

The Serving Disciple

Sharing Christ through a Servant's Heart



The **FIFTH** in a Series of **6** Small Group Studies



MDPC

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church





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Appendix



- 1 Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 Introduce every group member** (15 minutes).

Go around the group and have every member answer the following questions aloud:

- What is your name?
- What is your connection to MDPC or to another Christian fellowship?
- What in the past seven days has been really good news for you?

(Please note each member's time should be brief. If 10 members speak for five minutes, you will have taken 50 minutes to introduce yourselves!)

- 3 Read aloud about *The Equipped Disciple Series*, *The Serving Disciple Course*, and group expectations** (5 minutes).

The Equipped Disciple is a multi-course small group curriculum developed at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church. Each course lasts six sessions, with each session approximately 60-70 minutes. (To take up to 90 minutes, simply extend the group's participation in one or more areas of the session's lesson plan as desired.)

There are six 6-session courses designed for *The Equipped Disciple*, including this course you are starting now.

- *The Growing Disciple*
- *The Witnessing Disciple*
- *The Studying Disciple*
- *The Praying Disciple*
- *The Serving Disciple*
- *The Giving Disciple*

Another multi-course series of small group curriculum, *The Maturing Disciple*, is scheduled to launch in 2022-23.

This course, *The Serving Disciple*, has the sub-title *Sharing Christ through a Servant's Heart*. Each session will focus on one specific aspect of service that will enable you, with the Holy Spirit's help, to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ as you grow in the fruit of the Spirit, discover and apply your spiritual gifts, and share the good news of Jesus through your service.

Most sessions will include study and discussion on a biblical passage relevant to the spiritual practice of service. Also, each session will include opportunities to grow in your other spiritual practices, such as devotional reading and Scripture memory. Directions for those leading a group are found in the session materials themselves, not in a separate leader's guide.

So your group will be a fruitful and joyful experience, each member will strive to embrace the following:

- Commit to attend consistently.
- Contribute to a group climate of mutual trust, respect, honesty, and vulnerability.
- Discuss willingly. This is not a lecture. Your input is vital!
- Prepare in advance for the upcoming group session, barring unexpected events. (If such events occur, come to the session anyway.)
- Write in this guide. (But remember, this is not a writing class. Brief notes may suffice.)

- Bring your Bible every time. Ordinarily, biblical passages won't be printed in the guide.
- Anticipate that the Holy Spirit will do something in you during this time of focus.

4 Prepare and discuss as a group **Luke 10:25-37 and Ephesians 2:8-10** (30 minutes).

Read Luke 10:25-37 and Ephesians 2:8-10 in a Bible translation of your choice, then respond to the questions below. When you meet as a group, read Luke 10:25-37 and Ephesians 2:8-10 aloud. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss with one another.

How does the expert summarize the Law in Luke 10:27? Where in the Old Testament do you find verses that comprise this summary?

In Luke 10:30-35, who walks by the man attacked by robbers? Who stops, renders aid, and provides for the man's welfare? How are the answers to both questions scandalous by the standards of first-century Judaism? How are they scandalous even today?

How does "love your neighbor as yourself" encourage and motivate you to serve others? In what ways is Jesus speaking to you when He says, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37, NIV)?

Ephesians 2:8-9 is one of the most beloved of all New Testament passages. What is its central message? Why is this message so significant? How does this message go against the grain of our culture?

Ephesians 2:10 states we are saved by God's grace so we may become His "handiwork" (NIV) or "workmanship" (ESV) or "masterpiece" (NLT). What is at least one implication for your daily life that God has designed you in Jesus Christ? How does God's intentionality speak to you about your life's priorities? What good deeds do you think you have been "prepared in advance" (v. 10, NIV) to do?

What good work is the Holy Spirit prompting you to focus on this week as a follower of Jesus Christ? When can you do it? How can you maximize its effectiveness for the Kingdom? What should you avoid?

5 Read aloud about devotional Bible reading and responding (5 minutes).

We just finished a Bible study. Another encounter with Scripture that growing disciples need to practice often is reading the Bible devotionally. The consistent devotional reading of Scripture is an important way to experience the continuing presence and guidance of Jesus Christ.

For our 6-week course, we will read Micah together as our group's devotional reading. If you are unfamiliar with Micah, you may find this 6-minute video overview of the book from The Bible Project helpful. You can follow this link or type it into your web browser: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/micah/>. (Note: if you are already a consistent reader of the Bible, well done! For the group's time together, though, please either add Micah to your present reading or substitute Micah for your reading plan.)

We will divide this meaningful Old Testament prophetic book in this way:

- Before Session 2, read Micah 1:1–2:13
- Before Session 3, read Micah 3:1-12.
- Before Session 4, read Micah 4:1-13
- Before Session 5, read Micah 5:1–6:8.
- Before Session 6, read Micah 6:9–7:20.

You have great flexibility in how you schedule the passages from Micah for your reading. For example, you may:

- Read a few verses each day.
- Read the first half of the assignment one day and the second half another day.
- Read the entire assignment at once.

Please do not read mechanically. Reflect upon what you read as you read, and prayerfully discern God's guidance for you. In your study guide's appendix, you will find Reading Response Forms to help you answer two questions of each reading from Micah:

- "In what I read from Micah, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?"
- "What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?"

Please write your responses in the space allotted. In the remaining group sessions, you'll have the opportunity to share how God has been working through your devotional reading time.

6 Read aloud this introduction to Scripture memorization (5 minutes).

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Psalm 119:11, ESV)

Memorizing anything, especially Bible verses, gets little respect in our day. With the availability of search engines and smart phones, why bother? All you have to do is Google what you want, and there it is! However, Psalm 119:11 insists that storing God's word within our hearts (in other words, memorizing Scripture) can be an effective means of enabling and strengthening faithful Christian living. It is true Scripture memory will take some effort and determination. But it is well worth it.

Our memory verses for this course are Ephesians 2:8-10. These verses neatly and effectively sum up the importance of service for growing disciples: We are saved by grace through faith for the purpose of doing good works to God's glory. We'll memorize these

verses from the NIV, as we can help one another learn them more easily as we share the same translation:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV).

Some helpful hints for memorizing are:

- Write out the verses in longhand. Something about writing imprints the words on your memory. For some, repeated writing in longhand is quite helpful.
- Write the verses on a 3”x 5” card. Carry the card with you and refer to the verses often.
- Say the verses aloud as you practice. Speaking also imprints the words on your memory.
- Break up the verses into their smaller units. Start with the first phrase and work on it until you are comfortable. Then add the second phrase. Continue to add phrases as you learn the verses phrase by phrase.
- Reflect on the verses’ meaning. Connect the verses with their significance for your life.
- Do not forget to include the Scriptural reference and translation at the end, such as “Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV”. (Studies have shown it can be helpful to know where to find the verses you memorize in the Bible.)
- Practice often and review regularly. “Overlearning” is often what is needed to break through.

Starting at your next gathering, you will practice your verses with others by dividing the group into pairs or triads (groups of three) and practicing with your smaller group. You will want to work on your verses in advance in order to take the best advantage of this opportunity.

7 Talk about what’s needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please prepare the Bible study found in “Session 2: Our Model for Service,” and be ready to share.
- Read Micah 1:1 – 2:13 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Start memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.

8 Close in prayer.

- 1 **Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 **Greet and “check in” with group members** (5 minutes).
- 3 **Share from your personal Reading Response Form for Micah 1:1—2:13 and discuss** (10 minutes).
- 4 **Read, study, and discuss as a group Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:1-11** (35 minutes).

Read Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:1-11 in a translation of your choice, then reflect upon your responses to the following questions and prompts. Feel free to write down comments, thoughts, and notes in the spaces below. When you meet as a group, read aloud Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:1-11. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

What do James and John, the sons of Zebedee, ask of Jesus in Mark 10:35-37? (Mark 9:33-37 provides helpful background.) How is James and John’s request outlandish and inappropriate at best? How do the other disciples react in Mark 10:41? Why do you think the disciples are struggling with matters of status and power?

How does Jesus reply to James and John in Mark 10:38? How does Jesus expand upon His reply to all the disciples in Mark 10:42-45? What stands out to you in His response as you reflect upon His words?

If Jesus came to give His life and to serve rather than to be served, as He says in Mark 10:45, then what is at least one logical, inherent implication of this truth for Christian living? In particular, what is at least one concrete way your life is to be different because you trust and follow the Servant Savior and Lord?

In Philippians 2:1-4, Paul commends what characteristics and attitudes to the Philippians? Why such emphasis? (Philippians 4:2-3 provides helpful background.) Put these characteristics and attitudes in your own words. As you do so, what points emerge for your personal application?

Paul expounds upon the character and nature of Jesus Christ in Philippians 2:6-11. What stands out about Jesus in Philippians 2:6-8? What stands out about Jesus in Philippians 2:9-11? How do Philippians 2:6-8 and 2:9-11 fit together? How does this particular telling of His story impact your life?

In Philippians 2:5, how does Paul link the characteristics sought in Philippians 2:1-4 with the humility of Jesus detailed in Philippians 2:6-8? Why is this linkage so significant? How does this linkage inform you about the proper connection between theology and practice? What happens when your theology is off base? When your practice contradicts your theology?

In what ways do contemporary Christian faith and practice fall short of the aspirations given in Mark 10:35-45 and Philippians 2:1-11? How does this reality hurt Christian witness in our day? What are some steps we can take to address the disconnect between the doctrines and deeds of Jesus Christ with the attitudes and actions of many Christians?

5 Divide into pairs or triads (groups of three) and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) No doubt you have made progress on memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10. Wonderful! If you are struggling, remember God is with you as you memorize these verses. Go as far as you’re able. You will have an opportunity next time to continue your work.

6 Talk about what is needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please read the Bible study for “Session 3: Fruit and Gifts” and be ready to share.
- Read Micah 3:1-12 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Continue your work on memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV), and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.

7 Close in prayer.



- 1 Welcome everyone and open with prayer.
- 2 Greet and “check in” with group members (5 minutes).
- 3 Share from your Personal Response Form for Micah 3:1-12 and discuss (10 minutes).
- 4 Read, study, and discuss as a group Galatians 5:16-23 and Romans 12:3-8 (35 minutes).

Read Galatians 5:16-23 and Romans 12:3-8 in a translation of your choice, then reflect upon your responses to the following questions and prompts. Feel free to write down comments, thoughts, and notes in the spaces below. When you meet as a group, read aloud Galatians 5:16-23 and Romans 12:3-8. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

Galatians 5:16-18 names “the flesh” and “the Spirit” (NIV) as constantly opposing one another. Describe these two foes. How are they battling within all followers of Jesus Christ? How are they battling within you?

Paul gives a number of characteristics of life in “the flesh,” with what some commentators call a “vice list” in Galatians 5:19-21. What are at least three observations you make about this list? Discuss the importance of the warning at the list’s end in verse 21.

Galatians 5:22-23 offers nine characteristics of life in the Spirit. What is the significance of all nine being a singular product (“fruit”) and not multiple products (“fruits”) of our ongoing transformation by the Spirit? How are these characteristics grown and nurtured? Which one do you have a better handle on than the others? Which one do you struggle with the most?

Why do you believe Paul emphasizes Christian humility in Romans 12:3? What clues do you find in Romans 12:4-8? Describe in further detail this humility and how it impacts your life.

In Romans 12:6a, Paul says, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” What do you discover by realizing your particular mix of gifts is not the same as your Christian brothers and sisters?

In Romans 12:6b-8, Paul elaborates upon several spiritual gifts and how they should be exercised. Recognizing 1) this list is not exhaustive and 2) all the gifts are important, choose a gift that stands out to you as being especially pertinent and needed by the Christian community today. When have you seen this gift at work in an especially beneficial way?

As you compare Galatians 5:22-23 with Romans 12:5-8, you discover a distinction between fruit and gifts. If you follow Christ, you should show evidence of all nine fruit in some manner, and thus you cannot get away with something like, “I’ll focus on love, but self-control is just not my thing.” But you are never expected to possess every spiritual gift, and the norm appears to be each Christian has only a few. Reflect upon this distinction and discuss with your group.

5 Divide into pairs or triads and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) Have you made progress on memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10? If so, great! If not, remember God will give you strength as you memorize these verses. Go as far as you’re able. You will have an opportunity next time to continue your work.

6 Talk about what is needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please read the Bible study for “Session 4: More about Spiritual Gifts” and be ready to share.
- Read Micah 4:1-13 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Continue your work on memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.

7 Close in prayer.



Session Four • More About Spiritual Gifts

- 1 **Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 **Greet and “check in” with group members** (5 minutes).
- 3 **Share from your Personal Response Form for Micah 4:1-13 and discuss** (10 minutes).
- 4 **Read, study, and discuss as a group 1 Corinthians 12:1–13:1** (35 minutes).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1 – 13:1 in a Bible translation of your choice, then respond to the questions below. When you meet as a group, read aloud 1 Corinthians 12:1 – 13:1. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

Paul writes, “Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed” (1 Corinthians 12:1, NIV). Many people today are uninformed about gifts. What level of familiarity do you have? Is this a first-time concept for you? Or are you a long-time advocate? Or do you fit somewhere in between? Share your history and experience.

What is the source of our spiritual gifts, according to 1 Corinthians 12:4-6? How does this source help you as you compare and contrast your spiritual gifts with what may be called your “natural talents”?

List the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and 12:28-30. (For extra credit, read Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:11-13 and then compare the lists.) Some gifts are quickly identifiable in Presbyterian circles, while others are more associated with charismatic or Pentecostal churches. Some gifts are expressed publicly, while others are used behind the scenes. What do you make of the wide variety and expressions of the gifts? How do 1 Corinthians 12:7 and 12:11 help you as you reflect upon this?

Unity is an essential part of Christian faith and practice, according to 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 and 24-26. What struggles were the first-century Christians in Corinth experiencing regarding their uni-

ty? (Hint: briefly review 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:1-7; 5:1-2; 6:1-7; 8:7-11; 11:17-22 for a snapshot of this troubled congregation.) What struggles do present-day Christians face that reveal our need for unity?

Paul uses an analogy of a human body in 1 Corinthians 12:15-27 to illustrate the importance of diversity in giftedness. What jumps out at you from this analogy? How does it help you to address a recurring error in some Christian circles of applauding some gifts to the detriment of others? Or another repeated error of expecting all Christians to have a particular gift as a sign of their piety?

What is the “most excellent way” to which Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 12:31? How do 1 Corinthians 13:1 and what then follows in 1 Corinthians 13 make this way clear? How does this way connect with the discussion last time about the dynamic between fruit and gifts?

5 Divide into pairs or triads and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) If you have memorized Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV), congratulations! If you have not memorized these verses yet, don’t worry! Say what you can. Continue to work on it. You will have an opportunity next time to show how far you have come.

6 Talk about what’s needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- *NEW: No Bible study for next time. Instead, you will take the Gifted2Serve Spiritual Gifts Inventory online at the following link: <https://buildingchurch.net/g2s/>. Read the guidelines in “Session 5: Your Spiritual Gifts Inventory”, take the inventory, and respond to the questions and prompts given in preparation for Session 5.*
- Read Micah 5:1 – 6:8 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- Work on memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) and be prepared to practice with a partner at the next session.

7 Close the gathering in prayer.

- 1 **Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 **Greet and “check in” with group members** (5 minutes).
- 3 **Share from your Personal Response Form for Micah 5:1—6:8 and discuss** (10 minutes).
- 4 **Read the guidelines for your Spiritual Gifts Inventory** (5 minutes).

There is nothing inspired or authoritative about a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. You will not find one in the Bible. Yet a solid Spiritual Gifts Inventory may provide you with helpful input as you consider (or re-consider) what gift or gifts are part of your spiritual makeup.

The **Gifted2Serve** inventory, used in MDPC’s officer training, may be found online at the following: <https://buildingchurch.net/g2s/>. Please follow these steps:

- Read the introduction and instructions for the inventory—don’t skip past this!
- Click on the “Begin **Gifted2Serve**” link to complete the inventory.
- After you finish the inventory, you will receive a report of your results.
- You can also access a list of definitions of the gifts as used for the inventory.
- Please print out your results and the gift definitions or save them to your computer so you can refer to them later as you move to #5 below.

When you receive your report, you will discover two important categories: **Primary Ministry Motivators** and **Directional Ministry Motivators**:

1. **Primary Ministry Motivators** are your predominant spiritual gifts. You will function best with and find the most satisfaction from using these gifts. Identifying these gifts will assist you toward your primary ministry in the Body of Christ.
2. **Directional Ministry Motivators** are secondary gifts that often influence strongly how you practice your primary gifts. Certain gifts in this category may increase or decrease in prominence, based on your life experiences or needs within your church community.

- 5 **After you complete your Spiritual Gifts Inventory, respond to the following questions and prompts below. Then when you meet as a group, take one question or prompt at a time, share your responses, and discuss with one another** (30 minutes).

What were your top three Primary Ministry Motivators? List them below and share them with the group.

What were your top three Directional Ministry Motivators? List them below and share them with the group.

Did any of your Primary Ministry Motivators confirm what you have known for some time in your life? If so, illustrate with an example from your experience.

Did any of your Primary Ministry Motivators surprise you? If so, describe how. What is a concrete next step you may take to use this primary gift for Christ and His Kingdom?

Which of your Directional Ministry Motivators do you see most often in action alongside your Primary Ministry Motivators? Give an example from your experience.

Did any of your Directional Ministry Motivators seem to come from “left field”? How so?

As you reviewed the gift definitions, did any of them amaze or astound you? (If you answer “none,” then you must not have reviewed the list...) Which ones? Why or how?

6 Divide into pairs or triads and practice saying the memory verse without notes (10 minutes).

(NOTE: If you are meeting via Zoom, your host will need to set up the “breakout room” feature.) If you have not memorized these verses yet, do what you’re able. Continue to work on Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV). You will have a final opportunity next time to show how far you have come.

7 Talk about what’s needed for next time (5 minutes).

Review the homework:

- Please prepare the Bible study for “Session 6: Service and Evangelism” and be ready to share.
- Read Micah 6:9—7:20 and complete the Reading Response Form in the Appendix.
- **NEW: Continue memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) and come prepared to share your verses with the entire group!**

8 Close the gathering in prayer.



- 1 Welcome everyone and open with prayer.**
- 2 Greet and “check in” with group members (5 minutes).**
- 3 Share from your Personal Response Form for Micah 6:9—7:20 and discuss (10 minutes).**
- 4 Read, study, and discuss as a group Matthew 5:13-16 (35 minutes).**

Read Matthew 5:13-16 in a Bible translation of your choice, then respond to the questions and prompts below. When you meet as a group, read aloud Matthew 5:13-16. Then take one question at a time as a group, share your responses, and discuss your answers with one another.

Matthew 5:13-16 immediately follows the Beatitudes, one of the most famous teachings by Jesus (Matthew 5:3-12). How may this setting and context guide your interpretation and application of Matthew 5:13-16?

Jesus calls His followers “the salt of the earth” in Matthew 5:13 (NIV). What about salt’s nature and characteristics make this image particularly appropriate for those who follow Jesus Christ?

Jesus also calls His followers “the light of the world” in Matthew 5:14 (NIV). Then He shares two illustrations about a city on a hill and a light placed on a stand rather than hidden under a basket. What is Jesus saying here about Christian discipleship and witness?

As a Christian, how can you personally be salt and light through your good deeds in a world often not receptive to the gospel? What challenges may you face? What opportunities may you encounter? How may you respond to them?

While all good works are worth doing, are there good works that may be especially effective or beneficial in helping people see Jesus? If so, what are they? Describe at least three helpful characteristics of these good deeds and the people who practice them.

Respond to the following statement, often erroneously attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times; when necessary, use words." Is this statement always true? What are connections between deeds and words in your faithful witness to Christ? Think of and discuss with your group at least one situation in which deeds are not enough by themselves, so words must be shared.

As we come to the end of our course, what particular good work is God leading you to focus on in the immediate days ahead? When can you start it? How can you be consistent with it? How can you maximize its usefulness for the Kingdom? What pitfalls will you need to avoid? Please be both intentional and concrete in your response.

5 Share your successful memorization of Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) with the entire group (15 minutes).

Celebrate the successes! Encourage those still working on the verses. If you have not memorized them, do as much as you're able, and then continue to work on Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV). If there is time, please share with one another what you learned from this process.

6 As you close in prayer at the end of this final session, please state to your group at least one benefit you have experienced from participating in The Serving Disciple. Give thanks to God for His grace and encouragement (10 minutes).

Reading Response Forms for Micah

For Session 2 • Micah 1:1 – 2:13

In what I read from Micah, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 3 • Micah 3:1-12

In what I read from Micah, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 4 • Micah 4:1-13

In what I read from Micah, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 5 • Micah 5:1 – 6:8

In what I read from Micah, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?

For Session 6 • Micah 6:9 – 7:20

In what I read from Micah, what has made the deepest impression upon me and why?

What may God be communicating to me as a result? How might I respond to God's leading?



Houston, Texas • mdpc.org
Adult Discipleship Ministries
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