

Helping Others Grow

ONE OF MY GOALS in writing this book is to encourage people who don't think they can disciple others to see that they can, and just get going.

If you follow Jesus, then He's called you to this task. And He will give you everything you need to do it.

You don't need to be any farther ahead than you are right now. You just need to love God and love other people, and invite them to join you in following Jesus.

There are many ways to start, but one of them is to simply invite a few other people to join you in working through the material in this book with you. Read this material together and get together to work through the Group Discussion Questions at the end of each habit. If you want to go deeper, work through some of the questions at the end of each lesson.

8 HABITS FOR GROWTH

INVITING OTHERS

Before Jesus chose His disciples, He prayed (Luke 6:12–16). Before sending out seventy-two to serve in towns before Him, Jesus prayed with them. This pattern is repeated in Acts when choosing leaders (Acts 1:24).

Although you're not picking leaders, it's a good example to follow. This pattern of prayer before action is a good way to align our heart and mind with God's heart. Ask God for wisdom on who to invite. Ask Him to prepare the hearts of the people who will be joining you.

Look around you for faithful people who seem ready to grow (2 Tim. 2:1–2). Explain what you're thinking: that you would like to work on growing, and you're looking for people to join you. Be honest about the commitment: that you will meet regularly (how often is up to you), and that you want them to work through this book with you. Aim to express that the commitment is significant but not overwhelming.

Don't be discouraged if people say no. It's not your job to recruit people; you're just looking for those God has already prepared.

The best place to look for people is probably within your church. I believe that the church is essential to the Christian life. God knew what He was doing when He placed us within a Christian community! It's the best place to grow, and it's also the best place to look for people to invite. There's no better context in which to build these habits and invest in others than in a local church.

Generally speaking, especially in groups of only a few people, look for people of the same gender: men with men, and women with women. Paul instructs older men to invest in younger men (Titus 2:1) and older women to invest in younger women (Titus 2:3–5). Not only is this biblical, but it seems to work better practically. Mixed genders can work well in larger groups, but in smaller ones

it's usually better for men to invest in men, and women with women.

Inviting people can be one of the scariest parts of this process. But don't get discouraged. Ask for God's help. Finding even one person to go through this process with you is worth it. You will be investing in a process that will pay dividends for eternity.

ENCOURAGE AND GET PERSONAL

To make a difference in the lives of others, don't just be a teacher of content. Be an encourager. Get personal. Don't just transfer information. Get to know people and love them. Invite them into your life, and show an interest in them.

Scripture is full of examples of people who modeled this approach:

- Jesus spent three years living and traveling with the twelve apostles.
- Barnabas recognized Paul's gifts, encouraged him, and introduced him to the apostles (Acts 9:27).
- Paul poured his life into many people. He mentions dozens of people by name in his letters. He mentored Timothy and Titus. Paul describes his approach to one church: "But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess. 2:7–8).

This approach comes from believing that people are valuable and made in God's image, taking the role of a servant, and loving them. "Maximum growth in Christian maturity occurs when truth is presented in the context of relationships."¹ Your relational involvement

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in working through this material with others can make a profound difference.

KEY COACHING SKILLS

1. **Get to know the person.** Take a personal interest. Discover their story, joys, stresses, and hobbies. Learn about their strengths, skills, interests, and accomplishments. Ask good questions as an act of love.
2. **Be curious.** As you work through this material, take an active interest in how people respond to the habits and to the questions. Listen for what's really going on. Be compassionate and genuinely interested in the person and their responses.
3. **Be careful about giving advice.** “We've all got a deeply ingrained habit of slipping into the advice-giver/expert/answer-it/solve-it/fix-it mode,” writes Michael Bungay Stainer.² Recognize that habit in yourself, and try to catch it. Give less advice; ask more questions. Listen more than you speak. Allow time for God to bring His provision for the situation.
4. **Help people deal with setbacks.** “Change is moving in the right direction,” says David Powlison. “It’s not about speed, distance, or perfection, but direction.”³ Extend grace when people fail. Shrink the challenge. Practice the clean slate policy. Look for bright spots, and celebrate the positive.
5. **Pray.** One of the most important things we can do for others is to pray for them. Commit to praying for each person you coach regularly throughout this process.

RESOURCES

Visit gospelforlife.com/how-to-coach for resources on coaching.

NEXT STEPS

Acknowledge your inadequacy. Rely on God's power. Invite others to join you in pursuing God by building habits that put them in the path of God's grace. Just get started.

Please email me at darryl@gospelforlife.com. I'd love to hear from you.