

A close-up photograph of a person's hand cupped together, with a single drop of water falling from the fingers. Below the hand, a small green seedling with two leaves grows out of a mound of dark, rich soil. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The entire image is framed by a white border.

# EQUIPPING

A *CLOSER* Look At  
**LEADERSHIP**





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In John 17:17, Jesus prayed for his disciples, "Sanctify them in truth, your Word is truth." To sanctify is to set apart. As disciples of Jesus, we are to be set apart from the world and set apart to the Father. We are to be different from the world around us. Discipleship is about coming alongside another believer for the purpose of seeing transformation in their life according to God's Word. Discipleship is about transformation.

Now, that is a simple definition, but not simple to do. Think about it, in order for a leader to guide another person towards change, they have to be a trusted person in their life, they have to be able to assess a situation with a biblical lens, and they have to be able to ask the right questions. A disciple maker acts as a trusted friend, shepherd, guide, coach, and even consultant at times. So discipleship is not simply studying together, it's the art of making a real connection with them for the purpose of pointing the way.

## WEEK 1 :: LEADING

1 Peter 5:1-8, Ezekiel 34:1-6

## WEEK 2 :: COACHING

Acts 20:17-27

## WEEK 3 :: TEACHING

2 Timothy 2:14-21

## WEEK 4 :: CONSULTING

Acts 20:28-35



To You, Dear Disciple:

At its core, the CLOSER method is a way of studying your Bible. CLOSER is an acronym for a series of questions and exercises designed to lead you into a deeper understanding of God's Word.

However, knowledge is not the goal. The goal is transformation that leads to multiplication. Jesus called us to not only be disciples, but to be disciple-makers (Matthew 4:19 and 28:19-20).

Simply put, discipleship is teaching others to follow Jesus.

So this book is meant to be done with a partner. Whether you are in need of discipleship or you are ready to disciple someone, reach out and ask someone to study along with you. You might be using this workbook in a CLOSER group- and that's great. If you aren't in a CLOSER group or connected with anyone right now, be encouraged to find a partner today. Making the journey with a friend makes it so much richer.

Either way, my prayer is that you will be blessed in this time of self-study. The Lord is worth pursuing and his people are worth serving. Let's be intentional about growing closer to Him and to each other.

Much Love In Him,

Julie Keeler

*CLOSER Creator and Author*

# The CLOSER Method

*CLOSER is an acronym for a series of questions and exercises designed to lead you into a richer understanding of God's Word. Whether you are brand new to Bible studies or have been a believer a long time, this method will help you to discover truths about God and His Word. Take a look at the types of questions you will find...*

## CONTEXT

Reading about a time period and culture that is so different than our own can be fascinating and bring clarity. When you consider the circumstances of the people and the historical context of the text you are reading, you are more likely to understand the true meaning intended by the author.

## LOOK

Simply skimming God's Word isn't enough to gain a good understanding of who He is and what He is doing. This section will prompt you to look closely at each line of His Word through the use of key words.

## OBSERVE

Once you have examined each line of the text, you will be guided to make specific observations that are important to the topic.

## SUMMARIZE

By this point, you have probably observed some new truths that have interested you. Take some time here to put it all together in your own words.

## EXPAND

You are part of the story, too. View the storyline of the Bible to include you. Thoughtfully consider how God is using you to continue to accomplish his big plan for the world.

## REMEMBER

Prayer and Bible memorization are powerful tools for growth. This section will help you to connect with God, remember what you learned, and apply it to your life.



# WEEK 1 LEADING



## OPENING QUESTION

What do you know about the Holy Spirit?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## *The Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is one part of the Trinity we don't spend much time on. Perhaps the words 'Holy Ghost' spooked us. But, the truth is, it is just as important as God the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit was active in creation. He was also the source of Jesus' power during his ministry on earth. Jesus was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is our new power source for living this new life.

The Holy Spirit was promised to dwell in man all the way back in the days of Joel the prophet (2:28-29). Jesus comforted his disciples by letting them know that his death must come to pass so *that* the Holy Spirit could come (John 14:25-29). He is going to lead us in truth, lead us in how to pray, lead us in how to get our needs met by God, and lead us in our walk with the Lord. He is our power for sanctification.

# A CLOSER Look at Leading

## Context :: Galatians

The church in Galatia was started by Paul during his second missionary journey. After Paul's departure, the same false teachers that were in Jerusalem came to Galatia. In Galatians, Paul teaches the believers about the true power for sanctification: the Holy Spirit.

## Look

Read through Galatians 5:16-26 in the margin. As you read, look for the words *Spirit* and *flesh*. Underline them or circle them.

## Observe

What does Paul say is the answer to not indulging our sinful desires ("the flesh") in vs. 16?

What is the problem with our flesh according to verse 17?

Read Galatians 5:13-15 in your Bible.

- How does Paul sum up the work of the Spirit in vs. 14?
- What is a practical way to practice walking in the Spirit as mentioned in vs. 13?

## Galatians 5:16-26 ESV

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.



## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 1.

Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

1

### *Words to Define*

flesh:

work:

fruit:

## *Summarize*

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new power, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### KEY TRUTH for GROWTH #1

Our new power source for growth is the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

# *A CLOSER Look at Leading*

## *Expand*

How have you seen the Holy Spirit guiding you in your life?

How have you seen yourself using your own effort to "perfect" you rather than listening to the Holy Spirit guiding you?

Based on these verses, how would you describe walking by the Spirit? How is this different than just being good? See vs. 25.

## *Remember*

Write Galatians 5:16 here and commit it to memory this week.

Watch for the Holy Spirit nudging you to do or not do something. Share an experience of walking by the Spirit this week.



# WEEK 2 COACHING



## OPENING QUESTION

What are some things in your life that you consider to be a privilege?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## Privileges

Learning to live a life for God takes a renewed mindset and a will that is dependent on the Lord. In other words, it takes us saturating ourselves in His Word and in prayer so that we will know which way He is leading us. We could say that the Word and prayer are our new lifelines for living a righteous life.

*That is one way to look at it.*

Another way is to see the Word of God and prayer as two very great privileges. Think about it: the God of the universe wants to communicate with you! He has shared His heart, His will, and His character with mankind and written it all down for us to read and listen to whenever we want! He has also made a way for us to talk to him. When we are hurt, scared, sorrowful, or just plain need something, we can go to GOD. That's amazing grace!

Just like in our relationships with others, most of us tend to lean more towards listening or speaking. Both of them are needed, but it is not good when they get out of balance. Just like Bible study and prayer.

Lee Turner says, "Balance prayer with Bible study. Bible study without prayer leads to intellectual coldness. However, prayer without a knowledge of the Word leads to fanaticism and mysticism that will not radiate the beauty of Christ in our life."

We need to understand and practice both equally in order to live this new life well.

# A CLOSER Look at Coaching

## Context :: The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus teaches His disciples about the Word and about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5 he gives guidelines for interpreting God's Word. In Matthew 6, Jesus gives guidelines for prayer.

## Look

Read Matthew 6:9-13 in the margin. As you read, look for phrases that could be considered praise, confession, prayer for self, and prayer for others. Underline or circle them.

## Observe

What are some guidelines for prayer that Jesus gives in Matthew 6:5-8?

Take a few minutes to read through Matthew 5, then answer the following questions.

- Did Jesus seem more concerned with knowledge or understanding? How do you know?
- Did Jesus want God's Word to evoke outward rule following or inward transformation? How do you know?

According to Romans 12:2, what happens when we renew our mind?

What does John 17:17 teach us about God's Word?

## Matthew 6:5-13 ESV

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

:



## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 2.  
Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

2

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new privileges, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### Words to Define

praise:

confession::

intercession:

petition:

meditation::

### KEY TRUTH for GROWTH #2

Studying the Word of God and prayer are our new privileges and are our lifelines for growth.

# *A CLOSER Look at Coaching*

## *Expand*

What are some practical ways to renew your mind?

How can you use the types of questions you see in this study (Line by Line, Observe, Remember, etc.) to help you study God's Word?

How has this study shown you the importance of understanding God's Word?

What are some practical tips for making prayer a priority?

Devotions, also known as quiet time, is taking time each day alone with the Lord to read your Bible and to pray. What are some of your biggest obstacles to having your devotions or what do you think your obstacles will be? What can you do to help yourself?

## *Remember*

Write Romans 12:2 here and commit it to memory this week.

If you don't already, start having your devotions. If you are new to Bible reading, find a partner in your group to help you get started. Make sure to balance your time between Bible study and prayer.



# WEEK 3 TEACHING



## OPENING QUESTION

What do you think of when you think of the word **service**?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## CHURCH

When we think of church, we often think of a building or an event we attend on Sundays. However, the church is God's people. Not a building or a place, but a living community. There is the global church which is made up of all believers everywhere and then there is the local church which is made up of the community of believers who attend church with you on Sundays.

Lee Turner, author of *The Grace Discipleship Course* says, "The church is a supernatural, unique creation designed to function harmoniously as a living body made up of believers." So, as members of the church, we have a job to do to help the church function the way that it should. You may feel ill equipped to do this, but at the moment of salvation, God gave you spiritual ability to do your unique job. The Bible calls this our spiritual gift. This week, you will learn about the importance of using your gift to serve within your local church and beyond.

# A CLOSER Look at Teaching

## Context :: Paul's Case

In the book of Romans, Paul makes a solid case for Christianity. After the first 11 chapters of building his case, he starts Roman's 12 with a therefore clause. After building up to it for eleven chapters, Paul lands here. This is his big takeaway. Let's take a look.

## Look

Read Romans 12:1-8 in the margin. As you read, look for sacrifice, worship, the will of God, body, and members. Underline or circle them.

## Observe

Do you see how Paul connects the Father's will with serving in the church? See vs. 1 and 6. Explain the connection here:

What are some of the gifts mentioned in verses 6-8?

Even though we differ in our giftedness, how are we the same? See vs. 5.

How should this affect our attitude towards our giftedness? See vs. 3-4.

## Romans 12:1-8 ESV

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers (and sisters) by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 3.  
Take notes from the video here:

## WEEK 3

### Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new service, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### Words to Define

church:

measure of faith:

gifts of the Spirit:

### KEY TRUTH for GROWTH #3

Using your gifts within your local church or the global church will help you to better understand God's will for your life.



# *A CLOSER Look at Teaching*

## *Expand*

What are your spiritual gifts? Write them here. Not sure? Take a spiritual gift inventory to help. We have one on our website under our Discipleship Path. Check it out. Once you are done, write the results here:

How are you using your gift or how can you begin using your gift? Who do you need to talk to in order to make this happen?

If you are using your gift, how do you see it confirming God's will for your life?

## *Remember*

Write Romans 12:1 here and commit it to memory this week.

Write a prayer to the Father asking Him to bring people, experiences, and truths into your life that will help you to grow in the use of your gift.

# WEEK 4 CONSULTING



## OPENING QUESTION

What can keep a person from growing spiritually?

OR

Share something you did from last week's homework.

## SANCTIFICATION

Spiritual growth is our new objective. We are to become more and more like Jesus. The Bible calls this sanctification.

There is a wrong way and a right way to sanctification. Since the beginning of time, man has made the mistake of trying to please God through externalism. Meaning, we have tried to keep rules in order to impress God or to make more of ourselves in comparison to others (Luke 11:42-44). God is not interested in these kinds of work. In fact, he calls them filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

God is interested in the heart (Jeremiah 9:23-26). Through Christ, we have been purified within. Now, our job is to live that purity out. We are to make our actions increasingly align with our new heart. We do that through challenging our motives, confessing our sin, and renewing our minds with the truth in God's Word. This is the process to which we grow and become sanctified.

# A CLOSER Look at Consulting

## Context :: FALSE TEACHING

Soon after Jesus ascended and the apostles were charged with spreading the Gospel, new groups with false teachings sprung up in the church. Most of these false teachings were based on an external mindset rather than on a mind set on Christ, who is within us. Paul's epistles address this mindset.

## Look

Read Galatians 3:1-3 and Colossians 2:20-23 in the margin. As you read, look for the words Spirit (not spirits), faith, and flesh. Underline or circle them.

## Observe

According to Galatians 3:3, what were the Galatians guilty of doing?

What is Paul implying about how we are to grow? Is it by the flesh or by the Spirit?

According to Colossians 2:20, to what did we die?

According to 2:21-22, what do these things look like?

According to 2:23, what is the problem with them?

## Galatians 3:1-3 ESV

○ foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

## Colossians 2:20-23 ESV

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

## STOP.

Watch the video from Week 4.  
Take notes from the video here:

WEEK

4

## Summarize

Now that you have studied your Bible and watched a teaching on the topic of our new growth, summarize in two-three sentences what you have learned. Focus specifically on new things that you learned and what you want to remember.

### Words to Define

The Law:

flesh:

sanctification:

externalism:

### KEY TRUTH for GROWTH #4

The law is holy but weakened by the flesh. Our only means of lasting growth is through the Holy Spirit. True growth happens from the inside out.

# *A CLOSER Look at Consulting*

## *Expand*

Does it encourage or discourage you to know that you are to grow to become more like Jesus?

What struggles do you know that you will need to overcome in order to grow more like Him?

How do you find yourself making "laws" to overcome these struggles?

## *Remember*

Write Romans 8:4 here and commit it to memory this week.

Write a prayer asking the Lord to help you to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.