

NEW BELIEVER/NEW MEMBER CLASS

Hello! We are beyond excited for you and your next steps! If you are reading this, you most likely are either a new member of FBC Bogalusa or a new believer. Either way, we as a staff at FBCB want to let you know how thrilled we are for you, and we cannot wait to see what God does in your life. For the next six weeks you walking through some basics of the faith and of the church! We encourage you to find someone, even if you need to reach out to the church, to go through this material with you. Some weeks will say talk to your mentor, for that feel free to reach out and ask for someone at the church to walk through things with you. You will have readings from your Bible and questions and some light reading in this packet! This is not meant to steal all of your time every week. Hopefully, at the time of reading this you have already met someone to walk through this with if not, reach out to the church and we will direct you to them quickly! Also, note that the staff here at FBC Bogalusa would love to answer any of your questions and be of help in any way that we can! Looking forward to continuing to get to know you and see how these next 6 weeks go! Get ready for a new journey where you will see God do incredible things!

Ben Mitchell, Student Pastor

WEEK 1

NOW WHAT??

You may be finding yourself saying, “I am a new believer.” or “I am a new member.” and I do not know what to do. Well guess what! We are here to help! You are starting what is known as discipleship! Discipleship is learning how to be more like Jesus from a more mature seasoned believer. We believe that discipleship is for every believer no matter their age or walk of life. No one should ever get out of discipleship. You may not know this, but by taking part in this you are really far ahead. It takes other believers sometimes years before they are properly discipled, if they ever are. However, it is essential for younger believers to learn and be taught by more mature believers how to be more like Jesus! As you enter these next six weeks remember that this is a journey that does not need to end when the six weeks is over. You should always have someone discipling or teaching you how to be made more like Jesus. In fact, the Bible commands it. Let’s look at a few passages of Scripture!

READ Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 3:13-21, and 2 Timothy 2:2

Jesus final words in Matthew 28 tell his followers to make disciples. He does not say make converts or make Christians. Jesus wants his followers to be disciples, to be people who are learning how to be like their Heavenly Master and Lord. That is why we do discipleship! Jesus does not want people pretending to follow Him or simply being associated with him, He wants followers. When he was calling His disciples what did you notice? Maybe you noticed that Jesus desired to be with them! Jesus wanted to be with his disciples teaching them and making them more like Him! Jesus wants us to be discipled!

Why do we do discipleship?

Now that we know what discipleship is and why we disciple. Let us turn to how we disciple. All age groups here at First Baptist have discipleship groups because again we believe that believers of all ages should be being discipled. These groups meet various times throughout the week and are gender specific. Their goal is to help men and women grow closer to Christ and be discipled! This is done by weekly readings and coming together to discuss those readings. Some groups even add a layer of accountability or making sure that their brothers or sisters are living right and following Jesus throughout the week! Another ultimate goal of these is found in the 2 Timothy verse, Timothy was commanded to teach others who would teach others. Our design for discipleship is that groups will begin and then break into smaller groups where others are being discipled. When this is done, before you know it everyone is being discipled by someone capable of discipling them! After the six-week time is done we hope that you will jump into one of our discipleship groups and be discipled by the men and women of First Baptist!

Do you have any questions to ask during the meeting with your partner about discipleship, First Baptist's discipleship methods or anything that you read this week? Jot those down in the space below!

WEEK 2

Bible Intake and Prayer

Discipleship is important, but it is also important that you as a believer are self-feeding. You would never be content to only eat when you were eating out with friends would you? Why? Well, because you have to eat everyday whether you are with people or not. Reading the Bible and prayer with your church family are amazing and should be done; however, that is not the only time they need to be done. The believer must be spending time in prayer and Bible intake when he or she is at home. Public prayer and Bible intake is great, but it cannot be the substitute for private prayer and Bible intake no more than eating a meal with friends can substitute for not eating when you are by yourself.

Before we look at the Scripture though we must answer one critical question. Why is it so important that we spend our own personal time in prayer and Bible Intake? Simply put we need it. I could go and show you statistically how little time we spend in church, but that would just go to further prove the point that you do not get “enough prayer and Bible” at church to last you until the next time. Also, you must have a knowledge of how to read and pray because what if something happens and you are in a dire need for the Lord and you cannot contact anyone from the church. You must know how to do these things on your own as well as corporately! Now let’s look at a few Scriptures!

READ: Hebrews 4:11 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Matthew 4:1-11, Psalm 1, Psalm 119:11
Ephesians 6:17-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 6:5-15

Let’s begin with Bible intake! Why do I say Bible intake instead of Bible reading. Simple because there is so much more to reading the Bible than simply reading it. We read the Bible and think on it, we read the Bible to memorize it, we can journal our thoughts about the Bible! All of these things we can do, and they are for our building up and being made more like

Christ. We see that from 2 Timothy, and we see from the Hebrews passage the Bible is living and able to speak to every area of our life. Even more reason to read the Bible. If we need even more it is our offense in fighting against the devil according to Ephesians 6 and the memorization of Scripture helps us with that according to Matthew 4 when Jesus is tempted. These are the words of God and to sum it up some motivations for reading the Bible are growing closer to God, becoming more like Him, and resisting the devil. There are more motivations than these, but these give us just a few reasons we should be reading our Bible.

Which of these reasons stands out to you the most?

A quick practical note. I like to say have a plan, place, and time to read the Bible. Find a plan that works best for you. What will you read? Will you journal about it? How much will you read? Do not overdo but think about these things. Ask your discipleship partner for some helpful hints. Find a place. Be consistent where would you like to do discipleship? Work or home? What time is best for you? Morning or night? Take a second to think about a plan, place, and time and jot them down.

As crazy as it sounds, prayer is talking to God. We get the opportunity to talk to the God of the universe. It is a weapon for us in our spiritual warfare. We also can talk to God about anything. It

does not have to be big words or elaborate it can be short and sweet! In 1 Thessalonians we are told to pray all the time and that is not wandering around mumbling prayers but that is always being ready and being in a prayerful spirit where we can talk to God and talking to Him throughout the day. Jesus even condemns the big elaborate prayers in Matthew 6 and says it is better to pray by yourself and really mean it than to pray in public and not mean it. Write down any questions you may have about prayer for your discipleship partner!

Lastly, just a practical piece of advice about prayer. Jesus gives us a model prayer. Now he does not expect us to pray the exact words, but I think the Spirit of the prayer is helpful. It begins with worship we should begin worshipping God for who He is and thanking Him for all that He has done. This allows our heart to be right before God. Praying for needs, seeking forgiveness, and asking for strength to forgive all follow. We do not necessarily have to pray in that order but we should ask forgiveness, ask for strength to do the things of the Lord, and even ask for needs. Some say it is helpful to go with the acronym ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (praying for specific things) or PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield). I tend to like the latter one best because I combine Praise and Thanksgiving, and the latter gives time for us to listen to what God tells us. However, you choose to pray that is great! If writing down your prayers may help write them down on the space provided along with any questions you want to bring to this week's meeting!

WEEK 3

Fellowship

I suspect by now either in your church attendance or through this class you have heard something about the family of God or maybe you have heard the term fellowship. Those two words are linked very closely together and for good reason. The moment that you were saved you were brought into the family of God. Now you as a new believer have a whole new family that you have the opportunity to be a part of. Maybe you are taking part in this class and you are a new member to FBCB and not a new believer. Well guess what? You too are getting to experience something new. You are getting to experience a new church family, and while I may be a bit biased I think it is the best one around. We are going to discuss what it means to be a part of the family of God and how you can be a part of the specific family of God right here with your new church family.

Read: Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Corinthians 12

We see from back in the beginning of the church in Acts 2 that fellowship was always important to the people of God. This meant that they were spending time together stirring one another along. We are not to neglect that. You are to be in church. Why? It is good for you. We know it does not save us but it definitely brings us closer to God. You will see in your life that sometimes what you get out of church may not be what the preacher was preaching, but how a brother or sister pointed you closer to Christ. You need those things. You need to be held accountable if you are in sin you need someone pointing you to Christ helping you out of sin. Also in times where you just need comfort the church family is a good place to look. Maybe it is in grieve or loss, maybe financial struggles, family struggles, whatever it may be your church family wants to help. However, you have to make the commitment to be plugged into your church family. We are not meant to do this alone. When we start to do that, we fade away. It is easier for Satan to act

when we are alone. We are not meant to be lone wolf Christians. We cannot and should not try to survive on our own. We do not have to try it on our own. Let us make a commitment to staying a part of the body of Christ and allowing them to do the work God has designed for us.

Why do you think it is so important that God gave us a church to be a part of?

I know it was a bit lengthy but let's look at the imagery of 1 Corinthians 12. The body of Christ was likened to an actual body. Paul discusses how we all have jobs to do as a part of the body of Christ. Yes that means you too! When you were saved you were gifted certain gifts that are for the building up of the church! These are called spiritual gifts, and I would encourage you to talk to your discipleship partner about these in this week's meeting. I would also encourage a spiritual gifts test! Once you find out what your spiritual gifts are use them! We are called to help the body of Christ with our gifts, who knows maybe this specific body of Christ has something that you can be a part of. As you have heard we have discipleship groups to plug into and help with being a part of the body of Christ! There are also lots of areas to serve that all you have to do is ask and we will get you plugged in! You have a gift that the church needs! We know the body would suffer without all its parts so does the church! The church is there for you, and you are to be there for your church. Help your church by using your gift, do not harm your church by not using your gifts. Use the space below to note any spiritual gifts you think you may have, any questions for your discipleship partners for this week, or any thoughts to bring to the meeting.

WEEK 4

Sin and Sanctification

If you have not yet, at some point soon you will mess up and sin again in a way that you feel is really big and you will not hardly be able to believe that you did that. Now of course we know that we still sin, but sometimes we do not want to act like that we still sin. There is great news though. We have been saved, and through a process called sanctification we are being made more and more into the image of who God wants us to be. Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ. This is good because it means that we are not there yet, and it is also good that God is working in us empowering us to be the people He wants us to be. Which means, that when we sin there is grace and mercy as we are being transformed more and more to being like Him.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10, Ephesians 4:17-24 Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:23

As we look at Ephesians 2, we see the whole story of our salvation. We were dead in our trespasses and sins in which we once walked. Dead. We could do nothing. But God saves us. However, that does not mean that we do not continue to sin – we will sin. We see that verse 6 talks about God continuing to show and lavish His grace. If He continues to do that that means that we will continue to sin. So, what is the difference? Well, there are two major differences. Before salvation when you sinned, it was all you could do. You lived in and were dead in it. Then you are saved, and it is no longer something that you are living in, but something that you fall to when the flesh is weak. We always fight the flesh even Paul did (read Romans 7 for extra reading). However, this does not mean that we just live with fighting the flesh and say well good for us we won't sin as much. No, as the Ephesians passage says we put to death the flesh. We are constantly battling with the flesh so that we put it to death. We never just live with it, and say

well all will be good as long as I fight it back enough. We try to kill it and recognize we will fail sometime, but we let that be the exception. Why? Because we are His handiwork, and we cannot be His handiwork if we are living a life that sins a lot more than we should. So fight the flesh and try to kill and put off the old self.

Why do you think it is so hard to put the sinful flesh to death?

Now there is a distinction because we are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and as Galatians says the old self has been crucified it is now Christ who lives in us. That is true, the old self is dead. When we get saved, we are a new creation and our former self is dead; however, we do still fight against the flesh. But there is great news. We do not have to do it alone. The above paragraph is impossible on our own. However, we do not have to do it on our own. We fight and do those things through Christ living in us. We know he is sanctifying us and He will bring it to completion. He is making us more like Him every single day. It is a perfect harmony of we only are able to put to death the flesh through Christ living in us. We work as He is working through us. How amazing is that? This was a really heavy week to think through so in the remaining space write down any thoughts, questions, or even a prayer of thanksgiving for the wonderful work God does in our life.

WEEK 5

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

By now, you have probably already been baptized and hopefully it was explained to you at least in some detail what this symbol means. This is one of two practices that we as Southern Baptists practice regularly that we call ordinances. The other ordinance that we observe is the Lord's Supper. Now, without getting into too much detail, we do want to take a second to address that you may here these referred to as sacraments. Sacraments are believed to be little pieces of grace God gives that will eventually result in salvation, and many believe in multiple more sacraments than baptism and the Lord's Supper. However, we believe that we were truly saved at the moment we gave our life to the Lord and we do not have to do actions to receive more grace. The ordinances are things ordained by God, and we believe they are symbols of two crucial events in our Christian life let us take a deeper look at each one of these.

READ: Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 6:1-4, Matthew 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

We will begin with baptism. Baptism is the outward show of the inward change that salvation has brought. It does not save, but it shows the world that we are saved, and we are wanting them to know. It is like the wedding band, it does not make you married but if you are married you are going to want to wear one and show the world that you are not a single person. We want to show the world that we have been saved. It also identifies us with Christ in two ways. The first way was that he himself was baptized as a way to show us that we too should be baptized. Second, as Romans says it connects us with his death and resurrection. We go under the water both to connect us with Jesus death and to show that the old self is dead and then we are raised out of the water to connect us with Jesus Resurrection and our new life. This is why we

believe in believer's baptism by immersion. Which means, we believe that baptism is only valid after salvation and that it is to be done by dunking the new believer under the water. Finally, we know that we are to do this because Jesus told us to when he told us to go share the Gospel; therefore, it has been ordained by God so we do follow his command. Now, this is a very base level overview of baptism and the Southern Baptist position. Some believe in pouring and infant baptism, but because we believe in the symbolic nature of baptism we believe it is to be done after salvation and by dunking someone under water.

Why do you think Jesus gave us baptism as a symbol of our salvation and as a connection with Him?

Now we will turn our attention to the Lord's Supper. Before Jesus went to be crucified, he shared a meal with his disciples where he said the bread was his body and the wine (or since we are Baptists grape juice) is his blood. Now, there is a lot of debate over this with different people believing that Jesus meant this literally. We believe that Jesus meant this as a symbol, in other words the bread and the juice do not literally turn into or are not literally the body and blood of Jesus. Why then do we do it, well Jesus told us to, and 1 Corinthians tells us how to approach the Lord's Supper. We are to do so not weighed down by sin and in a right place with God. Why is this important, because the purpose of the Lord's Supper is a reminder of what the Lord has done for us in his death. His crucifixion is a major deal and the defeating of sin, and we as Christians need to observe the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of what Jesus has done. This is a very powerful reminder of what Jesus has done. Again, there are various views of how often and who

can participate in the Lord's Supper. We practice the Lord's Supper regularly and believe that anyone who has been saved can participate. I would highly encourage you next time you take the Lord's Supper to take this as a time to very vividly and heart-felt remember with your church family what Jesus has done for you.

Why do you think it is important that we observe the Lord's Supper?

Take a few moments to think over these things and write down any question you may have for your discipleship partner. Write them down on the space below.

WEEK 6

Evangelism

Well, we are about to complete our time together. This will be our last session in your new believer or new member class. I would also encourage you as I said in the video be sure to get plugged into another discipleship group, if you do not know which one asks your discipleship partner or one of the staff here we will gladly get you plugged into one. Now as we look at one last thing in the life of the believer, I think it is very fitting that we end on evangelism or telling others about Jesus. It is essential for you to tell others about Jesus, but before we get to far let us look at a few passages of Scripture that we call the Great Commission.

Read Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8

All of these Scriptures center around Jesus final words while on earth which are known as the Great Commission because it is the great commission given to believers to tell others about Jesus. Share Jesus with everyone. People that we like and that are like us, and people that we do not like and are not like us. One thing we will mention is that no one has an excuse no to share the Gospel. It does not matter how long you have been saved or how much you know it is essential that you share the Gospel. The Holy Spirit will help you, and if it is something that you do not know tell the person that but say something about let us look together and that helps you find the answer but also gets them into Scripture. If you are a new believer or a more mature believer, you must share the Gospel. It does not matter your age, season of life, amount of knowledge, or even time being saved you can share the Gospel and reach people that no one else can reach. Now since this idea is easy to understand and we know that we are supposed to share the Gospel let us take a few moments to very practically review some ways to share the Gospel.

One of the most effective ways of sharing the Gospel is the testimony method. This is when you get to share what God has done for you. Now maybe you say that you do not think that your story is good enough; however, anyone going from life to death is a really big deal. The major think to remember about this method is that you are not the hero of the story be sure to tell the story in a way that glorifies God and not you. The testimony method provides an interesting story, and it also shows the person that you are talking to a very personal example of what it looks like for God to change someone. It is also good to have a 30 second version and a longer version called the 30-minute version (it does not have to be 30 minutes). This is to give you the ability to share quickly or to share more in-depth. In the shorter version it is best to have prepared a sentence about your life before Christ, a sentence about when you met Christ, and a sentence about how He has changed your life. Go ahead and try to right that out right now.

Another method is the ABCs. This method is very simple and is just as simple as ABC. A-admit to God that you are a sinner, B-believe that Jesus is the son of God who died and rose from the dead for your sins, and C – Confess him as Lord. This is great for new believers who may not be as sure of themselves. It is very effective and walks them through the Gospel message.

There are several more ways to share the Gospel such as the Three-Circle method and Roman Road to Salvation and a simple google search can teach you about these. It is essential that you are sharing the Gospel. If the Gospel is preached there is no bad way of doing it. Also a brief note, you may not always have the response that you would like, but that does not change the command to share. God wants us to share and he controls the response. You also do not have

to stick to one method. Share the Gospel however you feel led, but it is important that you are sharing the Gospel even now. Write down some people you know need to hear the Gospel and what do you think may be the best way to share the Gospel with them. Also commit to pray for these people and write down a prayer that you want to pray for these people. Pray for them to be saved and pray for opportunities to share the Gospel with them!

Also write down any questions you may have for your discipleship partner.

We hope this has been an amazing 6 weeks and we look forward to getting to know you better and welcoming you into our church family!