

The Leader Guides are designed to be a support for your preparation to disciple. There is a guide for each chapter of iGod. Every chapter includes 8 sections:



FOCUS OF THIS CHAPTER

This section underscores the essence of the chapter by focusing on three thoughts to determine:

- What you want them to know
- Why you want them to know it
- What you want them to experience

A key Bible verse that captures the core of the chapter is also given.



EXPERIENCE

Each chapter includes an experience designed to enhance the heart of the chapter. Make sure you look ahead so that you can plan for these experiences. Jesus used familiar life illustrations that made a connection to what he was teaching – seeds, vines, fish, etc. These experiences are intentionally simple so that they are do-able. Don't underestimate the impact of an experience that engages the senses.



QUESTIONS

The questions have been extracted from the iGod book with page numbers where they can be located. Some direction has been given for the questions to support your answers. There is no doubt that other questions will surface. Don't ever be ashamed to say, "I don't know." You can always get back to the disciple after study or input from others. And questions can easily veer off the central thought of the chapter. Discipleship is about life transformation, not about having all the exact right answers.



BEFORE MOVING ON

You want to have confidence that the disciple understands and absorb the substance of a chapter before moving on. This section provides some insight as to what you should be looking for before moving on to the next chapter. This does not mean that the disciple needs to "perfect" the chapter – but they definitely need to embrace the aim of the teaching.



WORD OF ADVICE

In any conversation about spiritual things, there is always the possibility of rabbit trails and potholes. This section provides some cautionary advice as to what to look for, what to avoid, and how to stay focused on the main intentions of the chapter.

P

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

This encouragement can't be emphasized enough: *pray*. Discipleship requires discernment that is beyond human capacity; spiritual progress is rarely made without spiritual conflict; old patterns and habits are often hard-wired and hard to change – for these and many other reasons, pray for your disciple and for yourself. Among the things that will come up for prayer, this section provides some suggestions for areas of prayer.

J

JOURNAL POINTERS

There are all kinds of ways to journal and some people are more wired to journal than others. The intention of the journal is not necessarily a daily routine (although there's nothing wrong with that if either person wants to undertake it). The journal is a means of written expression of prayer, thoughts, and record of what is taking place. One of the greatest benefits to recording these things is the ability to look back and see progress, struggles, successes, etc. This can be a great asset for the disciple as he or she looks back in the journal over the months. Both the disciple and the discipler would engage in the journal experience – it will benefit you both.

A

ASSIGNMENTS

We typically value those things in which we invest. Assignments are a way that the disciple can begin to learn how to initiate their own positive habits of study and at the same time, give the opportunity for the disciple to invest in their progress. Assignments also bring a certain level of accountability and expectation. You will need to hold the line with assignments – if the disciple has a pattern of not doing their assignments, it's time to have a straight-up talk. The cold hard truth is that if they are willing or able to invest in the discipleship, they need to wait to go through the discipleship journey until they are able to make the investment. Don't cut corners with this – you'll be spinning your wheels if the disciple is not doing his or her part.

Memory Verse: Each chapter has a Scripture verse to be memorized. Both you and the disciple should memorize the verses and share them with each other when you meet.

Extra Reading: Each chapter has some extra Scripture verses that the disciple can read throughout the week. There will also be suggestions for books, articles, podcasts, etc. if the disciple wants to take an optional step of growing deeper in a particular area.

Action: Each chapter presents a chance for the disciple to put into action what is being learned. This is a great way to reinforce the experience. Again, both you and the disciple should do this.

Meditation: The New Testament encourages us to think on things that are excellent. The meditation is a way for the disciple to ruminate and reflect on Scriptures or a certain truth that is being learned.

The intention of including all of these areas is to amplify the chapter into an experience that is life-transforming for both the disciple and the discipler. As you go through this discipleship process with your disciple, you are laying the foundation for a future discipler. Work hard. Invest. And rely wholeheartedly on God to add the increase.

0.1 Mile Marker Zero



FOCUS OF THIS CHAPTER

What you want them to know:

The primary reason that God created us was for *relationship – to love and to be loved.*

Why you want them to know it:

Understanding that we were created to love and to be loved gives a foundation for our whole existence. Relationship is why we are here on the planet – there is nothing more important. And this perspective sets the stage for everything else that will be learned in the discipleship journey – because the connection with God, the local church, and the world – it's *all* about relationships.

What you want them to experience:

We can see a connection in the human race that is unmistakable – family resemblance, facial features, body type, personality traits, etc. This network is not random, and the more we learn about DNA, the more we are amazed at the connectivity between us all. This is a small picture of how we are created in the image of God. And the image of God is seen in Jesus' words about his pre-creation relationship with the Father – a mind-blowing concept. The concept of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is very profound and mysterious and beyond human understanding – but the simple truth that we want them to experience is that we are created in the *image* of a God who is all about relationship. And this "imaging" is seen all around us.

Key passage: John 17:23-24

May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.



EXPERIENCE

This first experience could prove to be revealing – you learn a lot about a person when they start talking about their family experience growing up. Be sensitive to know how much to probe – some family situations are very severe and painful – if you're just starting a relationship with the disciple, it might take a long time before they feel comfortable enough to open the door all the way. Here's the first experience:

Both disciple and discipler bring in baby pictures in – talk about the characteristics – who are they from? Talk about character – how do you act in the same way your parent(s) act? What things were good about your childhood? What things were tough? Did you talk much about God in your family? What was the spiritual experience (if any) like in your home?



QUESTIONS

Stop for a moment and think about these scientific advances. Our DNA can be analyzed and our genetic code mapped. Our DNA can identify us. In what ways has that information been useful? [p. 4]

Initiate a conversation about DNA. Even if you don't much about it, here are some basic benefits to DNA:

- DNA helps us trace our past – where we came from – why we look like we look.
- DNA also emphasizes how closely related our family is.
- There is a balance in DNA that makes us one-of-a-kind unique and at the same time, connects us together.
- According to the FBI, DNA is a key to identifying missing persons.
- DNA is found in every cell in the human body and contains the “map” or “formula” for creating us.
- *DNA is a connecting piece that clarifies identity.*

In what ways would understanding our spiritual DNA help us? [p. 4]

If we understand our spiritual DNA, we'll understand how we are connected to our Creator. We'll also understand that each of us is unique; we are also deeply connected to God in an inseparable link that had its activation at creation. Because we were created with the intention of being in God's image, the more we know about who he is, the more we'll know what we should be like in this lifetime. How could we ever know what this life is about if we don't know much about the Creator who made us in his image? This is one of the primary reasons that we would want to know God more intimately – so that we can accomplish what he wants.

Do you think that your view of yourself lines up with your true identity? [p. 4]

This is where the conversation can take a personal application. This first chapter is learning that we were created in an image of a God who is constantly in a love-relationship of community. God has an immense love for us – does the disciple embrace this? Does he or she have a healthy image of their true identity in God?

If not, in what ways does this come out? [p. 4]

Try to keep the conversation focused on relationships – between the disciple and other people; between the disciple and God. This chapter is not about guilt over sin – but the perception of how God views himself or herself. If the disciple has an inner image of a God that doesn't love them, how does this affect how they approach him, act towards others, view him or her?

Is this hard to believe? That God would love you as much as he does his own son? How can this be? [p. 7]

Some people wrestle with God's love for them – others don't. So much of this depends on the experiences the person has had in the past – and quite often, their perspective on how much God loves them depends on their view of themselves. Allow them to share their struggles without feeling the need for neat and clean answers. Even if a person's conclusion might be wrong (that God doesn't love them), their struggles are real.

God is love; so the force, the energy, behind all of creation is love. His "Spiritual DNA" is in you and on everything. As a result, everything is connected through his love.

How does that affect the way you look at the world around you? [p. 10]

Have the disciple think of a person with whom they may be experiencing conflict; or a well-known person that has committed a heinous crime. What if there was a realization that God's love for that person was *equal* to how God loved them, how God loves someone like Billy Graham, or even loves them as much as his own Son?

How would your perspective on your life be affected if you were to say "In the beginning, Love created the heavens and the earth"?...and Love said, let there be light, and there was light.....and Love said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness? [p. 10]

Since God is love, our entire existence should be motivated by love – *everything*. Does this make any change in the disciple's perspective of life?

Does understanding that love is the creative energy behind your existence change your thinking in any way? [p. 10]

This conversation might prove to reveal whether or not God's love has been wholeheartedly embraced by the disciple.

Since you are made in the image of God, how are you doing at being the conduit of God - love in your world? Have you allowed yourself to be loved by God; by others? Is love the energy, the force behind your life? [p. 10]

These questions could serve as a time to talk about struggles in relationships – in certain circumstances where it is hard to express love; what relationships in the past have created obstacles to loving other people, to loving God. This also might be the place to consider small do-able goals – is there someone that needs to be forgiven because of the understanding that love is the driving force. This is the first chapter, so we don't have to expect monumental accomplishment at this intersection – just seeds being planted and foundations being laid.



BEFORE MOVING ON

Our clear goal is to convey how valuable relationships are and why we are most fulfilled when these relationships are healthy and loving. Press to determine whether or not the disciple has embraced the truth that he or she was created. We will want to communicate that although we are starting a course where we will learn many things, all of them center on the most important thing: relationships.



WORD OF ADVICE

Here are a couple of things to watch out for in this chapter:

This chapter presents God from the beginning as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), which is a mystery that is impossible for us to humanly comprehend. Don't get caught up in trying to explain it – especially at this first stage. Keep the main thing the main thing.

You're building a long-term relationship. Don't try to fix everything the first week! Listen. And then after that, listen again. Begin to paint a picture – let God pace you. You will address a lot of issues through the course of iGod – like unconditional love, how to resolve conflict, etc. They don't have to all be tackled in the first chapter.

You want to put a strong emphasis on reading this chapter alone and not reading ahead to future chapters. The reasons for this are explained in the Leadership Training.

You want to build in accountability from the very beginning. When you first meet with the disciple, you will want to give them the iGod book and have them read through the chapter. When you meet to have conversation about the chapter, if you discover that the disciple hasn't read the chapter, you'll need to wait until he or she has read it. From the outset, a clear expectation should be set for the assignments to be done. If you find that the disciple isn't doing the work (for any one of many reasons), the harsh reality is that it's probably time to have a straight-up talk about discipleship. This might seem too strict, but the bottom line is that discipline is a part of discipleship that just can't be absent. If the disciple is consistently dropping the ball with a million excuses, it might just not be the right time for them to make the commitment to discipleship. Don't cut corners yourself – if you do, you're teaching them that this is okay. In the long run, they'll miss out on learning what it means to become a steady follower of Jesus if we make shortcuts.



THINGS TO PRAY FOR

Pray for this new relationship between you and the disciple – that God will develop a sense of trust and openness between you both.

Pray for *God to move and reveal truth*. We can only present truth; only God can reveal it in a person's heart.

Pray that the disciple will be able to separate any negative experiences from the past from their image of God. If there is a struggle in this area, pray that God would heal and mend that image.

Pray for sensitivity to know how far you should press at this early stage.

Pray for your own walk – that you would live an imitate-able life and that you'll be honest with the areas that you want God to strengthen.



JOURNAL POINTERS

As you introduce this concept to them, this is a time where you explain that the journal is personal place where you can be honest with God with your thoughts and struggles. The content of the disciple's journal is never intended to be read by anyone, including you. If you've never journaled, start simple and just see how you progress. Journaling can be a tremendous way of keeping record of prayers and answers to prayers. You should ask the disciple on a consistent basis how his or her journaling is going. Because this might be a new experience, here are some journal pointers for 0.1:

God, I love you because ...

God, the way I have noticed your love for me has been ...

Here are the ways that my thinking is changing ...

Here are some of the things I still struggle with in my relationship with you, God ...

Here are some of the things I still struggle with in my relationship with other people ...

I'm really thankful for ...



ASSIGNMENTS

Memory Verse:

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
Psalm 139: 13-14*

Extra Reading:

*"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.
John 17:24*

*But the man who loves God is known by God.
1 Corinthians 8:3*

*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.
1 John 4:16*

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.
Psalm 139:13-18*

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Psalm 136:26

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill.

Acts 17:24-29

Action:

Have the disciple write a note or card to someone and express appreciation and love – perhaps even someone that has been neglected, overlooked, or even adversarial.

Meditation:

Introduce the disciple to the concept of "thinking on these things." (Philippians 4:8) Encourage the disciple to begin each morning and end each night by thinking about how much God loves him or her.