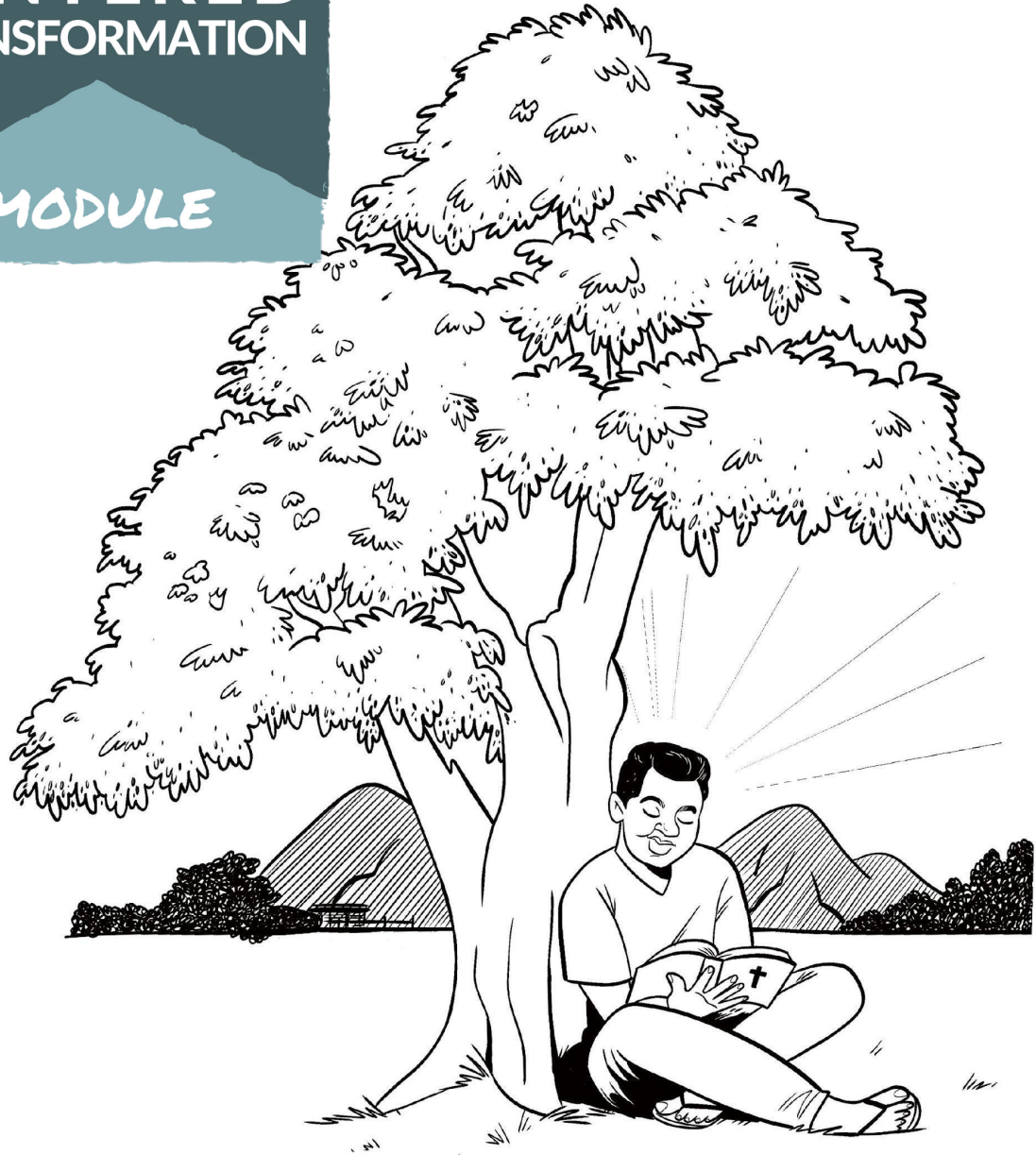


**TRUTH
CENTERED
TRANSFORMATION**

MODULE



**LIVING AS GOD
INTENDS
TEACHER GUIDE**

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Facilitator: Part A will take two days. Each lesson is 45 minutes. Please schedule 5 lessons per day - 3 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

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Facilitator: Part B will take one day. Each of the two sessions takes about 3 hours. Feel free to schedule breaks mid-session.

Session 1: Growing in Discipleship

Session 2: Growing in Fruit

Part A

Lesson 1: Why Do We Obey God?

Key Idea

We obey God because we are grateful to Him, and because He is powerful and good.

Introduction

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

In the TCT programme we've spent a lot of time talking about how God cares about every area of life, not just our spiritual lives. We have said that we need to obey God and follow His ways in everything we do. Let's take time to talk about WHY we should obey God in everything.

- Why do we worship and obey God? List as many reasons as you can think of.

We obey God because we are grateful to Him

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Think of a time when you were touched by someone's kindness to you.

- What did you do as a result? How did your relationship with that person change?

Let's read a story.

One day, as Mark finished working in his garden, he heard a truck coming up the road. Mark looked up. A teenage boy was driving the truck. He drove off the road right toward Mark's small house. It hit a goat, and the other goats ran in every direction. Then the truck crashed through the fence Mark had just built around his garden. It destroyed the garden before finally crashing into the side of the house. The boy climbed out of the truck. The roof of Mark's house crashed onto the truck. Mark stared at the ruin.

A crowd arrived. They shouted, 'Stop that boy! He stole the truck!' Someone grabbed the boy. A policeman put handcuffs on him. He began pushing the boy roughly toward the police car.

As they passed, Mark recognised the boy. He was an orphan who had recently joined the local gang. 'What's going to happen to this boy?' he asked.

The policeman paused. 'He has to pay you for all the damage he's done to your property. He also has to pay for repairs to the truck'.

The boy's voice shook. 'I could never pay so much! I have no money!'

The officer scowled. 'Then you'll spend the rest of your life in prison. You'll do hard labour to pay off your debts!'

One villager picked up a piece of wood. 'Look at this mess! We'll take care of him! Leave him to us, officer!'

'Yes!' The crowd began shaking sticks, shovels, and machetes. 'We'll give that boy what he deserves!'

Mark's heart filled with compassion for the boy. 'Wait!' Mark called over all the noise. 'I don't want the boy to die,' he said. 'I don't want him to go to prison either. I forgive his debt to me. And I will pay whatever the boy owes for the truck. If he did damage to anyone else's property, I will pay that, too'.

The boy looked shocked and confused. But a tiny flicker of hope came into his eyes.

The police officer and the crowd shook their heads in disbelief. Mark was the one most hurt by the boy's actions! Then they began to laugh. 'This crazy old man wants to use his life's savings to pay for someone else's crimes! Well, who are we to argue?'

Mark continued, 'All I ask is that I be allowed to adopt the boy as my own son. I will take care of him. I will protect him and teach him the right way to live'. He held his hand out to the boy. 'It's up to you,' he said. 'Will you agree to be my son?'

- What did the boy need to do to be saved? (*He only needed to accept Mark's offer of adoption.*)
- Could the boy have earned Mark's forgiveness if he tried really hard? Why or why not? (*No, he couldn't. The damage was too costly.*)
- How would you expect the boy to feel toward his adopted father? (*gratitude, trust, a desire to please him*)
- How do you think the boy's life will change? (*secure, listening and obeying with joy*)

This story has some similarities to us. Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

- How are we saved? (*by grace, through faith, not by works*)

Read Titus 2:14.

- According to this verse, what are the two reasons that Jesus gave himself for us? (*redeem us, purify us for good works*)
- How does Jesus want us to feel about doing good works? (*eager*)
- In what ways has your life changed as a result of Christ's gift?

Just like the boy in the story, we do not get rid of our sins by being good or doing good things. Jesus already died a real and painful death for our sins. We obey God because we are grateful to Him for what He's done for us.

We obey God because He is worthy

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

We obey God because we are grateful for His gift of salvation, and we want to please Him. There is an even more important reason for us to obey God, however. We obey God because He is worthy of our worship and obedience. This is because of God's character - who He is.

Read Psalm 103:8 and Psalm 136:1.

- What do these verses tell us about the character of God?

God is good. He always does what is right. He is merciful and is ready to forgive us. He is just - He will make sure that no sin is unpunished; that all injustice is paid for.

Psalm 147:5

- What does this verse tell us about the character of God?

God is powerful. He can do anything. He knows everything; He knows what is best for us. He is completely in control.

- Imagine that you are allowed to choose the next king for your nation. Which of these three people would you choose? Why?
 - Person 1 is very loving and kind. He wants what is good for people but doesn't have the authority or power to help or protect them.
 - Person 2 is very strong and powerful. He can do whatever he wants. But he is not good. He never considers what is best for others, only for himself.

- Person 3 is both good and powerful. He wants what is best for everyone, and he has absolute authority and power to be able to make any changes he wants.

Of course, we would all choose the king that was both powerful and good. Our God IS both powerful and good. Because of this, He is worthy of our worship, trust and obedience.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- In what ways have you seen God's goodness in your lives? How have you seen His power?
(examples: Has He forgiven you? Healed your body? Healed relationships? Has He provided what you need? Has He changed the hearts of people you know? Has He protected you?)

REPORT BACK

Let's go back to the beginning. We are thinking about WHY we obey God.

- What reasons have we talked about?
 - 1) We obey God because we are grateful for what He's done
 - 2) We obey God because He is both powerful and good

God is worthy of our worship and obedience. We want to obey Him and follow His ways. He is powerful and good. Let's remember what He has done for us, and obey with grateful hearts.

Conclusion and Application

- Spend time praying. Thank God for who He is and what He has done for you. Ask Him to help you to be eager to obey His commands.

Lesson 2: God's Ways Are Best

Key Idea

Following God's commands in the Bible brings blessing. We must obey the Bible, even when it is different from our culture.

Materials

1. Some kind of cloth to use as a blindfold
2. A rock or another small object that can be picked up easily

Introduction

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Have everyone stand in a circle. Ask a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle, be blindfolded and spun around several times. Then, place a rock or another object somewhere on the floor inside the circle. Ask the blindfolded person to choose someone to give them instructions that will help them find the object.

- What would have happened if our volunteer had chosen NOT to follow the instructions? (*they would have blundered around bumping into people*)
- How is the Bible like a book of instructions? (*it tells us how to live our lives well*)

The Bible is our instruction book. God created us and knows everything about us. He is good. He wants the best for us. Like a loving parent, God gives us commands in the Bible that are good for us.

Following God's commands in the Bible brings blessing

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Psalm 119:1-3.

- What is the result of following God's commands?
- What does it mean to be 'blessed'?

Following God's ways brings His blessing. This does not mean we will be rich. It means that God will meet our needs so that we can grow as He wants, and so that we can also be a blessing to others. Even when we face problems, God helps us to overcome them. He will give us His presence, and joy and peace in difficulty.

- How have you seen God's blessing when you obey His commands? (**Facilitator:** allow several people to respond or tell stories)

We follow God's ways, even if this is different from our culture

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Genesis 3:1-5.

- What lie did Satan tell Eve about God?

Satan essentially told Adam and Eve that God was lying. He said that we should not obey God, and that we can't trust that His commands are good for us. Today, Satan wants to trap us in the same lie.

Read Jeremiah 29:11.

- What are God's plans for us?

God has good intentions for our communities right now. But Satan wants us to believe that our communities will never change. He doesn't want us to follow God's ways, which lead to life and blessing.

Read John 8:32.

- How does this verse apply to us? *(if we know the truth and obey God's commands, we will be free from Satan's lies and their consequences)*

A Good Night's Sleep

In one community, many women were rising at 1:00 AM to start their daily routines. Before breakfast, they would collect firewood, fetch water, and prepare food for their families. After breakfast, they would work for hours in the field and take care of other household duties. Each evening, the women would return to their homes exhausted. After a long day's work, they had little energy to relax and enjoy time with their families.

A church in this community studied the Marriage and Family module. They learned in Ephesians 6 that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Though initially embarrassed by the idea of serving their wives, the men trusted that God's commands are good. After much debate, a few church leaders decided to rise before anyone else to avoid the embarrassment of others knowing they were helping their wives. The men awoke with their wives at 4 a.m. to help with the preparations of the day, allowing their wives three extra hours of sleep. The result was amazing! The women, feeling more rested and valued by their husbands, were able to put more time and energy into their families.

The community quickly noticed something had changed in these families. They started to investigate. It didn't take them long to find out these men had been waking at 4 a.m., allowing their wives extra sleep. Instead of laughing at the men, they too started to change! Now, the families in this community get up at 4am, inspired by a few men of the church who desired to serve their wives. The families in the community are now much happier and healthier. It's amazing what a bit of extra sleep can do!

- Why did the men decide to wake up earlier to help their wives? *(to obey God by loving their wives)*
- Why did they feel embarrassed to do this? *(this is not what men usually did)*
- What was the result? Is this community now more or less like God intends? *(the community saw that following God's ways is best; the community is more like God intends)*
- What can we learn from this story? *(when we learn God's truth, and obey His commands, it brings blessing; obeying God's commands can change our community)*

Every culture has parts that follow God's ways and parts that are trapped by lies. We must follow God's ways even if they are different from our culture.

Following what God says about vulnerable people

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: *If you have at least 20 minutes left, this can be a small group discussion. In that case, read all the verses as a large group, then have the class break into small groups while you write the discussion questions on the board. Give them 10 minutes to discuss, and then report back.*

For example, let's think about vulnerable people. This might be women, children, people with disabilities, people from a certain ethnic group, or anyone less valued by society.

Read Genesis 1:27 and Psalm 139:13-16.

Thinking about these verses, and about what we have learnt in TCT.

- What does the Bible say about vulnerable people? What does God think of them? (*Each person is important to God. He specially made each person in His own image*)

Read Psalm 140:12 and James 1:27.

- How does He want us to treat them? (*We must treat vulnerable people like they are valuable, especially by protecting them and meeting their needs.*)
- How is this different (or not) from what our culture does?
- Is anything hard about following God's ways when we interact with vulnerable people? Why is it difficult?
- What can we do to follow God's ways more closely?
- What other areas can you think of where God's ways are different from our culture?

In our next lesson we will look more closely at some other areas that God's ways might be different from our culture. We will talk about how we can follow God's ways more closely in these areas.

Conclusion and Application

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Following God's commands brings blessing. We must obey the Bible, even when it is different from our culture.

- Ask God if there is anything He wants you to do anything to show His love to vulnerable people in your community. If He shows you anything, share it with another person and pray for each other.

Lesson 3: Following God's Ways

Facilitator: In this lesson small groups will discuss different topics and then share with the class. If you think it is better for all the groups to look at all the topics themselves, put aside TWO lesson times. In this case, only give 10 minutes for small group discussion for each topic.

Key Idea

When we know what the Bible says, we must obey. This lesson gives people the chance to remember what the Bible says about specific topics covered in TCT and think about how to follow God's ways even more.

Materials

1. Mirror (optional)
2. Dirt or charcoal to rub on your nose, and something to wipe it off
3. Visual Aid - one topic for each small group

Introduction

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Before teaching the lesson, put a big smudge of dirt on your nose. Then choose one of these options.

- 1) When someone mentions the dirt, (you may want to ask one person before the class to mention it if no one else does) thank them. Exclaim about how embarrassing it is, but DO NOT wipe it off. Begin the lesson by asking someone to read the verse.
- 2) To start the lesson, tell the class that you want to look particularly good today. Pull out a hand mirror and notice the smudge on your nose. Exclaim about how embarrassing it is, but DO NOT wipe it off. Begin the lesson by asking someone to read the verse.

Read James 1:22-25.

- Imagine that someone tells you that you have a big smudge of dirt right on your nose. What would you do? What would people think if you said, 'How embarrassing. Thank you for telling me!' and then walked away and forgot about it? (*if you didn't wipe it off, they would laugh at you or think you are crazy*)
- What is this like, according to this verse? (*Reading the bible, but not obeying*)
- Do we ever do this? (*yes, we all do this, but hopefully less and less as we become more mature*)

Facilitator: Don't forget to clean off your nose!

In the last lesson we learnt that God's ways are best. According to Romans 12:2, his will is 'good, pleasing, and perfect.' When we know God's truth, it sets us free from Satan's lies. But we have to obey. When we obey God's commands, we are blessed.

Today we are going to look at several topics that we talked about in TCT over the last several years. We are going to:

- Look again at what the Bible says about the topic.
- Think about how this is different or the same as our culture.
- Think about what we can do to follow God's ways more closely in this area.

Topics to discuss

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Split the class into groups of 4-5 people. Give each group a **VISUAL AID: one topic**. If people finish their discussion early, give them another topic to begin to discuss. Make sure all topics are covered by at least one group.

In your groups, read the verses about your topic and answer the questions. Also think about what we've learnt in TCT over the past few years as you do this. You will have about 15 minutes.

Physical health

Read the verses. Think about what you have learnt in TCT. Discuss the questions.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

3 John 1:2

Matthew 4:23

Mark 12:28-30

- What does the Bible say about our physical health? (Is God concerned about it? How do you know? How does God want us to use our bodies? What does this mean?)
- Are these things different from what our culture believes? If so, how?
- Is anything hard about following God's ways in caring for our health? Why is it difficult?
- What can we do to follow God's ways more closely in this area?

SUMMARY

God cares about our bodies and our health. He wants us to take care of our bodies. We should have healthy practices. We should use our strength to live in ways that glorify Him.

Managing Money

Read the verses. Think about what you have learnt in TCT. Discuss the questions.

1 Timothy 6:10

1 Timothy 5:8

Matthew 6:33

Proverbs 11:25

Proverbs 21:20

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Proverbs 22:7

- What does the Bible say about money? (What should we do with it? What should we not do?)
- How is this different (or not) from what our culture does?
- Is anything hard about following God's ways in managing our money? Why is it difficult?
- What can we do to follow God's ways more closely in managing our money?

SUMMARY

We should not worry about money, nor let it become the most important part of life. We must be generous. We should use our money wisely to care for our family and serve others. We should learn to save, and try to get rid of debt.

Family relationships

Read the verses. Think about what you have learnt in TCT. Discuss the questions.

Ephesians 5:31-33

Ephesians 6:1-4

Deuteronomy 6:6-8

James 1:19

Philippians 2:3-4

- What does the Bible say about family relationships? (What are the responsibilities of children, parents, and grandparents? How should they interact with each other?)
- How are these things different (or not) from the way our culture views family relationships?
- Is anything hard about following God's ways in our family relationships? Why is it difficult?
- What can we do to follow God's ways more closely in our family relationships?

SUMMARY

God wants spouses to love and respect each other. He wants parents and grandparents to train children to follow His ways. We must listen to each other, and not act in anger. We should act in ways that benefit others, not just ourselves.

Our relationship with creation

Read the verses. Think about what you have learnt in TCT. Discuss the questions.

Genesis 2:15

Genesis 1:26-28

- What does it mean to rule the earth?
- What does it mean to work the earth?
- How does God want us to care for His creation?
- How is this different (or not) from what our culture does?
- Is anything hard about following God's ways in our relationship with creation? Why is it difficult?
- What can we do to follow God's ways more closely in our relationship with His creation?

SUMMARY

God wants us to protect the earth, and make sure it isn't damaged. We should work to make the earth productive, and learn to control creation. We use all the natural resources God has given us for His glory.

REPORT BACK

Facilitator: Choose one topic. Have someone from the group summarise their discussion.

- Allow the other groups to give feedback and input on that topic. Make sure that the main ideas covered in the summary boxes are mentioned.
- Write down on the board a couple of ideas of what we can do to follow God's ways more closely for each topic.
- Ask each person to reflect on how they are doing at following God's ways in that area, and if there is anything God wants them to do.
- Then, move to the next topic and do the same thing.

Conclusion and Application

Facilitator: Give people several minutes of silence to answer this question, and then pray for the class to put into action what God is showing them to do.

- When we know what the Bible says, we must obey. We've talked about several different topics today. What things will you do this week to obey God more closely?

Lesson 4: Glorifying God in Our Work

Key Idea

Work is good. God created us to work and care for all of creation. We should do our work in a way that honours God.

Introduction

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

- If you could live a perfect life, do you think you would do work? Why, or why not?
- Do you think God wants us to work, or just attend prayer meetings and church services?

Let's look at what the Bible says about work.

Work is good - it gives dignity and a way to serve

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Genesis 2:2 and 15.

- Who is mentioned as doing work in these verses? (*God and Adam*)
- Why did God put the man in the Garden of Eden? (*To farm. To take care of the land.*)
- Was this before The Fall - when everything was perfect - or after it? (*before the Fall*)

God did work and created humans to work before people sinned. Work is part of God's good creation. It was meant to be a blessing, not a curse! In a perfect world, people would still work.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, and Ephesians 4:28.

- What benefits of work are mentioned in these verses? (*respect of outsiders, not being dependent on anybody, being able to share with those in need*)

Work gives us dignity. It lets us provide for our family and allows us to serve one another.

We should work in a way that honours God

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Sometimes we think that it doesn't matter to God how we do our work. But the Bible has a lot to say about this.

Read Colossians 3:23 and Philippians 2:14-15.

The kind of job or work we have is much less important than how we go about our work. If we want to please God with our work, we will work hard and cheerfully. We will do our best, and never try to cheat anyone.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator Instructions: Assign a job - either farming or sewing - to each group. Ask them to create two short role plays: one showing a person doing the job in a way that brings glory to God, and one showing a person doing the job in a way that does not bring glory to God.

Do your role plays for the whole group.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

After each role play discuss:

- What are some of the ways you saw the person bringing glory to God in his/her work?
- What are some of the ways you saw the person not bringing glory to God in his/her work?
- What are some more ideas we can add to each of these lists?

Listen to two true stories about people who learnt to work in a way that brings glory to God.

A farmer works hard and shows love to others

A woman with a farm in Togo said, 'Before, I considered work to be a curse. Sometimes I would stay all day in the field without getting anything done. But now I understand that God wants us to work to glorify Him. Work can also help us love our neighbours. Now when I go to the field, I work hard. Then, before coming back, I search for firewood. I take some of it to elderly people to bless them'. The woman's pastor agrees that people in the church have changed their attitude towards work. Because of this, those in the church who used to lack food now have enough to eat all year long. Also, people in the community who previously did not like the church are now happy to come when they're invited to church events. This is because of the love that the Christians show them.

The woman with a sewing business

Last year, I didn't care about work. I have a sewing business. Sometimes people would order things, and I didn't respect the time we agreed on. They would come to get their order. I would say, 'It's not ready. Come back tomorrow and maybe it will be done'. I did not work hard. Then we learnt that we should glorify God in everything we do. Even in our work we need to glorify God. So I began to treat my customers differently. I began to respect the dates we agreed on and keep to them. I began to really do my best. I praise God that as I have changed my attitude towards work, He has blessed me. My children used to be sick often. Now God has blessed them with good health. Also, my customers trust me to do a good job. Now they come back to order more things. My business is good.

Conclusion and Application

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What things should we remember about work? (*Work is good. It brings dignity and a way to provide for your family and serve others. God wants us to do our best at our work.*)
- What is one thing you could do better to honour God in your work? Ask God to help you do this.

Lesson 5: Loving Our Neighbours

Key Idea

We show that we love God by loving our neighbours, especially the vulnerable. An important way to do this is by meeting their needs.

Materials

1. Visual Aid - Discussion Guide: What we can do to show love

Introduction (keep under 10 min - there is 30 min small group discussion at the end of the lesson)

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- If you were to choose 3 things that were most important for Christians to do, what would they be?
- How important do you think it is to love our neighbours?
- Compared to 5 years ago is this an area that your church is better at? worse at? or no different?
- What are some things that you do to show love to others in the community? What has been the reaction of the community?

The summary of all God's laws - love your neighbours

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 22:36-40 and Galatians 5:14.

- What are the two most important commandments? (*Love God, love your neighbour*)
- Which of the commandments does Paul say summarises the whole law and the prophets? (*love your neighbour*)

Read 1 John 3:16-17.

- How does this verse help us understand why Paul chose 'love your neighbour' as a summary of the whole law? (*God showed His love by sending Jesus to die. If we do not love people, then it shows that we don't have that kind of love. Loving our neighbour is the outward sign of whether a person really loves God.*)

People can know we are Christians by the way we love others. When we show love to others, it is an expression of our love for God. This pleases Him.

Our neighbour is anyone who needs our help

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

- Who remembers the story of the Good Samaritan? Let's see how well we remember it by acting out the story.

Facilitator: Ask for volunteers to act out the different roles – the man travelling, the robbers, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan, the donkey, the innkeeper. Give them 1 minute to prepare, and then have them perform a role play. Have the rest of the group tell the actors if they forget anything.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are the key ideas we learn from this story?

- *Our neighbour is anyone in need, even an enemy. (The traveling man is assumed to be a Jew. Samaritans and Jews were enemies.)*
- *We love our neighbours by meeting their physical needs. (Jesus focused on what the people DID)*

Luke 10:36-37 records that after telling the story of The Good Samaritan, Jesus asked, 'Who was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The response was, 'The one who helped him.' And Jesus said, 'Yes. Go and do the same thing.' Jesus is saying that we love our neighbours in our ACTIONS.

Read James 1:27, Psalm 82:3-4, and Jeremiah 22:3.

- Who does God especially command His people to protect and love? List some of them. (*people who are oppressed, refugees, orphans, widows, the weak, the needy*)
- Can you think of people in your community who are vulnerable like this?

What we can do to show love

We show that we love God by loving our neighbours, especially the vulnerable. An important way to do this is to meet their physical needs.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (15-20 min)

Facilitator: give each group a **VISUAL AID: Discussion Guide.**

In small groups of 6-8 people, read the following list of neighbours and discuss the questions:

- Are there other people that should be added to this list? Who do we think of first?
- Who is your church already helping? What have you done to help them?
- What other people could you help? How could you meet their needs?

Our Neighbours:

A stranger or newcomer in your community	A person who is extremely poor
A person who is in conflict with you	Another church member
A new believer	An orphan
A friend	A person who stopped coming to church
A person far from God	A family member
(maybe a drunkard, drug dealer, or gang member)	

REPORT BACK

Conclusion

We show that we love God by loving our neighbours, especially the vulnerable. An important way to do this is by meeting their needs. We talked about how we can do this. Let's choose one thing we can do this week.

Lesson 6: Loving Our Neighbours Well

Key Idea

We should help vulnerable people in ways that have long-term impact, like helping them be able to support themselves.

Materials

1. A long piece of cloth, or something else to tie someone to a chair
2. 7-8 rocks
3. Visual Aids - Ways to help that have a long-term impact (5 pictures - print and cut apart)

Introduction

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Ask for a volunteer. Have the volunteer sit in a chair, and tie them to the back of the chair, leaving their arms free. Place several rocks around the room. Explain that each rock is something that the person needs - maybe housing, or food, or water, or clothes. Tell the volunteer that they can ask for help getting what they need at any time. After the person asks for two or three things, and someone gets it for them, ask the class:

- Is there a better way to help this person get what they need?

Let the class discuss this. Hopefully they will come up with the idea to UNTIE the person so they can go get the things they need by themselves! If not, lead the conversation to that conclusion. (for example: 'Is there a way to help so the person doesn't have to keep asking for help?' OR 'What is keeping this person from getting what they need by themselves?')

We want to help vulnerable people in ways that have long-term impact, so that they are no longer dependent on others.

Helping people support themselves gives long-term impact

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The book of Ruth tells the story of a poor widow named Ruth. Ruth was a foreigner in her husband's hometown. To get food, Ruth began to pick up the grain on the ground that was dropped by workers as they harvested. A man named Boaz owned the fields. He took an interest in Ruth and learnt that she had been very kind to her mother-in-law.

Read Ruth 2:8-9, 15-16.

- What did Boaz do for Ruth? (*treated her with respect, gave her his blessing to work, told her the way to find the most grain, told the men not to bother her—provided protection, told his workers to leave extra for her—made her work easier.*)
- What DIDN'T Boaz do for Ruth? (*didn't give her a handout, didn't do the work for her*)
- How was Boaz's way of helping Ruth even better than just giving her grain? (*Boaz gave Ruth the ability to provide for her family. This gave her dignity and independence, not just food.*)

Listen to this true story.

Learning to Make Cleaning Products

In one neighbourhood in the DRC, many families were so poor that they couldn't afford to send their children to school. The fathers hired themselves out, but could not always find work. Sometimes their young daughters engaged in prostitution to get enough money for basic needs like soaps, lotions, or underwear.

The church in the community was desperate to find ways to fight this poverty. After the TCT training, a group of mothers wanted to show the love of God by giving other mothers a way to be useful and support themselves. Some of these women knew how to make soaps and cleaning products. These mothers offered to teach other women how to manufacture cleaning products for houses and toilets. They taught other women in the church and in the community. The Pastor provided basic supplies so that all the women at the training could start their own businesses.

Now the economic situation has changed. Even if their husbands do not find work, there is still food on the table. The children in these families are going to school to study. The entire community praises God. The mothers in the church are continuing to offer this training to all women in their community.

- What did the church do to help these poor families?
- Why was this better than giving the families food or money for basic needs?

The best way to love our neighbours is not always by giving them food or money. This only helps them for a short time. Helping someone support themselves is better. This has a long-term impact.

Other ways to help that have long-term impact

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Show **VISUAL AIDS** - *Ways to help that have a long-term impact.*

Here are some other ideas of Acts of Love that have long-term impact:

- Showing someone how to plant a garden
 - Why does this have a long-term impact? *(they can grow food themselves each year)*
- Building latrines
 - Why does this have a long-term impact? *(people will be healthier, be able to work harder and not need to pay for medical care)*
- Helping children attend school
 - Why does this have a long-term impact? *(children can learn basic skills, or learn a new trade; they can help their family)*
- Giving someone a male and female goat
 - Why does this have a long-term impact? *(gives consistent milk, gives a bit of work to do, they can sell the young goats, or give them away to help others)*
- Building a bridge
 - Why does this have a long-term impact? *(gives safer, quicker travel - maybe allowing children to go to school, or people to get to their fields more easily, or have better access to markets)*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Write these questions on the board.

- What Acts of Love have you done that have had a long term impact?
- Can you think of more that you could do?
- Are there people in the community who struggle to support themselves?
- What can we do to help them in a way that gives long-term impact?

REPORT BACK

Conclusion And Application

- What did you learn from this lesson about the best way to help vulnerable people?
- What steps can you take as a congregation to give someone else long-term help?

Lesson 7: Depending On God

Key Ideas

It is God who brings change. We must depend on God. This means we ask for His wisdom and help, listen to His response, and obey. As we obey God in loving our neighbours, He multiplies our efforts.

Introduction - God is the one who brings success and change

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How have you seen God help you in your work and Acts of Love? *(Optional prompts if needed: Did God give ideas, help with materials, relationships, strength? Did He do a miracle? Did He use your obedience to change any hearts?)*

The secret to success is not what we do. It's GOD. We obey Him, and He brings change. If we truly believe that transformation and success come from God alone, this will affect our actions. We will depend on God instead of ourselves. Let's talk about what this means.

Depending on God means we ask for wisdom and help

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

In the passage we are about to read, three armies had come to fight the kingdom of Judah. Jehoshaphat was king at that time.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-12.

- What did King Jehoshaphat do when he learned about the three armies? *(He called on the people to fast and gathered them to pray for God's help and wisdom v.3-4. 'We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you' v.12.)*

When we face decisions such as what to do, how to interact with someone, what advice to give, or anything else, we must be like Jehoshaphat. We must go to God, asking for wisdom and help.

Facilitator: Read the main point of this section, and ask people to repeat it after you.

DEPENDING ON GOD MEANS WE ASK FOR WISDOM AND HELP

Depending on God means we listen

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's look at the next verse in the story of Jehoshaphat.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:13.

- What did the people do after Jehoshaphat prayed?

It might seem strange that this verse is even in the Bible, but it shows something important.

- Would you ever ask a friend for advice or help, and then walk away without waiting for a response? Why or why not? *(Of course not! It would show that you don't really expect a response.)*

The people of Judah took time to wait for God to respond. We must do the same thing. Let's read the next few verses in the story of Jehoshaphat.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:14-17.

- How did God respond to Jehoshaphat? (*a prophecy - the Holy Spirit coming on someone, and direct instructions*)
- What did God tell Jehoshaphat to do? (*Do not be afraid. March out against them. Take your positions, then stand still and watch the Lord's victory. Do not be afraid or discouraged.*)

God may not give you a prophecy or audible instructions. Often, He responds in other ways. He may:

- bring up a passage or verse for you to think about
 - give an idea of what to do
 - bring to mind a person to talk to
 - tell you He loves you, or encourage you to trust Him
 - say nothing (This is OK. Just do your best to please Him. Trust that He will work all for good.)
-
- How have you experienced God's direction?

Facilitator: Ask people to repeat after you:

DEPENDING ON GOD MEANS WE ASK FOR WISDOM AND HELP

DEPENDING ON GOD MEANS WE LISTEN

Depending on God means we obey

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's return to the story. God told Jehoshaphat to march out to meet all three armies. He even told Jehoshaphat that he didn't need to prepare for a fight. He could just find a good place to watch. This might not seem like enough preparation for a huge battle facing overwhelming odds!

Read 2 Chronicles 20:18-21.

- How did Jehoshaphat show that he trusted God's direction and depended on God for success? (*v.20, 21. He obeyed... First, he encouraged the people to trust and not be afraid. Then, he not only marched out, but also sent the worship band in front of the army.*)

Jehoshaphat obeyed right away. He did it in a way that showed how completely he was trusting the outcome to God. He not only walked toward the combined armies, but he sent the worship team first, so that he couldn't sneak up on his enemies. The other armies must have thought he was crazy!

If we are depending on God, we will obey His direction, even if it doesn't seem to make sense.

Let's summarise what we've said so far.

Transformation and success come from God alone. Depending on God means that we regularly seek His wisdom, listen for His response, and obey His direction.

- **What does it mean to depend on God?**

WE ASK FOR WISDOM AND HELP

WE LISTEN

WE OBEY

God multiplies our efforts

Read 2 Chronicles 20:22-30.

- What did God do when Jehoshaphat led the people to obey God? (*made the three armies attack and kill each other; gave so much plunder, the people couldn't carry it all; made all the surrounding kingdoms afraid; gave Jehoshaphat peace.*)

When we obey God, He multiplies what we do.

Cleaning the Chief's House

At Lusulu in Zimbabwe, the church faced a serious problem. The Chief in the village was not a believer and had no respect for Christians. Under his corrupt leadership, the fields of Christians were taken by force. They were then sold to get money for the Chief's people. When the church studied TCT, they spent a lot of time praying about how God wanted them to serve their community. During the prayer time, they decided that God wanted them to offer to work at the home of the Chief. They were granted permission, and many people went to clean his home. After seeing the Christians working so hard to serve him, God changed the heart of this Chief—and all his officials! They all became believers, and they returned to the Christians the fields they had taken. Now, peace prevails in this community. Christians are serving God with joy, and the church is growing quickly in this area.

- What did the believers do?
- What did God do? How did He multiply the service of the believers?
- Do you have any stories like this? How has God used your obedience to bring change?

Conclusion and Application

- How would you summarise what it means to depend on God? (*ask for wisdom and help, listen, obey*)
- What is there in your life that you should ask God for wisdom and help with? Think about your family, church, neighbours, or work.

Lesson 8: Using ALL Our Resources for God's Glory

Key Idea

God expects us to use whatever we have to love and serve.

Materials

1. Visual Aid - List of 6 resources - one for every small group of 3-4 people
2. The Parable of the Bags of Gold - script found in Visual Aids - ask 4 volunteers to practise acting this out before the lesson
3. 17 stones to use as 'bags of gold'
4. Visual Aid – Resource Cards - one set cut up for every small group of 3-4 people

Introduction

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What is an Act of Love your church has done that didn't involve money at all? What impact did it have?
- Do you think there is anything God has given us that we could NOT use to love and serve others?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Get in groups of 3-4 people. Each group will receive the same list of 6 resources. Let's see which group can be first to come up with an idea for how we could use each resource to love and serve our community.

Facilitator: Hand out the **VISUAL AID - List of 6 Resources** to each group. The first group to think of an idea for ALL 6 resources should share their ideas. After each resource, invite the other groups to share their ideas of how to use that resource.

water	the ability to see
extra clothing	knowledge of how to make a fire
God's promises	children's energy

God expects us to use whatever we have to love and serve

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Give 8 stones to the MASTER. Put a pile of another 7-8 stones on a desk or table.

(Before class, ask 4 volunteers to act out 'The Parable of the Bags of Gold' (based on Matthew 25:14-30). They should practise before the lesson so it comes naturally.)

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

Master: Servants, come here and listen. I'm going on a business trip. I want you to take care of my money.
Here are five bags of gold for you to take care of (**give five stones to Servant 1**)
...two bags of gold for you (**give two stones to Servant 2**)
....and here is 1 bag for you (**give one stone to Servant 3**)
Goodbye. (**walks away**)

Servant 1: Wow, so much money. I should use it wisely *(walks away - gets 5 more stones)*.

Servant 2: The Master trusts me, and I want to please him. I will put this money to work! *(walks away - gets 2 more stones)*.

Servant 3: Oh no! What would happen if I lost this money? My life would be finished! Wait, I know, I will dig a hole and hide it in the ground. *(walks away)*

Master: *(comes back)* Servants, after a long time, I'm back! Tell me what you did with my money.

Servant 1: Master, you gave me five bags of gold; here, I have used them to make five more. *(Gives back 10 stones)*.

Master: Well done! You are a good and faithful servant. You used what I gave you well. I will give you more to use. Let's be joyful together.

Servant 2: Master, you gave me two bags of gold; here, I have made two more. *(Gives back 4 stones)*.

Master: Well done! You are a good and faithful servant. You used what I gave you well. I will give you more to use. Let's be joyful together.

Servant 3: Master, I know you are hard to please. I was afraid you would be angry if I tried to use the money, but lost it, so I hid your gold in the ground. At least I didn't lose it! Here it is. *(Gives 1 stone)*.

Master: You are wicked and lazy! You think I'm hard to please? Then at least you should have invested my money at the bank! Then I would have gotten some interest as well. Soldier! Take the gold from him and give it to him who has the ten bags. And send this wicked servant away from my house. For everyone who uses what he has, more will be given. He will have an abundance! But the one who does not, even what he has will be taken away.

- Why does the master compliment the first two servants? *(they did their best to use what He gave them)*
- Why does the master scold the person with one bag of gold? *(he didn't use what he had - he didn't trust that the master would be pleased with his best efforts)*
- What finally happens to the person with one bag of gold? *(he loses what he had and is sent away)*
- What can we learn from this parable? *(God wants us to use what He has given us regardless if it is much or little. He wants us to do our best and trust that He will be pleased with that.)*

God expects us to use whatever He has given us to love and serve others. When we do our best to obey, He is pleased, no matter what happens.

Are we using what we have?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Let's look again at some of the resources God has given us. I will give each of you an envelope with cards listing different resources. Please sort them into one of these three categories. (These are the same categories we talked about in Module 3).

1. **Internal Resources** - things like knowledge or abilities we have
2. **Physical Resources** - resources that we can see or touch
3. **Spiritual Resources** - things we have because of our relationship with God

Facilitator: Give each small group an envelope with the **VISUAL AID: Resources Cards** printed and cut out. Give them 5 minutes to sort the resources into categories and add any others that are available in their community.

REPORT BACK

- Are there any resources you have questions about? *(note: it doesn't matter which category they sort the resources into... the goal is that they see and think about the resources)*

- What other resources did you add?
- Can you think of more?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Assign one resource from each category to each group. (Each group will discuss three resources.) Have them discuss the following questions for each resource.

- Does our church already use this resource to serve God? If so, how?
- How could we use it more effectively to benefit our community?
- What problems could this resource help us solve? What opportunities does it give us?
- What are we going to do about it?

REPORT BACK

We encourage you to go through this list of resources more carefully with the leadership of your church and the Acts of Love committee. Add other resources to the list. Think about what you are using well, and what you can use better. Ask God what He would have you do next to use the resources He's given you. This process is something we can repeat as God blesses us with more resources.

When we obey, God multiplies our resources (if time)

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

When we use what we have to love and serve, God multiplies our resources to show His goodness and power.

From Malaria to Corn and Cassava

In a village in the DRC, there were many mosquitoes because tall grass grew all around. People often got sick from malaria. People were too sick to work and became poor. Sometimes it even led to death. One church studied the TCT health module. They decided to serve their community by cutting the grass. This meant that mosquitos could not lay eggs. This improved people's health and ability to work! And that isn't all. After they cut the grass, the church members noticed that the land looked different - empty. They decided they should use this land as well as they could. They planted corn and cassava. Normally, the villagers make a living from fishing. The only fields they plant are very far away in the middle of the forest. To the surprise of the church and the community, God helped the land produce large quantities of crops. Everyone began to ask themselves, 'Why are we going further, when the land here is very good for farming?' Other people in the community began farming in the village. The local government came to check if the products were good. They determined the crops were of very high quality. The church helped the vulnerable stay healthy, and helped the community be able to produce large quantities of corn and cassava. The community saw that God's ways were best!

- What was the church's first Act of Love in this story? *(they cleared tall grass off the land)*
- What resources did they use to do this Act of Love? *(knowledge of health issues, strength, time, tools)*
- How did God use this to give them more resources? *(He helped them see the good land to plant)*
- How did this bring God glory? *(the people are healthier and have more resources, they can see that God's ways are best)*

Conclusion

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Summarise for the group the things that the church is using well, and the things that you can use better. Make sure the Acts of Love committee knows about this. They should make a plan to use these things to love and serve the community. End with prayer, asking God to help you decide how to use these things, and to bring glory to Himself as you obey.

Lesson 9: Growing the Kingdom

Key Idea

We must not stop obeying, even when we don't feel blessed.

Materials

1. Visual Aids: Three True Stories - First and second parts - print out and cut into strips.

Introduction

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 6:9-13.

- In this prayer, we pray 'Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. How would you explain the meaning of the 'Kingdom of God' to someone who is not a Christian?

Facilitator Instructions: Listen to answers from the group. After listening, make sure they see that an explanation must include obeying God (God's will being done).

The kingdom of God is wherever and whenever people obey God. Its growth is not measured by external things, but by how much we are obeying. As more people become Christians, and as we obey God more and more, the Kingdom grows.

We must not stop serving and growing in obedience

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.

- What instructions do these verses give us? (*We should not give up doing good.*)

Read Philippians 3:13-14.

- Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians toward the end of his ministry. This was while he was imprisoned in Rome. What does Paul say about his goal, now that he has accomplished so much? (*He doesn't assume he's done, but is still working towards his goal*)
- What should be our goal as we graduate from TCT? (*continue to grow in obedience, continue to serve*)

We must not stop seeking God's kingdom. Instead, we must encourage each other to keep growing in obedience and serving, asking what God has for us next.

We continue to obey even when we don't feel blessed

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

There are times when we are obeying God but we don't see much change. We may not feel 'blessed'. Listen to these three true stories.

Facilitator: Give the first parts of the **VISUAL AID: Three True Stories** each to a different person to read out loud.

Jean loved the Lord. She worked as a nurse, gave generously to the poor, and taught children in her church. One day Jean's vision began to blur, and she found out that she had a tumour in her brain.

David is a pastor in a country that is primarily Muslim. On the day after Christmas in 2010, he and more than a hundred other church leaders in the country were arrested. Some were released after a few weeks. Some of the pastors were killed. David was kept in solitary confinement for a year, then spent another 5 years in prison.

One TCT church worked hard to build a bridge. As soon as they finished, rain came and washed the bridge away. When they rebuilt it, the same thing happened again.

- Have you had an experience like this?

We live in a broken world. Satan is always trying to get people to hate God and his ways. We may be victims of injustice, disease, or natural disasters.

Read Romans 8:28.

- What does God promise for us?
- Does this mean that life will be easy, or that we will never have problems?
- What does it mean? (*God will use even difficult things to help us mature as believers and grow His kingdom*)

When we follow God's ways but we don't feel blessed, we must still choose to trust and obey Him. He promises to work things out for our good and His glory when we obey. Let's hear what happened in our stories.

Facilitator: Give the second parts of the **VISUAL AID: Three True Stories** to the same people to read out loud.

Jean lived with cancer for several years. She was very weak, often dizzy, or in pain. She could not work or teach children. The cancer left her nearly blind. But she spent hours each day praying for her grandchildren, her neighbours, her church family, and many missionaries. Her testimony of trusting God through cancer inspired everyone who knew her.

David's joy in God through his imprisonment brought many other prisoners to know God. When people told him that they were amazed at his faithfulness to God, and how strong he was, David disagreed. He said, 'No, God was faithful to ME! I was not strong. He gave me grace and peace, just like He will do for anyone who trusts Him.'

The church finally built a third bridge. People in the community donated land so that the bridge could be in a safer place. Many people donated materials. The government was so impressed that they invited a local TV station to make a film about the Church who always loved their community. The film was shown across the country.

- How did God use the difficulties for good? Did the 'good' always mean that the people were saved from the difficulties?
- How did God's Kingdom grow?

When we continue to trust and obey God through hard times, God will use our obedience to grow His kingdom.

Application - how we can continue to grow and serve

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the questions below.

- Are there any situations you know of right now where it is difficult to see the good that God is doing?
- What do you need to do to continue to trust and obey in this situation? How can we encourage each other to do this?
- How can we keep growing and serving as a church, even after we finish the TCT training?

REPORT BACK

Facilitator: Have groups report back on the last question (growing as a church)

Conclusion

The kingdom of God grows when people obey more and more. We must not stop growing and serving. Even when our lives are difficult, God uses our obedience to grow His kingdom.

Lesson 10: Bringing Glory to God

Key Idea

The purpose of our lives is to bring glory to God. This means we let people see how great and good God is. We do this by enjoying Him and obeying His commands in everything we do.

Introduction - God created us to bring Him glory

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Why do you think God created humans?

God has a great purpose for us. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Matthew 5:16.

- What do these verses say about our purpose in life? What are we supposed to do? (*bring glory to God*)
- What do you think it means that God is glorified? (*it means that God has a good reputation - people think and talk about how great and good God is*)

God is so great, so good, and so wonderful that He wants to share His goodness with others. God wants us to live in a way that shows His greatness and goodness to others. This is our purpose - to bring Him glory! Let's talk about two ways to do this.

- 1) By enjoying Him and recognizing what He's done
- 2) By obeying His command to love our neighbour

We bring glory to God by enjoying Him and what He's done

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The Westminster Catechism is a founding document written almost 400 years ago. It has questions and answers about God and how to live as a Christian. Its first question is: *What is the chief end of man?* This is the same as asking: *What is the reason that God made us? What is our purpose?* The answer given by the church fathers is: *to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.* Theologians point out that glorifying God and enjoying Him are connected with each other. In fact, one key way we can bring God glory is by enjoying Him and what He does for us.

Imagine that someone spends a long time and works hard preparing a special meal for you.

- Which of these two options will bring them the most honour and pleasure?
 - You eat the meal only because you have to eat for energy.
 - You truly enjoy the meal. You exclaim over it. You tell everyone what a good cook the person is. (*the second option, of course*)

Imagine that a husband buys his wife a gift. She asks why he did it.

- Which of these two answers shows the most honour and love?
 - I bought this gift because I'm supposed to - it's my duty.
 - I love you so much and I'm so happy I married you that I wanted to get this for you. (*the second answer, of course*)

Read Philippians 4:4.

- Why do you think it is important for us to rejoice in the Lord? (*This honours Him and shows others His value*)

Psalm 73 begins with the psalmist concerned that life doesn't seem to be fair. He sees wicked people prosper. He struggles with this, and finally comes to a conclusion. Let's read verses 25-26.

- What does the psalmist conclude? (*no matter what happens, God is enough. He is satisfied in God*)
- If we remember how good God is and we are happy because of Him, even when circumstances are hard, what do you think people will think of God? (*they will think He is worth more than anything else*)

Read this true story.

There was a family that was relocated to a tribal village because of a war in their country. Before the war, the family had been very wealthy. Now instead of living in a fancy house they were living in a mud hut. The husband had been sent to a prison camp. The wife missed the beautiful house she used to have. She could only think of what she didn't have. She didn't care for the simple house and it quickly became run down. After some time, her brother-in-law came to stay. He swept, making the house tidy, clean and uncluttered. He repaired the house. He added plants in the yard and picked flowers to bring a little of God's beauty inside. He stayed for a few weeks doing these kinds of simple tasks without using any money. He worked cheerfully, and the feeling in the home changed. This gave hope not only to his brother's wife, but to the whole family and their neighbours as well. Even though the family was still poor and the house was still small and simple, they could be content. The brother used what the family had to give glory to God in the midst of a difficult situation.

- How did the brother-in-law bring glory to God?
- If Christians do not care for their homes, or if they cheat or mistreat people, or complain that God does not take care of them, what will people think about God? (*that He is not good, or not powerful, or that He doesn't care what people do*)
- What are some other ways that we can bring glory to God in our lives?

Our lives tell people what God is like. When we are satisfied with God, and rejoice in what He's done for us, People can see that He is wonderful. It would be terrible if our lives led people to think that our God is not very loving or very powerful or very important. When people look at our lives, we want them to think, 'God is so wonderful. His laws are for our good. His ways are the best!'

We bring glory to God by obeying His command to love our neighbour

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 5:16

- According to this verse, why should we shine our light by doing good deeds for others?
 - o *It brings glory to God*

When we do good deeds like Acts of Love, it brings glory to God! Let's listen to some stories of churches who brought glory to God by loving their neighbours.

Facilitator: choose one, two, or three of the following stories to read.

Income For A Widow

In Bangladesh a 70-year-old widow had been abandoned by her children. She lived in poverty. The church planted her land with high-quality grass that was popular with livestock farmers. It needed minimum care, and produced for 4-5 years. They worked together to plant, donating seed and fertiliser. The widow now sells the grass, earning a sufficient income to cover her basic needs. She was so thankful to the church that she shared

the testimony of how the church had helped her. She encouraged others to come to church. The pastor wrote: 'there has been a new zeal in our church, new people started to come to church. Our hearts are lit up.'

A Bridge To The Community

In Benin, erosion had created a river in one village. This meant that going to work, taking children to school, or going to the market was now a 5 kilometre walk. The church built a bridge across the river. When the Muslim community saw the church caring for the community's needs, they started to engage with the church. Some even came to ask for prayer.

The Amazing Well

There was a small mountainous village in Nepal with about sixty houses. To get water, the women travelled to another village 40 minutes away. They waited in line for an hour or more to get 20L water.

The pastor of the local church wanted to obey God by serving his community. He began to pray about digging a well in his village. He shared his idea with his father, but his father mocked him. He said, 'It's impossible! The land is stone. You would have to pay workers \$20 USD for each supporting concrete ring because it would be so hard to dig. And still you wouldn't get water!'

As the pastor taught TCT to his church, he shared this idea for an Act of Love. The church agreed to do this project together. They found labourers willing to work for only \$12 USD per concrete ring. They prayed about where to dig the well. God gave them confidence that if they dug a well in a certain place, He would give them success. The workers thought it would be very rocky and very hard to dig there. To their surprise, they dug a well easily. They found almost no stones at all, but they did find water! Later, they tried to dig just 2 metres behind this well but could not dig due to hard rock.

The church members praised God for giving them a well with water. They decided to give free water to their neighbours each morning and evening. The other villagers were astonished at seeing this great miracle. They could see that God is powerful and good. God was glorified.

- How did these churches' obedience bring glory to God?
- Do you have a story like this? How have people seen God's goodness and greatness through your obedience?

We said at the beginning of the Module that we obey God because we are grateful to Him for what He's done, and because He is powerful and good. Now we find that when we obey God and follow His ways, other people can also see that His ways are best, and that He is powerful and good. This brings glory to Him!

Reviewing main ideas

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator Instructions: Use this discussion to make sure the group remembers the main points from Lessons 1-10 before going to Part B of M10. Use questions to prompt main ideas if any are missed. (examples: Why do we obey God? What is the best way to help needy people?)

- What ideas do you remember from this module?
- We obey God because He is worthy, and because we are grateful to Him
- Following God's commands in the Bible brings blessing - we must obey the Bible, even when it is different from our culture.
- We should work hard and cheerfully
- We must love our neighbours by meeting their needs

- *We should serve the needy and vulnerable in ways that have a long-term impact*
- *We should use everything we have to love and serve others*
- *We should depend on God - asking Him for wisdom and help, listening, and obeying*
- *We must continue to grow in our obedience, even when we don't feel blessed*
- *We bring glory to God by enjoying Him and loving our neighbours*

Conclusion and Application

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

All the things we have talked about in this module are intended to help us live in a way that pleases God and brings Him glory. Everything we do should make others see our God as the One who deserves to be worshipped, the most excellent and wonderful One.

You have finished Part A of Module 10! In Part B, we will be celebrating what God has done in the past few years. We will also think about what our next steps should be as we continue to obey God in everything so that we bring Him glory!

PART B

Facilitator: Part B will take one full day. Each of the two sessions takes about 3 hours. Feel free to schedule breaks mid-session.

Session 1: Growing in Discipleship

Materials

- Visual Aids
 - Discipleship Tree – one for each MT and LF (**LFs:** When you train a church, you should draw this picture on large poster paper ahead of time instead of printing the Visual Aid.)
 - Discipleship Outcomes – Levels 1 and 5 (10 pictures)
- Stones, seeds or toothpicks - two per small group
- Poster: Our Plan - Before the session, divide a large paper into 3 sections to make a poster. Label each section as follows:
 - Discipleship areas where we want to grow
 - Changes we want to see in our community
 - Trainings/additional skills we need
- Poster paper and markers for drawing maps
- Small pieces of paper/cards for writing changes
- If available, community maps from Module 3

Discipleship areas where we want to grow :	Changes we want to see in our community:	Trainings/ additional skills we need:

Introduction to the discipleship tree - 15 mins

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Mark 4:30-32

- What do we learn about God's kingdom from this passage?
 - It starts small
 - It grows - it shouldn't stay small!
 - As it grows it provides shelter for others. Others should benefit as we build God's kingdom.

God's plan is the building of His kingdom – beginning on earth as it is in Heaven! As His people, we get to be part of this plan. This is what wholistic discipleship is all about - obeying God in all areas of life.

Read Matthew 28:18–20.

- What are the two things Jesus says we must do to 'make disciples'? (baptize, teach people to obey all His commands)

Read John 15:8.

- How do we know when someone is a disciple? (*they bear fruit*)

In part B of this final module, we are going to think of our wholistic discipleship as a fruit tree.

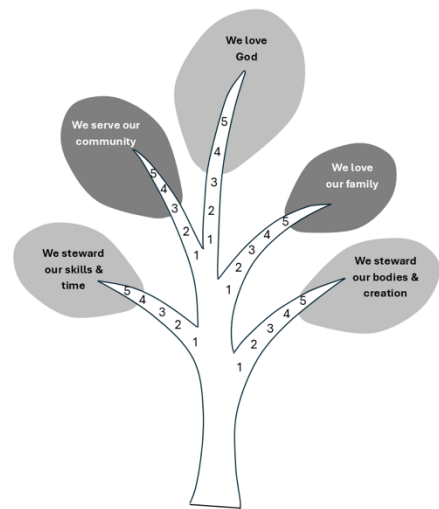
- What are some of the changes you see in a tree as it grows?
 - *Tree is larger and stronger*
 - *More fruit*

In our discipleship, we start as just a seed. As we grow in obedience, we become more mature. We grow into a strong tree that bears fruit. Our lives and our communities become more like God intends.

Facilitator: Show **Visual Aid: Discipleship Tree**

In session 1, we will look at our discipleship. We will look at how we are growing in obedience. There are five areas we are going to measure as we look at the growth of our discipleship. We are calling them 'discipleship outcomes':

- Loving God: (1 area)
 - We have a personal relationship with God and seek to please Him
- Loving Others: (2 areas)
 - In our families
 - By serving our community
- Stewarding God's gifts: (2 areas)
 - Our skills and our time
 - Our bodies & His creation



In session 2, we will look at our fruit. The activities in part B are designed to help you:

- Reflect on what changes you have seen and what you haven't seen.
- Celebrate the wonderful things God has done as you have been involved in the TCT program.
- Dream and plan for the future - what does God want you to do next?

As we go through these activities, please reflect honestly. This will help you really see what God has done. It will also help you make strong plans for the future. And it will help those who write the TCT trainings. Your feedback will help us strengthen the lessons and serve churches better. We expect that at the end of this section you will be encouraged, and have a plan for what you will do next!

Our discipleship trees - 2:15 hrs

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION - 10 min

Facilitator: Show **Visual Aid: Discipleship Tree**.

We are going to use this picture to measure our growth for each discipleship outcome. The foundation of our tree is already in place: we have faith in Jesus and believe that He died for us on the cross. But now we want to look at the branches of this tree, the five discipleship outcomes. Level 1 is the worst place a church could be in this area. Level 5 would mean we are living in full obedience to God. Level 3 is halfway between them.

Let's talk about Loving God. This means we have a personal relationship with God and seek to please Him.

- What do you think this would look like if a church was at level 5, living in full obedience to God?
 - *We pray and fast for transformation, individually & together*

- *We are excited to learn the Bible. We regularly read the Bible.*
- *We are committed to attending church*
- *We give our money generously*
- *We make decisions based on a desire to obey God in all areas*
- *We desire to glorify God*
- What do you think it would look like if this wasn't happening at all?
 - *No one has a personal relationship with God. They either do not know who God is, or just see Christianity as part of the culture*
 - *People don't make time for prayer*
 - *People do not know or understand the Bible*
 - *People do not give*
 - *People make decisions based on superstitions or their own desires*
 - *Immoral, harmful behaviours like thieving, alcoholism, or drug addiction are common*
- What do you think a 2, 3 and 4 might look like?

Facilitator: Summarise the key points using **Visual Aid: Loving God: Level 1 and Loving God: Level 5**

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY - 5 min

Facilitator: Divide people into 4 groups. One group should be for church leaders, one for men, one for women, and the final one for youth. Ask them to discuss in their groups (1) what level your church was at in this area before you started TCT and (2) what level you think your church has reached now.

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY - 10 min

- Give each group 2 small stones. Ask them to place the stones at the levels they agreed on the 'Loving God' branch in **Visual Aid: Discipleship Tree**. Remind them that there is NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWER.
- Tell the group which level has the most stones for (1) before starting TCT and (2) for today.
- Ask: Those who chose level ____ (whatever is most popular), why did you choose it? (*allow a few people to answer*)
- Ask: Those who chose a different level, why did you choose it? (*allow a few people to answer*)
- Ask: As a group, what level can we agree that the church is at today in this area? What level were we when we started TCT?
- Circle the two numbers on **Visual Aid: Discipleship Tree** (you could use two different colours if you have them)

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY - 15 mins

Divide into 4 groups. Each group will be assigned one of the four remaining discipleship outcomes. Create two short dramas (3-5 mins). One should show what your church would be like at level 1. One should show what your church would be like if you reached level 5.

Here are the four remaining discipleship outcomes:

- Loving Others: in our families
- Loving Others: by serving our community
- Stewarding God's Gifts: our skills and our time
- Stewarding God's Gifts: our bodies & his creation

REPORT BACK – 80 mins (20 mins per discipleship outcome)

Facilitator: Go through each of the remaining discipleship outcomes, one at a time:

1. Ask the small group to perform their two short dramas.
2. Ask the class how the dramas showed that discipleship outcome at level 1 and 5.
3. Ask what else might be in level 1 or level 5.
4. Summarise by showing the **VISUAL AID: Level 1 and 5** for each discipleship outcome and using the points in the Discipleship Outcomes Table (below).
5. Decide what your church's situation is like today. Decide what it was like before they started TCT. Agree on a starting and ending level for each area. (If helpful, use small group discussion and then stones, like you did with 'Loving God'.)
6. Record the levels by circling the numbers on the **VISUAL AID: Discipleship Tree**

Discipleship Outcomes Table

Discipleship Outcome	Level 1 - living in the belief of Satan's lies	Level 5 - living in obedience to God
LOVING GOD: WE HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND SEEK TO PLEASE HIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one has a personal relationship with God. They either do not know who God is, or just see Christianity as part of the culture • People don't make time for prayer • There is no accurate teaching and knowledge of the Bible • People do not give • People make decisions based on superstitions/their own desires • Immoral/harmful behaviours like thieving, alcoholism, or drug addiction are common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We pray and fast for transformation, individually & together • We are excited to learn the Bible. We regularly read the Bible. • We are committed to attending church • We give our money generously • We make decisions based on a desire to obey God in all areas • We desire to glorify God
LOVING OTHERS: IN OUR FAMILIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships in families and marriages are broken – untrusting, full of conflict, and unhealthy • Family members do not feel loved & respected • There is domestic violence in the home • Children are neglected and not able to grow well - physically, socially, mentally, spiritually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families & marriages are strong & reconciled • All family members feel loved & respected • There is no violence in the home • Children are supported to grow in all 4 areas - physically, socially, mentally, spiritually
LOVING OTHERS: BY SERVING OUR COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our church is not involved in our community but is only concerned with spiritual things • Any activities we do are to benefit the church or its members • The church shows special privilege to those who are wealthy or have power. It discriminates against people who are different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our church sees loving others in practical ways as essential to being a Christian • Our church actively looks for opportunities to be a blessing • Our church is doing Acts of Love that sacrificially serve those outside the church, and don't benefit us

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our church shows love to those who are often neglected in the community
STEWARDSHIP GOD'S GIFTS: OUR SKILLS AND OUR TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People do not work hard, whether due to hopelessness, laziness, low self-esteem or another reason We are not using our gifts and talents We are not able to provide for all our family's basic needs Money is not used wisely There are few opportunities for learning new skills or growing in our gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We see work as a gift from God and seek to glorify Him We use our time, talents & energy to benefit our family & our community We look for opportunities to grow in the talents God has given us We teach our skills to others
STEWARDSHIP GOD'S GIFTS: OUR BODIES AND HIS CREATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> God's creation is mistreated e.g. deforestation, littering, pollution We do not care well for our health. Illnesses are frequent e.g. low sanitation/ hygiene, no access to healthcare, no knowledge on how to prevent illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We believe that all of creation belongs to God. We seek to care for and restore God's creation We understand that our bodies are a gift from God. We care for our own health and the health of others (preventive healthcare, access to safe water, improved sanitation etc)

Facilitator: Please share the 10 numbers (the levels before starting TCT and levels today) from the Discipleship Tree with your MT. This is important for the following reasons:

- To celebrate the progress we are making and the parts of each area that are going well. We are told to 'make known among the nations what God has done' (Psalm 105:1-2). Sharing what He is doing in your community brings glory to God. If we don't share the numbers where we start, others cannot celebrate with us and praise God when our community changes.

- To share our challenges, as many parts of one body (Romans 12:4-8): if we struggle alone, it is easy to fall (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). If we share our struggles, our brothers and sisters can pray with us and share learning of what has worked in other churches.

- To strengthen the TCT programme and ensure the training is effective and relevant in your area.

Discipleship areas - what to celebrate, and where to grow - 30 mins

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION - 3-5 mins

Individually, take time to listen to God. Ask Him to bring to mind:

- Things to celebrate. What are we doing well in?
- Areas where we still need to grow. What are some of the things that we can do to grow?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- In what areas are we doing well that we can celebrate?
- In what areas do we still need to grow? What can we do in the next few years to do that?
- Building God's kingdom means continuing to grow in obedience. It is a way of life, not a checklist to

complete. From this amazing foundation we have built, what more does God have for us in these areas? What new things is He putting on our hearts?


LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Show the **Prepared Poster: Our Plan**. The sample poster below shows what the church's poster might look like after this activity.

We are going to make a poster together. It will summarize our plan of how to continue to grow after we finish TCT.

Right now let's note the areas that we still need to grow in wholistic discipleship.

- Put these areas to grow in the first third of the poster.
- Use pictures and symbols as well as words to represent them. We want everyone, even children, to understand the poster.
- Different people can draw different pictures at the same time.
- Alternatively, you can write only words now and someone can add drawings later.
- The poster should be displayed somewhere, so the more beautiful it is, the better!

Discipleship areas where we want to grow :	Changes we want to see in our community:	Trainings/ additional skills we need:
		

Session 2: Growing in Fruit

What is the fruit of obedience? - 20 mins

- What type of fruit does a mango tree produce?
- What type of fruit does a papaya tree produce?
- If a fruit tree never produced any fruit, do you think it would be healthy?

Read Psalm 1:1-3.

Facilitator: Show **Visual Aid: Discipleship Tree** again.

- God expects us to be fruitful. What sort of fruit do you think our discipleship trees will produce?

In Lesson 9 we shared a story of a church that built a bridge - three times! Let's listen to the whole story of that church. Let's see what sort of fruit their discipleship trees produced. Think about Physical, Spiritual, Social and Mental fruit.

A Community Transformed

This is the story of a real community. In 2005 most of the people in this community were poor. Their houses were simple. They had mud walls, dirt floors and leaf roofs. The fields were about 2km from the village down narrow walking tracks. Sickness was common and hygiene levels were very low. Few children went to school. Most dropped out because the school was so far away.

One day a few people from the community were invited to attend a TCT training. At this training they learned that the church is called to build God's kingdom by obeying God in all areas of life and showing love to their community. Those who attended the training taught others in the church. They formed a committee who met weekly to pray for the problems in the community and ask God how to help. If a family was too sick to plough or harvest their field, then a team from the church would do it. They began to serve the community. If someone's house was unsuitable for living, they would build a new one. They helped anyone in need, Christian or not. People in the community were surprised when they saw the church's actions. They asked why they were helping. The church shared: 'In the Bible Jesus teaches us that we need to care for and love our neighbours. God loves us and we need to show that love to others. People were very receptive. Many started to attend church and became Christians.

In Module 3 they drew a map of their community as they dreamed that it would be in 10-20 years' time. They drew a school, brick houses, roads to their fields and farm machinery. They knew the things they dreamt of would not happen easily. They needed to work hard and pray to God for guidance and blessing. As the church prayed, they decided to start by building roads to their farming areas. They gathered everyone that was willing to help, including several community members. It took them a few weeks to widen the 2km-long walking trail to a 1.5m-wide road. They bought cheap carts to carry their crops. Eventually they added a motorbike. Incomes grew as they could harvest and sell their crops more easily.

The church also did many other things in the community. They built other roads, wells, latrines, houses and a bridge. The bridge was a large and expensive project. They were not sure how they would manage at first. But they shared the vision and the government gave them steel. The church and community members all gave what they could or volunteered labour. At last their bridge was complete! Then, storms washed the bridge away. When they rebuilt it, this happened again! They did not give up, but built a larger, stronger bridge in a

different area. The government was so impressed that they invited the local TV station to film the church who kept loving their community.

After the TCT training on health, the church learnt that their bodies were a gift from God. They realized that it wasn't normal to be sick all the time. They included health lessons every time a small group met at the church. People began to apply the lessons to their lives. Their neighbours saw the difference it made and followed their example. Now everyone has a latrine and uses it. They wash their hands before eating and cooking. They pen their animals, wash their dishes, and keep their home tidy. Today, people are rarely sick and can treat minor illnesses themselves.

Before the end of the TCT programme, they had also bought a tractor to plough their fields. They had built a school, a health clinic and a brick house with a cement floor for everyone in the community. Inside the church, people have gone from only attending occasionally to being fully committed. People read their Bibles and tithe generously. Husbands now actively show love to their wives and no longer beat them. When the church drew the map five years ago, it seemed like an unrealistic dream to achieve in 10-20 years. But in obedience to God, they completed it in just 5 years! Church members continue to meet to plan Acts of Love, but these are now planned for neighbouring communities as they no longer have any needs in their own community.

- What is some of the fruit that this community saw?
 - *Spiritual – mindset of loving God by loving community, more committed to church, reading Bibles, tithing generously, people coming to Christ*
 - *Physical – incomes increased through roads, improved health, caring for God's creation*
 - *Social – good relationship with government, community seeing church positively and helping on projects, stronger marriages (no more beating wives)*
 - *Mental – school in the community, increased skills*
- Why do you think the church did not stop where there were no needs in their community, but started helping other communities?

Celebrating our fruit - 20 mins

Read Psalms 145:6-7.

- Why is it important to celebrate what God has done? (*We are called to proclaim God's great deeds and celebrate his abundant goodness*)
- Let's consider our own community - what fruit have we seen in each of these areas?
 - Spiritual – e.g. God's name glorified, growth in number of believers, growth in maturity
 - Physical – e.g. incomes, housing, health care, care of God's creation
 - Social – e.g. improved relationships with government, community and families
 - Mental – e.g. improved education, improved life skills

Facilitator: *If the group has the map from Module 3 then take time to look at it. Note what has been completed on that map. Use those changes to help your discussion on fruit.*

Once you have completed this exercise take time to CELEBRATE all that God has done through the church. This may be through inviting testimonies, singing a worship song, praying, or some other way. The group may even want to plan a longer celebration time for later!

What other fruit would we like to see? – 50 mins

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - 20 mins

Discuss what other fruit you think God desires for our community or neighbouring communities. Take time to pray together. Think about Physical, Spiritual, Social and Mental Changes. These could be things not yet achieved from the last dream map. They could also be new things that God is putting on your heart.

REPORT BACK - 10 mins

Facilitator: As groups are reporting back, make a list of the fruit people want to see on the board. Do not repeat ideas. (If another group mentions them again, just acknowledge it.)

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY - 20 mins

- What were some of the similarities in what people heard?
- What were some of the differences?

Draw a new Dream Map. Include the following things:

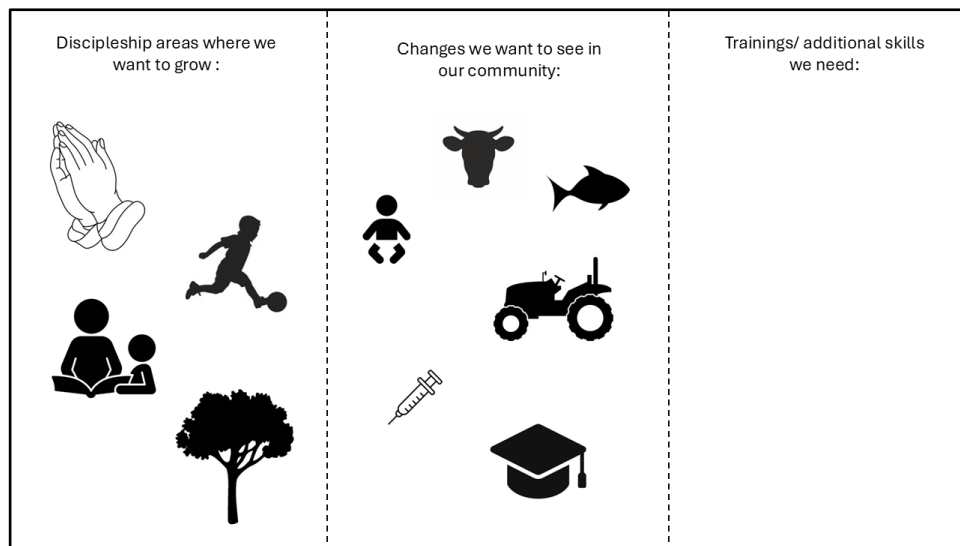
- Changes you hope to see in your community
- Other communities that you hope to reach out to

Try your best to draw as beautifully as possible. You can ask someone who is good at drawing to draw the map using all the main ideas. Then, hang it up in the church for people to look at it regularly.

While the final map is being drawn, others should identify all the changes you want to see happen.

Write them in the middle part of your **Poster: Our Plan**.

Facilitator: It might look something like this, depending on what changes people want to see:



Deciding on our next steps – 50 mins

We are now going to decide which of these changes we will focus on next, and which ones can wait until later.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER - 5 mins

Take time to think and pray about what changes the church should focus on next. Ask God for wisdom.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION - 40 mins

Begin by sharing what you heard from God about what He wants you to do next. Our prayers should guide our Acts of Love as we move forward. Discuss together:

- What Acts of Love should we do next?
- Who can be responsible for organizing them?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY - If there are lots of different ideas and it is not clear from your time of prayer where to start, you can sort the ideas using the following steps:

1. Write each change you want to see on a separate card.
2. Sort the cards into three piles according to how easy the problem is to solve:
 - easy to solve
 - so-so
 - difficult to solve
3. Write a 1 on easy to solve, 2 on so-so and 3 on difficult to solve
4. Put the cards together again and put them in three piles according to how important they are (most important, quite important, less important).
5. Write a second number on the cards, according to the pile they are in:
 - 1 - most important
 - 2 - quite important
 - 3 - less important
6. A guideline is that those that are most important and easy to solve are good things to work on first. Those that are less important or more difficult are changes we pray for and work towards in the future. However, if something is most important, you may choose to begin work on it right away, even if it is more difficult to solve.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION - 5 min

Read Galatians 6:9.

- What is the main point of this verse? (*do not stop doing good, keep obeying and trusting God for fruit*)
- What should we do after we finish the projects we've just agreed to do? (*ask God what to do next*)

When we finish Acts of Love and see changes happening, we should not stop doing good. We should come back to the poster and ask God what to work on next. Then, we should listen, discuss as a group, and make a plan to obey!

Training – 20 mins

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Now let's fill in the final third of our poster. To grow in wholistic discipleship and in fruit, we might need to repeat earlier TCT modules. Or we might need to find further trainings so we can grow in our skills. Remember that PART A of this training has 45-minute lessons. Leaders can easily reteach these to different groups. These lessons include the most important points from Modules 1-3.

Health, Marriage and Parenting, Money Management, Agriculture (Planting and Livestock), and Evangelism all teach basic skills. If our church is struggling in these areas, our leaders could teach the skills again. Or we could

extend the modules through learning additional skills. For example, if people are already practising agriculture skills, we might want another training on how to grow a specific new cash crop.

Facilitator: note the answers to these questions on the board.

- What skills training do you think we might need to repeat in our church?
- What new skills training would be beneficial for our church and community, to achieve the changes in the first two thirds of our poster?

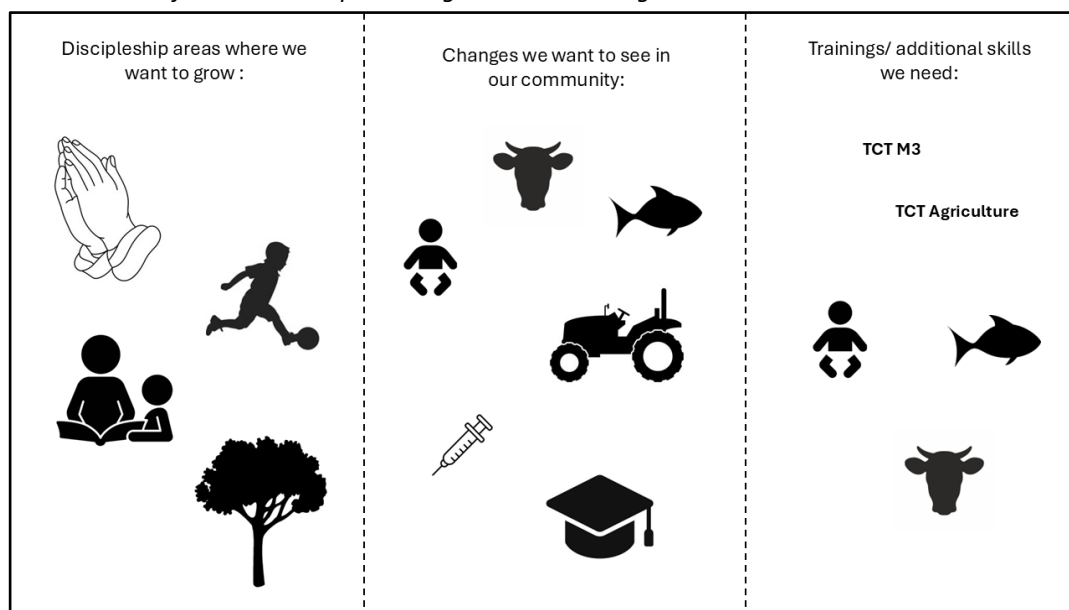
For each type of training listed, let's think about who we could ask to provide it.

- Do you know any experts like doctors, counsellors, or agriculture specialists?
- Do any NGOs near us or local government offices provide training?
- Is there anyone we could contact that might know of available training?

Facilitator: if you are struggling to get someone to facilitate an additional training, there is an optional Bible study at the end that will help you work out how you can do this.

From the list on the board, agree what trainings are most important for your church (and community) to receive next. These can be repeated TCT modules or new skills trainings. Add these trainings to the final third of your **Poster: Our Plan**.

Facilitator: the final 'Our Plan' poster might look something like this.



Closing prayer - 20 min

SMALL GROUP PRAYER

Look over your Dream Map and your planning poster. Take time to pray in small groups that God would help you bear this fruit for His glory. After praying, share any new ideas that came to you with the large group.

What is the next step?

■
Congratulations! You've reached the last training module of the TCT program. Think about all the ways your church and community have changed and grown over the last several years. God is very good!

NOTE: The Dream Map and Poster Plan are tools to help you continue to grow and glorify God. We recommend that you post them in your church. They will be a constant reminder to keep working toward your goals. You've already achieved so much! If you continue to depend on God and seek to be obedient, then even more can happen.

We hope you continue to meet together and pursue your dream map as well as other Acts of Love God lays on your heart. Keep applying what the Bible teaches to all areas of life. Continue seeking God's wisdom and help when you want to know how to bring changes to communities.

OPTIONAL: Finding additional resources and outside expertise for training

Materials:

1. Visual Aid: Learning from Nehemiah - this is not for use during the lesson, but to give to the church as a resource.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - 30 mins

We may need to persuade someone outside our church to come train us. Let's see how Nehemiah engaged with people in power to access what he needed to accomplish the vision God had given him.

Read Nehemiah 1:3-4 and 2:1-10 and discuss the following questions:

- What is the problem that Nehemiah is trying to solve? What resources is he missing?
- Why does Nehemiah bring his concern to the king? What can we learn from this?
- In verse 5, how does Nehemiah show he is taking responsibility for the issue?
- How does the king respond? What is it about Nehemiah's attitude that makes him willing to send him?
- What can we learn from Nehemiah about persuading people in power, even of different faiths and cultures, to help us if we need it?

REPORT BACK - 30 min

There are times we do not have all the expertise to do what God is calling us to do. Like Nehemiah, we may need to partner with hostile governments or others with the expertise or other resources we need.

Nehemiah is strategic in the steps he takes:

- He weeps – he allows himself to be genuinely moved by the problem. We need to pray for God to break our hearts - just as His heart is breaking for the problems in our community.
- He prays and fasts for God's help. Anything we do, we need to recognise our success will come from God alone. In Nehemiah's case, God already prepared the King's heart and the king even gave Nehemiah the opening to explain his problem.
- Nehemiah spoke out respectfully and politely to the one person with the power to give him what he needed. This was someone he had served faithfully, even though he was Israel's enemy - King Artaxerxes of Persia ruled Israel, having captured it from the Babylonians. It would be easy for Nehemiah to resent him, but he had built trust and a good relationship in spite of everything. We can build good relationships with our community, local government and others, even if we don't agree with everything they do. If we are willing to help and to serve them, motivated to show God's love, then if a time comes when we need their help (as it did for Nehemiah), they will be more likely to help us.
- Nehemiah's requests are very specific, not general. The more specific we are in what we ask for, the more likely we are to be successful.
- Nehemiah shows the king his personal commitment. His willingness to invest everything (leaving his home and probably most of his possessions behind) assures the king that the help he gives will be used for the right reasons. If we can demonstrate our own commitment and how we have given everything we can, they are more likely to trust us and to help us.

We need to identify exactly who has the power/ expertise to give us what we need, and follow Nehemiah's wisdom in approaching them.