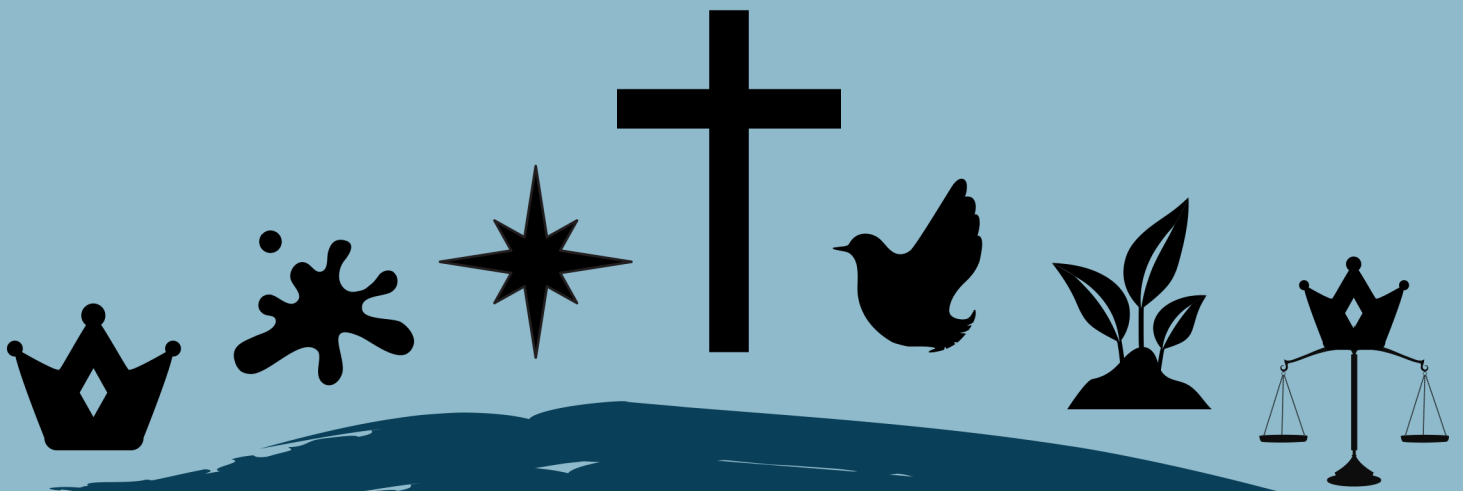
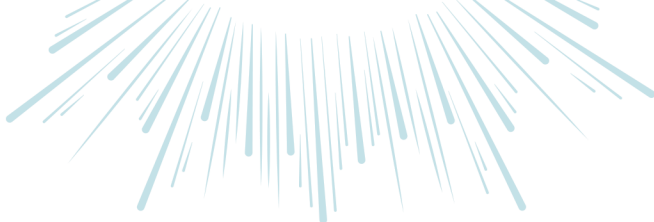


The Gospel Tool Bible Study



Facilitator's Handbook

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Introduction & Facilitator's Handbook

Trevor E. Payton, Mark W. Essenburg

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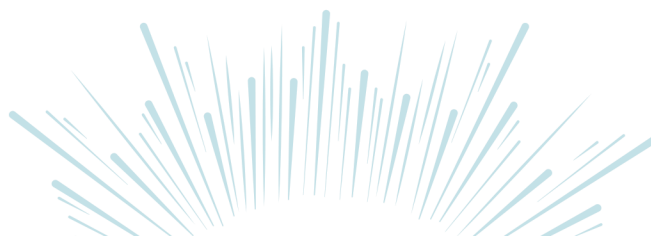




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Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about anything related to the Gospel Tool: contactgt@gospeltool.org

All materials in this guide are downloadable as a complete manual and as individual documents that can be printed if needed. Follow the direct link or scan the QR code on your phone. (Navigate to the Resources section, Facilitator Handbook)

gospeltool.org





Beginning A Year of Discipleship

Dear Gospel Tool Group facilitators,

We couldn't be more excited and expectant for how God will work this year as you grow disciples of Jesus Christ! You will be helping to nurture a culture of discipleship in your congregation or sphere of influence.

A culture of discipleship is an environment where it is normal, and even expected, that followers of Jesus Christ grow to develop a single-minded passion to learn from Jesus and to become like Him in all things. (1 John 2:6) As this happens, your congregation will increasingly impact the community as Christ intends. You will find your church coming alive in new and perhaps unexpected ways, as the life of Christ begins to manifest itself more and more fully among you.

All followers of Jesus can benefit from intentional discipleship training. As Gospel Tool Group (GT-Group) facilitators you will walk alongside both new believers and people who have attended church for years. These believers will grow into disciples who make disciples. Using the Gospel Tool, you will place a focus on a personal daily relationship with the Lord through His Word and prayer, encouragement and accountability to obey, and training to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Our vision is that, by the end of the year, you and your GT-Group participants will each know and obey God more fully, and be eager to help develop and multiply disciples. We have been praying that you will experience revival and a great spiritual awakening in your church as you deepen your understanding of the King and his Kingdom.

For an in depth look at the tools you will be using on this journey, please check out "How to Use This Manual" in the Gospel Tool Bible Study Manual. These are: **The Visual Gospel, The Gospel Tool, 40 Bible Study Lessons, Self-Assessment Tool, General Discipleship Conversation Guide, and Discussion Guides** (found in the Discussion Guide manual).

The content in this handbook will empower you to lead your GT-Group as you study the Gospel Tool Bible Study curriculum together. It will give a clear sense of what is required to lead the by-weekly Discussion Groups, and also how to support group members in their growth throughout this discipleship journey.

May the Lord work in all of us what is pleasing to Him!

Journeying with you as mentors,
Trevor and Mark



Gospel Tool Group Culture

In order to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ, a high level of commitment to discipleship is important. In first century Palestine, disciples would earnestly seek to reshape/conform all aspects of their life to become like their rabbi. The Gospel Tool (GT) seeks to reclaim some of that original single-minded focus as participants immerse themselves in the story of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Purpose

Gospel Tool Groups (GT-Groups) will be one of our primary mechanisms for equipping believers to more effectively carry out the Great Commission. Your time together will be focused on growing as disciples who are being transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As we learn to cooperate with God in the restoration of the world, each of us nurtures intimacy with Jesus Christ and becomes a more effective witness for Him.

Structure

There are four core practices that should be part of all GT Group meetings. Each one is important, but they do not need to happen in a particular order each week; there is a lot of room for flexibility in each GT Group meeting.

Worship - Worshiping God together through song, testimonies, etc

Care - Connecting personally and caring for needs

Prayer - Praying for each other, the neighborhood and the world

Equipping - Studying Scripture & the Gospel Tool lessons together

For example, one GT Group meeting may start with worship, proceed to the GT lesson discussion, move on to sharing care needs, and then conclude with prayer for one another. The next meeting may begin with care if the facilitator is aware of specific needs that one or more of the participants may be carrying, and then proceed to worship and prayer, followed by the equipping discussion.

It is important that the GT-Group facilitator remains attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in both the planning and the leading of the meetings. He/she prayerfully plans the flow of the evening ahead of time, deciding how and when to incorporate these four practices. During the group meeting, the Holy Spirit may lead the facilitator to adjust any aspect of these plans.

Suggestions for the Four Practices

The following lists of suggestions are not exhaustive; rather, they are examples to get you started. We encourage GT-Group facilitators to ask the Lord for fresh inspiration when planning each GT-Group meeting.

Worship

- Play some worship songs on your electronic device, so that participants can listen or even sing along.
- A participant with musical skills may want to lead the group in song.
- Invite participants to read aloud various scripture passages which describe the glory of the Lord.
- Invite a participant to share brief testimonies of ways that the Lord has worked in his/her life.
- Read a passage of scripture aloud and reflect on it together.

Care

- Ask the participants, *“Are any of you carrying any especially difficult burdens right now?”*
- Sharing highs and lows from the time since your last GT-Group meeting.
- When a GT-Group participant shares a need, see if there’s a way for the other participants to meet that need in the moment; perhaps move immediately into prayer.
- Lay hands on the sick and pray for healing.
- Offer encouragement to those who are discouraged.
- (Note: all care needs should be treated with confidentiality, in accordance with the GT-Group Covenant)

Prayer

- Pray the Lord’s Prayer together as a group.
- Pray that the Lord would grow a culture of discipleship in your church and in the other churches in your area.
- Pray for the needs of those in your group and in your neighborhood.
- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with people in your circle of influence who don’t yet believe.
- Pray for major global concerns.
- Pray for persecuted Christians around the world or in a specific location.
- Pray for revival and spiritual awakening in your region, nation, and the world.

Equipping

- Review the **Discussion Guide** prior to your meeting. We attempted to provide enough material to fill 75-90 minutes for each GT-Group meeting. As you get to know your group, you will be able to determine how much of it you may wish to cover. Give yourself the freedom to dwell longer on a question or activity if you sense the Holy Spirit is working there; do not worry if that would prevent you from covering all of the content in that week's Discussion Guide.
- Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the **GT Lessons** from the previous two weeks.
- Ensure that you're ready to discuss the spiritual disciplines listed in those Lessons.
- Try to engage *each* GT-Group participant in discussion. (At the end of this document we have included an appendix with some helpful suggestions.)

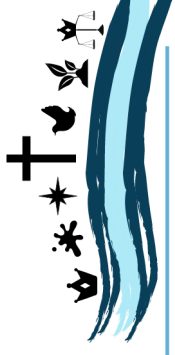
Anticipated Fruit

As GT-Groups give consistent attention to the four practices above, we anticipate that the Holy Spirit will work in such a way that participants begin to embody the Values and Goals summarized in the chart below. Participants in GT-Groups will monitor their growth in these areas by using the Self-Assessment tool which follows.

As the Holy Spirit continues to work through these growing disciples, a culture of discipleship will begin to take root in your church. As participants embrace these Values and Goals, they will grow in their ability to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to embody, proclaim, and advance the Kingdom of God.

Values	Goals
1. Abiding in Jesus Christ	1. Grow in relationship with God a. Intimacy b. Submission & humility
2. Rooted in God's Word	2. Grow in knowledge and obedience to God's Word a. Bible study b. Scripture meditation/memorization
3. Christ-centered relationships	3. Grow in relationship with Others a. Caring for one another b. Welcoming diversity
4. Vibrant and Growing Prayer Life	4. Grow in engaging in various prayer formats a. Comfortable praying alone and with others b. Ministering in prayer & listening to God
5. Transformation through the Spirit of Christ	5. Grow in cooperation with the Holy Spirit a. Engaging in the internal work for character transformation b. Practicing gifts and discernment together
6. Spirit-led Missional life	6. Grow in life on mission a. Sharing the Gospel in obedience to the Great Commission b. Stepping into opportunities to share God's love with people

The Gospel Tool Bible Study



Self-Assessment Tool with Facilitator Notes

Self-Assessment: Whenever we seek to grow and develop in any aspect of our lives, it is helpful to take note of where we began and to regularly monitor how far we have come. This year, as participants embark on a journey with the Lord, they can expect to experience actual growth and transformation. We want to encourage participants to be as authentic, bold, and humble as they can when using the Self-Assessment Tool; in doing so, they will help to foster a community atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit can do wonderful work. This is not a competition, nor will it be graded; rather, it's about believers being honest with themselves and the Lord about where they currently are in the process of growing to maturity in Him.

Each GT-Group participant will use this Self-Assessment Tool for the purpose of measuring their own progress and growth throughout the year. Participants should perform a self-assessment at the conclusion of Lesson 2 (**Beginning**), and then again after each quarter of study – at the conclusion of Lessons 12 (**1/4**), 19 (**1/2**), 30 (**3/4**) and 39 (**End**).

Using this Self-Assessment Tool, participants will assess where they feel they are on a continuum of growth. Each page lists a core value from the Discipleship Culture document, followed by the growth goals that correspond with the value. After each goal follow the stages of growth, which build from left to right: *Building Foundations* ⇒ *Increasing & Strengthening* ⇒ *Increasing & Regular* ⇒ *Abiding & Consistent*. Participants will rate/circle where they think they are on the continuum, and the notes section can be used to keep track of progress updates. Below are the general explanations of each stage of growth:

Building Foundations (B/F): Understanding the concept of the value and goal

Increasing & Strengthening (I/S): Growing in practice of the value and goal

Increasing & Regular (I/R): Growing in the application of the value and goal

Abiding & Consistent (A/C): Developing a **lifestyle** shaped by the value and goal

Facilitator notes: Below is the tool that outlines the values and goals that we desire to see increasingly evident in the lives of GT participants, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It will be used to serve for occasional check-ins throughout the year. This tool breaks down the goals for GT-Group participants into manageable and measurable components. Going through the Self-Assessment Tool periodically will help to ensure that the people in your group are growing in these areas.

Value 4: Vibrant and Growing Prayer Life					
Goal 4: Grow in engaging in various prayer formats	Building Foundations	Increasing & Strengthening	Increasing & Regular	Abiding & Consistent	Check in Continuum
Comfortable praying alone and with others (4a)	Realizes that prayer is a way to connect with God that is not only for individuals but for the church as a whole.	Practices praying alone and with others during the week. Uses various prayer formats and styles (examples: spontaneous, intentional, liturgical, centering, healing, prayer walking, etc.).	Is growing in practicing prayer alone and with others. Actively explores various prayer formats and styles (examples: spontaneous, intentional, liturgical, centering, healing, prayer walking, etc.).	Prays alone, with individuals, groups and church. Actively explores various prayer formats and styles (examples: spontaneous, intentional, liturgical, centering, healing, prayer walking, etc.).	Scale 0/1 1/5 1/8 A/C
	Realizes that God is calling them to cooperate with prayer to bring transformation through prayer. Is discerning and ministering in prayer.	Is growing in God's voice and is growing in prayer by using the principles and to pray for healing, emotional, physical, and relational for others.	Is growing in God's voice and is growing in prayer by using the principles and to pray for healing, emotional, physical, and relational for others.	Prays alone, with individuals, groups and church. Actively explores various prayer formats and styles (examples: spontaneous, intentional, liturgical, centering, healing, prayer walking, etc.).	Scale 0/1 1/5 1/8 A/C
Ministering in prayer and listening to God (4b)	Realizes that God is calling them to cooperate with prayer to bring transformation through prayer. Is discerning and ministering in prayer.	Is growing in God's voice and is growing in prayer by using the principles and to pray for healing, emotional, physical, and relational for others.	Is growing in God's voice and is growing in prayer by using the principles and to pray for healing, emotional, physical, and relational for others.	Prays alone, with individuals, groups and church. Actively explores various prayer formats and styles (examples: spontaneous, intentional, liturgical, centering, healing, prayer walking, etc.).	Scale 0/1 1/5 1/8 A/C
Notes	We use 4 Dismissal Principles from P416: 1. It is consistent with the intentions and character of God, as revealed in Scripture? 2. It is consistent with the intentions and character of God, as revealed in Scripture? 3. It is consistent with the intentions and character of God, as revealed in Scripture? 4. It is objectively verifiable confirmation?				

Value 1: Abiding in Jesus Christ					
Goal 1: Grow in relationship with God	Building Foundations	Increasing & Strengthening	Increasing & Regular	Abiding & Consistent	Check In Continuum
Intimacy (1a)	Is growing in awareness of the need for God's love and the need for spending time in communion with God through worship, reading the Word and prayer.	Notices God's involvement in everyday life; begins to carve out time to spend with God at set times during the day.	Invites and expects God to be a part of all areas of life. Is working toward finding more ways to connect with God throughout the day, including set times and organic times.	Enjoys spending time with God. In pursuit of self-awareness and honestly shares thoughts, feelings, and struggles with God as they arise. Seeks God's counsel on all matters as hopes and desires continue to be shaped by God's hopes and desires. Lives with conscious awareness and full acceptance of God's faithful, ever-present love.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Submission and humility (1b)	Is becoming familiar with the Biblical definitions of humility* and submission* to God.	Notices that God has a plan and that it is necessary to be submitted to Him in humility. Begins to recognize areas of rebellion, idolatry, and pride within one's life, heart, and attitudes.	Practices holding plans out before the Lord with open hands and trusts God's good plan for your life through being submitted and humble to Him. Works toward laying down rebellion, idolatry and pride in their life.	Seeks and waits on the Lord's guidance in all areas of life; puts aside personal plans in favor of participating in God's plans. Responds immediately to God's promptings, and displays mastery over rebellion, idolatry, and pride in pursuit of receiving God's direction, grace, and love.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Notes	*Humility: Turning away from self- centeredness, pride, and rebellion. Turning toward God: wanting His will, His way, and His glory. *Submission: To yield oneself to the authority or will of another; recognizing and responding immediately to God's Word and the promptings of His Holy Spirit.				

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Value 2: Rooted in God's Word

Goal 2: Grow in knowledge of and obedience to God's Word	Building Foundations	Increasing & Strengthening	Increasing & Regular	Abiding & Consistent	Check In Continuum
Bible Study (2a)	Recognizes the need to read the Bible as a value within one's relationship with the Lord.	Explores reading the Bible through study guides or a reading plan to grow in daily reading of the Bible.	Begins to read and study the Bible for delight and strengthening while applying the Bible to daily situations.	Pursues daily study of the Bible for edification and communion with God. Scripture (the Bible) guides actions, attitudes, and comes to mind often. Obedience to the Word (the Bible) comes before feelings, preferences, and comforts.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Meditation and scripture memorization (2b)	Recognizes that there is power, comfort, and value to be found in dwelling on and remembering scripture. Become familiar with the Biblical definitions of meditation* and memorization*.	Begins to practice scripture memorization and/or meditation weekly.	Meditates on and thinks about scripture frequently each week. Is growing in practicing scripture memorization and calling it to mind.	Engages in the practice of scripture memory in large chunks and has large passages memorized. Allows the Word of God to transform the mind and heart through regular, daily meditation of scripture.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Notes	*Scripture memorization: ability to bring scripture passages to mind when needed in daily situations and prayer times. *Scripture meditation: to reflect or contemplate a passage & idea from scripture.				

Value 3: Christ-Centered Relationships

Goal 3: Grow in relationship with others	Building Foundations	Increasing & Strengthening	Increasing & Regular	Abiding & Consistent	Check In Continuum
Caring for one another (3a)	Realizes that Jesus values His people caring for one another and putting others before themselves.	Expresses care of others by being an active listener, having kind speech and actions, and sharing resources. Practices putting others before themselves while pursuing biblical conflict resolution.	Notifies that the Holy Spirit invites cooperation when we care for one another. Builds relationships with others by investing time and demonstrating a desire to know others and be known. Uses spiritual discernment in caring for others and points them to Jesus the King.	Actively practices loving others as unto oneself. Shares encouragement, prayer, scripture, truth, resources, and the fruits of the Spirit as prompted by the Holy Spirit. Consistently pursues healthy relationship and conflict resolution through active listening, gracious speech and actions, and commitment to unity and for each one to grow up into maturity in Christ.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Welcoming diversity (3b)	Realizes the need to engage in relationships with those of differing backgrounds and views in order to grow in love and unity. Becoming aware of one's own cultural lenses and biases.	Notifies when one's own background and/or biases may enter attitudes about and conversations with others. Is becoming aware of how lenses and biases may negatively affect love for others.	Engages and welcomes dialogue with people of different backgrounds and/or viewpoints. Is growing in love, curiosity, respect, and interest in having relationships with others with increasing diversity.	Loves those that are different than oneself in all areas: age, race, political affiliation, gender, socioeconomic status, culture, etc. Consistently shows respect, curiosity and interest in others without discrimination or prejudice. Pursues opportunities to connect with and learn from others.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Notes	<i>The Gospel Tool Bible Study</i> ©2020 www.gospeltool.org 				

Value 4: Vibrant and Growing Prayer Life

Goal 4: Grow in engaging in various prayer formats	Building Foundations	Increasing & Strengthening	Increasing & Regular	Abiding & Consistent	Check In Continuum
Comfortable praying alone and with others (4a)	Realizes that there are various ways to pray and that it is important to pray individually and with others.	Practices praying alone and with others during the week. Tries new prayer formats and styles (examples: conversational, intercessory, liturgical, meditative, centering, healing, prayer walking, etc.).	Is growing in practicing prayer throughout the day. Actively explores new prayer formats both individually and with others. Is growing in intercession with others through prayer that builds as led by the Holy Spirit and through taking risks to pray aloud, even with strangers.	Prays alone, with individuals, groups and strangers with confidence as opportunities arise. Is growing in taking steps of faith and boldness in prayer. Is familiar with and engages with different types of prayer regularly, as the situation calls for and as led by the Holy Spirit.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Ministering in prayer and listening to God (4b)	Realizes that God speaks personally, and that He wants to cooperate with his people in prayer to bring about change and transformation through prayer. Is learning about discernment* and why it is important for listening prayer and ministering in prayer.	Is growing increasingly aware of God's voice and is growing in praying aloud with others. Begins to practice discernment in prayer by using the 4 discernment principles and to pray for healing (spiritual, emotional, physical, and relational) for others.	Begins to take bold steps in prayer, shares discernment and gifts. Desires to grow in praying for others, particularly in healing. Is increasingly open to receiving correction, if applicable, while growing in using gifts in various prayer settings. Takes opportunities to pray with others more regularly.	Demonstrates eagerness to pray for healing (spiritual, physical, emotional, relational) for others. Practices waiting upon God for guidance, gifts, and empowerment in praying with and for others. Demonstrates humility and submission when praying in a team setting. Welcomes others' discernment in all prayer settings.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Notes	*Discernment refers both to a spiritual practice as well as specific spiritual gifts of discernment including Discernment of Spirits. All Christians are called to practice wise spiritual discernment, and some are given a specific gift of spiritual discernment. We use 4 Discernment Principles: - Does it Give Glory to Jesus Christ? - Is it consistent with the intentions and character of God, as revealed in Scripture? - Do other people who are born again and filled with the Holy Spirit have a confirming witness? - Is there objectively verifiable confirmation?				

Value 6: Spirit-led Missional life

Goal 6: Grow in life on mission	Building Foundations	Increasing & Strengthening	Increasing & Regular	Abiding & Consistent	Check In Continuum
Sharing the Gospel in obedience to the Great Commission (6a)	Recognizes God's mandate for his people to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world through lifestyle, attitudes, words, and actions.	Is growing in prioritizing the Great Commission* by praying for unbelievers, watching for opportunities to share the gospel, and engaging people in relationship and spiritual conversations.	Desires to be obedient to the command in the Great Commission to go and make disciples by praying and watching for opportunities to share the gospel. Is mission-minded and intentionally engages people in relationship and spiritual conversation. Is active in the work of making and maturing disciples.	Is actively and consistently in discipleship relationships with others and consistently shares the Gospel. Takes delight in sharing the Gospel of Hope and is engaged in advancing the Kingdom of God through making disciples (multiplication) by telling others about the King and the Kingdom. Models the grace of God and the relentless love of Jesus toward all people.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Stepping into opportunities to share God's love (6b)	Recognizes that life on mission must be motivated by love in order to represent and embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ.	Is building a foundation of love by noticing the need of others to receive love. Recognizes the reality that love is shared from the overflow of love received from Jesus Christ.	Looks for opportunities to engage with the needs of others from the foundation of love as prompted by the Holy Spirit. Begins building relationships with neighbors and others within regular interactions.	Is motivated by love, pays close attention to the needs of others, and actively shares God's love, mercy and justice in word and deed. Is actively looking to serve neighbors and pays attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to be hospitable and loving while modeling the Gospel in tangible ways.	Scale B F I / S I / R A / C Beg ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1/2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3/4 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ End ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Notes	6a- proclaim 6b- embody All together advance (The Holy Spirit's work) *Matthew 28: 16-20				 <i>The Gospel Tool Bible Study</i> ©2020 www.gospeltool.org



Discipleship Group Covenant

I am committed to the purpose of GT-Groups at my church:

GT-Groups will be a means for each person to become better equipped to play his or her part in fulfilling the Great Commission. We aim to grow as disciples who are being transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and who are cooperating with God in the restoration of the world. This happens as each of us nurtures intimacy with Jesus Christ and becomes more effective witnesses for him.

I agree to the following expectations:

ATTENDANCE and PREPARATION: *I will make my GT-Group a priority and am committed to attending the meetings consistently. I will communicate clearly and in advance when I am unable to attend (Matthew 5:37). I will do my best to prepare for group meetings by completing the lessons and faithfully reading God's Word (Hebrews 4:12).*

SAFETY/RESPECT: *I will seek to foster a safe environment for all by listening well, avoiding judgment, speaking with humility, and treating my group members with love and respect (John 13:34-35).*

CONFIDENTIALITY: *I will keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group (Ephesians 4:29), with the following caveats:*

- *Unless someone or another party is in danger (in this case communicate with the Facilitator and they will help to discern next steps).*
- *Group leaders may share themes and progress reports with church leadership for the purpose of leadership coaching and celebrating fruit and growth, but will not share the personal stories of group members.*

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: *I will avoid gossip and am committed to pursuing holy conflict resolution according to the approach described in Matthew 18:15-17, which requires me to first go directly to the person with whom I am in conflict (Ephesians 4:1-6).*

ACCOUNTABILITY: *I understand that we—my GT-Group, my group Facilitator, and I—all fit together under the spiritual leadership of my church, and I agree to honor that leadership (Hebrews 13:17).*

I agree with and am committed to the values and goals listed in the GT-Group Culture document.

Name: _____

DATE: _____



Group Conversation Helps

As we lead our GT-groups, our goal is to create an atmosphere where open, honest sharing and learning can take place. The Discipleship Group Covenant lays out some expectations that all participants agree to uphold during the group meetings. This can be a great reference and/or reminder if needed. Below are some tips adapted from AlphaUSA (<https://alpha.org/tips-for-creating-an-open-discussion/>) that may help to give some conversation guidance for you as the Facilitator.

Keep the Conversation Alive

You may share these conversation expectations with the group in the first few meetings if you experience any difficulty or imbalance in sharing.

- You don't have to talk if you don't want to, but we'd love to hear from everyone.
- Any question or comment is welcome (just be brief and respectful).
- Respect each other by listening and allowing different opinions.
- Keep personal things confidential when you leave this group.

Conversation Tips

Rather than asking yes or no questions, ask open ended questions and/or follow up questions that help the conversation to keep going.

- Yes, good question! What do the rest of you think?
- Can you explain a bit more, or give an example?
- Are you wondering if...(clarify, rephrase)
- Has anyone else experienced something similar?
- And how does that make you feel?
- Can you share with us how that question came up for you?

Affirmations

It's important to be positive and to remind each participant that they are each important.

- Thank you for sharing that.
- I appreciate your honesty. Tell us more.
- Yes, I can relate to that too!
- It's ok to take a minute and think about it. That's what we're here for. No rush.
- I'm glad you're here!

While these suggestions can all be helpful for keeping the conversation moving, we want to always ensure that we are submitted to biblical truth and focused on the material presented in the GT manual.



Gospel Tool Group Care Support

With the Lord's blessing, Gospel Tool Groups (GT-Groups) will be wonderful places of growth and development, caring community, safety and fellowship, and places where the Spirit of God is noticeably at work. In some cases, members of the group might need help that goes beyond what can be addressed during the group time, or that goes beyond what the group is equipped to handle. This care support document can be helpful if the facilitator senses that someone may need physical or financial assistance, extended care or counsel, prayer ministry, or if there is significant conflict within the group.

It is important to be well prepared before your GT-Group gatherings begin. Please take time to communicate with the appropriate leader in your church, to fill in the blank for each of these headings with the appropriate contact information.

Physical/Financial Help: _____.

If a member of your group is struggling with physical needs, they can be referred to the Deacon team (or similar) for help. If the GT-Group is able and would like to help, the facilitator should consult the Deacons before doing so, to make sure that this care is coordinated. Some examples of these types of needs are:

- Lack of food
- Transportation assistance
- Help with rent or bills
- Financial counseling/equipping
- Medical Assistance
- Meals

Care needs: _____.

Should it become clear that a group member would benefit from individual care or counsel, please discreetly encourage them to connect with the appropriate person on staff who oversees the pastoral care of the congregation. Indicators of need may include:

- Going through a particularly difficult situation
- Lack of appropriate boundaries in sharing
- Unrealistic expectations of care and or relationship from group leaders or members
- Marital discord or family conflict
- Theological questions that go beyond group conversations
- Spiritual care needed beyond group conversations
- Mental health needs

Prayer Needs: _____.

2 Corinthians 3:17 tells us that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom! And so, we can expect that as we gather together around the Word of the Lord, the Spirit will be present and freedom will come. The group is encouraged to pray for its members as needs arise. However, if a member's needs require more ministry than the group is wisely able to provide, that person should be discreetly encouraged to connect with the contact person above. Here are some examples of such needs:

- Habitual sin
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Emotional heaviness
- Night terrors
- Views of God that do not reflect his character
- Low self esteem
- Addiction, etc.

Reporting Unsafe Situations: _____.

If the facilitator becomes aware of unsafe situations in their group, they must immediately report it to the contact person above. Most churches today have a Safe Church Policy in place; please check with your pastor to clarify your church's process for reporting unsafe situations. Facilitators should be attentive to the following:

- Hear about abuse or neglect from the person experiencing it
- Observe signs or symptoms of abuse
- Witness or hear about an incident of abuse or neglect

Conflict Within the Group

As a reminder, in the event that conflict occurs within the group, we follow the principles laid out in Matthew 18:15-17. In all things we seek to operate in a spirit of unity and brotherly love as followers of Jesus.

Go and Make Disciples

Matthew 28:19

Facilitator's Handbook

The content in this guide will empower Facilitators to lead Gospel Tool Groups as they study the Gospel Tool Bible Study curriculum. It will give a clear sense of what is required to lead the by-weekly Discussion Groups, and also how to support group members in their growth throughout this discipleship journey.

Here is what is included in this Handbook:

- **Beginning a Year of Discipleship** - An introduction for GT-Group Facilitators
- **Gospel Tool Group Culture** - How to create the context to grow a culture of discipleship in the group
- **Self-Assessment Tool** - Facilitator notes on how to use this important tool in a group setting, along with the actual tool
- **Discipleship Group Covenant** - A covenant signifying commitment to healthy group participation, to be signed by all participants
- **Group Conversation Helps** - Suggestions for keeping group conversation moving, ensuring that the group remains submitted to biblical truth and focused on the material presented in the GT manual
- **Care Support** - A guide for connecting needs with the appropriate support systems within your local context

