

G3 Discipleship

GRACE GROWTH GIFTS

Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'"
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Many recognize the above text as the Great Commission, the church's charge to make disciples.

And, rightfully so. Making disciples is the Christ-centered mission, no doubt about it.

Unfortunately, it's easy to undermine the two tools listed as the catalyst for life change as a Christ-follower: *Baptism* and *Obedience to Jesus' Teachings*.

This is a reminder that discipleship cannot be reduced to a particular model or method. Neither is discipleship about trendy theories or language.

Discipleship is about spiritual maturity; moving forward in faith as we are formed more-and-more into the likeness of Christ.

We experience this spiritual formation through embracing the grace we receive during baptism *and* learning the ins-and-outs of extending that grace to others.

Why This Makes Sense

This makes sense because people are different. Discipleship is not a one-size-fits-all operation.

To successfully steward our Christ-centered mission, we must consider the best way to meet people where they are.


Differences in race & religious upbringing, family dynamics & difficulties, personality styles & personal strengths play a significant part in one's spiritual formation.

Likewise, new believers need help in hearing from the Holy Spirit and building the Bible into the rhythm of their lives. Developing believers need nuanced growth to keep up with the changing seasons of their lives. Passionate believers need tangible outlets to lead and serve through their spiritual giftedness.

We need to disciple and be discipled, but not always with the same approach.

Why This Will Work

Think of G3 as similar to other discipleship processes, like the ones listed below:

Belong – *Believe* – **Become**
Listen – *Learn* – **Lead** 
Child – *Adolescent* – **Adult**

Each of these examples create clear forward motion for spiritual maturity, which is good. That's the goal.

These examples also include a destination. Again, this is good. However, we want to avoid the risk of reducing discipleship to a particular model or method, which can create imbalanced believers.

For example, think of the man who is the ideal servant-leader in the church, but at home, he's a horrible husband. Or the mom who leads her small group, but can't lead her small group of children. Or, the man who surrenders his life to Christ, but consistently fails to surrender his Sundays to Christian community. Or, the lady who leverages Scripture to judge others, yet lowers the standard for herself.

G3 inspires a more holistic integration of spiritual formation. They are less about a process and more about a passion for living out biblical values. Grace, Growth, and Gifts are less about the destination and more about the journey.

How This Will Work

The following tool/study guide will illustrate the basic framework for how the values of Grace, Growth, and Gifts move people into the status of fully devoted followers of Christ.

These values are an intentional investment into the overall vision of Northeast and allow us to:

- Put together healthy relationships within our church and community.
- Measure the spiritual maturity of those we disciple for continual growth.
- Give necessary attention to leadership development.

How This Makes Sense

G3 Discipleship is Scripture, lived out:

And Christ gave gifts to people—he made some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to go and tell the Good News, and some to have the work of caring for and teaching God's people. Christ gave those gifts to prepare God's holy people for the work of serving, to make the body of Christ stronger. This work must continue until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge of the Son of God. We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have his perfection... We will grow up in every way into Christ, who is the head. The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love (Ephesians 4:11-16 NCV).

GRACE – Life with God & Others

We have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him (2Corinthians 5:16-18).

God's grace is a gift. It is a gift that we cannot earn. We are not good enough and could never be good enough for God to accept us on our own.

So, our relationship with God and with others requires a foundation of forgiveness and acceptance. This means we must both embrace and extend grace.

EMBRACE

Embracing God's grace begins when we acknowledge the distance we put between us and God and the need for His forgiveness.

Read: Luke 15:11-32 – What does Jesus say about grace through this story?

How Do I Know I've Embraced God's Grace?

The following verses show that grace affects us inwardly and outwardly: Acts 2:37-39.

INWARDLY – When those present recognized their sin, they were "cut to heart." Something happened on the inside. Embracing God's grace begins when we acknowledge any misalignment with His design for our lives.

OUTWARDLY – After the inward disturbance, those present asked, "What shall we do?" The response was to "repent and be baptized."

According to the following verses, what is demonstrated through repentance?

Acts 3:19

Acts 26:20

2Corinthians 7:10

According to the following verses, what does the Bible say occurs when one is baptized?

Acts 22:16

Romans 6:1-4

Galatians 3:26-27

EXTEND

Extending God's grace means sharing this gift with others. This includes telling others about the transformative power of grace and a willingness to share with all people.

All people means we extend grace to others regardless of our differences. Remember, grace is a gift that cannot be earned.

How Do I Extend God's Grace?

The following verses call attention to critical attitudes and approaches when extending grace. Explain how these attitudes and approaches would play out in real life.

Galatians 6:1-2

Colossians 4:2-6

1Peter 3:15

Where Do I Begin?

To create a culture of authentic biblical community, we accept each other's differences and welcome people from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic contexts.

Does anything prevent you from being fully engaged in that effort? If so, please identify the issue and take the necessary steps to proactively deal with any personally divisive feelings. Use the space below to outline a plan:

What Next?

There are two basic things that all followers of Christ do: 1.) Christ-followers live in community and 2.) Christ-followers serve others.

We need opportunities in which we can experience mutual encouragement and accountability. Getting connected in a small

group and serving cultivates the relational give-and-take we need to *embrace* and *extend* grace.

Begin praying about your connection, and ask God to show you which type of group and the area of service that will be the best fit for you during this season of life.

At this stage, we suggest a Sunday Morning Group or a Life Group. However, you can see a full list of opportunities at ncclex.org

Agreement

When I have a disagreement with others, including Staff and Senior Leadership, I agree to respond in a respectful manner. This includes:

- Speaking directly with the individual(s) immediately involved instead of talking about the disagreement with others.
- Avoiding divisive language about topics on which believers have held different views throughout Church History.
- Expecting the best intentions from those with whom you disagree.
- Using care and discretion in how I use Social Media as a platform for my personal voice.

My Personal Responsibility

I have been saved by grace. I live by it and am committed to showing it to others. When I struggle in this area, I will dive deeper into my understanding of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

GROWTH – Forward as a Follower of Christ

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do (James 1:22-25).

Spiritual formation is all about obedience. When we obey, we grow. We grow in our understanding of God, ourselves, and our purpose.

On the other hand, disobedience is directly linked to forgetting who we really are.

God made us to grow into who we really are in Him. His desire is for us to grow into fully devoted followers of Christ. Unfortunately, growth isn't always easy. It takes time.

Time for Growth

Read: Romans 6:17 – List anything that is currently enslaving you. How have these caused you to forget who you really are? How long have you lived with this tension?

- _____

- _____

While God is faithful to supply us with spiritual resources, it's up to us to steward those resources for growth.

Spiritual formation begins to take shape when we are intentional about our growth.

How does the following verse illustrate the need for intentionality on our part? Explain in the space below.

James 4:8, "Come near to God and He will come near to you."

Tools for Growth

The following spiritual practices will help you come near to God:

BIBLE

There is no substitute for reading Scripture. Twenty minutes each day with an open Bible can change your character and keep you connected to Christ's work in your life.

Remember, reading the Bible is not another to-do on our spiritual check list. Instead, we read for the purpose of reflecting and then responding in obedience.

How do the following verses teach us to how the Bible can be a change agent in our lives?

Psalm 119:11

2Timothy 3:16-17

Hebrews 4:12

Knowing *what* we believe and *why* we believe it helps shape biblical values in our everyday experiences at home, in the community, and at work.

What if I Don't Understand the Bible?

During personal reading, consistency is key. Decide on a time that is best for you during this season of life. It can be in the morning or evening, on lunch or on vacation. Just stick with it.

Also, groups help with hammering out understanding and insight. You can connect with different types of groups:

Connection Wednesdays: These groups are focused bible and topical studies offered during the fall and winter. Keep an eye out for our updated list of classes.

D-Groups: These groups are much smaller than the Sunday Morning Groups, consisting of only 3-5 people. The goal of a D-Group is encourage daily Bible reading and immediate application of the reading.

PRAYER

When we pray we're seeking to speak with *and* hear from God. It's easy to forget that prayer includes listening. Again, this takes time.

Read: Luke5:16 – List the top three reasons you rush through your personal prayer time:

- 1.)
- 2.)
- 3.)

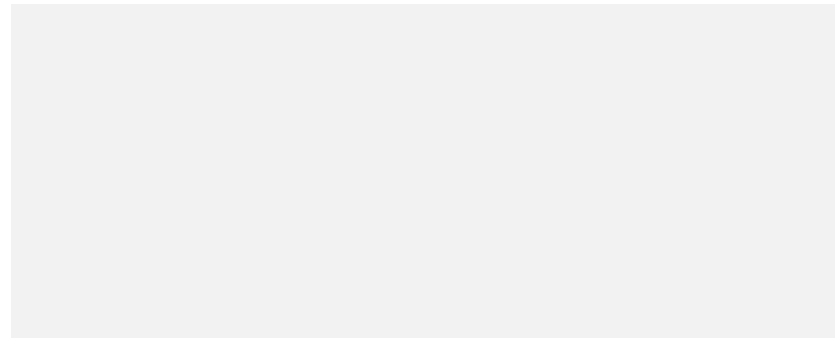
What if I Don't Know How to Pray?

Romans 8:26-27, "In certain ways we are weak, but the Spirit is here to help us. For example, when we don't know what to pray for, the Spirit prays for us in ways that cannot be put into words. All of our thoughts are known to God. He can understand what is in the mind of the Spirit, as the Spirit prays for God's people."

Sometimes we may not know how or specifically what it is that we should pray for. God gets this.

While this doesn't excuse us from the responsibility of growing into more mature men and women of prayer, this verse does enlighten us to the connection we have with God in our prayer times, even if we are silent.

Using the following verses, write out a prayer to God in the space below: *Philippians 4:6; 1Timothy 2:1-2; 1John 1:9*



WORSHIP

Worship is a way of life. It is not limited to a location, restricted to Sunday morning rituals, or all about musical preferences.

Read: Romans 12:1-2. How does this verse describe worship as a 24/7 lifestyle?

What about Sunday Mornings?

We must not forget the first Christians realized they were called to live in community, not in isolation. 24/7 worship included commitment to a wider community of Christ-followers.

According to the following verses, how do Sunday Morning Services benefit believers?

1Corinthians 11:23-26

Ephesians 5:19

Colossians 3:16

Sunday mornings move individuals to intentionally come near to God so that we can know what worship means for our life, our marriage, our children, our careers.

Read: Hebrews 10:24–25 – What risks do we run if we get into the habit of not meeting together?

My Personal Responsibility

I will continually pursue growth toward Christlikeness. I am

committed to this process. When I struggle, I will seek every resource at my disposal to begin growing again (2Peter 3:18).

GIFTS – Life as a Servant

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly (Romans 12:4-8).

God uniquely empowers people to move His purposes forward. To do so, He entrusts each Christ-follower with certain spiritual gifts.

While God takes full responsibility for distributing the gifts, it is our responsibility to discover and deploy them.

How do the following two verses demonstrate the balance of responsibility?

2 Timothy 1:6-7

How Can I Discover My Gift?

It's common for followers of Christ to be unclear about their giftedness.

This is one reason it is so important to talk about spiritual gifts, experiment with different areas of serving, and to really understand what the gifts mean.

Discovering your gift(s) begins by accepting the biblical truth that you have been gifted and you have a purpose.

Read: 1Corinthians 12:7 – What do you believe about yourself that blocks this biblical truth?

Write your response in the space below:

SHAPE

God is very intentional about taking full responsibility for distributing spiritual gifts.

Listen to the language of 1 Corinthians 12:11, immediately following a list of gifts:

"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines."

God determines your gift(s) based on who you are: your passions, your abilities, your personality, and your life experiences.

This is called your SHAPE. Take some time and work through the following:

S (spiritual gift) – What is my spiritual gift?

H (heart) – What am I passionate about?

A (abilities) – What am I really good at?

P (personality) – What can and can't I handle?

E (experience) – What does my age, past pain, education, job history, and family setup say about my giftedness?

How Can I Deploy My Gift?

We agree with the person who said spiritual gifts are “the grace of God at work within us to match our deep passions with the world’s needs.”

How do the following verses drive this point home?

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

1 Peter 4:10

Being rooted in a local church means taking responsibility for your spiritual gift.

Such responsibility includes:

- AVOIDING Destructive Attitudes

Because our gifts are different, some may feel out of place and others may be the reason why.

Identify the 2 Destructive Attitudes in the verses below:

“Suppose an ear says, ‘I’m not an eye, and so I’m not part of the body.’ Wouldn’t the ear still belong to the body? That’s why the eyes cannot say they don’t need the hands. That’s also why the head cannot say it doesn’t need the feet” (1 Corinthians 12:16, 21).

1.)

2.)

- ALIGNING with the Action

Go ahead and get in the game. There’s plenty of places to serve at Northeast and, more than likely, you’re already interested in a particular area.

So, what’s stopping you? If the opportunity presented itself for you to freely use the talents you’ve been given, what would you do?

Read: Matthew 25:14-30 – You can tell by the ending of this parable that spiritual gifts are serious business.

What Next?

If you need help identifying your spiritual gift, or would like some guidance about getting in the game, we're here to help.

- Go to ncclex.org/nextstep-gifts and register for the next Discovery My Ministry class.
- Go to ncclex.org/serve to find the best immediate fit for your SHAPE.

My Personal Responsibility

I will identify the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to me and use them to build up His church. When I struggle to understand what my gifts are and how to use them, I will commit to learning more about them and growing in my ability to put them into action (Romans 12:6-8).