

Our Discipleship Process

A twelve-week framework for one-on-one discipleship, using the Relationships Basics teaching and the Discipleship Questions

Purpose

Discipleship is not friendship management and it is not curriculum delivery. It is a voluntary, covenantal relationship in which one believer helps another grow in character, so that their ministry—whatever arena God has given them—is not hindered by hypocrisy or inconsistency.

This process assumes four things from the outset: That the role of the discipler is facilitation and stewardship, we are all—in truth—disciples of Jesus Christ. That the relationship itself must be covenantal before any accountability can be asked for. That vulnerability has to be earned in sequence, not demanded on day one. That discipleship is sought, it doesn't work if the discipler is constantly chasing the one being disciplined.

Overview

Weeks	Phase	Focus	Tool / Questions
1–3	I. Establish the Covenant	Name the relationship as covenant, not friendship. Teach forgiveness and the conflict half pipe.	Relationships Basics: Covenant vs. Friendship; “Sorry” vs. “Forgive Me” Questions 1, 2, 3, 4
4–6	II. Character Under Test	Surface where character, communication, and integrity are being tested.	Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
7–9	III. Deeper Honesty	Move into pain and formation, now that covenant and forgiveness have made it safe.	Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
10–12	IV. Feedback & Reproduction	Close the loop on ministry and relationships; identify who they will now disciple.	Questions 15, 16, 17 & revisit 4

Phase I — Establish the Covenant (Weeks 1–3)

Before any of the discipleship questions are asked, the disciple needs the relational operating system the questions depend on. Skipping this phase is the most common way discipleship curdles into friendship-negotiation (“I’ll be honest with you but only if you’re easy on me”).

A Covenant relationship.

- Week 1 — Name the covenant out loud. Walk through the Covenant vs. Friendship distinction: in a covenant, my expectation is on me, not you; in a friendship, I do for you if you do for me. State plainly that their accountability to you is voluntary, and that this is a strength of the relationship, not a loophole.
- Week 2 — Teach forgiveness and conflict. Cover the difference between “sorry” (for mistakes) and “forgive me” (for intentional hurt), and walk the conflict half-pipe: overlook, discuss, negotiate, mediate, arbitrate, discipline. Tell them you will use this ladder with them, not just teach it.
- Week 3 — Ask Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4: their relationship with God as it relates to their ministry, their skills, their hopes and dreams, and the arena they believe God has given them. These are the lowest-vulnerability questions on the sheet—use them to build the pattern of honest answering before the cost goes up.

Phase II — Character Under Test (Weeks 4–6)

With the covenant named and the conflict tools taught, move into the questions that expose where character and communication are actually being tested—not hypothetically, but this month.

- Week 4 — Question 5 (where character is being tested) and Question 6 (weaknesses and how they are working on them).
- Week 5 — Questions 7 and 8 (communication style, and how it affects both ministry and relationships).
- Week 6 — Question 9 (integrity): where they struggle to say no, where they embellish, where they can name hypocrisy in their own life.

Phase III — Deeper Honesty (Weeks 7–9)

This is the phase the first two exist to make safe. Pain and formation questions should not be asked of someone who hasn’t already practiced being forgiven and corrected inside the relationship.

- Week 7 — Question 10 (what pain they have experienced).
- Week 8 — Questions 11 and 12 (how that pain has shaped them, and how God might use their past to prepare them for ministry).
- Week 9 — Questions 13 and 14 (what God may be teaching them through disappointment, and—the hardest one—the two areas that would be most difficult to hear you speak into).

Phase IV — Feedback and Reproduction (Weeks 10–12)

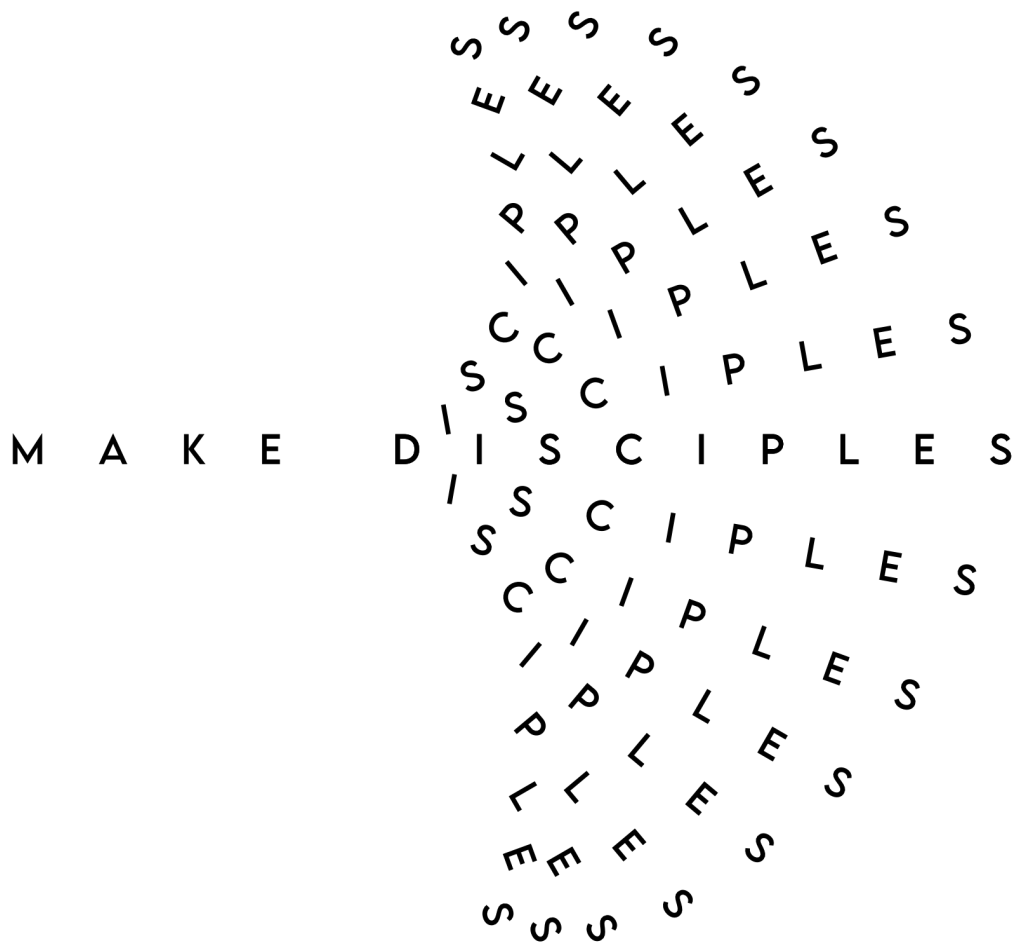
The process closes by turning outward. A disciple who has been through Phases I–III has the relational tools to disciple someone else—the goal was never to make them dependent on you.

- Week 10 — Questions 15, 16, and 17: what you can do to help them reach their hopes, what evidence they see of God's presence and power in their ministry, and how their relationships are affecting their ministry now.
- Week 11 — Revisit Question 4 (arena) in light of everything that has surfaced over eleven weeks. Ask directly: who could you now sit across from with these same two tools?
- Week 12 — Hand off. Give them both documents—Relationships Basics and the Discipleship Questions—and this process outline. Walk them through it as a discipler would, then commission them to begin.

For the Discipler

- Don't lose the relationship in the process! The relationship is far more significant than the process. Relationship depends on opening up, having people in your home, showing them your life, your strengths and weaknesses. Jesus treated each person differently, this process is not a cookie cutter. Discipleship is not a one size fits all.
- Don't be afraid to speak when someone gets it wrong, this is often the beginning of discipleship, a gentle rebuke. Some people will respond poorly, but those who embrace a gentle rebuke objectively are teachable.
- Small consistent steps are far more significant than single big changes. God seldom changes every issue in a person's life at a single moment. Keep in step with the Holy Spirit, when He says to address an issue then it's time to address it.
- Home Groups or Small Groups are an excellent way to teach the value of discipleship.
- Practice the frame, don't just teach it. When conflict or hurt arises between you and the disciple, use the actual ladder and the "forgive me" language in real time. This gives credibility to the content.
- No question is mandatory. The questions sheet says this on its cover—hold to it. Coerced vulnerability is not discipleship.
- Character before skill. The questions are ordered to test character consistently before they ask about calling and gifting—resist the temptation to reorder around what feels more comfortable to discuss.
- Twelve weeks is a guide, not a law. Some disciples will need Phase III to run longer. Let the relationship set the pace inside the sequence, rather than abandoning the sequence.
- When we learn something unpleasant about ourselves that doesn't change God's love for us. Help people to see that, though they may be horrified to learn something about themselves, God knew everything about them from the get go, and still loved them.
- Conflict Resolution is a key life skill. Some may benefit from the conflict resolution class at Firebrand: <https://www.firebrandchurch.com/firebrand-classes/biblical-conflict-resolution>

- Remember—above all—every believer is a disciple of Jesus Christ! Matthew 28 instructs us to make disciples of Jesus, not to make disciples of us. Jesus is the role model of the discipler, disciple as Jesus disciplined. Romans 14:4 “Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”



Discipleship Questions

We are to make disciples of Jesus Christ; not of ourselves.

These questions are aimed to help the discipler to play an intentional role in discipleship. No question is mandatory, and accountability is always voluntary. But lying and a lack of vulnerability only makes the process fake.

Ministry

In these questions we use the term “ministry” to denote the work that God has given each of us to do. Every Christian has a ministry given to them by God; whether it is to lead a church, lead a business, a home, a classroom, or even to lead oneself. Whatever you do you have opportunity to minister to self and to others; like coworkers, children, family and friends; and of course to yourself.

Our ministries are either helped or hindered by our character. Discipleship aims to help shape character toward better, more consistent and honest ministry and to avoid hypocrisy in our ministries.

Phase I — Establish the Covenant (Weeks 1–3)

1. How is your relationship with God being influenced by your ministry?
2. What are your skills and how are they being tested?
3. What are your hopes and dreams for your future?
4. What is the arena God has called you to right now, and what arena is He calling you into? (An arena is an area of influence and platform God gives, it could be education, or creative, or business, politics, parenting, etc. It's helpful to identify where God is giving you influence.)

Phase II — Character Under Test (Weeks 4–6)

5. Where is your character being tested?
6. What are your weaknesses or deficiencies and how are you working on them?
7. How are your communication styles affecting your ministry?
(Communication style is a complex set of personality traits that govern how we come across to others. You may tend to exaggerate, or embellish, you may be a verbal processor, or send confusing signals with body language. Communications styles could be negative or positive traits.)
8. How does your communication style affect your relationships?
9. What could I do to help you become more of a person of integrity?
(Where do you battle with integrity? For example: Do you struggle to say “no” to people, or do you tend to embellish, or can you identify hypocrisy in your life.)

Phase III — Deeper Honesty (Weeks 7–9)

10. What pain have you experienced?
11. How has that pain shaped who you are?
12. How might God use your past to prepare you for ministry in the future?

13. What might God be teaching you through your disappointments?

14. If you were to ask me to speak into your life, what two areas would be the most difficult for you to hear?

Phase IV — Feedback and Reproduction (Weeks 10–12)

15. What can I do to help you reach your hopes and dreams for your future?

16. What evidence can you point to of the presence and power of God in your ministry?

17. How are your relationships affecting your ministry?