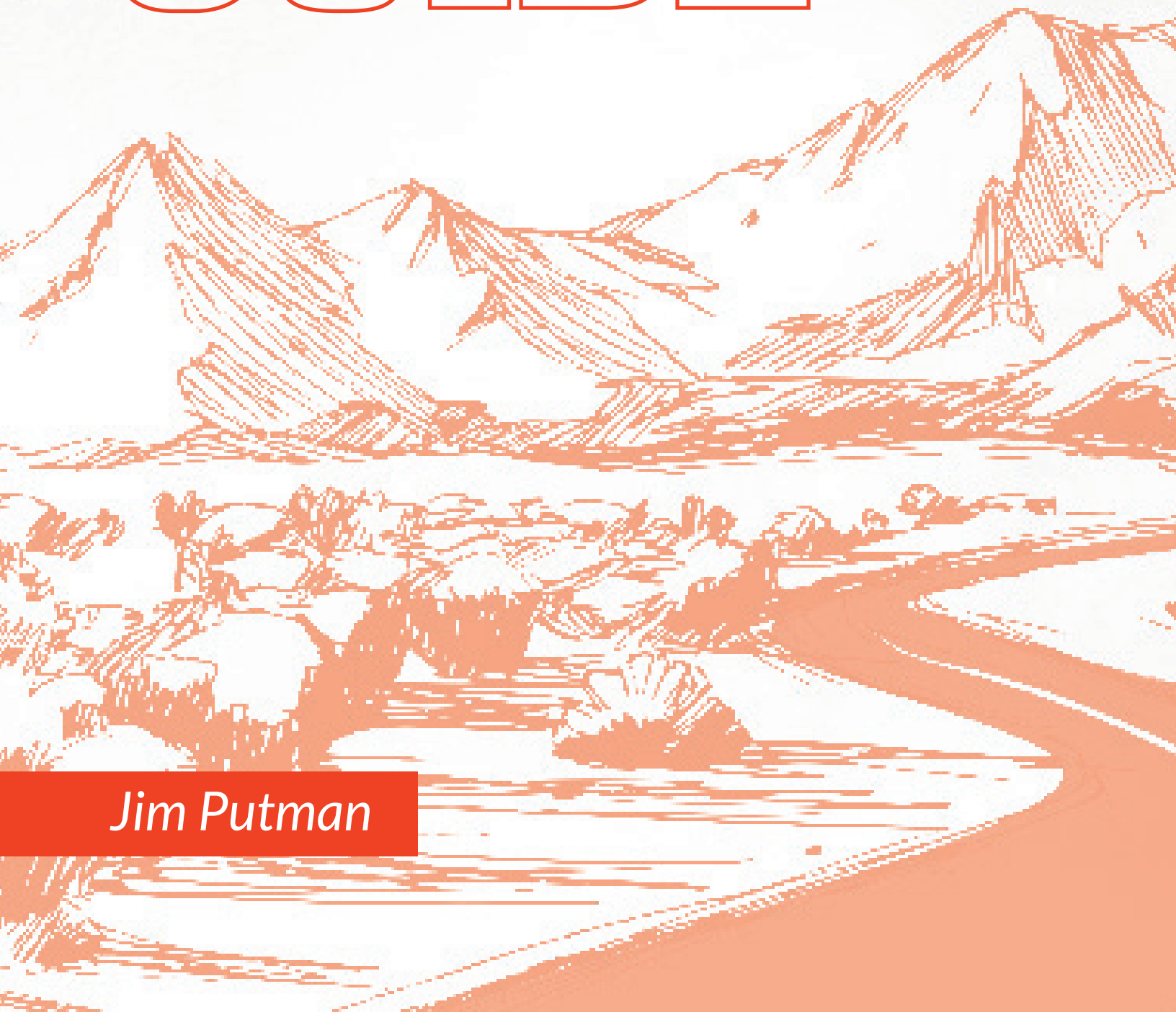


*The Disciple's Journey*

# LEADER GUIDE

*Jim Putman*



## Welcome to the Disciple's Journey for Leaders

Thank you so much for choosing to lead an individual or group through the Disciple's Journey. In this leader's guide, we will try to answer some questions you may have and give you some tips and tools to help you facilitate the discussions. .

This set of discussion guides is to be used in conjunction with The Disciple's Journey Workbook by adults who want to learn how to go deeper into their relationship with Jesus and other believers as they move through their journey of being and living as a disciple of Jesus.

Your role as facilitator will be to help guide your people through the discussions. You will need to lead with intentionality and compassion, recognizing that you are not there to fix anyone, but rather to help guide a discussion.

We believe Jesus gave us not only a mission to go out into the world to make disciples, but he also gave us the most effective method of doing so. Jesus utilized what we term Relational Discipleship with his disciples. He showed us the model of using small groups as a relational vehicle to take someone through the journey of discipleship. Jesus and the early church demonstrated how important relationships with both God and others are to our growth and nurturing us as believers. Small groups are to be an environment where we share one another's burdens, sorrows, and celebrations. In order for a group to have a healthy relational environment, it needs an Intentional Leader who is ensuring these specific components are in place.

- A safe environment where individuals can be known and know others.
- A safe and welcoming environment for people to come to know Christ.
- A place to form deep, God-centered relationships with one another.
- A place to give and receive encouragement, care, love, and accountability.
- A place to grow in relationship with God.
- A place to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ and to disciple others – creating disciples who can make other disciples.

### *Here are a few more ingredients to make your time a success:*

- Welcome: Give a warm welcome to everyone who comes - greeting them by name.
- Time: We want to honor members and their time by starting and ending on time.
- Prayer: Be sure God is at the forefront. This will set the tone for the rest of the time.
- Purpose: Give a reminder of the purpose of the discussion time.
- Guidelines/Ground Rules: Be sure everyone remembers the guidelines for discussion.
- Discussion: Stay on track and be sure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts.

## Small Group Guidelines

Though we call these Basic Group Guidelines, these are also effective in all relationships and environments. We believe it is wise to observe these whether in a one-on-one conversation or in a group discussion.

- Guidelines give boundaries for people to operate within.
- They help with the flow and pace of the discussions.
- They help us value one another.
- They help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.

### *This is a Safe Group*

Confidentiality is key, what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment: words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

### *No Crosstalk*

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, checking phone, responding to text or email, etc.

### *Listen*

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

### *No Rescuing or Fixing*

We are not here to fix each other, Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

### *Use "I" Statements*

It's easy to talk about the issues of others or respond with "we", "us", "the church". But for us to grow as disciples and build relationship we want to use "I" statements.

### *Don't Overtalk*

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

### *Fight for Relationship*

It's not "if" conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but "when". We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to that person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

## Tips For Asking Great Questions

### Don't ask yes or no questions:

Asking open ended questions keeps the discussion going. They usually begin with what, why or how. Open questions help you discover someone's knowledge, opinion or feelings. You can also begin with the phrase, "tell me about" or "describe" to prompt discussion. Be careful when asking "why" questions. Asking too many "why" questions may come across as confrontational.

### Ask follow up questions:

Asking a follow up question such as, "What makes you say that?" or "Why do you think that?" can give you greater insight. Asking someone else in the group "What do you think about that?" can open a discussion between more group members.

### Allow plenty of time for a response:

Often people need time to think before answering a deeper question. Give them time to think and respond. Sometimes they need to work up their courage to share a more personal response. Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

*Proverbs 19:20 (NIV)*

### Active Listening:

To be a skillful questioner, you must also be a skillful listener. Remind yourself frequently that your goal is to truly hear what the other person is saying. We all have a deep need to be understood and feel cared about. Our feelings, ideas, concerns and perspectives are important to us. When we think someone is really listening to us, we believe that our thoughts and feelings matter to them, and that makes us feel cared about. Unfortunately, most of us think we are better listeners than we actually are. The good news is there's hope. Hearing is an involuntary physical reaction to stimulus, but listening is a voluntary act that, to be really good at it, takes development of skills and practice.

The following five active listening techniques, from the MindTools website, will help ensure that you hear the other person, and that the other person knows you are hearing what they say.

#### **1. Pay Attention:**

- Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message.
- Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.
- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations.
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language

#### **2. Show That You're Listening:**

- Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.
- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments.

### **3. Provide Feedback:**

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. “What I’m hearing is,” and “Sounds like you are saying,” are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. “What do you mean when you say\_\_\_?” “Is this what you mean?”
- Summarize the speaker’s comments periodically.

### **4. Don’t interrupt:**

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don’t interrupt with counter arguments.

### **5. Respond Appropriately:**

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.

- Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.

When dealing with people, we often focus on the outward things - the words they speak, their emotions, or actions. Jesus shows us that we need to look deeper in order to discover what the real issue is and how to best walk alongside them. How we engage with them and help them to recognize issues and deal with them is extremely important.

Good things to remember when someone is blaming themselves or trying to control a situation: There are three parts to your situation - and you can only control one of them:

#### **Your Part:**

Own your part, if any. Make an honest assessment of your part of the problem or issue.

#### **Their Part:**

The other person is the only one able to do their part of the issue, you can’t do it for them.

#### **God’s part:**

God always shows up to do His part. Here are some questions you can ask yourself

- What is God’s part of the situation?
- How am I relying on God to guide and direct me?
- How is God working in the other person’s life?
- Are they listening?
- What is God’s view of the situation? What is His will?

Thank you again for choosing to lead someone through The Disciple's Journey - we pray God blesses both you and those you lead in and through the process!

Be sure to direct people to our resource page to watch The Disciple's Journey Podcast where Jim Putman goes deeper into each week of the workbook.

Visit:

[www.thedisciplesjourney.org](http://www.thedisciplesjourney.org)



# ***The Disciple's Journey Introduction***

As you move through the introduction, be sure to point out the four areas that this workbook is designed to help with:

1. We want to help you understand you are a disciple of Jesus, and what that means.
2. We want you to learn to have an abiding relationship with Jesus daily. This workbook is designed to guide you through a three-month habit that you will be able to continue with when you are done.
3. We want you to have a safe and encouraging small group where you learn to be in relationship with other believers — this workbook is designed to be led in a weekly group.
4. We want you to learn to make disciples in every area of your life.

Be sure to touch on the definitions of the terms that will be used throughout this workbook. Make sure the everyone has a good understanding of them.

Keep in mind that if you are leading a group, you probably have different stages of spiritual maturity present. Some may have been believers for a while and have an abundance of knowledge, but have not been discipled or know how to disciple others. Others may be brand new to the faith and to Jesus and are just forming their knowledge base. Your job as a leader is to read the level of your group and adjust your pace to accommodate the diversity. Some may need additional input outside of group, others in the group may be able to help bring clarity to some of the topics from their own experiences during the discussion time.

Go through **The Disciple's Journey Covenant** together – stating each of the commitment statements out loud. Discuss any that someone has questions or reservations about.

If you are all in agreement have all, including yourself, sign the covenant.  
Now you are ready to begin your journey!

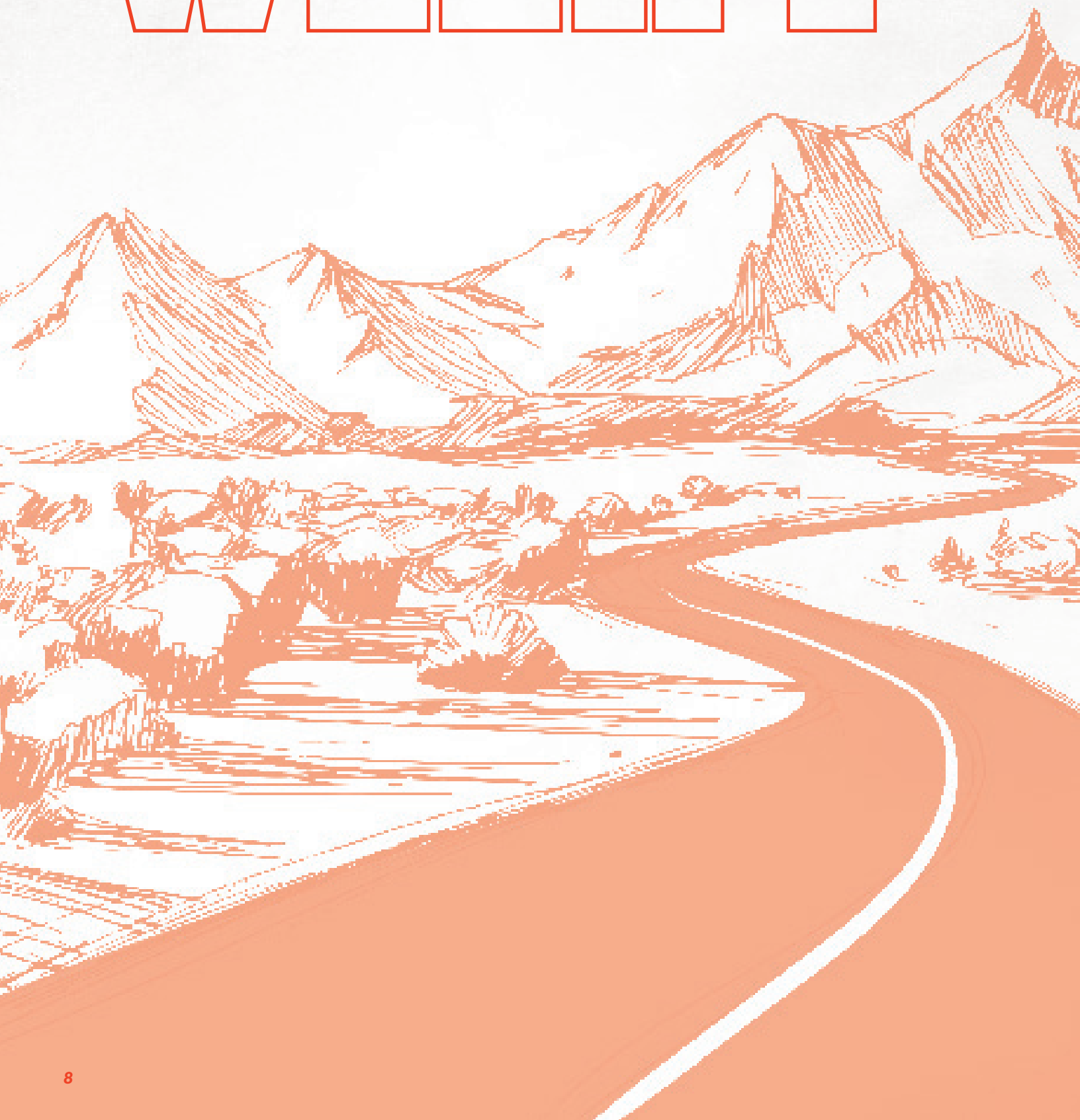
Visit:

[www.thedisciplesjourney.org](http://www.thedisciplesjourney.org)



## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 1



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 1 Discussion

This week in the Journey starts at the very beginning with what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This will be an important week for you as a leader to get a read on where your group is in their journey as a disciple. Remind them that wherever they are in their journey, they are still able to disciple someone else to the level they are at.

*If you have not already done so – go through the Small Group Guidelines with your group.*

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: What did you want to be when you grew up?*

1. What were your expectations when you became a follower of Jesus?

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2. If someone asked you the question "What do I need to be saved from?" what would your answer be today?

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3. What areas of your life do you carry a "me and Jesus" mentality, (meaning you have not allowed God's people to play a part in your life of learning and support)? Why?

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4. Which of the concepts taught in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 do you have the most trouble living out?

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5. Share any ways you have seen that your heart has been changed, or how Jesus has reshaped the way you think since you began following Him.

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6. What stood out to you the most from Week One? Is there anything you will do differently in your life because of it?

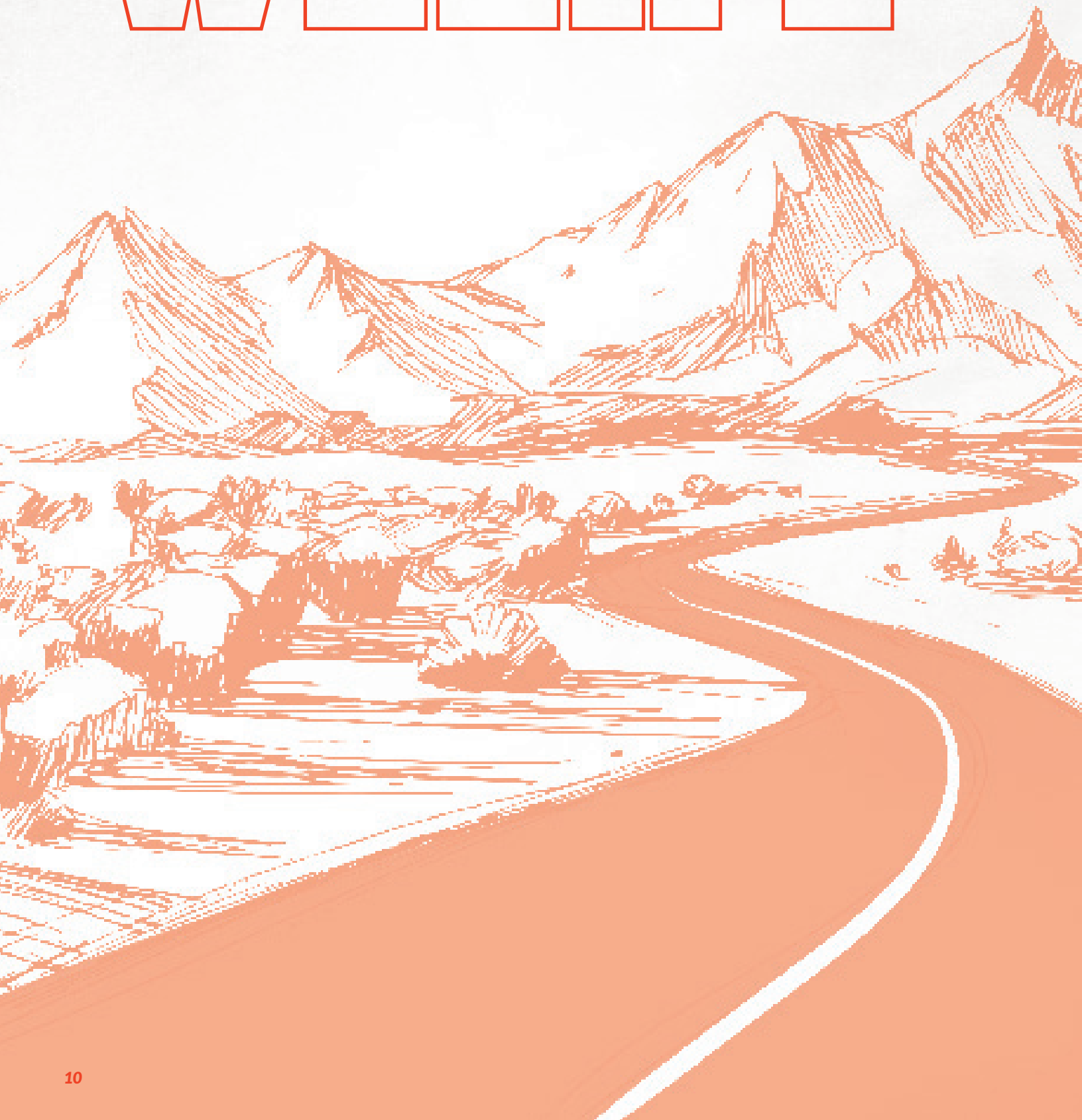
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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 2



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 2 Discussion

This week in the workbook we are talking about Jesus's method of discipleship. It was relational and reproducible. Those two principles are foundational to being and making disciples. He gave us a mission and a method that is not dependent on a time or place in history – it transcends all ages and cultures.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: Share a story about your biggest DIY or project failure.*

1. As you look at your own discipleship journey, can you identify the different elements of Jesus' process? Share with the group how and when Jesus was shared with you.

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2. Talk about a time you shared something personal about yourself with someone - how did they respond?

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3. How does having a Biblical Worldview shape the way you approach decisions in your life? Share a recent example.

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4. Take a good look at the relationships you are currently connected in. How do they help you move forward in your discipleship journey? In what ways do they hinder you?

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5. Is there a gift or an ability that God has given you that you are not currently using to minister to others? What is holding you back? What is one step you can take this week towards ministering/serving in your church or group?

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6. As a disciple, which of these actions would be the hardest for you? Why?

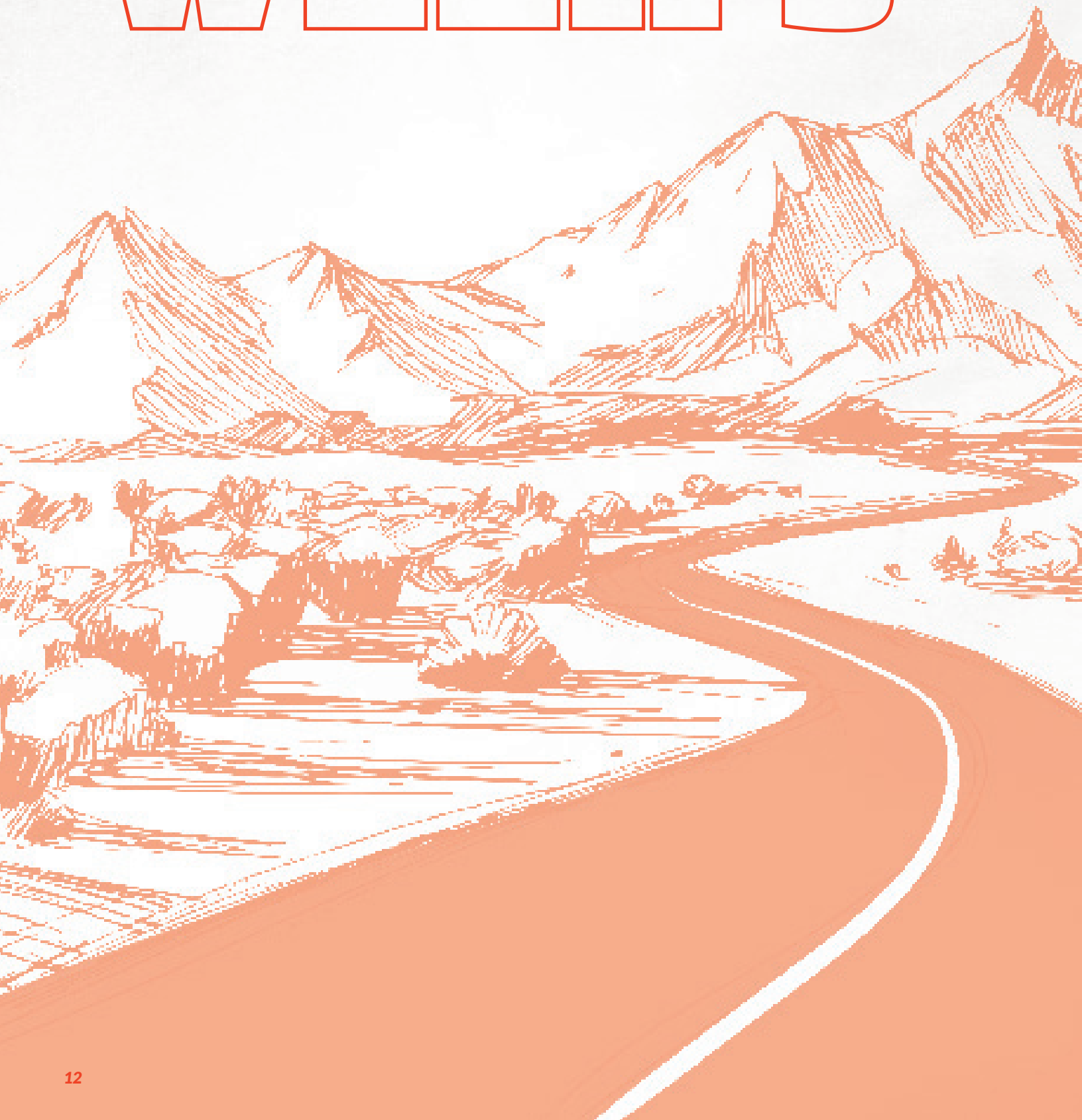
- Taking a step of faith
- Receiving constructive criticism
- Failing
- Resting
- Going with others/working as a team

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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 3



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 3 Discussion

This week we are talking about spiritual growth using the terms we find in God's word. This can be a hard concept to grasp because it doesn't depend on head knowledge or length of time as a believer. Spiritual growth begins to happen as we move from head knowledge to a heart that is being changed by Jesus.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: What are some key characteristics of each stage of spiritual growth?*

1. Every disciple of Jesus is able to disciple others to their same level of maturity - read the story of Jesus with the woman at the well in *John 4:1-30*. How did the woman respond when Jesus shared with her who he was? Where did she go? What stage of spiritual growth do you think she was in?

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2. What are some of the characteristics of a spiritual infant you exhibited after you began to follow Jesus?

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3. Name a characteristic that would distinguish a Spiritual Child from a Spiritual Young Adult in your eyes.

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4. What are some concerns you have about being a disciple?

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5. Name a few of the relational environments in your life right now where discipleship could happen. Do you see spiritual growth happening there, either in you or others? Why or why not?

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6. Has this week's lesson caused you to rethink the level of your spiritual growth? If so, how?

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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 4



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 4 Discussion

This week we move into the spheres of our lives and the plan Jesus has for us within them. This concept comes directly from the book of Ephesians, the graphics that we use help illustrate the principals God directed Paul to lay out in this book. This week we introduce the Abide Sphere, which is meant to be at the center of every area of our lives.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: If your house was on fire, what are the first three things you would grab and why?*

1. What do you think or feel when you hear the phrase in Ephesians 1:4 that you are "Holy and blameless in God's sight"?

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2. How do you think that abiding in our identity in Christ can help us when something happens that threatens who we think we are?

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3. Share an example of something in your life that you are prone to "abide" in rather than Christ.

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4. Name some of the things God, as the architect, would like to see you build your life on now.

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5. Why do you think the Abide Sphere needs to be in the center of the other spheres of your life? How are you currently making time in your life to abide in Christ?

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6. What changes do you plan to make after this week's lesson to the time or the way in which you abide?

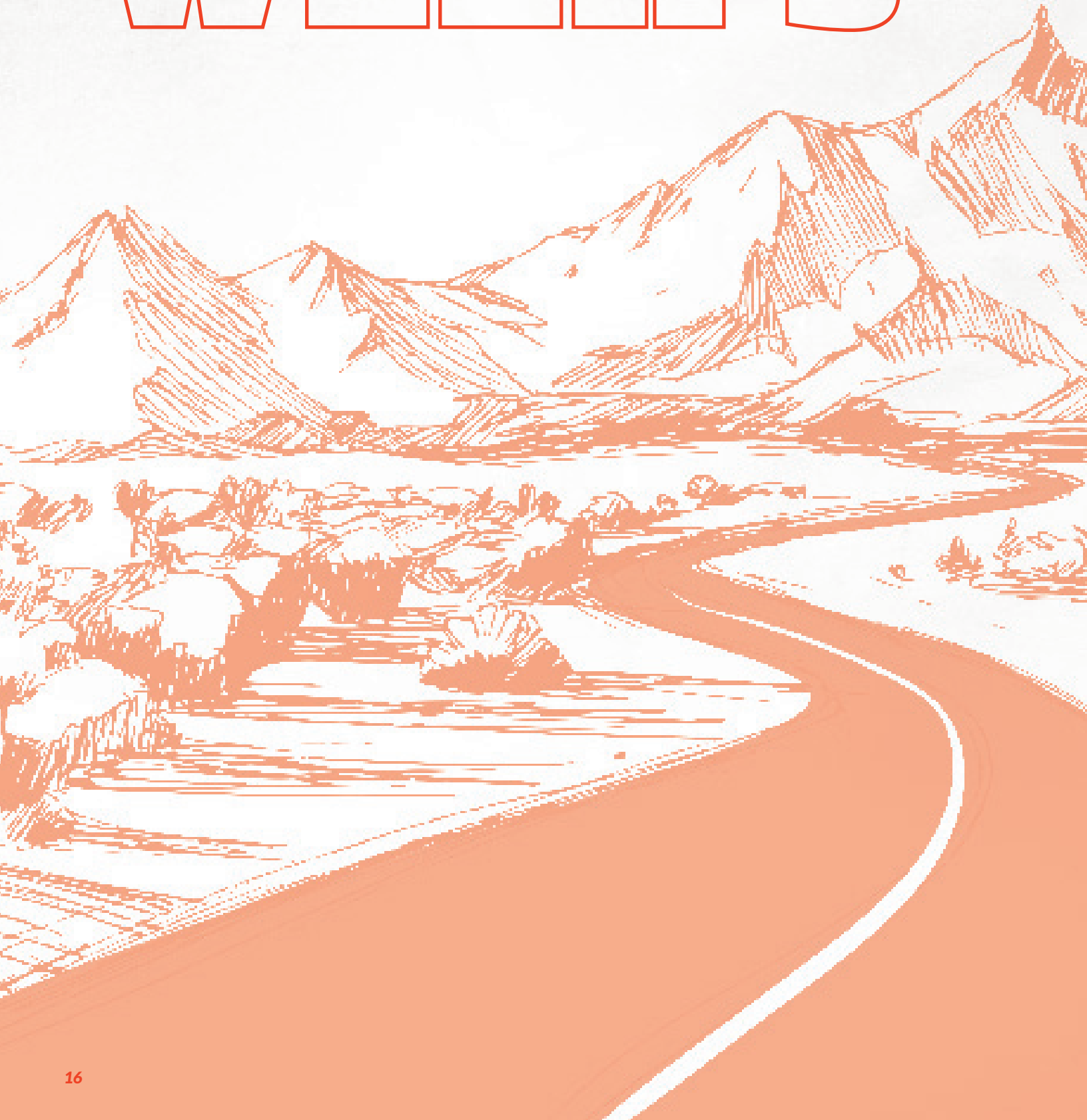
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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 5



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 5 Discussion

This week continues the discussion on the importance of the Abide Sphere. We talk about the importance of having a relationship with God, one in which we have conversation with him and learn to recognize his responses to us. Learning to trust him plays a key part in our decisions in our other spheres.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: What is the most used app on your phone right now?*

1. Why is it important that we be able to recognize God's voice?

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2. How have you seen the enemy use your identity to steer you away from truth?

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3. How did working through the Lord's Prayer change your perspective about prayer?

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4. Share a time when you struggled to trust God to give you the best answer when you asked him for something.

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5. What do you typically do when you feel discouraged? Do you turn to someone? Do you isolate yourself?

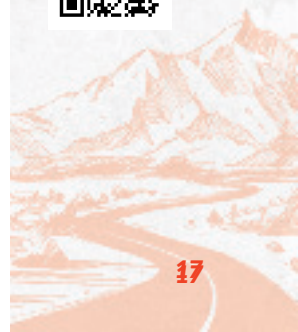
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6. How does going into a place where the Word of God is spoken and where prayer and worship take place change our perspective?

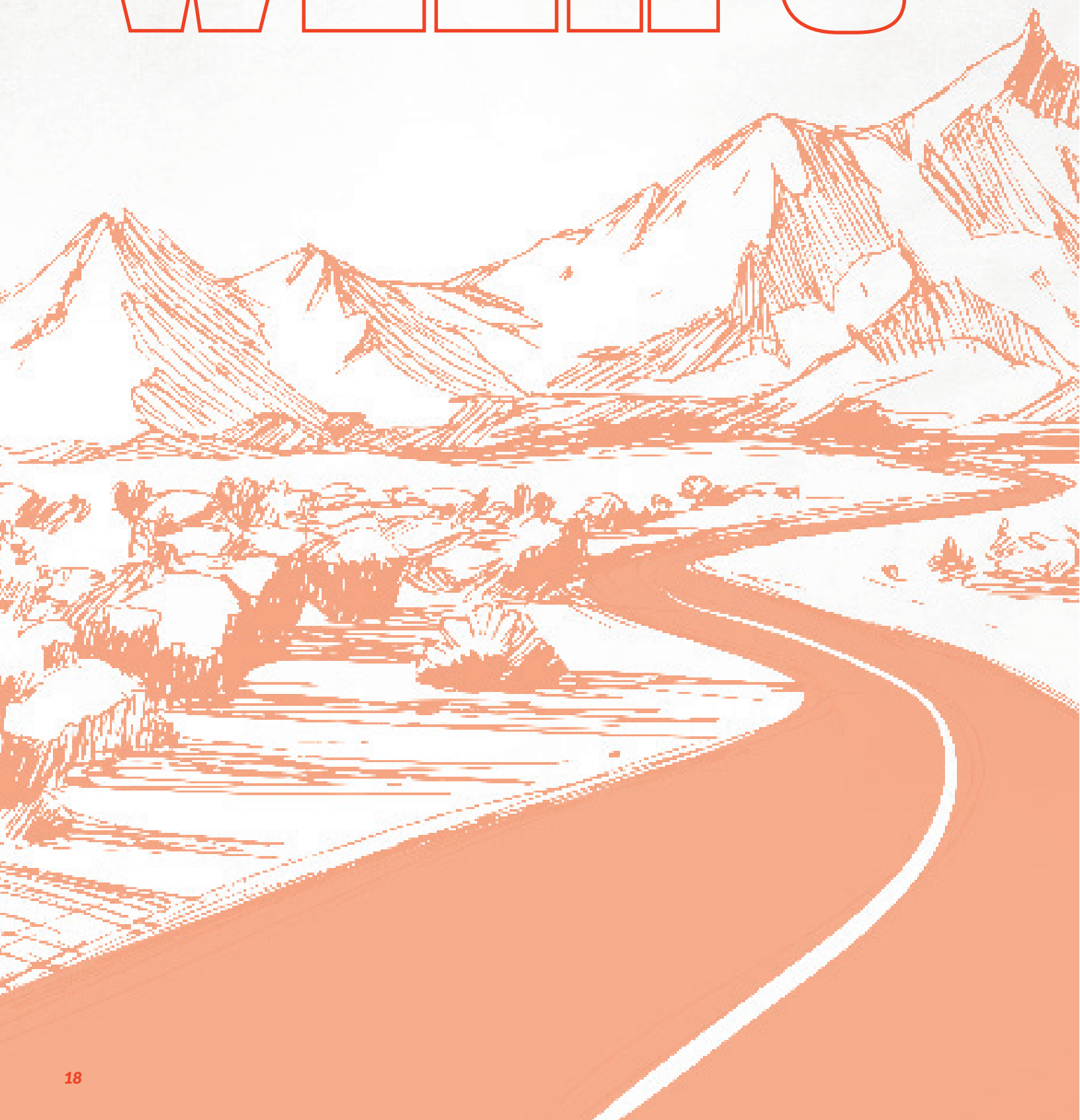
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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 6



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 6 Discussion

This week we enter into the Church Sphere. It is vital that disciples recognize the importance of this in their lives. The Church is the body of Christ and we are incomplete without it. Too many people say they love God but don't like the church – this is not acceptable in God's plan for us and for the world.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: Share about what your church experience has been to this point in your life.*

1. How has your understanding of the need for church changed over time?

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2. Do you agree with the phrase "Disunity affects how we are seen by unbelievers"?  
Have you ever seen an example of this?

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3. Who do you talk to when there is something in the church you attend that you don't understand or agree with?

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4. Have you taken the step of Baptism yet in your journey? Why or why not?

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5. Knowing something and doing something are two different things – what do you need to do differently in your life as a result of what the Lord is showing you in scripture?

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6. Did anything in this week's study surprise you or challenge your view of leadership in the church? Explain.

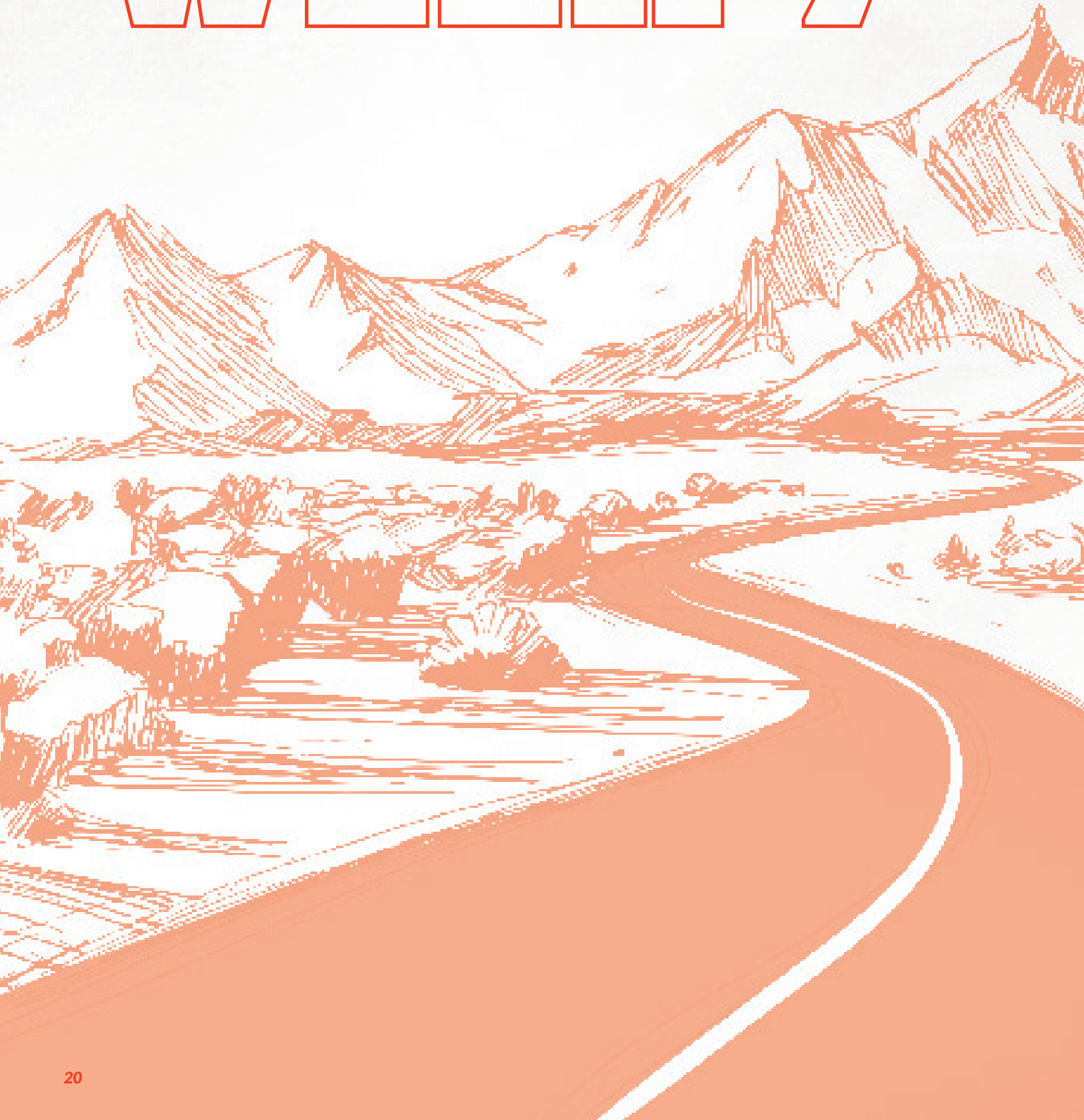
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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 7



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 7 Discussion

This week continues our discussion of the Church Sphere and our relationships with other believers. God wants a unified Church, and our spiritual maturity is both developed and revealed by the way we manage our relationships. Relationship with others is not only one of the greatest blessings in life, they can also be the source of our greatest hurts and struggles.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: On a scale of 1-10, how important is relationship to you and why?*

1. Which of the relational environments mentioned this week is the hardest for you to be in? Why?

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2. What happens when people don't engage with the church the way Christ calls them to? How does this affect the believers within the church?

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3. How do other people play a part in your current struggles? What do you need to do to better include people in your spiritual growth?

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4. Share a situation in which you felt offended – what was your response to the person you felt offended by? How did your reaction help or hinder the relationship?

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5. Which do you find harder to do – sharing the truth with others, or hearing the truth from others?

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6. What are some ways that you believe God has gifted you? How are you using your gifts to serve His Church?

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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 8



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 8 Discussion

Now we are entering into the Home and Family Sphere to take a look at God's design for marriage, children, and singles. The church is where God shows us what the family is supposed to look like – when we love those around us the way God loves us.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: Describe the environment in the home you grew up in. What was the family dynamic?*

1. Has the word submissive ever had a negative connotation for you in your life? Why or why not? How have you seen this word defined by the culture around you?

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2. Name some of the ways Jesus' relationship with the church is similar to a marriage.

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3. Have you ever disagreed with the way you believe the church handles finances? If so, have you every spoken with a leader about your concerns?

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4. After this week's lesson, do you feel there is something you need to do differently with your time, talents, or money?

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5. Where do you believe God expects children to receive their teaching about Him?

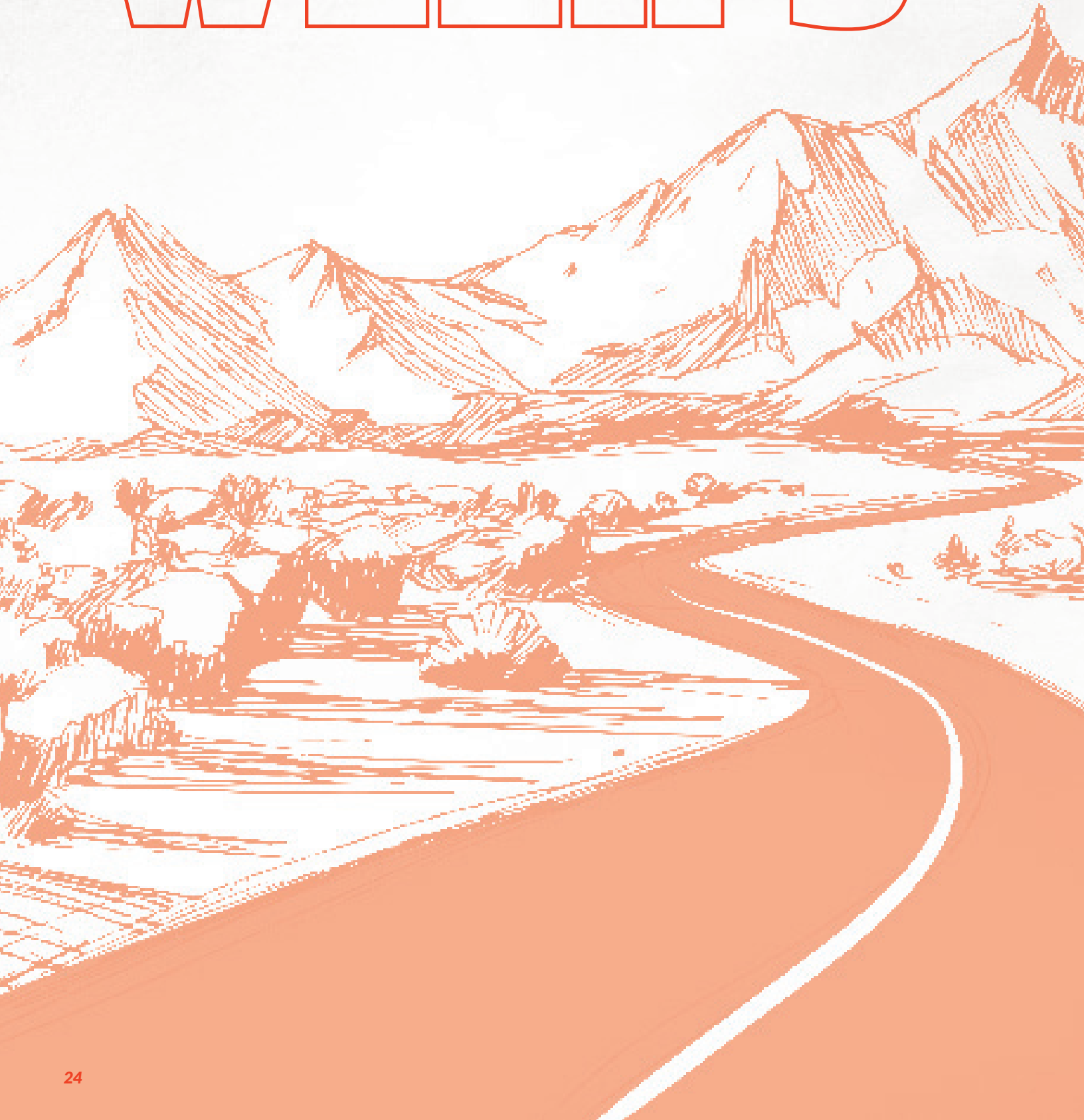
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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 9



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 9 Discussion

We are in week two of the Home & Family Sphere, and talking about the importance of our spiritual community and the tie between church and family. It is vital that we are intentionally putting time and energy into building and maintaining the relationships between our physical family and our spiritual family.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: Take an inventory of your week. What do you spend the most time doing outside of work?*

1. Do you believe you have the kind of friendships and community within your church that was described in this section of the workbook? Why or why not?

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2. Share about someone among your family or friends who is single and has had an impact on your life.

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3. Whether you are married or single, share a way that impacts the way you engage with community in the church body.

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4. How does being a part of God's family impact raising our children to become spiritually mature?

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5. Share a couple of ways you have honored your parents since you have become an adult.

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6. What has your view of retirement been up to this point in your life? Has it changed any after going through this section?

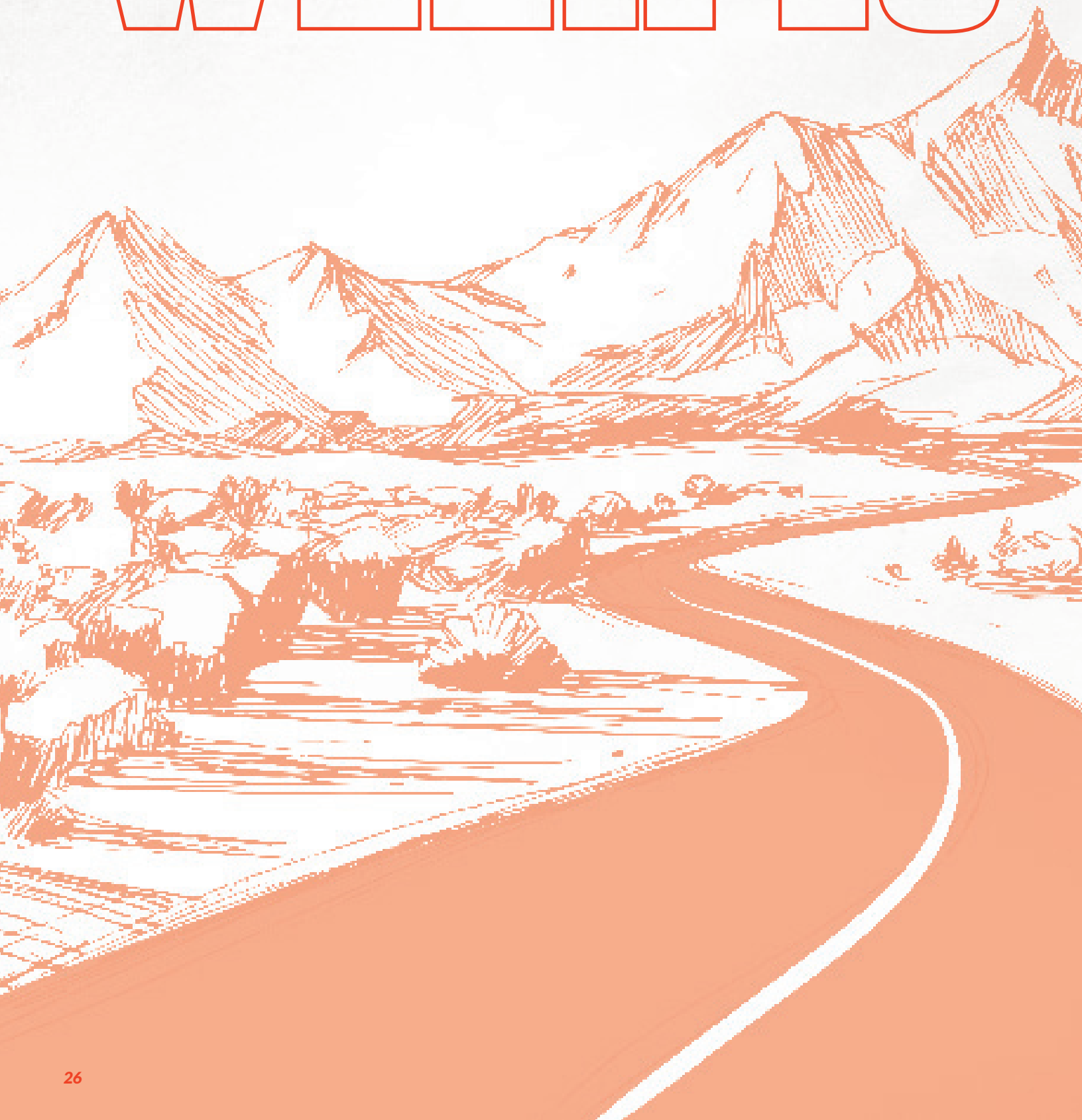
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## *Discussion Guide*

# WEEK 10



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 10 Discussion

This week we enter into the World Sphere, the areas where we work, life and play. As we are walking through this part of our life, we have a chance to illustrate Jesus to a lost world that does not know him. We do this through our words and actions as we interact with those around us. It is very important that we live as disciples in this sphere, as we are ambassadors for Christ.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: Share about a time you went above and beyond by sharing with someone.*

1. Would you say you are comfortable asking for help from others when you need it? Why or why not?

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2. Be honest - how does your work performance change when your boss is around?

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3. Talk about a time you found yourself believing that you were defined by your job or position. What brought that belief to light?

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4. How do you react when you disagree with something the governing authorities have done? How did this lesson help you grow in that?

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5. Share about a time you needed help from others but people didn't help you. What effect did that have on you?

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6. How would viewing your job as a mission field change the way you approach it?

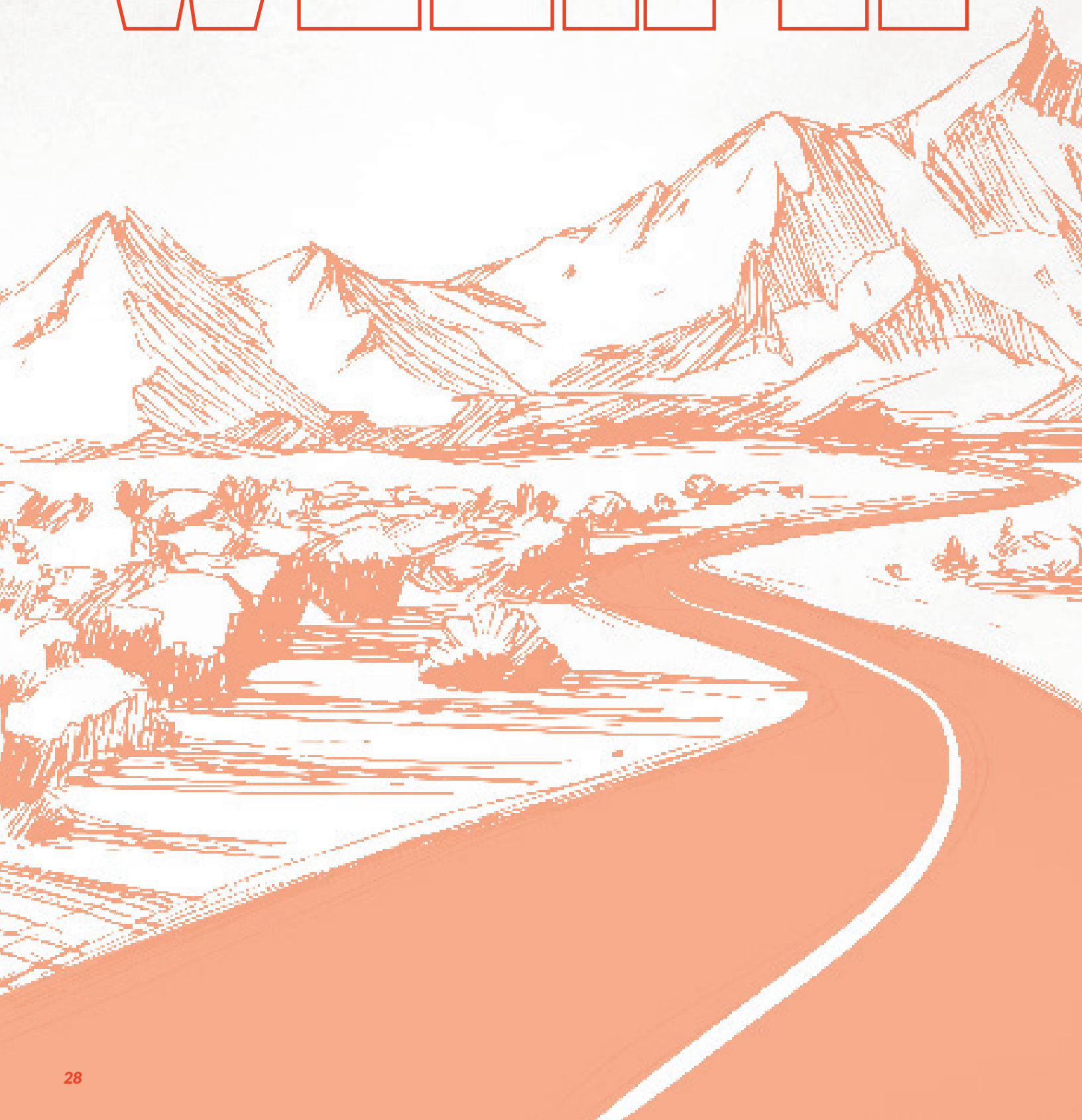
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## ***Discussion Guide***

# WEEK 11



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 11 Discussion

We have made it to the final sphere, the Spiritual Realm. This is where the Abide Sphere and the Church Sphere really come into play to work together and provide you with protection against the enemy. It is important to remember that we don't battle against each other – the real battles take place here.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: Share about a time you experienced a hard situation that felt like an attack you never saw coming.*

1. What does it bring to mind when you read that the enemy attacks us from the inside out?

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2. When you think of difficult times you've experienced, what role did other people play in helping you fight through?

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3. We talked in this section about three ways the devil works in our lives. Which one of the three do you feel he uses most often in your life?

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4. Share some different ways you can see that the Abide sphere and the Church sphere work together to arm you for battles in the Spiritual Realm.

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5. Share about a situation where you have had to deal with the consequences of something you did, even though you knew you were forgiven.

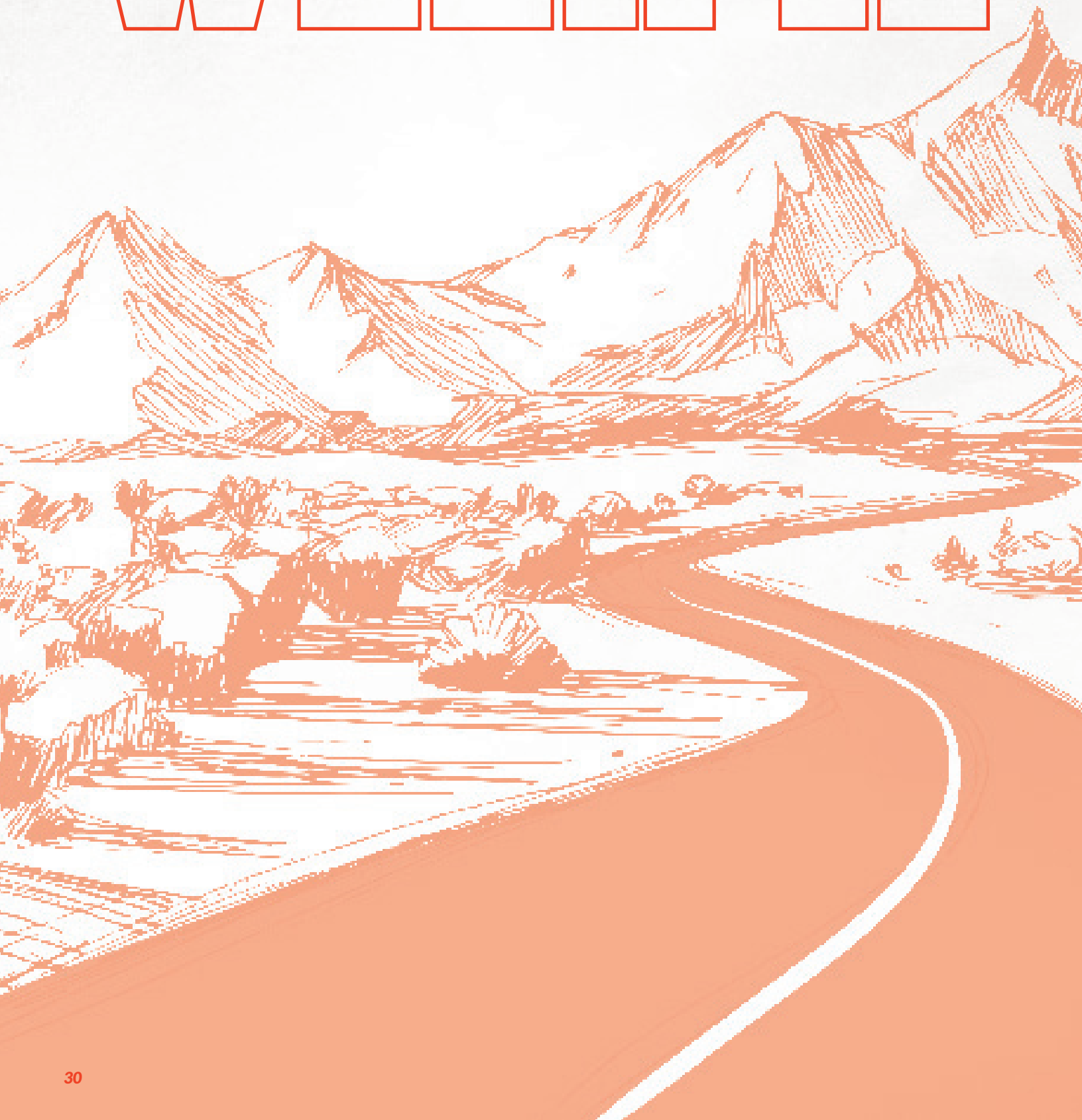
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## *Discussion Guide*

# WEEK 12



## The Disciple's Journey: Week 12 Discussion

In this final week of The Disciples Journey, we discuss what can happen when your life gets out of balance. We also do a review of what we have been learning through this study, and some of the things we are taking away.

### Questions for Discussion:

*Icebreaker Question: What comes to mind when you hear the word "balance"?*

1. On Day One you were asked to draw a picture of the spheres of your own life – which one of them was the largest?

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2. Do you have enough wise counsel and fellowship with other believers in your life to balance out your World Sphere?

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3. After going through this workbook, do you believe your Church Sphere is too small, too big, or just right?

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4. On Day Four you were asked to write out a game plan to continue to grow moving forward on your journey. Share with the group something you will put in place to take one immediate step.

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5. What is something impactful God has shown you about yourself through this study?

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6. In the introduction of this workbook, we stated 4 areas you should grow in from your time in this study. In which of these areas do you feel you have grown?

- Understand what a disciple is, and that you are one.
- Learn to have a daily abiding time with Jesus.
- Be a part of a small group in relationship with other believers.
- Learn how to make disciples in every area of your life.

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## ***Thanks for Joining the Journey!***

We hope you have enjoyed your time going through The Disciple's Journey Workbook. And we pray that you find yourself better equipped to live an abundant life as a disciple of Jesus in every sphere!

If you have any questions or comments for us regarding this study, you can reach us at:  
[realforlife@reallifeministries.com](mailto:realforlife@reallifeministries.com)

To find more resources for discipleship and spiritual growth, go to:  
[www.realliferesources.org](http://www.realliferesources.org)



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