishes to participate in the program, or does not feel their mentor is the right match, then the participant should contact the facilitator to make them aware of the situation.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The development of an effective curriculum is a multi-step, ongoing, and cyclical process. The process progresses from evaluating what we are doing now, to designing an improved program, to implementing a new program and back to evaluating the revised program. Your honest review and analysis of the information provided, its impact on lives (yours and others), as well as on people's perception of its strengths and weaknesses will help form the foundation of future curriculums and resources as we look forward to developing other curricula to assist in the discipleship process of our youth and young adults.

Please send your comments or concerns to dunchiem@gc.adventist.org or write to:

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Silver Spring, MD 20904

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