

MasterLife
LEADER GUIDE

III

The Disciple's

V I C T O R Y

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WELCOME! Thank you for leading this study.

MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory 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 document 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 Spiritual Armor presentation, instructions for the Prayer 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: Overcoming the Enemy 8

WEEK 2: Truth and Faith 12

WEEK 3: Rely on God’s Word 16

WEEK 4: Pray in Faith 20

WEEK 5: Look to Jesus 24

WEEK 6: Stand Victorious 30

Prayer Workshop 34

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.²

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

OVERCOMING
the
ENEMY

Session 1

OVERCOMING THE ENEMY

SESSION GOALS

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

- Stating their goals for their study of MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory.
- Explaining the "Helmet of Salvation" part of the Spiritual Armor presentation.
- Saying from memory 1 John 4:4.
- Describing different types of strongholds that form the battleground for spiritual warfare.
- Explaining the steps in how to demolish strongholds.
- Completing the assignments for week 1.

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 1 John 4:4 aloud together as a group.

STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Ask each member to give a **one-sentence statement of his or her goals for this study.** Encourage members to pray in sentence prayers throughout the week, asking God to help them achieve their goals.
2. **How did you utilize the spiritual armor in prayer this week? Describe your experience.**
3. **Why do Christians need to be prepared for spiritual warfare?**
4. **When have you experienced spiritual warfare? When have you experienced victory in Christ after a battle with Satan?**
5. Ask a volunteer to **define stronghold.** (A stronghold is an idea, a thought process, a habit, or an addiction through which Satan has the advantage in a person's life.) **What is a personal stronghold you have struggled with the enemy over?**

6. Ask a member to **define ideological stronghold**. What is an ideological stronghold in which you are aware of the enemy's influence?
7. Ask a member to **define cosmic stronghold**. What is a cosmic stronghold in which you are aware of the enemy's influence?
8. Can you recall a time when you tried to fight a spiritual battle with the weapons of the world? Share about this experience. How would you approach that battle differently now?
9. In what ways is the enemy most likely to tempt you in your life?
10. Ask a member to read **Matthew 4:1-11**. How did Jesus defeat Satan in the temptations in the wilderness?
11. Turn to pages 30–31 and review “How to Demolish a Stronghold” together. Have five volunteers explain each of the five points.

GUIDE TO THANKSGIVING

1. How did you utilize “Guide to Thanksgiving” (p. 17) in your prayer time this week? Describe your experience.

DEMOLISHING PERSONAL SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

1. Instruct your group to break into pairs. Ask for each member to **tell the other person about a personal stronghold they identified as needing to be demolished and how they are working to demolish that stronghold**. Encourage the pairs to **pray for one another, asking God to help the other person use the spiritual weapons Christ provides to demolish personal spiritual strongholds**.

THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR

1. Explain to group members that through the Spiritual Armor, they are expanding prayer and the Word of God—the vertical bar of the Disciple's Cross. Tell them they are building on the inner victory they learned to have in *MasterLife 2: The Disciple's Personality* with the outer victory they can have when they use the spiritual weapons Christ has given them. Give a brief overview of the Spiritual Armor.
2. Instruct the group break into new pairs. Have each person to **present the “Helmet of Salvation” part of the Spiritual Armor in his or her own words**. Have each partner **provide kind, helpful feedback**.
3. Preview the “Breastplate of Righteousness” part of the Spiritual Armor presentation. Show how it fits the overall context of the Spiritual Armor.

THE GROUP COVENANT

1. Ask your group members to **turn to and read the Group Covenant on page 9** 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.

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, "Truth and Faith," before the next group meeting.**
2. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close with asking God to help each group member claim the mind of Christ in the week ahead.

MasterLife

LEADER GUIDE

Week 2

TRUTH
and
FAITH

Session 2

TRUTH AND FAITH

SESSION GOALS

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

- Sharing prayer promises God has given them that apply to items on their Prayer Lists.
- Completing the assignments for week 2.
- Explaining the “Breastplate of Righteousness” part of the Spiritual Armor.
- Defining *truth* and *faith* and their relationship to each other.
- Praying, using principles of conversational prayer.
- Praying for people they know who are not saved.

WELCOME

1. Open the session with a general prayer for your group meeting. Then, continue your group’s time of prayer using “Guide to Praise.” Invite members to **share names of lost people for whom they are praying**. Spend time in prayer for these individuals.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite 2 Timothy 3:16-17 **aloud together** as a group.

STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. How did you utilize the spiritual armor in prayer this week? Describe your experience.
2. Has God revealed a promise from Scripture that you have claimed for some of your requests on your prayer list? Share a promise you’re holding on to in faith as you pray.
3. Ask members to **define truth**, based on this week’s study on “Truth and Faith.” Make sure the definition includes God’s revelation of Himself through Jesus and the written Word.
4. **Why can Christians know the truth?** (They are born of the Spirit and have been given the Word.)

SAY: Faith should be based on truth.

5. **What happens if we base our faith only on data we can gather through our five senses?** (It can be wrong because the senses can be deceived. Examples are magicians’ tricks, mirages, and psychosomatic illnesses. If faith is based on pure data, it is no longer faith but knowledge.)

- 6. Why are the mind, the will, and the emotions inadequate to interpret truth?**
- 7. What happens if faith is based on the written truth revealed by the Holy Spirit?** (It is valid and comes to pass. Of course, it may be misinterpreted if the mind, will, and emotions work in conflict with the truth rather than in harmony with the truth.)
- 8. Why is it important to be filled with the Spirit when you interpret the Word?** (So that you will rightly divide the Word of truth [see 2 Tim. 2:15] and not twist it [see 2 Cor. 4:2])
- 9. Reflecting on your memory verse from this week, through what means do you think the Holy Spirit wants to communicate the truth to us today?**
- 10. How would you define faith?** (Faith is not hoping but trusting in God's revealed Word.)
- 11. Have a volunteer read Romans 10:17. Where does faith come from?**
- 12. What is the evidence of faith? How do you demonstrate your faith in Jesus personally?**
- 13. Have a volunteer read Hebrews 11. How did the heroes mentioned in this passage demonstrate their faith?** (By acting on the basis of what God told them, without having proof)
- 14. When have you believed a promise from Scripture on faith and seen God's faithfulness in response?**
- 15. How did you utilize "Guide to Praise" in your prayer time this week? Describe your experience.**

DEMOLISHING PERSONAL SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

- 1. Instruct the group to break into pairs. Ask for each member to tell the other person about a personal stronghold they identified as needing to be demolished and how they are working to demolish that stronghold. Encourage the pairs to pray for one another, asking God to help the other person use the spiritual weapons Christ provides to demolish personal spiritual strongholds.**

THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR

- 1. Staying in the same pairs, have each group member present the "Breastplate of Righteousness" part of the Spiritual Armor presentation in his or her own words. Have each partner provide kind, helpful feedback.**
- 2. Preview for members the "Sword of the Spirit" part of the Spiritual Armor presentation. Explain to members that as they learn this part of the presentation, they will learn an additional presentation that teaches how to get a grasp on God's Word. This is known as "God's Word in Your Heart and Hand."**

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, “Rely on God’s Word,” before the next group meeting.**
- 2.** Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close with asking God to help each group member learn to pray in faith, based on His Word.

MasterLife

LEADER GUIDE

Week 3

RELY ON
GOD'S
WORD

Session 3

RELY ON GOD'S WORD

SESSION GOALS

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

- Completing the assignments for week 3.
- Explaining the Sword of the Spirit part of the Spiritual Armor.
- Praying for group members' requests about lost people listed on their Relational-Witnessing Charts.
- Describing the four areas for which Scripture is useful.
- Identifying how Scripture has been useful in their lives in these four areas.

WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite Psalm 1:2-3 aloud together as a group.

STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. 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.
2. Ask if anyone has an **update on any prayer requests** that group members have mentioned. Instruct your group to update their Prayer Lists accordingly.
3. **How did you utilize the spiritual armor in prayer this week? Describe your experience.**
4. **How did you utilize "Guide to Confession and Forgiveness" in your prayer time this week? Describe your experience.**
5. Have a volunteer recite last week's memory verse, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does "all Scripture is inspired by God" mean?
6. **When have you tried to rely on sources other than God's Word to provide guidance for your life? What was the result?**

7. With which of the four ways that Scripture equips us—teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training—have you had the most experience? Give an example.
8. What does it mean to delight in God’s Word? Do you currently delight in God’s Word?
9. When has proper teaching from God’s Word prevented you from making a harmful decision?
10. When has a verse of Scripture convicted you that you were going in the wrong direction?
11. What is the difference between the rebuking and correcting we experience through Scripture? (Rebuking involves making us aware that we are going the wrong way. Correcting shows us how to change direction to get back on course.)
12. In what ways is the instruction in the Bible more than a set of rules and how-tos?
13. When has the Bible given you helpful instruction for a specific situation?

THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR

1. Ask each member to pair with a person he or she has not yet worked with. Instruct each member to present the “Sword of the Spirit” part of the Spiritual Armor presentation in their own words. Have each partner provide kind, helpful feedback.
2. Bring the group back together and give a preview of the “Shield of Faith” part of the Spiritual Armor.

DEMOLISHING SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

1. Ask group members to break into new pairs and share with their partners what personal spiritual strongholds are being demolished in his or her life and what spiritual weapons he or she is using in the process. Instruct the pairs to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for what their partners have shared and the growth they have experienced.

GOD’S WORD IN YOUR HEART AND HAND

1. In these pairs, have the group practice presenting level 1 of “God’s Word in Your Heart and Hand.”
2. Bring the group back together and demonstrate how to present level 2 of “God’s Word in Your Heart and Hand.” On a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, draw the hand with the Scriptures on it. Remind members that they will be able to give the full presentation by the end of week 6.

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, “Pray in Faith,” before the next group meeting.**
2. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close with asking God to help each group member rely on God’s Word for direction and wisdom in the week ahead.

MasterLife

LEADER GUIDE

Week 4

PRAY
in
FAITH

Session 4

PRAY IN FAITH

SESSION GOALS

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

- Stating how they are demolishing personal spiritual strongholds.
- Completing the assignments for week 4.
- Presenting the “Shield of Faith” part of the Spiritual Armor.
- Saying from memory 1 John 5:14-15.
- Praying for unsaved close friends, neighbors, and coworkers of group members.
- Stating the six steps for praying in faith.
- Selecting a problem or need about which they want to pray.
- Sharing times when they have linked prayer and God’s Word.

WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite 1 John 5:14-15 aloud together as a group.

STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. How did you utilize the spiritual armor in prayer this week? Describe your experience.
2. Share the name of at least one person you have added to your Relational-Witnessing Chart. Who is this person to you, and what is your relationship like? Have you had an opportunity yet to share the gospel with them?
3. How have you utilized your “Praying in Faith” form? Describe your experience.
4. What is the relationship between praying in faith and living in the Word?
5. Ask a volunteer to explain what a covenant is. Discuss some of the covenants of the Bible. What are the stages of a covenant-making process? If we follow this process, what do we prevent? (Deciding what we want for ourselves and trying to bargain with God to get it)
6. What are the three steps for God’s communicating truth to you?

SAY: Purity of heart and obedience to God do not force God to give you anything you want. We can be sure we will get what we want only if God has revealed through His Word and Spirit that He wants to give us that thing. God answers when our wills coincide with His will. When our wills are different from God's will, He may do one of two things: encourage us to ask for the right thing or encourage us to do His will and trust Him for what is best for us.

7. Ask a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Why didn't God take away Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (v. 7) when Paul asked Him to? What did Paul learn as a result?

SAY: Regarding Romans 8:28, the "Guide to Praying in Faith" says, "That does not mean that all things are good but that ultimately, God will work together all things to produce good." Share your thoughts on this idea.

8. What are the three steps for communicating faith to God?
9. God does not always answer prayer the way we want Him to. When you pray for guidance, do you always do what you discern is God's will? Why or why not?
10. Why do you think we do not have all God wills to give us? (Because we often fail to ask for the things He wants us to have or we ask with improper motives; read Jas. 4:2-3.)
11. Have you ever acted in faith even though you couldn't see what the outcome would be? Describe your experience.
12. Under what conditions should a person go through the six steps for finding God's will, based on prayer and the Word?

SAY: Use this exercise in the major problems and decisions you face. Additionally, getting in the habit of daily living in the Word and praying in faith will help you make decisions with the direct leading of the Spirit.

DEMOLISHING PERSONAL SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

1. Share your own personal experience of working on demolishing the personal spiritual stronghold of religious ritual.
2. Ask group members to break into pairs and share with their partners their experiences in using a spiritual weapon to rid themselves of the stronghold of religious ritual. Instruct the pairs to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for what their partners have shared and the growth they have experienced.

PRACTICE PRESENTATIONS

1. Staying in these pairs, have each group member **present the “Shield of Faith” part of the Spiritual Armor presentation to their partner.** Have each partner **provide kind, helpful feedback.** Then, instruct each person to **practice drawing the hand in “God’s Word in Your Heart and Hand” and writing the verses on it.** Members are not expected to memorize the verses, but they should be able to find the verses and read them.
2. Bring the group back together. Present level 3 of “God’s Word in Your Heart and Hand.” Tell members they will be able to do this by the end of next week’s work.
3. Preview the “Gospel Shoes” part of the Spiritual Armor presentation, which they will learn in week 5.

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, “Look to Jesus,” before the next group meeting.**
2. Close with prayer. Ask for **updates on previous prayer requests**, as well as any **new prayer requests**, and pray over those requests together. Close with asking God to help each group member pray in faith in the week ahead.

MasterLife

LEADER GUIDE

Week 5

LOOK
to
JESUS

Session 5

LOOK TO JESUS

SESSION GOALS

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

- Completing the assignments for week 5.
- Stating the difference between life purposes and life goals.
- Evaluating their life purposes and life goals.
- Preparing their personal prayer journals.
- Presenting the Gospel Shoes part of the Spiritual Armor.
- Interceding in prayer for others.

WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite Ephesians 6:18 aloud together as a group.

STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. How did you utilize the spiritual armor in prayer this week? Describe your experience.
2. Ask a volunteer to **define life purpose**. Ask volunteers to **share their life purposes in relation to God that they wrote on page 114**.
3. Have a volunteer read Mark 12:29-31. What does it mean to follow God wholly? How can we tell what place God occupies in our lives?
4. Do you see loving others as the second most important purpose of your life? Share the life purpose related to your fellow human beings that you wrote on page 114.
5. Have a volunteer **define life goals**. How should your life goals relate to your life purpose?
6. What are the **benefits of setting worthy life goals**? (Possible answers might include: they help you look at things in a long-term way; they keep you from being sidetracked; they bring you peace and stability; they keep you in line with God's purpose for you.)
7. What is one of your life goals?

8. On page 136, you listed six goals for each of the six building blocks essential to building a life for God. Share one of these goals and the building block it pertains to. How does this goal honor Christ?
9. When you approach decisions, do you consider how your choices will help you achieve God's purpose for your life? How does this lens impact your decision-making process?
10. What was your experience like using "Guide to Intercession" during your prayer time this week? Who are you interceding for in prayer? Are any of their names on your Relational-Witnessing chart?

DEMOLISHING PERSONAL SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS

1. Ask group members to break into pairs and share with their partners their experiences in using a spiritual weapon to rid themselves of the stronghold of greed. Instruct the pairs to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for what their partners have shared and the growth they have experienced.

PRACTICING PRESENTATIONS

1. Staying in these pairs, have each group member present the "Gospel Shoes" portion of the Spiritual Armor to their partner. Then, ask them to practice presenting level 3 of "God's Word in Your Heart and Hand." Have each partner provide kind, helpful feedback.
2. Bring the group back together. Preview for your group the "Belt of Truth" part of the Spiritual Armor presentation, which they will learn in week 6. Remind them that they will be able to give the entire Spiritual Armor presentation by the end of week 6.

PRAYER JOURNAL

1. Call attention to "How to Develop Your Personal Prayer Journal" on page 115. Explain the purpose of the personal prayer journal. After the explanation, say:

SAY: Several of you may be finding it difficult to be consistent in the weekly assignments without group monitoring and help. A prayer journal provides a framework for monitoring yourself. The journal also makes it possible to draw all the prayer resources in MasterLife together so that they will be easier to use.

SAY: Also, most of us need to clarify our life goals and manage our time and lives better. A personal prayer journal helps us do that. For those of you who studied MasterLife 1: *The Disciple's Cross*, let me remind you of "How to Use MasterTime." You may want to include it in your personal prayer journal.

2. Discuss the development of the personal prayer journal, using "How to Develop Your Personal Prayer Journal" as a guide. Let group members ask questions as needed.

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, “Stand Victorious,” before the next group meeting.**
2. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and close by asking God to help each member of your group identify their God-given purpose and the goals that will help them accomplish that purpose.

*IF YOU PLAN TO HOST THE OPTIONAL PRAYER WORKSHOP

SAY: The Prayer Workshop that follows this week’s work will be the finale of all of the prayer experiences you have had during this study.

1. Describe the upcoming workshop. Explain that the focus of the workshop will be almost entirely on prayer.
2. Share your plans for the workshop. Consider plans for food and snacks. Answer questions members might have. Make sure everyone understands that this workshop is a time to complete this third *MasterLife* study and celebrate all members have accomplished. All assignments must be completed before the workshop.
3. Remind members that they need to have all assignments in their Walk with the Master checklists completed by the Prayer Workshop.
4. Explain that your group members need to put significant time into developing their prayer journals before the Prayer Workshop. Encourage them to write lists in their personal prayer journals of what they want to pray about during the Prayer Workshop.
5. Discuss the following:

Questions and Answers About the Prayer Workshop

How Long Is the Workshop?

1. Approximately four hours
 - Three hours for individual prayer time
 - Thirty minutes for a “Strength Rally” where group members will encourage each other towards short-term and long-term goals
 - Thirty minutes to preview material for *MasterLife 4: The Disciple’s Mission*

Why Have This Workshop?

1. To have extended, uninterrupted fellowship with God
2. To evaluate what God has been doing and saying in your life
3. To solidify Christ's lordship in all aspects of your life
4. To receive guidance for future plans and ministries
5. To concentrate prayer on your major concerns
6. To intercede for others

Why a Half-Day of Prayer?

1. It prepares you for a larger ministry. Jesus spent much time in prayer before He began another phase of ministry.
2. It is a basic building block in your continuing life as a disciple. You should have an extended time of prayer each month.

What Should I Bring?

1. Bible
2. The MasterLife books you have completed
3. Your personal prayer journal you began preparing in week 5
4. A notebook and a pencil or a pen
5. A list of life goals to date
6. A sack lunch, if your group leader asks you to bring one
7. Scripture-memory verses from books 1, 2, and 3

How Can I Pray for That Long?

1. Prayer is conversing with God. Listen to Him at least as much as you talk to Him.
2. Use as many or as few of the prayer resources in your personal prayer journal as you wish, in any order. Include all of the elements of prayer, using "Guide to Thanksgiving," "Guide to Praise," "Guide to Confession and Forgiveness," "Guide to Praying in Faith," "Guide to Intercession," and "Guide to Extended Prayer." You may also pray through the Disciple's Personality and the Spiritual Armor.
3. Use your Prayer List to pray for your needs and others' needs.
4. Use the Personal Guidance section of your prayer journal.

- Read through your Live in the Word guides to detect any patterns in what God has said to you and/or what you have said to Him. Note the answers to your prayers, evidences of spiritual growth, helpful insights, and commitments or concerns you need to pray about.
- Review your life purpose, life goals, and planning sheets. Ask God to help you write, refine, or complete those items.
- Focus your prayers on making progress toward your goals.

5. Read your Bible. Listen to God speak to you. Meditate on your Scripture-memory verses. Review your daily work in your MasterLife books and the applications you have made.
6. Do not become too introspective. Ask God to forgive your shortcomings, then move on to pray for other persons and concerns.

What Can I Do If I Think of Other Things?

1. Pray for whatever occurs to you. Perhaps God placed that thought in your mind so that you will deal with a certain issue.
2. List things that continue to come to mind. Ask God why. You are not preparing a speech to give to God. You are communicating with Him mind to mind, heart to heart, and spirit to Spirit. You are dialoguing with Him even as you think.
3. Write down things you need to do later so that you can set them aside for the duration of the workshop.

How Can I Stay Alert and Awake?

1. Pray aloud.
2. Vary what you are doing, such as praising, reading God's Word, meditating, evaluating, praying for vision, and interceding.
3. Change your position often—sit, walk, stand, and kneel.
4. Get adequate sleep the night before.

How Can I Make My Prayer Time Meaningful?

1. Keep notes on how you're praying throughout the day.
 2. Consult your notes in preparation for your next extended prayer time to ensure balance in your prayers. For example, if you spend most of this time praying about your needs, pray more for the needs of others next time.
- 6.** Get commitments from every member to be present at the workshop. If some members will not be able to attend, ask for a commitment to follow the instructions for spending a half-day in prayer another time that week. Assure them that they will not have a problem praying for three hours. Do what you can to remove any barriers that might stand in their way. For example, some may need help with childcare in order to set aside extended time for prayer.

MasterLife

LEADER GUIDE

Week 6

STAND
VICTORIOUS

Session 6

STAND VICTORIOUS

SESSION GOALS

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

- Reciting all six memory verses from this study.
- Sharing how they have seen group members grow during MasterLife.
- Sharing how they have intentionally shown God's love to others week.
- Completing the assignments for week 6.
- Sharing their personal testimony with someone.
- Presenting the full Spiritual Armor presentation.
- Presenting the full "God's Word in Your Heart and Hand" presentation.

WELCOME

1. Open the session with prayer.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1. Try to recite all six memory verses from this study aloud together as a group, including this week's verse, Ephesians 3:20-21.

STUDY REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

1. Ask all group members to share one change they have seen in the person seated on their right since beginning MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory.
2. How have you intentionally shown God's love to others this week?
3. Can you identify any moments when you missed opportunities to show God's love? If so, how do you want to respond differently in the future?
4. What stronghold have you used the spiritual armor to demolish in your life in the past six weeks? How has applying the spiritual armor been helpful for you in this effort?
5. Reflect on this week's memory verse, Ephesians 3:20-21. What is a specific, personal prayer you have prayed based on God's person, promises, purposes, and/or previous acts?
6. What is one area of your life where you are praying and depending on God to show you the way forward?

7. Describe a time when you obeyed God even when it did not make sense to you or others. What was the result?
8. Share about a time when you tried to fight a battle on your own instead of leaning on God. Then, invite group members to tell about their experiences.
9. Ask group members to share as a testimony to others an experience when they stood victoriously in spiritual warfare.

INTERACTIONS WITH NON-CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

1. Ask volunteers to report on their experiences of sharing their personal testimonies this week. Allow time for as many to share as possible before you lead in a time of prayer.
2. Pray together for the non-Christian friends your group is ministering to. Pray that the group members' expressions of love to lost friends will be entry points for sharing the gospel when the time is appropriate.

THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR

1. Ask members to break into pairs to present the full Spiritual Armor presentation to each other. Have each partner provide kind, helpful feedback.

GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART AND HAND

1. Staying in these pairs, have each group member present the full "God's Word in Your Heart and Hand" presentation. Provide paper and pens for each member to be able to draw out the hand diagram as they present.

REFLECTION

1. Bring the group back together. How did your presentations go? Which presentation do you feel most confident giving at this point? What do you want to continue to work on?
2. How has your prayer life changed over the course of this study? What is your next step to continue to grow in this spiritual discipline?
3. In what ways have you experienced victory in Christ during this study?
4. What has been most impactful about this study for you? What do you want to be sure to remember?
5. Tell your group when you will begin the study of MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission. 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 and to stand firm in the victory of Jesus Christ.**
2. Close with prayer. Ask for **prayer requests**, pray over those requests together, and thank God for what your group members have learned throughout this Bible study. Ask God to help each group member grow stronger in their faith as they continue to walk with the Master.

***IF YOU PLAN TO HOST THE OPTIONAL PRAYER WORKSHOP**

1. Answer questions about the Prayer Workshop. If you need to explain its purpose again, refer to “Questions and Answers About the Prayer Workshop” in Week 5 of this leader guide.
2. Urge members who may not yet have completed all their assignments to finish them before the Prayer Workshop.
3. Review final details for the Prayer Workshop. Invite questions.

MasterLife

LEADER GUIDE

*MasterLife 3:
The Disciple's Victory*

PRAYER
WORKSHOP

MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory

PRAYER WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP GOALS

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

- Spending three hours alone in prayer.
- Interceding for others.
- Asking the group to pray for them and one of their life goals.
- Encouraging others in reaching their goals.

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. Remind your group to **bring their personal prayer journals**.
3. Review the goals for the workshop. Master the material in this leader guide for the Prayer Workshop.
4. Check with the people responsible for the meeting site to be sure they are ready for the group. Ask them to have pens or pencils and extra blank paper on hand for the workshop.
5. Enlist a group member with strong leadership potential to help you guide the Strength Rally for half of your group. Give this person a copy of the instructions and review them with him or her.
6. Review the basic content of *MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission* so that you can give your group an overview at the end of the Prayer Workshop.
7. Prepare to present the MasterBuilder presentation.
8. Make plans for starting the study of *MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission*. Arrange a time, date, and place for the first session. Be prepared to share these plans with group members.
9. Pray for the workshop. Members need to have a sense of accomplishment and success at the end of *MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory*. Prepare to remind them of all they have accomplished by completing their Walk with the Master checklists and experiencing an extended time of prayer. Prepare to encourage them by acknowledging how much they have grown over the course of this study.

TODAY'S WORKSHOP AGENDA

- Introduction
- Individual Prayer Time
- Strength Rally
- Preview of MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission
- Closing

DURING THE WORKSHOP

Part 1 (20 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 3: The Disciple's Victory**. Go around the group until each member has responded.
2. Pray together, asking each person to **thank God for the progress that he or she has observed in group members' lives throughout MasterLife**.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS (10 MINUTES)

1. Call attention to the refreshment area. Let the group know that the workshop will have a couple of intentional breaks but they are welcome to grab a snack when they have a need throughout the day. Release the group for a quick break now.
2. Inform the group that the extended prayer time portion of the workshop is intended to be done individually. This is not a time to pray in pairs or groups. Each person should choose their own spot in the room and should not interrupt other members' prayer time.
3. Encourage members to make a time log of how they pray throughout this time. Instruct them to use the last 15 to 20 minutes of prayer time to write down reflections on this time and anything they feel God is saying to them.
4. Ask your group if they have any questions.
5. Briefly review the six steps for praying in faith as a send-off to the individual prayer time.

Break (10 minutes)

Part 2 (3 hours)

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER TIME (3 HOURS)

1. Instruct the group to spread out to their individual places for prayer.

2. As the leader, spend the full three hours in prayer, modeling what your group member should be doing during this time. Do not check on group members or wander around.
3. Let the group know when twenty minutes remain in the three-hour prayer time. Encourage them to **use these last few minutes to journal reflections about their time of prayer.**
4. When you gather the group back together, ask a few volunteers to **share about their experience during the prayer time.** Assure them that any combination of activities they did during the prayer time is acceptable. Encourage the group that if they found this exercise challenging, it will become more and more natural as they incorporate this prayer practice into their lives.

Break (10 minutes)

Part 3 (30 minutes)

STRENGTH RALLY (30 MINUTES)

1. Divide members into two groups. You will lead one group; the group member you enlisted will lead the other. Often, the entire group will want to stay together. Insist that they form two groups unless they agree to stay for the extra time it will require to get through the full group.
2. Have each group sit in a circle, and place a chair in the center of the circle. Members will take turns sitting in the chair and being the focal point of the rally.
3. As each group member sits in the center chair, he or she will **state one goal**: a long-term or short-term goal or a weekly goal. The goal should be one this person really wants to achieve but is having difficulty reaching or anticipates having difficulty reaching. The person will then be quiet and listen to what other members say.
4. For two minutes, members of the group, including the leader, will remind that person of every strength and resource the person has, large or small, for reaching his or her goal. They may suggest, if they believe the person's strength warrants it, that the goal could be greater. No one is allowed to state any shortcomings during this time.
5. Let the person in the center respond briefly, if he or she desires, by reflecting on which comments have been helpful. Then, group members will pray conversationally around the person. They may want to place their hands on the person as they pray. These moments of prayer should not exceed two minutes, after which the leader closes the prayer.
6. Each person's time in the center chair will last no more than five minutes. Then, the next person will sit in the center chair, present his or her goal, and listen to the group's encouragement about their strengths.
7. This will continue until every group member has taken a turn in the center chair. The leader should also take a turn. The members will benefit from understanding that everyone has difficulties and needs help.
8. At the conclusion of the rally, call the two groups back together. Ask a few volunteers to **reflect on their experience during the rally, both receiving encouragement and giving encouragement.**

Break (10 minutes)

PART 4 (35 minutes)

PREVIEW OF MASTERLIFE 4: THE DISCIPLE'S MISSION (30 MINUTES)

1. Preview *MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission* by reviewing the weekly titles and giving a five-minute overview of the content.
2. Tell the group that they will learn the MasterBuilder presentation during their study of *MasterLife 4*. Present the MasterBuilder presentation in your own words.
3. Ask volunteers to **give personal testimonies about why they are committed to continue the MasterLife discipleship process.**
4. Share your plans for when the group will begin *MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission*, 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 3: The Disciple's Victory*. Assure them that the time investment they have made in strengthening their faith will have great impact on their discipleship journey in the days ahead. Express appreciation for each member.
2. Close with prayer. Thank God for walking with every group member through *MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory*. 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 3: The Disciple's Victory* to daily life.
2. Finalize your plans for beginning *MasterLife 4: The Disciple's Mission*. 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 4 group sometime in the future.**
3. This is a good time to take stock of the leadership you provided during *MasterLife 3: The Disciple's Victory*. 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.