

YOUR JOURNEY



first
STEP



next
STEPS

bethel
making disciples





first
STEP

A NOTE FROM DAVE

I am excited that you are taking your “first step” in this part of your spiritual journey with God. For many of us in the Lord’s “army” here at Bethel church there is nothing more thrilling than seeing the work of God evidenced in people as they say “Yes Sir” to Him. Your willingness to step into this adventure suggests that you are learning to follow Him, that you are learning to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus. In this “first step” you will learn a little more about Jesus and Bethel Church.

If you’ve been around here even for a little while you know that the short form of our church purpose statement is “making disciples”. Jesus gave us that command, of course, but He also gave to those who follow Him, to those who are His disciples, special promises.

Here are two of those:

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Like the pillar of fire gave light to the Israelites as they followed it, so our Lord promises that as we follow Him in this dark world we will never walk in darkness but have His light to guide us.

John 8:31-32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

As Jesus’ disciples we choose to live by His teachings. As we do that we prove that we are really His followers and the truth we learn from Him unshackles us from the chains of this world’s lies. The Lord will fulfill His promises to you as you to continue follow Him. His radiance will “light up your life” and His truth will set you free. Take this first step. And then continue to walk with Him!

BETHEL'S PURPOSE

Our purpose is pretty simple: **"make disciples"**

Or in long form: **Building a community of whole people who, through devotion to Jesus Christ, are learning to live every day by the word of God.**

We don't just want a lot of people to come to church, we want to see lives transformed through people becoming disciples of Jesus.

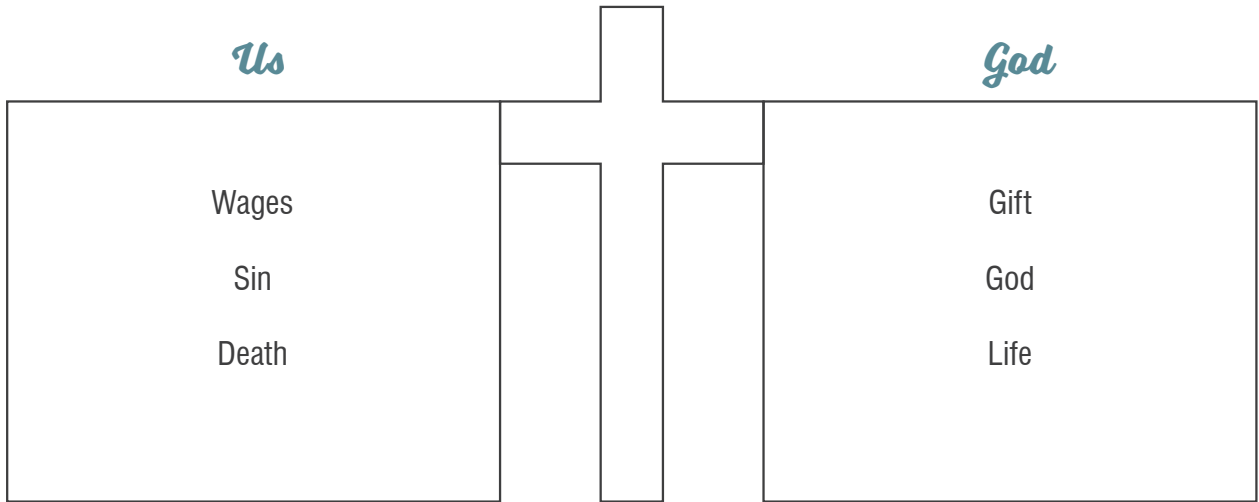
So What is a Disciple?



Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A _____ B _____ C _____




Baptism

Loves the Lord with every aspect of one's being, delighting in a growing, intimate relationship with Him.

1

Declares one's relationship with God through Baptism.

4

GROW ^A BETHEL 

☺ _____

☺ _____

• In so doing we make a _____

Baptism is a step of obedience. _____ of your inward commitment to Jesus Christ.

R RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

Community

Loves other believers as Christ loves.

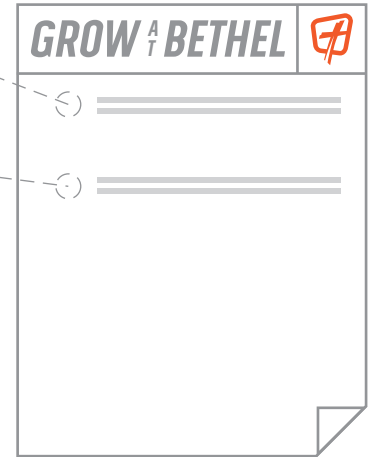
1

Devotes oneself to a local church meeting regularly and supporting it's leadership and direction.

3

- Believers need a _____ . *Hebrews 13:17*
- Believers need to _____ .
(join a local church) *1 Corinthians 12:12,27*
- Believers need _____ in order to _____ .
_____ . *Hebrews 10:23-25*
- Believers need to discover what they are _____ .
- Believers need to get in the game and _____ .

As a first step in belonging to our community we encourage you to attend Sunday services regularly



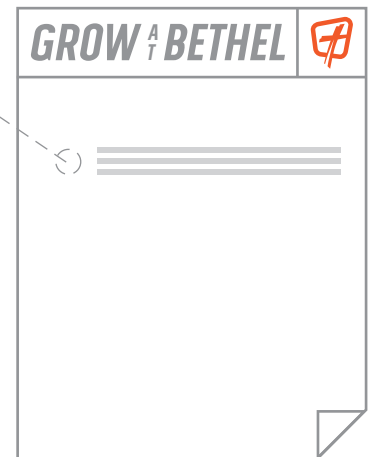
Small Groups

Invests energy and time in building true and authentic relationships with other believers in order to stimulate spiritual growth in one another.

2

- Connect in _____ . *Acts 2:42-47*
- Commit to _____ in Christ. *John 15:1-11*
- Contribute to our _____ . *Ephesians 2:1*

As a next step in belonging to our community we encourage you to connect regularly in a small group



0 OBEDIENT FOLLOWER

Actions and Attitudes

Surrenders ownership of all goals, plans, relationships, expectations, possessions, and all other aspects of one's life to Jesus.

5

Believes the Bible is accurate and true communicated from God, the authority for who He is and how we should live.

2

- _____ on what you see and hear in God's word

Patterns one's life in a purposeful and determined manner, according to the life and teachings of Jesus

3

- Creating a plan for _____ and _____ .

GROW ^A BETHEL 

W WORLD INFLUENCER

Change the World


Influences the world in the name of Jesus to bring glory to God.

1

Watches for and seizes opportunities to share the Gospel

7

- _____ what Jesus has done for you.

GROW ^A BETHEL 

BETHEL DNA

We seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ, not merely gather a crowd or accumulate converts. (We are about building followers of Jesus who are **G**od-lovers, **R**elationship-builders, **O**bedient-followers, and **W**orld-influencers.) (*Matt. 28:18-20*)

Disciples are **GROW**n, they don't just "happen". (We will develop intentional, strategic, focused ministries to **GROW** followers.) (*Matt. 4:19; Luke 14:26-37*)

G - Disciples **GROW** by feeding themselves with and guiding their lives by **G**od's Word, not people's opinions. (God's truth will be presented in an orderly, expository manner; we will provoke each other to read the Bible daily.) (*Matt. 4:4*)

R - Disciples **GROW** best working together in **R**elationships, not sitting alone on the sidelines. (We will gather in small groups and serve in ministries aligned with our giftedness.) (*Mark 3:14; Acts 20:20; Rom. 12:2-8; I Pet. 4:10*)

O - Disciples **GROW** through **O**bedience with actions and attitudes, not merely words. (Our leaders must model transparency, integrity, humility, servant-hood, working hard, and doing their best.) (*I Pet. 5:1-3; Heb. 13:7*)

W - Disciples **GROW**, by the power of the gospel, to change the **W**orld, not conform to it. (Disciples aid captives, build churches and help change worldly cultures to God-honoring cultures. They are light in the darkness and the salt of the earth.) (*Matt. 5:13-16; Rom. 1:16; 12:1-2*)



NEXT STEPS CLASS

Start GROWing

Taking intentional steps of GROWth is the key to deepening your faith. Wherever you are in your spiritual journey – just starting out or seasoned – Bethel has a challenging Next Step of GROWth!

Maybe you are ready to move on...if so...**NEXT STEPS** is for you. It's for you if you...

- Have a _____ with Christ
- Are or plan on being _____
- Are part of a _____ or plan to be in one
- Plan on becoming a _____ at Bethel

The **NEXT STEPS** curriculum is written with the hopes that you would venture out and take the “next steps” to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. The class spans 4 weeks and includes weekly classroom sessions with a **NEXT STEPS** facilitator. The studies cover the core of who we are as a church. You will dig deeper into our description of a disciple: God Lover, Relationship Builder, Obedient Follower, and World Influencer. As you dig into these principles, our hope as a church is that you will not only become a disciple but that you would “make disciples!”

A Word About Membership

Those who pursue membership at Bethel are not looking for a card in the mail or voting rights. Membership means that you are committing to be part of our purpose to “make disciples”. It shows you are no longer here to be a consumer of services, but that you want to reach the Tri-Cities, and indeed our entire world, with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Membership – What Does It Take?

- Attend First Step
- Complete Next Steps
- Get involved in a small group / Get Small Group Recommendation
- Affirm that you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- Affirm you have been Biblically Baptized
- Affirm you are in a Small Group
- Affirm the Bethel Covenant and attend Elder interview





next
STEPS

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INTRODUCTION TO NEXT STEPS

We're delighted that God has brought you to Bethel. We're also glad that you want to take "next steps" in following Christ and in your relationship with Bethel.

People who attend Bethel come from a variety of backgrounds. We vary in age, previous church experience, familiarity with Scripture, training in discipleship, understanding of church membership, and level of commitment. These differences, along with the fact that it is difficult for us to get to know everyone well, make it necessary to establish a common ground of understanding as the basis for church life. The intent of this material and the Next Steps class is to provide a core of understanding for people who consider Bethel their church home.

Next Steps contains a session on each component Bethel's acronym for discipleship: GROW. Our desire is for people at Bethel to become **G**od lovers, **R**elationship builders, **O**bedient followers of Christ, and **W**orld influencers for Christ. Each session consists of three sections: personal study, presentation of material, and discussion questions.

Personal Study: Personal reflection on Scriptures related to the topic helps you engage the subject on your own. The reflection questions follow the SOAP format: Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. If you are taking the Next Steps class, the intent is for you to complete the personal study on your own before class.

Presentation: Presentation Material: Whether guided by a facilitator in the Next Steps class or reading on your own, you will get an overview of discipleship topics that are emphasized at Bethel. Included in this overview will be biblical convictions, Bethel's view or approach, and specific illustrations or examples that are commonly used at Bethel.

Discussion Questions: Most of the questions at the end of each session ask for a personal response to the material you have considered. In the Next Steps class, table groups will discuss these questions. Your personal response to each question is important.

Membership: Completion of the Next Steps material is a requirement for membership at Bethel, but you will find the material beneficial even if you are not considering becoming an official member of Bethel at this time. If you are interested in becoming a Bethel member, the Membership section contains the information you will need. We hope that is a step the Lord leads you to take.





SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER



Our purpose is pretty simple: **"make disciples"**

Our definition of a disciple of Jesus is the acrostic GROW. A disciple is a

God Lover | **R**elationship Builder | **O**bedient Follower | **W**orld Influencer

The **G** in GROW stands for **God Lover**. A disciple has a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and expresses love for God in many ways.

Personal Study

Scripture: **I John 4:19** We love because He first loved us.

Observation: What prompts us to love God? _____
What is the ultimate expression of God's love for us? _____

Application: What are some ways in which God has loved you that make you want to love Him? _____

Prayer: Thank God for what He has done for you in Christ. Thank Him for the other ways He has shown that He loves you. Express your love to Him.

Scripture: **Matt 22:34-40**

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law. And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Observation: What did Jesus mean by saying that all the Law and the Prophets depend on loving God and loving your neighbor?

Application: What are some things you can do to love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind?

Prayer: Ask God to help you get to know Him and to love Him with all your heart and soul and mind.



SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER



Scripture: **Psalm 1:1-3**

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Observation: What is a God lover’s attitude and action toward the Bible, God’s Word?

Application: What benefits have you seen from reading and meditating on God’s Word?

How could you meditate on God’s Word more effectively?

Prayer: Thank God for the opportunity to know Him and hear from Him through His Word. Thank Him for the benefits you have experienced through delighting in, meditating on, and obeying His Word.

One of the ways a disciple expresses love for God is through prayer. Review the following verses. How are we to pray?

Psalm 145:2

Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Colossians 4:2

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Psalm 32:5

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Eph 1:16

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.



SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER

I Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing

Matthew 21:22

And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

James 4:3

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

I John 5:14

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

Psalms 66:18

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Aspects of being a God lover

A disciple...

- ...knows and relates with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Who exist as one eternal being.
- ...has faith in Jesus Christ, believing in His death and resurrection, turning away from sin, and receiving Him alone as personal Savior.
- ...declares his or her relationship with God through baptism.
- ...pursues a continual, intimate relationship with God through prayer, Scripture, and listening to Him.
- ...yields to and relies on the Holy Spirit for power to do His work.
- ...worships God by wholeheartedly expressing adoration and thanksgiving in words, actions, and attitudes.
- ...pleases God by yielding one's life in obedience through faith.
- ...rejoices in the Lord and is content in every circumstance.



SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER



Devotional Life

Loving God with your whole heart involves spending time with Him regularly in prayer and meditation on Scripture. To grow as a disciple, do the following:

Set a Time and Place: When are you going to read, meditate, and pray on a regular basis? It is best to have an unhurried time in a quiet place with few distractions.

Select a Reading Plan: The length of each day's reading can be anywhere from a few verses to several chapters. Many Bible reading guides are available, or you can plan your own reading. Many people at Bethel use the One Year Bible or a similar plan. Visit www.biblegateway.com/readingplans for additional suggestions.

Meditate on Scripture and Application: The intent is not just to get through the reading, but to discover what God has for you in it. Write down thoughts and impressions that God gives you as you read. Good things to look for are in the acronym S.O.A.P. that we use in the personal study portion of each session.

Scripture: Open your Bible to the reading found under today's date of your Reading Plan. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

Observation: What do you think God is saying to you in this Scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words, in your journal.

Application: Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

Prayer : This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out. If this seems a little overwhelming, take it slow and keep it simple.



SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER

Pray: In addition to praying about what you have read, it is a good practice to spend time talking with God about other things. Some people use the ACTS outline as they pray:

Adoration: Praise God and affirm your love for Him and commitment to Him.

Confession: Acknowledge your failures and shortcomings. Repent and thank God for forgiving you.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for the eternal things He reveals to us in Scripture, the big blessings in your life, and the immediate things you are experiencing.

Supplication: Ask God for the things you need and the things He wants to do in your life, your family, your church, other people, and around the world. Keep a list of the things He impresses you to request. Note how He answers them.

Bethel Beliefs

Loving God with your whole mind includes thinking rightly about Him and His Word. Our authority is the Scripture. Bethel's statement of beliefs is not a creed that we have adopted, but a brief summary of what we understand the Bible to teach about important aspects of its message. We understand that what we express in this statement is limited in scope and precision. However it is intended to communicate what we understand the Scripture to clearly teach. These truths will be taught at Bethel as non-negotiable.

Statement of Faith

Section 1 - The Scripture: We believe the Bible and only the Bible to be God's infallible Word and the Christian's supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. We affirm our belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scripture in their original autographs. (*II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; I Peter 1:25*)

Section 2 - God and the Trinity: We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While its members possess individual, personal attributes, the Trinity is without division of nature, essence, or being. (*Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 4:24; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 4:13*)

Section 3 - Jesus Christ: We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, sinless in life, who atoned for the sins of the world by His substitutionary death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His High Priestly intercession for His people. (*Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; Acts 1:9-11; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1-2*)



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Section 4 - The Holy Spirit: We believe the Holy Spirit to be the third person in the Trinity, whose ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. During this age, the Holy Spirit draws men unto God; convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and indwells, guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for godly service. (*John 14:16-17, 26; 16:8-15; Romans 5:5; 8:9-11; I Corinthians 3:16; 12:12-14; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 28:19-20*)

Section 5 - Man: We believe that Adam was created in the image of God but fell into sin and that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and therefore, lost. However, we believe that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). We believe that those who accept Christ as Savior and Lord shall be forever in God’s presence and those who reject Christ as Savior and Lord will be forever separated from God and be cast into the lake of fire for eternal punishment. (*Genesis 1:26-27; Mark 9:43-44; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:15*)

Section 6 - Salvation: We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ provides the only ground for salvation for all who believe. Only those who receive Jesus Christ and are born of the Holy Spirit can thus become children of God. (*John 1:12; 3:16; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 5:1; 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 1:5-8; Hebrews 9:22; I Peter 1:18-19; 2:24*)

Section 7 - Satan: We believe in the reality of Satan as a personal angelic being who has fallen from his original state of heavenly glory and is now the prince of the corrupt, anti-God world system. We believe in Satan’s final and eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire. (*Revelation 20:10; Ephesians 2:2; II Corinthians 4:4; Ezekiel 28:11-19; John 14:30; Job 1:12; 2:6*)

Section 8 - The Church: We believe that the true Church is composed of all persons who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of members of the true Church. These shall be eligible for membership in the local church. (*Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 12:12-13; II Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 4:4-6,15-16*)

Section 9 - The Ordinances: We believe that baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in testimony of a person’s faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Christ. It is a confession that the believer is dead to sin and risen to newness of life in Christ Jesus. We believe that the Lord’s Supper is a commemoration of the Lord’s death “till He come.” (*Matthew 28:19; 26:26-30; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Section 10 - The Priesthood of the Believer: We believe all people who are born of God have equality of direct access to God’s ear and heart, and there is no distinction between people in their exercise of that priesthood in their personal relationships with the Lord. (*I Peter 2:5, 9; Hebrews 4:14-16; 2:10-18; Revelation 1:6*)



SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER

Section 11 - The Last Things: We believe in “that blessed hope” (Titus 2:13) the personal, visible, pre-millennial return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (*Zechariah 14:4-11; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15*)

Baptism

Bethel's position on baptism requires a bit more explanation. Bethel has several primary beliefs regarding baptism:

1. Baptism is a step of obedience: In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded His disciples “...make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” In the New Testament, the first thing that people did after believing was to get baptized.

2. Baptism is a symbolic expression: It is a declaration of faith and new life in Christ. It does not change a person's standing with God, but is a symbolic testimony of what has happened in his or her life. When a person gets baptized they are showing a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is also an expression of commitment. A person who is being baptized is expressing the following:

- I am obeying the Lord's command.
- I have been born again through faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
- I pledge myself to walk as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- I have become a part of the body of Christ; I identify with and commit myself to other Christians.

3. Baptism is for believers only: The standard practice in the New Testament was to baptize new believers. The only person who should be baptized is one who has been born again by personally accepting Christ's death for his or her sins and is living a life in fellowship with Him. Someone who was baptized prior to receiving Christ as personal Savior has not yet experienced biblical baptism. We baptize believers on the basis of their profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Baptism is done by immersion: Although arguments can and have been made regarding the mode of baptism, believer baptism by immersion is a membership requirement at Bethel. Here are the reasons for baptism by immersion:

- It appears to be the practice in the New Testament (Acts 8:38, Matt 3:16, Mark 1:5, Col 2:12).
- The Greek word transliterated “baptize” means “to dip or immerse.”
- Immersion clearly symbolizes death to an old life, burial, and resurrection to a new life in Christ.



SESSION ONE: GOD LOVER



Communion

Because of Christ's death on the cross, you are able to have an abundant life. Jesus wanted us to remember what He did for us on the cross, so He instituted what is called communion or the Lord's Supper (Matt 26:26-29). We believe that communion is both a joyous celebration of what Jesus did for us and a serious remembrance of what it cost Him. The practice of communion varies from church to church. Bethel's belief and practice about communion can be summarized as:

- 1. Communion is symbolic:** The bread and wine (juice) represent the body and blood of Christ shed for us, but do not have power in themselves.
- 2. The purpose is to remember and proclaim the death of Christ:** And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (I Cor 11:23-26).
- 3. Only believers should partake of communion:** "Partaking" of Christ's body is for those who have responded to what He did for them through his broken body and shed blood by turning from their sin and putting their faith and hope in Jesus. All Christians are invited to participate in communion at Bethel. Parents are asked to allow their children to participate only if they have determined that they have received the Lord and understand what communion signifies.
- 4. Believers should confess their sin before taking communion:** Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died. (I Cor 11:28-30).

Discussion

Because of Christ's death on the cross, you are able to have an abundant life. Jesus wanted us to remember what He did for us on the cross, so He instituted what is called communion or the Lord's Supper (Matt 26:26-29). We believe that communion is both a joyous celebration of what Jesus did for us and a serious remembrance of what it cost Him. The practice of communion varies from church to church. Bethel's belief and practice about communion can be summarized as:

- 1.** What are some ways in which you could be more of a God lover? (For further exploration, take the online discipleship assessment at www.bthl.ch/assessment)
- 2.** What is your regular time, place, and reading plan for spending time with the Lord in Scripture?
- 3.** What is the greatest difficulty you face in establishing meaningful time with the Lord in Scripture and prayer?
- 4.** What questions do you have about any of the statements in Bethel's Beliefs.
- 5.** Have you been baptized? If so, share about it. If not, is it something you should pray about?



SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

At Bethel, our purpose is “making disciples.” A disciple is defined as being a

- G**od **L** _____
- R**elationship **B** _____
- O**bedient **F** _____
- W**orld **I** _____

The **R** in GROW stands for Relationship Builder. A disciple loves other believers and relates to them as other parts of Christ’s one body. Although relationships with non-believers are also important and will be covered in the World Influencer session, the Bible lays out distinctive guidance for relationships among believers.

Personal Study

Scripture: **John 13:34,35**

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Observation: What should be distinctive about the relationships among disciples of Jesus?

How is this commandment different from the Old Testament command to “love your neighbor as yourself”? _____

Application: How can your relationship with other followers of Christ be more like how Jesus related to His disciples? _____

Prayer: Thank Jesus for showing you how to love. Ask Him to give you greater love for other believers. Confess ways you have failed to love other believers well. Ask Him specifically who He wants you to be building deeper relationships with.

Scripture: **I Corinthians 12:12-27**

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves[d] or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.



SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts,[e] yet one body.21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Observation: How is Christ’s church like a body? _____

Why is it important to recognize that you are part of the same body with others who are not similar to you? _____

Application: How are you using your talents and gifting to make a needed contribution to your small group, Bethel, or the Body of Christ in general?

Prayer: Praise God for His wisdom in the way He has formed and gifted Christ’s body. Confess any ways you have failed to value others in the body who are different from you in some way. Ask Him to help you know better the specific ways He wants to use your gifts and wiring to build up His body.



SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

Scripture: **Hebrews 10:24,25**

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Observation: From this passage, what effects are disciples to have on one another?

How is this commandment different from the Old Testament command to “love your neighbor as yourself”? -----

Application: Do you attend worship services and small group regularly? -----
How can you better encourage and stir up other disciples when you meet?

Prayer: Thank God for the other believers He has put in your life, now and in the past. Pray for Bethel to be a church of healthy, deep relationships. Ask God to point out disciples you could develop relationships with to mutually stimulate love and good works.

Relationship Builder Overview

The Christian life is not an individual endeavor. Our connection with other believers is an important part of our relationship with God. The Bible calls us...

- Different *parts* or *members* in the body of Christ. (I Cor 12)
- One *new man* reconciled to God in one body through the cross (Eph 2:15,16)
- *Fellow citizens* of God’s kingdom (Eph 2:19)
- *Family members* of God’s household (Eph 2:19)
- *Living stones* used together in building a building or temple (Eph 2:20-22, I Pet 2:5)

Aspects of being a Relationship Builder

A disciple...

...loves other believers as Christ loves.

...invests energy and time in building true and authentic relationships with other believers in order to stimulate spiritual growth in one another.



SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

...devotes oneself to a local church, meeting regularly and supporting its leadership and direction.

...imitates the *example* of more mature believers and models godly living for the less mature.

...warns and *challenges* fellow believers about wrong behavior and thinking and also humbly receives correction.

...serves believers by using time and personal resources for their good.

...utilizes God-given abilities and gifts for the *building up* of God's people.

...seeks *reconciliation*, forgiving and asking forgiveness for both real and perceived offenses.

...promotes and maintains *unity* within the church.

...relates to *family members* according to biblical principles.

Building relationships is a two-way street. Many of the biblical commands to followers of Jesus are expressed as "one-anothers":

- Love one another (John 13:34)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Encourage and build up one another (I Thessalonians 5:11)
- Be hospitable to one another (I Peter 4:9)
- Teach and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
- Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another (James 5:16)

These and many other Christian responsibilities to one another are meant to build us up as individuals and as the body of Christ. They should be exhibited toward all Christians and within every church. However, many of them are difficult to fulfill apart from relationships developed through regular, extended, deeper-level interaction. At Bethel, a primary mechanism for living out the one-anothers is a small group.

Small Groups

Jesus made disciples in a small group. Although He taught crowds of people, it was in the context of the Twelve that He revealed Himself and related most deeply. The early Christians in Jerusalem also met in small groups in homes as well as gathering in public.

Acts 2:41-47

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things



SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Where did the early Christians meet?

What kinds of things did they do?

What attitudes did they exhibit?

What were the results?

Definition:

A small group is 3 or more people who meet at least once a week with the purpose of GROWing. At Bethel, small groups are the basic means through which we build relationships and make disciples. We assemble to worship in a large group setting on Sundays, and we have auxiliary structures and ministries to carry out specialized functions, but much of the core mission of the church is carried out through small groups. Our groups have three basic functions.

Community:

People have a deep need to feel that they belong. In a small group, they have opportunity to develop relationships and be knit into the purpose and identity of the church as they do the “one-anothers” commanded in scripture. The pastoral staff and elders cannot keep in touch with the needs of every member in a large church. Small groups can effectively and personally meet the personal and practical needs that arise in the lives of group members.

Action:

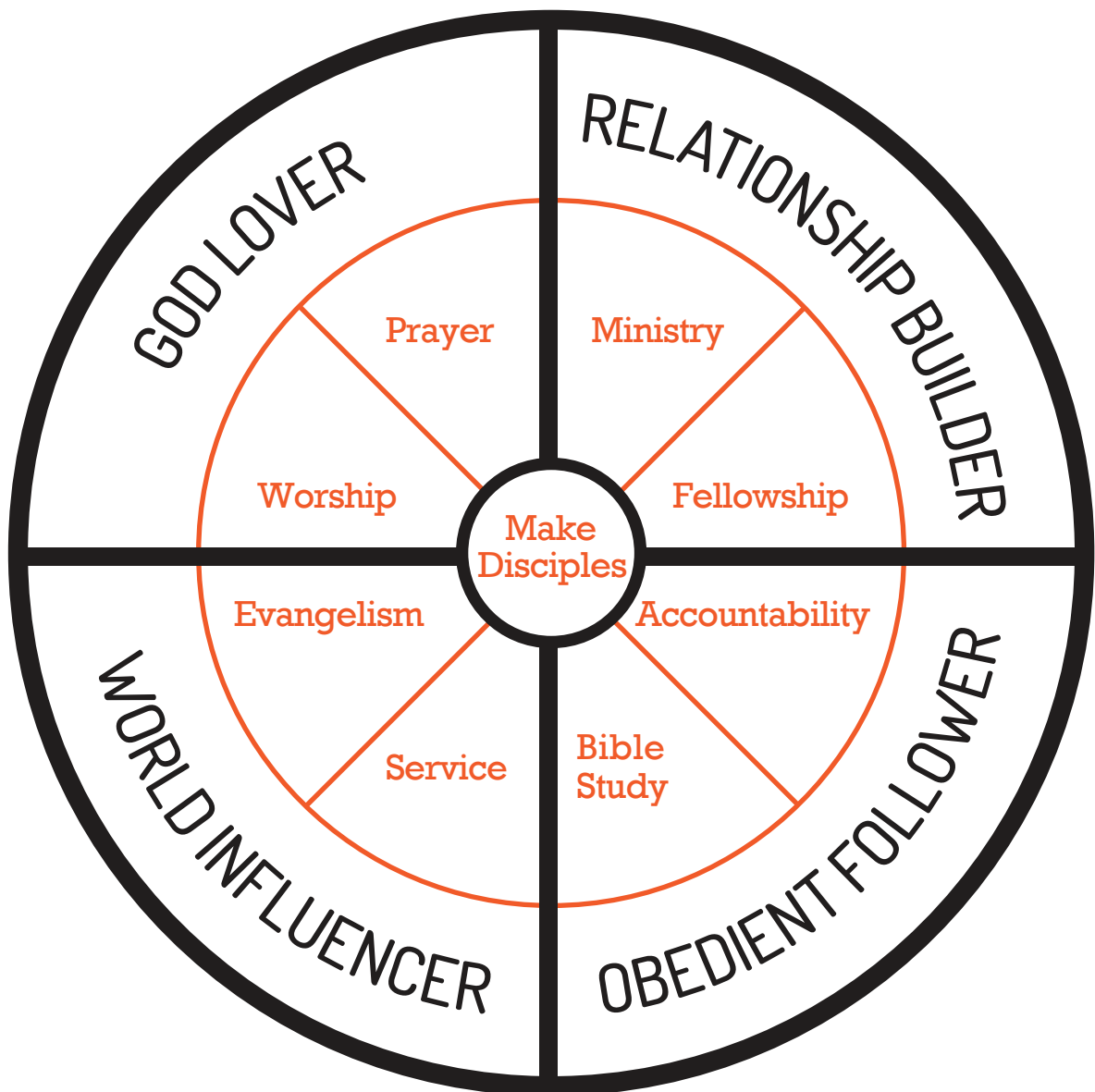
Serving and reaching out in Jesus’ name are often a group process. Small groups pray together for the lost, encourage one another in talking about Christ with others, and reach out as a group to share the Christian life with someone, and serve in the church and community together. Body life is a powerful testimony to the validity of the gospel.

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Transformation:

Jesus made disciples in the context of a small group. In small groups we can observe, interact with, pray for, teach, exhort, and encourage each individual. Each person in a Small Group should grow in knowing God and obeying Him. He or she should also develop ministry passion, spiritual gifts, and ministry skills.

The emphasis and flavor of each group will be distinctive, but the goal of each is to produce complete and balanced disciples. Over time, each group should balance all aspects of GROW in their time together. The specific components of a group will typically include worship, prayer, fellowship, ministry, accountability, Bible study, service, and evangelism.





SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

Types of Groups:

Bethel has a variety of groups:

- Adult Men and Women (In homes or at the church)
- Women's groups (Joy in the Morning, REV, and Focus)
- Men's groups (Various times and places)
- Singles groups (By age group, single mom's, divorce care)
- Young Adult groups (Mostly 20's)
- High School (Clusters by gender during the week)
- Middle School (Journey groups by gender on Sunday evenings)
- Children (In Discover Zone during Sunday services)
- Smaller groups (Unpublicized groups using the U+2 strategy of meeting w/ three or more friends or family)

Get in a Group:

Here are some ways you can find the right group for you.

- Check the open groups on the web site (bthl.ch/groups).
- Call the church office to contact the relevant ministry leader (628-0150).
- Ask an individual group leader or someone in a group about their group.
- Start a group using the U+2 strategy of meeting with two or more friends, family, or co-workers (Starter kits available through the church office).

Spiritual Gifts

Another component of being a relationship builder is an understanding and proper use of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts help you know how best to love and serve the body of Christ. They also help you understand and appreciate differences among believers.

What is a spiritual gift?

A spiritual gift is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit and distributed to each believer according to God's design for the common good of the body of Christ.

Two of the primary passages of Scripture addressing spiritual gifts are:

I Cor 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge



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according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Rom 12:3-8

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.

From these passages, we understand:

1. The **unity** of the body
2. The **diversity** of our personal gifting
3. The **source** of spiritual gifts (the Holy Spirit)
4. The **purpose** of spiritual gifts (the common good of the body)
5. The **basis** for distribution of gifts (the Spirit's will)
6. How gifting affects **motivation**
7. The **interdependence** we have with other believers and their gifts
8. The **value** of people who have gifts that are different from ours
9. The **danger** of assuming that everyone should contribute in the same way we do
10. The **responsibility** of using our gifts wholeheartedly

Spiritual gifts help you know what you were designed to do in the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit intends for you to be both fruitful and fulfilled in making a meaningful contribution to the body of Christ.



SESSION TWO: RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

Discovering your spiritual gift(s)

1. Study the gifts mentioned in Scripture (you'll do that in the next session).
2. How does God use you most naturally?
3. What are you especially good at?
4. What roles(s) do you find most fulfilling?
5. Ask others how they see you contributing to their lives and the church mission.
6. Experiment with various ways of serving in the church.
7. Take the spiritual gift assessment.

ASSIGNMENT : Take a spiritual gift assessment

Take the spiritual gift assessment available online at bthl.ch/spiritualgift. Be completely honest and don't hesitate to rate yourself very high or very low. You want to differentiate your strengths, not evaluate your worth. Identify the two or three categories in which you score the highest. Next session you will identify your spiritual gift(s) and discern how God would use them to serve the body.

Discussion

1. Which of the "one-anothers" or relationship-builder aspects is a strength for you as you related to other believers? Which is a weakness?
2. Are you in a small group? Why or why not? What are or could be the benefits?
3. Who is a fellow disciple who most encourages you and stirs you up to love and good works (Heb 10:24)? For whom do you do that?
4. How does the topic of spiritual gifts relate to being a relationship builder?
5. How does being a member of a local church relate to being a relationship builder?



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



At Bethel, our purpose is “making disciples.” A disciple is defined as being a

God **L** _____
Relationship **B** _____
Obedient **F** _____
World **I** _____

The **O** in GROW stands for Obedient Follower. A disciple seeks to follow the example of Jesus, obey the commands and principles of Scripture, and respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Personal Study

Scripture: **John 14:23**

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Observation: What does it mean to “keep the word” of Jesus? _____

How does loving Jesus relate to obeying Him? Which comes first?

Application: What evidence in your life indicates that you love Jesus?

Prayer: Thank Jesus for loving you and dying for you. Tell Jesus you love Him and want to follow Him obediently. Thank Him for the fellowship you have with Him when you are walking obediently with Him. Ask Him to show you anything you are doing or not doing that hinders that fellowship.

Scripture: **Luke 9:23,24**

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Observation: What level of commitment did Jesus ask of His disciples in following Him?

What is the result of sacrificially obeying Christ? _____



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



Application: Give an example of something you have denied yourself in order to follow Jesus.

Prayer: Thank Jesus for calling you to follow Him. Confess any scriptural command or prompting of the Spirit that you have been unwilling to obey. Ask if there is anything He wants you to change to follow Him better. Ask Him to enable you to obey Him.

Scripture: **Luke 6:46-48**

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. [c] 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Observation: Why is calling Jesus “Lord” without obeying Him a contradiction?

What are the consequences of knowing what Jesus wants but not doing it?

Application: What words of Jesus have you heard that you need to more fully obey?

Prayer: Thank God for giving us the commands and principles of Scripture to guide our lives as we follow Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you where you have fallen short in obeying Him. Ask Him to reveal specific ways in which you can be more obedient in doing what you have heard from Jesus.



Obedient Follower Overview

A follower or disciple by definition intends to submit to, obey, and follow the example of his or her teacher or master. A disciple of Jesus believes in what He taught and did, trusts His truth and wisdom, and loves Him to the point of obeying His commands and following His principles to the fullest extent possible. Although it is often a challenge to set aside our own desires and thoughts to obey His, we are convinced that following Him wholeheartedly is a fitting response to Who He is and leads to the best life possible.

Aspects of being an Obedient Follower

A disciple...

- ...lives in *grace*, knowing there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- ...believes the *Bible* is accurate and true, communicated from God, the authority for who He is and how we should live.
- ...patterns one's life in a purposeful and determined manner, according to the *life and teachings* of Jesus.
- ...*submits* to leaders who have authority over him/her.
- ...*surrenders ownership* of all goals, plans, relationships, expectations, possessions, and all other aspects of one's life to Jesus.
- ...develops sincere, heart-felt, *Christ-like character* by dealing with sinful core beliefs and motives, resulting in healthy attitudes and godly behaviors.
- ...wages the *internal battle* for daily obedience by denying sinful, fleshly desires, listening to the Holy Spirit, and realizing that one is no longer in bondage to sin but is a new person in Christ.
- ...invests one's material and immaterial *resources* joyfully and generously in God's purposes on earth, resulting both in blessings now and rewards for eternity.
- ...guards oneself as the dwelling place of God, maintaining the biblical standards of *purity* of heart, mind, speech, and body.
- ...has *weighed the cost* of discipleship and has decided to follow Jesus and His teachings.
- ...endures inevitable opposition with *patience* and *rejoicing*.



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



Authority of the Bible

The Bible is the inspired record of God’s revelation to man. It is our ultimate source of truth about God, and it is our ultimate authority on how He wants us to live. Obedient followers of Christ steadfastly seek to understand the Bible and apply it to our lives. It contains

Commands: Explicit statements of what we are to do or not do.

Example: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” Eph 4:29

Principles: General statements about how God and life work.

Example: “whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” Gal 6:7

Values: Statements of priority or importance to God.

Example: “To obey is better than sacrifice” I Samuel 15:22

Examples: Narratives or parables that illustrate godly or ungodly living.

Example: Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

When a disciple is confronted with inconsistencies between the Bible and his or her own thinking or actions, the obedient follower willingly submits to the authority of the Bible. When a disciple is faced with options or choices, he or she seeks biblical guidance as the basis for decision. Other possible sources of authority, e.g., family, society, government, church, own thoughts and feelings, experience and even spiritual impressions, do not supersede the clear teaching of Scripture.

Maturing as a Disciple

As obedient followers of Christ, we mature as we progressively know and obey the Word of God and allow the Spirit to guide and teach us. At Bethel, we use two illustrations to express this, the Engel’s Scale* and the Infant to Parent progression.

The Engel’s Scale illustrates how a person progresses from very little understanding of God to the point of conversion through repentance and belief and on to increasingly greater maturity as a disciple of Jesus. The point is that discipleship is a process that starts before a person comes to faith in Christ and continues for the rest of the believer’s life.

(James F. Engel & Wilbert Norton, What’s Gone Wrong With The Harvest? Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Publishing House, 1975)

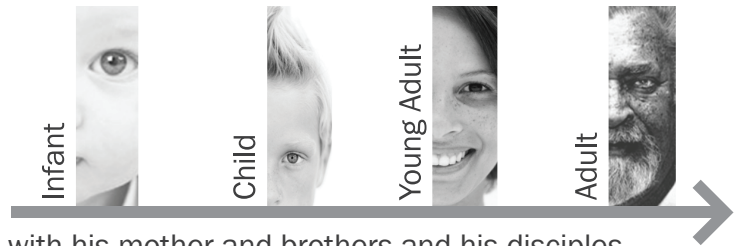
simplified
Engel Scale
-10 No God framework
-9 Experience of emptiness
-8 Vague awareness of Christianity
-7 Interest in Christianity
-6 Awareness of the Gospel
-5 Positive attitudes to the Gospel
-4 Experience of Christian love
-3 Aware of personal need
-2 Grasp of implications of the Gospel
-1 Challenge to respond personally
0 Repentance and faith
+1 Evaluation of the decision
+2 Learning the basics of the Christian life
+3 Functioning member of local Church
+4 Continuing growth in character, lifestyle and service
+5 Effective sharing of faith and life

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SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



The Infant-to-Parent illustration describes general stages of maturity in a believer's life. It is based on **I John 2:12-14**



¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. ¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.

AREAS OF OBEDIENCE:

Although there are too many aspects of obeying Christ to even list them all, there are a few that are important to point out

Personal purity and integrity:

I Pet 1:14-16

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Psalm 24:3,4

**Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.**

An obedient follower is not only obedient outwardly and in the presence of others, but also in his or her thoughts, heart, and private life. A person being transformed by Christ is eliminating things such as dishonesty, lust, greed, pride, unfaithfulness, gossip, insincerity, laziness, and destructive practices from his or her life. A disciple's words, actions, and thoughts are increasingly God-honoring and edifying.

Serving: Serving others is integral to Christian discipleship. **Jesus was a servant:**

Phil 2:5-8

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We are commanded to serve others in love and humility:

Gal 5:13

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Being a servant is the way of greatness in God's kingdom:

Mark 10:44,45

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

We are given spiritual gifts to use in serving the body of Christ:

1 Pet 4:10

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Disciples are to serve others in every context of our lives. We serve individuals within the family, the workplace, the neighborhood, the church, and anywhere else the Spirit leads. We serve with physical tasks, material support, and making time available. The essence of being a servant is to put the needs and interests of others ahead of our own.

Being a servant is the way of greatness in God's kingdom:

Within the church, we serve the body in a variety of ways. Sometimes we all pitch in to help with whatever needs to be done. No task is considered beneath us. Every member of Bethel is expected to serve in some way.

Unique contributions:

Additionally, we seek to know the specific ways the Lord would have us contribute to His body. We discern this by knowing the spiritual gifts, ministry passion, personality, and personal experiences He has given us. Some of these service contributions will come in defined roles within the church (see list). Other service contributions will transcend defined roles and may result in new ministries within the church. Some service contributions will take place in the community or the world. More about that next session.



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



Serving according to your spiritual gifting:

Long-term, fruitful, fulfilling service is more likely when we are using the spiritual gifts God gave us. Assess the results of the spiritual gift assessment, and review the list of spiritual gifts.

Consider the following spiritual gifts referred to in Scripture:

Apostleship | *Cor 12:28* start and oversee new ministries or churches

Administration | *Cor 12:28* organize people, tasks, or events

Craftsmanship | *Ex 31:3* make things that increase the effectiveness of ministries

Creative Communication | *Ps 150:3-5* communicate God's truth through music, drama, writing, etc.

Discernment | *Cor 12:8-10* distinguish between truth & error

Encouragement | *Rom 12:6-8* strengthen, comfort, or urge to action

Evangelism | *Eph 4:11* communicate the gospel so that people respond in faith

Faith | *Cor 12:8-10* act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief

Giving | *Rom 12:6-8* contribute to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality

Helps | *Cor 12:28* practical and necessary tasks which free up, support, and meet needs of others

Hospitality | *Pet 4:9,10* care for people by helping them feel valued and welcome

Intercession | *Tim 2:1,2* prayer on behalf of and for others

Knowledge | *Cor 12:8-10* bringing truth to the body through revelation or biblical insight

Leadership | *Rom 12:6-8* cast vision, motivate and direct people to accomplish God's purposes

Mercy | *Rom 12:6-8* alleviating pain or discomfort in suffering people

Prophecy | *Cor 12:8-10* reveal truth and proclaim it for correction, repentance, or edification

Shepherding | *Eph 4:11* provide guidance, care, and oversight to a group of people

Teaching | *Cor 12:28* understand, explain, and apply the Word of God

Wisdom | *Cor 12:8-10* apply spiritual truth effectively to meet a need in a specific situation

What are your prominent spiritual gifts?

How and where do you think Christ wants you to use these gifts to serve His body? Review a list of serving opportunities within Bethel.

Giving:

Managing the resources God entrusts to us is a major part of being an obedient follower. Our priorities and values are demonstrated in the way we use our time and money. Jesus said, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt 6:21. Problems such as greed, self-indulgence, materialism, impatience, selfishness, and wrong priorities usually show themselves in calendars and pocket books. The Lord Jesus spoke more about money and money management than He did about heaven and hell! He wants us to be generous with individuals and in supporting the local church and kingdom purposes. The topic is obviously of importance to God, not because He needs our money, but because money and material possessions in general) have an uncanny way of becoming idols in our lives.



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



Here are some biblical principles related to giving:

1. God owns everything we have. (*Psalm 24:1*)
2. God wants us to give cheerfully and freely. (*II Cor 9:7*)
3. We should personally determine our giving. (*II Cor 9:7*)
4. We should give proportionately. (*Deut 16:17*)
5. We should give regularly. (*I Cor 16:2*)
6. We should give generously and even sacrificially. (*II Cor 8:1-5*)
7. God blesses us when we give. (*II Cor 9:6*)

How and where do you think Christ wants you to use these gifts to serve His body?

Where?

The Spirit of God will lead us to give in many different ways. One of the biblically directed ways to give is through the local church (I Cor 9:14). If we are committed to the local church and share a vision for its work, we will be eager to support that vision financially. Bethel members are expected to give regularly, proportionately, and generously through Bethel.

How Much?

The Old Testament standard was to give a tithe, which is 10% (Malachi 3:8-10). Although a specific percentage is not given in the New Testament, it is reasonable to conclude that we should give at least that much. Although Jesus wasn't legalistic, His standards were always higher than the law (Matt 5:21-30). As a practical guideline, Bethel members are asked to give 10% of their income to Bethel. This isn't a rigid requirement, but something to aspire to and work toward.

How?

Giving through Bethel can be directed to 1) the general fund, 2) vision campaigns (e.g. The 13), or 3) Bethel Assistance Ministry (for families or individuals in need). This can be done by

1. Placing a check or cash in one of the offering boxes
2. Using your bank's bill pay, or
3. Contributing online through Bethel Connect (bethel-church.org/bethelconnect).

For tax purposes, giving records are kept for all check, bill pay, and online contributions. Cash contributions are also recorded when a giving envelope is used. Giving statements are available through Bethel Connect or upon request.



SESSION THREE: OBEDIENT FOLLOWER



Discussion

1. What insight did you gain from the three passages in the Personal Study section?
2. Which of the Obedient Follower descriptors captures a growth area for you?
3. Why is the authority of the Bible an important part of this lesson on Obedient Follower?
4. What are your spiritual gifts?
5. Where might you serve at Bethel?
6. What is your greatest question or challenge regarding giving?



SESSION FOUR: WORLD INFLUENCER



At Bethel, our purpose is “making disciples.” A disciple is defined as being a

G _____

R _____

O _____

W _____

The **W** in GROW stands for World Influencer. A disciple seeks to make an impact on individual lives, the community, and the world by sharing Christ’s love and the life-giving truth of the gospel.

Personal Study

Scripture: **Matt 5:13-16**

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Observation: What are the two analogies Jesus used to describe the influence His disciples are to have in the world?

What kinds of “good works” might people see that would cause them to give glory to God?

Application: Do people in your life know that the “good works” they see in your life are because of Jesus? _____ How might you “let your light shine before others” in a way that would draw them to Christ?

Prayer: Thank God for putting light in your life. Confess any ways that you have put it under a basket. Ask God to use your example and words to bring glory to God. Pray that people would see you as a flawed and broken sinner who has been redeemed through the cross of Jesus.



SESSION FOUR: WORLD INFLUENCER



Scripture: **I Peter 3:15**

“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect

Observation: What would cause a person to ask someone else about their reason for hope?

What does this verse say should be the spirit or attitude with which we talk to people about Christ? -----

Application: What can you do to be better prepared to talk to people about your belief in Jesus when the subject comes up?

Prayer: Thank God that you have life-giving hope through Jesus. Pray that the Spirit would prompt people to notice that Christ is Lord of your life and be interested in spiritual things. Ask God to make you aware of opportunities to share your faith and bold in directing conversation toward Jesus.

Scripture: **Acts 1:8**

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

Observation: Where does the power for witnessing come from?

Where did Jesus say that the early disciples would be His witnesses?

Application: How can you be involved in witnessing beyond the scope of your immediate relationships?

Prayer: Praise God for His work around the world and lives that He has transformed. Pray for ministries and missions locally and globally. Ask Him how He wants you to be a world influencer. Ask Him for power to be a bold witness.



World Influencer Overview

A disciple influences the lives of individuals outside the faith through prayer, example, relationships, acts of kindness and generosity, service, and sharing the gospel. A disciple also influences the community, society at large, and the world through prayer, communication, giving, organizational support, and strategic engagement.

Aspects of being a World Influencer

A disciple...

- ...influences the world in the name of Jesus to bring glory to God.
- ...loves *non-believers* because God loves them.
- ...lives a life so *distinct* from the world that it establishes a credible testimony.
- ...participates in God's worldwide work of reaching *all* social, economic, and ethnic groups
- ...prays for the salvation of specific people and God's work throughout the world.
- ...watches for and seizes *opportunities* to share the gospel.
- ...builds *relational bridges* to non-believers in order to win them to Christ.
- ...acts *boldly* in the authority of Jesus, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about change.
- ...promotes what is good and *exposes* evil.
- ...meets *needs* of the poor and powerless.

Sharing Christ

Talking with unbelievers about the gospel, their need for Jesus, and personal faith is one way to be a world influencer. What are some reasons a believer may not feel comfortable doing this?

Here are several things you can do to prepare to share Christ effectively:

1. Live a consistent, distinctive Christian life.

Actions speak louder than words

2. Resolve to identify with Christ.

Early in a relationship, mention something about Jesus, the Bible, or church.

3. Pray for people to receive Christ.

Pray for specific people who are spiritually blind and bound to be "granted repentance leading to the truth." (II Tim 2:25, 26)

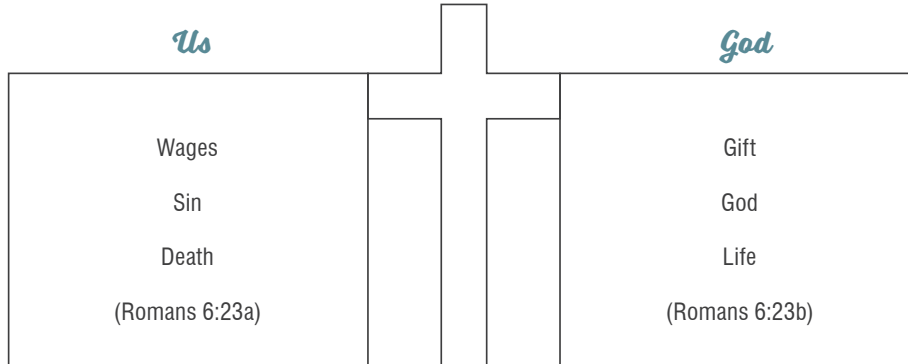
4. Build relational bridges to people.

Genuine concern and credibility promote acceptance of your words.



5. Know the message

A simple gospel outline can be very helpful. Here is one.



6. Know your story

Prepare and be ready to share your 2-minute testimony.

What was your life like before you met Christ?

How did you come to repentance and faith?

How has Christ changed your life?

7. Pray for and look for opportunities

The Spirit will point them out. We just need to be ready to respond.

Ministry Passion

God gives many disciples a special passion for a particular group of people, cause, or need. Using your spiritual gifts to address this ministry passion over the long haul is often the way a disciple most significantly influences the world and feels most fulfilled and motivated.

Identifying your ministry passion usually comes from experiences in your own life or in ministry to others. Sometimes you just need to try serving in various ways until you find the area where you will really passionately influence the world.

Here are some questions that might help you identify your ministry passion?

1. What past experiences have stirred your passion and made you feel that you were doing something important to God?
2. Where do you have a strong desire to make a difference?
3. What gives you energy, purpose, significance, and vision?
4. Has God given you a burden, dream, calling, or assignment?



SESSION FOUR: WORLD INFLUENCER



5. What group of people do you have a heart for?

- Children, youth, young marrieds, singles, elderly, single moms, etc.
- Homeless, poor, handicapped, minorities, refugees, orphans, foster children
- Abused, hurting, addicted, grieving, lonely, jailed, veterans

6. What issue, cause, problem, or need do you really care about?

- Marriage, personal finances, physical health
- Unreached people groups, medical needs, world hunger, literacy
- Creation research, apologetics, abortion, family values

The ABCs of Bethel Missions:

Bethel has a three-pronged philosophy of mission. We prioritize mission activity and partnerships that emphasize and integrate these three components:

Aid Captives: The heart of God is to release individuals from bondage of all types: spiritual, material, physical, emotional, societal, and political. Sometimes the focus is the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Sometimes it is those who are captives of Satan in other ways.

Build Churches: The church is God's primary instrument for reconciling the world to Himself through Christ. The proclamation of the gospel and development of disciples through planting and strengthening churches is a priority in our missional efforts.

Change Culture: Influencing secular culture to make it more compatible with Christian values and worldview is an essential component to any lasting change.

Local Mission:

Bethel embraces the responsibility God has given us to be a church for the community. We support individual members who are representing Christ in any neighborhood, workplace, social sector, or community effort where God has led them. We partner with churches, agencies and likeminded believers who are aligned with Bethel values and are in step with where God is leading our church. We initiate ministries where God has revealed need, raised up capable leadership, and provided resources.

Here are some areas of local ministry where you could join other Bethel people on mission as world influencers:

Aid Captives: The heart of God is to release individuals from bondage of all types: spiritual, material, physical, emotional, societal, and political. Sometimes the focus is the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Sometimes it is those who captives of Satan in other ways.



SESSION FOUR: WORLD INFLUENCER



Bethel Assistance Ministry (BAM)
REACH events (community service)
Holiday Outreach – Fall Frenzy, Thanksgiving, Christmas
Orphan Care
Human Trafficking – (FREED)
Jail Ministry
Veterans
Healthcare Ministry
Soul Soup (serves food weekly to the homeless and poor in Kennewick)
Royal Family Kids Camp - (for foster kids)
Bethel also has active partnerships with community agencies:
Tri-city Pregnancy Network
Union Gospel Mission
World Relief (refugees)
Grace Clinic (free medical services for uninsured)
Habitat for Humanity
Edith Bishel Center (for the blind)
SEWSCDH Center for the Deaf
Ignite Youth Mentoring
Center for Sharing
Young Life
Child Evangelism of Tri-Cities
The Chaplaincy
Fellowship of Christian Athletes
Family Learning Center
Emmaus Counseling Center

Global Outreach:

Jesus told His disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19) and that we are His witnesses “to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). Although not many of us will be long-term missionaries to other countries, there are several ways we can each be involved as world influencers globally.

Prayer

Mission work and missionaries really need our faithful prayer support. Cross cultural ministry is filled with challenges and at the heart of it; it is a spiritual battle ground.

Giving

Bethel contributes to world missions through its general fund, special campaigns like The 13, sponsoring children overseas, and donating directly to mission organizations. Nearly 10% of our general fund giving goes to global outreach. An additional several hundred thousand dollars has gone to Haiti and Cambodia through The 13 in the past three years. Occasionally, Bethel takes a special offering to meet an urgent need.



SESSION FOUR: WORLD INFLUENCER



Training

There are many opportunities to learn more about God's work around the world. One excellent course is Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, and is usually offered in the Tri-Cities each year. People preparing for short term mission trips are also expected to participate in excellent training and equipping events for cross-cultural ministry.

Going

Short-term mission trips – Annually, more than 100 people travel to foreign countries as part of Bethel-sponsored mission trips. People on these trips serve in a variety of ways, including medical, leadership training, sports, mechanical, and ministry to university students, children, and victims of sex trafficking. Other people go through other mission organizations with Bethel's blessing and possible support.

Longer-term missions - Some people are called and equipped to move to a foreign country to more effectively influence the world. Bethel supports a carefully selected team of missionaries throughout the globe and has sent out several families and individuals who are serving anywhere from several years to their entire career.

Focal Countries:

Bethel has intentionally focused on developing a few extensive partnerships in three strategic locations. Additional locations and partnerships will be considered as our hearts and resources for global outreach continue to expand.

East Asia

Bethel has partnered with like-minded organizations in this restricted access nation to send teams of professionals to teach at forums and on university campuses to cultivate relationships with students. Bethel also provides the oversight and hosting for Chinese student professional internships in the Tri-Cities. Several Bethel couples have moved to China to coordinate work there.

Haiti

Shortly after the devastating earthquake in 2010, Bethel took an offering of more than \$250K to rebuild homes through Haitian Christian Ministry (HCM). Since then Bethel has become a partner church with HCM and sends numerous teams each year to serve alongside this ministry in medical care, pastor training, mechanical support, sports ministry, and VBS. We have also contributed funds to assist with building projects, church buildings, pastor support, entrepreneurial loans, transportation, wells, and schools. More than 100 Bethel people also sponsor children in the schools and sports programs. Bethel people serve as HCM board chairman, child sponsorships director, and onsite communications director.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, Bethel partners with Agape International Ministry (AIM). Teams support AIM's efforts to free girls from sex trafficking, care for them spiritually and physically, work with men in the community, support churches, and provide leadership direction. A Bethel couple and individual is currently serving in Cambodia.



Discipleship Assessment

Bethel has developed an online discipleship assessment. For further exploration of areas in which the Lord may want you to grow, take the online discipleship assessment at bthl.ch/assessment.

Discussion

- 1.** Where or with whom are you being salt and light?
- 2.** Which of the listed aspects of being a World Influencer do you want to strengthen?
- 3.** How would you share the gospel with someone in an illustration or three or four bullet points?
- 4.** How are you currently serving? What are other possible areas of ministry passion for you?
- 5.** What does ABC stand for?
- 6.** What areas of local or global mission most interest you?



What is church membership?

Official church membership is a declaration of belonging and commitment to a specific local congregation in the body of Christ. By taking membership in a local church, an individual clearly expresses:

- Commitment to other members of the body
- Agreement with the church's fundamental beliefs and goals
- Desire to participate in the work of the church
- Mutual accountability with others in the church to grow as disciples (Heb 10:24,25)
- Willingness to accept the leadership of church leaders (Heb 13:17).

Why join a local church?

- Disciples formed local churches in the New Testament.
- Covenant community is biblical.
- Membership clarifies and strengthens connections within the body.
- Membership is required for certain leadership and ministry positions.
- Only members are allowed to vote on congregational decisions.

Requirements for membership at Bethel

- Born again through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Believer's baptism by immersion
- Commitment to Christian living and the church body as described in the Membership Covenant.

Membership process at Bethel We receive members through the recommendation of a Small Group. The process involves several steps:

Attend First Steps class This is a one-session introduction to Jesus and Bethel. Offered monthly.

Get involved in a Small Group

Participation in a Small Group will prepare you for membership commitment and give our body a chance to get to know you.

Complete the Next Steps booklet

Someone in the class or small group will be able to answer questions or provide assistance.

Get your small group recommendation

Have your small group leader or designee review your booklet and complete the membership recommendation on the last page.

Attend a membership orientation and interview

When you have completed the booklet, you may attend an orientation for prospective members. The orientation is an opportunity to affirm our mutual vision and commitment and to discuss any unresolved issues or questions. The interview with an Elder addresses issues such as personal testimony, baptism, previous church involvement, and identification of possible areas of service. It is intended to welcome you to Bethel and praise the Lord for what He has done in your life.

Turn in paperwork

Sign the Covenant of Fellowship and turn it in, along with the Application for Membership and Small Group Recommendation for Membership.



Membership Covenant at Bethel Church

I, _____, having been led by God the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord,

having been **baptized** by immersion as a profession of my faith, being **committed** to personal growth as a disciple of Jesus, having **studied** Bethel's doctrine, purpose, and government, and **desiring to unite** in the worship, fellowship, and work of the local expression of Christ's spiritual body known as Bethel Church,

I enter into the following covenant with other Bethel members to be a:

God Lover

- Regularly read and meditate on Scripture. (*II Tim 3:16,17; Rom 12:2; II Tim 2:15*)
- Pursue a continual, intimate relationship with God through prayer and listening to God. (*Ps 141:2; Col 4:2*)
- Worship and learn regularly in Bethel worship services. (*Ps 69:30; Ps 122:1; Acts 2:42*)

Relationship Builder

- Love one another as Christ loves us, being humble, gentle, patient, slow to take offense, and quick to forgive and seek forgiveness. (*John 13:34,35; Eph 4:1,2; Matt 18:15-20*)
- Invest energy and time in building authentic relationships to stimulate spiritual growth in one another, typically through a small group. (*Heb 10:24,25; Acts 20:20; Col 1:28*)
- Pray with and for one another, sharing our burdens, sorrows, and joys. (*Rom 12:15; Gal 6:2*)
- Promote unity, godliness, and scriptural faithfulness within the church. (*Eph 4:3; Phil 2:1-4*)

Obedient Follower

- Commit to the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible in how I conduct my life. (*Lk 9:23,24; I Jn 5:2,3; Psalm 119:10*)
- Turn from all godless living and sinful pleasures, and to live a consistent, God-honoring life. (*Titus 2:11-13*)
- Be a devoted, faithful, and spiritually encouraging spouse, if married. (*Eph 5:22-33; I Pet 3:1-7; Matt 19:3-6*)
- Offer Christian love, instruction, guidance, and discipline to any children God may entrust to me. (*Eph 6:4; Titus 1:6*)
- Give financially to the Lord through Bethel: consistently, proportionately, and generously. (*Mal 3:10; II Cor 8:7; I Cor 16:1,2; II Cor 9:6-8*)

World Influencer

- Endeavor by example, relationship, word, and prayer to win others to an acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord. (*I Cor 9:19-22; Col 1:28*)
- Use my time, abilities, and spiritual gifts to assist in the work of the church and to promote its usefulness in making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in our community and the world. (*Rom 12:6-8; I Cor 12; Matt 28:19,20*)
- Promote what is godly in our community, and to demonstrate God's love to the poor and hurting. (*Matt 5:13-16; Matt 25:31-46*)

Signature: _____ Date _____



Getting Practical about the Membership Covenant

God Lover

In the past two weeks, on how many days have you read the Bible, and on how many have you prayed?

How many times in the past two months have you attended worship services at Bethel?

Relationship Builder

Give a recent example of how you have shown love or patience toward someone, forgiven someone, or asked forgiveness?

How and with whom are you consistently investing energy and time to build authentic relationships, stimulate spiritual growth, and share burdens, and pray for others?

Obedient Follower

Give an example of the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible in a recent decision you made?

If you are married or have children, how do you love and encourage them in Christian faith and practice?

In the past three months, what percentage of your income have you contributed to Bethel?

World Influencer

In what ways have you volunteered to serve through Bethel in the past three months?

In the past six months, what have you done to help win others to Christ or demonstrate His love to those outside the church?



Application for Membership

NAME: _____

Why do you want to be a member of Bethel?

Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? ____ Yes ____ No

Describe how you came to that decision:

Have you been baptized? ____ Yes ____ No

Explain when, where, and how:

Describe any previous church relationships. Why did you leave?

Do you have any questions or reservations about Bethel's doctrinal statement or practices?

If so, what?

Do your responses on the Getting Practical form indicate that you are living according to the commitments of the Covenant of Fellowship, including attendance, giving, relationships, spiritual disciplines, and service? ____ Yes ____ No

Are you in a Small Group? ____ Yes ____ No

Which one? _____

What ministry or area of service in the church are you involved in or would you like to be involved in?

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____



Recommendation for Membership

To be filled out by Small Group leader or designee

Membership Candidate: _____

Small Group making recommendation: _____

_____ The candidate clearly understands what it means to be a Christian, and has trusted Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior.

_____ The candidate attends worship service regularly.

_____ The candidate attends Small Group meetings and activities faithfully.

_____ I have discussed the commitments expected of Bethel members (Covenant of Fellowship) with the candidate. He/she demonstrates an understanding of and faithfulness to the following:

_____ personal walk with the Lord (Bible reading, prayer, witness, etc.)

_____ relationship with members (involvement, care, attitude, etc.)

_____ serving

_____ giving

_____ The candidate has completed the Next Steps membership booklet, and I have reviewed it with him/her.

Comments: _____

Based on his/her faith, character, and commitment to Bethel, we recommend _____ for membership.

(Signed by Small Group leader or designee) _____