



2019 PURSUE CONNECT MATERIAL

INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to the 2019 Connect material! This material is designed to apply the Large Group material from the morning. The lessons are designed to take 20-30 minutes, depending on the amount of discussion. You should have this discussion during the Connect rotation in the afternoons. Ideally, you will provide your students with 20-30 minutes to do their TAWGs then you will finish with a discussion that helps apply the Large Group.

Each Connect lesson has explanation sections along with questions for you to ask and answer. We recommend you read through each lesson before you lead the time. If you find an extra few minutes, we recommend you also look up the Scriptures! Nevertheless, these are written in such a way that they should require little explanation and can be done with no preparation if necessary. Just follow the plan and you will do great!

As you ask the questions, you should help and encourage your students to arrive at the correct answer. Do not just read it to them! Please note that many of the answers have lists with supporting Scriptures. As you think appropriate, have students turn to the appropriate Scriptures and read them out loud. This will help give them confidence that their answers are on the right track while allowing the Scripture to strengthen and further their understanding.

Finally, each lesson ends with a challenge for you to make to your students. It is our experience that small challenges help students apply what they are learning with small action steps. Nevertheless, please feel free to use your judgment! You are free to tweak the challenge to your students' particular needs, weaknesses, and strengths.

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*For Jonathan Creek 5-day camps, please shift Day 3 to Day 4 and Day 4 to Day 5. For all 4-day camps, please skip Day 3a. If you would like, feel free to use this as a lesson after camp!

DAY 2 FOCUS: THE CHARACTER OF DISCIPLESHIP CONNECT DAY 2 – MAKING DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICAL

Say: Welcome to your first full day of camp! I hope you are enjoying the activities, fun, worship, and Bible Study. I want us to spend the next 30 minutes thinking about and discussing how the things we are learning in Bible study should impact us.

Ask: What has stood out to you from Matthew 1-5?

Answers: [Will vary. If everyone is quiet, proceed to the next question]

Ask: Last night we learned about Jesus' identity. According to our camp pastor, who is Jesus?

Answer: Jesus is the God-man and Messiah-King who will save the world.

Say: "God-man" means that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. In order to be our Savior, he had to be fully human just like us. This is what made him a fitting sacrifice. Yet, no human besides Jesus was able to bear the vast weight of our sin. The penalty for our sin and rebellion against God is infinite and so we needed someone who had infinite worth to pay the price. This is why it is essential to understand that Jesus, even though he was human, remained fully God. In *Avengers End Game*, Hulk volunteers to take up the Infinity Stone glove, arguing, "It's sort of like I was built for this." In the same way, Jesus is the only person who could fix humanity's problem. He had to be both fully God and fully man.

Ask: What do the words "Messiah" and "King" tell us about Jesus?

Answer: The word "Messiah" just means "anointed" or "set apart to lead God's people." God told his people Israel many times that a Messiah would come to deliver them from their sins and to set up a new kingdom on earth. "King" tells us that Jesus is from the royal line of King David, the guy who killed the giant Goliath. God promised King David that a son from his bloodlines would rule God's people forever. Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise, as he has been given all rule and authority and now sits at the right hand of God (cf. Luke 22:69; Eph 2:4-7; Col 3:1).

Have someone read out loud: Matthew 1:23.

Ask: This verse says that Jesus is actually “God with us.” How does Jesus’ identity make him worthy of our trust, worship, and obedience?

Answer: Since Jesus was a human, we can trust him because he is like us and he knows our struggles. As God, we can trust Jesus because he created us, has always cared for us, and is the embodiment of love and goodness (1 John 4:16). As the Messiah-King, we can trust him because he fulfills all of God’s promises from the Old Testament (cf. Luke 24:25-27; 2 Cor 1:20).

Say: This morning we studied the Beatitudes. We asked the question, “What does it look like to be Jesus’ disciple?” The answer is that Jesus’ disciples talk the way that Jesus talked, act the way Jesus acted, and persevere with purpose as Jesus did.

Have someone read out loud: Matthew 5:1-6

Ask: How did Jesus display these first four attitudes or discipleship characteristics?

Answers: [will vary – ensure at least two are discussed]

1. Poor in spirit (Matt 5:3) – Philippians 2:5-7 teaches that Jesus did not insist on his position or status and gladly became a servant.
2. Mourning (Matt 5:4) – John 11:32-35 tells us that Jesus mourned and wept over his godly friend Lazarus when he passed away.
3. Meekness (Matt 5:5) – Jesus showed great meekness in how he always served God’s will. His temptation in the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11) is an incredible example. His care for people is told through numerous stories in the Gospels and summarized in Matthew 4:23. Jesus always eagerly served others needs ahead of his own, whether spiritual or physical. Jesus always prioritized God’s mission to save the world over his comfort, needs, and desires.
4. Desire for Righteousness (Matt 5:6) – Righteousness is about doing things rightly in God’s eyes. It is pursuing God’s will and God’s ways. In John 8:28, he said that he only does and says what God the Father tells him to say and do. He taught in Matthew 5:17 that he had come to “fulfill the law.” This meant that he came to show what it looked like to live the law. He loved God and loved his neighbor fully and perfectly. The stories and life of Jesus teach us what it means to pursue righteousness.

Ask: Matthew 5:6 promises that those who pursue righteousness will be fulfilled. How does Jesus teach us to pursue righteousness in Matthew 6:1-18?

Answer: He teaches us to give, pray, and fast in secret.

Ask: What are some other spiritual activities we can do to pursue righteousness?

Answer: Bible intake (reading, meditation, listening, memorizing), fellowship with believers, serving others, prioritizing the church, taking the Lord's Supper, obeying Jesus, loving our neighbor, being pure, thinking on God/communing with him throughout the day, etc.

Ask: How do these spiritual activities teach us God's will and ways?

Answer:

1. Bible intake – As we hear what God has done and said (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit), we learn to talk and act as he has. The Bible also corrects our sinful behavior and encourages us to trust God when things are difficult.
2. Prayer – Prayer often applies our knowledge to our mind/hearts. It is through prayer we not only worship God, but we actively meditate with God through his word and choose to believe it, obey it, etc.
3. Church – The church is God's program for our discipleship. The Christian life is meant to be pursued together in community as God rules over us and teaches us through His word, the Lord's supper, community prayer, etc.
4. Serving Others – We often learn to believe and trust by simply obeying. One of the most practical ways we can begin to serve God is just by serving others and finding joy in seeing their interests pursued and needs met. As we mimic Jesus, we will become like him if our good works are paired with faith in Jesus.
5. Communing – The Christian life is not meant to just happen at church, camp, or during our devotion time. Our God is always present with us. We should seek to talk with him, thank him, ask him for help, praise him to others, and meditate on his word throughout our day. As we do this, we will find that he teaches us, comforts us, helps us, and encourages us.

Challenge: Which Beatitude do you think you can grow in? I want to challenge you to memorize that Beatitude while here at camp and to actively pursue Jesus by imitating his godly behavior and words.

For Further Study

Matthew 6:19-33

DAY 3A FOCUS: THE CHALLENGE OF DISCIPLESHIP

CONNECT DAY 3A – CONNECTING DISCIPLESHIP TO THE HEART

(For Creek 5-Day Camps Only)

Say: You learned about the Parable of the Sower this morning. This passage has been celebrated by the church for centuries because of how encouraging and challenging it is. It encourages us to keep our hearts soft by maintaining a strong faith in Jesus. It challenges us to weed out the thorns of worldly desire and dig out the rocks rebellious unbelief. Matthew 13 allows us to pop the proverbial hood of the car and look under the hood. What makes discipleship go? What is the engine of our discipleship? It is a heart filled with belief and faith. Disciples cultivate God's reign in their lives by knowing and practicing the word and promises of God. The heart is the engine that drives our discipleship. This is why the question for today is: "Do you really understand with your heart?"

Ask: What was the answer to the question today?

Answer: Jesus' disciples grow by pursuing the promises of God and fleeing the pull of the world.

Say: Let me explain how that answers the question. If you are pursuing God's promises in obedience and not putting your hope in the things of this world, including sin, then you do understand with your heart. Our obedience proves our understanding.

Ask: What must you believe in or have faith in to make sure you have a growing and flowering walk with Jesus?

Answer: You must believe in Jesus and believe the good news about Jesus.

Have a Student Read Out Loud: 1 Corinthians 15:1-7

"1 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles."

Ask: What does this passage tell us we must believe in?

Answer: You must believe that Jesus is the God-man and Messiah king who has come to save the world. You must believe God's many promises to help us, save us, and change us. You must believe that sin is real and judgment for it is guaranteed. You must believe that God has conquered sin through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. You must believe that Jesus' sacrifice paid for our sins and that he died as a substitute in our place. You must believe that Jesus' raised from the dead and defeated the power of sin and death so that we too can be raised from the dead and ascend to the Father.

Say: All these truths, and many more truths, make up the object of our faith. Our culture tells us to “just have faith” or “just believe.” This is empty hope because that kind of worldly faith is placed either in one’s self, in something or someone in this world that will decay away, or in nothing. 1 Corinthians 15:17 explains that Jesus’ resurrection is essential to our faith: *“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”* As disciples of Jesus, we should not just say, “I believe” or “I have faith.” It should always be followed by “in Jesus” or “in God” or in a specific promise or truth Jesus and God have given us. 1 Corinthians 15 tells you the facts of the gospel. It is this gospel and its truths about Jesus which we put our faith in. Some of you may have heard Romans 10:9 before, which says the same thing: *“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

Ask: What do we believe the death and resurrection of Jesus does for us?

Answer:

1. Hope of resurrection and eternal salvation;
2. A relationship with God;
3. A new heart that is able to obey God.

Say: The promise of our resurrection is given in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53: *“51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.”* If you want to see more passages about our resurrection, you can read 2 Corinthians 4:14 and Romans 8:11 later.

The promise of a relationship with God is given in Romans 5:1-2, *“1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”* John 15, Romans 8, and 2 Corinthians 1-5 are other great passages to read later that deal with our relationship with God.

The promise of a new heart is given in many passages. Colossians 2:13 and Ephesians 2:5 say that we have been *“made alive”* with him, Jesus. In other words, our hearts have been made alive. God gives us hearts that can respond to him and obey him. 2 Corinthians 5:16 says that we are a *“new creation”*: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

Let’s read Galatians 2:20 to understand how God gives us new life and a new heart.

Have a student read out loud: Galatians 2:20, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

Say: Galatians 2 teaches us a truth that is taught all over the Old and New Testament. Here is the truth: when we believe in God and God saves us, he changes us on the inside. He gives to us new hearts. As we have learned today, this is not a new, fleshy organ. The new heart is a new mind, new desires, new attitudes, new thinking, and new goals. God replaces our self-centered thinking and desires with God-centered thinking and desires. In fact, he does even better than that. What does Paul say here in Galatians 2:20? He literally says, *"I have been crucified with Christ"* and *"Christ lives in me."* This sounds like repentance, doesn't it? When we repent, we turn from and crucify our sinful ways and we turn to and obey Jesus' righteous ways. Repentance is what we experience. But, as we repent, there is a reality that happens on the inside that we do not feel or sense but is just as real. God changes us—from the inside out. He gives us a new heart. He makes us have the mind, desires, attitudes, thinking, and goals of his son Jesus. God does not replace our heart with a better self. The replacement is Jesus Christ himself. Your heart is new because Christ Jesus is living in your heart.

Ask: Why is it essential that Christ Jesus himself live within us?

Answer: Without Christ living in us, we would never be able to live as true disciples. A disciple is a "follower of Jesus." Our goal is not Christianity or spirituality. Our goal is to be like Jesus. He is the Vine and we are his branches. Without Jesus at the center, we would only pursue false religion. Sure, we might be able to fake it for a while, but sooner or later, the truth about our hearts will come out. However, having Jesus living inside us is going to create a ripple effect that changes us through and through. Think of throwing a rock into a calm lake. That rock is going to create ripples in the water. The initial splash on the water has an ongoing effect on the rest of the lake. The ripples just keep going. Our hearts act in the same way. What our hearts value, our actions will reflect.

Ask: How does a soft, Christ-like and Christ-filled heart relate to God's Word?

Answer: The Word of God is the word of Christ. It is essential for us to know his word and to renew our mind daily with it. This is also why it is essential that we meditate on his word and pray about it. As we pray, we learn to apply the Word to minds and hearts. The Word of God gives us the information, but it is prayer through the Holy Spirit that applies the truth to our mind. We must remember the truth of Luke 6:45, *"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."*

Say: I hope these truths encourage you. They are deep truths, and some may remain difficult to understand and comprehend. Do not worry! Over time, the Lord will help you grow in your understanding as you obey him and pursue him. If you find yourself weary with being the right person, let me encourage you to trust in Jesus and let him make you the right person. He will change you through and through and make you just like himself. If you are not sure you want to be the right kind of person, I challenge you to think about this question: which is more beautiful? A life lived for the good of others or a life lived for yourself?

Challenge: I want to challenge each one of you to read through one of the four Gospels out loud this summer. The best way to become like Jesus is to get to know Jesus through the Gospels. If you'd like, I can help you find a mentor to read through it with you out loud over a few meetings. They can help you read, ask questions to challenge you, and let you ask questions so that you can grow in your understanding. As you read one of the Gospels about Jesus' life, I think you will find yourself amazed at how wonderful of a person he is and find yourself wanting to be just like him!

DAY 3B FOCUS: THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

CONNECT DAY 3 – CONNECTING DISCIPLESHIP TO THE CHURCH

Say: Let's review the lesson from this morning.

Ask: What is the cost of discipleship?

Answer: The cost of discipleship is the same for disciples as it was for their Master: their lives. The Son of God gives his identity to the sons of God, and, therefore, we have the same mission as he did. There is no "belief" without action. When Jesus saves us, he becomes our Master.

Ask: We usually talk about Jesus as "Savior." Yet, we learned this morning that he is also our Lord and Master. How does this truth change the way you think about your discipleship journey?

Answer: I have been "bought with a price" and I am "not my own" (cf. 1 Cor 6:20). Because Jesus saved me, I now gladly trust him with every moment and every decision of my life. I am his servant and I trust that serving him is the most fulfilling and satisfying life I can lead.

Have a student read out loud: 1 Corinthians 4:1, *"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."*

Say: The Apostle Paul called himself a "servant of Christ." The word for servant here is not the normal word that is used. This word is a much more specific term that referred to boat rowers. In the ancient world, many ships were powered by slaves who sat in the underbelly of the ship and pulled giant oars together in unison. The conditions were hot, grueling, and exhausting. Even more remarkable, these slaves could steer an entire ship on a course without ever setting eyes on the horizon or the water. They simply obeyed the orders of their master. This is how Paul views himself, and it is how we ought to view ourselves. We may not be able to see the horizon and fully understand Jesus' purposes for our lives, but we continue to faithfully pull the oars of obedience, day by day, moment by moment.

Ask: We also learned about the nature of Jesus' church this morning. What are some things you learned?

Answer:

1. The church is the pillar and buttress of the truth (1 Tim 3:15);
2. The confession of Jesus' identity is the "rock" or foundation of the church, meaning that what we believe about Jesus is what unites us together (Matt 16:18);
3. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, God's people (Matt. 16:18).

Say: Let's think together about this idea that the gates of hell shall not prevail against God's church. Jesus is teaching his disciples that the spiritual powers of evil will oppose God's people. This means you and me. Yet, Jesus promises that evil will not prevail. Do you recall how Jesus ended the Beatitudes, which we learned about yesterday? He promised that his people will be blessed when they are persecuted and hated and suffer for the sake of his name. Yet, he promises that disciples who suffer for him will receive the kingdom of heaven. What a glorious promise! There is nothing in this world—no sin, no background, no evil person or force—that can take us away from Jesus. He promised in John 10:28 that *"no one can snatch [my sheep, my disciples] from my hand."* Yet, Jesus is not only going to protect us. He empowers his people to have victory.

Have a student read out loud: Romans 10:37, *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."*

Say: Here is what a well-known theologian by the name of J.C. Ryle said about the church's conquering ability: *"Nothing can altogether overthrow and destroy [the church]. Its members may be persecuted, oppressed, imprisoned, beaten, beheaded, burned. But the true church is never altogether extinguished: It rises again from its afflictions; it lives on through fire and water. When crushed in one land, it springs up in another. The Pharaohs, the Herods, the Neros ... have laboured in vain to put down this Church. They slay their thousands, and then pass away and go to their place. The true Church outlives them all and sees them buried each in his turn. [The Church] is an anvil that has broken many a hammer in this world, and will break many a hammer still. [The Church] is a bush which is often burning and yet is not consumed."*

Ask: The gates of hell will not prevail against the church. Given this truth, why is the church so important in your pursuit of discipleship?

Answers: [As students tie into these ideas, have them look up verse references and read them out loud]

1. The community stirs us up to good deeds (Heb 10:24-25);
2. The church is the place we serve one another and by so doing serve Jesus (Gal 5:13; Matt 25:31-40);
3. The church is a place for us to confess sin and find mentoring (2 Tim 2:2; Jas 5:14-19);
4. The church trains and equips us for ministry (Eph 4:11-14);
5. The church is where we hear the Word taught and preached, which is able to save us and is sufficient for all our needs (2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet 1:3; Ps 19:7-11).

Say: There are many more truths about the church in Scripture. There are over fifty "one another" passages alone where we are commanded to serve one another in different

ways. Some of the imperatives include: love, bear with, help, be kind to, exhort, meet with, instruct, and comfort one another. When you take the whole of these truths together, one realizes that the church is to serve as the center and hub our lives. Of course, when I say church, I don't just mean the building. The church is God's people. We are to spend our lives caring for one another. If we do this, the gates of hell will not prevail against us.

Ask: Have you ever realized how important the church is in God's purposes? How might God be calling you to prioritize the people of God, his church?

Answer:

1. Attend more faithfully;
2. Participate and pay attention better;
3. Look for opportunities to serve;
4. Spend time with others from church;
5. Find a discipler and meet with him or her regularly;
6. Find a peer with whom I can pray and read Scripture.

Say: Jesus does not desire his kingdom to be composed of many individuals all pursuing Jesus apart from one another. When Jesus saves us, he brings us into a family and a movement that is much bigger than ourselves. When the church doors are open, you should make it a priority to be there. The church is God's primary means of making you into a disciple of Jesus. You should open your eyes and look for opportunities to serve. Ask a leader of our church, "How can I serve or who can I serve over the next few months?" You also should spend time with older believers who can disciple you, hold you accountable, help you understand God's Word, and show you the way of discipleship.

Challenge: Would any of you like to make a verbal commitment to how you might prioritize the church in your life? I'd recommend you make a small commitment that is easily attainable, pursue that commitment with faithfulness and diligence, and then let the Lord help you to grow in faithfulness in bigger things.

Some examples might include:

7. I'm going to find someone to disciple me and meet with them at least once a month.
8. I'm going to leave my phone in the car and open my Bible during the services so that I can hear God's Word and grow.
9. I'm going to visit and spend time with an elderly widow once a month for the next 4 months.
10. I'm going to come to every Sunday service and/or every youth group meeting.
11. I'm going to pray for every member of the church (or youth group) by name before the month ends.
12. I'm going to serve in the nursery (or other ministry) at least once a month.

DAY 4 FOCUS: THE COMMISSION OF DISCIPLESHIP

CONNECT DAY 3 – THE EQUIPPED DISCIPLE

Say: This is the last day of camp. Camp always provides us the opportunity to ask of ourselves, "What is next?" While there are many good answers to this question, a part of the answer must always be, "I'm going to obey the great commission and take the good news about Jesus to a lost world."

Ask: How has the theme of going into the world come up all week?

Answers:

13. Jesus taught in Matthew 5:13-14 that his disciples are salt and light in the world.
14. Jesus taught in Matthew 16 that his church will prevail against the gates of hell.
15. The missions offering taught us that there is great need everywhere: my neighborhood and school, Louisville, Chicago, and the entire United States.
16. I learned that there are entire groups of people who have never heard about Jesus.

Ask: How many of you feel like you are not equipped or ready to share the gospel or to take the gospel somewhere?

Answer: [Help students see that these four attitudes are common among groups of disciples]

17. I'm ready to go. All I need is the Bible and God's presence.
18. I'm willing to obey, but I don't know if I can teach others.
19. I'm willing to obey, but I don't know a lot about God or the gospel. I find a lot of this confusing still!
20. I'm not willing to obey. Jesus' call sounds too hard and it just seems like I will fail.

Say: The Lord knows your doubts and fears. The great news is that he has not left us to figure it out on our own. Psalm 119:105 says that the Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. The Word of God does not only teach us about God and Jesus. It trains us in how to be his disciple and how to obey his commands.

Have a student read out loud: 2 Timothy 3:15-17, *"14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

Ask: What does verse 15 promise and how may that affect the way you share the gospel with someone?

Answer: Verse 15 teaches that the sacred writings, which are the 66 books of the Bible, can *"make you wise for salvation."*

Say: When verse 15 says that the Scriptures can “make wise,” it is teaching that hearing the Word of God can help all of us believe and understand our need for salvation.

Have a student read out loud: Romans 10:17, *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”*

Say: Romans 10:17 teaches the same truth with different words. In 2 Timothy, the apostle Paul says the Scriptures make us wise. In Romans 10, the apostle Paul says that the *“word of Christ,”* which is the Scriptures, creates faith. Sometimes the best way to share the good news about Jesus is to read the Scriptures to them or with someone. Evangelism is often better in the context of a relationship than in a one-time conversion. It can happen over a series of conversations as you read through a gospel together. If you don’t feel equipped to make arguments to defend the faith, or if the person you are sharing the gospel with is very hostile or has questions you cannot answer, do not concern yourself. Just make sure they hear the Word of God.

Ask: Turn back to 2 Timothy 3. According to verse 16, what is the most important truth about the Bible?

Answer: It is breathed out by God. In the original Greek, the word was one word: God-breathed. Think about this: when you speak, you naturally breathe out. The point is simple: the source of Scripture is God himself. The logic that Paul is using, then, is also simple. If God is the source of Scripture, and God is true, then Scripture is true and profitable.

Ask: In verse 16, what are the four things the apostle Paul says the Bible is profitable for?

Answer: *“...for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training.”* These terms are often neglected, overlooked, and, perhaps, not even noticed. That is a big mistake. This would be like meeting the baker at a world-famous pie shop but not eating the pie! The reason you meet the baker is to get the benefit of tasting the world secret recipe!

The four terms here focus on two areas: training in doctrine and training in life. The Word of God gives us the content of our faith, thus training us in doctrine. It shapes and defines our beliefs. The Word of God tells us who God is, who Jesus is, what God requires. It tells us what to believe. Thus, Timothy was to use it to *“reprove”* what is false and to *“teach”* what is true. Scripture is the standard and the pattern of truth. If you imagine learning the game of golf, these two terms, “teaching and reproof,” are similar to learning the rules of the game. You learn about birdies and pars, greens and fairways, scoring rules, so on and so forth.

The Word of God also trains us in right living. It corrects our behavior when it is improper. It helps us to call wickedness wicked and to call sin sin. Even more importantly, it trains us in proper and godly behavior. It teaches us what is righteous.

The word “righteous” at its core means “straight, level, consistent.” It teaches us to live and behave in a way that is consistent with how Jesus himself lived and behaved. As believers, the Word of God trains us to demonstrate in word and deed the way of Jesus. If we return to the golf analogy, these two terms, “correction and training,” point to coaching we would receive while playing the game. A coach will correct our swing, teach us putting and chipping techniques, so on and so forth. In the same way, the word of God corrects our “Jesus swing.”

Ask: Look at verse 17. What is the incredible promise made here?

Answer: Verse 17 promises that the Word of God can make us complete and equipped for every good work.

Say: [Replace this illustration with a personal one where you have failed] We all have had many teachers. We all have had friends whose correction is invaluable. Many of us know the hard work it takes to acquire a skill such as reading and speaking another language. I recall wanting to learn to play the guitar. My parents bought me a guitar, which I took to college. I played at least an hour every day. I even took a guitar class, learned to read basic sheet music, and developed some good callouses on my fingers. There was only one problem. I'm tone deaf and have no rhythm. It didn't matter how many times my guitar teacher reproved me for changing the beat—his correction and training was not profitable.

The Word of God, however, is absolutely effective. Why? Because it gives the life it seeks to sustain. It grants the righteousness it reminds us to seek. It not only trains us to be godly people; the Word of God makes us all godly people. Look at what verse 17 says: it makes us complete and equipped for every good work. There is nothing that God has called you to do that he does not, through His word, create the faith in you and ability in you to do it. This includes fulfilling the great commission: the great task that lies before all of us!

Challenge: I want to challenge you to memorize 2 Timothy 3:14-17 before our next church service back home. This verse will serve as a guide on how to read the Bible and an encouraging reminder of why giving yourself to God's Word is worthy of your time and energy.

For Further Study:

Hebrews 4:12

Romans 12:1-2

Psalms 19:7-8