

Praise for THRIVE

Jim Hall emphasizes the importance of discipleship as an important function of an Acts 2 church. He not only tells us why we must disciple people, but how. This material is an excellent resource, and I encourage you to consider it as part of your training curriculum.

—Alton Garrison, assistant general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, executive director of the Division of Church Ministries and Discipleship

Jim Hall speaks from the front lines of forty years of disciple making with an authority that could only be found in the crucible of experience. *The Harvester's Handbook* [now **THRIVE**] is more than a book or a curriculum: it is a process loaded with the practical helps, powerful tools, and passionate insight that has guided hundreds of churches into the greater fruitfulness of transforming lives. Every church planter, pastor, and ministry leader will deeply benefit if they choose to follow the simple, straightforward example set forth in the highly engaging, easily multiplied message of Jim Hall's ministry found between the covers of this book.

—Dr. Tom Clegg, president and founder of the Missional Transformation Network, author of *Lost in America* and *Missing in America*

James Hall has done a great job with this very practical training manual in *The Harvester's Handbook* [now **THRIVE**]. He is right on target. Anyone wanting to learn more about personal evangelism and discipling will find it here. I heartily recommend its use.

—Dr. Robert E. Coleman, author of *The Master Plan of Evangelism*

After using your curriculum for years, I highly recommend it for discipling new converts. The materials are well thought out, easy to understand, and directly relevant to the society we live in today. I believe this is the best curriculum of its kind on the market today and has been needed in the church for years. It is self-paced and step by step with beliefs and instructions that are true for all Christians—and has made a difference in discipling our people.

—Dominic T. Gaccetta, former discipleship director for the Los Angeles Dream Center (Matthew Barnett, pastor)

I have read Jim Hall's *The Harvester's Handbook* [now **THRIVE**]. It is just what a new follower of Jesus needs. In a world where order, sequence, and truth have become like confetti blowing in the wind, this is a sequence of study that brings stability to a new believer's life.

—Bill Hull, author of *Jesus Christ, Disciplemaker* and *The Complete Book of Discipleship*

THRIVE

DISCIPLER'S GUIDE

Mentoring new
Christians through
One PLANTs One
discipleship

J A M E S H . H A L L

About the author

James Hall is the son of missionaries John and Cuba Hall, with whom he spent eight and a half years growing up in Burkina Faso, West Africa. He was active in student ministries in high school and at the University of Missouri, where he received a B.A. in English literature. He earned a Master of Divinity degree from Covenant Theological Seminary in 1970. Since then he has served as Chi Alpha Director for the Illinois District Assemblies of God and as senior pastor of Urbana Assembly of God in Urbana, Illinois. After several teaching trips to Singapore, Jim and his family spent a year on the pastoral staff of Calvary Charismatic Centre (AG) in Singapore, where he began writing materials for new Christians.

Jim and his wife, Betty, have been married for forty-five years, and they have two grown children—Julie Green and Joshua. The Halls have resided in Springfield, Missouri, since 1989. After years of careful study of the Scriptures, much thought, and countless personal witnessing and discipling exchanges, God has given birth in Jim's spirit to these guidelines and lessons and helped him make them available to others. God also has called Jim to travel to churches to personally train members for personal evangelism and discipling of new believers using **THRIVE** (formerly *Harvester's Handbook*).

In March 1992 the Halls received appointment as U.S. missionaries with the Assemblies of God to focus on the major population centers of the United States to train local believers for local ministry. Their assignment has continued to encompass their ministry of training and providing materials for evangelism and discipling, but also founding and directing Urban Bible Training Centers. This program helps pastors train ministry-minded church members locally. In eighteen years, God has raised up centers in approximately forty-five cities—with as many as a thousand students enrolling at any given time.

Jim and Betty have placed approximately twelve thousand discipleship training manuals in the hands of harvest laborers across the United States. Because they have allowed photocopying of the lessons for new believers in the **THRIVE** handbook for new Christians, only in heaven will we find out how many new believers have been helped to know God with these lessons. The many testimonies received have convinced the Halls that God is in the project.

The handbook for new Christians has also been translated and distributed in Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Bulgarian, German, and Chinese. Some translations are available as free downloads from our Web site: www.newchristian.com.

To schedule ministry or order materials, contact:

Reverend James H. Hall
1411 E. Stoneridge Street
Springfield, Missouri 65803
(417) 833-9052
E-mail: JHHalls@aol.com
Web site: www.newchristian.com (credit card orders)

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Contents

<i>Foreword by Dr. J. Robert Ashcroft</i>	vi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
<i>Preface: Jesus' Final Command</i>	ix
One PLANTS One Discipling	Discipler's Guide 1
1 Pray for Compassion	Discipler's Guide 2
2 Love through Friendship	Discipler's Guide 6
3 Assist Faith in Jesus	Discipler's Guide 8
4 Nurture Faith to Follow Jesus	Discipler's Guide 15
5 Train to Plant Others	Discipler's Guide 22
One PLANTS One Seminar Participant Notes	Discipler's Guide 27
Handbook for New Christians (with Discipler Helps)	
<i>Session Summaries</i>	iii
Phase 1: Orientation	
1 Starting New Life in Jesus	1
2 Knowing God Is Always with You	9
3 Worshiping God, Loving God	17
4 Working with God	25
5 Your Spiritual Birth Announcement	31
Phase 2: Prayerful Living	
6 Knowing God as Your Father	37
7 Becoming a Citizen of Heaven	45
8 Your Daily Supply of Food	51
9 Your Daily Supply of Forgiveness	59
10 Freedom through Dependence	65
Phase 3: Responsibility	
11 Remembering Jesus Together	71
12 Spiritual Living	79
13 Going with the Flow	87
14 Sowing Gospel Seed	93
15 Reaping	99
<i>Appendix A: Daily Journal</i>	109
<i>Appendix B: How to Be a Discipling Friend</i>	111
<i>Appendix C: Answers</i>	115

Forward

Andrew heard John the Baptist speak of Jesus, and he followed Him. Then Andrew found Peter and brought him to Jesus, saying, “We have found the Messiah!” What a sequence! History has never been the same since those events. Today, believers are still finding others to bring to Jesus.

James Hall has put his knowledge, skills, and experience into creating clear, simple, but adequate guidelines for bringing people to Jesus and training them to be soul winners. He has provided a minicourse in fulfilling the great truth: “It is better to have won a soul winner, than to have won a soul to the Lord.”

The dynamic principle of one-to-one discipling is set forth in clear plans in Hall’s course. He has done the work for us. It puts into a pastor’s or teacher’s hands the principles used by Jesus in selecting His disciples and training them to go into all the world with the gospel. “Each one win one” could achieve the expectations of the evangelical world.

Dr. J. Robert Ashcroft
July 1989

Acknowledgments

First Edition (July 1989)

My Lord, whose idea this endeavor was, and who has guided and enabled its unfolding in an incredible tapestry of ways. In whatever ways **THRIVE** is helpful, the credit goes to the Lord of the harvest, while the deficiencies are the author's.

My friends in Calvary Charismatic Centre in the Republic of Singapore, who demonstrated such great devotion and diligence to disciple new believers. They presented a practical model that fired my vision to provide practical materials for disciplers anywhere and everywhere.

My wife, Betty—my best friend on the planet—who encouraged me, proofread many revisions of revisions, became “General Manager of Production,” and who, along with my long-suffering children Julie and Joshua, continued to love me while I was “married” to my computer.

My parents—the ultimate “discipling friends”: my father, missionary John Hall, whose Bible lesson footprints I stand in but will never fill—and who is smiling on this project from the balconies of heaven; and my mother, missionary Cuba Hall—assistant proofreader, chief intercessor, and consistent encourager—a modern example of my favorite Bible character, Barnabas.

Space does not allow comment, but I am deeply grateful for the significant parts the following individuals played in the massive team effort that these materials represent. For your encouragement and varied assistance along the way, I sincerely thank Reverend Randy Hurst; Reverend Rick Seaward; Reverend Chua Hock Lin; my “A.T.C.E.M.” and “C.D.P” students in Singapore; Jim Carter; Reverend Herlin Summers; Dr. J. Robert Ashcroft; Reverend Charles Crabtree; Dr. Zenas Bicket; my sister, Evelyn Looper; and Reverend Greg White. “Your labour is not in vain in the Lord!” (1 Corinthians 15:58 KJV).

Second Edition (July 1992)

To the pastors and congregations who have desired help in leading people to Christ in addition to assistance in discipling new believers. Their enthusiasm for the teaching on evangelism and the Adoption Contract they received has encouraged me to add the section on personal evangelism to this second edition.

Their purchase of *Harvester's Handbooks* (now **THRIVE**) has made possible its availability to others.

To Reverend Robert Pirtle, Mrs. Faith Hamilton, and Reverend Charles Hackett, whose confidence and affirmation have encouraged me to seek and receive appointment as a U.S. missionary with the Assemblies of God, which has opened a wider door for the use of these materials.

Third Edition (July 2008)

Deep gratitude for this fine-tuned edition to an army of friends: To Pastors Garry Hamilton and Dave Donati and the discipling army they lead at First Assembly of God, Auburn, New Hampshire, who have demonstrated for over a decade the fruit of systematically and passionately obeying Jesus by discipling. To Dr. Leighton Jones—fellow visionary; encourager; networker; and partner in prayer, iron sharpening, and ministry. To Robert Douglas—timely encourager and ministry enlarger—another sharpener and fellow fanatic for discipling. To Phil Alessi—partner in enlarging vision and mining biblical truth, who dragged me into much needed uplifting fellowship with Church Resource Ministries (CRM). To fellow CRMers Rick Tansey and Bob Trott, who greatly helped fine tune my training strategies. To Alton Garrison, whose respect for what God has given me has expanded my platform for ministry. To Larry Pace—model lay-ministry leader, great witness in the business world, and first official fellow trainer. To Todd Waggoner, a fellow trainer whose desktopping skills and kind labors greatly enhanced the look and flow of my seminar workbook.

And in grateful memory of Carl Barnes, cofounder of Cantrell-Barnes Printing, who gave us a workable payment plan and the beginnings of twenty-one years of excellent service by CBP to help us get the Word out!

Fourth Edition—THRIVE (July 2011)

With sincere gratitude for the professional expertise in design and editing, tireless labors, provision of segments of needed content, and heart for this project of Dawn Brandon and Tammy Bicket at Between the Lines. Their assistance has truly been a godsend that will greatly increase the fruitfulness of these resources.

With heartfelt appreciation for the encouragement of Alton Garrison, Wes Bartel, and Randy Hedlun to pursue upgrading and expanding availability of these God-given resources.

Preface | Jesus' Final Command

Disciple Is a Verb

Just before Jesus returned to heaven to sit on His throne at the right hand of God the Father, He gave a command with instructions to His disciples. He also reminded them of His authority and that He would always be with them to help them—a promise of ever-present help for obedience. Read the words of Jesus from Matthew 28:18–20 (the command is in bold):

All authority was given to Me in heaven and on earth.
Going, therefore, **disciple all the nations**,
Baptizing them into the name
of the Father, and
of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit,
Teaching them to do all things that I commanded you. And look,
I am with you all the days until the completion of the age.
(*Matthew 28:18–20, literal rendition with author's emphasis added*)

The original word here translated as the imperative verb “disciple” is *matheteuo*. A related and more frequently used New Testament word is the Greek noun *mathetes*—commonly translated “disciple.” This noun indicated learners in ancient times who accompanied their teacher in an ongoing apprenticeship-style association. *Matheteuo* is a verb with the same root as *mathetes*, meaning in this context, “to cause to learn through personal association.” (A similar comparison would be to use the word *apprentice* as a verb, indicating the process used to train apprentices.) “All the nations” is the direct object of the verb—showing that this method will work and is to be used with all kinds of people at all times in all places.

Jesus had modeled what He mandated using the traditional rabbinical learning process, discipling through personal interaction with individual disciples, subgroups, and with all twelve as a team. He activated them to baptize believers, distribute miracle lunches, find transportation for His Jerusalem entrance, and make dinner preparations. He also sent them out with authority to gain ministry experience and with instructions to report back on all they did and taught.

The traditional goal of discipling was reproduction. Disciples were equipped to become rabbis who would disciple others. This was the goal of Jesus' relationship

with His disciples as stated in His instructing them to teach the baptized to obey all that He had commanded them. We see specific examples of this objective being fulfilled in the early church in the discipling relationships of Barnabas with Paul; Barnabas with Mark; Barnabas and Paul with the Asia Minor believers (Acts 13); Peter with Mark; Paul with Timothy, Titus, and Priscilla and Aquila; Timothy with “faithful men” (2 Timothy 2:2); and Paul with each one of the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:11).

Personal contact was the core dynamic of this empowering process and was valued by Jesus for its natural effectiveness at imparting new convictions and new conduct to His committed followers. This personal component is evident now in mentoring, apprenticeships, and coaching relationships. To this natural process Jesus added the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Notice that He fully employed both natural and supernatural components.

Jesus is commanding us to do the same—to make this method the standard for dealing with all the nations. We dare not depart from or try to improve on His methods—which are effective beyond equal. As we are faithful in carrying out the Lord’s prescribed methods, He will be responsible for the fruit of our labor. As we pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers, we must also be diligent to plant and water the harvest fields according to God’s plan—as a farmer works in cooperation with the Creator. As we express faith by praying and enact faith by obedient works, God will give the increase of a great harvest.

The Greatness of the Great Commission

Consider the following possible scenario:

- In one year, one ready discipler wins and discipled one person to be able to win and disciple others.
- The next year, two ready disciplers each win and disciple one person to win and disciple others.
- The third year, four ready disciplers each win and disciple one person to win and disciple others.
- The fourth year, eight ready disciplers each win and disciple one person to win and disciple others.
- The fifth year, sixteen ready disciplers each win and disciple one person to win and disciple others—resulting in thirty-two discipled additions to the Kingdom from one discipling five in five years.

If this process continues—each discipled believer winning and discipling one person each year—at the end of ten years, there will be 1,023 new believers. All of this can come from a chain of obedience started by one ready discipler who discipled just ten in ten years.

The Limitations Of Involvement

The only way many new believers can be personally discipled is through the involvement of many established Christians. A few new believer follow-up specialists cannot personally disciple a multitude of new believers. A natural parallel would be something like a single mother who just gave birth to quintuplets and has no one to assist her in caring for her precious bundles. She may be called to the ministry of motherhood, but there simply is not enough of her to go around to meet the individual demands of caring for five newborns at the same time.

To neglect any of these little ones, and thus contribute to their stumbling, arouses strong feelings in the heart of their heavenly Father, elder Brother, and indwelling Helper. Yet how many new believers have spiritually died or suffered long-term from spiritual malnutrition simply from lack of individualized care to help them get a good start. A great harvest will require many church members to care for the spiritual newborns.

Conclusion

In one process, the Lord of the harvest has given us the way to raise up the best quality Christians (faithful and fruitful), who will in turn produce the greatest quantity of believers. Jesus' final command was to give ourselves wholeheartedly to this process. You hold in your hand a proven field guide—a handbook that provides practical guidelines and resources—to carry out the Great Commission in the manner commanded by the great Commissioner.

This prescribed conduct can only flow from our personal contact with the Commissioner. So the instructions in this manual begin with taking you back to Jesus to find out how He views lost people and how He feels about them. It was for their sake that He gave the Great Commission and the Holy Spirit—and put in your hands the *THRIVE Discippler's Guide*.

May these materials provide you with insight and guidance for teaming up with the Lord of the harvest to invest your life in One PLANTs One discipling. He has always intended for you be a fruitful witness by discipling others. In this way you will keep adding to the crowd traveling with you to where Jesus is in heaven.


 Introduction

One PLANTs One Discipling

THE LORD OF THE HARVEST has earned His title by coming to earth to be the world's number-one harvester. He modeled the basic strategy and spiritual empowerment needed for the harvest (Luke 4:18). “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21, emphasis added). He wants us to continue to proclaim His message: in His manner, with His motivation, and through His means. Much has been said about each of these critical aspects of Jesus' ministry, with the exception of His manner.

His manner was primarily defined by His personal contact with people—and ours should be as well. This does not exclude the need for other means of communication. We should communicate the gospel in any and all ways available, but at the same time, we should be diligent to keep Jesus' example of personal contact the main thing. The early church turned the world upside down with personal contact witnessing—as have believers in Latin America and China in modern times. We want to be like Jesus, and we are His church. So our ambition should be to help lost people know Jesus primarily by the way we personally relate to them.

The phases of Jesus' harvest strategy can be remembered with the acronym PLANT:



PLANT

PRAY for compassion—ask Jesus to give you His eyes and heart for lost people.

LOVE through friendship—cultivate the soil of human hearts by demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit.

ASSIST faith in Jesus—sow the seed of the gospel, and help it sprout as the lost person responds to the Spirit's convicting and drawing.

NURTURE the new believer's faith to follow Jesus—reap and retain the harvest with the Spirit's help.

TRAIN to PLANT one to PLANT another—multiply the harvest with the Spirit's power.

The early church turned the world upside down with personal contact witnessing—as have believers in Latin America and China in modern times.



Chapter 1

Pray for Compassion

When the Good Shepherd recovers a sheep, we can almost hear Him shouting through the hallways of heaven: “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.”

The depth of God’s love is measured by the price He paid so runaway children can come home.

Recognize how God sees people.

The ancient Eastern shepherd was not a rancher who managed large herds of livestock. He was a man who owned a small flock of sheep that he called by name and cared for individually. If one were lost, he would go search for that one until he found it and would lay it on his shoulders and take it home, rejoicing. (See Luke 15:5.)

When Jesus looked at the multitudes, He did not see a faceless crowd. He saw a great number of individuals with severe problems—all due to one cause. They were sheep separated from their shepherd (Matthew 9:36)—and He was their shepherd. Each person was created for a personal relationship with Him. Jesus also knew that the greatest tragedy, eternal hell, was in store for those who would not put their trust in Him. He wanted to rescue them and be in relationship with them—for their sakes and for His own sake—because He loved them.

For these reasons, when the Good Shepherd recovers a sheep, we can almost hear Him shouting through the hallways of heaven: “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep” (Luke 15:6). All heaven celebrates when just one sheep is found.

Recognize how God feels about people.

Jesus sees below the surface with people. He looks beyond the faults and the inadequate strengths and sees the root condition of people’s lives—the people in the crowd were like sheep created for a shepherd’s care but separated from their shepherd, harassed and helpless. Understanding this, Jesus felt compassion. And because Jesus is the accurate representation of God in human flesh, we can know how God our heavenly Father and God the Holy Spirit also feel about the lost: God feels compassion.

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son” (John 3:16). To God, every world citizen is His child who has run away from home. He longs for each of them to return—though they do not deserve this privilege. The depth of His longing is measured by the price He paid to make their return possible.

Know what God is doing for people—and join Him!

God blesses the world by causing the sun to shine and the rain to fall, which causes crops to grow and produce a harvest. He gives life and meets earthly needs of people in many ways. But life on earth can only be truly good for those individuals who, like the prodigal son, return home to their heavenly Father and interact with Him in daily conversation and cooperation.

God uses this cooperation with Him to help bring other runaway children back to Him. The reconciliation He desires with the lost depends on help from the labor pool of His children who remain at home. Unfortunately, according to Jesus, the cooperation level is low: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:37).

God’s efforts to bring runaways home is limited by the number of human laborers actively assisting Him—and by the level of cooperation they give. He calls this joint project His harvest. It is His highest priority, but He can only pursue it as we work with Him.

To those who will join Him in loving others, He has provided His Word and His Spirit to help us be effective.

Hear what God is saying to us.

The Lord of the harvest focuses first on the labor shortage. “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:38). We should pray not only for increased numbers of workers but also for increased effectiveness for those who are working. We can also make requests on behalf of specific portions of His harvest field—particular people groups (literal meaning of the Greek word translated “nations”), people in special geographical areas, and even individuals.

Remember that prayer is conversation, not just a one-way appeal for God to do something we want. As we listen, we will begin to hear from the Lord of the harvest. Now that we have shown concern for what is of greatest concern to Him, we are in a much better position to hear what our harvest supervisor has to say to us about our own personal involvement in His business. If we are truly drawing near to Him in fellowship and cooperation, we will recognize His call to join Him in befriending sinners. That’s central to being like Jesus.

Jesus invites us to join Him in loving people. The good Samaritan, whom Jesus commands us to emulate, saw a man he would not naturally care for. He felt compassion for him in a way that moved him to serve the man’s need sacrificially. (See Luke 10:30–37.)

Jesus knows we need help to care in that manner, so He provides to our selfish hearts His love. His indwelling Spirit delivers this love personally. The apostle Paul wrote: “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he

Being a friend to
the people He is
befriending is central
to being like Jesus.

Our neighbors' need for Jesus will become as important to us as our own need for Jesus.

Working with Jesus in the harvest becomes a combination of our natural efforts and Spirit-imparted abilities.

has given us" (Romans 5:5). This outpouring of love becomes the resource He uses to pour His love through us, manifesting itself as fruit of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). This fruit causes us to care about the eternal well-being of the people we know who are on the road to hell.

If we persistently abide in Him and He abides in us, we will bear much fruit—the fruit of His Spirit living in us. It takes the supernatural work of the Spirit of adoption dwelling in us to allow us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). This sort of love means putting our neighbors' need for Jesus on a par with our own need for Jesus. This is well beyond the reach of whatever natural sympathy resides in us.

Go to people with God.

"We are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9 KJV). The Spirit seeks the cooperation of the person in whom He dwells.

Combine/add your effort to His.

Our work together in the harvest becomes a combination of our natural efforts and abilities imparted by the Spirit. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light," Jesus said (Matthew 11:29–30). Compared to the struggle of life apart from Him, truly, "his commands are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). However, we are required to expend our natural energy as we work to do God's will.

From the New Testament, we see that working in God's harvest field may require blood and always requires sweat and tears. We must serve with the same determination as the apostle Paul and a multitude of other faithful servants. See how Paul described his effort: "We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.... We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you" (1 Thessalonians 2:2, 8–9).

Cooperate with the Spirit.

The harvest is already in progress. God's plan for your life is coordinated with His master plan for the harvest, with the other workers in the field, and with the stage of the work where He places you. The Lord of the harvest will give you on-the-job training and personally supervise and empower you—if your intention is to cooperate with Him. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me," Jesus says (Matthew 11:29). We learn in the process of doing.

As you allow God to work through you, God is also working directly in the nonbeliever (John 6:44; 16:8) and through other channels. God's program in a

nonbeliever's life is always bigger than the part you are playing (Philippians 2:13). Pray that God's whole program in a lost person's life will be effective; but you are only responsible for the part the Spirit shows you and enables you to do. Through Christ you can do all the things He wants you to do (adapted from Philippians 4:13). That is why Jesus said you are to be baptized in the Holy Spirit—so you can function as a Spirit-controlled and empowered witness (Acts 1:8).



As you allow God to work through you, God is also working directly in the nonbeliever.

Appendix A | Daily Journal

DATE _____ PASSAGE _____ VERSES THAT SPOKE TO ME _____

WONDERFUL THINGS I SEE _____

HOW THEY APPLY TO MY LIFE _____

PRAYER NEEDS _____

PRAYER VICTORIES _____

Appendix B | How to Be a Discipling Friend

Introduction

A literal translation of Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19 is, "Disciple all the nations." God intends for His spiritual family to love His newborn spiritual children and work with Him to disciple them until they are strong and able to disciple others. You have been discipled by someone using these **THRIVE** sessions. Now you can be a discipling friend to another new Christian using a new copy of these same sessions.

Part 1

God intends for His older children to receive new Christians as their own brothers and sisters (Luke 15:32). This includes:

- A. Celebrating with God the birth of new members of His eternal family (Acts 11:23).
- B. Receiving new believers in His name as members of the family whom God loves as much as the older family members (1 Thessalonians 2:7–11; 3:12).
- C. Being a friend who...
 - understands their past,
 - accepts them as they are,
 - sees the good in them, and
 - gently encourages them to grow.

Part 2

God's loving family helps His new children learn to walk with Him (Acts 14:21–23).

- A. Paul and his coworkers in Thessalonica...
 1. Prayed for the new Christians (1 Thessalonians 1:2–3; 3:9–13; 5:23).
 2. Helped them learn to walk with God (1 Thessalonians 2:7 to 3:13; 4:1–8).
 3. Helped them learn to love people (1 Thessalonians 4:6–12, 18; 5:11–15).
- B. Then the new believers willingly cooperated with their disciplers until they also became disciplers of new Christians (1 Thessalonians 1:6–10; 2:13–14; 4:1, 9–10).



Read 1 Thessalonians 1 through 5 to see the example set by discipling friends Paul, Silas, and Timothy as they cared for the Thessalonian church—and how the Thessalonian believers followed their example, in turn discipling others.

Part 3

Spiritual growth is best served by a discipling friendship between a more experienced spiritual brother or sister and a new Christian.

- A.** A discipling friend (discipler) is a guide for the new believer.
1. The discipler should explain that the sessions instruct the new believer to learn to walk with God.
 2. The discipler helps the new believer to personally experience God's presence and power while learning direct conversation with God through:
 - a. Studying His written Word and responding in prayer.
 - b. Hearing God speak while praying and through the day.
 3. The discipler should pray daily and diligently for the new believer's needs and growth.
 4. The discipler will receive from God the help he or she gives to others.
- B.** A discipling friend should encourage two-way communication by:
1. Being honest and open in conversation.
 2. Being a patient and attentive listener.
 3. Describing his or her own background and growing experiences to...
 - a. Help the new believer understand the growing process in Christian living.
 - b. Encourage the new believer to trust Jesus always.
 4. Arranging time to be with the new believer without a planned discussion, to allow friendship to grow. In this setting the new believer can talk about things that are on his or her mind and heart or ask questions. This will allow the discipler to better understand how well the new believer is grow-

ing spiritually or where he or she is struggling. “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34).

5. Being alert to what God wants to teach him or her through the new believer, because God always works through fellowship between believers to benefit everyone involved.

Plan of Action | The Discipling Process

A. Disciplers need to be trained before they disciple new believers.

1. Disciplers should always work through each session themselves before discussing the material with a new believer. This will help the discipler to know the material well and to be able to help the new believer better understand God’s truth.
2. If possible, disciplers should discuss each session with another Christian or in a small group before discussing it with a new believer. This will help them explain things more clearly.
3. Disciplers should bring their completed sessions to the meeting with the new believer as notes for reference.

B. Disciplers need to know how to use the *THRIVE* sessions.


1. First meeting: Go through Session 1 with the new believer, assisting him or her to understand how to work through the material and to understand the truth and how it applies to everyday living. At the end of each meeting:
 - a. Explain and assign the daily time of study and prayer (quiet time) to be practiced until the next meeting between discipler and new believer.
 - b. Always take time to pray together without hurry, encouraging the new believer to talk to God as simply and naturally as if talking to another person. When you pray, use simple words so the new believer can learn how easy it is to pray by listening to you.
 - c. Arrange a regular weekly time to meet. Be faithful in meeting with new believers—even if they are not. Their spiritual life depends on it.
2. Second meeting: Go through Session 2 with the new believer, using the same activity format as with your first meeting. Give whatever help is

needed to find answers in God's Word, and discuss how those answers guide daily living. Review changes in the new believer's life, discuss their quiet-time experiences, and take turns praying. Turn to Session 3 in their handbook, and ask them to work through it on their own before your next meeting. Encourage new believers to give their best effort in completing the material but not to worry about any difficult parts. Assure them that when you meet, you will discuss and make clear the Bible's answers to the questions.

3. Third meeting: Discuss together the new believer's answers, questions, and other responses to Session 3. At the end of the meeting, give the new believer Session 4 to complete before the next meeting. Continue this process for the remaining sessions.

C. Disciplers should follow these guidelines for discipling others:

1. The sessions usually work best when used by one discipler with one new believer. If many new believers need to be disciplined, two or three can meet together with one discipler.
2. Contact the new believer at least once a week without a detailed plan for the conversation. This contact, by phone or in person, will let you check on how well the new believer is doing and will help your friendship grow.
3. Maintain a schedule for completing the sessions.
 - a. Meeting regularly is more important than completing an entire session at every meeting. Sometimes dealing with pressing needs in the new believer's life will require multiple meetings to finish a session.
 - b. If the new believer seems to be making a real effort to learn and grow, it is important to give him or her whatever time is necessary to understand and apply the truth to his or her life.

 Being a discipling friend actually begins with being a friend of sinners, as Jesus is. God wants us to rescue people from the fires of hell, but He also wants us to train (disciple) them to walk with Him in daily fellowship and obedience. An important part of their obeying God is for them to become discipling friends to others. Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20). So be sure to teach the new believer to disciple others while you also keep discipling new Christians.