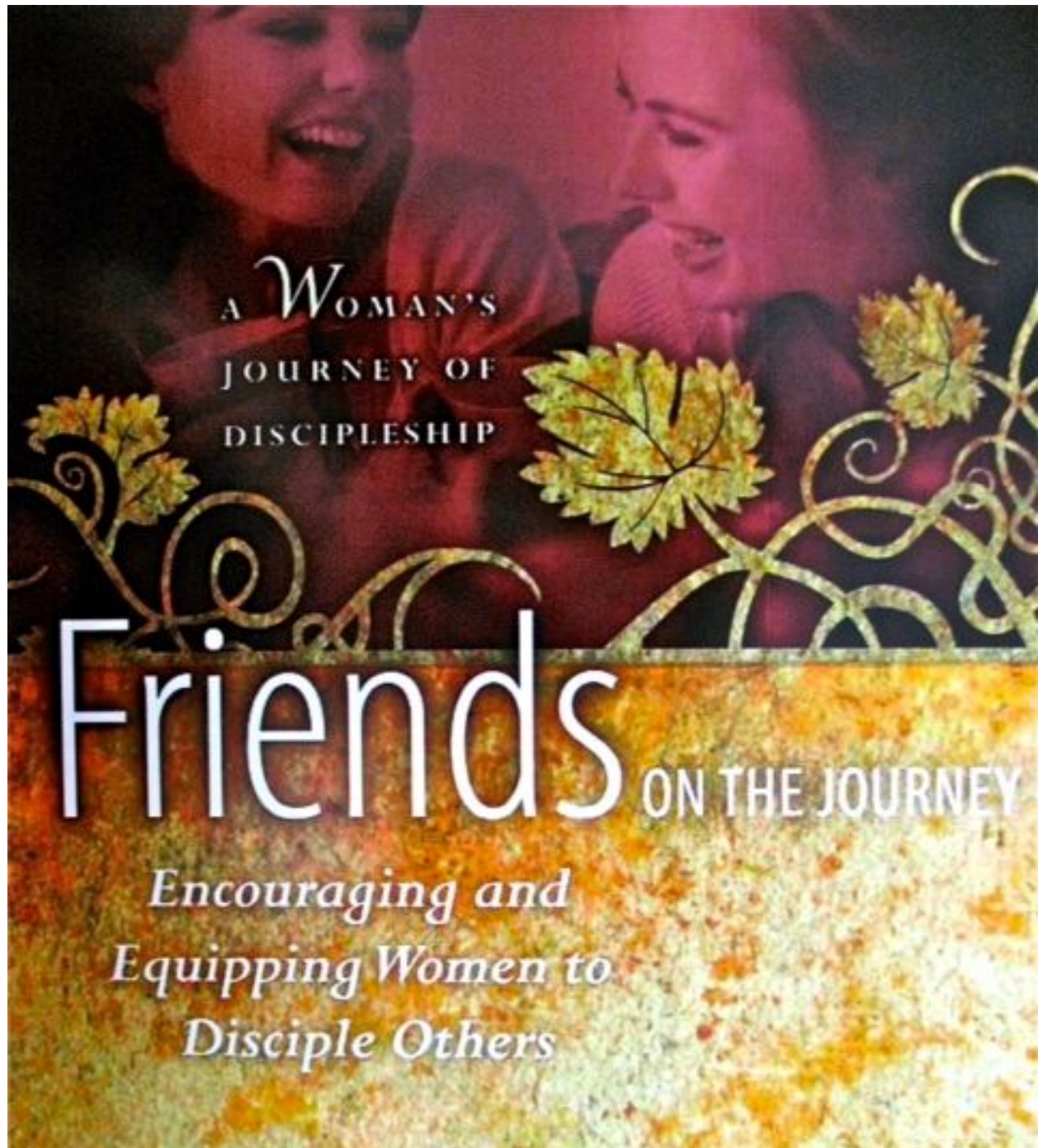


Friends
Leadership
Manual



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Focus Tips for Leaders

Friends on the Journey

Focus Tips is a tool to help you, the leader, take other women through *Friends on the Journey*. The purpose is to enhance and give direction to the discussion of each session. It is not meant to take away from the discussion questions, but to stimulate thinking and discussion as you go through each chapter. Please familiarize yourself with the Guidelines and Essentials on the Journey in Appendix B, pages 165-169.

As you lead your group through *A Woman's Journey of Discipleship*, remind them that this is a process rather than simply a Bible study. This journey with Jesus gives opportunity to wholeheartedly follow him in discipleship as well as to capture his heart and vision for discipling others.

Jesus taught his disciples by example, setting the pattern for his followers. Through your life and ministry, you can learn to encourage and equip others, who will in turn invest their lives in future generations. *Friends on the Journey* is intended to empower you with God's vision and passion and provide the skills for a lifelong ministry of DISCIPLING others, life-changing friendships that leave a legacy for future generations.

It's important to the process that you as the leader cover each of the seven components (listed below) with your group. This will enable the women to grow in their spiritual journey and help them develop spiritual disciplines, such as scripture memory, quiet time, studying and applying God's Word to their lives.

Components of each session of Friends

- MY DAILY JOURNEY... sharing highlights from the Word draws the group closer.
- OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER... reviewing lessons learned reinforces the discipling process
- REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY... helps women relate as they read encouraging stories from ordinary women about their encounters with an extraordinary God.
- THE TRAVEL GUIDE... brings deeper understanding through exploring and experiencing the truth of the Bible.
- TIPS FOR THE ROAD... offers practical help and encouragement
- LEARNING THE ROUTE BY HEART... changed lives happen through memorizing scripture.
- NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY... enables the women to see progress as they complete each assignment.
- MY JOURNEY FRIENDS... (initiated in the first lesson.) Encouraging one another beyond the group time brings encouragement and accountability.

Focus Tips are written for each of the ten sessions in *Friends on the Journey*.

Included are:

1. Key Point/Focus of the Session
2. Overall tips for the Session to emphasize and highlight
 - Background of scripture where relevant
 - Questions to choose and insights from your discussion
3. Take away (application) from the Session

Starting each session:

Here are some suggestions to help you start each session of *Friends on the Journey*.

Open with prayer

Included in each lesson is the scripture memory component, *Learning the Route by Heart*. The tear-out memory verses are in the back of the book. As you start each session, the ladies could pair up with someone else to review the verse they have memorized or you can do it as a group. You can be creative and vary how you review the verses.

Another vital part of the lesson is *My Daily Journey*. This is an important part of discipleship as it encourages the women to spend daily time with God through His Word and helps form the habit of journaling. The first two books of the series included a daily devotional guide called My Daily Journal. In the first book, readers looked at the gospel of Mark; in the second book, the gospel of John. In *Friends on the Journey* the focus will be on the book of Acts.

Rather than provide a daily guide for *Friends on the Journey*, encourage the women to develop their own daily reading plan for the book of Acts and record their thoughts in their journals. This will help establish and reinforce the joy of a lifetime habit of meetings with the Lord. Encourage the women to use these two questions to guide them:

- What did I learn about God or myself on my Journey?
- How can I grow deeper in my relationship with the Lord or demonstrate His love to others

In *Our Journey Together* ask the ladies to share from one of the five days of *My Daily Journey* that they have recorded. This will really help your group get to know each other better and see how God is working in their lives through the Scriptures.

We encourage you to pray regularly for your group that their hearts would be ignited to follow Jesus Christ and in turn disciple others, leaving a legacy of spiritual generations.

Friends on the Journey

Session 1

The Discipling Vision

“Am I willing to carry the torch?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journeys.
2. **Key Point of Session 1**: Capturing the vision on what's on God's heart by saying “yes” to the privilege of obeying God's command to disciple and intentionally invest in other women.
3. **Journey Components**. As the leader, it's important to the process that you cover each of the components included in this session:
 - My Daily Journey
 - Our Journey Together
 - Reflections on the Journey
 - The Travel Guide
 - Tips for the Road
 - Learning the Route by Heart
 - Next Steps on the Journey
 - My Journey Friends

4. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**

To give the women a picture of what to expect in the *Friends on the Journey* process, and to fully understand the process of discipling others, together review the Introduction (pages 9-11).

- A. **From Question 1**: Gigi is not alone in her feelings of inadequacy and fear at the thought of discipling someone. Discuss with the women in your group feelings of inadequacy they might have. Compare those feelings with how they see the heart of Jesus revealed in Question 1 as He responds to the people around him.
- B. **Question 2**: Ask them to share the prayer they wrote, expressing their heart for God's harvest.
- C. **From Question 3**: As described in 1 Corinthians 3:5-11, Apollos and Paul had unique responsibilities. Clarify the differences described, and discuss how the women might identify. Ask them how this passage encourages them.
- D. **From Questions 4 & 5**: Read Psalm 78 together, and discuss the ways God's people are called to cultivate spiritual generations. What happens when God's life giving words are passed on?
 - Share with one another specific examples of how conveying God's vision of discipling others can be conveyed in day-to-day activities.

- E. Question 6a, b & c: Ask the women what they discovered about spiritual generations from these passages. Who did Timothy witness to and disciple? Describe the picture you see in Revelation 7:9-10 and how it might reflect the vision Paul expressed in 2 Timothy 2:2.
- F. Question 8a, b, c, & d: Describe Paul's heart and relationship with the new believers he discipled. What was the ultimate vision he cast for them?
- G. From Question 9: Ask the women to share some character qualities of people who have influenced them, and the encouragement they experienced from those relationships.

5. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**

- From Question 7: Ask the women to share their dreams and who they would like to see come to Christ.
- Read Ephesians 3:20 together and spend time praying over these people. *God is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of--infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes.* (TLB)
- Read ***Tips for the Road*** to help identify some next steps to take.

The Great Commission

“How Can I Develop God’s Passion For the World?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journeys.
2. **Key Point of Session 2:** Discovering your role in the Great Commission and developing a passion for God’s panoramic vision for spiritual generations.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. Together read *The Message* translation of Matthew 28:18-20.
 - B. From Question 1: Discuss the common ideas the women discovered from the chart on page 35. What specific instructions are given regarding communicating the gospel?
 - C. From Question 2: Ask the women what they think is involved in Jesus’ calling of making disciples. Discuss some ways to capture God’s vision and heart?
 - D. From Questions 3 & 4: Share with one another your written personal summaries of The Great Commission, as well as your prayer picturing how you would live out His call.
 - E. From Question 6: In view of what has personally entrusted to us, ask the women how they can begin to influence the people they are praying for.
 - F. From Question 9: In comparing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20 with the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39, discuss how you could express the Great Commandment as you live out the Great Commission. Ask the women to give specific, practical examples of how these two mandates might work together in reaching out to the women they are praying for and hoping to disciple.
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - Encourage the women to show how their priorities and schedules would change in order to make the Great Commission an integral part of their lives.
 - Read ***Tips for the Road*** together, and challenge the women to develop or deepen their relationship with someone from their prayer list by inviting them to lunch or coffee.

Friends on the Journey

Session 3

Friends on the Journey

“What does it mean to minister life-to-life?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include *Our Journey Together*, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 3:** Embracing God’s heart and vision for linking you with other women in personal, effective discipling relationships. A life-to-life relationship involves intentionally passing on values, heart, vision, passion, knowledge, and skills.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. Look together at the illustration on page 50. Explain to the women how the role of the disciplemaker decreases in the life of a disciple as growth takes place and she begins to disciple others.
 - B. Read page 50 together and answer Question 1. Ask: Why is God’s love for you and others significant in your life-to-life relationships?
 - C. From Question 3: After identifying the mission Paul was called to, ask: What did the Lord say Saul could expect the outcomes of his ministry to be? How do these verses motivate you to make life-to-life ministry a priority?
 - D. After reading John 17:20-21, discuss Question 4.
 - E. From Question 5: Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6 together. Then ask the women to share their discovery about how Timothy prepared the Thessalonians during a difficult time in their Christian walk.
 - F. From Question 5, b and c: Encourage the women to share a circumstance that may have discouraged them, and then about how someone came along to “strengthen and encourage” them during that time.
 - G. From Question 6: Discuss together the “IMITATE” acronym, with corresponding qualities in the second column. Ask how these qualities were demonstrated in Paul and Timothy’s life-to-life relationship. For example: It was a Purposeful relationship as Paul urged Timothy to continue in what he had been learning and how he had built convictions through the Word.
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - We all experience times of resisting change, and sometimes busyness keeps us from staying on the right track. What are some ways you could help the woman described in Question 8? How would you address these obstacles to her growth? What principles can be applied from *Tips for the Road*?

The Priority of Prayer

“How can I experience God’s Power and Promises?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include *Our Journey Together*, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.

2. **Key Point of Session 4:** Through prayer we have access to the rich resources of God’s power and promises day by day, hour by hour, and minute by minute – in the good times as well as in the difficult times. He longs to give us these resources, if only we would ask.

Isaiah 30:18 (Amplified) expresses it well: *The Lord (earnestly) waits—expecting, looking and longing—to be gracious to you; and therefore He lifts Himself up, that He may have mercy on you and show lovingkindness to you. For the Lord is a God of justice, Blessed—happy, fortunate and to be envied—are all those who (earnestly) wait for Him, who expect and look and long for Him (for His victory, His love, His peace, His joy, and His matchless, unbroken companionship).*

3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**

- A. From *Reflections from the Heart of a Discipler*, what were the three practices Ruth used to enrich her prayers? Ask the women to share ways that have deepened their prayer lives.
- B. From Question 1: As a group, praise God for his attributes as listed in David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-13. Use “popcorn prayers” so everyone has at least one opportunity to praise God.
- C. From Question 2: Learn how the group members filled in the chart—things they are thankful for as well as what they are asking God for.
- D. From Question 3: John 17 is a powerful-recorded prayer of Jesus. He prayed for His disciples and for us. *Through prayer you, too, can reach into the future, laying a foundation of blessing for those new disciples you are befriending and to generations beyond them.* Ask the women what things they can pray for themselves and others.
- E. A promise is an oral or written agreement to do or not do something. God’s promises are foundational to living and ministering in God’s kingdom. God gives us His promises in order to awaken hope and expectation in us. As we pray His Word, we are simply activating what He has already made available. Ask the women to share their responses from Question 4.
- F. Discuss Question 5 and Question 6.
- G. Ask the group members to share their most motivating promise from Questions 7 & 8

4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**

- Together review the scriptural promises listed in *Tips for the Road*. Ask each woman choose one or two of these scriptures to pray for her discipling friend. Spend time praying these scriptures at the end of your group time.

Essentials for the Journey

“What are good habits for a spiritually healthy heart?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include *Our Journey Together*, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 5:** Spiritual discipline is crucial to finishing well and enjoying the blessings that come from being faithful in those disciplines.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. From *Reflections from the Heart of a Discipler*, what did Gigi discover that was indispensable in giving her soul room to breathe and grow?
 - B. Discipline requires cultivation. Lead the women through the three passages in Question 1, and discuss what these scriptures teach about spiritual training.
 - C. Discipline brings freedom. From Question 2, Discuss with your group the spiritual disciplines Daniel demonstrated, and the benefits he enjoyed because of these godly habits.
 - D. From Question 3: Ask the group members to express the lessons they think Jesus wanted Peter to learn. Share experiences when the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak, and how spiritual disciplines could help at a time like this.

Spiritual habits in themselves do not make us godly, but they do place us an environment where God can address issues of the heart.
 - E. Discuss Question 4, Question 5, and Question 6.
 - F. Read aloud together the text and scripture on page 84.
 - G. From the chart on page 86, listen to one another as you share the steps you will take to reach these goals.
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - From *Tips for the Road* draw out from your group their response from the four questions.
 - As a group, pray for one another that these spiritual disciplines will enable transformation to take place, realizing that its not the disciplines that change us, but rather the practices that can put us in God's presence and in his Word so that **HE** can transform us.

Lightening the Load

“How can I help when a woman I disciple is emotionally wounded?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include *Our Journey Together*, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 6:** In discipling others we need to recognize Jesus' healing ministry and what it means for us to encourage and come alongside women who are hurting, while keeping them on track to follow Jesus on their spiritual journeys.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. Read together the three encouraging truths on page 95.
 - B. Review page 96 with your group, pointing out the essential principles. For example, “replacing the enemy's deceptions of doubt, self-sufficiency, and death.” The scripture offers biblical guidance.
 - C. Cover Question 1 in your group and share findings from the chart on page 97.
 - D. Ask the women to share their thoughts from Question 2.
 - E. Lead the women through Question 3, including a, b, and c.
 - F. From Question 4, ask the women to share the evidences Jesus used to reveal his identity.
 - G. From Question 6: Using 2 Timothy 2:15, 22-26 as a guide, ask group members what they discovered about the responsibilities of disciplers and of the people being disciplined.
 - H. From *Writings Along the Way*, review with the women the three important things to remember about prayer for emotional healing (page 102) and the components of “One-Another Prayer” (pages 102-103).
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - Ask the women to give a concrete example of their ministry approach, or one that they intend to take when a healing need comes up in their discipling ministry.

The Process of Discipling Others

“How is transformation evident in the life of a new disciple?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 7:** The life of a growing disciple is evidenced through a changed life reflecting the character of Jesus Christ.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. **Reflections from the Heart of a Discipled:** God uses disciplers to help bring about spiritual transformation in the lives of those they are discipling through equipping and encouraging them to grow in their walk with Jesus. From Gigi's story discuss the similarities and importance in the roles of a physical mom and a spiritual mom.
 - B. **Looking at the two passages of scripture in Question 1:** What are some key actions needed in order to bring about spiritual transformation in the life of a believer?
 - C. **From Question 2:** (I Thessalonians 1-3) Paul, Silas, and Timothy saw life change in their new disciples. Draw out from the women what changes they discovered. What were some ways in which these men had a part in helping the Thessalonians grow in their faith? How did these life changes influence others?
 - D. The two passages in **Question 3** talk about life change. Where does life change begin, and how is it carried out? “Spiritual transformation” means to change or to form under the power of God.
 - E. **Questions 4 and 5:** As the leader, please share some examples of how God is transforming your life and what blessings you are seeing as a result of God's work in your life.
 - F. Discuss the key points of growing spiritually in **Question 7**, a, b, c, d, and e.
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - From lessons learned in this chapter and looking at the four facets in ***Tips for the Road***, identify one way from each facet in which you can help your friend pursue transformation as a growing disciple.

Relying on the Guide Book

“How can I effectively use God’s Word to disciple others?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God’s Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.
2. **Key Point of Session 8:** As a disciple and a discipler of others, allow the Bible to be the foundation of your life and a plumb line for your daily thoughts, words, and actions.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. From *Reflections from the Heart of a Discipled*: God uses disciplers to help bring about spiritual transformation in the lives of those they are discipling through equipping and encouraging them to grow in their walk with Jesus. From Gigi’s story discuss the similarities and importance in the roles of both a physical mom and a spiritual mom.
 - B. Look together at the chart in Question 1, and share some ways in which you have learned to trust and rely on God’s Word.
 - C. Question 2a,b, c, d, e: Ask the women to share a time in which they went from not understanding the truth about who Jesus is to how their hearts were ignited with passion for him. Was there a particular passage of scripture that helped them experience this truth?
 - D. Question 3: Ask the group to share how Mary’s worship prayer stirred their hearts? How might her prayer motivate someone to pray scripture back to God?
 - E. Questions 4, 5, 6: Intimacy with God is the key point to these questions. In what ways would you summarize to someone you are discipling the importance of going beyond reading and studying the scriptures to developing a deeper intimate relationship with God?
 - F. As you read through the scriptures in Questions 7 and 8, list some truths that will you teach your disciple to reach out to future generations.
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - From *Writings Along the Way*, share a passage of scripture that convinced you of your need to change before focusing on someone else’s need to change.
 - Share as a group scriptures and ways in which God’s Word has given you a heart to disciple others.

Bringing Others Along

“What is the value of one woman?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include ***Our Journey Together***, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journeys.
2. **Key Point of Session 9:** Even though there are more than six billion people living on earth, God considers every single one incredibly valuable.
3. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**
 - A. Question 1: ***Reflections from the Heart of a Discipled*** tells the story about Beth, a woman who walked by faith and loved life. Ask the women how God used this ordinary woman in an extraordinary way.
 - B. From Question 2: (Psalm 8:3-8; Isaiah 43:4 and 2 Peter 3:9) glean from the group members their thoughts about what place people have with God.
 - C. Ask the women what stood out to them in Question 3: God is relational.
 - D. What nuggets of truth did your group members discover in Question 4:a-c about how God's knowledge and love for each person is demonstrated?
 - E. From Question 6: Inquire of the group members what they learned about Joseph, Rahab, and Lydia...what contributions each made, what influence each had, and how each one was ordinary.
 - F. From Question 7: 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 says that God chose the foolish things of the world, the weak, and the lowly. Ask the women what they think this means.
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7-10: Ask the group to explain how we can draw on God's power, and not our own, when we are hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, or struck down.
God's focus is not on the container but rather on the priceless contents.
 - G. From Question 9: Together with the group share how Jesus demonstrated His value for these ordinary people listed on the chart (page 146).
4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**
 - Ask the group to share with one another how God has demonstrated his value for them.
 - ***Tips for the Road*** describes seven ways to help overcome the temptation to overlook people who are not popular or especially talented. Invite the women to pray over these points, asking God to seal them to their hearts, and to encourage an “ordinary” woman this week.

Leaving a Trail for Others to Follow

“How can I leave a spiritual legacy?”

In preparation for the study take some time to pray over this lesson...the key point and the “take away,” highlighting the questions you think will best communicate to the women in your group.

1. In your group time include *Our Journey Together*, which is important to the discipling process. It gives opportunity for group members to build community as they share recent highlights from their devotional journals, experience the joy of hiding God's Word in their hearts through scripture memory, and learn from one another lessons learned on their journey.

2. **Key Point of Session 10:** Leaving a spiritual legacy for the next generation.

From *A Legacy of Prayer*, by Jennifer Kennedy Dean:

You can reach into the future through prayer this very day. You can . . . impact the world for generations to come. Your life can impact a people of whom you have never heard, and you can be instrumental in bringing forth generations of believers from a nation you may never see.

2. **Overall Tips for the Session to Emphasize and Highlight.**

- A. A spiritual generation is what results when God works through one believer to birth a new generation of believers. Each person can be a link in a spiritual chain that reaches into the future. The family of faith expands through history – one person – one generation at a time.
 - From Question 1, discuss with the group how spiritual generations were reinforced through these Old Testament scriptures.
- B. From Question 2: With the women in your group, identify the generations referred to in the passages listed. How many generations did you discover?
- C. Read aloud with the women the paragraph on the top of page 157 and the quote mid-page.
- D. Question 3: Ask for volunteers to share their written prayers.
- E. What nuggets of truth did your group members discover in Question 4:a & b about bearing spiritual fruit and leaving a legacy of spiritual generations?

4. **Take Away (application) from this Session:**

- From Question 5: Ask the group to share with one another how they can begin to build a spiritual legacy for women who do not have one.
- From Question 6: Discuss with the women as to how they can begin to impart to other women a vision for spiritual generations.
- From Question 7: Share together about how the implications of the illustration in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8, 11, 12 can be applied in ministering to others.

Next Steps on the Journey:

- CELEBRATE! Read together page 163, and set a time for your celebration, and share your greatest blessings from *A Woman's Journey of Discipleship*.