

# Facilitator's Manual

# Bloom

*Reproducing disciples who experience  
God's love and transforming power*



*P.O.D. COMMUNITIES*  
*Bloom where you're planted*



# Bloom/POD Facilitator's Manual

## Welcome

Yes, Welcome! If you are viewing this page congratulations, because that means you are considering taking a group(s) through the Bloom/POD Communities disciple making training process. Jesus has reserved His greatest blessings for the faithful that answer His call to “Go and make disciples” for He said, “I will be with you to the end of the age”. By picking up, the baton of disciple making you will grow personally, as the Lord is well pleased to empower the faithful. A good mindset would be “I’m leading to learn not just leading for leading’s sake”.

You may have some hesitations or fears with regarding to facilitating or leading a group. Jesus says “Fear Not”. By humbling yourself in this way, you have placed yourself into the Lord’s hands. You will learn to become more and more dependent on Him as you seek the Holy Spirit’s counsel, revelation, power, and comfort. By depending on God’s Word and the Holy Spirit to be the facilitator, you will be amazed as you witness the transforming work of the Spirit. Your facilitating is a gift to the group but keep in mind that the participants share responsibility for the group as well.

I know you will want to give much thought to becoming an effective facilitator. The following resources will help you navigate the challenges of leading a Bible discussion group and will put you in a place where you can enjoy the effort and opportunity.

At a minimum, you should familiarize yourself with the [Small Discussion Group Essentials](#). Those articles will provide the basics for facilitating a small POD group. The [7 Session Facilitator’s Discussion Guide](#) will be particularly helpful in giving specific instructions as what to emphasize and what to be aware of for each of the seven teaching session’s three modules.

You don’t have to download this entire manual. You can print specific pages for a quick reference. In addition, this document has been created with navigation links throughout so when you either view it on-line or store the document on your computer you will be able to readily navigate.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

This manual contains many insights into becoming an effective small group facilitator. You can click on the following links to explore these facilitator tips. You should at least be familiar with the following small group essentials.

## **BLOOM/POD COMMUNITIES SMALL GROUP ESSENTIALS:**

pg. 6

- The [Role of the Facilitator](#)
- [Strategies for presenting](#) the Seven Essential Teaching Topics
- [Facilitating can be as easy as A B C.](#)
- [How to view the video](#) teaching sessions via the internet using a TV or other monitor.
- [7 Session Facilitator's Discussion Guide](#) (Specific guidance for each of the seven teaching topics modules A, B, C)
- Guidance on [how to conduct Module D](#) of each teaching session topic.
- Use of the ["REMEMBER CARDS"](#)
- How to create the [participant notebooks](#)

## **ADDITIONAL TIPS and INSIGHTS:**

pg. 11

- [Facilitator objectives](#)
- Tips on [facilitating the study](#)
- [Preparing yourself](#) to Lead
- [Small group formation](#) insights
- [The Art of Asking Good Questions](#)/ Facilitating discussions
- Keys to [better listening](#)
- [Be an encourager](#)
- How to handle a group with [mixed maturity levels](#) (Babe, Adolescent, Mature)
- Manage [expectation levels](#) (retention levels).
- Tips for [Resolving and Managing Conflict](#)
- How to gently cut off [discussion dominators](#)
- [Stay on topic](#) and to the point, i.e. don't chasing rabbits
- [Should I allow others to join](#) once we are well into the teaching sessions?
- [When you are out of town](#)

## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:**

pg. 21

- Four Panel [Promotional Flyer](#)
- Moving from [self-focus to a missional focus.](#)
- Bloom's [Mission, Vision, and Purpose](#)
- How to [multiply your small group](#)
- The [Power and Cost of Commitment](#)
- The Bloom/POD Communities Ministry [Transformation Process](#)
- [Course Curriculum/ Synopsis of Seven Teaching Topics](#)

## BLOOM/POD COMMUNITIES SMALL DISCUSSION GROUP ESSENTIALS: [TOP](#)

### The Role of the Facilitator

[TOP](#)

The intent of this facilitator’s manual is to help you stay focused on those key elements, which will help each participant get the most out of each teaching module. It has been proven repeatedly that authentic spiritual growth does not come from reading a book or attending classes, but by the personal application of the material into one’s life. You are to help the group “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” Heb. 10:24.

Your role as facilitator is simply to stimulate discussion by encouraging people to respond to numerous questions that will arise while viewing the video teaching sessions. You will want to [gain skill in asking additional questions](#) for clarification, emphasis, and personal application.

Remember, as the facilitator of a discussion, you are simply a channel God is using to stimulate and guide the conversation. The Holy Spirit is always the teacher. Do not do all the talking, but involve every member of the group, always seeking sharing that is edifying and points towards Jesus.

### Strategies for presenting the Seven Essential Transformation Teaching Topics

[TOP](#)

The teaching sessions can be presented several ways. You can customize any way you see fit based on your group’s time constraints, geographical location, childcare needs, etc.

Each teaching topic has four modules. The first three modules, A, B, and C, are video driven each about one hour in length. As previously mentioned there is a detailed [7 Session Facilitator’s Discussion Guide](#) which will guide the facilitator through each module. There is a fourth module, D, that is used for review of the topic, answering lingering questions, testimonies, and what we call PEA’s for the POD. PEA stands for “Personal Exercise Applications”. These exercises were developed to enhance the learning experience. It involves personal hands-on interactive group participation. The intent of the exercises is to help the teaching topic move from head knowledge to heart felt personal application. These exercises are explained in detail in the [Module D Specifics](#) for each session, which is located on the eBloom.tv website under the Facilitator’s Tab.

We have found that meeting weekly for approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours and going over one of the Modules, in order, works well. That way one full topic can be covered per month, spanning a total of seven months. We typically start a new session in September starting with Session one. We then go over Session 2 in October, Session 3 in November, and

take a break for the holidays during December. We continue in January and finish by the end of April.

As mentioned above you can modify this schedule as you see fit. You can meet at least every other week, less often is not recommended. You can take more time with all or some of the topics by covering some of the modules in more than one setting. The more time spent discussing and digesting the topic will only increase each participants learning retention.

Note each of the seven teaching topics were filmed in one three hour setting broken into three modules A, B and C with shorts breaks in between. As you view the videos that will become apparent. Each topic can be taught the same way but it is a significant information download. Using that approach could lend itself to a weekend retreat, covering one topic, done once a month or less frequently. Either way if you use this approach, we recommended that the POD small groups get together at least once or twice outside the retreat time to process the teaching.

Each topic could be taught as a standalone piece. However, all the topics are woven together one building upon the other. So, ideally they should all be taught in order for maximum impact.

### **Facilitating can be quite simple. It's as easy as A B C.**

[TOP](#)

Don't think you have to be an expert. Remember, facilitating a small group does not require you to a Bible scholar, theologian, counselor, or any other kind of expert.

- A. Learn to use the **Power of the Pause**: Pause the video frequently to allow group interaction especially when a question is asked from the video.
- B. Learn the art of **asking good open-ended questions**: Let the group's discussion and interaction give the Holy Spirit the maximum opportunity to do His living changing work as "Iron sharpens iron". You do not need to be a "Bible Answer Man". [Here is more on the art of asking good questions.](#)
- C. **Pray** consistently, often and both silently and out loud during and after the teaching sessions. God's will is that the information delivered moves from head knowledge to a soul/heart change, the fruit of which is personal application flowing from a transformed life. Your prayers are the key! TRUST HIM ON THIS.

### **Tips for on-line video streaming**

The videos can be readily viewed by streaming from the [eBloom.tv](#) website on any type of device. In order to view them using your TV as the monitor you will need a device like a lap top computer that has access to the internet and has an HDMI or VGA port. That device can then be

connected to any TV that also has an HDMI or VGA port. This way your TV will become the monitor for viewing the videos, perfect in a small group setting. See how it is done using an [HDMI cable](#) or using a [VGA cable and audio cable](#).

Here are some other ways to [stream videos using your TV](#).

Note: For your convenience at some point in the future, we may make the video sessions available on DVD or USB thumb/flash drives. As an added bonus, those formats would be in High Definition whereas videos streamed on the internet are of lower quality. These would be offered at our cost plus shipping. Understand that the DVD set would contain at least 8 DVDs and the flash drive would have a 64-gigabyte capacity and provided in an MP4 format. Costs could run in the \$50 range. Please contact us at [info@eBloom.tv](mailto:info@eBloom.tv) if you have an interest in one of these other formats.

If you choose to use the flash drive option, then on older computers running Vista or earlier you may need to update your video player so it will play the MP4 format. Go [here to download the codec pack](#) which when installed should allow your video player to view videos in the MP4 format.

Also note: You can choose to download each video onto your computer. This way the videos can be easily viewed and freed of any internet interruptions. All the videos together will require about 60GB of hard drive space. In the future, we will be providing an option to download the videos in high density, HD, directly from the eBloom.tv website.

**Your Monitor Settings:** Here are a couple of other tips that might enhance your viewing experience.

- If our monitor's brightness or contrast settings were too high, that could tend to "washout" certain features on a web page.
- Learning to use your monitors zoom feature may enhance your viewing experience.
- You can also use your mouse, cursor, as a pointer. This will come in handy during some of the teaching sessions.

## Creating a notebook for the listening and resource guides

[TOP](#)

- As the facilitator you have some choices to make regarding creating the notebooks and all the handouts for the resource guides. You can create the notebooks and print the necessary contents (preferable), charging each to cover costs, or have each participant do the same.
  - A heavy-duty 3" ring notebook is required. Ideally, the facilitator would assemble the empty notebooks and charge to cover costs.
  - Each of seven sessions is broken into three modules, A, B, and C. There is a separate listening guide for each module, twenty-one altogether. There is also



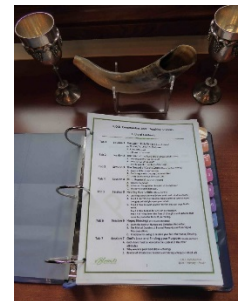
one [Resource Guide](#) for each of the seven sessions, which contains several articles. The listening guide and resource guide articles could be printed off in advance and given to each participant at the beginning of each of the seven sessions. Hand out only one session's material at a time. Again, you can require each participant to do the printing, however it is ideal if you could do that for him or her in advance, charging to cover your costs.

- As the group goes through each session and its related modules, their notebook will start filling up session by session.
- Please note: Some of the articles in the resource guide are required for viewing during the video session. Those specific articles are highlighted in the "7 Session Facilitator's Guide" for each of the seven sessions module's A, B and C. It is important that those highlighted articles are available, at a minimum, with each respective module. Again you can provide those or the participants would need to be made aware in advance that certain articles need to be brought to the meeting.
- **How to create a notebook for all the material:** You can create an empty notebook in advance for each participant. The notebook should be heavy duty with 3" rings. We used the Wilson Jones® 385 Heavy-Duty View Binder with No-Gap D-Rings, 3" Rings, 48% Recycled.

- Each notebook should include a cover page, which has the **Bloom branding logo**. [Go here](#) to print suggested notebook insert cover pages.



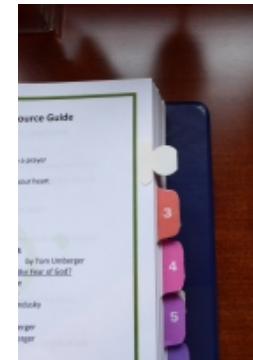
- Place a **heavy clear plastic protector page** in front of the table of contents.
- Right up front provide the **Table of contents**. [Download here](#)



**Ten tab dividers** (We used [Avery® Ready Index® 30% Recycled Table Of Contents Dividers, 10-Tab, Multicolor](#)): Dividers 1 through 7 for each of the session’s listening and resource guides, Divider 8 for miscellaneous articles, divider 9 for Bloom/POD promotional flyers, and divider 10 for paper for extra notes or journaling.



- **Place a tab on the Resource Guide page** for each session in order to mark the beginning of each session’s resource guide articles. Aline the gummed tab right behind each session’s number tab. We used [Gummed Index Tabs \(Avery 59102\)](#).



## 7 Session Facilitator’s Discussion Guide

This is a detailed guide for the facilitator. It will serve as a step-by-step guide as how to conduct each of the Seven Session’s training modules, A, B, and C. There are twenty-one teaching modules altogether. This resource can be found on the [eBloom.tv website under the Facilitator’s Tab](#).

### **Detailed guidance on how to conduct Module D of each teaching session** [TOP](#)

This resource can be found on the [eBloom.tv website under the Facilitator’s Tab](#) look for module D Specifics.

### **REMEMBER CARDS**

[TOP](#)

With each of the seven teaching topics, we have created what we call [“Remember Cards”](#). Each card is business card sized and is intended to highlight key points from each session. The back of each card asks a thought provoking question leaving space to fill in an answer. It also leaves room to right down some key verses that you will commit to memorize. Finally, it leaves space to write down personal application steps you intend to take in order to move the teaching from head knowledge into your mission field.

They are small enough to be carried wherever you go. They should be viewed frequently as a way of reminding you of these life-changing truths.

We used [Avery's 8371 template](#) to create the cards. Here is a link to a [package of printable business cards](#) using the Avery Template.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS AND INSIGHTS

### Facilitator Objectives

[TOP](#)

The following are suggested objectives to help you become an effective facilitator:

- To guide the discussion, to clarify understanding, and to keep the group focused on the lesson.
- To steer the group into a meaningful exchange among members.
- To help the participants learn from each other.
- To keep the group discussion focused on the key learning points that are outlined at the beginning of each of the teaching modules.
- To be a neutral person, leading the discussion back on point if it wanders.
- To assist the group in finding practical applications for the principles discussed.
- To encourage each person to participate in the group discussions by not allowing anyone (including yourself) to [dominate the conversation](#).
- To make the discussion group a nonthreatening place for all to share their ideas.
- To have a positive attitude and to [provide encouragement](#) to the group.
- To guide, rather than dominate the discussion.
- To avoid or cut off denomination bashing.
- To move the participants from a [self-focus to a missional focus](#). This is the essence of disciple making and answering the call to “Bloom where you are planted”.

### Tips on facilitating the study

[TOP](#)

- **Preview the video and printed materials beforehand.** Beginning familiar with the discussion material beforehand is a key to keeping the group focused during the discussion period and should be a part of your preparation.
- [Learn the art of asking good questions](#). This is essential and the primary key to having a successful discussion.
- **Always begin the study on time.** If everyone realizes that you begin on time, the members of the group will make a greater effort to be there on time. They will not want to miss anything.

- Provide time upfront and at the end of each meeting for **fellowship time**.
- You might want to consider **providing a few light snacks or dessert** at each meeting. You can make a donation basket available to help defray your costs or you can ask each participant to provide this on a rotational basis.
- The first module A of each of the seven teaching topics videos begins with prayer. **Please begin and end module's B and C with prayer.**
- Take a little time during session one module 1 A to share a little about yourself. Go around in a circle and **have each member share briefly about him or herself**. In larger groups, you can spread this out over the first few times together.
- **In the succeeding meetings**, especially during Module D, feel free to ask:
  - What key points stood out to you?
  - Which key points challenged you or encouraged you?
  - Does anyone have a testimony as to how the teaching as touched their life?
  - Were you able to share what you learned with others?
  - In what areas of your life might you be able to apply this teaching?
- Even though the teaching is video driven you should emphasis right up front that the learning technique employed **emphasizes healthy discussion**, not lectures. Encourage everyone to participate. Again, please [learn the art of asking good questions](#).
- Because access to all the teaching videos and other **resources are available on-line**, you should encourage the participants to go over the videos for each module again and again. Repetition plays a key role in the learning process. In order for them to view the videos, they will need to “enroll” by visiting the [eBloom.tv](#) website.
- The [Resource Guide](#) for each of the seven sessions contains additional support material some of which is utilized during the video teaching sessions. Please walk them through the [Resource Guide for Session One](#), as an example, to familiarize them with its content. Here they will also find suggested discussion questions for each module. You can use these questions to help drive the discussion during the session review during module D. As homework, urge them to answer those questions on their own. Encourage the members to begin reading one or more of the articles provided as handouts and visit the web links suggested. One or more books are recommended, reading them will go a long way in helping to drive the point's home.
- [Avoid going off on tangents](#). If people wander off course, gently bring them back to the question at hand.
- **Don't talk more than the rest of the group**. Ask questions to generate discussion.
- **Try to end on time**. This is often difficult to do, but if you control the pace by not spending too much time on some questions and monitoring the video timer, you should be able to finish on time. Note: Beware in advance of the length of each video session, they run in length anywhere from 35 minutes to 1-hour10 minutes. Most are in the one-hour range.
- **Encourage a mature believer in your POD to be your assistant or back up facilitator**. There may come a time when you are sick, [out of town](#), or it's temporarily impossible to

lead the group. Having a backup and backup location provides a wonderful opportunity to groom future POD facilitators.

## The Art of Asking Good Questions/ Facilitating discussions

[TOP](#)

The Bible discussion facilitator asks questions, which help each group member, become a "discoverer". The facilitator is not a teacher. He is a guide and a participant himself. He uses questions that help the group members discover, understand, and apply Biblical truths. He does this by:

- **launching** the discussion;
- **guiding** the discussion; and
- **summarizing** the discussion

A good **launching** question is one that simply asks the group members what they discovered on their own as they went over a particular section of their Bible study. This means using phrases such as "What did you learn?" "What did you observe?" "What did you discover?" "What impressed you?" For example, "What did you learn from this section about prayer?"

To **guide** the discussion means keeping it moving, and drawing out the principal thoughts the group is sharing. You can ask questions like these! "Who else would like to comment on that?" "What does someone else see in this verse?" "Does anyone else want to add something?"

**Summarizing** the discussion is something you may want to do frequently throughout the group's time together. Your summary will serve as a brief review and as a transition to another topic. Remember to summarize what the group has discussed, rather than your own insights. Do clarify some responses to questions. If a person's answer is long-winded or unclear, repeat it back, summarizing it, for clarity. This proves you are listening and it keeps the attention of the rest of the group.

### How do I ask questions?

Questioning is a powerful method of stimulating thought. So the more you plan and evaluate the questions you ask in a Bible study group, the greater will be your effectiveness as a facilitator.

One of the main reasons for asking questions is to help people understand Biblical principles. Your questions can help them grasp the basic issue a particular verse or passage is addressing. Once the group has identified a Biblical principle, you can ask a follow-up question that tie in this principle to a specific situation. This can be a real-life situation or a hypothetical one, but it should help the group realize how the principle can be practically applied. Then they can see more clearly how the Scriptures can actually change their lives.

When you ask a question, look around the group until someone answers it. Don't be afraid of silence. Allow time for the Holy Spirit to help them process a response. Then you can ask "What did others of you find?" or "What did someone else discover?" Again, look around the whole group, watching for anyone who wants to speak instead of pointing out a specific individual.

To begin with, the group members will probably look directly at you as they give their replies. However, if you patiently persist with good guiding questions, the members will begin responding to the group instead of to the facilitator. Thus, true discussion will begin. Rather than being facilitator-centered, they will become group-centered.

**Here are some common errors. Try to avoid doing these things:**

1. ***Do not preach!*** It's the quickest way to kill a good discussion.
2. ***Don't feel like you have to know all the answers.*** You are human. If a question is asked without a clear answer then challenge them to dig deeper for the answer over the next week or so. You can also say that is a great question, "let me get back to you on that".
3. ***Being afraid of silence after ask a question.*** Don't be impatient or nervous. People need time to think and listen to the Holy Spirit before responding. Don't give into the temptation to always say something first. It may mean the question wasn't heard or was unclear.
4. ***Try to avoid answering your own questions.*** If the group thinks you will always answer for them, they will keep silent.
5. ***Encourage more than one answer to each question.*** You might ask, "What do the rest of you think?" or "Anyone else?" "Does anyone else have something to add to that?"
6. ***Limiting yourself to asking questions.*** The facilitator is also a participant in the group. Share freely your answers and observations, but don't dominate the discussion. As the facilitator, be prepared to answer. Your openness, honesty, and transparency will encourage others to open up as well.
7. ***Combining two questions in one.*** Ask one question at a time.
8. ***Not explaining what you want the group to do.*** You're in charge. Don't hesitate to step in from time to time to influence the direction of the discussion, to end the discussion on time, to call on someone to pray, and so on.
9. ***Trying to maintain too much control.*** If the discussion "takes off", don't worry about it as long as the group doesn't wander too far from the Scriptures.
10. ***Asking a question, which can be answered "yes", or "no".*** This type of question hinders discussion.
11. ***Asking questions that are too complex.*** State each question simply and clearly.
12. ***Emphasizing your own viewpoint or application.*** Don't expect everyone to be deeply impressed with the same things in Scripture that deeply impressed you.
13. ***Not asking "Why" questions.*** These make people really evaluate their feelings and thoughts. For example, "Why do you think Jesus said that?"

### What questions stimulate the best discussion?

Type of question:	Examples:	Answers:	Value in promoting discussion:
Leading	Of course, you all agree, don't you?  Surely, you don't think that do you?	Yes  No	<b>None.</b> These questions rarely stimulate active thought or discussion.
Limiting	What are the three great truths in this passage?      Do you agree with that?	What they think you think.      Yes or no	<b>Little.</b> Everyone realizes you're thinking of a specific answer. Instead of stimulating discussion, you start a mind-reading contest.  <b>Some.</b> It insists on a decision. It should be followed by an open or wide-open question to stimulate further discussion.
Open ended	Who is this all about? How does that make you feel? Why do you think ...? Where did this happen? When was this? Why was it? What was the outcome? How did it happen? What would you do if ...?	People Places Times Reasons Results Methods, processes, etc.	<b>Much.</b> They stimulate discovery, understanding, or application, depending on how you word the questions. The key words are who, where, when, way, what, and how. (Other examples: Whom does this apply to? What does it mean? Why is it important? How can we learn from it?)
Wide-open	What do others of you think? What other thoughts does anyone have? What does someone else think about that?		

**A checklist: Here are questions to ask yourself after each group discussion.**

1. Was I familiar enough with the material to feel free in facilitating the discussion?
2. Did everyone take part in the discussion? or was it a lecture (with me doing most of the talking), or a conversation among only two or three of us?
3. Did we keep to the subject without wandering?
4. Did I frequently summarize the main ideas that were brought up by the group?
5. Did the discussion lead to further understanding of the truths the group members discovered in their personal Bible study?
6. Did we discuss adequately how we could apply what we learned to our lives?
7. Did the discussion end on time?

**Small group (POD) formation insights**

[TOP](#)

Ideally, a small group is the best way for the information to be processed. Small groups add so much by providing encouragement, accountability, fellowship, and perspective. A small group can be two or more. However, we have found that a group in the 6 to 12 participant range works well. Gender specific groups work even better – i.e. men only, women only, or couples meeting with couples because of the intimacy level that can be developed in the group. People need a place to be real and we believe these target groups provide the best environment for this. You will need to determine how the Lord is calling you to ministry and what works best for those within your sphere of influence.

**Preparing yourself to facilitate**

[TOP](#)

It's important, that you, the facilitator of the discussion group, be a cleansed vessel filled with God's Love and Wisdom --- a living example of someone who is walking in God's Love and Truth. It's important to remember that you do not have to be perfect in order to guide a discussion; you simply must be an open vessel pointing others to the only One who is perfect, Jesus. Genuineness will be brought into the discussions by being real and transparent yourself, sharing your own failures as well as your victories.

The message of the Bloom ministry and its foundational elements must be applied to your own life. As the facilitator you stand to gain as much if not more than the participants. As you guide others through the teaching make yourself an example for others to follow as you seek out ways for personal application. You cannot "give out" something you have never experienced or applied for yourself.



It would be a good idea to review the teaching sessions on-line beforehand. Look for good places to ask a question, insert a comment, or seek clarification. You may want to do some homework like reading the [“7 Session Facilitator’s Discussion Guide”](#) for each module in order to help understand the important points to make in the discussion and provide more information about the questions.

Do much private prayer before during and after each module. Be sure to pray for the group before and after each study and do much private prayer during the discussion itself. Pray for each member of the group during the week always remembering that prayer is the only thing that unleashes the power of God to work in all our lives.

### **How to handle a group with mixed maturity levels (Babe, Adolescent, Mature).**

#### **TOP**

The Bloom/POD teaching process provides solid food for the hungry. There is more than enough depth with the teaching to stretch the mature believer. The challenge is to not overwhelm and lose the babe or adolescent in Christ. This is pointed out at the beginning of each of the seven video sessions with the caution “Do not get overwhelmed”.

As a facilitator, you should be sensitive to the least mature in your group. Help them to listen to the Holy Spirit. He will highlight what He wants them to take away from each module even if that is one thing. Watch their face and body language, if you sense confusion then pause to help clarify. Caution them to not get bogged down in details. If the issue they are struggling to grasp is foundational, remind them, if they remain diligent in reading God’s word, seek His presence and ask for wisdom then He will respond to their requests. Others in the group including yourself should see the babes in Christ as part of their mission field. Spending extra time with the young in Christ outside of the normal group time will prove invaluable to them as they seek to mature in Christ. They need a coach, encourager, guide, someone to hold them accountable, and fellowship. Teach them how to dig deeper to get answers to their questions.

**What if someone wants to participant after you are well into the seven teaching sessions?** We welcome those who are hungry into the teaching process at any point. They can go over the prior teaching sessions by themselves, using the on-line resources. Better yet, they can be coached by the one who invited them to attend. This is the heart of disciple making and is a golden opportunity to become engaged in the call to go and make disciples..

The teaching processes emphasizes the need to go through the seven teaching session once again, the following year. Therefore, someone who has begun midway or at some point latter in the process can rejoin the group the following year to complete a full cycle.

## Manage expectation levels.

[TOP](#)

Typically, with any teaching strategy retention levels are low if a student does not put in the extra effort, see “The Power and Cost of Commitment” in Supplemental Resources. Homework should be involved and seeking ways to personally apply what has been taught is essential.

Retention Levels from our experience:

1. Attend all four modules of each of the seven teaching sessions. = 15%
2. Spend additional time in extensive personal study  
(Read the resources and suggested books). = 20%
3. Go through all the training sessions a second time. = 30%
4. Share what you have learned with others, start your own POD. = 35%
5. On-going lifetime commitment; going deeper and helping others. = Complete

**Warning: Without on-going maintenance, you risk losing what you have gained!**

## Tips for Resolving and Managing Conflict

[TOP](#)

Conflict is the natural result of people spending time together. Conflict should be embraced rather than avoided. Conflict may occur between group members. When properly handled, conflict can spur groups to a deeper level of intimacy and community.

Here are a few tips for addressing a difficult situation.

- Address issues quickly.
- Use “I” statements when talking about what you are feeling and experiencing.
- Listen and look closely for underlying messages. Remember tone and body language communicates as much if not more than the words.
- Try to communicate in person. Try to avoid the use of emails or phones when conflict occurs.
- Ask questions to gain perspective on the conflict. Questions like; who is involved? What is the issue or concern? What are the needs of the individuals involved? What are the needs of the whole group? How can this be an opportunity for growth in their relationship with God, with one another, with self, and with the world? What scriptures are relevant? How can I pray for the situation?
- Here are the three steps outlined in the Bible for resolving conflict.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> One-on-one meeting to seek reconciliation (Matt. 18:15)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Mediator is included (Matt 18:16)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense is made public (Matt 18:17)

Types of challenging situations that should be dealt with privately:

1. Agenda person
2. Chatterbox
3. Critical/negative person

4. One who has offended/hurt another
5. One whose kids are becoming a disruption
6. One who is struggling with attitude issues

#### How to confront privately

1. Let restoration reign
2. Let love, mercy and forgiveness lead
3. Let truth direct
4. Let reflection precede reaction
5. Let wisdom determine your weapon
6. Practical tips:
  - a. Always encourage
  - b. Ask questions
  - c. Reaffirm value to group
  - d. Use proactive phrases
    - “I’m sorry”
    - “That’s interesting.”
    - “Help me understand why...”
  - e. Pray together
  - f. Prepare yourself for difficulty

#### Keys to better listening

[TOP](#)

Everyone is desperate for someone to listen to him or her, especially when going through critical emotional issues. Whenever someone is talking, give him or her your undivided attention. Your eyes should be on the person sharing and you should try to acknowledge them as much as you can (again, always praying silently to God for His response).

#### Other tips:

- **Stop talking.** You cannot talk and listen at the same time.
- **Don’t interrupt.** Interrupting people discourages them from future interaction.
- **Use body language.** Sit or stand up straight and look the other person in the eye.
- **Actively listen.** Don’t think about what you are going to say.
- **Listen for themes.** Try to identify and understand the speakers’ main idea. Listen for a comment, which will help connect you to where you want to go next and quickly use those comments to move the discussion forward.
- **Connect the dots.** Practice connecting one person’s comments with another person’s comments in a way to enhance the flow of conversation. If you find one person’s comments encouraging to the group, repeat their words with other comments that will stir up engagement by others when they know they have been heard and their words repeated.
- **Be alert.** Watch for nonverbal clues that indicate the speaker’s mood.

## Be a good encourager

[TOP](#)

Set an example for your group by encouraging the members continually. Without encouragement, your sharing times will be nothing more than answering homework questions at school. You might even suggest that the following week, each of the members of the group phone and encourage someone else in the group. Treat everyone's comments and questions with consistency. Keep in mind that there's no such thing as a "dumb" question or comment.

## Stay on topic and to the point, i.e. don't chase rabbits

[TOP](#)

It's the facilitator's responsibility not to let the discussion slide off track. It can be started by one person's remark or question that is followed by another person's comment and before you know it, you have gotten off track. To avoid the issue, keep the group focused on the question at hand and follow up by bringing the group back to the actual question. Everyone benefits when the facilitator gently steers the conversation to the right source and light.

Of course, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading sometimes the departure will lead to root issues that are relevant to the question. Be flexible. Sometimes other issues need to be discussed even though they are not scheduled.

## How to gently cut off discussion dominators

[TOP](#)

Many small groups are challenged with a spirited person that wants to control conversations with his or her insights or otherwise wants to contribute to the conversation too much. You need to allow each person in the group an opportunity to share, but you must prevent any one person from doing all the talking (including yourself). One person who dominates the discussion can derail and quench an otherwise anointed sharing time. You mustn't rush the person speaking, giving the Holy Spirit time to minister and guide the discussion, but at the same time, you are responsible to keep the discussion on target and to accomplish all that needs to be done.

Here are a few suggestions to prevent a person from dominating the discussion:

- You might interrupt the particular person speaking and restate what you have just heard them say.
- You might repeat the question you previously asked the group. The dominating person might be startled at first by the interruption, but should respond by answering the second question more directly.
- If this does not work, then you should ask the participant to please let the other group members share their views also.
- If the member persists, in dominating discussion take time outside the group meeting to meet with that person and thank him or her for their contribution but also remind them that others need to be given a chance to speak up and process externally the topic being

presented. In all circumstances, correct with gentleness, love and respect for that person whether in the group setting or outside the group.

Another great way is to ask them to assist you in drawing the more quiet members into the conversation by allowing them to speak first and by not responding to each question. Remind them silence gives others time to process the question with the Holy Spirit.

### When you are out of town

[TOP](#)

- **Don't cancel the meeting.** Your POD continuing while you are out of town is a great community-building opportunity. In addition, it is a perfect time to give your assistant or another solid group member the opportunity to facilitate.
- **Prep key people.** If you know you'll be out of town for an upcoming meeting, make sure key people in your group know, particularly the host home and your assistant.
- **Identify alternative location.** If your group meets at your home, work with another group member to secure an alternative location. Give your POD enough advanced notice of the changed location along with directions to get there.

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

### How to multiply your small group

[TOP](#)

From the very beginning, share your heart with your group regarding multiplication. This is what disciples do they multiply. The last thing you'll want to do is catch your group off guard with the idea of multiplying. Session one establishes the call to multiply as or Lord commanded saying, "Go and make disciples". Let this theme sink in as it is proclaimed repeatedly throughout the training.

Each participant may have the potential to become a future group facilitator. After the participants have gone through the teaching one time they are encouraged to go through the training one more time. It is during this second go around that you can encourage certain individuals to facilitate one or more of the teaching sessions. This is a wonderful way to equip them to have a ministry of spiritual multiplication.

Also, even as you are recruiting your group, think about those who would make great group facilitators. You should try to identify an assistant who could help you facilitate or fill in if you are absent. They may not possess all of the necessary qualifications now, but focusing on their potential along with their current characteristics is important.

Here are some keys to consider:

1. They are not involve in too many other ministries.
2. They have an obvious commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
3. They have a clear understanding and passion for fulfilling the great commission.
4. They model spiritual maturity.
5. They have influence with others.
6. They can communicate fairly well in a small group setting.
7. They have a genuine love for God's people/church.
8. They are **F**aithful, **A**vailable, and **T**eachable. (This is the FAT test)
9. They demonstrate commitment.

## Moving from a self-focus to a missional focus

[TOP](#)

A disciple of Jesus Christ is both a learner and follower. A disciple learns from His master and puts into action what His master commands. A disciple of Jesus Christ has learned the only way to have a thriving ministry is through an every growing intimate relationship with the triune God. Through that, kind of abiding relationship flows God's counsel, power, and love.

Learning for just learnings sake can become quite self-focused. However, when gaining head knowledge makes the shift to "how can I help others" a beautiful transformation has occurred. Everything we do should point back to our one central purpose: "Reproducing disciples who experience God's love and transforming power". While this is a challenge to us as individuals and within our groups, it cannot stop there. As we are growing and challenging one another to grow we have a Biblical mandate to turn to the world around us with a missional focus, leading people in the same direction.

To "Bloom where you are planted" means we are to reproduce and it starts right in our own backyard. We are to reproduce disciples who in turn make disciples. By discipling others we are producing followers of Jesus Christ who love as He loves, serve as He served, and lay down their lives as He laid down His. John 12:24 says it well "Truly, truly, I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit".

If you can lead your group to serve, you'll see a different type of spiritual and relational growth take place that can only happen when we give of ourselves for the cause of Christ. When it comes to making missions a part of your group, don't see it as an event, but rather a lifestyle that Christ calls all of His people to emulate.

Therefore, look for opportunities for your group to reach out. You can create your own opportunities mobilizing the groups various gifts and talents or partner with another established mission organization. The group should make a commitment for one year to routinely invest in that ministry. This is where missions become a lifestyle, not just as event.

## Promotional Material

[TOP](#)

By far and away, the very best way to encourage people to attend this training is thru personal invitation. You should consider getting together with potential participants either individually or in a small group orientation session several weeks or months in advance of the start date.

Here is a [Four Panel Flyer](#) (under Additional Resources on website) to help promote forming a small group. It is laid out in landscape so you will need to print on both sides flipping on the short edge. The “For More Information” portion of the flyer has space to input your own personalized information.

The [eBloom.tv website](#) is a great resource for promoting the Bible study. The home page features a four-minute promotional clip and points to other places, which will help to explain the disciple-making tool and encourage participation.

# Bloom Ministry

*Reproducing Communities that experience God's love and transforming power*

## Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Goals

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### **Vision:**

To mobilize an army of ambassadors for Christ who have been transformed by the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and ongoing intimate encounters with the Lord and POD mates; thus being filled with the power of God to the fulfillment of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

### **Mission:**

To transform lives that are committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commandment and Great Commission. This will be accomplished by creating an environment and process where seven foundational topics will be taught and discussed in a manner which will provide the Holy Spirit maximum opportunity to accomplish His life-changing work.

### **Purpose:**

To produce and motivate Christians to holy obedient living whom:

- P.** = Are directed by the Spirit of God 24x7
- O.** = Have gained the keys to a growing intimacy with God and others
- D.** = Are operating in the Power of the Holy Spirit

### **Goals:**

To train and equip a new crop of spiritual reproducers every twelve months by completing the seven foundation lessons in the context of small groups (PODs).

Those who have completed the lessons will be encouraged to go through it once again but this time by inviting those within their sphere of influence to participate;

Year three will see the POD Communities teaming up, when appropriate, and reproducing the ministry into the life of their local church and or mission field.



# The Power and Cost of Commitment

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**“Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will do it” Psalm 37:5**

The fear of commitment is epidemic in the Western world. What is the root? selfishness and creeping worldliness. Among Christians, non-commitment takes on subtle forms. Activities, church attendance, and right doctrine can easily mask a lack of deep commitment of the whole person. There is another side. Many people make strong commitments to the wrong things (career, success, leisure, a lovely home, a summer cottage, a time consuming hobby, and so on).

If Christians really understand commitment from God’s viewpoint, many will respond with godly fervor. God’s faithfulness is not dependent on our acts of commitment, but we activate His response by our commitment. We must act. We cannot sit back passively and hope for holiness. It comes only with deliberate commitments made through the years in the midst of life. We must commit ourselves to the **lordship** of Jesus Christ. This is a continuing act of the heart, the mind, and will. The fog of worldliness however seems to envelop believers, it detracts, blinds, and deters them from the unsurpassed joy and fulfillment that await the man and woman of commitment.

**Emotions** alone are never an accurate barometer of spiritual depth or commitment. God captures our attention in two general ways: through the mind and through the emotions. One person absorbs Scripture and Biblical truth, and comes to a decision before God. Another is struck emotionally and cries out to God for help. Neither is sufficient by itself. Both must lead to a decision of the will and ultimately to a combination of mind, heart and will.

Each commitment will exact a price. “Freedom is not free.” Jesus won’t ask for blind commitment, but careful, intelligent, full awareness of the cost. The costs could include time, promotion, reputation, energy, emotional stamina, or health. There is no greater fable in Christian life than the promise of commitment without a cost. The key to a joyful, victorious Christian life is costly commitment. You want to know Christ? Then your commitment is to know Him as well as to do what is necessary to get to know Him. Our prayer is that you will discover the need of getting together with a **small group** of people who study the Bible together regularly to motivate and keep you accountable.

No commitment to wealth and success alone will have God’s blessing. We simply need a commitment to stewardship of our abilities and resources under God’s sovereign guidance – in the perspective of other more vital spiritual commitments. All the talent and ability in the world are useless without the **discipline** to point you in the right direction. Someone has said discipline is the refining fire by which talent becomes ability. Commitment without discipline is like a luxury car without gasoline: it looks great but goes not where.

*“On the other hand discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” 1 Timothy 4:7-8*

**Accountability** is foundational to the New Testament concept of **fellowship**, but it rarely exists in the church body today. Biblical fellowship cannot exist without the elements of *“stimulating one another to love and good deeds” Hebrews 10:24*. Accountability puts teeth into commitment. Accountability puts pressure on us to perform, and opens the door to failure. However, the rewards fully out-weight the risks. Consider the great sense of accomplishment, as spiritual commitments become reality. For the Christian if or when, he fails, he by God’s grace, will learn, grow, and turn it to the good.

**Vision** is the central driving force of a Christian. Vision gives power. This is a different power than that of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers the Christian to live a holy, godly life. The vision from God, on the other hand, empowers a Christian to live a fruitful, devoted life. Certainly, God wants us to be holy. Nevertheless, a holy life without holy vision ultimately leads to inward spiritual poverty. The central vision for every Christian is the Great Commission. There is no other commission. Only by committing to that vision can our lives have true meaning. Vision needs a vehicle for practical expression. This is our **calling**. God calls us as our part in fulfilling the Great Commission to the specific task. This task relates to our spiritual gifts and abilities. Commitment to a vision requires commitment to a calling. The specific tasks in one’s calling may vary greatly. Some support evangelists, disciplers, or teachers. Some are greatly involved in these tasks. However, all believers are still responsible to evangelize where they live and work.

Job was committed to God regardless of his circumstances. He said, *“Though He slay me. I will hope in Him.”* That is the final commitment – the ultimate hope in God alone – *faith*. It seems that Job finally concluded; *“But He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold”*. The suffering was a trial and that would purify him. In his final reflection, Job came to ultimate reality. *“Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; to depart from evil is understanding”*

One word summarizes the mark of the spiritually mature man or woman – **obedience**. Simple obedience extends from the heart and the mind and expresses itself through the will. In all creation, fruit bearing is the preeminent mark of maturity. A mature believer bears fruit of two kinds. The first is that of character and holiness of life. The second is becoming a spiritual parent either by leading others to Christ or by adopting a baby or growing Christian. *“I am the vine you are the branches, he who abides in Me, and I in him be bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5*

Taken from “The Power of Commitment” by Jerry White

Yes, there is a cost to commitment yet it is the way to the Spirit, true intimacy and the power of God!

*“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotion, spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never tasted victory or defeat.”*

Teddy Roosevelt

[TOP](#)

## The Bloom Ministry Transformation Process

**You will be transformed as God reveals Himself to you and as you seek Him.  
He has conveyed to us the path into His presence:**

**Obedience:** *John 14:21* "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

**Renew your mind:** *Romans 12:1-2* Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship, and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by **the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Community:** *Proverbs 27:17* Iron sharpens iron, so **one man sharpens another** (Community, P.O.D.).

**Seek Him:** *Proverbs 8:17* "I love those who **love me**; And those who **diligently seek me** will find me.

**Prayer:** *2 Chronicles 7:14* and My people who are called by My name **humble themselves** and **pray** and **seek My face** and **turn from their wicked ways**, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

**Therefore, the Bloom ministry will strive to create a community environment where  
the Holy Spirit and God's Word will be proclaimed in such a way as  
to cause spiritual transformation and multiplication.**

### Special Ingredients:

- Each session will be bathed in prayer (before, during, after)
- Focused on God's word
- Solid Teaching
- Active Discussion and Q&A
- Small group interaction
- P.O.D. facilitators (for encouragement, follow-up, accountability and guidance)
- Homework and follow-up discussions required for maximum impact
- Scripture memorization
- Journaling (write it out in your own words)
- Workbook provided
- Resource guide and handouts for additional reading
- Visual Aids: PowerPoint, video clips, multi-media
- Seven power packed multi-hour teaching sessions spread out over a one-year period.
- Each session will be comprised of three teaching modules and will have a rhythm: Prayer, teaching with Q&A, POD discussion w/ prayer, and a break. This rhythm will be repeated with each module.

- Participants will be encouraged to go through the entire process once again the following year and to invite others to participate.

**Seven Attitudes to Cultivate for Spiritual growth:**

- **Approach God and His word with reverence: *Philippians 2:12*** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;
- **Be like the Bereans: *Acts 17:11*** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.
- **Strive for correct interpretation: *2 Timothy 2:15*** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
- **Set yourself apart: *1 Peter 1:15*** But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;
- **Seek truth by keeping an open mind: *John 8:31-32*** , *“If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”*
- **Make a Commitment to the process: *Psalm 37:5*** Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. *1 Timothy 4:7-10* “ ..... discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come..... it is for this we labor and strive...”
- **Pray: *Matthew 7:7*** *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

[TOP](#)

The **seven teaching topics** were selected after decades of experience in the realm of disciple making. The seven topics should be viewed as essential and foundational. Each is like a wing on an airplane. If the plane is missing a wing, it won't get off the ground. Each topic goes right to the heart of receiving that which God has given His children for life and godliness. Through mind renewal, each topic provides another key for the unlocking of motivations that produce a



growing desire to pursue God and live a holy life. The topics are presented in a specific order one building upon the other. If a participant misses a module, it is advised that they view the module either on-line or on the DVD as a makeup prior to the next module. Note: Each topic can be taught on a standalone basis.

**Session 1 or Topic 1:** is titled **The Call to Holy living** (Is love a decision?). Here we begin with the end in mind by proclaiming the call and will of God for every believer and discover the role our will plays in answering that call. We unpack the P.O.D acronym (Spirit, Intimacy, and Power) and see what role each plays in assisting the child of God to live a holy life in union with Him.

**Session 2: The Fear of the Lord** (The joy of fearing God correctly), proclaims the first of two major cornerstones foundational to developing a healthy motivation. It reveals the gift of this great treasure and joy of fearing God correctly and exposes the counterfeit of fearing man or anything of this world.

**Session 3: The Gospel of God's Grace** (Know your true identity). We explore the second of the two major cornerstones foundational for proper Christian motivation. Here we disclose God's plan, by grace, for perfecting each part of our being, body, soul, and spirit. We help participants search for and find their true identity in Christ. We disclose the unholy trinities plan, Sin, Satan, and Self (our flesh) and how they each war against us in an attempt to get our needs met apart from Christ.

**Session 4: Mind Renewal** (Solomon's Temple). God declares that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Scripture proclaims we are now the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we have the mind of Christ. This is a fascinating journey as we look into the detailed design of Solomon's temple

as a model for the blue print of a believer. The parallels are stunning and help to unlock the mystery of mind renewal. We will not only look at the temples structural design but at the temple furnishings and priestly rituals as well. We will help clear up the confusion caused by the so often interchangeable use of the terms; heart, spirit, soul, mind, will, and emotions. This is a pivotal session and touches on some of basics of Christian based Biblical counseling. It paves the way to living the victorious life as an over comer.

**Session 5: Hearing God's voice** (know His will) is the heart's desire. Here with scripture we will show the path into His presence. You will learn how to discern His still voice through His written Word (Logos) or by direct revelation of the Holy Spirit (Rhema). You will learn how to test your thoughts to see if they are from God. Quieting yourself, looking for vision, and journaling the flow of thoughts and pictures are all discussed as keys to distinguishing His voice.

This session was strategically placed here because, frankly, if one is not willing in the first place to be obedient to God's commands, it would be very difficult to hear from Him as the noise from the world and our flesh would drown out His voice. However, by now, after completing the first four sessions the ground work has been laid for desiring a greater intimacy with God and realizing that we are radically dependent upon Him for every good work. With that transformation of the heart, God is more than pleased to reveal more of Himself and open the door to clearer communication with Him.

A pattern has emerged through the first five sessions. You should see that indeed our good Lord has given us everything we need for life and godliness leading to obedient holy living in union with Him. Out of a grateful heart, you begin to respond to His voice in ways that you know are pleasing to Him. However, what about when the going gets tough, you find yourself in harm's way or are confused about God's love because of the pain and suffering you experience and see all around you? That leads us to the next two sessions, six, and seven.

**Session 6: Hope/Blessings** (His reward standards). This is where the doctrine of eternal rewards plays a vital role. Here you will learn the basis of God given motivation. You will see more clearly, what moves us to do what we do. We will look at the difference between having an eternal or temporal view of reality. You will see how hope is truly "an anchor to our soul". You will see how all other motivators, including love, fall away in a time of severe testing. Hope and the promises of eternal blessings or rewards sustain us during a time of testing. We will clear up many of the miss teachings and misconceptions that have prevented the liberating truth of this glorious doctrine from being properly proclaimed and received.

**Session 7: God's Love and Finding your Purpose** (Mapping your future). During this session's three modules, A, B, and C, we will cover several things. First, in module A we will take a closer look at God's love but from the perspective of the unity of all His other attributes bringing them up to the same level of importance; His truth, His holiness, His sovereignty, His wrath, His jealousy, His justice, His grace and mercy, and so on. We will answer the question; is God's love only unconditional?

In the second module B, we will look deeply into the number one objection to Christianity. If God is good, why does He allow evil and suffering? You will come away with a good way to respond to this challenge to our faith. You will also be strengthened in your own faith and more able to stand firm when the going gets tough.

We will conclude the “seven session training” in module C just as we began in session one with a call to holy living. This time we will help you described how you would fulfill that call by crafting your own personal purpose statement. We call the process “Mapping your Future”. It will serve as a road map, compass, and vision as to where God would have you go and what to do. It will help you to live the specific call He has placed on your life based on your unique giftedness and experience.

When you step out in faith into the mission field, you will be fulfilling the goal and purpose for this ministry, which is, “To Call, To Equip, and To Send”. You will have become one who is *“Reproducing disciples who experience God’s love and transforming power” by “Blooming where you are planted”*.

**Final comments:** Another theme is woven throughout all seven topics. That theme is **spiritual warfare**. When putting this ministry together we were impressed by the Lord to keep the focus on Him; He says by My Spirit in a growing intimacy with Me, will My power come forth. Therefore, we keep the main thing the main thing. We mention what we are warring against but emphasize everything God has given us to war against the wiles of the enemy so that we can be more than conquerors! [TOP](#)

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