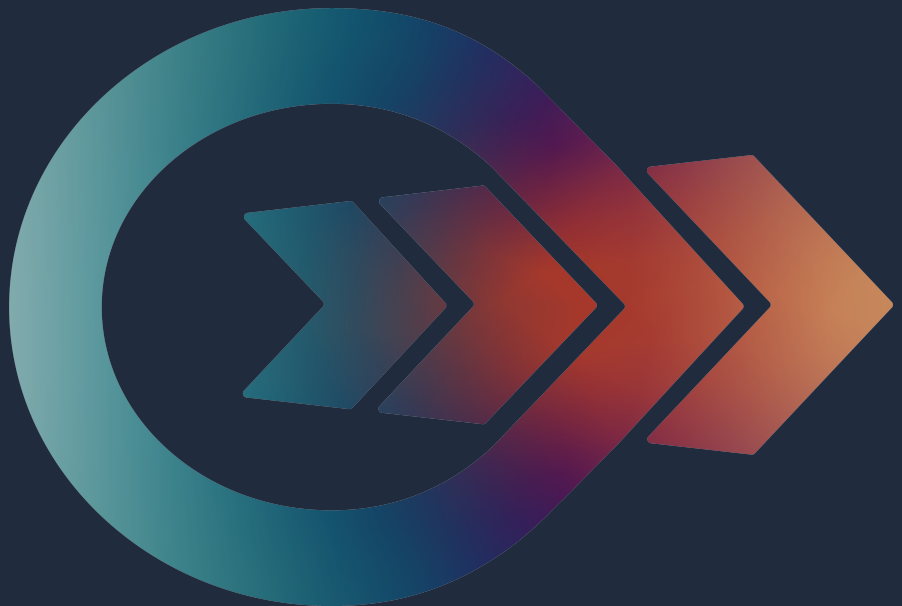


# DISCIPLESHIP @ WORK

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A 12-Session Journey  
by Needle's Eye Ministries



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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

“Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”

- John 8:31b-32

“Whoever does not carry their cross and follow Me cannot be my disciple.”

– Luke 14:27

Every Christian is called to be a disciple of Jesus. Discipleship means not only believing what the Bible teaches and accepting the gospel, but also living a life submitted to Jesus’ Lordship and trying to imitate Him, by the power of His Spirit, in every aspect of our lives. We have to hold to His teaching, carry our crosses, and follow Him.

*Discipleship @ Work* approaches discipleship in two ways that may be unfamiliar. The first, most obvious, way is that our focus is on following Jesus at work. Certainly, God intends for us to honor Him with our families, friends, churches, churches, etc., but many believers who are serious about Jesus have not had the opportunity or the resources to help them apply God’s Word and the fullness of who they are in Jesus to their careers.

The second way this may be unfamiliar is that *Discipleship @ Work* is designed for small groups. Many of us understand discipleship as an older, more mature believer helping a younger, less mature believer grow to be more like Jesus. This is a wonderful and biblical way to approach discipleship, but the church has always understood that there are many ways that God provides for us to pursue greater Christlikeness: our own personal walks with Him, gathering for corporate worship and sacraments, small groups where we can gain vulnerable trust and encourage and exhort one another as “iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17), etc.

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If God has blessed you with a more mature believer who is helping you follow Jesus within the context of your career (and beyond), what a gift! If not, we believe that a strong small group can powerfully help each member grow significantly as a disciple. We've included intentional practices to help groups be communities that foster this kind of growth.

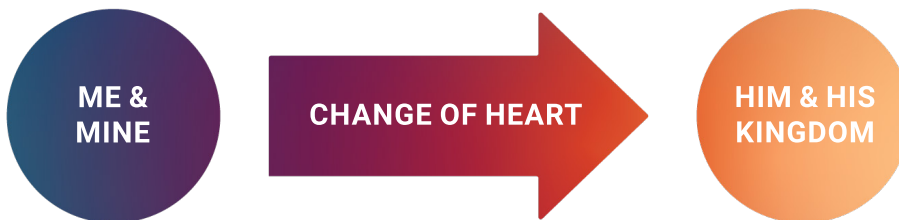
*Discipleship @ Work* is more than water cooler evangelism and personal ethics. To step fully into the role God has for us at work requires a deep, inner transformation so that we might join Him in the work He is already doing. This kind of discipleship requires courage and commitment. We need the courage to be vulnerable, and the commitment to push through the discomfort that vulnerability often brings. In a community that is safe, encouraging, and challenging, you can address the root issues that lie beneath your fears and insecurities, helping you to find the faith and strength necessary to overcome them once and for all. By identifying and addressing the things holding you back from living out your faith at work, you can more fully step into the role God has for you in your workplace.

*Discipleship @ Work* has been designed for you to walk with a group through the Three Movements: Identity, Purpose, and Influence & Resources:

1. **Identity** focuses on your mind, encouraging you to move from living in your old self to bringing your whole new self to your work and workplace. “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” - Ephesians 4:22-24



2. **Purpose** focuses on your heart, encouraging you to move from self-serving or success driven motivations to being compelled by Christ’s love at work, serving God and His Kingdom. “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” - 2 Corinthians 5:14-15



3. **Influence & Resources** focuses on your hands, encouraging you to move from a close-fisted mindset of scarcity and control to an open-handed mindset of abundance and freedom, reliant on God as your Source for all things. “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” - 1 Peter 4:10



## Methodology

Each Movement is broken into three sessions, called **Lever Topics**, to work through. They are called **Lever Topics** because, like an old-fashioned railway handcar, the more you “work” the lever, the farther down the track you will move.

Each **Lever Topic** includes the following elements:

- **Pre-Work-** This is work you are expected to do *before* gathering together. It will typically involve one page of reading, some journal reflections, and occasionally a tool or exercise to engage in on your own. Journaling is a powerful tool for self-reflection and many of your journal entries will be referenced throughout the process.
- **Discussion Questions-** The bulk of your time together as a group will be spent in discussion. Questions have been provided in each session that are based on the reading in the pre-work section. These questions are intended to evoke honest conversation and will often be drawn from your journal entries.
- **Practices/Tools-** Every topic ends with a list of recommended practices and tools. Many can be used as a group and/or as an individual. These are recommendations for experiencing further growth in each Movement, and you are welcome to pick and choose the ones that work best for you. Certain tools will be identified as necessary to the process and will best be engaged in during Group Discussion or Pre-Work.

To get the most out of this experience, it is imperative that everyone set aside time between meetings to read the next topic, reflect on the journal prompts, and engage in the recommended tools and practices. This will foster a better conversation at each meeting, allowing you to go deep more quickly and more meaningfully.

The goal in each Movement is growth. It doesn't matter where you start on the path to Christlikeness, only that you are moving forward. Christ calls us to measure growth by our “fruit.” To help you identify where you are, and whether you are growing, each Movement has a **Self-Assessment**. This assessment is taken before each Movement and consists of statements that describe the fruit of your faith journey at the point of measurement. The assessment does not have to be shared, so be as honest as you can. One of the most powerful things about Jesus' forgiveness, love, and grace is that we have the freedom to admit the “poverty” of our Christian walks without condemnation and without



disqualification from the throne of grace. As part of the concluding session, you'll take all three assessments again. Comparing your scores will show where you are experiencing growth in your faith journey. It should also help you discern where you may need to spend more time using the practices and tools, in prayer, or seeking the support of others journeying with you.

This process should take a minimum of twelve meetings. However, it is possible that some discussions might take more than one meeting to complete. The goal is growth, so work through the material at whatever pace encourages the most growth for your group.



## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you hope to get out of this experience together?
2. How can this group best support you through the journey?
3. What hesitations do you have about embarking on a journey like this one?
4. What is the greatest hindrance/barrier for you to live out your faith at work?





## PRACTICE/TOOLS:

- Refer to the Accountability in Community Practice. Read it together and discuss how you can best commit to implementing this as a group.
- Commit to praying for your group members, and for the shared experience you will all have together. Ask God to give you all courage to be vulnerable and honest.
- Begin thinking about the role and impact God is asking you to have in your work.
- Before your next session, and between all future sessions, read the next Lever Topic and set time aside for the journal reflections.

# Theology of Work

## Co-Laboring with Jesus

In the book of Revelation, we are given a picture of what the fully restored world will look like:

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. - Revelation 21:1-4

As this passage describes, a day will come when heaven and earth are reunited, and the world as we know it will once again be fully restored under Jesus’s reign. There will be no separation between God and humanity. The world, and everything in it, will be *as it should be*.

N.T. Wright in *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* writes, “The transition from the present world to the new one would be a matter not of the destruction of the present space-time universe but of its radical healing.”

This is a profound work that will only be completed on the day Jesus chooses to return to earth, but the work has already begun as God calls His people to bring the values of His Kingdom to the earth right now. This invites us to look beyond the explicitly defined responsibilities of our jobs to see the impact our work has on the world. Where is our work aiding in God’s restoration? Where is it inhibiting it? How can our work be more effectively leveraged to join Jesus in the work of restoring all things?

By asking ourselves these questions, we begin to see how the value of our work reaches into eternity. If our work, and the way we choose to do it, can help in some small way to bring healing and restoration to this world, then our work is an opportunity to join Jesus in His work of restoring all things.

Tom Nelson in *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* writes, “If our daily work, done for the glory of God and the common good of others, in some way carries over into the new heavens and the new earth, then our present

work itself is overflowing with immeasurable value and eternal significance.” Your work is an opportunity to co-labor with Christ in bringing healing and restoration to this broken world and, in so doing, prepare this world for the world to come *as it should be*.



## JOURNAL PROMPTS:

1. How hard is it for you to recognize the *eternal* significance of your work? Why?
2. How have you been taught to view heaven? How does work fit in?
3. What about your work do you believe adds value to the kingdom of God? How so?
4. How does it make you feel to think about co-laboring with Christ through your work? Is it inspiring, overwhelming, exciting, intimidating, etc.? Why?
5. What do you hope your work accomplishes for the world, long after you are gone?



## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How hard is it for you to recognize the *eternal* significance of your work? Why?
2. What is your view of heaven? How does work fit in?
3. How might Jesus invite you to co-labor with Him in the work of restoration in your workplace?

4. Do you feel like you are truly capable of bringing healing and restoration to this world through the work that you do? How?
5. Read and review the Getting to the Root practice together. Can you think of any deep wounds you have where it was hard to see the root cause and understand where it came from? Don't fix it, just identify it. This will prepare you for the Lever Topics related to Identity you will discuss in your next three sessions.
6. Have you ever participated in helping someone navigate through their hurt to the underlying root cause? Share about that experience.



## PRACTICE/TOOLS:

- Read and meditate on *your role* in the following passages: 1 Corinthians 3:5-15, Acts 1:6-11, and Luke 10:1-3.
- Ask group members or Christian co-workers for help identifying the *eternal* significance of your work.
- Listen in prayer to how Jesus is inviting you to co-labor with Him in your workplace and through your work. Do this every so often, as it can change over time.
- Refer back to the Getting to the Root practice.