



FOLLOW  
ME

# FOLLOW ME STUDY GUIDE

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We're all being disciplined. The question is 'Who are you being disciplined by? Who are you following?'

None of us is neutral. We're all following someone and being shaped by something. The problem is that most of us are unaware of this discipleship process—we simply swallow the story we're told without realising how it shapes us.

How are you being disciplined by your workplace, shaped by its worldview and values to fit the cultural mould? How are you being shaped by the messages of the secular, progressive cultural elite? How are you being shaped by what you watch on Netflix and listen to on Spotify?

God has set his church in the world as a city on a hill (Matthew 5:13–16). As we live out our identity as salt and light, we believe that our city will be transformed by the good news of Jesus, one person at a time. However, there is a real danger we face. Mark Sayers laments that 'the missional church movement went to the pub to reach people for Jesus, but all that happened was we became more like the people at the pub!' If this danger is real for any church, it's the church that started in a bar, moved to a pub, and now meets in a music venue! If we want to see our city transformed by the good news of Jesus, then it is vital that we are learning to live distinctly kingdom-shaped lives like Jesus, rather than being disciplined by our culture unawares.

There is nothing more important than for us to respond to Jesus's call of discipleship ('Follow me') and intentionally learn to be like him. And yet there can be great confusion about what a disciple actually is and how to make disciples. When we lack clarity on these issues, we can spin around in circles not actually accomplishing the mission of Jesus. But when there is clarity on the 'what' and 'how' of discipleship, then we align ourselves with what God is doing in the world and we expect to see fruit!

Our hope for this series is that each member of the Anchor Family will actively take their part in Jesus's mission of discipleship: both personally learning to be like Jesus, and making disciples of Jesus.

Here are the key messages we hope you take away from the series:

## **1 A disciple is someone that is learning to love and live like Jesus**

This is a holistic transformative learning process, not classroom learning to pass an exam. This is embodied learning in the context of community that results in inner transformation that works itself out in obedience to Jesus's teaching.

## **2 Every disciple is called to be a disciple-maker**

We all have a part to play in God's mission. Making disciples is not done by professional pastors or evangelists, but by everyone of us as we share the gospel and our lives with one another and our neighbours.

### **3 We make disciples by prayerfully sowing the seed of the gospel in people's lives**

It is only as the gospel seed is planted in people's hearts that we will see fruit in people's lives as God gives the growth by his Spirit. This means that we don't make fruitful disciples just by hanging out together or being a nice friend. Of course, this relational context is vital to discipleship as we learn from one another and love our neighbours. But if we want to see our city transformed by the good news of Jesus, we need to be sharing God's Word with people.

We don't want this series to be purely theoretical. Discipleship is more like a practical apprenticeship than a university lecture. With this in mind, we have given you four practices we want you to commit to over the next eight weeks as we learn to be like Jesus together. We are praying expectantly that God will use this series to bring transformation in your life and in our city as we surrender ourselves to our Master and his mission of making disciples.

# DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES

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It's no use if we just learn theoretically what it looks like to be more like Jesus. We need to put it into practice. With that in mind, we hope that each member of the Anchor Family will commit to four practices over the next eight weeks as we take seriously Jesus's call to 'Follow Me'.

## 1 Prayer

Prayer is vital for discipleship, as the gospel cannot produce fruit in someone's life without a powerful working of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer covers and infuses all of the other practices listed below: praying that God will speak to us through the Bible in a transformative way; praying for one another in Triplets; and praying for our unbelieving friends as we seek to share Jesus with them.

And yet it's not enough for prayer to be assumed, lest it is neglected. We want prayer to saturate every corner of our church. So over the next eight weeks, we want you to commit to the practice of prayer.

Here are some practical ideas to help you pray:

- Before you read your Bible, being with a few minutes of silence and solitude, focusing your heart and mind on the love and mercy of our Father in Heaven, and asking him to speak to you through his word
- Shape your prayers around what you've read in the Bible
- Use the PrayerMate app to plan to pray for others, including your 'five'
- In Triplets, lead one another in prayers of repentance and faith, as well as praying for one another's needs
- Use each line of the Lord's Prayer as a springboard for prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)
- Use a Psalm to pour out your heart to God
- Use the ACTS structure: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (asking)

*'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.'* 1 John 5:14–15

## 2 Bible Reading: Learning from God

A disciple is a learner—someone that is learning to be like Jesus. An important part of this transformative process is learning from God's Word and responding in obedience. We've created an eight-week Bible reading plan (four days a week) to facilitate our learning together as a church family.

We'd love you to commit to this as a vital discipline for your own spiritual growth. We believe that the Bible is the place where we hear God's voice most clearly, and that it is the key to a fruitful life, as the Spirit takes the implanted word and bears the fruit of obedience in our lives.

This is not about filling our heads with Bible knowledge, but meeting with God our Father in his word, and being transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of our Saviour Jesus.

We encourage you to purchase an Abide Journal from the Connect Desk at a Sunday Gathering for \$10 and use the REAP journaling method to understand and apply God's Word. This practice is really about each of us taking personal responsibility for our own spiritual growth.

### 3 Gospel Triplets: Learning from One Another

Discipleship is more than learning information. It is learning a person (Jesus) and his way of life.

The New Testament emphasises the importance of imitation as a crucial way that we learn to be like Jesus—'Follow me as I follow Jesus' (Philippians 4:9). We take this seriously at Anchor, and understand that it is virtually impossible to make fruitful disciples outside the context of community.

Over the next eight weeks, we want to facilitate you forming intentional disciple-making relationships, especially in Gospel Triplets.

If you're already in a Triplet, use the next eight weeks to intentionally disciple one another and apply the gospel to your life.

If you're not in a Triplet, talk to your Gospel Community leader or go to the Connect Desk at a Sunday Gathering to help you connect with people.

We all need to take the initiative in seeking out others to disciple, because to be a disciple of Jesus is to be a disciple-maker.

Within Triplets, we focus on Head, Heart, and Hands.

**Head:** review what God has been speaking to you in the Follow Me Bible reading plan, how the Spirit has been convicting you of sin, and leading you to repentance and obedience.

**Heart:** ask each other: 'What bad fruit is there in your life?' Use the Fruit to Root resource to help you repent of the root issues of unbelief and idolatry, and speak the truth of the gospel into one another's lives.

**Hands:** keep each other accountable for living in obedience to God's Word as everyday missionaries.

## 4 Mission: Ask a Friend to Read the Bible With You

We believe that God has called each of us to be an everyday missionary in the city of Sydney.

Over the next eight weeks, we want each member of the Anchor Family to prayerfully commit to pursue one of your 'five' friends to read the Bible with. This is within the context of 5FOR5 (choose five friends, and seek to do five things: PRAY, CONTACT, BLESS, INVITE, SHARE), and is designed to help us intentionally share Jesus with our friends.

We have a deep belief that the gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16), and that as we open the Bible we hear God speak. We are expectant that as we read the Bible with our non-Christian friends that many will be captivated by the person of Jesus.

Here's what to do.

1. Identify a friend who is warm towards you and pray that God will make them receptive and open a door for the gospel
2. Ask them: 'I'm looking for someone to read the Bible with, and I'm wondering if that's you?' If they say 'No', then say 'No worries!' If they say 'Yes!', then organise a time to grab a coffee and read together.
3. When you meet up, read a chapter of Mark's gospel together (starting at chapter 1).
4. Ask five questions:
  - a. What did you notice?
  - b. What does it say about God?
  - c. What does it say about people?
  - d. What will you do?
  - e. Who will you tell?
5. Organise a time to meet again to read the next chapter.

# FOLLOW ME BIBLE READING PLAN

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## **The Master: Who is Jesus?**

Mark 1:1–20     Acts 2:22–41     Philippians 2:1–11

*29 July Brad Konemann*

Psalm 2     *John 1:1–18 (optional)*

## **The Mission: What did Jesus come to do?**

Mark 10:35–45     Hebrews 9:24–28     Isaiah 52:13–53:12

*5 August Arnaldo Santiago Jr.*

Colossians 1:15–23     *Genesis 12:1–9 (optional)*

## **The Call: What does Jesus require of me?**

Mark 2:13–17     1 Peter 2:9–12     Jeremiah 1

*12 August Brad Konemann*

Mark 8:27–9:1     *Matthew 5:13–16 (optional)*

## **The Way: Learning. How do I follow Jesus?**

1 Timothy 4     Acts 2:42–47     2 Chronicles 34:14–33

*19 August Mitch Brice*

Psalm 1     *1 John 3:1–3 (optional)*

## **The Way: Loving. How do I follow Jesus?**

Mark 12:28–34     Isaiah 29:13–24     Deuteronomy 6:1–9

*26 August Matt Sparks*

1 John 4:7–21     *Ezekiel 36:16–38 (optional)*

## **The Way: Living. How do I follow Jesus?**

Matthew 7:24–27     Titus 2:11–14     Colossians 3:1–17

*2 September James Wong*

Isaiah 1:1–20     *Deuteronomy 30:11–20 (optional)*

## **The Sower: Who makes disciples?**

Matthew 9:35–38     Acts 19:8–22     Joel 2:28–32

*9 September Brad Konemann*

1 Corinthians 12     *2 Corinthians 4:1–7 (optional)*

## **The Seed: How do we make disciples?**

Mark 4:1–20     Isaiah 2:1–5     1 Thessalonians 2:6–13

*16 September Arnaldo Santiago Jr.*

Isaiah 55     *Matthew 28:16–20 (optional)*

## **The Field: Where do we make disciples?**

*23 September Matt Sparks*

What did you notice? • What does it say about God? • What does it say about people? • What will you do? • Who will you tell?



# THE MASTER



*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear his word and put it into practice.*

Our culture has so many different views of Jesus. What are some of the most popular opinions you've heard? If someone asked you, 'Who is Jesus?', what would you say?

What are your biggest questions about Jesus?

Mark wants to show us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1:1). What do these titles mean? <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Christ is a title from the Old Testament. It is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, which means 'Anointed One'. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil, specially commissioned as God's chosen ones to do his work. But more specifically, the term Messiah came to be associated with the hopes of Israel for a king who would reign on the throne of David.



**Read** 2 Samuel 7:4–17, Isaiah 9:7, Ezekiel 37:22–25, Micah 5:2.<sup>2</sup>

Why is the Old Testament background of God's promises to Israel so important to understanding who Jesus is and what he came to do?

In Mark 1–2, what do you see Jesus doing in his ministry? How does this reveal his identity and authority?

How does Jesus's authority confront us in our individualistic 'no-one-tells-me-what-to-do' autonomous culture?

What claim does Jesus have over your life? What does it look like in everyday life to submit to his authority and live with Jesus as Lord?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

**Pray** for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.

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<sup>2</sup> These are just a few of the many Old Testament prophecies foreshadowing the arrival of a Messianic king who would restore the kingdom of God.



# THE MISSION

FOLLOW ME

*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear his word and put it into practice.*

Why is Jesus's identity so important for his mission (see Mark 2:1–12, especially 2:7)?

Read Mark 1:14–15. How would you explain what Jesus's mission is?

Read Mark 8:27–33. In this climactic episode in Mark's narrative, Peter identifies Jesus as the Christ, and yet totally misunderstands what this means for Jesus's ministry. What might Peter have been expecting of the Christ?

What is the Christ's job description according to Jesus?

Read Isaiah 52:13–53:12. How might Jesus's reading of this passage on the Suffering Servant informed how he understood his mission?

Read Mark 10:45. Jesus interprets his pending death as 'a ransom for many'. What does this mean?

Why do we need a ransom? How does Jesus's death accomplish our redemption?

How have you seen the kingdom of God come in your life?

What areas of sin, suffering, and darkness in your life have the light of the kingdom of God yet to shine on?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

***Pray for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.***



# THE CALL

FOLLOW ME

*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear his word and put it into practice.*

*Read Mark 1:14–20.*

Who takes the initiative in discipleship? How have you seen God's gracious initiative in your own life?

How do the fishermen respond when Jesus calls them? Why?

Why are repentance and faith so foundational to being a disciple? What is repentance? What is faith?

In what areas of your life is Jesus calling you to repentance, or to 'leave your nets' and follow him?

What is the mission Jesus gives to his disciples? How does Jesus model this mission in his own ministry (Mark 1:35–39, 2:13–17)?

Who are the people God has put in front of you who ‘need a doctor’? What needs and opportunities has he opened up for you?

What would it look like for us a community to intentionally and lovingly pursue these specific individuals so that they might know Jesus?

***Read Mark 8:34–38.***

What is the way that leads to life according to Jesus? How does that compare with the messages we receive from our culture?

What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross? Why would we bother following Jesus when the cost is so great?

In what areas of your life do you feel convicted that Jesus is calling you to deny yourself and follow him?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

***Pray for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.***



# THE WAY: LEARNING



*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear his word and put it into practice.*

Teaching and learning play an important role in disciple-making (Matthew 28:20). Why are they so important for the Christian life?

Jesus warns his disciples about the dangers of false teachers (Matthew 7:15–20). Why is this such an important warning?

What are some growth areas or knowledge gaps in your Christian life? What are some big questions you have about Jesus or Christianity? Discuss ideas of how we can address these as a community.

What does it look like for us to take seriously Jesus's call to be a learning community?

**Read** *Matthew 7:24–27*.

What is the intended effect of learning Jesus's teaching (See also Matthew 28:20a)?

What is the place of 'imitation' in learning to love and live like Jesus (1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, Philippians 4:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:7–9, 1 Timothy 4:12)?

Who are you imitating/learning from? Who are you seeking to set an example for/teach? What opportunities are there for us as a community to open our lives to one another more and more to learn from one another to follow Christ?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

**Pray** *for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.*



# THE WAY: LOVING

FOLLOW ME

*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear his word and put it into practice.*

Why is the heart so significant for Jesus?

*Read Genesis 6:5, Matthew 15:18–19, and Ezekiel 14:3.*

What is the nature of our sin problem? How does the nature of our problem shape the nature of the remedy we need?

*Read Ezekiel 36:26, Jeremiah 31:33, and Romans 2:28–29.*

What does God promise us?



How can we experience inner heart renewal (Romans 12:2, John 3:1–8, 1 Peter 1:23)?

According to Jesus, what is the relationship between our hearts and our behaviour (Matthew 12:33–35)?

What then is the relationship between our head, heart, and hands? How does this shape our life together as a community?

Jesus emphasises love as the heart of the law of God (Mark 12:28–31). Our failure to keep God's law comes down to two sinful heart issues: idolatry (putting something else above than God) and selfishness (putting ourselves before others).

Spend some time diagnosing idolatry in your lives and applying to gospel to one another. What do you tend to love more than God?<sup>3</sup> What do our idols offer us? Do they pay off? Why God is better than any of our idols? Lead people in repenting of idolatry and believing the gospel.

In what areas of your life is the Holy Spirit convicting you of selfishness and a failure to love your neighbour?<sup>4</sup> Pray for inner transformation, that God would pour his love into your hearts so that it overflows in love for others.

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

***Pray for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.***

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<sup>3</sup> You might like to reflect on the story of the Rich Young Man as an example of idolatry (Mark 10:17–31).

<sup>4</sup> You might like to reflect on James and John's selfish request as an example of failing to love neighbour (Mark 10:35–45), and Jesus's response as outlining the life of neighbour love that is required of his disciples.



# THE WAY: LIVING

FOLLOW ME

*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear the word and put it into practice.*

Why does it matter how we live (Romans 6:1–2)? Doesn't God accept us anyway because of his grace and mercy?

What is the place of obedience to God's law in the Christian life (Matthew 5:17–20, 7:24–27, 1 Peter 1:13–16)? Isn't the gospel about grace, not law (Romans 3:21–26)?<sup>5</sup>

How does the gospel produce godliness (Titus 2:11–14, Ephesians 4:22–24)?

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<sup>5</sup> Obedience to the law cannot save us, because none is righteous. We can only be saved as an undeserved gift from God that we receive by faith in Jesus Christ. But now that we have peace with God and have received the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit now transforms us and empowers us to live according to God's law of love.

What is the relationship between learning, loving, and living? How does our 'knowledge of the truth' lead to godliness (Titus 1:1)?

Read Mark 8:34–38. Jesus's call of discipleship demands everything! What does it look like in practice for us to follow Jesus?

Jesus consistently withdrew from the crowds to spend time with his Father in Heaven (Mark 1:35). What does it look like for us to live like Jesus in our spiritual disciplines?

Jesus gives us a new command: to love one another (John 15:12). What does it look like in practice for us to live like Jesus in our love for one another?

Jesus has commissioned us to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:16–20). What does it look like in practice for us to take our part in Jesus's mission?

Who are you pursuing on mission? Have you asked one of your five to read the Bible with you? What are your next steps in mission?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

***Pray for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.***



# THE SOWER



*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear the word and put it into practice.*

Before hearing the sermon, how would you have answered the question, 'Who makes disciples?' How have you viewed your role in discipleship?

What has held you back from being actively engaged in making disciples?

What is the mission Jesus has entrusted to us (Mark 1:17, Matthew 28:16–20)? How should this shape what we do together as a family of missionaries?

*Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 and Joel 2:28–32.*

What are the implications of the Spirit giving gifts to each of us?

**Read** *Ephesians 4:11–16*.

What is the role of our pastors in discipleship? What role do the rest of us have in discipleship?

What would it look like for each of us to be actively engaged in making disciples of Jesus?

Why do we need God to work as we make disciples (Ephesians 2:1)? How does this spiritual reality of discipleship shape our understanding of making disciples?

'Our level of trust in [the work of God's Spirit in discipleship] will be demonstrated by our constant dependent prayer for God to give the growth. Prayerlessness, like Wordlessness, is a classic symptom of a sick disciple-making culture.'  
What might it look like for prayerful dependence to mark our community as we make disciples of Jesus?

How do we hold together God's work and ours in making disciples (1 Corinthians 3:5–9, 2 Corinthians 4:5–6)?

What next step is God calling you to make to be actively engaged in making disciples?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally learn to be like Jesus and make disciples?

**Pray** for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.



# THE SEED



*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear the word and put it into practice.*

How do you view the Bible? What has shaped your attitudes towards the Bible?

*Read Mark 4:1–20, 1 Corinthians 3:5–9, Colossians 1:28–29.*

What is the biblical model of how we make disciples?

Why are the word and prayer so essential for making disciples?

How should this shape our life together as a community? How can we create a rich culture of discipleship in our Gospel Community?

All disciples are disciple-makers, and we want to see every person actively engaged in making disciples. We all have a part to play in the mission of God!

Do you see yourself as a disciple-maker? Is there anything holding you back from playing your part in making disciples?

Who are you discipling?

What is your strategy/method for making disciples?

**Read** *1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Timothy 4:11, Philippians 4:19.*

How do these verses give us a holistic vision of teaching?

What kind of example are you setting with your life? What areas is God convicting you to repent and obey?

How can we open our lives more to one another and our non-Christian friends to make disciples?

How are you going with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What can you do this week to intentionally be a disciple and make disciples?

**Pray** *for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.*



# THE FIELD

FOLLOW  ME

*Pray for God to give you a responsive heart so that you might hear the word and put it into practice.*

Why is community so important for making disciples of Jesus?

How does the theological reality that God has adopted us into his family shape our life together?

*Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Colossian 3:16, Ephesians 4:25, James 5:16, 1 John 3:11.*

There are 100 uses of 'one another' in the New Testament focusing on the community life of the church. What might it look like for us to take the 'one another' statements of the New Testament seriously in our life together?



Are you in a Triplet? If not, what's holding you back? Why are Triplets so vital for not only growing as a disciple of Jesus but also being actively engaged in making disciples?

**Read** *Genesis 12:1–3, Matthew 28:16–20, Luke 24:46–49, Acts 1:8.*

What is the scope of the mission that Jesus has entrusted to us? What promises does Jesus make that should give us great confidence for mission? What does it look like for us to be seriously committed to taking the gospel to the ends of the earth?

Why is speaking the gospel and opening God's word with people so central for mission? Why is a life of love important as the context for speaking about Jesus (Titus 2:10, 1 Peter 2:11–12)? Why would it be dangerous to have one without the other (word without deed, love without speech)?

Do you see yourself as an everyday missionary? How does your gospel identity shape how you live?

So much of our mission is intentionally pursuing our friends and neighbours in love with the good news about Jesus—being proactive, rather than reactive. Is your missionary posture more proactive, or reactive? What would change if you were to be more intentional, planned, and proactive in pursuing your five?

Looking back over the last eight weeks, how have you gone with your practices of discipleship (Prayer, Bible Reading, Triplets, Mission). What will you take away from this series to be a lifelong learner of Christ and disciple-maker?

**Pray** *for God to transform you to live in obedience to his Word.*

# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*.

D. A. Carson, *Call to Spiritual Reformation*.

Tim Chester, *The Ordinary Hero*.

Col Marshall & Tony Payne, *The Vine Project*.

Paul Miller, *A Praying Life*.

John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life*.

Mark Sayers & John Mark Comer, *This Cultural Moment* (podcast).

James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love*.

John Stott, *Basic Christianity*.

John Stott, *The Radical Disciple*.

Jeff Vanderstelt, *Saturate*.

Jen Wilkin, *Women of the Word*.