

2022 Discipleship Series: Growing in the Word

Why does the word discipleship seem to scare so many of us? Perhaps because we think of the Great Commission and feel so utterly unqualified to obey the Lord in this. Perhaps it is because we don't really understand what discipleship is or means, but we know it is important, and we know that we are supposed to both be disciples and make disciples — whatever that means!

Through the months of 2022, we will be digging deeper into what discipleship is and what it should look like in our lives. In February, our articles centered around love. The first and most important thing for any disciple of Christ to know and understand is the love of God for them. We cannot go any further in our walk with Christ or carrying out His commission if we do not know the love of God for ourselves personally. A person who knows how deeply they are loved by God loves Him and trusts Him, and this is the basis for our faith.

The second critical aspect of being a disciple of Christ is to know His Word, so that is what we are going to explore through the month of March.

The Word of God is the most powerful weapon God has given us, but it is only as good as we know how to use it! When the Word of God fills our heart, soul, and mind, we have a strong defense against the enemy's lies. But if we do not know the Word, or if we do not believe the Word, then we will be easily deceived and/or live a life of bondage rather than freedom.

So, how do we grow in the Word?

The most important way to grow in the Word is to open it and read it. That may seem obvious, and it is, but it is shocking how many Christians never (or rarely) open their Bibles.

Hearing what others are learning in the Word whether that is your pastor, small group leader, Sunday School teacher, or Bible Study leader may encourage you, but if that is your only nourishment in the Word, you will remain weak and easy prey for the enemy.

I mean no condemnation or judgement by this statement, friends. I can remember when I was convinced that I did not have time to be in God's Word. "God knows and understands how busy I am," I told myself. Satan uses this lie to keep God's children weak and powerless.

Like the Israelites in the wilderness received daily Manna from God's hand, we must be nourished daily in His Word. By this nourishment, we can flourish and grow.

It is not, however, simply time in the Word that is important. We must engage with the Word. It is not so much how much time we spend in the Word, but how much of the Word of God we believe and put into practice in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. In order for the Word to transform us into the image of Christ, we must know it, believe it, and practice it. The Holy Spirit is longing to teach us how to walk in the God's ways, for this is how we grow. This is how we

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*Your word is a
lamp to my feet
and a light to
my path.*

Psalm 119:105



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Seeking to Grow in the Word

by Julie Dibble

*"In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God"
(John 1:1, XIV).*

Baffling. Impossible. How can this be?

I remember the first time I heard John 1:1 read. Several years ago, Columbia Church of God invited me to speak for their ladies during the Easter season. In her delicate, calm voice, Diana Thomas read this Scripture from the pulpit while I sat in a pew.

God opened my ears and heart to understand my Jesus who saved me also was the Word who was with God from the very beginning of the earth's existence. Unfathomable! Yet, this truth powerfully drew me to the hem of His robe, where I then trusted He would satisfy my every need. I trusted He would teach me His Word.

Perhaps unlike many of you, I grew in my relationship with the Lord before I grew in His Word. Without a doubt, God reached down from heaven and chose me. Jesus set aside time in His day to make Himself known through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Slow like a sloth, I looked up Scripture that arrived in the mail plastered on the front of a card. If someone I knew posted a verse on Facebook, I opened my Bible to find it. I took notes during the sermons and would choose one verse to meditate on that week.

Do notice I wasn't winning any prizes for Scripture memorization. While this activity has value for the present and for the unpredictable future, in it lies a dangerous temptation from the devil that whispers *as long as you can quote the Bible, people will think you are holy and righteous*.

Rebuke the devil with this: My righteousness comes from Christ (2 Cor. 5:21), and He has chosen me (Ephesians 1:4). My

Lord saved me by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). I do not earn His love or count the opinions of people toward who I am in Him.

Never have I sensed God pressure me to memorize Scripture. He was and is and always will be the most patient teacher any of us have ever experienced. God reassured me that I could continue to look up Scripture as long as I needed/wanted.

Why would He do such a thing with a 40-something-year-old He called to speak His truth?

No matter what you or I can regurgitate, it is our heart that matters most to God:

*"You will seek Me and find
me when you seek Me with
all your heart."
(Jeremiah 29:13)*

Remember the wise men who so-journed following the star placed by God so that His Son would be found by them. They stayed the course, heeded warnings, and did not allow anything to stop them from finding Jesus. He promises He will be found if you seek Him with a pure heart, desiring to know Him.

Are we loving Him when we seek the Scriptures, or are we anxious because we cannot remember where something is?

Are we truly seeking to feast on the Bread of Life, seeking to drink from His water and never thirst again...or are we doing a quick devotion in the

morning and running until we fall into bed at night?

For those who seek Him find Him:

"And without faith, it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

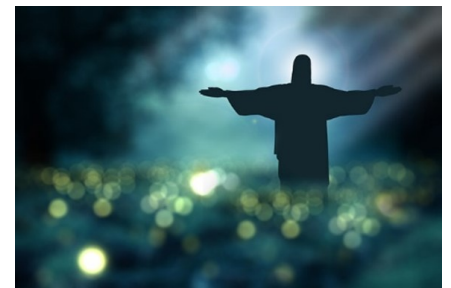
*Those who fear Him are
nestled in His wisdom
and under His wings.
(Psalm 111:10,
Psalm 91:4)*

Those who not only know the Word but are doers (James 1:22)...apply it to their lives, deepen their roots, remain connected to the True Vine...become changed on the inside in ways that are only supernaturally possible.

*"For the word of God is alive and active.
Sharper than any double-edged sword, it
penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,
joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts
and attitudes of the heart."
(Hebrews 4:12)*

Though our limited minds cannot grasp how Jesus is also the Word who lives and actively pursues a relationship with us, let us lay down our memorization trophies.

Be still.



Allow His presence to surround us with blessed assurance that we do not need to walk the balance beam

at Scripture gymnastics. Rather, come, seek, know, learn, grow in Him, in He who is the Word.

Remember growth has to begin somewhere. We are not born knowing Jesus or His Bible. As we encounter others, may we bend our ear to listen to their questions, their longings, and guide them gently to the Word.

Please also remember growth cannot be complete on this side of heaven. We cannot ever know ALL of Scripture, its meaning, its applications. Nor can we ever know Jesus fully here on earth, yet we are fully known. Hallelujah!



One day soon, we will answer to God about how we did or did not pursue a relationship with His Son, the Living Word (Romans 14:12). Let us allow this future meeting with God to build our hope higher in Him, to spur our souls to pant for Jesus. As we pant, let us drink of the Living Water found in the pages of Scripture. For I can say with complete confidence, none of us will regret how much time we spend growing in Our Lord and Savior.

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." (Psalm 42:1)



Julie Dibble is a servant of her Lord Jesus Christ. Together with her husband Jason, they have two sons, Braedon 17 and Jackson 15, and one rescued pup named Rocko. Julie preaches, writes, hikes, and prays for God to use her daily in this broken world. Currently, she is on staff at Newberrytown Church of God as Director of Outreach and Evangelism.

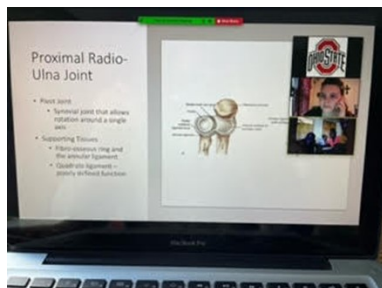
Thank Offering 2022 Updates

The following reports were shared with the ladies attending our CGWM Triennial Meeting during the Flourish Conference a few weeks ago. We want to give all of you the opportunity to hear how your Thank Offering donations are being used to advance God's Kingdom on earth.

A slideshow with this information can be found on our website under the Thank Offering tab if you would like to present this information to your church or women's group during your Thank Offering service. A Thank Offering service template is also available for your use on our website.



First, we want to say thank you for your offering. Women in Venezuela are pushing forward in their studies and education professionally and also spiritually. Each lady who is offered a scholarship or grant or even an offset to their costs allows them to profound themselves in God's word and grow spiritually. Each woman who serves alongside the Conference in outreach to their communities is also asked to go through a series of studies to help them be more effective. We are excited that women of all ages are getting involved in studies and in-service side by side in ministry.



one more! Current PT students having class on Zoom this past Tuesday—God is good!



Thank you for your faithful prayers and generous giving throughout 2021 to provide resources for women in other parts of the world. This has enabled women to receive training and various other benefits to improve their lives while gaining dignity and better quality of life for them and their families. Throughout most of 2020 and 2021, the government of India has locked down schools and education centers, so they have been unable to meet in person. Our staff at the India Mission continues to do their best to tutor and maintain their relationships with students and families but it has been difficult. As a result, our Mission has taken the opportunity to open women's empowerment skills training sites in 3 different locations. Tailoring is the skill being taught while relationships are developed. Ministry is occurring as mentoring in various ways happens. These women are from extremely poor communities which have suffered the most through this pandemic. These women's skill centers have been able to bring training, dignity, a source of income and clothes, as well as the Good News to these women and their families. Thank you for helping to make this possible through your gifts and prayers. I have included some pictures from our various training centers.

Application is Essential

by Heidi Looney

The Word of God is a gift to us all. In times of trouble, it is a comfort. In battle, it is both a sword and a shield. In times of unspeakable joy, it is the words we need. God's Scriptures allow us to learn more about the character of God and grow in knowledge. In time, we discover that growing in the Word requires us to apply it to our lives. This application of God's Word and our subsequent growth reminds me of a story.

My youngest son loves anything with fine motor skills. He's two and anything that he can line up, stack, snap, weave, or roll with his fingers has him intrigued. One of his recent gifts was a peg and block toy. It has various shapes (triangles, circles, rectangles, and squares) and each shape has a set number of holes and will only fit in the corresponding pegs. For example, the circles all have one hole and will fit in the area with just one peg to stack. The rectangles have two holes each, and will fit in the board with two pegs, and so on. He adores this toy and can sit for quite a while stacking and restacking the shapes on the pegs.

However, it took him a while to grasp the concept of the shapes only truly fitting with their designed pegs. For instance, while the rectangle has two peg holes, it will technically fit (or at least one side of it) with the one peg for the circle. The peg only holds one hole of the rectangle block, so you can in theory stack them. But the stack wobbles back and forth, and not all the blocks will stay due to the uneven leveling. Then this leaves the problem of the circle blocks – where can they

go? They won't fit in the space designed with two pegs for the rectangles, because there isn't enough space to use even one of the pegs. So, after hours of practice and play, my son began to understand that the shapes all had a place and if he wanted to stack all the blocks on the board, they had to stack in just the right spot and order. Without that concept, the board wouldn't fit all the pieces it was designed to hold.

This idea reminds us of how we ought to apply the Word of God in our lives. The Word

needs to be foremost. When it comes first, we find that the rest of life falls into place around it. While we can try it for a while, it's only so long we can get away with cramming in the scriptures where we feel we can. Doing so denies ourselves true wisdom and peace that can only come from growth. We must invest

the time in the Word to make it first.

The Word also needs to be correctly applied – the right words in the wrong place and time can leave little room for growing and building to reach that higher level of understanding. Our foundation may wobble, or we may end up with missing pieces that just won't fit. When we've applied the scriptures correctly, we find that they fit and build on each other. This requires self-reflection and application, even when it's uncomfortable.

If we want the Word of God to truly be a part of our lives, let's take the risk of shuffling things around if they aren't where they should be. Let's be willing to move other things around to make room for the Word. With the Word as the foundation, we'll be able to correctly apply it and grow in wisdom and understanding. With time and conscious effort to apply God's Word, we can grow and watch the pieces fit as He intended.



From the Director's Desk

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become vessels of His glory that can then reach out and disciple others.

A disciple is one who first follows the Lord. Then, and only then, can we become empowered to disciple others as we are commanded to do.

I am in the practice of reading through the Bible each year. The past two years, I have invited others to join me in this quest by way of a Facebook group called Daily Manna 2022. As I am reading, I never get tired of the treasures of Truth, the Lord shows me as I read. The Word is truly living and active. It is truly profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

God loves treasurer hunters! When we dig into the Word because we want to know Him better, to seek Him more, to learn His ways, He is delighted to teach us and train us to be more like Jesus empowered by His precious Spirit.

May you find great joy as you seek the Lord in the reading of His Word. He is waiting to meet with you there! He longs to teach you His ways and show you how to live according to His truth. He wants to set you free from every sin and stronghold as you apply His Word to stand against the enemy's lies. I invite and challenge you to spend time with God in His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what is important and where to ready and how to apply it. You will be forever changed if you do!

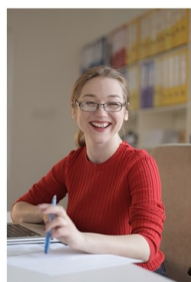
Living Boldly for Christ,

Kathy Foor





Sometimes pictures share thousands of words. Here are several from September 2021 in Haiti. Syndie, a full scholarship recipient in physical therapy, helping a lady who has been blind her whole life learn to walk with a walking stick so she is able to be independent. Again, Syndie with a young girl who has an amputated leg. Syndie was treating her to alleviate pain she had when she walked with her prosthesis. Syndie graduated from the physical therapy program in December! Rebecca, a physical therapist who received a full scholarship and graduated from the physical therapy program 2.5 years ago, leading a conference about physical therapy with current students. The 4 students are in their second year of the physical therapy program. The girl students receive partial scholarships. We thank you all for giving to the Lord. He does the unimaginable and He is to be praised!



Winebrenner's mission is to equip leaders for service in God's Kingdom.

Women at Winebrenner Theological Seminary

This Academic year ten women at Winebrenner benefited from half-tuition scholarships for a total of just over \$13,000. These gifts have made such a difference in the ability of the students to concentrate on their studies. Here are a few notes from some of our students.

"I am incredibly humbled and grateful for the scholarship provided to me. I am already loving my time at Winebrenner. God is stretching me and teaching me and it is overflowing into my full-time ministry at the church. I can't wait to see what God has in store for this season."

*"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever."
1 Chronicles 16:34*

Thank Offering should be sent to
Regional Treasurers by July 31, 2022

2022 Thank Offering will support
the following ministries:

- * School for Girls in India (15%),
- * Physical Therapy School in Haiti (20%),
- * Winebrenner Female Students (25%),
- * Venezuela Bible School (15%)
- * Women's Leadership Development (25%).

"Thank you for the incredibly generous gift of scholarship donation. Scholarships, such as this one, are the reason I can study at Winebrenner and follow my calling in ministry with youth! It would not be possible with you!"

"Thank you very much for your generous gift of paying towards my tuition at Winebrenner! As a woman, closer to retirement than not, I appreciate not having the full payment on my shoulders, and your scholarship allows some room to breathe. I had no idea there was such a group as yours and am humbled that you selected me."

"My sincere thanks and appreciation for selecting me as a recipient of your scholarship! What a blessing it has been to me and my family! Knowing that I can continue my education with the support of your organization is humbling and encouraging. Thank you for believing in me."

"Just a note of thanks for blessing me with a scholarship as I continue my studies here at Winebrenner. The calling on my life to full-time vocational ministry has been evident since I was a teen. This scholarship removes the financial portion of tuition and allows me to focus just a little more on the rigor that it takes to be a successfully equipped stu-

dent. Being a part of the Winebrenner family has impacted me in ways that I cannot fully express. Thank you for partnering with me in this journey to become all that I am called to be."

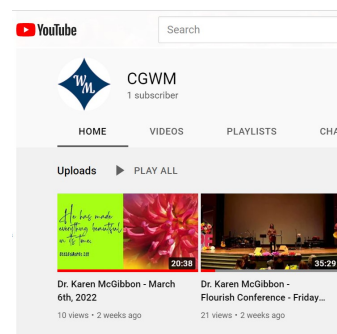


Flourish 2022

Ladies, if you didn't attend the 2022 Flourish Conference and you're wondering how it went, we had a wonderful time of fellowship, worship, and teaching. Check out our Facebook Page for some highlights.

In case you didn't know, CGWM now has a YouTube channel where you can also access some highlights from our weekend.

We hope you will plan now to join us the first weekend of March 2023 for our next Flourish Conference.





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If you or your women's group have not been a part of Thank Offering in the past and would like to, all you need to do is get a container and start thanking God for the many blessings he gives you each day. Look for our reminders to send in your offerings in April. We are better together! Thank Offering barrels may be obtained by contacting Kathy Foor or ordering online at [Berlin Packaging](https://www.berlinpackaging.com).

Visit our Website

<https://www.cggcwomen.org/>

There you will find:

- ⇒ more information about CGWM and it's officers
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CGWM is funded through donations. To donate please make check out to CGGC with WM1800 in the memo and send to:
Churches of God General Conference, P.O. Box 926, Findlay, OH 45839

Announcing: The Flourish Conference



March 3-5, 2023

Keynote Speaker:
Linda Draper

*You loved her as the Co-Director of the March Retreat,
And you'll love her even more as our Keynote Speaker for The Flourish Conference 2023!*