

# LESSON ESSENTIALS

## EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

### LESSON 4: FOLLOW UP METHODS

A follow-up meeting ought to have a planned structure. Of course, the outcome depends on God, but we must do our part to prepare for these meetings, and respect our subject's time and privacy. This lesson will make you aware of how to conduct a follow-up interaction, telling you how you can appropriately reveal God to new Christians through your life.

Following-up with a new Christian isn't all about small talk and niceties. It might even include some plain speaking and taking Godly stands. This lesson will make you aware of them.

As a good follow-up person, you should be genuinely interested in your new friend. After all, they're not a 'project' that you need to complete. As God's representative, you're required to exhibit His love and concern for your new friend and to care for their spiritual growth.

The best way to teach someone anything is to show them how it's done. For example, the most important thing a new Christian needs to know is how to pray. So go ahead and pray with them.

Are you helpful, encouraging, and friendly? Congratulations, you just qualified for the job of following-up with a new believer to help them grow in their faith! Even if you're none of the above, we have good news for you. God can still equip you to become all that, and more!

As a good follow-up person, you should be genuinely interested in your new believer friend. After all, they're not a 'project' that you need to complete: they are a person on a spiritual journey. As God's representative, you're required to exhibit His love and concern for your friends and to care for their spiritual growth.

Striking a bond with a new Christian might require a little effort from your side and a commitment of prayer. As you spend time with your new friend, and give them a glimpse of God's love through your life, they will learn to trust you. While establishing a rapport with a new Christian, make sure you don't assume a position of moral superiority and play the judge. Be accepting of your new friend and sensitive to their needs and background.

The best way to teach someone anything is to show them how it's done. For example, the most important thing a new Christian needs to know is how to pray. So go ahead and pray with them. Show them how important you know it is to pray before a meeting by starting your follow-up visits with prayer so that you are in a position to discern God's leading.

Even as you spend time with a new Christian, sharing, listening, and praying, don't forget to focus on the Word of God. Show your friend how much you value God's Word, and how you can depend on it for instruction. Make your friend aware of the importance of reading the Word daily, and how it can keep you abiding in God.

Don't forget, you will only sound convincing if you really trust God's Word yourself, and can demonstrate how you've been led by it. Sharing personal experiences and anecdotes is more effective in teaching than reciting facts about what a person should or shouldn't do. Your testimony can make a huge impact on a new Christian, so don't hesitate to share it.

Before every meeting, make a rough outline of all that you're going to share, so that you don't end up on a tangent that is less than helpful. While a little informal conversation is fine to help establish a comfort level, you shouldn't run out of time and then realise that you weren't able to achieve what you'd planned prior to the meeting. Having said that, remember that this interaction is not a

pre-set interview or a monologue where you have a captive audience. Make the dialogue interesting and share everything that you've prepared for the meeting. You should make a list of important lessons that you want to communicate to your friend, within a timeframe, so that he is equipped with God's truths and not swayed by other secular influences. Avoid presenting too much information at once, so that your friend has the time to digest what he has learnt. Be aware of your friend's time-constraints, and make sure you are punctual and respectful of his privacy and time. Our punctuality will also indicate our commitment towards the Lord as we try to be good stewards of the resources that He's given us – time being an important one of them.

Be prepared for some straight talk, too. As a Christian, it is important for you to make your stand clear on sin. If your friend is dabbling in any addiction like drugs, alcohol, immoral relationships, destructive influences, pornography, or temper make him aware of the sin in a manner that isn't condemning or condescending. After all, God hates the sin, but loves the sinner. He loves your friend as much as He loves you, so don't pretend you are more righteous than you are. As you minister to the new believer, make him aware of God's ability to change lives. There's hope for all of us, even the worst sinner.

You should also try to gently find out from your friend whether he is hurting in any way – as a consequence of a broken relationship, rejection, or an act that requires a confession, or forgiveness. These are issues that plague many today, and it requires trust to reach out to such a person, and love to minister to them. Jesus can be our role model.

Are we ready to let Him lead us to new believers to disciple?

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## IN REVIEW

While conducting a follow-up meeting, we need to:

- Be interested in the new believer as true friends, so that we can build a relationship of trust.
- Show them the importance of prayer and Bible-reading.
- Make sure we plan our meetings so that important topics are well-explained.
- Be respectful of their time-constraints and privacy needs in a way that shows our serious attitude to God, and our respect for them.
- Make sure that they have committed to quit any habits/vices/relationships that may weaken their relationship with Christ.
- Be ready to help them do some damage control, like mend broken relationships, and fix their attitudes toward life.

