

Dynamic Discipleship

Understanding goal one – make disciples

Small Group Study Guide



The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version® . NIV® . Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Written by Alastair Kendrew, 2010

Updated in 2013

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
1. Dynamic disciples make a choice.....	8
2. Dynamic disciples are being transformed.....	12
3. Dynamic disciples get to know God	16
4. Dynamic disciples build up the Church body	20
5. Dynamic disciples help those in need.....	23
6. Dynamic disciples make disciples.....	28
7. Dynamic disciples press on.....	33
Tips on How to Lead an Effective Study	37

Introduction

In 2005, The Salvation Army in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga launched the Territorial Strategic Mission Plan (TSMP), with four goals to help us achieve more of our mission. Having made such a positive impact on the territory, TSMP was updated in both 2010 and 2013.

James 1:22 says ‘But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says (NLT).’ This booklet is part of a series of studies to help you grapple with the goals, their biblical mandate, and how you might apply the Bible’s teaching around the goals in your life.

This particular booklet is focused on *Goal One – Make Disciples* and contains seven individual studies explaining how dynamic disciples:

1. make a choice – to follow Jesus and then to love God and love others as much as they can
2. are being transformed – they are holy (set apart, pure, dedicated to God) and are changing their attitudes, character, relationships, habits and service to be like that of Jesus
3. get to know God – they put in place habits to do this
4. build up the Church body – by seeking unity and serving using their spiritual gifts
5. strive for social justice – they seek to eradicate poverty and fight against injustice
6. make disciples – by sharing their love for Jesus with others
7. press on – with their eye firmly on Jesus, they press on, increasing their love for God and others, while persevering through the tough times

Separate booklets are also available for a deeper study of many of the topics.

Style

While it is possible to use this booklet for individual study, it is designed for use in a small group setting (e.g. 5-10 people), relying heavily on discussion and the sharing of ideas.

The studies are designed to be thought-provoking, with questions to which there will hopefully be a variety of responses. Often there are no ‘right’ answers as many of the answers will be about you deciding how you will apply the Bible’s teaching in your life.

Each session follows the same format – an introductory idea or story followed by a time of discussion and study, concluding with time to reflect, apply what you have learned and pray. They are planned to take between 60 and 75 minutes, depending on the discussion. We encourage your group to spend time together socially and to pray for each other, so at least one and a half hours should be allowed.

Preparation

All you need is a Bible, a pen and an open heart. Make sure your Bible is a modern translation. References in this booklet are typically from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, but the New Living Translation (NLT), Contemporary English Version (CEV), New International Readers Version (NIrV) and Good News Bible are also recommended.

The leader is encouraged to pre-read the study so that they know what is coming. There are also tips at the end of this book for leading an effective study.

Guidelines

It is important that people feel comfortable sharing within the group knowing that everything discussed is done so in confidence.

If your group is new, you should start by agreeing to some guidelines, such as those below.

We wish you the best as you study God's word together.

Group Guidelines

We agree to:

1. Keep everything discussed in the group within the group (unless specific permission is given otherwise).
2. Provide equal opportunity for everyone to talk. No one is to dominate the discussion and no one will be forced to share if they are not comfortable doing so.
3. Only talk about our self and our situation, avoiding conversation about others.
4. Show respect for each other at all times.
5. Leave as friends. We want to allow rigorous debate, but we will not make conversations personal. Should we disagree, we will do so with grace.

6. Pray for each other.

STUDY 1

Dynamic disciples make a choice

Getting started

The last instruction Jesus gave before going back to heaven was ‘to go and make disciples’. This is a series to help you understand what it means to be one of these disciples.

So right up front, let’s start with a definition. A disciple is someone who learns from a teacher, but also tries to imitate them. A disciple of Jesus therefore follows His teaching and tries to become more and more like Him. But more than this, because Jesus is the Son of God who conquered death, He calls us into a living relationship with Him and invites us to be part of the family of God. We’ve added the word ‘dynamic’, not to say you need to be extroverted, but to show that the discipleship journey should be alive and vibrant.

Being a disciple is a life long commitment to following Jesus. We hope these studies help provide you with some of the tools you need to make the most of the journey.

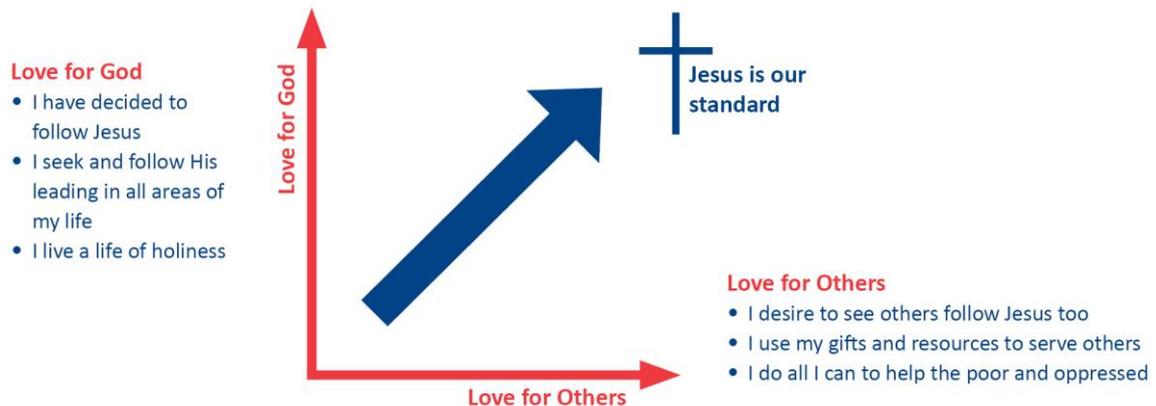
1. Think of someone you would describe as a dynamic disciple of Jesus? What made you think of this person? What sorts of things might you expect in a dynamic disciple?
2. What sorts of things might you expect to find in a non-dynamic disciple?
3. What words come to mind when you think about following Jesus?

Explore

If a dynamic disciple is someone who is following Jesus, what would He have us do? When Jesus was asked which was the most important commandment, He replied:

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind’; and ‘Love others as much as you love yourself’. (Matthew 22:37-39, CEV).

Or more simply – love God and love others, as much as you can. We can never get to a point where we love God or others enough, so there is an implied ongoing movement.



LOVE GOD

4. How do you respond to the phrase ‘Love God and do as you like’ (Augustine 354-430)? What does it mean to love God as much as you can? If you truly love Him, what would people observe in you?
5. If you love someone, you will want to get to know them. Can a disciple of Jesus be dynamic without investing any effort into getting to know God and finding out His will for them? Explain.

Spiritual disciplines are behaviours that help us get to know God better, such as reading your Bible, prayer, worship, fasting and meditation. We call these disciplines because they require effort and commitment.

6. Romans 12:1-2 speaks of the need for followers of Jesus to be transformed. In what ways do you think dynamic disciples should be transformed?

Look up the following verses to explore some of the ways the Bible says we are to be transformed.

Bible verse	How dynamic disciples are transformed
2 Corinthians 7:1	
Ephesians 4:23	
2 Peter 1:5-11	
Galatians 5:22-23	
Genesis 1:28-30	

Love for God is seen in a personal, ongoing commitment to knowing God and allowing Him to transform us into His likeness.

LOVE OTHERS

7. What do you think it means to love others as much as you can?

Look up the following verses to explore some of the ways the Bible says we are to love others.

Bible reference	How dynamic disciples love others
Romans 12:10,13	
Ephesians 4:12	
Matthew 25: 37-40	
Matthew 28:19-20	

Love for others will permeate every area of a dynamic disciple's life. He or she shows love in their relationships with others, serves within the church family, helps those in need, and looks to see others become disciples of Jesus.

Reflect

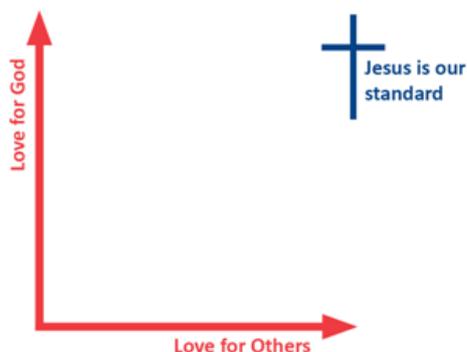
Being a dynamic disciple requires a daily choice – a choice to follow Jesus wholeheartedly; a choice to be disciplined about getting to know Him; a choice to allow Him to transform our life; a choice to love and serve others; and a choice to work towards helping others become disciples of Jesus.

So, how's your discipleship journey?

Think about your love for God. Are you seeking to know Him as much as you can? Is your life being transformed so you become more like Him?

How are your relationships with others? Is Jesus asking you to do something specific for someone? Are you praying for friends to know Jesus?

Place a mark on the graph where you would see yourself. Why did you place yourself there?



Apply

As a result of this study, what will you do over the coming week to love God and/or others more?

Pray

- That we will be filled with a passion to love God and others more
- For the actions we have committed to for this week
- For the next study, where we will explore being transformed

Going Deeper

- Wait until next study!

STUDY 2

Dynamic disciples are being transformed

Follow-up

Since last time, how have you got on with loving God and others more?

Getting started

Keith Green was a contemporary Christian musician who made an enormous impact before he died tragically in a plane crash aged only 28. Some of his best known songs are 'O Lord, You're Beautiful' and 'There is a Redeemer'.

As a child, Keith enjoyed phenomenal musical success, signing his first record deal as an eleven year old. However, within a few years, he became disillusioned, turning to drugs and mysticism. His spiritual search continued until he was 21 when he decided to follow Jesus. This completely transformed his life.

Somewhat reluctantly, Keith was thrust into a 'John the Baptist' type ministry, calling believers to wake up, repent, and live a life that looked like what they said they believed. Keith felt he would have met Jesus sooner if not for Christians who led double lives. He made audiences squirm by saying:

'If you praise and worship Jesus with your mouth and your life does not praise and worship him, there's something wrong', and

'Loving Jesus is to be our cause. He can take care of a lot of other causes without us, but He can't make us love Him with all our heart. Anything else is an imitation.'

Keith was far from perfect, but he honestly hungered after righteousness, constantly asking the Holy Spirit to 'change my heart, convict me of my sin.' And when he was convicted, he took action. If he needed to repent, he repented. If he needed to phone someone to ask forgiveness, he did.

Keith died in 1982, but his life and short ministry still make a huge impact around the world. He once said, 'When I die I just want to be remembered as a Christian.' It's safe to say he reached his goal and perhaps a bit more.

(Adapted from 'About Keith Green', www.lastdaysministries.org)

1. Keith suggested he 'would have met Jesus sooner if not for Christians who led double lives'. Do you think this is common? Explain:

2. While not perfect, Keith claimed to constantly ask the Holy Spirit to ‘change my heart, convict me of my sin’ and then took action. How important is repentance to a dynamic disciple and why?

Explore

Read together Romans 12:1-21.

3. Verse 1: what is your understanding of the word ‘holy’?
4. What do you think Paul means when he urges us to offer our bodies as living, ‘holy’ sacrifices? Is this even possible?
5. Why are we to do this?

The main meaning of ‘holy’ is ‘separate’. It comes from an ancient word meaning ‘to cut’ or ‘to separate’. A more accurate translation could be ‘to be a cut above’. Being holy means you are set apart as special, without fault, dedicated to God.

Do you grasp the sheer impossibility of this task? We are imperfect. We have faults and blemishes. How can we possibly present ourselves to God and be accepted? The answer is ‘God’s mercy’.

The phrase ‘in view of God’s mercy’ should be translated ‘by means of God’s mercy’. Paul is underlying that our relationship with God is entirely dependent on His mercy, not any feelings we might have of our own merit. Our logical response to this is to offer ourselves completely to God.

6. Verse 2: in what ways do you think dynamic disciples need to be different from people who are not committed to following Jesus?
7. Are there ways that dynamic disciples should be the same? Explain.
8. Is it inevitable that we slip up occasionally? If so, how much is OK?

9. Paul urges us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Why do you think the mind is so important to our transformation?

‘It’s one thing to believe in Jesus. It’s quite another to believe what Jesus believed. And the first can’t be what it should be without the second. Acquiring the mind of Christ – thinking and feeling what Jesus does – that’s transformation. What did Jesus believe about life? What was important to Him? How did He define the good life? What is good and evil? How do we conduct our life? And in the end, what really matters?... As disciples, our quest should be to believe what He believed so we can live the way He lived.’ (Bill Hull, The complete book of Discipleship (NavPress 2006), p130)

10. Bill suggests believing what Jesus believed is quite different to just believing in Jesus and that if you don’t believe what He believes, you won’t be able to live the way He lived. Do you agree? Explain:
11. Romans 12 provides a succinct view of Christian living. In just 21 verses, Paul provides instructions on how to pursue your relationship with God, relate to others, serve within the church family, handle difficulties, etc. Record in the table below what Paul says about our attitudes:

Attitude to ...	Verse	Paul says ...
God	1-2, 11-12	
Sin	1, 9, 17	
Ourselves	3, 16	
Serving	4-8	
Our relationships	9, 10, 13, 15	
Personal character	17	
Community	13, 15-18	
Issues with others	14, 18-21	

12. Paul writes in Ephesians 3:20 ‘Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.’ What role does the Holy Spirit play in our transformation?

Reflect

We started our study by looking at being holy – being set apart and dedicated to God; keeping our bodies pure; living without sin; not conforming to the pattern of the world. What emotions do you feel when you hear that? How pleasing to God do you think your sacrifice is at the moment? Do you need to (re)offer your body as a living sacrifice to God?

Paul urges us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds – to think and feel as Jesus does. Romans 12 provided some insight as to what our attitudes should be. Which of these challenged you the most?

Apply

Ask the Holy Spirit to challenge you. Seek forgiveness for any sin.

Are you involved in any situation that is causing you to sin? What can you do this week to stop it?

Which of your attitudes do you feel God is working on with you at the moment? What are you being challenged to do?

Pray

- For forgiveness of our sin
- That the Holy Spirit will transform our minds – give us a desire to become more like Jesus
- For the actions we have committed to for this week
- For the next study, where we will explore habits to help us get to know Jesus better

Going Deeper

- If you want to learn more about holiness, why don't you try one of the holiness studies in this series

STUDY 3

Dynamic disciples get to know God

Follow-up

Last time, we looked at the need to be holy and the need for on-going transformation. How have we got on since then?

Getting started

One of the greatest fears parents have is that their children will end up in the 'wrong crowd'. Why? Because we tend to become like those we 'hang out' with.

The dynamic disciple wants to become like Jesus, having a close relationship with him and following his direction. It stands to reason then that dynamic disciples 'hang out' with him.

1. If the two greatest killers of relationships are complacency, and lack of integrity, how might these apply to our relationship with God?
2. What do you find easier – maintaining your relationship with God, or maintaining your relationships with friends? Why?

Explore

In a recent survey of 80,000 Christians, almost all of them spoke of a time when they had stalled in their faith (with one in five saying they were stalled currently!). When asked what got them moving again, the researchers found one factor stood out well above the rest. What do you think it might have been? A crisis in their life? Meeting someone who inspired them? Switching churches?

The number one factor, suggested by 70% of the respondents was 're-starting their personal spiritual practices' – reading their Bible, praying, etc. This was over double the next highest factor of 'experiencing a personal crisis'.

What does this tell us? If you want to move forward in your relationship with Jesus, you could go looking for a personal crisis, (or another church), but the better approach by far is to maintain good personal spiritual practices.

But surely all Christians pray and read their Bible regularly? According to Bible Society research undertaken in New Zealand, this is far from the case. Only 11%

of Christians read the Bible daily with a further 13% reading it weekly. In other words, if our group is typical of those in the survey, three quarters of people here will not be reading their Bible even once per week!

Today, we're going to practise reading our Bibles as a group. This will give you a model that you can then use in your own time.

Step 1: Start with prayer

Hopefully you've done this already. Acknowledge God's presence and ask him to speak to you through the reading.

Step 2: Read and apply the Bible

If you're not sure what to read, start with one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John), then move onto Acts. Plan to read only a small amount each day – around one section at a time.

As you read, ask yourself two questions:

- a) What does it mean? What did it mean to the person who wrote it or the people who first read it?
- b) How does it apply to me? This is the most important stage. When we see the relevance of what we are reading and put it into practice, the Bible comes alive and we become conscious of hearing God's voice.

Read Luke 10:38-42

a) What does it mean?

3. What do you think Jesus is trying to say to Martha in this story?
4. There was dinner to prepare for at least Jesus and 12 disciples and no-one was helping. If you were Martha, would you have argued back?
5. Why does Jesus think that Mary has chosen what is better?

b) How does it apply to me?

6. What are some of our 'dinner preparations' that keep us busy and away from God's presence?

Busyness (*author unknown*)

I knelt to pray but not for long, I had too much to do
I had to hurry and get to work for bills would soon be due
So I knelt and said a hurried prayer, and jumped up off my knees
My Christian duty was now done, my soul could rest at ease ...
All day long I had no time to spread a word of cheer
No time to speak of Christ to friends, they'd laugh at me I'd fear
No time, no time, too much to do, that was my constant cry
No time to give to souls in need but at last the time, the time to die
I went before the Lord, I came, I stood with downcast eyes
For in his hands God held a book, it was the book of life
God looked into his book and said 'Your name I cannot find
I once was going to write it down... but never found the time'

7. We all know that reading our Bible and praying are important, yet according to the research, three quarters of us may not be reading the Bible even once a week. Why do you think that is?

8. What can we do as a group to help improve this? (for example, if a factor was not knowing the Bible well enough, should we do an overview study? If it is not making reading the Bible a priority, can we commit to holding each other accountable?)

Step 3: End with prayer

Remember, prayer should be a two-way conversation with God. Don't just rattle off a wish list – take time to listen to God as well.

If you're not sure what to pray, consider using a prayer model such as ACTS – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (praying for needs).

9. Consider the following tips for a quiet time with God. What else would you add from your experience to this list?

Tips for a quiet time with God

1. Have a set time that works for you (in the morning, before bed, lunch).
2. Choose a private and quiet place.
3. If you miss a day, don't worry – start again the next day. The more days you miss, the more determined you must become to re-start!
4. Don't burn yourself out. Try for 5-10 minutes. If you get excited and go longer, you may find that you then give up because 'it takes too long'.
5. Try keeping a journal. Start your time by reflecting on your day. This slows you down to be with God and helps refine your character.
6. When you pray, include a time of confession.
7. Writing down your prayers provides a great history of answers.
8. If praying makes you sleepy, pray aloud or write your prayers instead.
9. If your mind wanders while praying, write down the things you are wandering about – then pray for them too!

Reflect

Research has shown that 21 days of consecutive similar experiences form a habit. If you can keep it up for three weeks, reading your Bible will become easy as it forms part of your daily routine.

Apply

What changes do you need to make in your life to spend more time getting to know God?

When is the best time for you to have a daily quiet time with God? Do you need to do anything to prepare, like get a new Bible or a devotions book?

Pray

- For protection against Satan's attacks to get us started
- For the next study, where we will explore building up the church family

Going Deeper

- The Territorial Strategic Mission Plan (TSMP) studies on *Knowing God*
- E100 Bible reading challenge (www.e100nz.org.nz)
- Authenticity* – small group series from Interactions on being honest with God and others
- Too busy not to pray* by Bill Hybels

STUDY 4

Dynamic disciples build up the Church body

Follow-up

Since last time, how have we got on with our 'holy habits'? Remember: twenty-one days of consecutive activity creates a habit so let's keep going!

Getting started

In his book *Think Orange*, Reggie Joiner explains that no matter how much effort we put in, the church will never out-produce culture when it comes to putting on a good show. We can't compete with Hollywood or record companies who invest millions of dollars in entertainment. But here's the good news: *culture can never outdo churches with respect to creating community* (adapted from *Think Orange*, by Reggie Joiner, p195; published by David C Cook).

1. Do you agree? Can culture create community? Is the church really any different? Explain:
2. Suggest to your group two ways the world be a better place if everyone was more like you (hint: this is intended to be funny)?

Explore

Read together Ephesians 4:1-16.

UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

3. One biblical picture of community is that we are the body of Christ, with all the parts working together and in love? What are the consequences for the church if it is not like this?
4. Paul starts off by urging us to be humble. The Collins Dictionary describes humble as being aware of your own shortcomings. Why is this so important to promoting unity?

5. To what extent is 'keeping the peace' our responsibility?
6. Is there ever an excuse for disagreement within the church? Explain:
7. What implications does this passage hold for:
 - c) Relationships between different denominations?
 - d) Relationships within a denomination?
 - e) Relationships within an individual church?
8. It is obvious that if everyone stopped serving, nothing would happen. Still thinking about unity, is it ever ok for just a few people to do little or nothing? Explain:

SERVICE USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

9. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given to all believers. Use the references provided to clarify your understanding of spiritual gifts.
 - a) Who gives them (v7-8)?
 - b) Why are they given (v12b)?
 - c) Who has them (v7-8, or Romans 12:5-6a)?
 - d) What criterion is used to give them (v7)?
 - e) How are they different to the *gift* of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49)?
 - f) How are they different to the *fruit* of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)?
 - g) What spiritual gifts can you find (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8)?
10. What are the implications for the church if its believers don't know or aren't using their spiritual gifts?
11. What are the implications for the believer if they don't know their own spiritual gifts?

Reflect

The most compelling evidence that Jesus is the Truth is not a slick marketing campaign or persuasive apologetics. Jesus says:

'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'
(John 13:35)

The best advertisement for Christianity is a community of people showing love for one another – characterised by unity and service. When people see and experience such a community, how can they not be attracted to it?

How are you contributing to such a community? Does your life build up the body? Do you know your spiritual gifts and are you using them to serve wholeheartedly?

What, if any, are the barriers to unity in your corps?

Apply

Ask the Holy Spirit to challenge you. Seek forgiveness for any behaviour that may be causing disunity. Do you need to do anything to put things right?

Are you serving the body of Christ or are you sitting back leaving the work to others? Are you finding fulfilment in your service or are you being challenged to step out and do something different? What changes do you need to make to use your spiritual gifts to build up the Church?

Pray

- For unity within our group and church
- For all the people already serving within your church
- For the actions we have committed to for this week
- For the next study, where we will explore helping those in need

Going Deeper

- As a group, you could consider completing a more detailed study on spiritual gifts (e.g. the Network course), that includes detailed descriptions of each gift, assessment tools to help you identify yours, and suggestions for matching your gifts with your passions.

STUDY 5

Dynamic disciples strive for social justice

Follow-up

How are our 'holy habits'? Are they 'habits' yet?

Last time we were looking at unity within the church family and service using our spiritual gifts. How have we got on with our actions?

Getting started

The concept of justice is well understood. Try distributing lollies unevenly between children and you'll quickly hear cries of 'that's not fair!' There is a deep sense inside us of what is right and when that 'right' is abused or wronged, our values cry out against it.

But I wonder how many of the kids really care whether some children have missed out – or just that they didn't! We have a natural tendency to accept a situation of injustice as long as we're the ones with more.

Bono, the lead singer in the band U2 puts it this way:

'It's annoying but justice and equality are mates. Aren't they? Justice always wants to hang out with equality. And equality is a real pain!'

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase 'social justice'?
2. Do you agree with Bono – are justice and equality related?

3. Micah 6:8 is a very well-known verse from the Bible:

'And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8)

How might you characterise an organisation or person focused on:

- a) faith (walking humbly with God)?
- b) mercy?
- c) acting justly?

4. The Salvation Army is sometimes referred to as a bird with two wings – faith and social services – needing both to fly. Do you think this is a good picture? Is anything missing? Do you have another picture that might better encompass Micah 6:8?

5. Is social justice something for all Christians, or does it just apply to social services?

Explore

Social justice is an idea that the world and everyone in it can live equal, safe and dignified lives.’ (Just Imagine, p13) It’s proactive – striving to make the world a fairer place, rather than reactive – providing charity.

Clearly our world is not equal. According to Worldometers (<http://www.worldometers.info/>), approximately 1.03 billion people are undernourished while 1.15 billion are overweight. Approximately 25,000 people die of hunger every day.

But this is not just an overseas problem. For example, in New Zealand, the gap between rich and poor has grown steadily over the past two decades; and Māori are poorly represented in statistics around income, health, welfare, crime and education (see *Just Actions*).

6. Whose fault is it that the world is not equal? Are people affected by poverty just lazy? Is this actually justice – you get what you deserve? What do you think causes injustice?

7. Any action that causes injustice is sin. There are two types – sins of commission (what we do) and sins of omission (what we haven’t done). What examples of each can you think of that cause injustice?
 - a) Sins of commission:

 - b) Sins of omission:

Read Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus referred to those who helped 'these brothers of mine' as 'righteous'? When we hear the term righteous, we think of 'being right'. However, the Greek word used in the New Testament is *dikaios*, which can be defined as bringing about the right thing (aka justice). He is looking for more than charity – he is looking for justice.

8. From reading this passage, how would you respond to the following comments?
 - a) To receive eternal life, all I need to do is help others? (Romans 3:28)
 - b) Money gets taken out of my bank account to sponsor a child somewhere so I have a tick in the box for eternal life (1 Cor 13:3)?
 - c) I'm saved by my faith, not by what I do (Matthew 25:41-46, James 2:14-17)
9. Read Exodus 3:7-14. When God asked Moses to go back to Egypt and lead his people out of slavery, how did he respond?
 - a) verse 3:11
 - b) verse 3:13
 - c) verse 4:1
 - d) verse 4:10
 - e) verse 4:13
10. What excuses do we come up with, not to fight injustice?

Reflect

One of the main excuses is 'I don't know what to do'? In reality, unless we're a person of considerable influence, most of our individual actions will be charitable. However, by working together, we can make a difference.

Here are a range of things we can do together:

- a) **Become informed:** as a group, what can we do to become more informed about our community; movements such as Fair Trade and Make Poverty History; and The Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit? How can we inform others?
- b) **Change our attitudes:** see injustice as sin.
- c) **Change our spending habits:** do we buy things we don't need? Could we buy second-hand? Do we ask where the item has come from and whether anyone has been exploited in producing it? Is there a fairer way to purchase this (e.g. fair trade)? How much of our income do we spend on others?
- d) **Invest in an income generating project:** organisations are having huge success helping mums in third world countries start their own businesses to lead their families out of poverty. We could all raise money for self-denial or a women's ministry project, or sponsor projects through The Salvation Army's overseas development or a site like www.kiva.com.
- e) **Our time:** what do we do for others? Can we volunteer at a local social service centre? Is there someone here who would become our social justice champion to keep us informed about issues, or who would like to lead a justice project?

Apply

What will we do as a group to strive for social justice?

What is the significant step to you that you will commit to today to help eradicate poverty and injustice?

Pray

Use the ACTS model of prayer:

- ❑ Adoration: for God who created a world that has enough for everyone
- ❑ Confession: for all the times when we have acted unjustly; or for our prejudices against others
- ❑ Thanksgiving: have everyone create *Gratitude Lists* – 10 things you are grateful for – and thank God for these
- ❑ Supplication:
 - for the people of the world suffering injustice
 - for the actions we have committed to for this week
 - for the next study, where we will explore introducing others to Jesus

Going Deeper

- ❑ Read *Just Imagine* by Roberts & Strickland
- ❑ Read *Just Actions* from The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit (SPPU)
- ❑ Read *50 Ways of Improving Justice* by Fay Foster and Miriam Gluyas (produced by the Justice Unit, Australian Eastern Territory)
- ❑ Invite staff from a local Salvation Army social services centre to share a little of what they do and the difference they are making
- ❑ Sing or listen to the song *Hosanna* by Brooke Fraser
- ❑ Display a Global Village video clip (if the world were a village of 100 people) – search YouTube for Miniature Earth (e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIUCTbi_XZs)
- ❑ Watch a movie such as *Amazing Grace* or *Pay it Forward*
- ❑ Have Child Sponsorship and Fair Trade brochures available

STUDY 6

Dynamic disciples make disciples

Follow-up

How are our 'holy habits'? Are they firmly established?

Last time we looked at social justice. How have we got on with our actions?

Getting started

1. What have you observed people do to share their faith that has been completely ineffective (or worse)?
2. Share an experience (good or disastrous) that you have had sharing your faith; or share how you came to faith.

Explore

The last recorded words of Jesus in Matthew are a direct command to go and make disciples:

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.' (Matthew 28:19-20)

If we unpack this a little more, we see that it is a circular command.

Jesus starts by telling us to go and make disciples. 'Go' might be more accurately translated 'while you go' so making disciples should be a natural part of our lives!

Next, we are commanded to baptise them – help them become immersed in God – and to teach them.

What are we to teach them? 'To obey everything I have commanded you', which includes to go and make disciples. Therefore, the true mark of a dynamic disciple is whether they are helping make more disciples of Jesus.

Yet, according to international evangelist Greg Laurie (www.harvest.org), a recent survey amongst Christians revealed that 95% of those surveyed had never led another person to Jesus Christ. Further, only 10 percent of those who claimed to be born again felt it was important to share the gospel with others!

3. What do you think are the main reasons people find it difficult (or don't bother) sharing their faith with others?
4. What part do each of the following play in helping people decide to become a disciple of Jesus:
 - a) You
 - b) The other person
 - c) The Holy Spirit
 - d) Prayer
5. In any earlier study, we learned about spiritual gifts, one of which is the gift of evangelism. What relevance does this gift have if we are all called to 'go and make disciples' (or should this verse actually say 'people with the gift of evangelism are to go and make disciples – the rest of us should concentrate on our own gifts')?
6. Do you think it is appropriate to build a relationship with someone just to tell them about Jesus? Why or why not?

Read Luke 10:1-12 (*note: a major part of this study is the Apply section below*).

Reflect

What difference does Jesus make to your life?

How important is it to you to share the gospel with others?

Apply

Work through the *A Model for Friendship Evangelism* worksheet at the end of this study, identifying friends that you would like to see come to faith in Jesus and deciding on actions you can take to be intentional about building your relationship with them.

Pray

- ❑ As a group, share the names of the people on your *Friends Prayer List* and pray for the actions you are committing to for each friend
- ❑ For the next study, where we will explore persevering

Going Deeper

- ❑ As a group, you could consider completing a more detailed study on how to share your faith, such as 'How to be a Contagious Christian' or 'Just walk across the room'

A MODEL FOR FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

Luke 10:1-12 – Jesus sending out 72 people in pairs to ‘make disciples’

STEP 1: PRAY (verse 2)

Pray to God to help you identify up to five people or families that you would like to see come to faith. Write these names in your *Friends Prayer List*.

STEP 2: GO (verse 3a)

Go implies being proactive – getting to know people and spending time with them. How well do you know the people on your list? Are you prepared to invest in the relationship? If not, cross them off your list.

STEP 3: STAY AWHILE (verses 5 and 7)

Don't spread yourself too thin. Decide to build deep relationships with a few people, and then be intentional about this by hanging out with them. Record interests or ideas of things you can do with each of the people on your list.

STEP 4: MEET THEIR NEEDS (verse 9)

This is the time to show that you care and the key to this is to notice.

Complete the potential needs column of the table. What do (or might) they need? What can you do as a friend for them (e.g. meals, baby-sitting, a role model for their kids, sharing what you have, listening, etc.)?

What can the corps family offer (e.g. social events, parenting and marriage courses, dedication service, spiritual values training for kids, etc.)?

STEP 5: TELL (verse 9b)

Meeting their needs may open up opportunities to talk about your faith. If so, don't hesitate to seize these. If they know you truly care about them, it will be natural to talk about the things that are important to each of you.

A good place to start is your story and the difference Jesus makes to you.

If you don't feel confident answering questions, can the corps help?

People are most open to God at special events and times of significant change in their lives. Keep an eye out for the right occasion for your friend.

WHAT IF THEY'RE NOT INTERESTED? (verses 10-12)

Some people just won't be interested. That's OK. If you have spent time with them, meeting their needs and have told them about your faith in Jesus, that's all God asks of you. At the end of the day, they need to make up their own minds.

FRIENDS PRAYER LIST

1. Write down the names of five people you want to see come into a relationship with Jesus (e.g. friends, family members, work colleagues, neighbours, etc.).
2. Think about their interests and potential needs, then record any specific actions you can take to enhance your relationship with them.
3. Commit to pray:
 - For opportunities to build your relationship with them
 - for them to become open to Jesus
 - for courage and the right words to speak when the opportunity comes to share the reason for your faith

Friend/Relative	Interests	Potential Needs	My Actions

STUDY 7

Dynamic disciples press on

Follow-up

Last time, we talked of our need to maintain relationships with a few key friends. To pray for them and meet their needs, while always being prepared to talk to them about Jesus when appropriate. How are we getting on?

Getting started

Wouldn't it be great if being a dynamic disciple of Jesus just meant a one-time decision, followed by ceaseless joy and success! Unfortunately, it is not like that.

For a start, in what other aspect of your life do you expect brilliant success from day one? You wake up in the morning and decide to take up a new sport, or instrument, or career and you're an immediate expert! Real expertise is built over a sustained period of learning, putting ideas into practice and learning from mistakes. In fact, you'll often hear an expert say 'the more I learn, the more I realise I don't know'. We should expect getting to know Jesus to be similar.

Secondly, following Jesus is not all ceaseless joy. Hopefully, it is mainly like that, but we are in a spiritual battle and Satan wants us to fail. The last thing he wants is a dynamic disciple of Jesus! We will give into temptation and doubt our place in the family of God. We will see suffering and grapple with how God can allow it to occur. We will face times when our prayers seem to hit the ceiling and we wonder where Jesus has gone.

The apostle Paul writes in Philippians:

'Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 3:12-14)

Even Paul, with his amazing ministry reckoned he hadn't made it!

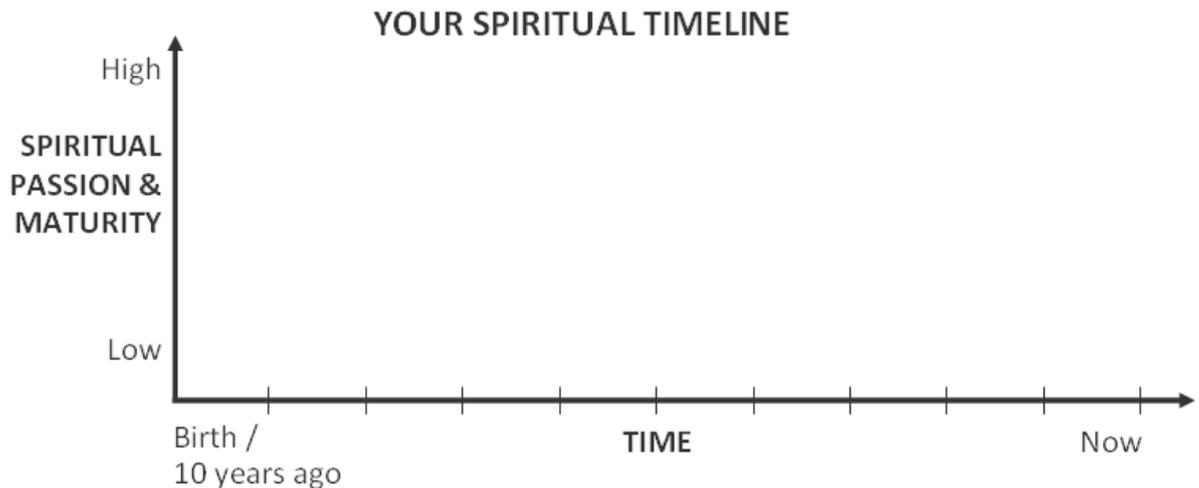
1. Read Philippians 3:7-11. What is Paul saying he hasn't obtained?

Explore

2. If this is the benchmark, how is your journey? Take a moment to draw your spiritual timeline – a graph of your spiritual journey over time (see example opposite).



Starting either from birth, or just the last 10 years, mark in any particular spiritual highs or lows then think about what happened in between.



2. Over time, most timelines include four types of lines. Complete *the middle column* of the table below with the reasons you can find in your timeline for each of the four types:

Line	Your reasons	Group reasons
Up sharply <i>(sudden positive spiritual change)</i>		
Up slowly <i>(steady growth)</i>		
Flat or down slowly <i>(little growth or waning)</i>		
Down sharply <i>(major negative spiritual change)</i>		

3. Share your responses as a group. Are any patterns emerging? As a group, record in the *last column* of the table any additional group responses.

Typically, the line jumps up following a significant spiritual experience (e.g. deciding to follow Jesus or answer to a significant prayer) and continues to grow where there is effort. On the other hand, the line drops away when you become complacent or following a significant test of your faith.

It seems obvious that if we want to grow, we do the things that help our lines rise, and avoid or react quickly to the things that make them drop.

4. Why do you think people become complacent in their efforts to follow Jesus?
5. We are talking here mainly about things that we can do. What part does the Holy Spirit play in our spiritual growth?
6. How important to our growth is stepping out in faith, saying 'yes' to God?
7. What do you think are the main ways Satan attempts to ruin your spiritual enthusiasm?
8. Based on your timelines, what should you do if you are struggling with your relationship with God?

Anyone who has ever tried to improve their fitness will understand the benefits of having a training partner or being part of a team. The same concept applies to being a dynamic disciple. How much would you grow if you were involved in a relationship with someone who held you accountable for your spiritual growth? We call such a relationship a spiritual partner (or mentor if it is one way).

9. What experiences do people have of spiritual partners (or mentors)?
10. What emotions do you feel when you consider the idea of meeting regularly with someone to hold each other accountable (e.g. anticipation, fear)?

Reflect

Paul tells us to press on, because becoming all Jesus wants us to be takes time and effort, and Satan is out to stop us. We've tracked our spiritual journey, recognising what has led to our spiritual growth (and decline).

Where is your timeline right now and perhaps more importantly, which direction is the line moving?

If it is tracking upwards strongly – great! Thank God for all He is doing in your life, but watch out, because Satan will be knocking.

Is your line pretty flat? How is God speaking to you about increasing your dynamism? What do you need to do to say 'yes' to God?

Perhaps your line has actually dropped and you are experiencing a real spiritual low at the moment? Are you discouraged? Pour out your heart to God, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you again now.

Apply

What will you commit to doing to improve and sustain your spiritual growth?

How do you feel about seeking a spiritual partner? Is there someone you think you could be honest with?

Is the Holy Spirit challenging you about behaviours that you know are dragging you down – perhaps deliberate sin or excessive involvement with people who are not good for you. Ask Jesus to forgive you and commit to changing these circumstances.

Pray

- Thanks for what we have learned and shared through this study series
- For perseverance to continue the habits and actions we have committed to
- For us all to press on towards Jesus

Going Deeper

- If you want to meet with a spiritual partner, use the starter's kit available with the Territorial Strategic Mission Plan resources.

Tips on How to Lead an Effective Study

Approach

These studies take into account some specific findings about how people learn, including that learners:

- ❑ are now-oriented – so we start with a few open questions to engage them
- ❑ learn best by saying and doing, not listening – so our studies are based around discussion, with only short comments or readings. We encourage the leader to facilitate more than teach
- ❑ bring experience – so we invite (expect?) most of the learning to come from discussions in the group, rather than new content in the study
- ❑ are self-directed – so we include a chance for them to apply their learning, individually.

The Need to Stimulate Interaction

One of the primary objectives of small groups is the application of the truth (James 1:22). Remember that people learn best by relating the learning to their own experiences and besides, our experiences also benefit each other.

For this reason, leaders should maximise interaction and use effective questioning techniques to draw out experiences and knowledge from the members, supplemented by short inputs of content. All content should then be discussed.

Of course, in preparing, you need to consider how much the members actually know about the topic as this determines how much content you suggest compared to how much you extract from the members.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE INTERACTION?

1. Set up the room as a circle so that everyone including the leader is facing each other.
2. Gather information by asking open questions which encourage people to expand and cannot be answered with yes or no.
3. Be careful with 'why' as it can sound aggressive and may make people feel defensive. Rather than 'Why did you do that?', try 'What were your reasons for doing that?'

4. Use 'rebound' and 'boomerang' questions to have other group members answer questions before you do (e.g. 'What do others think?'; 'Does anyone have a different idea we should consider?').
5. Use closed questions only to check information or to cut someone off when you need to regain control (e.g. 'So you had a good time then?').
6. Watch for those who would like to participate and ask for their contribution. Read faces and body language.
7. See that everyone is involved in the discussion and has a chance to share.
8. Guide the discussion by switching from one person to another. Interject your viewpoint and experience occasionally.

COMMON MISTAKES THAT PREVENT INTERACTION?

1. Set up the room so that the leader is clearly separated from the other group members, and have the group members sitting in rows so that they can't easily see each other.
2. Ask lots of questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.
3. Ask complex questions that no-one knows the answer to.
4. Answer all questions asked of you – and a few you ask of others as well.
5. Be afraid of silence. Don't give people time to think.
6. Pick on people and keep asking them questions. Pressure people to pray, read or speak.
7. Ask rhetorical questions. Anticipate when people want to answer a question then move on quickly.
8. Try to maintain control. Prevent all tangents as soon as you notice the conversation taking off.
9. Make questions sound conversational.
10. Ensure the group knows that you know all the answers.
11. Criticise people and allow people in the group to criticise others as well.
12. Be more interested in getting through the material than in the people who are present.
13. Share your viewpoint first.