

*MasterLife*  
LEADER GUIDE

I

*The Disciple's*

CROSS

AVERY T. WILLIS JR.

Lifeway Press®  
Brentwood, Tennessee

**WELCOME!** Thank you for leading this study.

*MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross* is a discussion-based Bible study from Avery T. Willis. This classic Bible study has recently been updated with an integrated discussion guide in the Bible study book to make leading a *MasterLife* group more accessible than ever before.

This leader guide is a more robust discussion guide that contains elements from the original *MasterLife* leader guide, including additional discussion questions, concentrated opportunities to work on the Disciple's Cross presentation, instructions for the Growing Disciples Workshop, and more. We pray this leader guide further equips you to facilitate your group sessions in a way that fosters community, conversation, and transformational learning for you and those you're leading.

Feel free to use this guide in whatever way works best for you and your group. If you want to follow this leader guide to the letter, do that! If you need to adapt parts of it, you may do so. Our goal is to give you all the tools you might need as you lead your specific group in your specific setting.

We're grateful for you and praying for you as you lead this study.

# CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . . 4

---

**WEEK 1:** Spend Time with the Master . . . . . 8

**WEEK 2:** Live in the Word . . . . .13

**WEEK 3:** Pray in Faith . . . . .16

**WEEK 4:** Fellowship with Believers. . . . . 20

**WEEK 5:** Witness to the World . . . . .23

**WEEK 6:** Minister to Others . . . . .27

---

Growing Disciples Workshop . . . . .31

# INTRODUCTION

*MasterLife* is a sequential, developmental, small-group discipling process to help Christians master life by developing personal, lifelong, obedient relationships with Jesus Christ. This leader guide provides step-by-step guidance for facilitating group studies of the four books in the *MasterLife* process. By studying this introduction, you will learn how to disciple believers using *MasterLife*.

## THE MASTERLIFE PROCESS

*MasterLife* was written to help believers make the following definition of discipleship a way of life:

Christian discipleship is developing a personal, lifelong, obedient relationship with Jesus Christ in which He transforms your character into Christlikeness, changes your values into kingdom values, and involves you in His mission in the home, the church, and the world.

Participants in *MasterLife* learn how to deepen their relationships with Christ through a 24-week discipleship process that consists of four six-week studies: *MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross*, *MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality*, *MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory*, *MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission*.

Each course builds on the other and is a prerequisite for the one that follows. Members will benefit most and gain valuable information and experiences to be disciples of Christ if they complete all four books in this process. It is recommended that you begin with book 1 and continue sequentially through book 4. (If you start with a book other than book 1, familiarize yourself with previous books and with presentations such as the Disciple's Cross and the Disciple's Personality, to which subsequent books refer.)

Each Bible study book employs an interactive learning process. Each day, for five days a week, members are expected to study a segment of the material and complete related activities. Each day's work should require twenty to thirty minutes of study time. The *MasterLife* process involves six essential elements:

1. The daily activities in the Bible study books lead members into a closer walk with Christ. Doing these exercises daily is important.
2. The weekly assignments in the Walk with the Master checklist are real-life experiences that will change members' lives.
3. The leader is a major element. Discipleship is a relationship. It is not something members do by themselves. Members need human models, instruction, and accountability to become what Christ intends for them to be. That is why Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples (see Matt. 28:19-20). We all need someone who has followed Christ long enough to challenge us. To become better disciples, members need a leader to whom they can relate personally and regularly. Members will not accomplish the goals for *MasterLife* without you to teach them, model the behavior, and hold them accountable.

4. The weekly group sessions help members reflect on the concepts and experiences in *MasterLife* and help members apply the ideas to their lives. The group sessions allow members to experience in their inmost beings the profound changes Christ is making in their lives. Each group session also provides training for the next stage of spiritual growth.
5. Christ is the Discipler, and members become His disciples. As they fully depend on Him, He works through each of the previous elements and uses them to support members. If any element is omitted, the discipling process will not be effective.
6. The body of Christ—the church—is vital for complete discipling to take place. Members depend on Christian friends for fellowship, strength, and ministry opportunities. Without the church, members lack the support they need to grow in Christ.

## DISCIPLESHIP IS A RELATIONSHIP

Discipleship is a relationship and a process. As a group leader, don't forget: *Disciples are not instantly made.* Regardless of new technologies and advanced teaching methods, developing disciples is much like physical development. It cannot be rushed. Discipleship takes time. Be patient with your group as you disciple them through this study.

*Discipleship is not a course.* Often, discipleship is defined as content. Some people think they make disciples when they teach certain material. Content is important, with the Bible as the first source of revelation. However, many people believe that if they communicate certain facts, a person is disciplined. Even doctrine—a vital part of discipleship—is not sufficient. Studying every discipleship course available does not in itself make someone a disciple. In the Great Commission, Jesus said, "... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). Jesus went beyond knowing the commands to doing them. Discipleship involves practicing His commands.

In John 17, Jesus revealed His heart in the last prayer with His disciples before He went to the cross. Jesus stressed that as the Father had related to Him, He had related to the disciples. In this relationship, Jesus taught them God's Word but also urged them to obey the Word. He taught and prayed for the disciples. We disciple people in relationships with Jesus Christ, not in a body of knowledge.

*Discipleship is not a program or a method.* No one way of discipling people works with everyone. Although we can use a sequence or a process of growth that is logical or developmental, we cannot prescribe a step-by-step procedure that will be effective for everyone. So how can we use *MasterLife* to disciple others? Picture *MasterLife* as a tool that relates people to Christ, who disciplines them. Use it to help disciples relate to Christ in a personal way and to become obedient to Christ. *MasterLife* teaches obedience in many ways, including the completion of weekly assignments. If members do not honor their covenant with the *MasterLife* group or prioritize their time to do the assignments, remind them that obedience is an attitude of the heart, not just a response to direct commands of Scripture.

Because discipleship is based on relationships, our relationship with participants is a key factor in making disciples. We need to remain flexible and make time to develop a personal relationship with each group member. How? Take members with you as you minister or work. Be ready to disciple during ministry times, recreational outings, and family situations.

God seeks personal, obedient, and lifelong relationships. Help members focus on developing relationships with Christ that continue to grow long after the study ends.

## DEVELOPING COMMITMENT IN DISCIPLES

Common questions surface about participation in *MasterLife*: How do you get people to be committed to Christ and to develop as disciples? How do you develop a commitment that motivates a person to continue a personal, lifelong, obedient relationship with Christ? Our goal is to make disciples who will continue to apply the principles and live the Christlike lifestyle long after they complete course requirements. Here are ways to help disciples be committed.

- *Involve disciples in what you are doing.* Let disciples see how you respond in your own lifelong, obedient relationship with Christ. Let them see and participate in the ways your commitment to God expresses itself through serving in your church, visiting sick or homebound people, witnessing to the lost, participating in your church's prayer ministry, etc. Ideally, disciples will see a commitment to Christ that is not dislodged by other priorities.
- *Invite disciples to be on mission with God.* Make sure they understand they are not merely involving themselves in another church activity or event. Make them aware that they are joining God in His mission on this earth—to bring all people to Himself.
- *Reveal the Father.* Just as Jesus set the example for you by revealing the Father to His disciples, you can reveal the Father to those you disciple. Demonstrate in your life such Christlike characteristics as steadfastness and dependability. As you show that you can be relied on, they will see Christ in you. Ideally, they will understand that commitment is not just a rule but the very essence of who you are and who the Father is. God is committed to us; we need to make the same commitment to Him.
- *Give assignments.* Closely watch how disciples follow through. Praise them for sticking to a task or, if they fall short of the mark, try to determine what deterred them (e.g., circumstances beyond their control, a matter of attitude) and encourage them to make changes.
- *Explain the requirements of a continuing relationship.* Living as a committed disciple does not protect us from suffering or temptation. In fact, it makes Satan want to tempt you even more. Commitment to Christ in a personal, lifelong, obedient relationship leaves us constantly on call. But the greatest peace is found in living at the center of God's will and following Him every second of every day.

## LEADING DISCIPLES TO EXPERIENCE TRUTH

How do you lead a person to master a truth? As you just read, modeling plays a key role. You cannot teach what you are not practicing. The heart of discipleship is living Christ's commands and then teaching them. The disciple respects you and is therefore willing to try an idea because he or she has seen you live it. However, a new disciple needs time to assimilate the scores of ideas he or she confronts. A disciple makes a truth a part of his or her life by practice. Here are five steps a disciple experiences in mastering a truth.

1. *Imitation.* The disciple does what the model does. The disciple may not understand the actions but still does what he or she sees the model doing.
2. *Experimentation.* The disciple tries out the truth in real life. The disciple believes it enough to experiment but is still not convinced. He or she begins trying it in nonthreatening situations.
3. *Application.* The disciple applies the truth in more complex situations. The disciple says he or she believes the truth, but he or she may still have occasional reservations about it.

4. *Demonstration.* The disciple shows proficiency in living the truth under various conditions and situations. It has become a conviction and is part of his or her value system.
5. *Representation.* The disciple models the truth as a characteristic of the life of a disciple.

## HOW TO LEAD A SMALL GROUP

### Understand Your Role as a Leader

As you prepare to lead, ask yourself these questions.

- How can I get the group to accomplish its goals?
- How do I help the group grow and learn?
- How do I involve group members in meaningful activities?

Leading a group is not just relating information to a gathered audience. Create a learning environment that encourages people to participate and share. Note: Your role as a leader is not to bring glory to yourself. The best group learning usually takes place when the leader blends into the group and is not set apart. Read the following guidelines and consider what effect they would have on you and your small group.

- *Atmosphere.* Create an atmosphere that encourages each member to share ideas and invest talents. Convey acceptance to group members. This frees them to participate openly. Arrange chairs in a circle or semicircle so that members can see one another and experience the support of community.
- *Goals.* Help move the group toward its established goals. Keep the group united and focused on its task.
- *Awareness.* Be aware of what is happening within the group and encourage growth.
- *Acceptance.* Express your acceptance of group members. Listen to them, set aside your own biases while they speak, and convey the fact that you consider them a significant part of the group. This will signal that you expect them to contribute to the group and give their best. Be patient, and allow them to share when they are ready. Put their needs ahead of your own.<sup>2</sup>

Your role as a leader is not to be a traditional teacher that is expected to have all the answers. Rather, your role as leader is that of a helper or a guide. Help the group discover problems and questions, find answers and solutions, and organize facts and information.

### Continually Pray for Your Group Members

Regularly intercede on behalf of your group. Ask God to use these group sessions and this study to build each group member up in their understanding of His Word. Pray that they would develop a great love for God and that out of that love would come sincere devotion to their spiritual disciplines. Pray that the discipleship journey each group member embarks on through MasterLife will continue in a lifelong, obedient relationship with the Master. The practice of praying for your group will help you remember that God is the One who can change hearts through your group study. You can trust Him to work as you faithfully lead your group.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*Week 1*

SPEND TIME  
*with the*  
MASTER



## Session 1

# SPEND TIME WITH THE MASTER

### SESSION GOALS

Group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Sharing a sense of need after they complete the inventory at the end of week 1.
- Completing the assignments for week 1.
- Explaining the center of the Disciple's Cross.
- Asking group members to pray for a request.

### WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.
2. Give the group members a chance to get to know each other. Have each person **share their name, something about their family, and why they chose to join this MasterLife group.**

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to **recite John 15:5 aloud together** as a group.

### STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. **Who is a disciple?** Allow volunteers to answer and surface any frustration they have in responding to this question. Take notes for future reference.
2. **What were two reasons Jesus chose the disciples?** (To be with Him and to send them out)
3. **On day 1, you studied Luke 9:23 as a foundational verse for MasterLife. What insight does this verse give about the meaning of discipleship?** Take a moment to read this verse and try to memorize it together.
4. **What did Jesus do when people began following Him?** (He discouraged those who did not fully commit themselves to Him by first stating the requirements for being a disciple.)
5. Ask group members to open their Bibles to Luke 14:26-33 and **identify the three things over which Jesus said He must have priority.** (People, possessions, purposes)
6. Ask volunteers to **share their answers to the activity on page 19**, where they considered what might be taking priority over Christ in their lives. If they do not readily respond, share your answer.

7. What are the three characteristics Jesus said should be in a disciple's life? (Obedience, love, fruit)
8. Name the two things that are required to obey Christ's commands today. (Knowing them and doing them)
9. As weak as most of us are, how is it possible for us to obey and follow Christ? (Use Philippians 2:13 and John 15:5 to help members see that Christ provides us with the willingness and the ability to live the life of a disciple.)
10. Who have you asked to be your prayer partner? How do you plan to pray together regularly? If some still do not have prayer partners, encourage them to find one before they leave the group today.
11. Direct your group to look at their responses to the questions on page 30.
  - What would be difficult for you to leave behind or do if God asked you to?
  - What would you do if God asked you to do something that seemed unreasonable or did not make sense to you?
12. Ask for volunteers to share how they felt when they completed the inventory on pages 33-34.
  - Do you think your score adequately reflects where you are currently in your discipleship journey?
  - Share one or two words you would use to describe the current state of your discipleship.

## ABIDE IN CHRIST

**SAY:** Our primary goal as Christians is to abide in Christ. The only way we can become true disciples is through the power Jesus gives us to live a Christian life.

1. Instruct the group to turn to page 10 and look at the "Abiding in Christ" form.
2. Read John 15:1-17 aloud together. Then, give your group members five to ten minutes to fill out the form on their own.
3. Ask your group to share their takeaways from filling out this form.

## OBEY CHRIST'S COMMANDS

**SAY:** MasterLife is based on the truth that obedience to the lordship of Christ is the only way to learn to be a true disciple.

1. Instruct the group to look at the six key disciplines featured in MasterLife listed on page 7. Ask volunteers to describe each of these disciplines in their own words, based on what they know so far. Make helpful suggestions if your group members struggle to define these disciplines, and encourage them that they will understand these disciplines more and more as their MasterLife study progresses.

2. Ask members to look at their Walk with the Master checklist from this past week on page 13. Call attention to the fact that this checklist has assignments in each of the six disciplines every week in *MasterLife*.
3. Look ahead to next week's checklist on page 39. Encourage your group members to set aside twenty to thirty minutes each day to complete the assignments.

**SAY:** The assignments in the Walk with the Master checklist are based on Christ's commands. They are modern applications of concepts and principles Jesus taught. They will help you obey Christ's commands and do His will. The most important learning in *MasterLife* will take place between sessions as you complete your assignments. Any assignment that is not completed will reduce your chances of learning. So be diligent to complete your checklist every week!

## THE GROUP COVENANT

1. Ask your group members to **turn to and read the Group Covenant on page 11** in their Bible study books. Tell them that with this covenant, you and all the group members are committing to help one another keep these commitments.

**SAY:** Although you may find some of the demands difficult now, this is a commitment to try, with God's help and the help of the group and the leader. All you need is a willing heart.

2. Invite questions. Then, **ask members to sign the covenant**. When everyone has agreed to sign the covenant, go around the circle and have everyone repeat their names, with group members writing their names in the blanks on the covenant, so everyone has a full list of the people in the group. Explain that praying for group members is an important part of *MasterLife*. Encourage members to refer to the list of members while they are learning names in order to pray for them.

**\*Consider taking a quick break here\***

## DAILY QUIET TIME

1. Review the points in "How to Have a Quiet Time" on pages 22-23.
2. Share your personal plan for a daily quiet time. Do not mention the length of time unless someone asks you. Emphasize the consistency more than the amount of time at this point. Tell your group they will learn more about the significance of their daily quiet times as they study the material in week 2.

## PRAYER LIST

1. Have your group look ahead to page 52 in week 2 and read "How to Use the Prayer List."

2. Explain that the Prayer List is an important element of MasterLife that they will use throughout the entire study. Turn to pages 188-189 and talk through how to use the Prayer List.

**SAY:** List each request in specific terms so that you will know when it is answered. For example, do not write, “Bless Aunt Donna.” Instead, ask God to help Aunt Donna with a specific need she has. Record the date requested. If the Holy Spirit impresses on you a particular Bible verse related to that request, write that verse in the appropriate column. (You may want to give a personal example.)

**SAY:** Be alert to verses in your Bible reading that might apply to your request. Later, we will study more about the different ways God answers prayer. Your prayer may be answered in stages. Write the date when each prayer is answered.

3. Assure members that they are not expected to have enough prayer requests to fill all the lines. Suggest that they record only the requests that represent real concerns to them.
4. Tell members they will begin adding people to their Prayer Lists during this week of study. Encourage them to use this list regularly during their prayer time.
5. Tell members that their Prayer Lists with dated answers will be a great reminder of God’s faithfulness and may become the best evidence they have to convince a skeptic of God’s concern and power.
6. Ask each group member to **share one request**. Ask other members to **write that request on their Prayer Lists and commit to praying for each other throughout the week**.

## DISCIPLE’S CROSS PRESENTATION

1. Have the group break into pairs. Instruct members to **practice explaining and drawing for their partners the center of the Disciple’s Cross and saying the verse that accompanies it**. Both members will attempt to explain and draw the part of the cross they have learned. Remind them that they will add material each week to their presentation of the cross. By the end of this study, they should be able to explain the Disciple’s Cross in their own words.

## WALK WITH THE MASTER REFLECTION

1. Bring the group back together to wrap up with a quick discussion on their Walk with the Master assignments. **Did you complete the activities on your Walk with the Master checklist?**
2. **What part was easiest for you to complete? What was most difficult?**

## CLOSING

1. Ask members to **complete their personal study and Walk with the Master checklist for week 2, “Live in the Word,” before the next group session**. They will learn how they can grow closer to Christ as they learn to live in the Word through daily quiet time and memorizing Scripture.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*Week 2*

LIVE  
*in the*  
WORD

## Session 2

# LIVE IN THE WORD

### SESSION GOALS

Group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Giving and receiving support from group members on problems they may be having with weekly assignments.
- Completing the assignments for week 2.
- Explaining the lower bar of the Disciple's Cross.
- Making Prayer Lists and praying for group members' requests.

### WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite **John 8:31-32** aloud together as a group.

### STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Ask several volunteers to **share one good experience related to completing their assignments this week.**
2. Take a few minutes and ask members to **identify any problems they may be having with any of the assignments.** Ask other group members to **suggest ways to solve these problems.**
3. Ask members for **reports on how they are doing with keeping a Prayer List.**
4. **Which of the four reasons given for having a quiet time is the most important to you? Why?** (The first list of these four reasons is on page 44.)
  - **What are some other reasons we should have a daily quiet time?**
5. **What benefits do you see in a quiet time?** Instruct the group to write the benefits in the margins of their workbooks as group members mention them.
6. **Consider the Bible stories about David, Daniel, John the Baptist, and Jesus. How important was it to them to spend time with God? How can you tell?**

**SAY:** These answers give us observable ways we can evaluate how important a personal time with God is to us.

- 7.** Ask members to **write in the margins of their Bible study books these items:** eating, fellowship with family, personal cleanliness, work, personal time with God. Ask them to rank them 1 to 5 in order of priority, with 1 being the highest priority. Then, ask: **What did you learn about yourself?**
- 8.** What was your experience establishing a quiet time this week like? What went well? What do you want to do differently this week?
- 9.** When has God helped you make a decision after seeking answers from His Word in a quiet time?
- 10.** What might you need to give up in order to establish a regular time of fellowship with God?

## DISCIPLE'S CROSS PRESENTATION

- 1.** Have the group break into two small groups to practice presenting the Disciple's Cross. Two members in each small group will **present the center circle of the Disciple's Cross.** Two other members will **present the lower bar of the Disciple's Cross.** Invite group members to **provide kind, helpful feedback.**

## WALK WITH THE MASTER REFLECTION

- 1.** Bring the group back together to wrap up with a quick discussion on their Walk with the Master assignments. **Did you complete the activities on your Walk with the Master checklist?**
- 2.** What part was easiest for you to complete? What was most difficult?

## CLOSING

- 1.** Ask members to **complete their personal study and Walk with the Master checklist for week 3, "Pray in Faith," before the next group session.**
- 2.** Ask members to **mention specific praises they have about their experiences in MasterLife so far.**
- 3.** Pray before you dismiss. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close by asking God to help every group member make daily quiet time a part of their lives.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*Week 3*

PRAY

*in*

FAITH



## Session 3

# PRAY IN FAITH

### SESSION GOALS

Group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Incorporating thanksgiving, praise, confession, and asking into their prayer times.
- Completing the assignments for week 3.
- Explaining the upper bar of the Disciple's Cross.
- Telling group members how they showed love to non-Christians.
- Praying for their personal needs and the needs of others.

### WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite **John 15:7** aloud together as a group.

### STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Invite a volunteer to **share about a time when he or she prayed on the basis of what he or she wanted rather than seeking God's will first**. Tell your own experience in this area.
2. Ask if anyone has updates to share regarding the requests on their Prayer Lists. **How are you seeing God move in response to prayer?**
3. **Why do you believe thanksgiving and praising God occur first in prayer? How has starting your prayers this way affected your prayer life and connection to God?**
4. **On day 3, you studied different names of God. Which has been most helpful to you in learning to praise Him? Why?**
5. **How do we distinguish between praising God and thanking Him?**
6. **Why do you believe confessing sin is important? Invite a volunteer to share how he or she found that confessing sin helped restore a right relationship with God.**

7. Invite several members to **share one of the personal needs they listed on pages 87-88**. Voice a prayer asking God to help group members with the specific requests mentioned. Encourage them to **pray for these needs with their prayer partners as well**.
8. **Why do you think God wants you to intercede for others? Why is this an important aspect of discipleship?**
9. **Which of the four types of prayers is the easiest for you to pray? Which is most challenging? Why?**
10. **What was your experience showing God's love to someone who is not a Christian this week?**

**\*Consider taking a short break here.\***

## THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS

1. Instruct your group to **break into pairs**. Have each person to **present to the other in his or her own words the material learned so far on the Disciple's Cross**. Members have likely mastered the vertical bar and the center circle. Invite group members to **provide kind, helpful feedback**.

## MASTERTIME

1. Bring the group back together to discuss MasterTime.

**SAY:** Many of you may find it difficult to add the MasterLife assignments to an already busy life. MasterTime will help you learn to manage your time better and rethink your priorities. Setting goals and making long-term plans will enable you to do the most important tasks first.

2. Briefly introduce "Redeeming the Time" on pages 108-109 in the Bible study book by summarizing the key thoughts.
3. Introduce the MasterTime form on page 184 in the Bible study book as a vehicle to help members set priorities and manage their time.

**SAY:** To manage time is to manage life.

4. Ask members to **take notes as you explain how to use time wisely**. You may refer to "How to Use MasterTime" on pages 113-114. Members will study the material later, but they should take notes now to help them learn. Explain each point, including the following.
  - *Trust the Lord.* Begin by listing the activities you will do as a part of walking with the Master for this time period.
  - *Plan your daily work.* Explain that members should **use a few minutes at the beginning or end of the day to plan their use of time for the next 24 hours**.

- Ask the Lord. Encourage members to **pray as they make their plans**.
- Depend on the Lord. Give examples of how you deal with interruptions.
- Discipline yourself. Encourage members to **master their time but not to become a slave of their planning**. We are not trying to reduce spontaneity but to encourage the wise use of time.
- Leave the results to God. Tell members to **work when they should but leave for tomorrow tasks they cannot finish**. Worrying or becoming a workaholic interferes with the best use of time.

## WALK WITH THE MASTER REFLECTION

1. Bring the group back together to wrap up with a quick discussion on their Walk with the Master assignments. **Did you complete the activities on your Walk with the Master checklist?**
2. **What part was easiest for you to complete? What was most difficult?**

## CLOSING

1. Ask members to **complete their personal study and Walk with the Master checklist for week 4, "Fellowship with Believers," before the next group session**.
2. Some members may feel overwhelmed by the amount of work or may feel stuck on an aspect of their work, such as Scripture memorization. Encourage members to **contact you if they need help**.
3. Ask volunteers to **share needs in their lives**. Begin by sharing one of your own needs. Being open and honest will set the stage and make it easier for others to share their needs.
4. Ask if anyone has an **update on any prayer requests** that group members have mentioned.
5. Close with prayer. Ask for any new **prayer requests**, pray together for the needs and requests that have been mentioned, and close by asking God to help each member develop a consistent life of prayer in which they exercise their faith daily.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*Week 4*

FELLOWSHIP  
*with*  
BELIEVERS

## Session 4

# FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS

### SESSION GOALS

Group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Sharing their progress in having a quiet time.
- Completing the assignments for week 4.
- Explaining the right crossbar of the Disciple's Cross.
- Managing their time efficiently in the following week.
- Sharing their experiences befriending someone who is not in their immediate circle of friends.

### WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite **John 13:34-35** aloud together as a group.

### STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Did you find using MasterTime this week to be beneficial? In what ways was it helpful to you?
2. Ask members to **share their challenges when it comes to time management.**
3. Give suggestions based on "How to Use MasterTime" (pages 113-114) and "Redeeming the Time" (pages 108-109). Encourage members to **use time wisely by planning and letting the Master guide them.**
4. **How many times did you have quiet times during the week?** Let all group members share openly, without judgment. Encourage them to **continue incorporating this discipline into their lives daily.**
  - Praise God for progress members have made to this point. By now, they should be able to have quiet times at least five days of seven.
5. Ask members to **share ways they have learned to overcome challenges when it comes to setting aside a quiet time.** Encourage them to support and help one another.
6. Ask a volunteer to **share about an experience of trying to go it alone as a Christian rather than staying connected to the fellowship of believers.** Share your experience in this area.

7. **Why is someone who professes to be a Christian yet does not attend church living outside God's will?** (Christ commands us to love one another and to encourage one another in the body of Christ. To do otherwise disregards God's Word.)
8. **Can you think of a specific time when you found it especially meaningful to fellowship with Christians?** Allow two or three members to respond.
9. Ask volunteers to **share their answers to the case studies of Maria and Charles on page 101. Have you had an experience with befriending someone in need as these two case stories illustrate?** Encourage members to share circumstances, not names.
10. Page 105 says, "Friends care enough to confront one another in love if necessary." What does it look like for Christians to confront one another in a loving, Christ-honoring way?
11. **When have you found it especially meaningful to fellowship with other Christians? Share about a specific experience or season of life.**
12. Ask members to describe **briefly their experiences this past week in befriending someone who is not in their close circle of friends or in the MasterLife group.** Emphasize that members do not need to give the names of the people they befriended but merely describe circumstances.

## THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS

1. Ask each member to pair with a person with whom he or she has not yet worked. Instruct each person to **present to the other in his or her own words the material learned so far on the Disciple's Cross.** Group members should now have a firm grasp of the center circle, the vertical bar, and the right cross-bar. Remind them that they will be able to explain the complete Disciple's Cross in their own words by the end of week 6. Invite group members to **provide kind, helpful feedback.**

## WALK WITH THE MASTER REFLECTION

1. Bring the group back together to wrap up with a quick discussion on their Walk with the Master assignments. **Did you complete the activities on your Walk with the Master checklist?**
2. **What part was easiest for you to complete? What was most difficult?**

## CLOSING

1. Ask members to **complete their personal study and Walk with the Master checklist for week 5, "Witness to the World," before the next group session.**
2. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close by asking God to help each member see the difference fellowship with other believers can make as they live life in Christ together.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*Week 5*

WITNESS  
to the  
WORLD

## Session 5

# WITNESS TO THE WORLD

### SESSION GOALS

Group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Reporting on a new friend who is a non-Christian and praying for the non-Christian friends of others.
- Completing the assignments for week 5.
- Explaining the left crossbar of the Disciple's Cross.
- Giving and receiving support when challenges arise in Scripture memorization.

### WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite **John 15:8** aloud together as a group.

### STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Ask members to **share the names of non-Christian friends they made during the past week**. Ask the whole group to **write all names on their Prayer Lists** as members share what they know about their new friends.
2. Pray for the lost friends who have been mentioned. Ask members to **pray for these people by name during the week**. Have a volunteer **read the promise in Matthew 18:19**.
3. **How are you doing with Scripture memorization? What challenges are you experiencing?** Share a challenge you have had in this area. Review "How to Memorize Scripture" (page 145). Encourage members to **continue to work on this process and to pray for God's guidance**.
4. **Have you had an experience of trying to rely on your own strength when sharing Christ with other people rather than relying on the Holy Spirit to empower you?** Tell about your own experience in this area.
5. **Why is giving a verbal witness in addition to having Christlike traits in our lives important?**



6. When has someone's comment on a positive trait they've seen in you given you an opportunity for a verbal witness?
7. Choose one of the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. How can this fruit become the basis of a verbal witness?
8. What excuses have you made for not witnessing? Share one of the excuses you have made in the past.
9. When have you experienced Jesus working so powerfully in your life that you could not help but share about that experience?
10. Do you feel ready to testify about what Christ has done in your life? Why or why not?
11. Ask a volunteer to read aloud John 15:20-21. Ask members how they feel about the fact that bearing fruit for Christ has its price. Ask a volunteer to share about a price he or she has paid for being a Christian.
12. What are some examples of the types of suffering Jesus experienced? Remind members that Jesus was the only sinless person who has ever lived; His suffering was completely undeserved.

**\*Consider taking a short break here.\***

## THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS

1. Ask members to work in pairs to practice presenting the Disciple's Cross. Members likely will have mastered the center circle and the vertical and horizontal bars. Remind them that **they will need to present the complete Disciple's Cross in their own words in next week's session. To do this, they will need to be able to quote all the verses that accompany the Disciple's Cross.**

## WALK WITH THE MASTER REFLECTION

1. Bring the group back together to wrap up with a quick discussion on their Walk with the Master assignments. **Did you complete the activities on your Walk with the Master checklist?**
2. **What part was easiest for you to complete? What was most difficult?**

## CLOSING

1. Ask members to **complete their personal study and Walk with the Master checklist for week 6, "Minister to Others," before the next group session.**
2. Let your group members know that there is a Discipleship Inventory available as a free download at [lifeway.com/masterlife](http://lifeway.com/masterlife). If they choose to do this inventory, they should wait until after session 6.

**SAY:** The inventory enables you to evaluate your growth in discipleship. It is based on the characteristics of a disciple.

3. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close by asking God to help each member of your group bear fruit by learning to give a verbal witness for Christ.

**\*IF YOU PLAN TO HOST THE OPTIONAL GROWING DISCIPLES WORKSHOP**

1. If you are planning to host the Growing Disciples Workshop, the Discipleship Inventory will be mandatory. Share that **they will be able to score and interpret their responses at the Growing Disciples Workshop**. Encourage them to **be as honest as possible in evaluating themselves**.
2. Take a few minutes to describe the upcoming workshop. Remind them of the date, time, and place for the workshop and explain its purpose (see the final section of this leader guide). Point out to members that **before the Growing Disciples Workshop, they will be asked to draw something to illustrate the concepts of the Disciple's Cross**. This learning activity will indicate how well they understand the truths of the Disciple's Cross. Urge them to **draw the picture even if they don't believe they have artistic ability**. The important thing is not the artwork but the concepts contained in it.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*Week 6*

MINISTER  
to  
OTHERS

## Session 6

# MINISTER TO OTHERS

### SESSION GOALS

Group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Sharing how they have seen other group members grow during their study of MasterLife.
- Reporting the kind acts they did for their new non-Christian friends.
- Completing the assignments for week 6.
- Explaining what “take up your cross” means to them personally.
- Completing memorization work on the Disciple’s Cross.

### WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

### SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to **recite all six memory verses from this study aloud together**, including this week’s verse, John 15:13.

### STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Ask all group members to **share one change they have seen in the person seated to their right since beginning MasterLife.**
2. **When have you had the opportunity to serve someone sacrificially? What did you experience as you served another person this way?**
3. **Have you had the opportunity to serve someone sacrificially but chosen not to? What factors played into that decision? Is there anything you would do differently now?**
4. **How would you define cross bearing? What does Jesus’s command to “take up your cross” mean to you personally?**
5. Have five volunteers **describe a specific, personal way they might use the following resources in the ministries listed with each one (ask for one volunteer for each resource):**
  - **The resource of the Word in the ministry of teaching**
  - **The resource of prayer in the ministry of worship and intercession**

- The resource of fellowship in the ministry of nurture
- The resource of witness in the ministry of evangelism
- The resource of fellowship and witness in the ministry of service.

6. When have you regularly prayed for a pastor or church staff member? Why is it important for us to be diligent to pray this way?
7. How do you feel when you realize Christ has said you will experience rejection when you witness in His name? How do you feel when you realize Christ has promised to send the Holy Spirit to help you?
8. Share about a time when the Holy Spirit made you (the leader) bold and gave you strength to minister to others. Then ask group members to **tell about their experiences in this area.**
9. How would you stay connected to the Vine if your Bible and the opportunity to pray to and worship God freely were taken away?
10. In what ways did you show kindness to your new non-Christian friends this week? Pray for the lost friends who have been mentioned. Pray that the group members' kind acts will be entry points for sharing the gospel when the time is appropriate.
11. Invite members to pray at this time.

**SAY:** Voice a sentence prayer for yourself. Ask God to help you find ways to use the resources you have available through Him.

## THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS

1. Instruct members to **break into pairs and give the full presentation of the Disciple's Cross.** Remind them to **quote all the verses that accompany the Disciple's Cross.** Have each partner provide kind, helpful feedback.

## REFLECTION

1. What has been most impactful about this study for you? What do you want to be sure to remember?
2. Tell your group when you will begin the study of *MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality*. Encourage them to **plan to join the group to continue their discipleship journey with MasterLife.**

## CLOSING

1. Share what you have observed in the group members over the last six weeks. Highlight how they have grown. Encourage your group members to **continue in their practice of the six spiritual disciplines.**

2. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and thank God for what your group members have learned during this Bible study. Pray that each member will continue to walk with the Master throughout their lives.

**\*IF YOU PLAN TO HOST THE OPTIONAL GROWING DISCIPLES WORKSHOP**

1. Refresh members' memories about the time, date, and place for the Growing Disciples Workshop.
2. **Do you have any questions about the Growing Disciples Workshop?**
3. Urge members who may not have completed all their assignments to finish them before the Growing Disciples Workshop. At the workshop, members will be asked to share what they have learned.
4. Remind members about the Discipleship Inventory available at [lifeway.com/masterlife](http://lifeway.com/masterlife). Ask everyone to **complete it before the workshop**. They must **bring the completed inventory with them to the workshop**. They will score and interpret their responses at the workshop. Encourage members to **be honest when completing the inventory**.

*MasterLife*

LEADER GUIDE

*MasterLife 1:  
The Disciple's Cross*

---

GROWING  
DISCIPLES  
WORKSHOP

## *MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross*

# GROWING DISCIPLES WORKSHOP

### WORKSHOP GOALS

By the end of this workshop, group members will be able to demonstrate their progress toward MasterLife goals by:

- Sharing how they have grown during MasterLife.
- Completing all assignments in MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross.
- Explaining their diagram that illustrates the concepts of the Disciple's Cross.
- Completing the Discipleship Inventory and evaluating the results.
- Examining ways they plan to seek continued growth in Christ.

### BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

1. Pray daily for each member of your group.
2. Email each member of the group to be sure everyone will be there.
3. Review the goals for the workshop. Master the material in this leader guide for the Growing Disciples Workshop.
4. Check with the people responsible for the meeting site to be sure they are ready for the group. Ask them to arrange the meeting place so that members can sit in a circle.
5. Make enough copies of "Scoring Your Inventory" ([lifeway.com/masterlife](http://lifeway.com/masterlife)) for each member to have one.
6. Have pens or pencils and extra blank paper on hand for the workshop.
7. Review the basic content of MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality so that you can give your group an overview at the end of the Growing Disciples Workshop.
8. Prepare to present the Disciple's Personality presentation.
9. Make plans for starting the study of MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality. Arrange a time, date, and place for the first session. Be prepared to share these plans with group members.
10. Pray for the workshop. Members need to have a sense of accomplishment and success at the end of MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross. Prepare to remind them of all they have accomplished by completing their Walk with the Master checklists. Prepare to encourage them as they assess their growth as disciples.



## TODAY'S WORKSHOP AGENDA

- The Disciple's Cross
- Discipleship Inventory
- The Disciple's Personality

### DURING THE WORKSHOP

#### Part 1 (30 minutes)

#### WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

1. Greet members. Ask each person to **share one change he or she has seen in himself or herself since beginning MasterLife**. Go around the group until each member has responded.
2. Pray together, thanking God for the progress that each of the group members have made throughout their study of MasterLife.

#### THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS (20 MINUTES)

1. Ask group members to break into pairs and have each member **present the Disciple's Cross to their partner**. Instruct each partner to **provide kind, constructive feedback**.

#### Break (10 minutes)

#### Part 2 (45 minutes)

#### THE DISCIPLESHIP INVENTORY (45 MINUTES)

1. Ask members to **take out their completed Discipleship Inventory**. Ask them how they felt as they took the inventory.

**SAY:** The Discipleship Inventory, based on the characteristics of a disciple, enables you to determine where you are in your growth as a disciple.

2. Distribute copies of "Scoring Your Inventory." Allow sufficient time for members to score their inventories. Be available to answer questions.
3. Debrief what members discovered about themselves from the inventory. Discuss each of the five categories one by one, using the ideas below as starters.

- **ATTITUDE**

**ASK:** Does the list under "Attitude" contain any characteristics that you do not think a disciple should have? Are there characteristics you would add? Which characteristic is most difficult to demonstrate?

- **BEHAVIOR**

**SAY:** People often find their attitudes are better than their behavior. Look at your scores for each of these two categories. Do you see a wide range of difference? Which is higher? What does that say to you about their relationship in your life?

- **RELATIONSHIPS**

**ASK:** How do you relate to God based on the inventory? How do you relate to others? How important is the fellowship of other Christians? Ask volunteers to comment on one characteristic he or she would like to improve.

- **MINISTRY**

**ASK:** How important is it for a disciple to minister to others? What Scriptures encourage or expect ministry from Christ's disciples? Did you find your score in attitude and behavior better than in ministry? If so, what does this suggest?

- **DOCTRINE**

**ASK:** Are there doctrines listed that you do not agree are taught in the Bible? (Be careful not to let this become a theological debate.) How can we live lives that demonstrate our beliefs?

4. Tell members that they will have the opportunity to take the inventory again at the end of book 4 to identify areas in which they have grown.
5. State that the next three books in the MasterLife series will meet specific needs in this growth process. Read Philippians 3:12-14 and encourage members to **fulfill Paul's goal**.

**Break (10 minutes)**

### **PART 3 (50 minutes)**

#### **THE DISCIPLE'S PERSONALITY (45 MINUTES)**

1. Preview MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality by reviewing the weekly titles and giving a five-minute overview of the content.
2. Tell the group that they will learn the Disciple's Personality presentation throughout their study of MasterLife 2. Present the Disciple's Personality presentation in your own words.
3. Ask volunteers to **share why they are committed to continuing the MasterLife discipleship process**.
4. Share your plans for when the group will begin MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality, and encourage all members to **pray about continuing on with the group**. Assure members that regardless of what they decide about continuing, you will always be available to talk to or pray with them about life in Christ.

## CLOSING (5 MINUTES)

1. Congratulate members on completing *MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross*. Assure them that the time investment they have made in learning to be a follower of Christ will make their pilgrimage more meaningful in the days ahead. Express appreciation for each member.
2. Close with prayer. Thank God for walking alongside every group member through *MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross*. Ask God to speak clearly to them about His will for them in the next season of their discipleship journey.

## AFTER THE WORKSHOP

1. Write a note to each member, expressing appreciation for his or her participation in the course. Remind each member that you are praying as he or she continues to apply concepts of *MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross* to daily life.
2. Finalize your plans for beginning *MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality*. Email group members to communicate all of the details. If some group members cannot join your group for this next step, encourage them to **join a MasterLife 2 group sometime in the future**.
3. This is a good time to take stock of the leadership you provided during *MasterLife 1: The Disciple's Cross*. If you have areas in which you want to grow as a leader, seek counsel from another seasoned *MasterLife* leader. If you believe a problem exists between you and a member, visit with this person and seek reconciliation.
4. Continue to pray for each member of your group.