

TWELVE SESSIONS - ONE MAN OR THREE

The Men's Discipleship Workbook

Discipleship that produces a schedule, not a feeling.

Almost every discipleship resource for adult men is either a book with questions at the end or a study written for children and re-labelled. This is neither. Twelve sessions, each on one passage, each ending with one decision that has a time attached and a written condition for when it has failed. Work it alone, or with two other men and an agreement page signed at the front.

- Twelve sessions - one a week, or one a fortnight for six months
- Built for one man alone, or a group of three - no leader's guide required
- Every session ends in a WHEN, an ACTION and an EVIDENCE line
- A partner agreement page, because a group with no terms becomes a chat
- A twelve-week grid and a closing review against the 70% line

For personal and small-group use. Print one per man.

Break the cycle. Build the system. Be the man.

bethemansystem.com

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How to run this

Alone

One session a week, same hour, twelve weeks. Read the passage first, out of your own Bible. Write the answers rather than think them - a thought that has not been written has not been tested, and you will find out which of your answers do not survive a pen.

With two other men

Three is the number. Two becomes a friendship with a book, and four or more becomes a class where the quiet man never speaks and nothing is installed. Each man works the session alone first, then you meet for an hour: forty minutes on the questions, twenty on last week's evidence.

The twenty minutes on evidence is the part groups skip and the only part that makes it discipleship rather than discussion. Each man reads out what he wrote in his EVIDENCE line and what he actually did. No commentary from the others unless it is a question.

The rules that make it work

- Nobody leads. Rotate who reads the passage. A group of three with a designated teacher becomes two men listening.
- Nothing said in the hour leaves the hour, with one exception stated up front: if a man says something that means he or someone in his house is in danger, it goes further that day. Agree this before it is needed, not while it is happening.
- Attendance is a number, not a feeling. It goes on the grid at the back. A group that met five times out of twelve and calls it a good season is not measuring.
- A man who misses two in a row gets called, not dropped. That is the whole difference between a group and a mailing list.

What this is honest about

I am inside these twelve, not past them. Session 6 and session 9 are the two I have had to rebuild smaller more than once this year. If a resource on discipleship reads like it was written by a man who has finished, either he has not, or he is not telling you the part that would help.

The agreement

Sign this before session one. A group with no terms turns into a chat by week four, and nobody can say when it happened.

WE THREE AGREE

- To meet at a fixed hour, booked twelve weeks ahead, not arranged week to week.
- To have worked the session alone before we meet. A man who has not written his answers still comes, and says so.
- To read our EVIDENCE lines out loud, including the weeks with nothing in them.
- To keep what is said here, except where someone is in danger.
- To ask a question rather than give advice, unless advice is asked for.
- To call a man who misses two in a row, within three days.

SIGNED

Name _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

WE MEET ON _____

OUR TWELVE WEEKS RUN FROM _____

The one thing that ends a group early

A man stops coming and nobody rings. It is almost never a decision - it is two missed weeks and then embarrassment doing the rest. That is why the call is in the agreement above with a number of days attached to it. Without a number it is a good intention, and good intentions are exactly what this workbook exists to convert into something else.

SESSION 1

What you actually believe

THE TEXT James 2:14-20

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

Faith without works is dead. The passage is not arguing that works earn anything. It is making a claim about evidence: a belief with no corresponding behaviour is not a quiet belief, it is an absent one, and the man holding it is the last to know.

Every man has two sets of beliefs. The stated set is what he would say in a room at church. The operational set is what his calendar, his bank statement and his search history would say on his behalf. Most men have never put the two lists side by side, and the gap between them is not hypocrisy - it is usually just never having looked.

This session is the looking. It is uncomfortable and it is only week one, which is deliberate. A discipleship course that gets comfortable before it gets honest produces men who are good at the language.

WORK IT

Write three things you would say you believe about how a man should live.

Now write what your last seven days would say you believe. Be specific.

Where is the widest gap? That gap is what the next eleven weeks are for.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS**WHEN****ACTION****EVIDENCE****FAILS AT**

SESSION 2

The source

THE TEXT **2 Timothy 3:16-17, then Judges 21:25**

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

All scripture is God-breathed and profitable - for teaching, for correction, for training. Note that three of the four are corrective. The text is not primarily described as comfort. It is described as the thing that tells you where you are wrong.

Judges ends with the alternative: every man did what was right in his own eyes. That sentence is written as a verdict, not a description of freedom. And it is worth noticing that a man doing what is right in his own eyes does not feel like a rebel. He feels reasonable. That is the danger of it.

So the practical question is not whether you believe the Bible. It is what happened the last time it told you something you did not want to hear, and whether you had a mechanism for finding out - or whether your reading is mostly confirming what you already do.

WORK IT

When did scripture last correct you on something specific? Write it and the date.

Where are you currently doing what is right in your own eyes? Name one area.

What is your reading slot - the actual hour, and how you will know if it stops?

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS
WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 3

Nothing exists until it has a time

THE TEXT **Luke 14:28-30, then Proverbs 21:5**

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

Sit down and count first. The plans of the diligent lead to plenty; everyone who is hasty comes to want. Both passages describe the same thing: the sitting down before, rather than the effort during.

Most men's spiritual life is a set of intentions with no times attached. Pray more. Read more. Be more present. Every one of them true, none of them schedulable, and therefore none of them keepable or breakable. They can only be felt, and how you feel about them will track your week rather than your obedience.

The fix is not more discipline. It is attaching a number. Not "pray more" but 6:10am, kitchen table, ten minutes, and I have failed at this when I have missed three in a row without saying so.

WORK IT

Write one spiritual intention you have carried for over a year with no time on it.

Give it a time now. An hour and a place, not a frequency.

Write its failure condition. At what point is it broken rather than just missed?

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS

WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 4

Money says it out loud

THE TEXT

Matthew 6:21, then Luke 16:10-11*Open it and read it before you write anything below.*

THE GROUND

Where your treasure is, your heart follows - and note the direction. It does not say fund what you love. It says what you fund is what you will come to love, which makes a bank statement a more reliable account of a man than his testimony.

Luke 16 goes further and makes money the training ground: faithful in the least, faithful in much. Unrighteous mammon is called the small thing you are tested with before you are trusted with the real one. That reframes a budget as a spiritual instrument rather than an administrative chore.

The men's version of this failure is rarely greed. It is opacity - money handled privately, decisions made alone, and a wife or a partner who finds out afterwards. Not stolen. Just not said.

WORK IT

Print or open your last month. What does it say you love? Write the top three.

What is one number nobody else in your house currently has?

What is the date each month you will say it, unprompted, from now on?

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS

WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 5

The ninety seconds

THE TEXT James 1:19-20, then Proverbs 29:11*Open it and read it before you write anything below.***THE GROUND**

Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, in that order. The fool utters all his mind. Neither passage forbids anger - they slow it down and put it last, which means what is being trained is sequence and speed, not temperament.

The damage in a house is almost never the anger itself. It is the ninety seconds between the trigger and the sentence. What gets said in there is remembered verbatim for years, and no amount of subsequent sorriness edits it.

You will not invent a response while you are angry. You have to have decided one in advance, while calm, and rehearsed it enough to reach for it. That is what this session installs: a physical interrupt and a sentence, decided today.

WORK IT

What is your physical trigger - the signal you feel before you say anything?

What is your interrupt? A room, a number of minutes, a sentence. Be exact.

What do you say when you come back? Write the actual words.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS**WHEN**

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 6

What you look at

THE TEXT

Job 31:1, then Matthew 5:28

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

Job made a covenant with his eyes. A covenant is a formal, prior agreement with terms - not a resolution and not a preference. He decided the matter before the moment, which is the only time it can be decided.

Matthew 5 moves the line back from the act to the look, which men have spent two thousand years finding inconvenient. The point is not to produce despair. It is that by the time a man is fighting at the level of behaviour, the decision was made several steps upstream, in what he permitted himself to keep looking at.

So the work is boring and structural: what is on the phone, what is on at night, who you follow, what you have told yourself is fine because it is not the worst thing. Nobody is delivered by a stronger resolve at 11pm. Men are delivered by changes made at 9am, and by one other man knowing.

WORK IT

Name the specific upstream input. Not the category - the actual thing.

What structural change removes it? Something you do once, not decide daily.

Which man will ask you about this, and when? Name him and name the day.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS

WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 7

Words in the house

THE TEXT James 3:2-6, then Colossians 3:19

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

The tongue is a small member that boasts great things - a rudder turning a large ship, a spark setting a forest. The image is leverage: disproportionate effect from a small input. Colossians adds the specific instruction to husbands, and it is not "love her" - that is the first half. It is "do not be harsh," which exists because the first half is not sufficient on its own.

A man can love his family genuinely and still be sharp with them at the end of a long day, and the sharpness is what gets quoted back in ten years. Nobody remembers the average tone of the house. They remember the four words said at the worst moment.

Words are also the cheapest system to fix, because the intervention is a rule rather than a character change: one sentence you have decided you do not say, and one hour of the day you have identified as your worst.

WORK IT

What is the hour of the day you are hardest to live with? Be honest about it.

What is the one sentence you will stop saying? Write it here so it has a name.

What is the repair line when you say it anyway? Short, no explanation attached.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS
WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 8

Work, and what it is for

THE TEXT Colossians 3:23-24, then Ecclesiastes 2:18-23

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord. And then Ecclesiastes, which spends a whole passage on a man who worked hard and could not tell what any of it was for, lying awake with his mind not resting even at night. Both are in the canon on purpose.

Men usually fail at work in one of two directions. Either the work is where identity is stored, so a bad quarter becomes a crisis of self - or the work is resented and done badly, and the resentment leaks into the house at 6pm most evenings.

The corrective is not balance, which is a word with no time attached. It is a boundary with an hour on it, and a stated purpose for the work that is not your own standing.

WORK IT

Which direction do you fail - identity stored in it, or resentment leaking out?

What time does work end in your house? Not usually. What time, as a rule.

What is the work actually for? One sentence, and it cannot be about you.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS

WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 9

Confession to a man

THE TEXT James 5:16, then Proverbs 28:13*Open it and read it before you write anything below.***THE GROUND**

Confess to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. He who covers his sins will not prosper; whoever confesses and forsakes them finds mercy. To one another - not privately and considered handled.

Private confession costs nothing, which is precisely why men prefer it. There is no risk of being thought less of, no possibility of being asked about it next month, and no evidence produced. It also has an unbroken record of not working for anything with a grip on you.

This is the session most likely to be worked at the level of theory. If you finish it without a name and a date written down, you have studied confession, which is the ninth version of avoiding it.

WORK IT

What have you only ever told God? You do not have to write it - write its category.

Who is the man? Write the actual name. If there is none, that is the finding.

What is the date you tell him? A date this month, not a season.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS**WHEN****ACTION****EVIDENCE****FAILS AT**

SESSION 10

Serving where nobody is watching

THE TEXT

Matthew 6:1-4, then Mark 10:43-45

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

Do not do your good works to be seen. Whoever would be great must be servant of all. The two passages together remove the two things men actually want out of serving: recognition, and rank.

The test is simple and unpleasant. Take the thing you do that is visible - the role at church, the thing people thank you for - and ask whether you would still do it if it were unattributed. Then find something in your own house that nobody will ever mention, and do that instead for a month.

This session exists because it is entirely possible to be a well-regarded Christian man in public and a passenger at home, and the public role can run for a decade without the private one being noticed as absent.

WORK IT

Name one thing you do that you would not do if nobody knew. Be honest.

Name one thing in your house nobody will thank you for. Take it, for a month.

What is its WHEN? A recurring day, or it will not happen twice.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS

WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

SESSION 11

Teaching what is under you

THE TEXT Deuteronomy 6:6-9, then 2 Timothy 2:2*Open it and read it before you write anything below.***THE GROUND**

Teach them diligently to your children - when you sit, when you walk, when you lie down, when you rise. The instruction is not a curriculum, it is a set of moments already in the day. And Paul tells Timothy to commit it to faithful men who will teach others, which makes handing it on part of the thing itself rather than an advanced option.

Most men wait to be qualified. The passage does not describe a qualification, it describes a proximity - you teach the ones you are already near, in the moments you are already in. A man who waits until he has it together will hand on nothing, and the waiting will look like humility the whole time.

What you have is eleven weeks of worked sessions and some evidence lines, some of them blank. That is more than enough to be useful to a man three steps behind you, and considerably more honest than what he is likely to get elsewhere.

WORK IT

Who is under you? Name a child, a younger man, or a man three steps behind you.

What is the one thing from these eleven weeks worth handing him?

When? A specific occasion in the next thirty days.

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS**WHEN****ACTION****EVIDENCE****FAILS AT**

SESSION 12

What happens in week thirteen

THE TEXT **1 Corinthians 9:24-27, then Galatians 6:9**

Open it and read it before you write anything below.

THE GROUND

Paul describes himself running with a fixed aim and disciplining his body so that having preached to others he is not himself disqualified. That is a man with a system and a stated failure condition, written by the person least likely to need one.

Do not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not lose heart. In due season - which is a long way off, and is the honest timescale. Twelve weeks is not a transformation. It is the first quarter of something that means nothing until it has four of them.

The most common ending is the worst one: the group finishes, everyone says it was good, and nothing is scheduled. Do not end this session without a date in the calendar. That single act is the difference between a course and a practice.

WORK IT

Count your evidence lines. How many of twelve decisions are still running?

Which one broke, and was it wrong or just too big? Rebuild it smaller here.

What is the date of the next meeting, and what are you working next?

THE DECISION THIS SESSION INSTALLS
WHEN

ACTION

EVIDENCE

FAILS AT

Twelve weeks

One row a week. Ran is how many days out of seven the decision from that session actually held. It goes in on the day, not from memory at the meeting.

WK	THE DECISION INSTALLED	RAN /7	MET	WHAT I STILL GET WRONG
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

THE COUNT

Add the Ran column and divide by eighty-four. Above 70%, keep everything exactly as it is and choose the next twelve weeks' material. Below 70%, do not add resolve and do not find a better workbook - take the two weakest decisions, cut their scope until they are almost embarrassingly small, and run the same twelve again.

The closing review

Each man does this alone before the last meeting, then reads out the three numbers. Numbers first, then discussion. In the other order, the discussion edits the numbers.

DAYS THE DECISIONS RAN, OUT OF 84

ADHERENCE PERCENTAGE

SESSIONS ATTENDED, OUT OF 12

Three questions, answered in writing

Which decision is still running without you thinking about it?

Which one broke, and what is its smaller version?

What did the other two men see in you that you did not report yourself?

Next

OUR NEXT TWELVE WEEKS START ON

WHAT WE ARE WORKING

Break the cycle. Build the system. Be the man.

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