



# **GENEROUS LIVING**

**FAITHFULLY STEWARDING WHAT GOD HAS  
GIVEN YOU FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
THE KINGDOM**



**D I M E N S I O N S   O F   D I S C I P L E S H I P   G U I D E**

**LOGAN | RIDLEY | DEVRIES**



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## GENEROUS LIVING

Generous living is one of eight discipleship guides for the Dimensions of Discipleship series. It doesn't matter which guide you start with—start wherever you'd like and move on to wherever God is leading you next. When we live in the dynamic rhythm and flow of a missional life, we need to take our cues from the Holy Spirit.

These eight guides are organized according to the tree diagram below; examine it to see how all of the pieces fit together. Generous living is the branch of the tree stemming from spiritual responsiveness that includes faithfully stewarding what God has given you so you can contribute toward the advancement of the Kingdom.





Generous living means investing well what God has given us—whether that be our spiritual gifts, our homes, our time, our money, or anything else God has entrusted to us. We are to practice generosity in line with our beliefs and what we are hearing from God. We are to recognize that all we have is from him and we are to steward it well for the advancement of God’s Kingdom and purposes.



“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip....”

Matthew 25:14-15

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities.” Luke 16:10

How are we to live out a radically generous life? How are we to live wisely, stewarding well what God has given us? Into what areas of our lives does generosity extend? The generous living guide is designed to help us engage questions like these. The following five-part journey covers these five essential expressions of generous living:

- Managing your time and resources for kingdom purposes
- Using your spiritual gifts to bless others
- Giving your money generously and wisely
- Showing hospitality without favoritism
- Living out your God-given calling

“People are often unreasonable and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway. If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway. For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”  
—Kent Keith

Meet together in a group of three or four to talk through each of these expressions. Ask each other these questions. Wait for and listen to responses from the heart. Encourage, challenge, and affirm one another. Go at your own pace: you can do one a week or one a month, whatever pace works best for you. Be sure to allow enough time to live into these behaviors.



## PART 1: MANAGING YOUR TIME AND RESOURCES FOR KINGDOM PURPOSES



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU MANAGING YOUR TIME AND RESOURCES FOR KINGDOM PURPOSES?

God has entrusted certain resources to each of us: resources we are to use for his Kingdom. We are to steward them wisely in a holistic sense: saving, investing, giving. Having a good overall stewardship strategy in our lives puts us in a better position to live generously in all the myriad ways God would have us be generous.

Too often we think only of money when we think of generosity. But what else has God entrusted to us? If we have an abundance of time due to being unemployed or retired, we can use that for prayer and service. If we have a home, we can use that to welcome others. If we speak English, we teach the language to international students. If we can read, we can tutor children. If we are well-connected socially, we can connect people with one another who can band then together for Kingdom purposes. There are many, many ways God has gifted us that we seldom recognize.

“Abundance isn’t God’s provision for me to live in luxury. It’s his provision for me to help others live. God entrusts me with his money not to build my kingdom on earth, but to build his kingdom in heaven.”  
—Randy Alcorn

### MAKE AN ACCOUNTING OF YOUR ASSETS

Write down a list of all that God has entrusted to you: time, gifts, resources, situations, abilities, etc. List as many as you can. Now pray over each of these assets and ask God how he would have you steward it for his kingdom.

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discipleship questions.



Matthew 25:14-30:

<sup>14</sup> “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. <sup>15</sup> He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.



<sup>16</sup> “The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. <sup>17</sup> The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. <sup>18</sup> But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master’s money.

<sup>19</sup> “After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. <sup>20</sup> The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

<sup>21</sup> “The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

<sup>22</sup> “The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’

<sup>23</sup> “The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

<sup>24</sup> “Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. <sup>25</sup> I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

<sup>26</sup> “But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, <sup>27</sup> why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

<sup>28</sup> “Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. <sup>29</sup> To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’



**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS:**

What have you become aware of God gifting you with?

What opportunities do you have for using those gifts?

What would it look like to bury it in the ground? What would it look like to invest it?

What is the risk you would need to take to invest what God has entrusted you with?



**ACTION STEPS**

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

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How will you do this?

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When will you do this?

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Who will help you?

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## PART 2: USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO BLESS OTHERS



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU USING YOUR GIFTS TO BLESS OTHERS?

We all have different gifts-- that's the point of the Body of Christ. Each of us is incomplete without the rest. Individually, we each make a difference in only a small way. Collectively, the impact is huge. Consider your gifts. What are you good at? What do other people say you are good at? How has God used you in the past? What are you passionate about doing? How can you do that for the glory of God?

Spiritual gifts are an important place to start when we consider serving others, but we need to remember that God can use us outside of our giftedness too. Sometimes when God places us in situations outside of our comfort zones or has us working in areas where we feel out of our depths.

Those can be significant growing experiences for us. Looked at from a practical standpoint, Jesus' primary gift was probably not washing feet... but he did it anyway. Likewise, we are to have a servant's heart as we go about serving others. No task is too small or too unimportant.

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."  
—Dalai Lama XIV

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

Take a look at the list of spiritual gifts below. Although these were all drawn from scripture, the list may be incomplete. Next to each gift, write the name of at least one person you believe is gifted in that way. When you've finished, look down the list and spend some time praying and envisioning what God might have you do.

- Prophecy \_\_\_\_\_
- Serving \_\_\_\_\_
- Teaching \_\_\_\_\_
- Exhortation \_\_\_\_\_
- Giving \_\_\_\_\_
- Leadership \_\_\_\_\_
- Discernment \_\_\_\_\_
- Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_
- Healing \_\_\_\_\_
- Apostleship \_\_\_\_\_



- Evangelism \_\_\_\_\_
- Mercy \_\_\_\_\_
- Faith \_\_\_\_\_
- Healing \_\_\_\_\_
- Administration \_\_\_\_\_
- Shepherding \_\_\_\_\_

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discipleship questions.



Romans 12:3-21

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. <sup>4</sup> Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, <sup>5</sup> so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

<sup>6</sup> In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. <sup>7</sup> If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. <sup>8</sup> If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

<sup>9</sup> Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

<sup>11</sup> Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. <sup>13</sup> When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. <sup>15</sup> Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!



<sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. <sup>18</sup> Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

<sup>19</sup> Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

“I will take revenge;  
I will pay them back,”  
says the LORD.

<sup>20</sup> Instead,

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them.  
If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap  
burning coals of shame on their heads.”

<sup>21</sup> Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.



#### DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS:

What gifts has God specifically given you?

For what purpose do you believe he has given them to you?

How could you best use those gifts in your current environment?

What are some unique contributions you can make?

What are some creative ways you might use your gifts in the future?

What might result?



**ACTION STEPS**

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

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How will you do this?

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When will you do this?

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Who will help you?

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## PART 3: GIVING YOUR MONEY GENEROUSLY AND WISELY



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU GIVING YOUR MONEY AND RESOURCES?

Just as our time and our spiritual gifts are not to be used for ourselves alone, so our money, our property, and our resources are to be used for ourselves alone. These things are gifts God has blessed us with, and he means for us to use them to bless others in turn. We are to practice generosity in all areas of our lives. That includes our finances. Money can be a hard thing for people to talk about. In most cultures, people are very private about financial matters. Yet God expects to be let into the most private areas of our lives. He tells us not to cling to our possessions for identity but to cling to him.

As we give, we need to be generous. We need to offer our money with open hands, recognizing that it is not really our money, but God's. We are stewards. At the same time-- because we are stewards—we are to give wisely. We are to give in ways that forward the work of the kingdom, that bring redemption and hope to the poor, and that help others come into a position where they will be able to give generously and wisely as well.

“Give a bowl of rice to a man and you will feed him for a day. Teach him how to grow his own rice and you will save his life.”  
—Confucius

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discipleship questions.



Luke 12:15-21:

<sup>15</sup> Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”

<sup>16</sup> Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. <sup>17</sup> He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ <sup>18</sup> Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. <sup>19</sup> And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”’

<sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’”



<sup>21</sup> “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21:

“Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup> When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to someone in need, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. <sup>4</sup> Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

<sup>19</sup> “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

1 Timothy 6:17-19:

<sup>17</sup> Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup> Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. <sup>19</sup> By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.



### DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS:

In what ways are you generous with your resources? In what ways are you not?

What is your internal attitude when you are faced with the prospect of giving?

Since we all have a limited amount of time and resources, how do you decide where to invest what you have?

What principles do you follow for practicing wisdom in giving?

When it comes to giving of your money and resources, in what areas do you need to grow?



**MAKE A BUDGET:**

Sit down with a sheet of paper and make two columns. In one column, write down all the sources of income you have in the course of an average month. In the other column, write down all of your standard monthly expenses (rent, gas, food, giving, etc.). What do you notice about how you spend your money? What do you notice about your priorities?



**ACTION STEPS**

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

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How will you do this?

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When will you do this?

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Who will help you?

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## PART 4: SHOWING HOSPITALITY WITHOUT FAVORITISM



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU SHOWING HOSPITALITY?

People are often surprised to find hospitality as a part of generosity. Too often, we think of generosity as simply giving money. Such a narrow definition guts generosity of most of its life. Generosity begins with an impulse of the heart to invite. We invite people into our lives, to share our food, our space, and our time with us.

Remember too that hospitality isn't only for our friends. Hospitality means taking in the stranger and providing for practical needs. It does not depend on us having a large or lavish home. It does not depend on our cooking skills. It does not depend on our having spotlessly clean living quarters. Often people find simplicity more comfortable and authentic anyway. After all, when we invite into our home, we are inviting into our lives... warts and all.

How can we practice hospitality in simple ways? We can invite someone for coffee. We can bring a meal to the sick. We can invite those that others don't invite. We can extend a lunch-hour invitation to a coworker. We can throw a party. Although the classic means of inviting someone over to your home for dinner is wonderful, it's hardly the only way of showing hospitability. As you engage in this study with a few other people, consider some means of hospitality that would work well in your particular situation and context.

"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."  
—Mother Teresa

### BRAINSTORM

List as many different ways of showing hospitality as you can. Consider the word "invitation." What can you invite people to?

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discipleship questions.



Matthew 5:46-47:

46 If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. 47 If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.



Matthew 22:1-10:

Jesus also told them other parables. He said, <sup>2</sup> “The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. <sup>3</sup> When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come!

<sup>4</sup> “So he sent other servants to tell them, ‘The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’ <sup>5</sup> But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. <sup>6</sup> Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.

<sup>7</sup> “The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. <sup>8</sup> And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the honor. <sup>9</sup> Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.’ <sup>10</sup> So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests.

Hebrews 10:1-3:

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup> Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! <sup>3</sup> Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.

1 Peter 4:8-10:

<sup>8</sup> Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. <sup>10</sup> God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

3 John 1:5-11a (NIV):

<sup>5</sup> Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you. <sup>6</sup> They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. <sup>7</sup> It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. <sup>8</sup> We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

<sup>9</sup> I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. <sup>10</sup> So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good.



**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS:**

What does the word "hospitality" mean to you?

How do you see it used in these scriptures?

Tell about a time when you were intentional about showing hospitality. What happened?

When is a time when you experienced someone else's hospitality? What was that like?

What might hospitality look like in our culture?



**ACTION STEPS**

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

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How will you do this?

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When will you do this?

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Who will help you?

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## PART 5: LIVING OUT YOUR GOD-GIVEN CALLING



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU LIVING OUT YOUR GOD-GIVEN CALLING?

“Calling” can be such an intimidating word. How are we even to know something as monumental as our calling, much less live it out? Not everyone gets blinded by the light like the Apostle Paul, after all. That is true, but it’s also true that everyone has a calling. It doesn’t have to be bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. Your calling can be raising good children. It can be your Thursday night ministry to those in prison that you do in addition to your ordinary day job. It can be teaching 3rd grade. We all have individual callings... but taken together with the callings of others they add up to something monumental. God asks each of us to do our parts. That is calling.

For those us not blinded by the light like the Apostle Paul, calling can even be something we stumble into (or so it seems to us). Very few of us know what we want to be when we grow up. Instead, we start doing something, change directions, learn things along the way, and eventually land somewhere we never expected. That doesn’t mean it’s not our calling. If we are faithful in moving forward—even when we aren’t sure where we are going-- God will be faithful in guiding us where he wants us to go.

“Success is finding out what God wants you to do and doing it.”  
—Sam Logan

### PAINT A PICTURE

Come up with an image in your mind that represents “calling” to you. What do you see? How would you articulate it?

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discipleship questions.



Ephesians 2:10:

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 4:1-10:

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. <sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making



allowance for each other's faults because of your love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. <sup>4</sup> For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. <sup>5</sup> There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.

<sup>7</sup> However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. <sup>8</sup> That is why the Scriptures say,

"When he ascended to the heights,  
he led a crowd of captives  
and gave gifts to his people."

<sup>9</sup> Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. <sup>10</sup> And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

Romans 8:28:

<sup>28</sup> And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Micah 6:8:

No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good,  
and this is what he requires of you:  
to do what is right, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with your God.



### DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS:

How do you understand your calling?

What has become clear so far?

What lies get in the way of you embracing your calling?

If you are not sure of your specific calling, what are some steps you could take that may shed some light on your path?

How can you be faithful with what you do know God is calling you to do?



**ACTION STEPS**

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

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How will you do this?

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When will you do this?

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Who will help you?

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## WHAT'S NEXT?

So you've completed this guide. What now? Is there another dimension of discipleship you need to zoom in on? If so, which one?

Because the *Dimensions of Discipleship* guides aren't meant to be used in any particular order, it's up to you to do some listening to the Holy Spirit. Take a look at the big picture and decide where God is leading you next. With a holistic system, it's always a surprise. No matter which guide you choose next, you're engaged in an ongoing action-reflection process as you continue living incarnationally and missionally.

Maybe what's next isn't another *Dimensions of Discipleship* guide. Here are a few other options:

You can move on to a similar series: *The Journey Together Now* guides. You can find out more about these downloadable guides at [www.loganleadership.com](http://www.loganleadership.com).

If you have a friend or mentor you've been going through these guides with—or if you'd like to begin discipling someone, you can start an online coaching relationship at [www.mycoachlog.com](http://www.mycoachlog.com): a tool to help you stay on track, reflect on what God is doing, and celebrate progress.

You may be ready to engage in a more formal coaching relationship with someone who can challenge you to the next level of missional living and leadership. Check out [www.loganleadership.com](http://www.loganleadership.com) for information on coaching.

No matter what's next for you, continue to grow in the ways you follow Jesus into your continuing journey of discipleship.