

BIBLE TALK LEADERS HANDBOOK

SO WHAT AM I READING?

Hi! If you're reading this it means on some level you want to lead a Bible Talk. Maybe you're already leading one, maybe you're assisting, maybe you want to lead in the future, and maybe you are just really nosy and couldn't help yourself from reading this. But we're not picky, so any way you got here is cool with us.

This handbook is a starting point. It's a stack of tools and resources to help you do whatever you're doing in your Bible Talk. Whether you're taking your first hesitant step or trying to imprint a heavy footprint in your community you can find some helpful tools here.

These are not the silver bullet techniques. These are not the 10 steps to guaranteed growth in your Bible Talk. **This is not the right way or only way.** These are more like signposts that are meant to point you in the right direction, and we hope with all the strength we can muster that some of the things we've discovered can help you along the way.

Enjoy!

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WHY DO WE HAVE BIBLE TALKS?

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world....”*

It’s the only thing that ever has”

-Margaret Mead

The worst thing to happen to a Christian is to become religious. What I mean by that is to get to the point where you are doing Christian things without knowing why you’re doing them, or worse without *remembering* why you’re doing things. Most of us have had the “Why are we doing this?” moment in our Christian lives—whether it’s holding hands and closing your eyes while praying, the infamous Christian side-hug, or even having Bible Talks, we silently wonder why we’re doing this slightly awkward thing but fall in line as we always have. This is the way Satan kicks the plug out of the socket powering our walk with God and leaves us sitting in the dark, clueless as to why we are ineffective in our spiritual lives.

So then, why Bible Talks? For many of us, that’s the way it’s always been and it seems that’s the way it’s always going to be. But that’s really not a good enough reason is it? Let’s look at some reasons.

(Note: For the sake of this section I am referring to Bible Talks interchangeably with: Family Groups, House Churches, Small Groups, Mission Teams, Prayer Groups, etc. Not the actual discussion itself, but the element of small groups.)

SMALL GROUPS IN THE BIBLE

1. JESUS ABSOLUTELY HAD SMALL GROUPS [MARK 3:13-19, 6:7, 6:30, 9:2-13]

There really is no denying that Jesus had small groups. He called the twelve to him so that they would “be with him and he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14 ESV). He used that group of twelve guys to train them to preach but also just to be with him. He would send them out to prepare the way for him. And even within that small group he had a smaller group of Peter, James, and John. He didn’t ignore the crowds, but realized that building quality relationships with a few people made a bigger impact than building shallow relationships with the multitudes (see: Book of Acts)

2. THE FIRST CHURCH ABSOLUTELY HAD SMALL GROUPS [ACTS 2:46, ROM 16:4-5, PHILEMON 1.2]

Call them whatever you want—House Church, Family Group, Mission Team, Bible Talk—but without a doubt, the church didn’t always meet in a big building with Powerpoint Presentations and a Fellowship Hall. They met in people’s houses. People’s homes back then were not large so these groups were limited to how many people you could fit in your house. People worshipped, ate, and took care of each other within the small group. They even dealt with issues within House Churches. 1 Cor 1:11 discusses Chloe’s Household dealing with issues, and the whole letter of Philemon is addressed to Philemon, a house church leader, to deal with any issues that may come up with him personally and for his house church to keep him accountable with the return of Philemon’s former slave Onesimus.

3. SMALL GROUPS KEEP DISCIPLES MOVING FORWARD [HEBREWS 10:24-25]

Hebrews 10:24-26 is incredibly helpful for answering “Why small groups?” This verse starts, **“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together”**. It links spurring each other on and meeting together. This makes sense, you can’t spur each other on without being together. But also meeting together allows people to have closer relationships with each other and know exactly how to spur each other on. Meeting only in large groups leads to general and vague spurring. In small groups, spurring is intimate, personal, specific—and ultimately more effective.

4. SMALL GROUPS KEEP DISCIPLES ENCOURAGED [HEBREWS 10:25]

Everyone needs encouragement. If you don’t—please call me and we’ll be best friends because I need a ton of it. Hebrews 10 continues **“..not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”** It really is difficult too be encouraged by other disciples if you don’t meet together. *Wait...we do meet together, at Church on Sunday!* Once again, if you meet in a large group on Sundays encouragement can become inconsistent (No one can encourage everyone ever week), or vague (“Well bro, you’re just awesome, y’know”).

5. SMALL GROUPS KEEP DISCIPLES FROM SIN [HEBREWS 3:12-13]

It’s our responsibility to keep each other from turning away from God. But The Bible says the way to do that is **“Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”** And as we saw above, we encourage one another when we meet together (or at least we should). Sometimes we encourage with words of positive affirmation. Other times we encourage by speaking the truth in love. Only in small groups do you have the time and relationships needed to specifically address and encourage so that no one falls into sin.

6. SMALL GROUPS HELP DISCIPLES MATURE [EPHESIANS 4.14-16]

No one wants to remain a spiritual infant (even if they seem like they do). We are designed by God to grow and mature. This happens by “**speaking the truth in love**” (v.15) so that “**the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**” (v.16) We don’t grow by ourselves, we grow by being connected to the body and therefore being connected to the head of the body, Jesus. Small groups let people have real life contact with real disciples and learn how to live real life as disciples. It is easy to act religious at Church on Sunday. Church Service is meant to be a safe haven away from the world for disciples and seekers, and we do mature at church. But let’s be honest, most of our lives are lived outside the Church building and we need help, instruction and examples of how to live outside Sunday morning.

7. SMALL GROUPS HELP PEOPLE BECOME CHRISTIANS [ACTS 2.42-47]

We have a mission to make disciples. Small Groups just work to accomplish that and it has since the beginning. Bible talks are like free samples of the Kingdom of God. People see it work, people see the love, people see God walking in and among his people and they say—*I’ll have what they’re having*. Coming to church makes an impact to hear the word, but small groups let people see it in action.

PURPOSE OF BIBLE TALKS

Bible Talks have three very simple jobs. They are all about moving people from where they are to become more like Jesus. The jobs are to:

1. HELP NON-CHRISTIANS BECOME CHRISTIANS [MATTHEW 28.18-20, JOHN 13.33-35]

It’s not just the Bible Discussions that help people become Christians, it’s also seeing the love of Jesus lived out. If you’re not making disciples with your Bible Talk, you’re missing out on the mission.

2. HELP YOUNG CHRISTIANS BECOME MATURE CHRISTIANS [EPHESIANS 4.14-16]

If you help someone become a Christian but they never mature, they are doomed to leave God eventually. Many do not mature because they are not adequately connected to a small group.

3. HELP STRONG CHRISTIANS BECOME LEADERS [2 TIMOTHY 2:2]

For the Kingdom to grow, you have to make disciples. For the Kingdom to multiply, you have to train leaders. Jesus used his small group as a training ground to raise up the twelve guys who would turn the world upside down after he was gone. Our Bible Talks must be training grounds to identify and raise up new leaders, so that the Kingdom doesn’t merely grow, but multiplies.

Neglect any of these three jobs and your Bible Talk will feel stagnant, people won’t grow the way God intended them, and the Bible Talk doesn’t fulfill the purpose God set out for it. That’s how a Bible Talk ends up being a group that no one wants to be apart of.

WHAT'S MY JOB AS BIBLE TALK LEADER?

"Leadership is action, not position"

-Donald H. McGannon

"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20.26-28

Leaders serve. That's the biggest point you can take from this. Leaders serve. Being a Bible Talk leader is not a title, an office, or a position, it's a responsibility of service. There are different ways a Bible Talk Leader serves, but above all else you need to want to serve as a leader. The quickest way to get God's hand to push against you is to act like you're the star of the show rather than the servant.

You've probably experienced this kind of me-first leadership before. It's the boss that is desperate to climb the corporate ladder and really doesn't care how you feel about what he's saying to you as long as you produce the way you should. It's the manager who asks for the impossible to be done during the evening rush but remains in the back when the front is like a circus. It's the team captain who yells at their teammates when they screw-up the play, but never offers to help them get it right. These "leaders" are more concerned about what their people can do for them rather than what they can do for their people. As Bible Talk leaders, it's easy to fall into this trap and see the Bible Talk as a way for your personal prestige and influence to swell, rather than the treasured people of God entrusted to your care and protection.

HOW DO BIBLE TALK LEADERS LEAD? (LEAD, LOVE, TRAIN, TEACH)

What are you talking about? Well here are some Biblical examples.

PRAY! [MARK 11.22-25, ACTS 6.4, MATTHEW 9.37-38]

We are not able to lead/serve our people on our own. We can bring about certain behavioral changes and maybe have some fun discussions, but the kind of growth we are trying to help bring about can only happen supernaturally. Even The Twelve said their two most important jobs were preaching and praying (Acts 6.4). If we really want to serve our Bible Talks, our greatest work will be done in prayer.

BE AN EXAMPLE [1 CORINTHIANS 11.1, 1 CORINTHIANS 4.16-17, 2 TIMOTHY 3.10-14]

People need an example. Paul says imitate me as I imitate Christ. So many people come from backgrounds where they never saw a disciple in real life. You being an example in Bible study, prayer, evangelism, service, confession, holiness, love, etc may be the closest and clearest example of a disciple they've ever seen.

TEACH TRUTH [2 TIMOTHY 4.2, MATTHEW 7.24-27, 2 TIMOTHY 2.15]

One of your biggest jobs is to know the Bible well, and teach it to the people you are leading. Otherwise you are leading people with your wisdom and opinion and not helping them build their lives with God's word.

ADDRESS AND DISCIPLE SIN [EZEKIEL 33.1-6, ISAIAH 58.1, ACTS 20.31]

One of the most difficult jobs of a leader is to address sin. A leader must be aware of sin in the Bible Talk, address it (with scripture), disciple it (with scripture), and help bring about repentance. Go back and look at the prophets—their biggest message was “Repent and turn to God!”

INSPIRE PEOPLE [NEHEMIAH 2.11-18, ACTS 14.1, PROVERBS 29.18]

Satan has a 24/7 job of trying to bring us down, and often he succeeds. A Bible Talk leader must be on the lookout for demotivated disciples and be ready to inspire them. There are many ways to inspire your Bible Talk (see page 45 for more).

TRAIN/TEACH/HELP PEOPLE MATURE [COL 1.28-29, EPHESIANS 4:15]

I'll bet there have been a bunch of people that have invested time in teaching and training you. What if they never did that? What if they tossed you a Bible and said, “Good Luck with figuring that out”? When we have been given teaching and training, it is our responsibility to turn around and pass that training on to someone else. We raise up new leaders, and replicate ourselves, so the Kingdom can MULTIPLY not just grow.

ENCOURAGE PEOPLE [HEBREWS 3:13, 1 THESSALONIANS 4:18, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11]

Sin's deceitfulness hardens our hearts, but sincere encouragement emboldens them. Many of us are good at spotting the negative, but barely even acknowledge the positive. Encouragement, even on little things (“Great job with the snack!”) costs us so little, but can give a lifetime of joy for the recipient. People are motivated when they feel like they can do something, so tell them they can!

PROTECT THE FLOCK (JOHN 10, ACTS 20:28-31, JOHN 21:15)

Satan will attack your Bible Talk from inside and out. People will lob lies at your group, and sin and pride and pettiness will try to tear your people apart. A leader runs to those fights and protects their people from the attacks and address the sin from within. Whether it's false doctrine or false humility, the leader fights the battle when the awkward battles come.

PLAN AND DELEGATE (1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27, ACTS 6:1-7, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12)

Multiplying your Bible Talk doesn't happen by accident. It takes planning and preparation. A leader will carefully consider, pray and fast about the best course of action—a campaign, a calendar, a schedule, a series, a special event, a prayer night etc.—and then execute it. Often that means delegating certain tasks to other people to fit their strengths and let the Bible Talk members mature.

HELP WITH REAL LIFE (MATTHEW 4:23, ACTS 6:1-6, JAMES 2:14-17)

Jesus had compassion on people's daily struggle with life. He healed them, then preached to them. While he preached, he fed them. The twelve focused on preaching in Acts 6 but still made sure widows were being taken care of. James tells us if we claim to have faith and yet do nothing about our brother's physical needs, we do nothing. Sometimes we serve by leading Bible Talk Discussions and sometimes we help with the day-to-day stuff like cooking meals, giving rides, cleaning the house, helping with laundry, helping with school work, etc.

PRACTICAL IDEAS OF HOW TO SERVE

So all of these principles are nice, but what should I do? Well, here are some ideas to get you started...

- Pray through everyone in your BT regularly (start weekly and try to get to daily)
- Fast regularly for the harvest and maturity in your BT
- Have a monthly plan of imitating Jesus in the spiritual disciplines
- Memorize scriptures on all kinds of life topics (*see 100 useful scriptures and GAS in Appendix*)
- Have a list of Shepherding issues in your BT to pray through, get input about, and address
- Develop training plans for the people you are discipling and raising up (*see Training Plans in Appendix*)
- Have someone in your BT over to your house for dinner twice a month
- Develop a habit to regularly call people in your BT just to encourage them
- Create a schedule for your BT complete with BT series, special events, family times, etc. (page 14)
- Brainstorm creative/useful topics for BT series with your BT
- Identify and Delegate roles/responsibilities to everyone in your BT (*see BT Roles and Responsibilities, page 15*)
- Singles: Take your sisters on DATES. Good dates. Not lame ones. Plan fun group dates for the whole BT.
- Marrieds: Organize Date Nights complete with babysitting.
- Celebrate Birthdays, Spirthdays, Life Milestones.
- Bring soup to sick members, take communion to those who can't attend church.
- Help clean the house of the hosting family/household.
- Find service projects for the BT to serve at.
- Organize group evangelism days with door-knocking or scavenger hunts.
- Regularly initiate your own Bible Studies and invite people to be in on them so you can train them.

HOW DO I “OWN” MY BIBLE TALK?

*“Remember the difference between a boss and a leader—
a boss says, “GO!” and a leader says, “Let’s Go!”*

-E.M. Kelly

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep

-John 10.11

If you want really make great things happen in your Bible Talk, you have to own it. What does it mean to own it? It means to take full and complete responsibility of it. It means to lay down your life for the flock. It’s when you truly own it and make it your responsibility that you begin to think creatively of how to best help your flock—and that is when you start to dream.

Without goals, dreams, and plans we can become aimless and apathetic. As leaders it becomes part of job to dream for our Bible Talks. To dream of where God could take you as a group and then to help bring about the work of the Holy Spirit to get there.

Let me say something now though. Your dreams may be big, inspiring and awesome. But you’re dreams don’t mean much at the end of the day. As a leader in God’s church, your dreams take a back seat to God’s dreams. It’s our job to own our Bible Talks and take care of them as Jesus would. If we dream we look only to imitate God’s dream for his people and make those happen, and then to work on our personal dreams. When we begin to shoehorn God’s dreams into our dreams that’s when we have problems and you’re heading for disaster. But when your dreams and plans become secondary to God’s dreams, miracles happen.

So how do you start to own your Bible Talk? Here are some resources that can help with that.

HOW TO START OWNING IT

Ownership comes from seeing the needs in your world. Matthew 9:36-11:1 takes us through how Jesus saw his world, discerned a solution, and executed a plan.

SEE THE NEEDS (MATTHEW 9:36—THE CROWDS WERE “HARASSED AND HELPLESS”)

What are the needs of my Bible Talk? (ex. Deeper relationships, Make More Disciples, Spiritual Maturity)

HAVE COMPASSION (MATTHEW 9:36—HE HAD COMPASSION)

How are those needs affecting your Bible Talk? How would you feel if it was you having those needs? How can you begin to have compassion like Jesus did for them? (Lack of joy, guilty, feel isolated and lonely)

DISCERN AND PRAY FOR THE SOLUTION (MATTHEW 9:38-39—NEED MORE WORKERS/ASK GOD)

What are possible solutions? (ex. Need more maturity, need to learn how to make disciples, need to enjoy being around each other)

TRAIN, EQUIP, DELEGATE, AND FOLLOW THROUGH YOURSELF (MATTHEW 10:1—HE CALLS THE 12)

What tangible practical things can you do and equip your team to accomplish solutions? (ex. Young Christian Classes/D-group, Planned fun times, more dates, Disciplemakers Class, more one-on-one discipling)

POINT A TO POINT B

Here's another way to own it. Start with Point B then go to Point A then answer the middle.

POINT A

Where is the BT now?

What will it take to get there?

POINT B

Where could it be?

<p>One new disciple baptized every six months/semester. Only the leaders involved.</p>	<p>Training from leader on how to make disciples. Classes twice/month. Accountability in D-groups. Following up at midweek. Expectations of everyone in a Bible Study.</p>	<p>The Bible Talk makes enough disciples that it has to split into two BTs.</p>

WHAT, WHY, HOW

Another way to think about how to own your Bible Talk

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

POINT A

POINT B

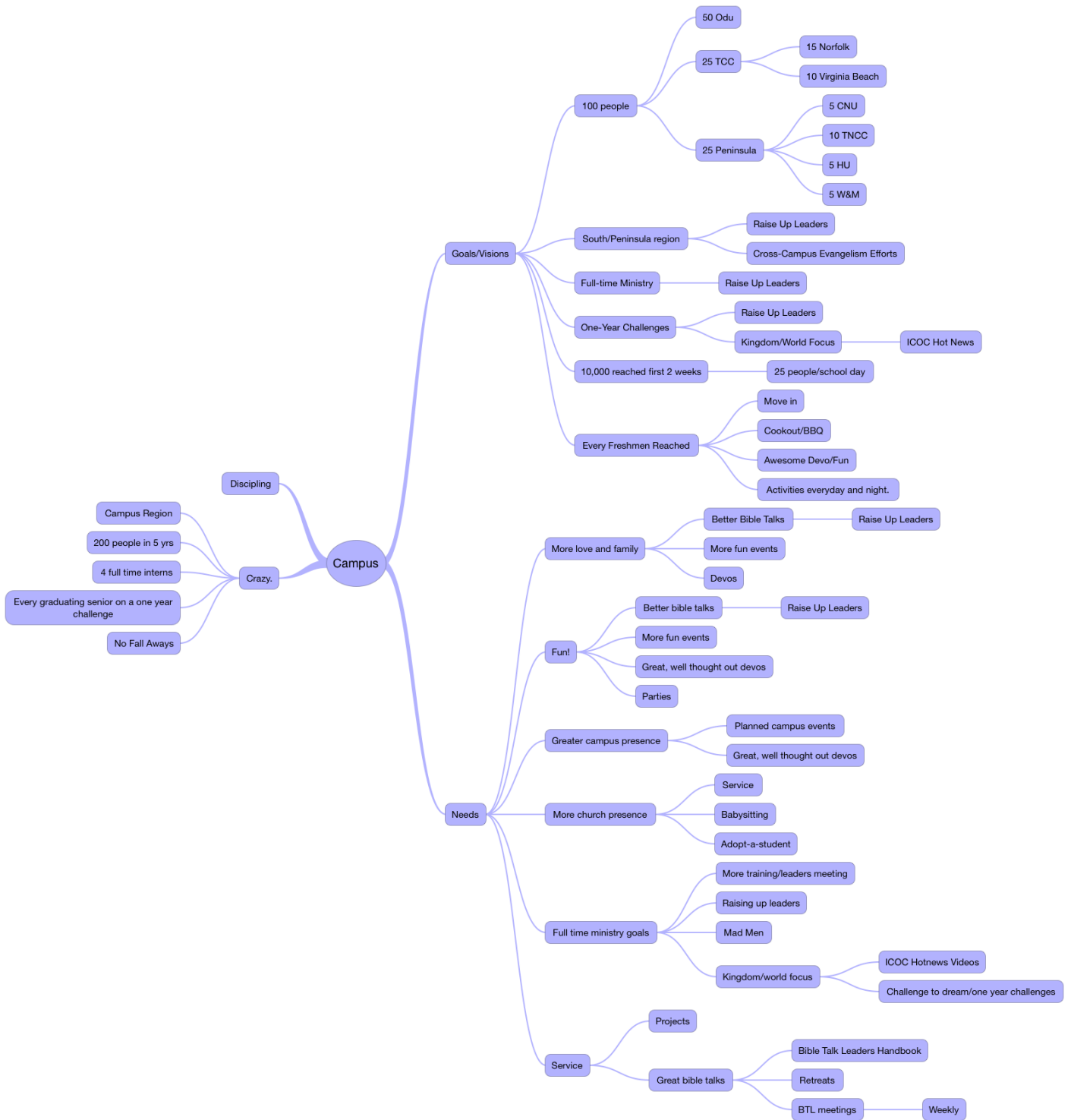
WHY DO WE NEED TO DO THAT?

SCRIPTURES

HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THAT?

PRACTICALS

Here is an example of dreaming using mind-mapping. This is a mind map made in the Summer of 2012 when the HRC Campus ministry had 31 disciples. We implemented many of the ideas you see below and we grew to over 70 disciples two and a half years later.



USE THIS BLANK PAGE TO DREAM

Dream big. Dream Faithful. **Important: Take 45 minutes to an hour of UNINTERRUPTED Time to Dream and start to Own your BT.**

Include BT dream, semester, 1 year, 2 year, and flat out crazy dreams.

SCHEDULING FOR YOUR BT

Dreaming is fantastic, but they remain dreams until you do something about it. One way to make dreams into reality is to put together a calendar/schedule geared toward making your dream a reality. There are three areas where a schedule is needed: **Mission, Shepherding, and Family Time.** Below is an example of a fictional Bible Talk's schedule for their Campus semester. This BT is focused on being more of a family, baptizing one guy and one girl, and raising up two-new leaders.

"LEGION OF BOOM" BT (LEADERS: GEORGE/MONICA, ASSISTANT: CHRIS/HANNAH)

MISSION

Bible Talk—Tuesdays at 8p @ Rogers Hall

Group Evangelism—Tuesdays before BT at 7:15 @ Webb Center

Ministry-Wide Disciplemakers Class—Fridays in October at 5:30p-7pm @ Constant 1005

Ministry Kick-Off Fiesta—9/5 at 6p @ the ODU Quad

First Two week Evangelism Focus—8/25-9/5—George & Ashley will provide schedules

End-of-the-semester Re-Focus Campaign—11/1-11/25—Chris & Robin will create campaign

Evangelism Scavenger Hunt—10/18 at 12p @ MacArthur Mall (Stuart/Hannah will create hunt)

SHEPHERDING

Men's D-Group—Thursdays at 7p-9p @ George's House

Women's D-Group—Saturdays at 8:30a-1p @ Monica's House

Ministry-wide Young Christians Class—Saturday mornings in September at 9:30a @ TBA

Churchwide Men's Purity Group—First and Third Sundays each month after service @ The Church Building

FAMILY TIMES (INVITE YOUR FRIENDS/VISITORS TO THESE AS WELL!)

ODU Football Game & Tailgate—9/6 at 5p @ George's House (Monica's in charge)

Strawberry Festival—9/20 at 12p-3p @ Strawberry Fields Forever (Stuart's in charge)

ACR Conference—10/3-7 @ VA Beach Conference Center—\$65 to register (Tell George if you need help)

Pumpkin Carving Party—10/25 at 6p-9p @ Ashley's house (Monica's in charge)

BT Thanksgiving Dinner—11/22 at 6p-9p @ Monica's House (Hannah's in charge, Monica helps)

End of the Semester Party—12/2 at 7p-9p @ Robin's House (Hannah's in charge)

Notice how each event has

A name

A Time

A location

A delegation of who is in charge

Deciding these things beforehand and delegating them out helps take things off of your plate, but also gives you a chance to raise up other people.

Caution: Consult the Churchwide calendar before you put your BT calendar out so there are no conflicts. Also, make sure to be flexible with your calendar. You want to make sure you don't over schedule and wear out your BT.

Once your calendar is verified/input is gotten, reorganize it by months and pass it out!

BT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1 Corinthians 12 tells us that the body is made up of many parts that play many roles. Here are some roles & responsibilities that make a BT function well. You don't necessarily need to have all of these types of people or responsibilities in your BT, but these are helpful to identify and delegate roles.

ROLES [TYPES OF PEOPLE]

LEADER/CO-LEADER Oversees different roles, leads discussions, sets pace/tone for BT

ASSISTANT Helps in anything/everything, is being trained to lead their own BT

VISITOR BRINGER Someone who is just great at bringing people to events

DISCIPLE-MAKER Can successfully take a seeker through to conversion

CATALYST Someone who walks with people, and makes things happen. Faithful and has initiative

SHEPHERD Has a heart for the weak, and makes it their personal mission to strengthen them

ENCOURAGER A sincere heart for building others up

FUN BRINGER Great at having fun, brings the energy and fun wherever they are

YOUNG/WEAK Less of a role and more of a reality. Important to identify the weak and have a plan to strengthen them and a plan for the young to help them mature

RESPONSIBILITIES [POINT PERSON]

SNACKS

- They don't have to bring the snack, they delegate who does bring them
- Utensils, cups, table cloth, etc.
- Make sure these are great

ICEBREAKERS

- Fun and different. Not the same ones you played in class your first week.
- Bring the energy!

FAMILY TIMES

- Well thought out times to create memories.
- Watch out for fun/free community events

ENCOURAGEMENT

- Keep track of Birthdays/Spirthdays
- On top of people who are sick, discouraged, gong through things
- Encouragement cards! Dates! Random Acts of Encouragement!

PRAYER NEEDS

- Knows the prayer needs
- Communicates prayer needs
- Has conviction on prayer
- Organizes prayer time.

COMMUNITY LIAISON [CAMPUS SPECIFIC]

- Keeps in contact with Church community (non-campus) needs and organizes BT service.
- ex. Babysitting, yard work, helping families move.

HELPING NON-CHRISTIANS BECOME CHRISTIANS

HOW DO I MAKE BIBLE TALK GREAT?

“Excellence is never an accident”

-Aristotle

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord”

-Colossians 3:23

One night at a nearby university, I walked briskly into the Student Center because I was late for that night’s Bible Talk. I heard the dull roar of disciples bouncing off the walls and quickly made my way to the circle of chairs and couches pushed together in the blob-like manner that could only be a campus Bible Talk. As I dropped my backpack on the closest open seat, I scanned the circle and what I saw made me want to pick my bag up and walk out the door like I had a dental emergency. Every face I saw looked mildly annoyed, like they had just gotten a parking ticket. There was conversation, but it was mostly strained, forced small talk that had the warm appeal of a Porta-Potty. The “snacks” had been thrown on a free standing chair, and the generic Oreo-ish cookies peeking out from their crumpled bag wouldn’t have looked out of place on a gas station countertop. I really didn’t want to stay, and I am a disciple! Mercifully, the Bible Talk started and everyone took their seats. What followed was a painful Q&A session, not unlike your dentist questioning you about your flossing habits. The answers were vague, shallow and religious. The discussion questions seemed to be designed either for four year olds in Sunday school or people holding a doctorate in theology. And for the life of me I can’t remember what the take-home practical was. As we broke for the night, disciples and visiting friends alike darted from the circle until all that was left was a remnant pushing the couches back into place and shrugging their shoulders as to why everyone was gone. This was not an event that I ever wanted to attend again.

That’s a Bible Talk horror story where just about everything went wrong. Unfortunately, there are too many elements from that story that casually find their way into our Bible talks without us even knowing it. Our Bible Talks should be the best thing going in our area! Bible Talks are little mobile versions of the Kingdom! And for many visitors, it’s their first contact with the Kingdom of God. We have to make it awesome. But great Bible Talks don’t just happen.

(Note: In this section, we’re going to discuss Bible Talks as the EVENT not as a GROUP within the church. Here are some guidelines to help you think through how to make your Bible Talk excellent.)

THREE R'S OF GREAT BIBLE TALKS

There are many ways to do Bible Talks, but in an increasingly Post-Modern World, these elements are central to creating great Bible Talk events.

REAL [1 TIMOTHY 1.15-16, 2 CORINTHIANS 12.7-10]

People can't stand fakes. I can't stand fakes. Nothing sends people running to the exits like insincere "religion." Paul was convinced that he needed to boast in his weakness, his real life problems so that Jesus could put his grace and patience on display as an example for those who would believe in him. Paul saw his realness as a means of helping people believe in Jesus.

Too often our Bible Talks consist of religious lingo and vague descriptions of real life. It becomes a wax figure which everyone knows isn't real but pretends it is anyway. The most powerful Bible Talks are when disciples put their actual problems in real life on display and describe it in real language the way real people talk. Saying, "I didn't want to come to church or read my Bible this week" rather than "I struggled with putting God first this week" connects with people, and communicates that our God is the God of real people with real problems, not religious people who have religious struggles.

PRACTICAL

Record your Bible Talk discussion—all of it. See how often someone says something "religious" (meaning anything spiritual you would need to explain to someone visiting—examples: Quiet Time, D-Time, struggle, sanctify, going sharing, Devo, be surrendered). Have your Bible Talk go after speaking in real terms.

Be vulnerable about real problems for YOU! Encourage your Bible Talk to do the same.

RELEVANT [2 TIMOTHY 3.16, TITUS 2.12, HEBREWS 4.12]

The Bible is *useful* to us! It teaches us how to *live*! Sadly, more and more people are becoming less and less convinced that the Bible has any use for our actual lives. They say, "it has nice stories, but it's not relevant to me in my life." Nothing could be further from the truth! But it becomes our responsibility to use the Bible as it's meant to be used—to teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteousness.

We need to make sure the things we discuss in our Bible Talks are relevant to the people coming. If you are at a secular, predominantly atheist/agnostic university, Bible Talks about being a *real* Christian may not be your best bet, maybe doing an Evidences for God or a Mythbusters series would be more relevant. While a more religious campus wouldn't be as interested in proofs for God, but a series on "Would Jesus Call You A Christian?" would be relevant.

PRACTICAL

Create a survey of different Bible Talk topics and ask people to fill it out. Brainstorm ideas with your Bible Talk asking, "What are the biggest issues or problems people in our life situation are facing?" Use that information to create Bible Talks to address those issues.

Make sure each Bible Talk ends with a solid practical takeaway. Make your bible so relevant that people will leave saying, "I'm so glad I came. I can't wait for next week" rather than wishing they were somewhere else.

RELATIONSHIPS (JOHN 13.33-35, 1 CORINTHIANS 9.22, 1 THESSALONIANS 2.7-9)

The great irony of a world connected by social media is that somehow we have become incredibly distant from people. People put stock into their virtual lives with strangers or a small group of friends and neglect building real relationships with people. Seriously though, go to any restaurant and count how many people are on their phones while having an evening out with friends...it's scary.

The love of Jesus cannot be recreated virtually and is the most powerful, attractive, and transformative thing we have at our disposal. We must embody his love for each other in the Bible Talk (John 13 says that's how people will know if we are his disciples by how we love each other) and how we become whatever we need to be to love the lost and help them know Jesus. Bible Talks cannot be an event we attend and then leave. Bible Talks are our family! We share our lives with each other and with non-disciples. Bible Talks should be closest-knit yet easiest to break into family in the world. We want everyone to experience how awesome this is. Even if they don't set out coming to the Bible Talk for Jesus, they may keep coming for the relationships and God will take it from there. You don't have to start coming to God for the right reasons, you just have to keep coming and he'll set you straight.

PRACTICAL

Make your Bible Talk a family. Have Bible Talk traditions. Bible Talk inside jokes. Bible talk cookouts. Bible Talk meal nights. Bible Talk parties. Celebrate birthdays. Spend time with each other after Bible Talk is over. Do things together with people you are reaching out to during the week. Start a fantasy football league. Share your lives.

ASK YOURSELF... (WRITE YOUR ANSWERS BELOW)

IS MY BIBLE TALK REAL? HOW COULD WE BECOME MORE REAL?

IS MY BIBLE TALK RELEVANT? HOW COULD WE BECOME MORE RELEVANT?

DOES MY BIBLE TALK HAVE GREAT RELATIONSHIPS? HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?

BIBLE TALK GUIDELINES

These are the questions to ask yourself when evaluating how a Bible Talk is doing.

BEFORE

- Are visitors coming? (Follow-up with your contacts, have your BT follow-up too)
- Does the BT know the topic for the night beforehand in order to reach out more effectively?
- How is the environment of the BT? (Temperature, Distractions, Seats, Sun in eyes?)
- How is the vibe? (Music, talking, laughing)
- Are you going to have snacks? Do they look appetizing or like a gas station?
- Are the disciples talking to visitors?

PRINCIPLES

- **Be warm, welcoming, and “where it’s at.”** You want your BT to be as warm and welcome as possible, but also have a “this is the place to be” feel. Very few college kids want to come to a group that is boring or juvenile.
- **Would you want to come here?** Look at your BT through a first time visitor’s eyes and ask yourself, *“If I was visiting for the first time, would I want to stay?”*
- **Make this Awesome.** Make it so that people coming to your BT are glad they came here rather than do whatever else they could have done. Not last minute icebreakers and snacks you picked up from the cafeteria on the way because you forgot. Make this excellent in every way.

DURING

- How engaging was the icebreaker or introduction?
- How was the mood of the BT? (Serious, somber, detached, excited, laid-back, fun)
- How religious sounding was the BT? (Was it real or was it a religious discussion?)
- Who did most of the talking? Disciples or visitors?
- Was it a talk, like a conversation or more like individuals presenting opinions?
- Was it useful for college student’s everyday life?
- Was there a clear charge to study the Bible?
- How long did it last? (We shoot for 20 min discussion, 40 min total)

PRINCIPLES

- **BTs should be useful for everyday life.** The more useful it is the more likely people will want to study more. So while the trinity is fascinating, maybe try and be more practical, and always end with a charge/encouragement to study the Bible.
- **BTs are not a place for religious people to say religious things.** Help your BT not use religious jargon/lingo in the BT and to be real and vulnerable about their struggles in real life. Not talking about “Society in general” or the “sanctification of believers” which distance visitors from the message.
- **Disciples should be driving the discussion in BTs.** There are different ways to approach this (and actually everything we’re talking about), but it is our thought is that visitors should want to speak and be able to discuss things, but people with the Holy Spirit should be directing the discussion about God.
- **It is OK to laugh and have fun!** Serious does not equal spiritual and spiritual does not mean mandatory sobriety. Have a blast, and remember this is the place to be!

AFTER

• WAS THERE FOLLOW-UP FROM THE DISCIPLES?

- Did disciples talk to the visitors afterwards right away?
- Did disciples ask the visitors to study the Bible?
 - Did they set up a specific time and place?
 - Did they get their contact information for confirmation?
 - Did they clearly communicate that it is a Bible Study to help them grow in their faith?
- Was there any kind of bonding happening after the BT?
 - Games, conversations, hanging out somewhere after, getting food?
 - Did visitors or disciples leave right away afterwards?
- Did you review with your BT to see who set up studies? Are you jumping in?

PRINCIPLES

- **Strike while the iron is hot!** After someone has been in the Bible, God is always working on their heart. Having a conversation right away as opposed to later lets you help them see more clearly the actions they need to take to get closer to God. This is good for people who are there for the first time or have hit a bump while studying the Bible.
- **We are family!** Our friendships do not end with BT, so there should be stuff we are doing with each other outside of BT. This time becomes golden opportunities to share our lives with visitors and seekers as well as strengthen the bonds between disciples.

Disclaimer: This is not the only way or right way to do a BT. These are principles and guidelines we use in Hampton Roads. Tailor your BT to meet the needs of the people coming to your Bible Talk.

HOW TO WRITE A BIBLE TALK

There is not one right way to write a BT, but here is one effective way.

1. SELECT A BIBLICAL PASSAGE (MATTHEW 7.24-27)

- Bible Talks need to be driven by **the Bible**. Imagine that.
- Don't start with an illustration, not a fun game, not a cool point you read, but **the Bible**.
- Start by selecting one passage. Flipping around to too many passages confuses your audience.
- If you're in the middle of a series, select a passage that deals with the series subject matter.
- Try to make it a passage, not one verse, not several chapters, but a passage. It isn't that you can't use multiple passages or chapters, but using one passage lets you focus and dig into one point more quickly and effectively rather than spend most of your time flipping to passages and explaining each one.

2. FIND THE MAIN POINT (WHAT IS THE BIG THING GOD IS TRYING TO SAY HERE?)

- What is the Big Main Idea of that passage?
- What is God/Jesus saying in this passage? Not the loads little points, but the one big idea?
- In order to find this you have to Read, Read, Read. You have to understand this passage to find the main point. Read in context (read before and after it).
- Ask, "If there was only one thing Jesus wanted his hearers to learn—what would it be?"
- The main point should be able to be written in a sentence.

3. FIND THE MAIN QUESTION (ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WHY AM I HERE?")

- Take the main point and say, "If this is the main point, what is the question this main point answers?"
- Find a real life, precisely applicable question or situation that this main point answers or addresses. Use that as an opener.
- Usually this will be a problem we all face. (ex. Do you ever wonder what God's will is?, How do I handle my doubts about God? How do you handle disrespectful people?)
- This will vary based on your audience. Campus has different needs than marrieds, than singles, teens, etc.)
- Make this question as clear, useful, and universally relevant as you can. (Not questions from
- The energy you put into this aspect will determine how **RELEVANT** your Bible talk is.

4. DEVELOP TARGETED QUESTIONS (QUESTIONS THAT HELP PEOPLE DISCUSS AND DISCOVER)

• Questions produce discussion, preaching makes people passive listeners. You need good questions!

• Three basic types of questions: **Interpretation, Application, Contemplation.**

- **Interpretation:** What is happening in the text?
 - These should be easy, simple, and clear
 - Emphasize feelings/sin/situation/questions that we might have ourselves
 - Look for relevant situations and focus on those
 - Also look to make the story/plot clear
 - *"Who is speaking?"*
 - *"Who is he speaking to?"* or *"To whom is he speaking?"* (for the grammar nerds)
 - *"Why does the Bible say he did this?"*
 - *"Why does the Bible say she felt like this?"*
 - *"How do you think she was feeling when...happened?"*
 - *"What did Jesus command?"*
 - *What is the final warning?*

- **Application:** How does this directly apply to me?
 - Bring the Bible to your world and your life.
 - Ask questions connect the biblical principle to your life, even tomorrow.
 - Try to connect Bible characters and present day situations.
 - If I get stuck, I'll ask myself, "If today is Monday, what would I start doing on Tuesday if I were to live this out?" and then ask about that.
 - Help the disciples in your BT be as real, honest, and vulnerable as possible. This is where we like to sugar-coat or "religi-ize" our real life. We can use words like struggle, tempt, sovereign, surrendered, give it to God, sanctified, etc and that distances what we're doing from people's real lives.
 - People feel as though the Bible isn't useful for them because they don't "struggle to be pure", they don't "engage in immorality or worldliness", people don't "wonder what repentance looks like" for them, they "have sex with their boyfriend" they "go to that party", and they "don't know how to stop it". We need to ask and answer these questions that help people connect the Bible with their real life. Not a religious one.
 - *Have you ever doubted God's promises? What was that like?*
 - *How have you struggled to be bold in public?*
 - *Have you ever wanted to conceal something that you've done wrong? What was that like?*
 - *What something that you can go to, to give you comfort besides God?*
- **Contemplation:** Why should I do this/Why have I not been doing this?
 - This is where we address the way people think. If you get ready to **DO** something different but **THINK** the same way as before, real change hasn't happened.
 - Really try to expose the very real excuses we use to justify sin.
 - Try to even concede that these things seem incredibly reasonable. But use the scripture to crush even the most reasonable excuses into dust.
 - Help/Remind people of why they should want to obey the Bible. Use scripture to help them. Try to avoid "religious platitudes" like "because I don't want to go to hell"—amen, awesome, but let's get a little deeper.
 - Avoid self-improvement positivism. "To live a more positive life and spread positive energy"
 - *What are some reasons you "exchange truths about God for a lie?"*
 - *Why do these "light and momentary struggles" bring us down so much?*
 - *Why have you not wanted to "hear the word and do what it says?"*
 - *What might stop you from "consider others better than yourself"?*
 - *Why is it so easy to compromise on having sex?*
 - *What might stop you from?*
 - *Why would I want to have "not even hint of sexual immorality?"*

5. CREATE A CLOSING CHARGE (REMIND THEM WHY THEY CAME)

- Write this down beforehand (don't wing it and call it "relying on the spirit")
- Recap the main question and then answer it with the main point.
- Use stuff you heard in the actual discussion too.
- Nothing new in the conclusion.
- Now is the time to preach...only here. And keep this short, no more than a minute.
- **ALWAYS ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SET UP A BIBLE STUDY!**

EXAMPLE BIBLE TALK DISCUSSION

LUKE 12.13-21

MAIN POINT: Don't store up stuff for yourself, be rich toward God.

MAIN QUESTION: How are we supposed to view our stuff and possessions?

OPENING QUESTION: People say “money can't buy happiness”, but sometimes that doesn't seem true. How do you think money affects our moods?

INTRODUCTION: We all have stuff, and we probably like our stuff. We like our phones, computers, cars, clothes. But we also know “Money doesn't buy happiness” and “the things you own end up owning you”—ok but we need our stuff right? So how are we actually supposed to view our stuff and possessions? Well, Jesus talks about that exactly...turn over to Luke 12.

READ LUKE 12.13-21

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS (WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE TEXT?)

- Why does Jesus tell this story? Who is he telling it to?
- What great thing happened to the man in the story? How did that change his life?
- What does he decide to do about it? Why do you think he did that?
- What happens that night?
- Why does God call him a fool? How do you think the guy felt about that in the moment?
- What does Jesus warn his listeners about?

APPLICATION/CONTEMPLATION QUESTIONS (HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME AND MY MINDSET?)

- What are some things we like to store up for ourselves?
- What would you want to have an “abundant harvest” of? (money, cars, friends, good grades)
- Why do we feel better when we have more of this stuff?
- Has there ever been a time when you suddenly lost everything you had been storing up for yourself? What was that like?
- What does Jesus mean to be “rich toward God”? How can we start to be “rich toward God”?
- Why is it difficult to become “rich toward God” instead of “store up things for yourself” on earth?
- Why would I want to be “rich toward God”?

FINAL CHARGE

Let's be honest, having good stuff is great. We feel better when we can see with our own two eyes the things that we possess and give us security. But for thousands of years Jesus has been trying to grab us by the earbuds, yank them out of earholes and say “Your life security? There's not an app for that!” Treasures here, whether its money, a job, grades, a relationship, they can come and go overnight. They are the exact opposite of secure.

God is pleading with us to forget those treasures and instead be rich toward him. It's more difficult, and it can't be bought in a store, but once you have it, it can't be taken away. If you're not sure how to be rich toward God, or even if you are—make sure!, Study the Bible. Don't even waste a day. This man's life was demanded from him that night. How are we supposed to see our stuff? We're not. We're supposed to forget about storing up stuff for ourselves on Earth because it can disappear in a flash, instead be rich toward God because God and only God lasts forever.

GUIDELINES TO ICEBREAKERS

There are many ways to do icebreakers, again here are some useful principles.

1. ICEBREAKERS ARE MEANT TO BREAK ICE

These fun little games can either break the ice or build an ice palace.

- Icebreakers should establish the mood and the vibe
- They don't have to get people talking to each other—but they can
- Don't do the same old same old icebreakers everyone does the first week of middle school.
- Do icebreakers that allow your audience to be glad they came.
 - If you are on a college campus don't do icebreakers made for kindergartners
 - If you are in a mature singles B'T, maybe not "Bum Shuffle"

2. ICEBREAKERS ARE FUN

- Icebreakers can be games or questions but either way they need to be fun!
- Ask a question or play a game that make people think, "This is fun"
- Your goal of the icebreaker is to get people laughing.

3. ICEBREAKERS ARE ENERGETIC

- It takes energy to break the ice.
- Deep, philosophical, contemplative questions come later—have some fun!
- If your group doesn't have an energetic personality, you bring the energy.
 - If the leader isn't excited to be there, the group will follow.

4. ICEBREAKERS CAN CREATE FAMILY

- Family comes from shared experiences and memories.
- Playing silly games and answering silly questions lead to making memories.
- My goal is to develop a running joke through the Bible Talk beginning with the icebreaker
 - If someone answers a questions or does something memorable during the game, bring it up again in the Bible Discussion. It can lighten the mood and break tension if things are too tense. It also reminds the group of whatever that joke/memory was increasing the likelihood of making it stick as a family memory.

5. ICEBREAKERS MUST BE THOUGHT OUT

- Nothing is quite as fun as well done icebreaker, and nothing is quite as painful as a lame one.
- Don't throw together an icebreaker at the last minute. Think through some interesting questions to ask.
- Delegate someone to research good icebreaker games and have it be their job for the month/semester/quarter.

Whatever you do with icebreakers, make sure people finish the icebreaker thinking—"That was fun, I'm glad I'm here," not "Ugh, when is this thing over again?"

Make it awesome!

HELP YOUNG CHRISTIANS BECOME MATURE CHRISTIANS

HOW DO I HELP PEOPLE MATURE?

*One of these days you who are now a 'babe' in Christ shall be a
'father' in the church. Hope for this great thing;
but hope for it as a gift of grace, and not as the wages of work,
or as the product of your own energy*

-Charles Spurgeon

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for
teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in
righteousness, so that the servant of God may be
thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Once the joyful embrace of conversion begins loosens its grip, the biting reality of real life whacks you over the head with a baseball bat. This is where Satan really goes to town on people. He doesn't have to stop you from becoming a Christian (although he does try), he just has to keep you from *staying* a Christian. Young Christians make mistakes, they make messes, they are tossed back and forth in their spiritual walk, and if they don't mature they don't stick around.

Thanks for scaring me! Ok, so I realize that's heavy, but it's true. **If you start to lose hope, remember...Someone did this for you!** This is an incredibly important role of the Bible Talk and BT Leader. *But how?* How do you help someone who's lived their entire life as a non-disciple start acting like a disciple after just a few months of studying the Bible? Well, that's just it—studying the Bible? The Bible is useful for converting you, its useful for maturing you, and it's useful to teach you how to convert and mature others! Man, the Bible rocks!

What you'll find below is a slightly modified version of the HRC/Commonwealth Academy Bodybuilders II series, which is all geared toward helping people grow and mature as disciples. For more details go to commonwealthacademy.net.

SCRIPTURE IS USEFUL FOR TEACHING

<p>TOPIC FOR TEACHING:</p>	
<p>W H A T</p>	<p>WHAT does Scripture say about this topic (to define and illustrate the topic)? WHAT are we expected to BE, DO, or KNOW? WHAT is a vital conviction to hold on this topic?</p>
<p>W H Y</p>	<p>WHY is this teaching important in my spiritual walk and growth? As always, God is the ultimate WHY!</p>
<p>H O W</p>	<p>HOW can I grow in this area of biblical teaching?</p>
<p>H U R D L E S</p>	<p>HURDLES are pitfalls inherent in all challenges for growth. Anticipate HURDLES to anticipate successful growth.</p>

SCRIPTURE IS USEFUL FOR REPROVING/CORRECTING

Use this Approach/Questions to get to the heart when discipling. Ask a lot of questions!

HANDS

WHAT HAPPENED? [BEHAVIOR AND SETTING]

Joshua 7, Proverbs 18:17, 2 Samuel 11

- What happened? Get ALL the facts!
- Anything Else? What was happening before that?
- How had you been feeling the last few days?
- How was your relationship with God going?
- Was there anything going on in your life that was affecting your mood?

Scriptures to Reprove the behavior:

HEAD

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? [LOGIC, REASONING, EXCUSES]

2 Corinthians 10:5, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:17-23

- What was going through your head?
- What convinced you that that was a good idea?
- Do you think what you did was sin?
- What did you think you were accomplishing?
- What problem were you trying to solve?
- What relief did you get from it?

Scriptures to Reprove the excuse:

HEART

WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE? [TREASURE, EMOTION, ATTITUDE, CHARACTER]

Matthew 6:21, Proverbs 20:5, Jeremiah 17:9

- That problem/relief—Why is it so important?
- What would it say about you if [insert fear/insecurity/problem] was true/went unchecked?
- Why did that problem need to get solved?
- Synthesis: So if [insert problem] is true/happens, then [insert sinful behavior] solves it?
- So you've learned that when [problem] happens [sin] fixes it.

Scriptures to Reprove the Desires:

SCRIPTURE IS USEFUL FOR TRAINING

TRAINING PLAN			
M A K E	Virtue or skill to add or enhance in my walk with Jesus	REINFORCING SCRIPTURES:	
B R E A K	Sin or weakness to eliminate from my walk with Jesus	REINFORCING SCRIPTURES:	
A D D	Spiritual disciplines of engagement (Stuff I should START doing)	SMART Behaviors to gauge progress via updates:	REVIEWS:
S U B T R A C T	Spiritual disciplines of abstinence (Stuff I should STOP doing)	SMART Behaviors to eliminate with progress via updates:	REVIEWS:

SMART is a way to describe goals. It stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, & Timely. For example: *I will initiate, schedule, and complete one Bible study with a seeker before next Friday* This is more helpful for progress rather than, *Be more evangelistic!* Always set a date to review!

HOW TO HAVE A DISCIPLING GROUP

Again there is not one way to run an effective D-group, but here is one way.

1. CONSIDER AND PRAY ABOUT WHAT THE GROUP NEEDS (HEBREWS 10.24)

The Bible tells us to CONSIDER how to spur each other toward love and good deeds. Not to liberally apply the spur to the body and hope it works out. Effective d-groups are the result of consideration and prayer about how to help your group repent. Not a knee-jerk reaction to whatever has bugged you that week.

Take the time to consider

- Where is the group now?
- What trait of Jesus do they need to add?
- What are some of the biggest problems the group is facing?
- What is the cause of those problems?
- What scriptures discuss those things?

Pick one problem/issue and make that the focus of this particular D-group.

2. CONSTRUCT A 10-15 MINUTE MINI-LESSON

- Start with the one or two Biblical passages that discuss the issues you're focusing on.
- Teach what the Biblical standard is and the associated principles.
- Take a little time here to identify some common excuses.
 - The more specific you are here, the more helpful it will be.
 - Try to think about excuses you've used
- End the lesson by inspiring the group with what repentance looks like and where it leads

3. ASK ONE OR TWO RELEVANT QUESTIONS TO THE GROUP

- Based on the mini-lesson ask questions that are broad enough to allow disciples to wrestle with the text and their hearts.
- Examples:
 - *"How has your attitude been toward 'Walking as Jesus Walked'?"*
 - *"In what ways do you need to focus on 'Walking as Jesus Walked'?"*
 - *"Have you seen any instances of you 'forsaking the love you had a first'?"* How?
 - *"Have you been striving for 'not a hint of sexual immorality, impurity, or greed'?"* How can you start?

4. GIVE RELEVANT FEEDBACK

- First and foremost, feedback should be Biblically based. You're thoughts are nice, but we are called to build our house on the rock of the word of God. First go to scripture then your thoughts.
- Feedback should be helping the person who is talking see their blind spots, whether it's positive or negative.
 - Sometimes people can't see their sin and they need your help to see that. Other times they can't see God's grace and they need your help to see that.

5. HAVE EVERYONE MAKE A DECISION, WRITE IT DOWN AND FOLLOW UP NEXT TIME.

Nobody should leave the group without a decision to do something (James 1.22-25). Something that can be extremely helpful is to have everyone make a decision, everyone write it down and then follow up next time you meet together. That way there is accountability but also character development and exposure. The disciples can encourage and spur each other during the week(s) and celebrate when repentance has occurred.

RELATIONSHIPS THAT HELP PEOPLE MATURE

It isn't just planning and discipling that helps people mature, it's relationships with disciples and therefore the head of the Church, Jesus (Ephesians 4.15-16)

BE A GREAT LOVING FRIEND [PROVERBS 17.17]

When you are spiritually maturing there will be growing pains. There will be mistakes, there will be sin. But a friend loves at all times. And when the hard times come, well, a brother is born for adversity. You need to be there good times and bad. That kind of unconditional love and grace can become a real life version of God's grace. And after all, it is God's grace that teaches to say No to ungodliness (Titus 2.12)

SHARE YOUR LIFE [1 THESSALONIANS 2.8]

If you want to help people mature you have to let them see your life so they can see what maturity looks like. They need to see you grow, they need to see you wrestle, they need to see how to live life. Do things together. Watch movies together. Have dinner together. Evangelize together. Pray together. MAKE MEMORIES! Memories are the key to relationships. The more memories the deeper your relationship is.

CONFESS SIN TO EACH OTHER [1 JOHN 1.5-10]

True fellowship comes from confessing sin. That is a two-way street. While one of you may give more input than the other, sin should be shared on both sides! This will help bring you closer together and force you to pray for each other.

MODEL REPENTANCE [1 CORINTHIANS 11.1]

We have an example on how to do everything in Jesus. All except one thing—repentance. Jesus never needed to repent because he never sinned! So how do we teach our young Christians brothers and sisters how to repent? We must be the model of how to repent for them. BE honest with what you are working on. Show them how to go after repentance!

USE THE BIBLE TO DISCIPLE [2 TIMOTHY 3.16-17]

If you want to help someone mature you have to teach them using the Bible, not your opinions, your inspiring sayings, or something you picked up from a book you're reading. If we use the Bible to disciple someone, the principles are unshakeable. We have to be careful to differentiate between scripture and your opinion as well. Show them in the Bible when it's clear, when it's a principle, when it's a disputable matter, and when it's just your own thoughts.

BE PATIENT [1 CORINTHIANS 13.4]

Young Christians, like children, need patience. Nobody gets it right the first time. When they mess up or fail, encourage them, expose the problem, teach them, encourage them again. God is willing to stick with them—so should you!

HAVE FUN [2 CORINTHIANS 7.2-4]

When you make room in your hearts for true godly relationships it's a blast! Laugh together, have fun together, and enjoy life as disciples together.

HELP STRONG CHRISTIANS BECOME LEADERS

WHO SHOULD I TRAIN?

2 Timothy 2:2 says to entrust the gospel to “reliable men.” But what does it mean to be reliable? How do I know I should entrust the gospel to them? Here are some things to look for in a reliable person that you should invest in.

If you want to start a fire, you got to have some **H.E.A.T.** Look for people who are...

HUNGRY [MATTHEW 5.6]

Someone who needs to be filled with training is someone who is hungry for it. But not just training, they want to be filled with righteousness! Who is reading their Bible like crazy? Who is always asking questions? Who is trying to be filled to the brim with God? The person who is hungry for God and righteousness will very likely be a worthy person to train.

EFFECTIVE [ACTS 9.19-22, LUKE 19.11-27]

Now some folks are hungry, but they're not effective. That doesn't mean they are effective at leadership without training, it means they make progress with the training they are given. Are they growing or chilling? Some people love to talk about godly things but don't do much with what they are given. Look for someone who has been given basic training and are doing something with it. Who is setting up Bible studies? Who is bringing visitors to Bible Talk? Look to see who is already doing something and it's very likely they would be a good person to train.

AVAILABLE [MARK 1:16-20, MARK 3.14]

Jesus called his disciples to follow him and be with him, and that was a full-time job. Now we don't need the people we train to be on call, but they do need to be around. If they don't have time, it will be difficult to train them. Look for someone who is willing to rearrange their schedule to be trained.

TRAINABLE [PROVERBS 12.1]

If you try to correct or instruct someone and then make excuses or don't listen, well, it will be difficult to train them. A person that is a good candidate for your training is someone who is willing to be trained even if they don't understand in the moment. Look for someone who imitates leadership or takes challenges you give them.

Now I bet some of you read this and said, “Yeah wouldn't it be nice to find someone like that!” I understand that this is the ideal and you don't always have someone who fits into all these categories. Sometimes you have to take what you have and work with that. Find the person that fits the most of these and disciple what's missing.

And above all things **PRAY!** Pray that God changes their heart. And pray that God sends you people who can be leaders in his kingdom.

PRACTICAL

Write the names of three people you could train. What traits from HEAT do they have? What would they need to grow in?

TRAINING PLANS FOR LEADERS

Paul had a very clear plan and purpose when it came to training Timothy. In the same way, we must have clear and purposeful plans for the people we are training. Let's look in 1 Timothy for what Paul did.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

1 Timothy 1.3-7

PAUL'S PLAN FOR TIMOTHY

1. ACTION TO TAKE

“...So that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies...” (v.3-4)

2. THE WHY BEHIND THE ACTION

“Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith.” (v.4)

3. END GOAL

“The goal of this command is love...” (v.5)

4. REPENTANCE/HEART REQUIRED FOR THE END GOAL

“which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (v.5)

5. OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

“They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.” (v.7)

HOW TO PLAN FOR YOUR PEOPLE

1. BEGIN WITH THE END GOAL

- Think, get advice, and PRAY about what God wants them to become.
- Talk about the end goal with the person you're training, (“Where do you want go?”)
- Use a “battle cry scripture.” (A theme scripture to memorize and embody)
- Usually a character quality or a state of being, (eg. “love”, “leader”, “servant”).
- Make sure you both clearly communicate the end goal you're both working towards.

2. THINK ABOUT THE REPENTANCE REQUIRED TO GET TO THE END GOAL

- Ask the question “How do they think now vs. how do they need to think?”
- “What is the sin/sinful nature/character issue keeping them from where they need to be?”
- What are some scriptures dealing with that sin?
- Keep a journal of scriptures for him to give at the appropriate time.

3. IDENTIFY CLEAR PRACTICALS TO HELP WITH REPENTANCE

- Practicals should be aimed, at first, at aiding repentance of the hindering sin. Meaning you help stop the sin before you start the righteous.
- Come up with a series of practicals to gauge progress towards the end goal.
- Make all practicals/goals SMART--(Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely)
- Demonstrate! (Never ask them to do what you're not willing to do yourself)
- Both of you keep a detailed journal of practicals so you can measure progress.

4. EXPLAIN THE WHY BEHIND THE PRACTICALS

- Anyone can learn to do spiritual things, but without explaining the why behind the practicals we create Pharisees.
- Help him with his mindset while doing the practicals. (“Try to think about this scripture”)
- Teach him the intended goal behind the practicals. (“The reason for you to do this is...”)
- Tell him what sin to watch out for in doing the practicals.

5. ANTICIPATE OBSTACLES

- Training always comes with obstacles, identify what might derail their plans for repentance/training. (“What might stop you from doing...?”)
- Develop an “In-case-of-emergency” plan. (“What are you going to do when that happens?”)

6. TEACH THEM TO WALK WITH GOD

- Help them see how daily spiritual disciplines can affect/be affected by their repentance in this area and their training plan.
- Discuss what new levels of their relationship with God will be necessary to see real lasting change in this area. (“What’s your prayer life/QT’s going to need to look like for this to happen?”)
- Without this all we are is a self-help program that will last as long as you’re discipling them. With this, we see lasting change/training that can change their life/the kingdom forever.

7. TAKE TIME TO EVALUATE PROGRESS

- Each week evaluate the progress that is being made.
- Celebrate the good (even small victories can be huge!)
- Discuss and adjust for the bad. (“So what happened there?”/ “What was your thought process there?”)
- Disciple patterns of the heart and behavior not one time incidents.
- Love your brother, be his biggest fan, and rejoice while he’s being transformed into Christ.

Seem like a lot? Yes it is. But it’s worth it. Just wait until they’re leading their own Bible Talk!

On the next page you’ll find all of these principles condensed onto a graphic organizer that you can use to keep track of the goals and progress the person you’re training is making. If you put in the time you can use this chart for half a year or an entire semester.

HAVING GREAT TRAINING RELATIONSHIPS

The training relationship is one of the closest bonds we see in scripture. Paul & Timothy were more like Father and Son than brothers. Here are some ways to make sure these relationships are fantastic.

HAVE A VISION FOR THEM AND TELL THEM ABOUT IT (MATTHEW 16:18-19)

Pray for God to give you a vision for the people you train! Jesus saw Peter when everyone else could only see Simon. Jesus saw where he was heading and told him about it. Sometimes people won't dream for themselves because they're afraid to. Let them borrow yours until they get their own.

ENTRUST TASKS TO THEM (2 TIMOTHY 2:2)

The key word here is entrust. Sometimes we are so used to doing things our way, or we're too proud to let anyone do something that we don't fully entrust the people we are training to do anything. Find small tasks they can definitely handle, give them direction and then follow-up. Don't micromanage. Allow them to make mistakes. Encourage them. But entrust them to do things. If you don't you end up stunting their growth because they always rely on you instead of God.

SHARE THE HIGHS AND LOWS (2 TIMOTHY 3:10-11)

Leadership is difficult and rewarding work. Timothy saw the highs and lows of Paul's ministry and it prepared him for the inevitable highs and lows of his own ministry. Sharing the joys and burdens instead of pretending to have the right answer or right strength all the time forges some of the strongest bonds of friendship and partnership in the kingdom.

PASS ON EVERYTHING YOU KNOW (JOHN 15:14-15, 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-11)

At my most proud moments I can be tempted to keep some insight/training for myself so I can always appear to have the best insights. Jesus models just the opposite for us—he tells the twelve everything! It needs to be our goal to pass on everything we know and everything we've learned to the people we are training. We are like a fountain, passing on training in every direction we can find.

DON'T LET THEM SETTLE FOR LESS (2 TIMOTHY 1:6-8)

Leaders need to be called higher. They need to be challenged to do more, go deeper, do better, dream bigger etc. Paul wanted Timothy to fan into flame the fire of the Holy Spirit. We must do the same. Not being unreasonable, but to keep pushing to where God wants them to be. Nothing great happens by settling for what's comfortable.

GET OUT OF THE WAY (JOHN 3:27-30)

John the Baptist was the greatest man that had ever lived (according to Jesus, Matthew 11:11) and yet he knew when to back away. It was time for Jesus to be greater. Your goal is to raise up new leaders so that if you left your BT tomorrow, not only would nothing change, but your BT would do better. Train your people, give them responsibilities where they can grow and shine, and let them raise up.

TRAINING PLAN

- 1. END GOAL
- 2. REPENTANCE
- 3. PRACTICALS
- 4. WHY?
- 5. OBSTACLES
- 6. EVALUATE

END GOAL	
BATTLE CRY SCRIPTURE:	
OBSTACLES	DATE REVIEWED
PRACTICALS & WHY'S	SCRIPTURES
REPETANCE REQUIRED	
WHERE ARE YOU NOW? POINT A	WHERE DO YOU NEED TO BE? POINT B

BIBLE TALK LEADER EMERGENCY KIT

WHAT DO I DO IF...

Come what may, all bad fortune is to be conquered by endurance.

-Virgil

*Therefore put on the full armor of God,
so that when the day of evil comes,
you may be able to stand your ground,
and after you have done everything, to stand.*

Ephesians 6.13

You can't know what's coming, but you can know who you're following. One of the biggest things that can stop us from being effective leaders is our fears and insecurities in the face of the unknown situation. We can't be prepared for every situation but we can be prepared for where to turn when those situations come.

The following pages are designed to help you when those rough days, weeks, months, and years come. And to help you not only survive, but to thrive in these tough times.

SCRIPTURE EMERGENCY KIT

Scriptures to look at and pray through if you're feeling...

FEAR

Psalm 23	Psalm 34	Psalm 46	Psalm 55	Psalm 56	Psalm 118
1 John 4.18	2 Tim 1.7	Deut 31.6	Isa 41.10	Isa 41.13	Rom 8.15
Heb 13.6	John 16.33	Deut 3.22			

INSECURE

Psalm 61	Psalm 68	Psalm 72	Psalm 110	Psalm 115	Psalm 121
Psalm 123	Psalm 124	Psalm 138	Jer 1.17-19	Isa 42.16	

UNMOTIVATED

Psalm 1	Psalm 19	Psalm 27	Psalm 91	Psalm 103	Psalm 107
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OVERWHELMED

Psalm 16	Psalm 17	Psalm 20	Psalm 28	Psalm 33	Psalm 37
Psalm 57	Psalm 62	Psalm 112	Psalm 122	Psalm 125	Psalm 143
1 Cor 10.13	Rom 5.3-5	James 1.2	1 Pet 1.6-7	Eph 3.20-21	

PERSECUTED

Psalm 2	Psalm 22	Psalm 54	Psalm 59	Psalm 64	Psalm 69
Psalm 83	Psalm 94	Psalm 109	Psalm 120	Psalm 129	Psalm 140
Matt 5.12	John 15.18-20	2 Tim 3.12	1 Pet 4.16	Jer 20.11	Luke 6.22-26

ANXIOUS

Phil 4.6-9	Eph 6.10-20	Matt 6.25-34	Eph 1.3	Luk 12.11-12	1 Pet 5.7
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GUILTY

Romans 8:1	Titus 3:4-5	2 Cor 5.17	Isa 43.25	Heb 9.14	Heb 10.22
Micah 7.19	Isa 54.4	Rom 8.38			

FAITHLESS

Psalm 48	Psalm 74	Psalm 77	Psalm 78	Psalm 81	Psalm 105
Psalm 106	Psalm 11	Psalm 119	2 Tim 2.13	Jer 3.22	Heb 10.39
Gal 6:7-10					

100 USEFUL SCRIPTURES

Learn to locate the 100+ passages by chapter number only. They're useful for almost any situation! Make flash cards, whatever, just memorize them.

MATTHEW

1.25—Mary's virginity (Catholicism)
6.15—Forgiveness in damaged relationships
6.33-34—Seeking first
7.7-8—Seeking and finding
7.13-14—Narrow road
13.55-56—Jesus' family (Catholicism)
22.29—Biblical ignorance
22:37-40—Greatest commandment(s)
23.9—Honorific titles ("Father")
28.19-20—Great Commission

MARK

1.16-20—Fishers of men
2.22—Fresh start (wineskins)
3.20-21—Family opposition
7.6-9—Traditions
7.20-23—Sin
11.24—Faith
16.16—Baptism

LUKE

6.22-23, 26—Opposition
9.23-26, 9.57-62—Discipleship
10.38-43—Worry and distraction
13.1-5—Repentance
14.25-34—Counting the Cost
16.13—Two masters (see 14.26)
18.9-14—Self-righteousness

JOHN

1.14—Incarnation
2.17—Jesus' zeal and conviction
8.31-32—Discipleship (word)
12.24—Death to self
12.47-50—Word
13.34-35—Discipleship (love)
15.8, 16—Discipleship (fruit)

ACTS

2.6-11—Tongues = real languages
2.38—Conversion
2.42-47—New Testament church
11.26—Disciples
17.10-12—Bereans
22.16—Baptism
24.25—Convenience
26.19-21—Repentance

ROMANS

1.18-32—Sin; the Fall
3.23-24—Sin
6.3-4—Baptism
6.23—Sin
8.9—Spirit
13.8—Debts

1 COR

1.10-12—Factions (denominations)
4.3-4—Motives & conscience
5.12-13—Church discipline
6.9-11—Sin and change
6.20—Body is temple
7.15—Separation
7.39—Marrying a Christian

2 COR

5.14—Christ's love compels us
6.14—Marrying a Christian
7.10-11—Repentance

GALATIANS

1.6-10—False doctrine
3.26-27—Baptism
5.19-21—Sin
6.7-10—Sowing and reaping

EPHESIANS

2.8-10—Grace
2.19-22—The church
5.3-7—Sin

PHILIPPIANS

1.21—To live is Christ
4.13—All things through Christ

COLOSSIANS

2.12—Baptism
2.16-18—Sabbath etc.
3.5—Sin

1 THESS

2.13—Word
4.3—Sexual sin
5.1—End of world

2 THESS

3.10—Get a job!

1 TIMOTHY

2.5—One mediator
4.1-5—Celibacy and food rules
4.16—Word

2 TIMOTHY

1.7—Spirit
2.15—Workman (the word)
2.23-26—Patient instruction
3.1-5—Sin

3.16-17—The word
4.1-5—Preach the word!

TITUS

1.5-9—Eldership (also 1 Tim 3)
2.11—Grace

PHILEMON

(All)—Leadership style

HEBREWS

3.12-13—Church
4.12-13—Word
5.11-14—Spiritual maturity
10.23-25—Church
11.6—Faith
13.4—Extramarital sex
13,7, 17—Leadership/ followership

JAMES

1.19-21—Quick to listen;
1.26—Control tongue
2.24—"Faith alone"?
4.17—Sins of omission
5.16—Confession

1 PETER

2.21-25—The Cross
3.1-7—Marriage
3.21—Baptism
4.3-4—Partying

2 PETER

1.3-11—Spiritual growth
1.16—Fact and fiction
2.1-3—False prophets
2.20-22—Returning to the world
3.16—Paul's scriptures

1 JOHN

2.3-6—Obedience
2.15-17—Worldliness
4.20—Hatred and racism
5.13—Assurance of salvation

REVELATION

3.16—Lukewarmness
3.20—Knocking at the door
21.8—Sin
22.18-19—Word

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR BT IS UNMOTIVATED

How to Motivate and inspire your BT

REMINDE THEM OF GOD'S PROMISES [2 TIMOTHY 2:13, HEBREWS 11:6, 2 PETER 1:13-4]

No matter what comes your way, God has made certain promises that he will always keep. Reminding your BT of God's faithfulness and helping them increase their own faith will trump any inspiring thing you have to say any day of the week.

PRACTICAL

Have a few BT theme promises for the semester that everyone memorizes, and uses to encourage each other. Ex. "The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few." Bring this up all the time!

SERVE THEM LIKE JESUS [MATTHEW 20:20-28, GALATIANS 6:10]

Leaders must serve, that's our number one job. Jesus came to pour himself as a ransom for many. Inspiring our BTs means we must serve. Whether it's rides, helping people move, equipping people to be more Godly, discipling, having people over to your house, etc. People are inspired when they see that you as a leader are not in it for yourself and your glory but to serve them.

PRACTICAL

Have a service plan for yourself. Mark out "weekly service" that you will do weekly and repeat and "service projects" for things you will try and do over the course of the semester.

LOVE THEM LIKE JESUS [JOHN 13:33-35, 1 CORINTHIANS 13, 1 JOHN 3:16]

Jesus tells us that all people will know us as his disciples not by our religiosity, our church attendance, or our charisma, but if we love each other the way Jesus loves us. This is very similar to service but also involves affection. It means sharing your life and time and heart with the people you are leading as well as laying down your life for them. People will be motivated and inspired to join you in the fight if they know you love them and not just see them as a sheep to shepherd. \

PRACTICAL

Spend personal time with each of the people in your BT. Create memories. If this is not natural for you, plan one "just fun" time per week with someone in your BT.

ENCOURAGE THEM [HEBREWS 3:13, 1 THESSALONIANS 4:18, 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11]

Sin's deceitfulness hardens our hearts, but sincere encouragement emboldens us. Many of us are good at spotting the negative, but barely even acknowledge the positive. Encouragement, even on little things ("Great job with the snack!") costs us so little, but can leave a lifetime of joy for the recipient. People are motivated when they feel like they can do something, so tell them they can!

PRACTICAL

Encourage someone from your BT everyday. Brothers, take the sisters on dates and make. Sisters, be grateful and encouraging for those dates. Have an encouragement family time where you just encourage each other.

MODEL THE BEHAVIOR [PHILIPPIANS 3:17, 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1, HEBREWS 13:7]

Never, never, never ask your BT to do something you're not willing to do yourself. That kills trust and demotivates people. Sometimes it's difficult to do something if you've never seen it, so model discipleship, radical living, etc for your BT. The quickest way to get someone in your BT to do something different is to have them join you while you model it yourself.

PRACTICAL

Go evangelizing with your people, have a set schedule for this. Invite others to be in our the studies you have. When you challenge the people in your BT that you are discipling, go do the challenge with them.

BE VULNERABLE [2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10, 1 TIMOTHY 1:15-16, 1 JOHN 1:5-10]

Paul delighted in his weaknesses and he became a masterpiece of God's grace because of it. Everybody struggles with sin, not everyone perseveres to overcome it. The greatest example we can possibly be is that of repentance for the people we lead. If we are open about our sin and struggles and yet model what repentance looks like, our people feel inspired to change as well. Nobody is inspired by Superman because we feel we can't even come close to that, but someone that has the exact same weakness as us and overcome it gives us hope.

PRACTICAL

Constantly share your struggles. Confess your sin to the people your are discipling. When leading BT be as vulnerable as possible.

BE FRUITFUL [MATTHEW 9:37, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21, 1 THESSALONIANS 2:19]

Let's be honest, nothing quite inspires and motivates people like seeing someone else have their life changed for the first time. Watching someone else get it reminds people of their conversion and how powerful God works in people's lives. We are meant to be a family but also have a great mission.

PRACTICAL

Have at least two Bible studies going on at all times. Pray, follow-up, fast, work, get advice to see God make your BT fruitful.

ENJOY LIFE AS A DISCIPLE [PHILEMON 1:7, 1 THESSALONIANS 2:20, PHILIPPIANS 4:1]

Life as a leader is a life of servitude, but it is also one of great joy! Pouring yourself for the people you lead allows to feel the joy of their victory, sometimes even more than your own. Communicate the joy you get from being in the fight with your BT, express the encouragement and refreshment you get from their partnership in the gospel. People feel motivated and inspired when they see someone pouring their life out for God and enjoying it.

PRACTICAL

Enjoy the time you get with your BT. Be friends. Have family times with no agenda just to hang out and have fun. Enjoy being a disciple.