

# DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

## *An Invitation to Follow*

### PRE-COURSE FOUNDATIONS | SUMMARY NOTES

*"Before we begin the course together, these three foundational truths form the ground we stand on. Watch, reflect, and bring your questions to the group."*

#### PRE-COURSE | TOPIC 1

### The Father Heart of God

*Jesus came to make the Father known — Matthew 28:19–20*

#### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus didn't just come to save us from something - he came to bring us to someone. His whole mission was to reveal the Father. The way you perceive God will be the way you approach God. And the picture Jesus gives us of the Father is not a distant judge, but a running, embracing, celebrating parent.

#### THE PRODIGAL SON: WHAT THE FATHER DOES (LUKE 15:11-30)

In this parable, every detail of the father's response tells us something about God's heart toward us:

Symbol	What the Father does	What it means for us
<i>Running (v.20a)</i>	<b>The Father pursues</b>	God doesn't wait passively - he runs toward us
<i>Embrace (v.20b)</i>	<b>The Father embraces</b>	We are welcomed, not condemned, when we return
<i>Kiss (v.20c)</i>	<b>The Father kisses</b>	Intimacy and full restoration, not just tolerance
<i>Robe (v.22a)</i>	<b>The Father covers</b>	Our shame is clothed in his honour
<i>Ring (v.22b)</i>	<b>The Father blesses with righteousness &amp; authority</b>	Identity and standing are fully restored
<i>Sandals (v.22c)</i>	<b>The Father grants freedom</b>	Servants go barefoot - sons wear sandals. We are sons and daughters, not slaves

#### **Luke 15:20**

*"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."*

#### PRE-COURSE | TOPIC 2

### The Work of Jesus on the Cross

*The Cross is the lens through which we see past, present and future*

#### THE BIG IDEA

The Cross isn't just a historical event - it's a new way of viewing all of life. Understanding what Jesus accomplished changes how we see where we've been, who we are now, and where we're going. How we perceive him will determine how we approach him.

## PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
<p><b>Debt paid in full</b></p> <p>The Cross eliminates the guilt and shame of our past. We have been atoned for — reconciled to God through Christ's life, suffering, and death. You are free.</p> <p><i>Colossians 2:13–15</i></p>	<p><b>Righteousness received</b></p> <p>In Christ, we are declared righteous — not because of what we do, but because of what He did. We don't work for love and acceptance; we work from love and acceptance.</p> <p><i>2 Corinthians 5:21</i></p>	<p><b>Love that will not let go</b></p> <p>God's love is unshakeable, unbreakable, and enduring. Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God. We move forward with confidence and peace.</p> <p><i>Romans 8:38–39</i></p>

*"We do not work for love and acceptance. We work from love and acceptance."*

### 2 Corinthians 5:21

*"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

### Romans 8:38–39

*"Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

## PRE-COURSE | TOPIC 3

# The Person and Power of the Holy Spirit

*True and lasting change isn't about trying harder — it's about trusting better*

## THE BIG IDEA

The Holy Spirit is not a force or a feeling - he is a person who lives within every follower of Jesus, working from the inside to transform us into the image of Christ. We don't change by trying harder. We change by surrendering more fully to the Spirit at work within us.

## FOUR WAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES US

<p><b>01</b></p> <p><b>Gradual Change</b></p> <p>Like fruit growing on a vine - almost imperceptible day to day, but certain and sure. Don't be discouraged by slow progress; growth is happening.</p>	<p><b>02</b></p> <p><b>Internal Change</b></p> <p>The Holy Spirit works from the inside out. True transformation isn't behaviour modification - it's heart transformation.</p>
<p><b>03</b></p> <p><b>Inevitable Change</b></p> <p>Trust determines the outcome. When we trust the Holy Spirit fully, transformation is not a maybe - it is inevitable. The question is only one of surrender.</p>	<p><b>04</b></p> <p><b>Spiritual Change</b></p> <p>Spirit-fuelled obedience produces deep, lasting commitment - not rule-following, but a genuine desire to live as Jesus lived, powered by the Spirit within us.</p>

### Colossians 3:10

*"Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him."*

**Romans 8:29**

*"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."*

**REFLECTION & DISCUSSION**

1. Which image of the Father in Luke 15 (pursuing, embracing, covering, restoring) do you find most surprising or hardest to believe about God's attitude toward you personally?
2. How does understanding the Cross as covering your past, defining your present, and securing your future change the way you relate to God day-to-day?
3. In your experience of following Jesus, have you mostly tried to change through willpower - or through surrender to the Holy Spirit? What has been the difference?
4. Of the four ways the Holy Spirit changes us (gradual, internal, inevitable, spiritual) - which gives you the most encouragement right now, and why?