



Bearing Fruit

AN 8-WEEK LEADER GUIDE

REPLIC^ΛTE

Greetings!

You hold in your hand the *Bearing Fruit Leader Guide*: a guide to weekly D-Group discussions about the book that you will be reading together. *Bearing Fruit* contains eight chapters that will help you understand the fruit a disciple bears.

We suggest you use this with your Discipleship Group (D-Group). If this is your first D-Group, it will provide you a great ending point describing the fruit you and your group will bear. If you are a D-Group veteran, you will find this to be a resource that is reusable for future groups, as well.

The process is simple: each week, you will read one chapter in *Bearing Fruit* and answer the corresponding questions in your Leader Guide or a journal. Bring those answers to your group meeting to pose the questions to your D-Group participants to encourage discussion. You will also be memorizing Scripture together—one passage per week. It is recommended that you keep a record of all the passages you memorize so that you can refer to them as you need to throughout the remainder of your year.

The goal of this Leader Guide, as with all the Replicate resources, is twofold: to encourage you to grow closer to each other as you grow towards Christ. We here at Replicate hope that, through this process, you grow to see the fruit of Christ's finished work in your life.

Make Disciples Who Make Disciplemakers,

Replicate Team

Week 1

For Chapter 1: *The Absolute Necessity of Abiding in Christ*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

The Christian life is to be lived in close relationship to Jesus. In the gospel of John, Jesus is referred to as the Vine and God as the Vinedresser. Our lives are to be so closely related to the Lord that the fruit of godly character and intimate communication with Him are produced. God will continually prune our lives to assure the best fruit possible as we abide closely in Him.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. What aspects of the Christian life are least talked about? Why do you think this is the case in many Christian circles?
2. Jesus refers to Himself as the Vine, and God the Father as the Vinedresser or Gardener. What does this analogy have to do with discipleship?
3. What types of things does God prune from our lives as He prepares us to bear fruit?
4. In what ways can one know if he is remaining in Christ?
5. What does the Vinedresser use most often to cut away the dross in our lives?
6. What reason(s) might a person's life not bear much fruit for God?

Assignments

- Assign your group to read through John 15:1-17 before your next meeting—to refresh their thoughts on Jesus' teaching about the vine and the branches.
- Have your group read Chapter Two of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 2

For Chapter 2: *Preparing a Path for God*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

John the Baptist brought a message of repentance and confession when introducing Jesus. This is the only way to come to the Lord—by turning away from our sinful nature and then walking toward a new life in Christ.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. Have you experienced doubt about your own salvation experience? Did any parts of this chapter help clear things up for you?
2. Repentance is described as an about-face, or complete change in direction. In what ways did you experience this when you came into a saving relationship with Jesus?
3. How has God helped in your change from “walking with sinners” to “walking in the Spirit” after your salvation? Can you share specific life changes with your group?
4. Confession is said to bring about intimacy with Jesus. Explain how you have seen increased closeness in your own relationship with the Lord after profession of sin is made to Him.
5. What kind of change have you seen in your own heart after you are repentant to God for sins you become aware of each day?

Assignments

- Ask your group to read Chapter Five of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.
- For next week, think about a person or event that inspired you the most when it comes to sharing your faith. Be ready to share!

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 3

For Chapter 3: *A Ministry with No Regrets*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

Have you ever considered whether or not you feel ashamed of sharing the gospel with those around you? This chapter explores the ministry philosophy of the apostle Paul in the way he was bold in stating his faith in the Lord with everyone—regardless of their background or religious affiliation.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. What do you consider to be some common reasons why believers are hesitant in sharing their faith in Jesus?
2. What would prompt you to become more confident when it comes to telling others what Christ has done in your life?
3. We read in this chapter that Paul considered people as “fruit” of his preaching and teaching. What keeps you from reaching out to the souls of men and women you are in contact with each day?
4. Are there certain people groups within our society that you feel are off limits or “lesser” somehow for sharing the gospel? What holds you back from reaching out to them?
5. What facts about Christ is your faith based upon?

Assignments

- Ask your group to read Chapter Six of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.
- For next week, think about the price of sin and the freedom that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Be ready to share!

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 4

For Chapter 4: *God's Work in Our Lives*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

Although we have been forgiven and set free by our new Master, Jesus—we sometimes continue living as slaves to sin. This chapter addresses the reality of our new freedom and explains how we can live triumphantly through new life in Christ.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. How long have you known Jesus Christ as your Savior? Do you still feel entrapped by a sinful nature, or wrongdoings of your past?
2. What keeps many Christians from living in the freedom that only Jesus can give?
3. Think of an area of sin that still has you bound in slavery. What have you learned in this chapter to help move you toward freedom in your thinking and behavior with this particular sin?
4. We learned that living in freedom means abstaining from anything that would hinder our relationship with Christ. How is this done in a practical sense? How does one set up boundaries to avoid sin when it's all around us?
5. In practical terms, what does it mean to live in freedom through Christ?

Assignments

- Ask your group to read Chapter Seven of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.
- For next week, think about how God may want to continue growing you in and through His plans specific to your calling.

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 5

For Chapter 5: *You Only Grow in What You Know*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

Growing in Christ takes time and requires spiritual disciplines. In this chapter you'll find out what a Christ-follower lives for, as maturity in the Lord comes over time.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. In what ways are you acting as a *mature* Christian? What are some next steps you need to take in the Christian growth process?
2. How would you describe the difference between loving God and being knowledgeable about God? Where does your relationship with the Lord fit when it comes to these two descriptions?
3. What kind of situations is God using right now to help you discern what is best for your life?
4. What is God constructing within you at this time? How is it different than what you had planned for yourself?
5. Is it possible that your own spiritual outlook has become confined? How do you see God stretching your faith to grow you toward bigger possibilities?
6. What has been the result when you've tried to manufacture righteousness on your own?
7. Which Christian keystone habits have you set in place recently? What type of ripple effects are you now seeing as a result of them?

Assignments

- Ask your group to read Chapter Eight of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.
- For next week, think about the way God wants you to apply the information from this book to your daily lifestyle.

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 6

For Chapter 6: *Your Work Done God's Way for His Glory*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

As we finish this last chapter, we're reminded that God will bring about fruit from His Spirit as we abide in Him. The best way to know God and His ways is through a continual attitude of prayer, as we see in the life of the apostle Paul. Through a lifestyle of conversing with the Lord, He will work in and through us to bring about His good and perfect will.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. What are some examples of Paul's prayer life that are worthy of implementing in your own lifestyle of conversation with the Lord? What kinds of changes need to be made in your schedule or daily activities in order to do this?
2. What are some warnings involved with having access to so much knowledge about God and spiritual matters? What did you take away as the main reminder for yourself when it comes to obtaining biblical information?
3. In the section marked as *Patiently Enduring*, were you personally challenged in any way? If so, explain to your group.
4. The apostle Paul throws a reverse in the way we normally go about our prayer requests to God. How is this a challenge for you? What can you do in an effort to make this kind of change in the way you approach God in prayer?
5. When it comes to the Discipleship Pathway mentioned throughout this book, what is your next step in this process?

Assignments

- Ask your group to think of highlights from this book that have made a change in their thinking about the Christian life, especially when it comes to abiding in Christ.

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 7

For Chapter 7: *The Flavor of the Fruit*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter we learn that abiding in Christ is a slow, daily process rather than a quick fix. As we grow in our relationship with the Lord, He transforms us from the inside out. Our fleshly desires diminish as the Holy Spirit indwells us to cultivate pleasing fruit to benefit others. This fruit—shown in the way we think and behave evidences the result of walking in the Spirit.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. Consider how you would truthfully answer the question: "Who is the Holy Spirit to *you*?"
2. If you intentionally gave over your entire body to the Holy Spirit, what differences in your lifestyle and persona would be affected?
3. Which indications of fruit (fleshly or spiritual) have you seen in the life of someone close to you?
4. In what ways have you seen the fruit of the Spirit become manifest in your life since becoming a Christian?
5. Which spiritual discipline(s) have you found most helpful in putting to death the deeds of the flesh?

Assignments

- Assign your group to read through John 15:1-17 before your next meeting—to refresh their thoughts on Jesus' teaching about the vine and the branches.
- Have your group read Chapter Three of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.

Week 8

For Chapter 8: *Unending Worship*

Introduction

- Have each member share about their week.
 - Discuss instances where you've seen spiritual growth in your own life.
 - Share areas where you're struggling this week.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting this week.

Chapter Summary

We are reminded in this chapter that Jesus went outside the camp for us—taking on our defilement—in order to save us from desecration forever. He accomplished the ultimate, which was to cleanse mankind spiritually through His sacrifice. It is for this reason that He is worthy of our unending praise.

Discussion Questions

Ask members to share how the truths discovered within this week's chapter can be applied to their lives as you discuss the following questions:

1. We're asked to remember our leaders in the faith. What are some characteristics of great spiritual leaders in your life?
2. Three types of relationships that every believer should have are mentioned in this chapter. Do you currently have these spiritual relationships in your life? If so, how are each important to your spiritual growth?
3. As you read the section about atonement, what are some things you learned about the Levitical system of sacrifice? How does knowing this impact your thinking about Jesus' death?
4. Jesus wants us to go outside our comfort zones to share about Him. What does this mean for you?

Assignments

- Ask your group to read Chapter Four of *Bearing Fruit*. You, as the leader, preview the questions in next week's section as preparation for next week's discussion.
- Begin thinking through your salvation testimony—how you came to know the Lord. Line up the various parts of it with the reading for next week.

Conclusion

- Spend some time in prayer.
 - Ask members to share how others may rejoice with, or pray for them.
 - Pray specifically for each member of the group, by name.
 - Pray that God would use what was learned this week to draw each member of the group closer to Him and to one another.
- Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week.