



Unit 4: Disciple of Christ

Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of God.

Lesson 15 The Word of God

Day One ***God's Word***

In *Lesson 14: Fear the Lord*, we learned that fearing the Lord is a profound blend of reverence, awe, and wonder, rooted in a deep awareness of God's holiness, power, and authority. It involves trusting, obeying, and worshiping God wholeheartedly while recognizing our accountability to Him. Often described as "genuine faith" or "true religion," fearing the Lord evokes both reverence and actual fear, protecting us from presuming on His grace.

Fearing God is a universal and timeless principle. It will always be the law of heaven and earth as well as for the *new* heaven and earth. The book of Revelation makes it clear our Lord will be feared and glorified forever.

Read Revelation 15:4 and answer questions 1–3:

"Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." Revelation 15:4

1. Fill in the blank. *Who will not _____ you, Lord, and bring _____ to your name*(v. 4a)?
2. Who will come and worship before the triune God (v. 4b)?
3. Why will all the nations come and worship before the Lord (v. 4c)?
4. Read Revelation 19:5. This verse describes believers who will be invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb. How are these servants of God described?

Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" Revelation 19:5

God's Word reminds us that He is watching and listening to His people. God sees and hears when He is dishonored and disrespected. God knows when He receives the leftovers in time,

money, and affection. He is aware of sin and faithlessness. God grows weary of complaints against His goodness and character.

But God also sees and hears those who fear Him and serves Him. God knows when He is honored and respected. God is aware of receiving the best in time, money, and affection. He makes note of obedience and faithfulness. God delights and remembers when He is praised for His goodness and holy character.

Read Malachi 3:16–17a and answer questions 5–7:

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.¹⁷ “On the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession.” Malachi 3:16–17a

5. When you speak to others in a way that honors God and shows that you fear Him, where will your name be written (v. 16)?

6. Who will you belong to when the Lord Almighty makes up His treasured possession (17a)?

7. Take time to consider being God’s treasured possession. How do these thoughts encourage you?

Historically, the Lord was judging the Israelites in Malachi 3 for not fearing Him and turning away from His decrees. Among their sins were sorcery, adultery, defrauding workers of their wages, oppressing widows and the fatherless, depriving foreigners of justice, and robbing God by not tithing. The Israelites sinned by saying that it was futile to serve God and they gained nothing by carrying out His requirements. They claimed that evildoers were blessed and prospered even when they put God to the test.

While God was addressing the Israelites at the time, His words are timeless and apply to all people today. God continues in Malachi 4 to warn those in the future: “the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them.”² But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves” (Malachi 4:1–2).

God separates the righteous from the unrighteous. He is a perfect judge, evaluating and discerning actions as well as attitudes, thoughts, and motivations. God is merciful, but also just. The wicked face consequences, and without Christ and repentance, will be placed in hell. However, for those who rightly fear and follow the Lord, they will be God’s valued possession and rewarded. Similarly, Psalm 31:19 expands on this truth, describing the abundant goodness God has stored up for those faithful to Him.

8. Read Psalm 31:19. What two attitudes or actions are necessary to receive the good things God has prepared?

How abundant are the good things that you have stored up for those who fear you, that you bestow in the sight of all, on those who take refuge in you. Psalm 31:19

God's Word is filled with promises of hope, mercy, love, and grace. However, not all the good things God has prepared for us may be received in this lifetime, but rather in the next. Fearing God means accepting difficult circumstances while trusting in His promises to see us through. The Bible is a source of guidance, encouragement, inspiration, and empowerment. It is a priceless gift, offering meaning, warning, truth, and comfort.

The Bible is also honest about the realities of life. It does not shy away from acknowledging that life can be difficult, even for those who follow Christ. Jesus Himself said, *"In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). Scripture reminds us that trials and hardships are not only inevitable but also serve a purpose in strengthening our faith and shaping our character. James writes, *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance"* (James 1:2-3).

There are many biblical examples of individuals who faced overwhelming challenges yet remained steadfast in their faith. These stories remind us that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness and that He works through our struggles to fulfill His purposes. Whether enduring physical afflictions, emotional pain, or spiritual trials, believers are called to trust in God's sovereignty and lean on His promises. It is through these hardships that faith is refined, and His glory is revealed.

David Ring is a modern-day example of someone who rose above hardship and trials to live out his faith.¹ Born in 1953 with complications that deprived his brain of oxygen for eighteen minutes, David suffered permanent brain damage, resulting in cerebral palsy. This condition has significantly impacted his muscle control, causing stiffness, difficulty with movement, and a speech impediment. On top of these physical challenges, he endures ongoing pain from arthritis and other joint issues.

David's life was filled with loss and hardship from an early age. At just 11 years old, his father died of cancer. By the time David was 14, his mother became gravely ill. He prayed fervently:

"God, please don't take my momma. God, please don't take my momma. God, my momma is the only thing I have. God, don't take my momma, please."

After his mother fell ill, David was sent to a large school where he faced relentless bullying. Everywhere he went, someone would point at him, saying:

¹ David Ring and Lela Gilbert, *Just As I Am* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). The story that follows about David Ring is summarized from this resource.

“Look, that boy walks funny,” or “Look, that boy can’t do anything right.”

The constant ridicule cut deeply. “I hated people, because I was really hurt,” David admitted.

When his mother passed away just months later, David was devastated. Overwhelmed by grief and anger, he felt abandoned and hopeless. Without Jesus in his life, David lost all sense of purpose. He sank into a year of self-pity and misery, longing for an end to his life and pain.

But everything changed when, at 15 years old, he attended a church service. That day, David asked Jesus to come into his life. Yet, even after his decision, David wrestled with questions about God’s love for him. He wondered:

If God loves me, why did he take away my parents and give me a crippled body?

Despite these lingering doubts, David chose to set those questions aside and accept God’s offer of salvation and a new life. He decided to trust that God had a purpose for his pain, even if he could not yet see it. We will return to David’s story later in this lesson.

9. How do you think David’s early losses shaped his understanding of God and faith?

10. Have you ever struggled with questions about God’s purpose for your suffering? Yes | No (Underline One) If yes, how did you respond?

11. What can we learn from David’s decision to focus on God’s promises rather than his unanswered questions?

Perhaps you, like David, have faced physical disabilities, abandonment, or other painful circumstances in your life. It is important to remember that you have never been abandoned by your heavenly Father. In Christ, God is your true and loving Parent. He delights in you and desires that you rise above your circumstances to glorify His name. Even in times of anguish and turmoil, God offers comfort and assurance through His Word.

Read Psalm 33:4–6 and answer questions 12–16:

For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. ⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. ⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. Psalm 33:4–6

13. What does it mean that the word of the Lord is right and true (v. 4a)?

14. Where do we go to find the truth (v. 4a)?

15. Whose very essence is faithfulness, making Him faithful in all He does (v. 4b)?

16. How were the heavens, the universe made (v. 6)?

Action Step

16. This week, look for the Lord's unfailing love that fills the earth (vv. 5–6). Share your findings.

In every challenge or loss we face, the Lord's promises remain true and steadfast. Even when unseen, God is working for our good. For example, the call to fear God forms the foundation of our relationship with Him, and God makes it possible for us to do so.

Read Jeremiah 32:39–40 and answer questions 17–19:

I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. ⁴⁰ I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. Jeremiah 32:39–40

17. God gives us a singleness of heart and action, so that we will always _____ Him (v. 39).

18. What is the everlasting covenant that God is referring to (v. 40a)?

19. Through the new covenant in Christ, God inspires believers to _____ Him. (v. 40b).

The everlasting covenant was established through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. He died for the sins of humanity, satisfying God's righteous wrath for sins and rescuing the repentant from Satan (Isaiah 42:6–7; Luke 12:31). The everlasting covenant is the new covenant, also known as the new testament. The Bible itself is divided into the Old and New Testaments, representing the old and new covenants.

We studied the everlasting covenant in Lesson 6: *The New Covenant* because it is essential to understand and claim the benefits and promises we have in Christ Jesus. Whatever God calls us to do, He empowers us to do. In Christ, the Holy Spirit fills us, prompting us to obey Him and enabling us to follow through. God is truly amazing!

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #1–19 with your discipleship team.

—End Day One—

Day Two
Dry Bones Revived

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit are inseparable in their work to shape and transform us. The Word lays the foundation of truth, while the Holy Spirit breathes life into that truth, helping us to understand it, live it, and grow from it. Together, they empower us to follow God's will—not by trying to meet external rules, but through the life-giving power of the Spirit, as 2 Corinthians 3:6 reminds us.

20. Read 2 Corinthians 3:6. The letter refers to the law as an external standard of judgment. Who gives life and makes it possible for believers to obey God?

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 3:6

This life-giving power of the Spirit, as described in 2 Corinthians 3:6, is vividly illustrated in the “visionary-prophetic literature” of Ezekiel. This type of biblical writing consists “of visions whose events are recorded exactly as they were seen by the author and are explained through a divine interpreter. The theological content is primarily eschatological.² It is equally interesting that this type of biblical literature was normally composed during the time when its recipients experienced oppressive conditions.”³

You may find yourself living under harsh and oppressive circumstances, whether it is an organization, a government, a management system, or even a single individual. Stressful situations, such as ongoing family conflicts or an insensitive work environment, can also feel oppressive.

Oppression does not always come from external sources—it can also arise from within. Our own sinful nature often plays a significant role, leading us into behaviors and patterns that stifle our growth and freedom. Addictions, selfish desires, and recurring sins can create a cycle of internal oppression that feels impossible to break.

While our sin nature is a source of struggle, it is exploited and amplified by Satan. As the enemy of our souls, he seeks to deceive, control, and lead us further away from God. Yet, Scripture reminds us: *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery* (Galatians 5:1). Through Christ, we can overcome both the bondage of sin and the schemes of the enemy.

This ongoing battle for our hearts is not a new struggle. Throughout history, God's people have faced oppression and exile—sometimes as a consequence of their own disobedience, other times

² 1. Eschatology is the branch of theology that is concerned with the end of the world or of humankind. 2. It is a belief or a doctrine concerning the ultimate or final things, such as death, the destiny of humanity, the Second Coming, or the Last Judgment.

³ Frank E. Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 6: Isaiah–Ezekiel (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 924.

because of the actions of others, and often due to the schemes of Satan, who seeks to hinder God's purposes.

Ezekiel, born into a priestly family, prophesied during one such time of hardship—the Babylonian exile (593–571 BC). This was a period when Israel faced the discipline of God for her unfaithfulness. Despite repeated warnings, Israel's disobedience, especially her idolatry, led to the covenant curses God had foretold.⁴ As a righteous and just God, He upheld His word, disciplining His people through dispersion and exile to foreign lands. Yet, in the midst of judgment, God also revealed through Ezekiel a vision of restoration and hope.

Exiled in Babylon, near present-day Bagdad, Iraq, the Israelites were separated from the temple of the Lord. The temple, with its sacrifices, offerings and celebrations, was located in Jerusalem—the center of their relationship with God. God longed for His people to return to a holy relationship with Him, so He called Ezekiel to remind them of His faithfulness and sovereignty, as well as their responsibility to uphold the covenant.

The covenant between God and the Israelites was modeled after the human treaties common in the Ancient Near East, making it easier for the people to understand their relationship with God and what was required of them. As we recall from Lesson 6, a covenant is a “pact, treaty, alliance, or agreement between two parties of equal or of unequal authority.”⁵ God, unequalled in any respect including authority, initiated all covenants with humanity.

Action Step: Read Ezekiel 37:1–14 from your Bible and answer questions 21–29. The following is the last verse from this passage:

I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD. Ezekiel 37:14

21. Who placed Ezekiel in the middle of a valley filled with dry, dead bones (vv. 1–2)?
22. What did God instruct Ezekiel to do (v. 4–5)?
23. What happened as a result of God's command and Ezekiel's obedience (v. 10)?
24. Who did the dry bones represent in Ezekiel's vision (v. 11a)?
25. What does the house of Israel (the dry bones) say (v. 11b)?

⁴ For covenant curses see Leviticus 26:1–46; for dispersion see verses 33–36.

⁵ Trent C. Butler, editor, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 308.

26. What did the Lord tell Ezekiel to prophesy in response to the people (vv. 12–14)?
27. What will be the outcome of the Lord putting His Spirit in the dead bones (v. 14)?
28. Have you ever felt like dry bones scattered on the battlefield of life? Yes | No (Underline One) If so, how do you overcome these feelings?
29. Have you ever encountered someone who seemed like dry bones scattered on the battlefield of life? Yes | No (Underline One) If so, how did you help them?

The Spirit brings life and hope from the grave. The Lord does the impossible, transforming the dead into the living. Israel, spiritually dead in their exile, had sinned against the Lord and was suffering the consequences. Yet, Yahweh is a God of grace. His Spirit brings endless hope, boundless energy, and invincible power. The Holy Spirit offers the same hope, energy, and power to you through God's Word and promises.

30. Read Ezekiel 36:37–38. Just before the Spirit set Ezekiel in the valley of the dry bones, the Lord says: *I will yield to Israel's plea*. What does the Lord mean?

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to Israel's plea and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, ³⁸ as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed festivals. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD." Ezekiel 36:37–38

When I think of the word "yield," I think of the triangular traffic sign that means I must give way to the other driver. I can even envision the word "YIELD" written on the yellow sign. Yield also means to give way to arguments or demands. In Ezekiel 36:37, it means that God will listen or give way to Israel's prayer.

God wants to hear our prayers including pleas and petitions—and to respond to them. Talk to God about your condition or circumstances. Ask Him for healing where it is needed. Plead your case and petition Him to revive any dry bones or any ineffective limbs you may feel you are dragging around. Trust God to make you an effective warrior in His kingdom for His glory.

31. In light of God's promise (Ezekiel 36:37), pray for disciples of Christ to become as numerous as sheep, as the stars in the sky, and as the sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17). Pray also for God to use *you* in making numerous disciples. I have prayed: Yes | No (Underline One)
32. Do you ever despair or lose hope that things will change for the better? Yes | No Sometimes (Underline One) Explain:

Preach the following message to yourself: “The Spirit brings life and hope from the grave. The Lord does the impossible and transforms the dead into the living. Israel was spiritually dead in their exile. They had sinned against the Lord and were suffering the consequences. Still, Yahweh is a God of grace. His Spirit brings invincible hope, boundless energy, and limitless power. The Spirit will bring the same to me. Revive my dry bones and raise me to new heights in love and service.”

33. How did you feel after preaching the above message of life and hope to yourself?

Previously, we left off with David Ring’s story at the point where he had accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Though he still wrestled with questions about God’s love and motives, he chose to set those questions aside and embrace God’s offer of salvation and new life.⁶ Today, when speaking to an audience, he shares this message:

Look at me, people. Look at me! I still walk with a limp. I still talk funny. But, Oh, the joy that floods my soul because Jesus touched me and made me whole. I’m not the same anymore. I don’t want to die anymore. I want to live!

I don’t have a daddy.

I don’t have a momma.

I don’t even have a healthy body.

But let me tell you what I do have. I have the grace of God, and the Bible says that God’s grace is sufficient for you and for me.”

Yes, God’s Word declares that His grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9). In July 1971, David had to claim God’s promise of grace in a new and profound way. He was called to serve God in a highly unusual way for someone with cerebral palsy. David was called to preach.

I said, ‘Who me? Lord, I can’t preach. I talk funny.

Lord, people can’t understand me.

Lord, I have cerebral palsy.

Can you imagine me telling God I have C.P.? I have a feeling He looked down and said, ‘Really? You have to be kidding! Tell me something I don’t know!’

David, I want you to preach.

⁶ Ring and Gilbert, *Just As I Am*. The story that follows about David Ring is summarized from this resource.

But it was not an easy road. Many people told him he could not be an evangelist because of his condition. Sometimes he became discouraged but he continued to work hard at his calling and faithfully walked through the doors the Lord opened for him.

Today, David travels weekly to speak in churches of all sizes and denominations, as well as schools, companies, and civic organizations. Through his ministry, thousands upon thousands have been impacted—receiving salvation, encouragement, or both.

David's heartfelt messages resonate deeply with audiences because he speaks from a place of personal experience and profound empathy. He understands the struggles people face, not just on the surface but in the hidden corners of their hearts. In one of his messages, he addresses the silent pain carried by so many:

I'm amazed today, everywhere I go, every time I get up to speak. I'm amazed by how many hurting people I speak to. I'm not talking about the worldly bunch. I'm talking about the family of God. I'm talking about the children of the family of God. I'm talking about the saints of God. I'm talking about the people whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I'm talking about the people whose sin has been washed away by the blood of the Lamb. Everywhere I go, people come up to me and say, 'I'm hurting, I'm hurting!'

If I could open up your life, I would find some dark corner that nobody knows about. They don't know about the pain you're going through. I'm not talking about the body's pain. I'm talking about the pain that goes deeper than the body. I'm talking about the pain that nobody knows about but you and God.

You might walk OK. You might talk OK. But down deep in your heart, you're saying, 'I'm in pain.' We all hurt today folks, but we are asking the wrong questions. We are asking, 'Why, why, why?' Don't ask why, ask what!

What can I become because of the situation? How can I glorify God?

34. Like David Ring, how can you grow through your painful situation and glorify God?

35. How do you think David's faith transformed his perspective on his physical challenges and losses?

36. What advice would you give to someone struggling with anger or self-pity, similar to how David felt before finding Christ—and even how believers may feel at times?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #20–36 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Two—

Day Three
The Word of Comfort

In the Old Testament, the Lord often warned that disobedience could bring physical consequences, such as plagues and diseases (Deuteronomy 28:15). However, His Word also makes it clear that not all suffering results from personal sin. The story of Job, for instance, reveals that trials and hardships can occur for reasons beyond human understanding, ultimately serving God's greater purpose and glory.

Throughout history, people have sometimes misinterpreted Scripture, taking verses out of context and failing to grasp the full counsel of God. In the New Testament, Jesus further clarified the relationship between sin and suffering. When He healed a man born blind, He challenged the misconception that all suffering was a direct result of sin.

37. Read John 9:3. Jesus healed this man of his blindness, yet chose not to heal David Ring of his cerebral palsy. What lesson do you learn from this?

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” John 9:3

In Day Two, we read about David's surprise at how many Christians are hurting. He also offered wise advice: to ask what we can become in the situation and how we can glorify God. While we agree with David's recommendation, we must also acknowledge that believers experiencing sorrow need comfort. This is not about those who constantly seek attention by always having an issue—that is a different discussion and not our focus here.

It is also beneficial to recognize that sometimes we imagine trials or problems that do not actually exist. “According to a study cited in Robert Leahy's book ‘The Worry Cure,’ 85% of the things we worry about never actually happen.”⁷ While this insight is useful, the need for comfort remains—whether our challenges are real or imagined. Seeking comfort is a natural response to distress.

Definition: *Comfort* is a state of physical ease and freedom from pain or constraint. It is also the easing or alleviation of a person's feelings of grief or distress. *Comfort* involves helping someone feel less worried, upset, or frightened. It also includes giving strength and hope.

Where do you go for comfort? Where do I go? Each of us should turn to God first and foremost as the Bible assures us that He comforts us in all our troubles. But how do we turn to Him, surrender our struggles, and find peace? The answer is found in His Word.

In the Old Testament, the Word of God is often personified, described as a living being with power and action. In this way, it serves as a means of carrying out for God's will and revelation.

⁷ <<https://www.jpost.com/health-science/is-it-possible-to-choose-wonder-over-worry-628793>>(accessed 1/29/2025).

Read Psalm 107:19–20 and answer questions 38–39:

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.²⁰ He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Psalm 107:19–20

38. What happened when the people cried out to the Lord (v. 19)?

39. What did God send to heal the people and rescue them from the grave (v. 20)?

Healing and rescue come through the Word, revealed in the New Testament as Jesus (John 1:1–5; see *Unit 5: The Gospel of John, Lesson One*). Jesus existed before creation and is the eternal Word through whom all things were made (John 1:1–3). He is not merely a representation of God but the perfect revelation of God in human form—fully divine and fully human. Furthermore, all of Scripture testifies about Him (John 5:39), revealing His divine nature and redemptive mission.

40. Read John 14:9. What does Jesus mean when He says, *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*?

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” John 14:9

Just as God’s Word healed and rescued the Israelites (Psalm 107:20), so too, the Word heals and rescues us from our sorrows. Jesus, the Word, calls the weary and burdened to come to Him (Matthew 11:28). To be weary is not only to be physically tired from working, striving and struggling, but also to be emotionally discouraged and on the verge of giving up.

Are you weary? Tired? Burdened with sin and failure? Exhausted from fruitless work?

The following are four steps to help you find comfort and renewal for your troubled heart. Renewal is the process of making something new, fresh, or strong again. For the disciple of Christ, it is an ongoing process of revitalizing our faith, deepening our relationship with God, and restoring spiritual vitality.

Steps for Comfort and Renewal

(1) Come to Jesus—Take His Yoke

Read Matthew 11:28–30 and answer questions 41–44:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28–30

Definitions: *Burdened* is to cause someone to carry something; figuratively, to be weighed down with troubles and difficult circumstances such as strict legal observances. The word *rest* means to refresh and restore strength; figuratively, it refers to a state of inner peace, spiritual renewal, and encouragement. A *yoke* is a wooden device used to join two draft animals together. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus uses the term figuratively to illustrate submission to His authority, emphasizing that true discipleship involves taking on His yoke and finding rest in Him.

41. What is Jesus' gracious invitation to you and for all people (v. 28)?

42. How do we "come to Jesus"?

43. How do we take Jesus' yoke and learn from Him (v. 29)?

44. How do we find rest for our souls (v. 29)?

Although Jesus was primarily addressing the religious burdens imposed by the scribes and Pharisees, His words transcend time and circumstances. The self-righteous and proud religious leaders had added over 600 laws to the Torah, placing the people under the heavy yoke of legalism. In contrast, Jesus extended a gracious invitation to trust and follow Him, offering deep, soul-rest.

When Jesus said, *My yoke is easy*, there is a deeper meaning to consider. The Greek word translated easy, *chréastos* (χρηστός) not only implies ease but also conveys the idea of something being well-suited, useful, or excellent for its purpose. Following Jesus is not about arbitrary religious laws but about being trained and guided to fulfill God's divine purpose for our lives. His yoke is not burdensome because it aligns with God's perfect will, which brings true freedom rather than oppression.

Similarly, when Jesus said, *My burden is light*, the Greek word *elaphros* (ἐλαφρόν) literally means *light in weight*. However, Jesus is speaking figuratively, assuring us that whatever He calls us to bear is not overwhelming. His burden is not one of legalistic demands but of faith, grace, and reliance on Him. Furthermore, in light of eternity, any trials or sacrifices we endure for Christ pale in comparison to the glory that awaits us (Romans 8:18).

Jesus' invitation to come to Him is universal, extending to all people regardless of their burdens. Unlike the rigid and oppressive teachers of the law, Jesus is gentle and humble. He does not impose impossible demands but instead offers rest, peace, and strength for the journey.

Yet, as a believer and disciple of Christ, you may still feel weary and burdened despite your relationship with Him. This may be an indication that you need to draw closer to Him, trust Him more fully, and grow deeper in faith. True rest is found not merely in acknowledging Christ but in fully surrendering to Him and embracing His promises.

This brings us to the second step in finding comfort and renewal: crying out to the Lord.

(2) Cry Out to the Lord

Definition: *Cry out* means to call, shout, or plead loudly, often in desperation, urgency, or deep emotion. In Scripture, *crying out* to the Lord refers to fervent, heartfelt prayer—calling upon God for help, mercy, or deliverance. It expresses dependence on God in times of distress, repentance, or faith.

Read Matthew 8:25 and answer questions 45–46:

The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” Matthew 8:25

45. The disciples were on a boat in the midst of a storm. How did they cry out to the Lord?

46. Jesus calmed the storm. What storm are you facing that you need to cry out to the Lord?

One morning, Jesus walked on the lake toward the disciples’ boat. When He commanded the apostle Peter to come to Him, Peter stepped out of the boat and began walking on water. At first, he was both obedient and courageous, but then he took his eyes off Jesus.

47. Read Matthew 14:30. What was Peter focused on when He began to sink?

“But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’”
Matthew 14:30

Perhaps you have been faithfully following Jesus for years but lately feel spiritually adrift. Have you taken your eyes off Him? Just as Peter was distracted by the wind, what circumstance or situation has drawn your focus away? Whatever it may be, you can cry out to Jesus, just as Peter did. He is always near, ready to lift you up and set you back on course. It is never too late to refocus, trust Him again, and walk forward in faith.

48. Read Mark 10:47–48. What did blind Bartimaeus do when the crowd rebuked him and told him to be quiet? What can we learn from his response when obstacles arise?

“When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” Mark 10:47–48

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #37–48 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

Day Four

Sufficiency of Scripture and Grace

In our journey toward comfort and renewal, we have explored two steps so far: coming to Jesus—taking His yoke, and crying out to the Lord in faith. We now move forward with two more integral steps: embracing the sufficiency of God’s Word and accepting God’s grace.

(3) Embrace the Sufficiency of God’s Word

In lesson 12, we explored why the Bible is trustworthy. We examined how the biblical canon was formed and considered the importance of understanding context when interpreting Scripture. These foundational elements help us see the Bible as a reliable and inspired guide for faith and life. Now, we will take that understanding a step further by focusing on the sufficiency of Scripture—how it not only informs our faith but also sustains and directs every aspect of our walk with God.

What does it mean that God’s Word is sufficient? It means the Bible is the inspired, final authority for knowing God, pleasing Him, and living a fulfilling life. Scripture is considered complete because it provides everything necessary for salvation, faith, and godly living. As 2 Timothy 3:16–17 states, *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.*

Barry Cooper of Ligonier Ministries offers further insight:

The sufficiency of Scripture also means that Scripture itself is sufficient to interpret Scripture. This was a very big deal during the Reformation. The Reformers talked about “Sola Scriptura,” a Latin phrase meaning “Scripture alone.” Their point was that, in contrast to the [Roman] Church’s teaching, we do not need an infallible church in order to understand what Scripture says about salvation and what we must do to honor and please the Lord. People don’t require the Pope or the Church or Church tradition to tell them, definitively and infallibly, what Scripture means. Or to put it another way, only Scripture can interpret itself infallibly and only the teaching of Scripture can bind the conscience. In other words, only the teaching of Scripture can compel faith and obedience among God’s people.

Again, this isn’t to rule out the wisdom of consulting other believers, commentaries, or the way a particular verse has been interpreted historically - these can all be very helpful as we read the Bible. What’s more, the Bible is the church’s book, so the church has a role in declaring to God’s people the teaching of Scripture and in disciplining God’s people according to Scripture. But the church and all other sources, as helpful as they may be, are not infallible interpreters of Scripture. We can say that only about Scripture itself.⁸

⁸ <<https://learn.ligonier.org/podcasts/simply-put/the-sufficiency-of-scripture>>(accessed 2/6/2025).

The religious leaders—the Pharisees and the Sadducees—erred by adding to God’s Word and elevating their teachings and traditions to be equal to, or even above, Scripture. Jesus directly challenged this mindset, frequently pointing His listeners back to the authority of Scripture. When confronting the Sadducees’ denial of the resurrection, He said, *“You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God . . . Have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living”* (Matthew 22:29–32). Jesus rebuked them for neglecting the clear teaching of Scripture, emphasizing that God’s Word is the ultimate authority.

Similarly, the Catholic Church elevates church tradition and the authority of the pope alongside—or, in some cases, above—Scripture. This places human authority on par with, or even superior to, God’s revealed Word, repeating the same error of exalting human traditions over divine truth. Some Protestant denominations also risk falling into this error when human doctrines or practices are prioritized over the clear teaching of Scripture. To this point, the apostle Paul offers a clear warning:

49. Read Colossians. 2:8. What specific warning does the apostle Paul give to the church at Colossae?

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.
Colossians. 2:8

While Paul warns against the dangers of human traditions, he also highlights the enduring power of God’s Word. Scripture not only guards us against deception but also provides endurance, hope, and the encouragement we need to navigate life’s challenges.

Read Romans 15:4-5 and answer questions 50–52:

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.
⁵ *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had* ⁶ *so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Romans 15:4–6

50. What was the purpose of everything written in Scripture (v. 4)?

51. What kind of attitude does the apostle Paul pray for believers (v. 5)?

52. How does having “one mind and one voice” among believers glorify God? Why is this Christ-centered unity crucial when facing trials and seeking renewal (v. 6)?

Unity among believers glorifies God because it reflects the character and attitude of Christ Jesus. When we share the same mindset and work together with one mind and one voice, we demonstrate God's love and grace to the world. This unity is especially vital during trials, as it provides mutual support, encouragement, and strength. By standing together, believers can endure difficulties, lifting one another up and glorifying God through our shared faith and perseverance.

As disciples of Christ, we are not left to navigate these challenges alone. Jesus promised that He would not leave us as orphans but would send the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter and Helper (John 14:16–18). The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in illuminating Scripture, quickening our hearts to understand God's truth, and applying His Word to our lives. Rather than adding new revelation, the Holy Spirit reinforces the sufficiency of Scripture by leading us deeper into the wisdom of God's already-revealed Word.

In closing our discussion on the sufficiency of Scripture, it is important to note that the Bible does not cover every subject, such as engineering, space travel, or art. These areas fall under God's general revelation, meant to be explored and understood through His creation. However, while the Bible may not provide technical details on these topics, it does provide the principles needed to live a godly life as an engineer, astronaut, or artist. To live in a way that pleases God—one must follow the guidance and truths found in Scripture.

53. How does the sufficiency of God's Word shape the way *you* approach challenges and decisions in your life?

54. Was there anything new *you* discovered about the sufficiency of God's Word that *you* can apply to your daily walk with God?

We have examined three steps toward comfort and renewal: coming to Jesus—taking His yoke, crying out to the Lord in faith, and embracing the sufficiency of God's Word. Now, we turn to our final step, accepting God's grace.

(4) Accept God's Grace (with gratitude)

Definition: *Grace* is God's divine power in action in and toward undeserving people.

Theologian Wayne Grudem teaches that God's grace manifests itself in the world in two different ways: *common grace* and *saving grace*. He defines common grace as “the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation.”⁹ These general blessings include the beauty of creation, moral restraint within society, and intellectual achievements in areas such as science, art, and mathematics.

⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 657.

While the Holy Spirit can influence society broadly—restraining evil and promoting good—this is different from His indwelling work in believers. *Common grace* does not lead to salvation; rather, it reflects God’s goodness to humanity as a whole.

In our discipleship study, we want to emphasis *saving grace*, which is specific to those who are being redeemed (Ephesians 2:8–10). This grace brings about regeneration, faith, justification, and sanctification. It is directly connected to Christ’s redemptive work on the cross and mediated through the Holy Spirit’s personal, transformative work in our lives.

For the disciple of Christ, God’s grace is actively at work within us, helping us persevere each day. Through His grace, He comforts, strengthens, and revives us, shaping us to be more like Christ. Our Father in heaven knows that life is challenging, which is why His Word encourages us to come to Him with confidence so His grace can be continually manifested in our lives.

55. Read Hebrews 4:16. Why are we to approach God’s throne of grace with confidence?

Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16 (Cf. Esther 4:11—approaching kings.)

Notice that we are called to approach God without fear, with openness, and boldness. Through Christ, God invites us to come to Him with a spirit of expectation to receive His divine favor.

56. Read 1 Peter 5:10. What else does the God of all grace promise the disciple of Christ?

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:10

Read Romans 15:4-5 and answer questions 57–58:

I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—⁶ God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. ⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:4–8

57. Why is the apostle Paul’s heart overflowing with thanksgiving to God (vv. 4–7)?

58. How does Paul’s gratitude deepen your own for saving grace—for yourself and others?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #49–58 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Four—

Day Five

***Authority of Christ
Making Disciples***

While times of comfort and refreshing are necessary, we are not meant to remain there. As new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), we are beneficiaries of His grace and have access to the privileges of heaven. Jesus is our Head, Leader, and Representative—through our union with Him, we share in His power and divine authority. With these thoughts in mind, we must live boldly, serve faithfully, and advance in the victory He has secured for us.

Read Ephesians 2:6–7 and answer questions 59–60:

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:6–7

Definition: The *heavenly realms* refer to the spiritual dimension where God’s presence, authority, and reign exist beyond the physical world. The term encompasses God’s dwelling place (1:20), spiritual authority (2:6), spiritual warfare (6:2), and the believer’s true identity and blessings (1:3).

59. What does it mean that we are seated with Jesus in the heavenly realms?

60. If you are seated with Christ in the heavenly places, how can you have a fruitful life and overcome all the devil’s plans, schemes, and temptations?

To be seated with Christ in the heavenly realms means we share in His victory, authority, and spiritual position. Though we live on earth, our true citizenship and identity are in heaven. This seating signifies our partnership in His reign, the security of our salvation, and the power we have in Him to live out God’s purposes for His glory.

Discipleship is not passive. We must boldly exert and use the authority and power Christ won for us. We must remind ourselves daily that we *are* seated in the heavenly places, sharing in the power and authority Christ has secured. Furthermore, He has equipped us with spiritual weapons to use in both the earthly and spiritual realms.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:4–5 and answer questions 61–63:

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4–5 (Our weapons include God’s Word (Ephesians 6:17), faith (Ephesians 6:16), prayer (Ephesians 6:18), the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:17), obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5), and the authority of Christ (Luke 10:19).)

61. How are *you* exercising Jesus' authority and using the spiritual weapons He has given you?

62. Why is obedience to Christ a spiritual weapon for disciples? (See also James 4:7.)

63. How can *you* apply the promise of divine power in your life today?

Obedience to Christ—especially in taking every thought captive—is a powerful spiritual weapon because it dismantles Satan's deception and false arguments, replacing them with God's truth. By rejecting lies and submitting to Christ's authority, we strengthen our faith, align ourselves with His rule, and guard our hearts and minds against spiritual deception. This alignment with God's will also makes our prayers more effective, as we pray from a place of faith and truth.

Victory has already been secured through Jesus, but walking in that victory requires active obedience and faith. We must do more than acknowledge our authority in Christ—we must exercise it boldly, resisting deception, tearing down falsehoods, and confronting both external battles and internal struggles that seek to keep us bound.

If Jesus has given us power and authority, why are we not using it? Are we allowing ourselves to remain weak, fearful, or defeated when we have already been given victory? Take hold of the power you were meant to wield (use effectively) relying on the Holy Spirit continually.

Read Romans 8:5–6 and answer questions 64–66:

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.
Romans 8:5–6

64. In what ways are *you* setting your mind on what the Spirit desires in your daily life?

65. When facing challenges in God's work, do you remain faithful even when you see little or no outward success? Yes | No | Sometimes (Underline One)

66. How can *you* seek the Spirit's guidance to discern whether to persevere, adjust, or move on to a new assignment?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers #59–66 with your discipleship team.

Disciples are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works that He prepared for us in advance (Ephesians 2:10). These works are the outward evidence that our faith in Jesus is real (James 2:26). However, they must flow from a heart aligned with Christ, reflecting His

humility and love so that all glory goes to God (Philippians 2:3–8). That is why we must continually seek the Spirit—His power enables us to walk as Jesus walked and to serve with the right motives. When our good works come from a transformed heart and bring glory to God, all disciples have reason to rejoice.

But our calling does not stop with personal transformation. Jesus has not only given us authority to walk in victory but has also commissioned us to share that victory with others. Discipleship is more than personal growth—it is an active calling to lead others into the same love, freedom, and power we have received. As followers of Christ, we are commanded to go, teach, and equip others to walk in obedience to His Word, expanding His kingdom through the work of the Spirit.

Read Matthew 28:18–20 and answer questions 67–73:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18–20
(Please see Unit 2: *Blessing Others* for lessons on witnessing and making disciples.)

67. Who possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, and who granted it to Him (v. 18)?

68. Based on His full authority, what specific command does Jesus give to His followers (v. 19)?

69. What does it mean to make disciples, and how does Jesus describe this process (vv. 19–20)?

70. Who is included in “all nations” (v. 19), and how does this align with Jesus’ earlier instructions in Matthew 10:5–7 to proclaim God’s message only to the people of Israel?

71. What is the significance and meaning of baptizing disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (v. 19)?

72. How are *you* making disciples per the great commission?

73. If you are not actively making disciples, what will you do now to obey Christ’s command?

The risen Christ gave the Great Commission so that His body, the church would be inclusive of everyone. Before His death, Jesus instructed His disciples to proclaim God’s message only to the people of Israel (Matthew 10:5). But with His death and resurrection, this limitation was

removed. Now, without exception, all nations and people are to hear the truth and follow the Son of God.

This command (Matthew 28:19) includes all of Christ's disciples—those who lived at the time, those alive today, and those yet to come. The original disciples could not reach every nation in their lifetime, so it is now our responsibility to take up the mantle and continue the mission of making disciples, taking the gospel to more of the world.

Central to discipleship is baptism. Jesus commands that all disciples be baptized in the name (not names) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which signifies the unity and full revelation of the Triune God. God's name reveals His nature (Exodus 3:14–15), and through Jesus, we come to understand the inseparable relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This baptism signifies a disciple's commitment to honor, obey, follow, depend on, and worship each Person of the Trinity equally, binding their heart and life fully to God.

While disciples are given the authority to baptize and teach (Acts 8:36), water baptism is typically administered by pastors in the church. However, if no Christ-honoring, Bible-believing church is available, a disciple has the authority to baptize (Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:12).

Obedience is not only a spiritual weapon, but also plays a crucial role in the life of a disciple. Jesus instructs His followers to teach everything He has commanded (Matthew 28:20), emphasizing the importance of obedience to God's Word: "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15). As Peter and the apostles confirm in Acts 5:32, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. To walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and live God-honoring lives, we must remain steadfast in obedience.

Read Acts 5:32 and answer questions 74–75:

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him. Acts 5:32

74. Who receives the Holy Spirit, and why is this significant for disciples of Christ?

75. How does obedience to God's Word invite the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in a disciple's life?

—End of Day Five and Lesson 15—

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:105

Next—Lesson 16: Faith and Confession, Unit 4: Disciple of Christ

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