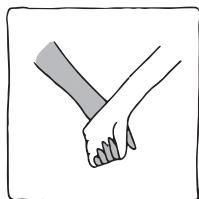




## Spiritual Companions: Opening Question (15 minutes)



Call to Community

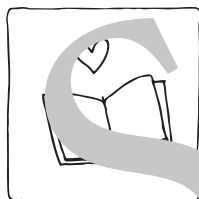


Call to Witness

**TEACHING NOTES:** Invite participants to get into pairs with their Spiritual Companions, and share:

- Talk about the key people who have made a difference in your life.
- After you're done sharing about these questions, you can also share with your Spiritual Companion: What did God give you this week in your 7 veils?

## Trust the Process (5 minutes)



Call to Devotion

**TEACHING NOTES:** The original version of this illustration can be found in *Deep Calling*, Chapter 20, or Chapter 3 of this curriculum. You can read it from there, or give a more generalized illustration as follows.

If you travel to China, you can visit many temples and gardens. There, you can find varieties of bamboo that, when planted, show no signs of growth for up to four years. Then, in the fifth year, the plant can grow up to 40 feet in that one year! When it looks like nothing is happening, roots are growing invisibly beneath the surface, giving the plant the support to sustain the growth that is coming.

The same is true of the discipleship process. You cannot sit alone in the presence of God, with the Word, inviting the Holy Spirit, and have nothing happen. You may not be aware of something happening, but it is happening. When you're sitting there and you think nothing is happening, roots are deepening to sustain the growth that is coming in your life.

## Teaching: Learning Styles (10 minutes)



Call to Devotion

**TEACHING NOTES:** This section focuses on how people learn differently. Participants bring with them their preferred learning styles. This is why the teacher must vary their techniques in order to engage each of these learning styles.

Experience-based learning is so powerful because we remember things better when we actually do them. When we experience things, we know rather than know about. Experiences are inductive rather than deductive. Learning is direct rather than vicarious. We discover meaning for ourselves and validate our own experiences.

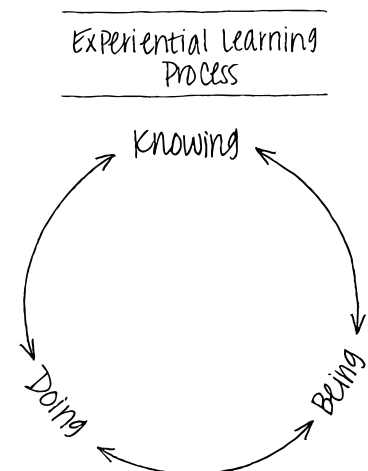
One paradigm for learning is called the Experiential Learning Cycle (which was adapted from psychologist David Kolb's Learning Cycle).

1. **Experiencing.** Gather data: study, explore, examine.
2. **Snaring.** Share observations and reactions from phase 1.
3. **Processing.** Systematic examination of the shared experience — focus on the process.
4. **Generalizing.** Connecting structured experiences to practical everyday life.
5. **Applying.** Learning impacting behavior. Applying to actual life situations.

This is why activity-based learning is so important. Experiential learning is a relational experience. You can also see why this process is so much more powerful in a group. Our learning goes beyond just experiencing; we have to share it with someone and have someone to help us process and apply it. This is why God invites us into community; God partners with people to connect with us and help us learn in more powerful, long-lasting ways.

Another paradigm for learning that can be helpful is as follows:

- Knowing.** Cognitive Level (knowledge, understanding)
- Being.** Affective Level (attitude, heart)
- Doing.** Behavioral Level (practices, skills)



In spiritual learning, we tend to think there is only one way to learn and connect with God, but in all other learning, we acknowledge that there are so many different ways people learn. You may have learned a certain style to connect to God and it might not be the style that is most natural for you.

## Perception Check

**TEACHING NOTES:** Ask participants to turn to someone near them and talk about their “light bulb” moments and learning experiences thus far.

We are going to try to incorporate a variety of these learning styles throughout, which means some exercises won't be your cup of tea; I'd encourage you to engage nonetheless and stretch yourself. Who knows how God might show up in surprising new ways for you?!

## Devotional Experience: Psalm 91:1, 2 Handout (20 minutes)

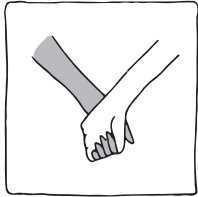


Call to Devotion

**TEACHING NOTES:** Give participants a handout with just these two verses on a large piece of paper: Psalm 91:1,2.

We're going to have a time of quiet prayer now. Your focus will be on Psalm 91:1,2. Reflect on these questions: What do you love about God? What do you adore? Take 20 minutes with these two verses. Sit with the verses. Do not strain. Put aside expectation. Don't be concerned about great moments of silence, when nothing is happening. Maybe start with a song to center yourself on God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be with you. Then, look at the text line by line. What individual words stand out to you? What do these words mean to you? Contemplate and reflect on the words. Ask yourself: what is hindering me from dwelling here with God? Perhaps you could pray: “God, I'm under a lot of pressure and heat; lead me to your shadow. You are my refuge Oh God.”

## Small Group Time (15 minutes)



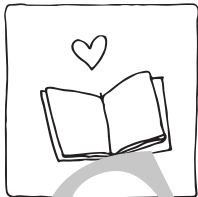
Call to Community



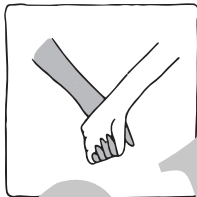
Call to Witness

**TEACHING NOTES:** Invite the participants to get into their Small Groups and share: “What did God share with you?”

## Teaching: Devotional Habits (15 minutes)



Call to Devotion



Call to Community

“We finally believe this radical truth that change is possible. Transformation, becoming something different than we are today, is possible. The Spirit is here. The way you are today is not the way you must be tomorrow. The way the church is now is not the way the church will always be. The hurting, suffering, and pain that exists now is not the way it will always be. This is true of the future promise of God in the coming of Jesus, but also true of the way the people of God are able to relieve the suffering of those around us today.”

— DEEP CALLING, CHAPTER 10, PAGE 120, 121

Devotional habits are uniquely designed by God for us to receive grace by allowing us to place ourselves before God, so that God can transform us! We must always remember that the path does not produce the change, it only puts us in the place where the change can occur. Devotional habits are not the means of change; they are the path that opens us up to God and God does the changing.

Engaging in devotional habits simply means learning from Jesus — how we arrange our lives around activities that enable us to spend time in the presence of God. The question is “How?” How are we going to arrange our lives around these habits? That’s where the intentionality comes in. How will I arrange my life around this priority?

**TEACHING NOTES:** Review what you discussed about devotional habits in Session 2.

On the dry erase board, make a column for Habits of Disengagement and a column for Habits of Engagement. Underneath each, write the examples you brainstormed and discussed in the previous session. Invite the participants to think of anything else to add to the lists. To help encourage their brainstorming, be sure to talk of these habits in ways the participants can really hear. We often talk about the disciplines in words that are disconnected from everyday, rather than something relatable. For example, when talking about disengagement and unplugging — things like solitude and silence — you can focus on how habits can give us freedom from distraction. You could connect the idea of unplugging to real life — if I’m using my phone for a Bible, it can be harder to unplug and engage because I’ll be getting texts and notifications that will distract me. Instead, it can be better to either turn your phone on “Do Not Disturb” or use a paper Bible to help stay focused.

If not already on the board, you can suggest the following:

#### **Habits of Disengagement**

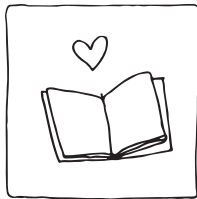
- Getting alone with God
- Unplugging
- Christian reflection
- Sabbath
- Solitude
- Silence
- Fasting

#### **Habits of Engagement**

- Bible reading/reflection
- Prayer as conversation
- Praise
- Bible study
- Worship
- Community
- Service
- Prayer and meditation

The purpose of all of this is to get into the presence of God and to be in a reflective mindset there. You will find yourself being more reflective about all of life — more discerning — as you reflect with Christ. Reflection can take many forms. It can be awareness of where God is at work, reflection on Scripture, integration of Scripture into our lives, theological reflection, meditation, engagement with God and in the world, contemplation, etc.

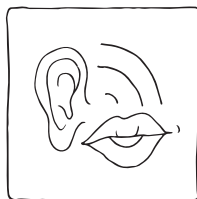
### Engaging: Praise Activity (30 minutes)



Call to Devotion



Call to Witness



Call to Prayer

Tonight, we're going to focus on the devotional habit of praise. Do you know the difference between Thanksgiving and Praise? Thanksgiving is being grateful for what God has done. Praise is being grateful for who God is. When we praise, we look beyond our circumstances and focus on the qualities of God we can always depend on. To set the scene, we're going to watch this clip from the "How Great is Our God" presentation by Leslie Gign.

**TEACHING NOTE:** Play one of the links below, the first 10 minutes.

<http://youtu.be/RKMw1ndI-EY>

<https://youtu.be/rRiIWLO4po8> (Alternate version)

**TEACHING NOTES:** Progression comes in small steps. From good to better to best. Your goal in this activity is to move them into what they most appreciate about God. You lead the process, step by step, into where you want them to go. Pause after each instruction point below and allow them time to reflect and pray. Then proceed to guide them to keep narrowing it down until they're focusing on just one attribute of God. Then surprise them with the invitation to draw the picture. This drawing is a non-threatening activity; it isn't meant to be an artistic masterpiece, but rather to engage them in another way of connecting with God.

Take some time on your own, with your journal (or a piece of paper).

1. First, I want you to sit there for a moment of quietness. Say in your heart, “This is going to be about God.” Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind and heart, five attributes of God — five things of WONDER about God. Write them down as they come to you.
2. Next, quietly go through the five, reflecting on each one.
3. Narrow the five down to two. For whatever reason moves you, go for your top two.
4. Then go from two to one.
5. Spend some time again reflecting on that one.
6. Then draw a picture of that attribute of God.
7. When I announce that time is up, I want you to come back to your group and share that picture.

**TEACHING NOTES:** After you’ve moved through this exercise, announce the end of their time for drawing and invite them to

1. Share with one other person your picture of God.  
Then find a different partner and describe for that person your previous partner’s picture of God (you don’t need to have their drawing, just describe it).

We don’t take enough time to wonder at God. Praise is a powerful way of being aware, at any moment in the day, of the One who is present with us.

**My invitation to you this week is to praise God for one characteristic each day.** You can do it in the morning when you’re reading your one verse for the day, or you can do it at lunch, or in the evening before bed. Or you can do it whenever it comes to mind throughout the day. Whenever you do it, I encourage you to take a moment and write it down. Write the characteristic you are praising God for.

**TEACHING NOTES:** Some additional suggestions for resources and activities around praising and giving thanks in every day ways:

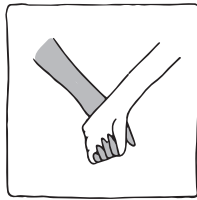
- *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* by Tish Harrison Warren
- *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are* by Ann Voskamp (including her Joy Dare: [annvoskamp.com/joy-dares](http://annvoskamp.com/joy-dares))



## Conversational Prayer (10 minutes)



Call to Prayer



Call to Community

**TEACHING NOTES:** *Gather everyone back to the circle and close with a session of conversational prayer.*

Sample