

WEEK 4

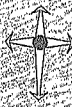
Fellowship with Believers

This Week's Goal

You will experience growth in Christ through relationships in His body.

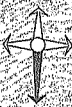
My Walk with the Master This Week

You will complete the following activities to develop the six biblical disciplines. When you have completed each activity, draw a vertical line in the diamond beside it.



SPEND TIME WITH THE MASTER

- ◇ Have a daily quiet time. Check the box beside each day you have a quiet time this week: Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday



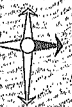
LIVE IN THE WORD

- ◇ Read your Bible every day. Write what God says to you and what you say to God.
- ◇ Memorize John 13:34-35.
- ◇ Review Luke 9:23, John 15:5, John 8:31-32, and John 15:7.



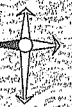
PRAY IN FAITH

- ◇ Pray with your prayer partner.
- ◇ Pray about your priorities and your use of time.
- ◇ Add requests to your Prayer-Covenant List.



FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS

- ◇ Befriend someone in the church who is not a close friend or is not in your *MasterLife* group.



WITNESS TO THE WORLD

- ◇ Plan your time, using "How to Use MasterTime" and the MasterTime form.
- ◇ Read "Redeeming the Time" and underline portions that apply to you.




MINISTER TO OTHERS

- ◇ Continue learning the Disciple's Cross. Explain the meaning of the right crossbar to add to the information about the circle and the vertical crossbar that you learned in previous weeks. Learn the Scriptures that go with each part of the cross.

This Week's Scripture-Memory Verses

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).

DAY 1



The Mark of a Disciple

When missionary Bruce Schmidt was negotiating to buy three acres of land in a Ugandan valley to begin a new work among unreached people, he found himself face to face with a leader of the Karamojong, one of the most feared tribes in East Africa. “Why are you here, and what do you want?” the chief demanded.

Bruce replied that he was in the valley because of two great things: the Great Commission, which he explained, and the Great Commandment. “In the Great Commandment Jesus said that we are to love God first and to love our neighbor as ourselves. I want to be your neighbor.”

To Bruce’s surprise, the Karamojong leader voiced no objection. Instead, he appeared to be moved by Bruce’s remarks. “Nobody wants to be the neighbor of the Karamojong. We are the most despised tribe in Uganda. All of our neighboring tribes have had their cattle stolen, their women raped, and their men murdered. We can’t believe you want to be our neighbor!” the man exclaimed.

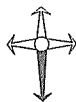
By the time the meeting ended, God had melted hearts of stone. This feared Karamojong tribe ultimately gave Bruce and his coworkers 30 acres of land for their new mission work—all because of neighborly love that Bruce extended in Jesus Christ. Although most of us are not placed in a foreign land with hostile tribes as neighbors, we often face hostility as Christians in an evil world. Like Bruce, we are to love our neighbors.

As we stay connected to people in fellowship and as we love one another, we gain strength from one another.

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”
(John 13:34-35).*

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

Jesus never intended for you to operate in a vacuum. You cannot be a balanced Christian if you neglect loving relationships with others. If you try to live apart from the fellowship of other believers—the church, which is Christ’s body—you will not experience fullness of life in Christ. The Lord put us in a body of believers because sustaining life outside the body is difficult. As we stay connected to people in fellowship and as we love one another, we gain strength from one another.



Read this week’s Scripture-memory verses, John 13:34-35, in the margin. What did Jesus say identifies His disciples?

Now go back and read John 13:34-35 aloud from one to three times to begin memorizing these verses.

Jesus said that one identifying mark of a disciple is your love for others. Love shows the world that you are His disciple. Loving others and

being involved in harmonious fellowship with them show that Christ is at the center of your life. Loving relationships are at the very heart of life in Christ. He shows you Himself through fellowship with others. Jesus did not tell His followers to go it alone but to demonstrate the love He modeled for them. You do this in fellowship with other believers.

**Love shows the world
that you are His disciple.**

Read the following case studies.

Martha loved the outdoors and enjoyed long walks in the woods. Although Martha was a Christian, she did not attend church, reciting an excuse many people use: "I can worship God better when I'm enjoying His creation." Members of a Bible-study group invited her to attend, but Martha chose to pursue her outdoor interests instead.

Joe had given his life to Christ several years ago but had never become involved in a church. Even though members of a church in his neighborhood visited him, Joe declined to attend. A shy person, Joe could not imagine himself conversing with strangers.

Underline the excuses Martha and Joe used for declining to fellowship with believers. What kinds of activities do you choose to do instead of fellowship with believers? List them.

Exploring God's creation is a wonderful way to be aware of His blessings and glory, but it does not take the place of the fellowship Christ intended for you to have with other believers. Shyness around others is a painful matter for some people, but the Father can give you strength to overcome weaknesses so that you can be part of the body. When you have life in Christ and abide in Him, you follow His commands. John 15:12 says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Why does John 15:12 say that you are to love other persons?

John 15:12 says that you are to love other persons because Christ commanded it. Love flows from God through Christ to humankind. Having modeled love for you, Christ commands you to exhibit it to others. Shutting yourself off from the fellowship of others impairs your ability to show love to others and prevents their exhibiting love to you. Your local church represents the body of Christ, in which you can fellowship with other believers. Hebrews 10:24-25, in the margin, clearly teaches that we are to meet together with other believers.

"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pet. 4:10).

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love” (John 15:9).

Isolation and individualism are not Christ’s ways. Christ brings believers together as a family. We should encourage our fellow Christians to express love for one another. Worshiping together is one way we gain strength and motivation from other disciples. As the verse from 1 Peter in the margin indicates, Christians are to be part of a body of believers, using their gifts to serve others and receiving instruction from God’s Word. Anyone who professes to be a Christian but does not attend church is disregarding God’s Word and is living outside His will.

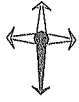
The abundant love God the Father has for His Son, Jesus Christ, is the source of the love the Son has for His followers. It is also the model for the love you are to have for others. The depths of Jesus’ love, which led Him to the cross, should not surprise you, because it is modeled in the love the Father has for the Son. Read John 15:9 in the margin.

LEARNING THE DISCIPLE’S CROSS

The fourth discipline of a disciple’s life, then, is fellowshiping with believers. You will study this discipline this week as you continue to learn and add to the Disciple’s Cross. While the vertical crossbar you have studied for the past two weeks emphasizes your relationship with Christ through the Word and prayer, the horizontal crossbar you will study this week and in week 5 stresses the importance of your relationship with others through fellowship and witness.



Draw the portions of the Disciple’s Cross you have studied. Draw a circle with *Christ* in the center and draw the lower crossbar with *Word* written on it. Then draw the upper crossbar with *prayer* written on it. Add the verses that apply. Now draw the right crossbar and write *fellowship* on it. Under *fellowship* write *John 13:34-35*, the verses that accompany it. Refer to the completed cross on page 136 if you need help.



Continue reading your Bible daily during your quiet time. Today read I Corinthians 12:12-31, which depicts the special relationship between you and other Christians. After you have read this passage, complete the Daily Master Communication Guide in the margin.

DAY 2



The Gift of Accountability

God has shown me many times that I can do nothing without the fellowship of believers in the body of Christ. When I was in college, my friends and I decided to conduct a huge youth revival in my friend's hometown of Borger, Texas. We secured the high-school auditorium, put up huge billboards, announced the event on the radio, and delivered posters to stores. But at the last minute high-school officials told us that church leaders in the community—members of our own denomination—had pressured the school not to let us use the facility. Because we had not sought the local churches' involvement in advance, our plan was backfiring.

I prayed, "Lord, You cannot let us down after we have done so much to prepare," but He taught us another lesson: that we could do nothing without Him. We had undertaken this task on our own for God rather than asking what He wanted. We had talked and prayed about the revival but had then gone ahead with our plans.

This experience was a crushing defeat but a lesson well learned. We left town, convinced that we would not again try to do anything without God's direct leadership and without working within the framework of the local church.

Have you ever had a disappointing experience in Christian service because you were working outside the fellowship of believers?

Yes No If so, describe your experience.

My friends and I had not first prayed in faith for God's direction before we proceeded. We had not asked God to search our hearts to determine whether selfish motives and desires for success were driving our plans. We had not sought the local churches' support. We had failed to live as part of the body of Christ.

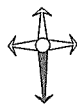
DAILY MASTER
COMMUNICATION
GUIDE



I CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

What God said to me:

What I said to God:



Say aloud your memory verses for the week. Write what these verses say about the importance of fellowshiping with Christ's people.

You may have answered something like this: I may be obedient to Christ in a number of ways, but unless I demonstrate love for His people, I do not show that I am His disciple.

GOD WORKS THROUGH OTHERS

Many times God reveals Himself through the individuals He places in your path. Life in Christ includes trying to live in fellowship with your brothers and sisters. Often through that fellowship others speak a God-anointed word to you that helps you see a problem more clearly or make the right decision. Christian friends can help hold you accountable for times when you get off course. They can remind you of what the Word says. They can lovingly help you recognize your misplaced priorities. The Father works through others in the church to accomplish His will in your life.

Many times God reveals Himself through the individuals He places in your path.

Read these case studies and answer the questions that follow.

Anita and her grown daughter had not spoken in years. Anita longed to make relations right between them. She invited her daughter home for a special weekend to attempt to repair their relationship. Anita spent every spare moment of the weekend cooking food for her daughter and buying her presents, hoping these actions would make her daughter want to be close to her. She also asked her friends at church to pray for them.

How could Anita's friends at church show love for her?

Charles worked two jobs to provide income for his family. He was away from home so much that he was seldom available to his wife and children. His children wanted him to attend their sports games and school events, but Charles had to miss most of them. He managed to take his family to church about twice a month.

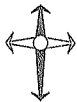
How could fellowship with other believers help Charles?

In Anita's story you may have noted that Christian friends could have visited with Anita and prayed with her about her daughter. Without necessarily giving her advice, they could have helped Anita examine her choices. What had she done to make things right? Had Anita apologized to her daughter for any wrong on her part? Had she discussed the situation with her pastor or with a Christian counselor? Christian friends could invite Anita to church activities to give her other focuses in her life. They could lovingly model ways she could connect with the Vine as the source of help.

For Charles's situation you may have replied that Christian friends could help with his employment situation. They could help him network among church members to find a job with better pay, which would eliminate the need for two jobs. They could invite him to family activities planned by the church to provide opportunities for him to be with his children in a church setting. Men could include him in their accountability-and-support group. They could lovingly help Charles see his children's need for him and could help him connect with the Vine as the source of power.

AN INSTRUMENT OF CHRIST'S LOVE

If you want to be Jesus' true disciple and to have a personal, lifelong, obedient relationship with Him, you will show love for others by fellowshiping with them and by being Christ's instrument in their lives. Christ's love can flow through you to them. You can help them be all Christ wants them to be. The right crossbar of fellowship on the Disciple's Cross reminds you of the importance of your relationships with others.



Say aloud your Scripture-memory verses for this week, John 13:34-35. Say them to your prayer partner in your prayer time this week.



Read 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13 during your quiet time. Let God speak to you through this passage about loving one another. After reading this passage, complete the Daily Master Communication Guide in the margin.

**DAILY MASTER
COMMUNICATION
GUIDE**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:31-13:13

What God said to me:

What I said to God:

DAY 3



Help for Withered Christians

Fellowship with other Christians is also crucial to avoid withering in your Christian life.

Fellowship with other Christians is also crucial to avoid withering in your Christian life. Roy Edgemon, my longtime colleague and one of the “three men at the gate” who encouraged me to bring *MasterLife* to the United States, recalls a time when the fellowship of other Christians—the aspect of the Disciple’s Cross you are studying this week—helped revive him in the midst of spiritual withering.

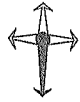
As a busy pastor in Texas, Roy was almost burned out from church building programs and heavy involvement in state denominational leadership. One night a missionary from Africa named Bud Frey conducted a rally at Roy’s church in Odessa, Texas. As Frey described a recent period of spiritual withering and exhaustion, “I could tell he had been in the same shape I was in,” Roy said. Frey said a Christian friend admonished him, “You’re a Bud Frey cause, not a Jesus cause.” The friend urged him to “find out how the Lord needs to have His way with you.” Frey said he began learning how to be a Jesus cause, changing his lifestyle to ensure a daily quiet time and a more personal relationship with Christ.

Roy took out a slip of paper, wrote a note, and passed it down the aisle to Frey. The note said, “If you know how I can stop this world long enough to get off, I want to talk to you.” But to Roy’s embarrassment, before the note could make its way down the aisle to Frey, a friend, Bill Hogue, read the message and wrote under Roy’s comment, “Me too.”

“I didn’t want anyone to know I was in that kind of shape,” said Roy. But Roy, Bill Hogue, and their wives spent most of the remainder of the night talking and praying with Bud Frey. The meeting resulted in life change for Roy, he said.

“I started getting up in the morning and praying regularly,” Roy recalls. “Before, if we didn’t have decisions in every service, I had taken it as a personal defeat. I was doing the Lord’s work but wasn’t letting the Lord work through me.” Fellowship with other Christians who shared their own brokenness helped encourage and restore this pastor to a life of usefulness in God’s kingdom.

Has fellowship with a Christian friend ever helped you when you were withering spiritually and were not experiencing a victorious life in Christ? Yes No If so, describe this experience.



Read 2 Timothy 1:1-14, which depicts the special relationship between Paul and Timothy, during your quiet time today. After you have read this passage, complete the Daily Master Communication Guide in the margin.

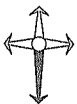
A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

You can also encourage others as you become an instrument of Christ. What happens to your fellow church members is important to you. First Corinthians 12:27 says, "You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." If one member of the body withers—experiences illness, loss, or a diminished spiritual life—the entire body suffers, including you. The body cares for each member of the body so that together all of the members become more complete in Christ's love.

Fellowship among Christians can span the globe, thanks to modern technological methods such as electronic mail. One of my colleagues at work regularly uses electronic mail to encourage a pastor in another state who is experiencing interpersonal challenges in his congregation. This fellowship across the miles and computer networks can help remedy the isolation and loneliness of pastors who sometimes feel that they have few confidantes in their communities. Christians urgently need fellowship with other believers.

SHARING WHAT GOD IS DOING

God may want you to help build up the body by sharing what He is doing in your life. Have you shared with other believers ways you are growing in Christ as you learn what being His disciple means? You can tell others about your experiences of praying in faith, memorizing Scripture, or a daily quiet time. Sharing your experiences may lead another person to seek a closer relationship with the Lord.



As you work today on this week's Scripture-memory verses, John 13:34-35, tell someone how you have grown in Christ from the practice of memorizing Scripture.

Stop and pray, asking God to show you how He wants you to work within the body of Christ to encourage others.

DAILY MASTER COMMUNICATION GUIDE

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14

What God said to me:

What I said to God:

DAY 4

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What Christ Expects

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:9,12-13).

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Prov. 17:17).

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Matt. 18:15).

“Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it” (Jas. 4:11).

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

When disciples fellowship with other believers, they take care to develop Christ-honoring relationships with others. Relationships do not just happen. They require careful cultivation and nurture. Because all of us have sinful natures, we can fall into patterns of thoughtlessness in the way we treat others. Hatred, snobbery, jealousy, and backbiting have no place in the life of a follower of Christ. The Scriptures instruct us about how Christ expects us to treat others with whom we fellowship.

FRIENDSHIP: A HIGH PRIORITY
Read John 15:9,12-13 in the margin.

Why are you to love other persons?

At the heart of friendship is the willingness to _____ if necessary.

You should love other persons because of the love that flows from God through Christ to you. Jesus put so much value on friendship and fellowship that He said friends should be willing even to give their lives for one another if necessary. Jesus made friendship a high priority! Jesus laid down His life for others, and later, some of His disciples did, too. Fellowshiping with other believers and loving those believers with the kind of sacrificial love that Jesus demonstrated are important parts of life in Christ and of a lifelong, obedient relationship with Him.

Examine what the Bible says about the way friends are to act toward one another. Read the verses in the margin. Then match each reference in the left column with the correct statement in the right column.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Proverbs 17:17 | a. Friends care enough to confront one another in love if necessary. |
| ___ 2. Matthew 18:15 | b. Friends do not gossip or make hurtful remarks about one another. |
| ___ 3. James 4:11 | c. Friends want the best for one another and therefore present the gospel to friends who do not know Christ. |
| ___ 4. 1 John 1:3 | d. Friends love one another regardless of the situations they face. |

Now review the previous statements which describe characteristics of friendship. Draw a star beside the trait or traits that represent the biggest challenges in your friendships. Stop and pray that God will change you in these areas through Christ's love.

Was one of the statements you checked item a—caring enough to confront? People sometimes struggle with this issue, believing that confronting a friend is not Christlike because it seems to call for hostility. Actually, confronting a friend in love is a very caring act. Sometimes people tell others that they have a problem with a friend yet never go directly to that person. That type of indirect communication can hurt the relationship. It can also hurt the body of Christ. Disagreements between individuals in a church can escalate, widening their circle to include others. Eventually, small disputes can develop into major rifts that prevent the body of Christ from doing its work.

Jesus was very clear about how Christians are to resolve difficulties face to face. These Bible verses tell you how a follower of Christ relates to others. You can learn loving, diplomatic ways to communicate how you feel so that such communication strengthens and does not harm the relationship. The correct answers to the previous exercise are 1. d, 2. a, 3. b, 4. c. Book 4 discusses more about how to reconcile broken relationships.

THE COST OF NEGLECTING RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes you may find that you have closed yourself off from persons who care about you. Do you shut out persons rather than get involved in their lives? Do you avoid persons rather than risk cultivating relationships? Because you have been hurt in past friendships perhaps you withdraw rather than make yourself vulnerable again. Even if you attend church, you may not allow friendships to form there. You may think you can attend, listen to the sermon, and then spend the rest of the week avoiding fellow believers who might want to get involved in your life.

In the previous paragraph underline statements or questions with which you can identify.

If you avoid fellowshipping with believers because you do not want to risk relationships, you miss opportunities to serve your family in Christ. When difficulties come your way, relationships with other believers can provide resources to meet your needs. The most serious result of neglecting fellowship with believers is that it inevitably creates distance between you and God.



Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13 today during your quiet time. After you have read about Paul's love for and ministry with the Christians at Thessalonica, complete the Daily Master Communication Guide in the margin.

DAILY MASTER COMMUNICATION GUIDE

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-13

What God said to me:

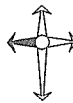
What I said to God:

Paul's example with the Thessalonians can guide you in relating to your *MasterLife* group members. Likely by now, after four group sessions together, you are forming a special bond with your group members. Although you may not have known some of these persons well before you began studying *MasterLife*, long, enduring friendships can form as a result of this fellowship. You may begin to see in these persons some of the traits of friendship you studied on page 82. Be thankful for the trust, support, and fellowship that have begun to develop.

Take to heart John 15:12-13, the verses you have read several times this week, and lovingly lift your group members to the Father in prayer. Stop now and pray for each of your *MasterLife* group members by name. Ask God to bless each person through this study. Ask Him to help you be available as a friend to your fellow members.

USING YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY

A lack of time is an excuse you may use when you assess why you do not take advantage of—or create—opportunities to fellowship with believers. Perhaps you have already had difficulty finding time to do your daily assignments. For the rest of today and in day 5 you will learn ways to be a better steward of your time.



The following suggestions can help you use your time more effectively. As you read them, underline statements that seem relevant to you.

REDEEMING THE TIME

We search for time and yearn for more. Time has become our most cherished possession. Our world focuses on the race against time, and the clock dictates the tempo of our lives.

Ask God's Purpose for Our Time

Time is God's gift to us. The art of having time occurs when we live according to God's purposes. We are responsible to Him for every minute He gives us. If we listen to Him more carefully, our lives are more harmonious. When we treat time as a gift from God, we spend our time in ways that are more consistent with His purposes. We become good stewards of our time. We find that the events of our lives flow together more smoothly and that we have more time to do the things that need to be done.

Ask God's Direction for the Day

Time is an opportunity God gives us to discover and carry out His purposes. If we believe that Christ is the Lord of our time, we can believe that He has a design for this day, as well as for our entire lives. Knowing and doing God's will for our lives involves knowing and doing God's will for this day in our lives.

When we treat time as a gift from God, we spend our time in ways that are more consistent with His purposes.

Prioritize What You Do Before You Do It

The apostle Paul said that wisdom is related to the use of time: “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). The word translated “making the most of every opportunity” literally means “buying up every chance” or snapping up bargains at a sale. God’s time is a priceless commodity. He calls us to invest our opportunities in worthwhile pursuits. The wise use of time means being alert to every opportunity for Christian ministry and witness. Seize the critical moment when it arrives: the chance encounter, the turn in conversation, the unplanned incident. Be prepared, expect such opportunities, and grasp them. Do not miss a chance to do Christ’s work at the wise moment!

The wise use of time means being alert to every opportunity for Christian ministry and witness.

Do It in Priority Order, but Leave Yourself

Open for God to Redirect You

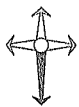
We experience freedom when we obey God’s purposes. Jesus was a truly free but purposeful person living an unhurried life. Jesus had plenty of time to speak to a foreign woman he met at a well, to spend holidays with His disciples, to admire the lilies of the field, to wash His disciples’ feet, to answer their naive questions patiently. Most important, He had time to spend a whole night in prayer before an important decision.

A time of quiet meditation is good for our spiritual lives. We rediscover how to take things easily, how to rest as God commanded, how to meditate and pray. In quietness we rediscover the inner peace the world needs. We make a clear distinction between what is really important and what is secondary.

Check the benefits you are receiving from your daily quiet time.


- Learning how to take things easily
- Learning how to rest as God commanded
- Learning how to meditate and pray
- Rediscovering inner peace
- Learning to distinguish between what is really important and what is secondary

Draw a star beside the above area or areas you still need to work on.



Continue to memorize this week’s Scripture-memory verses, John 13:34-35. Write them in the margin from one to three times. Review the verses you memorized earlier.

DAY 5



The Model of Friendship

Fellowship was the centerpiece of one of Jesus' last messages to His disciples as He was on the way to the cross. He wanted to tell His most beloved followers all they would need to know to carry on His work after He was no longer on earth physically.

"You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:14-15).

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other" (John 15:16-17).

"My prayer is ... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. 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" (John 17:20-22).

Read John 15:14-15 in the margin. Underline two things Jesus considered important to communicate to His disciples.

Jesus wanted the disciples to know that He considered them friends, not servants. Their relationship was that of friends who loved one another in fellowship. He also wanted them to know that He had taught them everything He learned from His Father. Unlike the guarded way someone would treat servants, the Master openly discussed His business with the disciples. Jesus was reminding His disciples that they would have all the knowledge they needed to do His work after He was gone.

Like the disciples, you have all the knowledge you need to do the Father's work. The marching orders for discipleship that Jesus gave His followers are the same orders today for your lifelong, obedient relationship with Christ. Jesus is your friend. He set the model for fellowship, and you as His disciple can act on that model.

In John 15:16-17, in the margin, underline the three things Jesus wanted to happen in the lives of His disciples.

This passage emphasizes the high priority Jesus placed on fellowship with believers. He emphasized three reasons He chose the disciples: He appointed them to (1) bear fruit, (2) ask the Father in His name, and (3) love one another. In week 3 you learned about the second of those reasons as you studied praying in faith. You will study more in week 5 about bearing fruit. The third priority, loving one another, is the emphasis of this week's study. Christian love is not the identifying mark of extraordinary disciples—those who go beyond the call of duty. It is the identifying mark of all disciples. Those who obey His commands love one another.

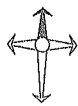
A STRONG BODY

The encouragement that springs from fellowship with believers also gives you strength to witness. John 17:20-22, in the margin, describes the complete unity that Christ wants in the body. People who are united in Christ can be effective witnesses for Him. Jesus wanted unity, not division, in the church so that others would believe in Him. A church

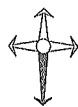
with members who argue and fail to demonstrate love to one another does not appear to a lost world as if it has something to offer.

Furthermore, believers need one another's encouragement when they try to win others to Christ. Fellow church members can pray for you, encourage you, and help ground you in Scripture as you prepare to share your faith. The church can make you feel useful and supported when you witness to persons who need the Lord.

If you have friends, coworkers, family members, or other acquaintances who do not know Jesus, perhaps you have listed them on your Prayer-Covenant List. Continue to pray in faith that you will seek strength from the body of Christ for witnessing opportunities that the Father puts in your path. Pray that God will give you an opportunity and will help you plan a time to share about your relationship with Christ.



Stop now and review your Prayer-Covenant List. Perhaps this day's study has brought other persons or requests to mind. Add them to the list now.



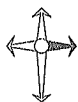
Say aloud your Scripture-memory verses, John 13:34-35, to someone you consider to be a caring friend. Use this as an opportunity to thank this person for his or her friendship.



Again read John 15 in your quiet time today. This time look for teachings about the discipline a Christian needs to fellowship with believers. After reading, complete the Daily Master Communication Guide in the margin.

MOVING BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Perhaps fellowshipping with believers is easy for you as long as you are within your comfort zone. You likely have a comfortable circle of friends in your Bible-study group, in your *MasterLife* group, or in another area of your church. But when Christ commands you to love others, He does not put restrictions on those you are to love. Sometimes you may need to reach outside your close circle of friends to extend fellowship.



Befriend someone in your church or at work who is not in your close circle of friends or in your *MasterLife* group.

When you think about extending yourself outside your familiar circle, the old protest about time may arise again. You may counter: I barely have time for myself and my family's needs. How can you ask me to take time to get to know someone else? Yesterday you read about redeeming the time to become a better steward of your time. Today you will learn to use a MasterTime form to set your priorities. You will find the MasterTime form on page 138.

Although I like to do things spontaneously, I have learned that in order to get the priority things done, I must plan my schedule every

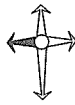
DAILY MASTER COMMUNICATION GUIDE

JOHN 15

What God said to me:

What I said to God:

day, using the MasterTime process. I never get everything I planned to do finished, but at least I know that I have done the priority things. If I do not prioritize my time, others will prioritize it for me.



Here are directions for using MasterTime. As you read, underline portions that seem important to you.

HOW TO USE MASTERTIME

1. Trust the Lord to direct you in all you do: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way" (Prov. 3:5-6, GNT).
 - Ask God to show you His purposes for you in His kingdom: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).
 - Make annual, monthly, and weekly lists of the major goals you believe God has given you.
2. Plan your daily work under the Master's leadership: "You may make your plans, but God directs your actions" (Prov. 16:9, GNT).
 - List on the MasterTime form the things you need to do by basic categories. Plan one day or each day for a week, including all areas of your life: God, family, church, and recreation.
 - Write under the "Time" column on the form the amount of time you estimate you need to complete each task. You may prefer to write the time of day you plan to do it, for example, "See Mr. Jones, 9:00-9:30 a.m."
 - Rank the tasks according to your priorities and write that number in the "Priority" column on the form. You may choose to rank only within categories, since you can save time by doing similar tasks in order, such as telephoning. You may also rank them without any regard to category. Minutes spent in planning save hours. Set aside time for planning at the beginning of each day. Ten or 15 minutes will save hours later.
3. "Ask the Lord to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out" (Prov. 16:3, GNT).
4. Depend on the Lord to direct your actions: "You may make your plans, but God directs your actions" (Prov. 16:9, GNT).
 - Do the tasks in the order planned to save time and to receive immediate direction about the next task to do.
 - When God directs you otherwise, follow His immediate leading. Interruptions and unplanned events are sometimes God's ways to get you to do His will. However, ask His leadership, because Satan can also stop you from doing God's will. Ask yourself:

Plan your daily work under the Master's leadership.

Depend on the Lord to direct your actions.

- Is this one of God's priorities I might not have anticipated?
- Is God trying to teach me something?
- Does He want me to help someone I had not considered?
- Does it contribute to one of my long-range goals? If so, is it a high enough priority to interrupt my list of priorities for today?
- Is it important or merely urgent?
- Is this the best time to do it? Could I do it some other time?
- Can it be delegated to someone else?
- How much do someone else's responsibilities depend on my doing this task at this time?

5. Discipline yourself to carry out your plans: "It is better to win control over yourself than whole cities" (Prov. 16:32, GNT).
 - The key to self-control is Master control.
 - When you fail, do not waste time blaming yourself and feeling guilty. Ask forgiveness and submit yourself to the Master's will.
6. Leave the results to God. "Men cast lots to learn God's will, but God himself determines the answer" (Prov. 16:33, GNT).

At the end of the day, after you have used your MasterTime form, reevaluate unfinished tasks. Do not worry about being unable to do everything you planned, since you did the most important things in priority under God's direction. Leave them to the Lord tonight and add them to tomorrow's list with the priority each deserves that day.

Evaluate how often you feel that you accomplish the goals in "How to Use MasterTime." Circle the appropriate number: 4 = always, 3 = usually, 2 = often, 1 = sometimes. Then pray about areas in which you need to improve.

I trust the Lord to direct me in all I do.

4 3 2 1

I plan my daily work under the Master's leadership.

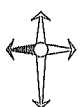
4 3 2 1

I ask the Lord to bless my plans.

4 3 2 1

I depend on the Lord to direct my actions.

4 3 2 1



Now begin to plan your time, using "How to Use MasterTime" and the MasterTime form on page 138. Use the MasterTime principles for at least the next six weeks. Feel free to make copies of the form as needed. If you already use another system for time management, apply these same principles to that process.

Do not worry about being unable to do everything you planned, since you did the most important things in priority under God's direction.



Stop and pray, asking God to help you establish Christ-honoring priorities and to help you use your time wisely.

If you manage your life so that you keep a proper balance, you can keep ministering to others without depleting your spiritual resources.

LEARNING THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS

You can use the Disciple's Cross to keep your time priorities balanced and to work toward the goals in "How to Use MasterTime." The cross shows two means of intake for a Christian: prayer and God's Word. It shows two means of output: fellowship and witness. You will study about witness in week 5. If you manage your life so that you keep a proper balance between intake and output, spiritual and physical growth, mental and social stimulation, and time for your needs and those of others, you can keep ministering to others without depleting your spiritual resources.



To summarize what you have learned this week, draw the portions of the Disciple's Cross you have studied, with the verses that accompany each discipline. At the next group session be ready to explain what you have learned about the cross.

HAS THIS WEEK MADE A DIFFERENCE?

Review "My Walk with the Master This Week" at the beginning of this week's material. Mark the activities you have finished by drawing vertical lines in the diamonds beside them. Finish any incomplete activities. Think about what you will say during your group session about your work on these activities.

As you complete your study of "Fellowship with Believers," I hope that you asked Christ to examine areas in which you are not loving others as He commanded. Sometimes this kind of examination is uncomfortable. Your best intentions will not make you a disciple of Christ until you follow His command about fellowship and loving others.