

A CARE NET INITIATIVE

making LIFE DISCIPLES™

2.0

HANDBOOK & GUIDE

*Equipping the Church to Offer
Compassion, Hope, Help
and Discipleship to Women and
Men Considering Abortion*

Visit Care Net online at care-net.org
Making Life Disciples Resources at MakingLifeDisciples.com

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44180 Riverside Parkway, Suite 200
Lansdowne, VA 20176
(703) 554-8734 Office
(703) 554-8735 Fax
support@makinglifedisciples.com

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

FOR EACH SESSION:



① GEAR UP

Gear up by reading the introductory paragraphs (stop before the discussion questions).



② LEARN

Learn by watching the session's video



③ PROCESS

Process the video through the discussion questions.



④ BE ENCOURAGED

Be encouraged through the *You're Not Alone* section.



⑤ GO AND GROW

Go and grow through the *This Week* section.

After the 12th session,
continue on into the ***Next Steps!***

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SESSION 1

WELCOME

Starting with the Gospel

GEAR UP

Thank you for joining us, friend! You're embarking on a twelve-week journey to become a special kind of first responder in your church and community. Women and men are facing pregnancy decisions all around us, and while there are many ways to engage on the issue of abortion, God has given us the solution: discipleship.

Many churches think nothing of investing time and money to equip a short-term mission team to go and offer compassion, hope, help, and discipleship to those who think differently than they do. What's more, in preparation for their trip, each team member would receive training to better understand the people group they'd be serving. Indeed, that's exactly what *Making Life Disciples* is: a cross-cultural training to help you better reach the abortion-vulnerable—a mission field right in your own church and community.

In these next few weeks, as you learn more about caring for lost and hurting people, don't forget along the way that your Heavenly Father cares for you. We believe He wants to minister to you even as you learn, and this guide is designed to help you draw closer to Him.

Whether you are using this training tool as part of a small group, in a Sunday School class, or on your own, we recommend taking the time to digest each week's content with the discussion questions. After you watch today's video, take some time to reflect or share on the topics below.



LEARN - Watch Session Video - 30 MINUTES



PROCESS - Discussion Questions

- *What caused you to want to take this course?*
- *What do you think of Roland's description of Pro Abundant Life? How is this different from how abortion is typically talked about?*
- *What stood out to you from Lauren's story?*
- *Have you been discipled by someone before? Who? What impact did that person have in your life?*



BE ENCOURAGED - You're not alone...

The topic of abortion can be intimidating, and so can many topics you'll face when discipling someone through a pregnancy decision and beyond. Thankfully, you're not the first to serve in this area and you are not meant to do this alone. Each session in this guide will connect you to the support you need—from God and from faithful servants in your community and across the United States.

The most comforting knowledge you could start with is that God will be with you on this journey. When Christ commissioned His followers to make disciples of every nation, He reminded them that He has all the authority and promised that He will always be with them.

*Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age." -Matthew 28:20 CSB*

EACH SESSION IN THIS GUIDE WILL CONNECT YOU
TO THE SUPPORT YOU NEED—FROM GOD AND
FROM FAITHFUL SERVANTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY
AND ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.



GROW & GO - This week

In each session, you'll also find an encouraging and practical assignment to help you grow and prepare for ministry. Whether they help you experience what you just learned, send you out into your community, or direct you back into your prayer room, each exercise comes from careful consideration of what will best equip you as a *Life Disciple*.

For this first week, let's begin by making sure our life-affirming efforts are rooted in the heart of Christ. What does that look like? In truth, there is no better mirror of what internal beauty and godliness looks like than the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12. Here Jesus gives his disciples eight characteristics that evidence being in a state of blessing and approval by God:*

- *The poor in spirit*—this is viewing yourself as spiritually bankrupt before God. As the great hymn says, “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.”
- *Those who mourn*—this is a reminder that being godly is not being happy all the time. It's also a reminder that God sees and will one day comfort all whose current situation is intolerable or incomprehensible.
- *The meek*—to be meek means to not be arrogant. In other words, meek people are gentle, humble, and don't throw their weight around.
- *Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*—this means that, in God's eyes, beautiful people are those who are eager to live as God requires.
- *The merciful*—this is a generous attitude which is willing to see things from the other's point of view, forgives, and is not quick to take offense.
- *The pure in heart*—this has to do with truthfulness or integrity, as well as having a heart that actively seeks God.
- *The peacemakers*—this refers to those who actively try to make peace by seeking reconciliation and bringing together those who are estranged.

- *Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake*—this reminds us that followers of Jesus are not isolated from culture but rather engaged. As such, there are times when our counter-cultural beauty will arouse opposition.

After reading through Matthew 5:1-12 a couple of times and thinking about the definitions above, reflect on these questions:

- In trying to save people from abortion, how is the pro-life movement sometimes tempted to undervalue or forget about the Beatitudes?
- How are you tempted to do this? Which of the qualities above do you most need the Holy Spirit to help you mature in?

Finally, write out your answers to the questions above on the next page, concluding with a prayer that God would work in you both “to will and to do” of his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13)

*These definitions are informed by R.T. France’s commentary published by Eerdmans. In the words of D.A. Carson, France deserves “pride of place” among the best commentaries on Matthew (*New Testament Commentary Survey, Seventh Edition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013)).

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SESSION 2

CONTEXT

How Did We Get Here?

GEAR UP

On Friday, June 24, 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark decision that made access to an abortion a federal right in the United States. Although there are many questions about how this will play out in individual states, we can all rejoice in the greater legal status and protection this decision provided for the unborn. Again, despite the unknowns of how all of this will play out, here are two things we do know:

- Just court decisions and legislation can contribute to a culture of life, but they cannot change hearts.
- Life decisions—no matter what the laws—are always going to need life support. That is why the work you are preparing to do as a *Life Disciple* is so vital.

As a reminder or for those who may not be familiar with the 50-plus years of history that preceded the overturn of *Roe*, including the spiritual harm it facilitated in the lives of many post-abortive women and men, please watch the following.

LEARN - Watch Session Video - 12 MINUTES

PROCESS - Discussion Questions

- *What are some ways followers of Christ can confront the tragedy of abortion?*
- *Which way(s) should be the Christian's top priority?*
- *On the issue of abortion, why is it important for a local church or parish to prioritize practical ministry rather than politics? What can happen if this isn't done?*

- *Reflecting on the life and example of Jesus, what might a Christ-like response to abortion look like?*



BE ENCOURAGED - You're not alone...

You're not the first to go through the hard work of grappling with the abortion issue; if you feel like nobody else cares, we look forward to introducing you to some of our Life-Affirming Partners throughout this training.

The pro-life movement has been led by Christians for decades, from their prayerful presence on the sidewalks outside abortion clinics to the creation and support of thousands of pregnancy centers. There are also Christians in all levels of legislative advocacy and political office. While there are ungodly ways to engage in all of these arenas, we at Care Net are confident and thankful that there are also many godly efforts in each field.

The ministry of a *Life Disciple* is greatly needed and thankfully you don't need to have every piece of the abortion puzzle figured out. What you'll learn to do in the coming weeks is to take on the heart of Christ and be His hands to serve people facing pregnancy decisions.

For an opportunity to get inspired by some of the pastors and leaders who are in this with you, visit MakingLifeDisciples.com/vox

Indeed, the body is not one part but many. -1 Corinthians 12:14 CSB

IN A SOCIETY UNDER OPPRESSIVE ROMAN
RULE, JESUS FOCUSED HIS TIME ON SHOWING
COMPASSION ONE-TO-ONE, ACTIVELY MINISTERING
TO THE NEEDS OF HURTING INDIVIDUALS.



GROW & GO - This week

As a Life Disciple, you are called to serve in your unique church and community, which will be affected by state laws and local organizations. Doing some research into the laws and restrictions that exist in your state will give you some important context, along with checking to see if or where abortions are offered in your city or region. Visit MakingLifeDisciples.com/local-research for help.

If you are in a state where abortion is legal, try to locate your community's nearest abortion providers. After locating them, begin praying for them daily. It's okay to pray against their work but pray for the workers that they would find God's grace.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven." - Matthew 5:43-45 CSB

NOTE: For a full list of the *Making Life Disciples* Life-Affirming Partners, visit the Expand Your Ministry section of MakingLifeDisciples.com/next-steps

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SESSION 3

QUALIFICATIONS

You Can Serve with Compassion

GEAR UP

The fact that you're on this twelve-week journey with us shows you understand that the topic of abortion calls for special training. However, as we cover important topics like permission-based care, we also want to help you overcome any paralyzing concerns about your qualifications. Compassion and dedication will be most important, and if you ever feel overwhelmed, remember that if God has called you to this ministry, He will equip you!

The four essential traits of a *Life Disciple* are *Authenticity*, *Acceptance*, *Humility*, and *Empathy*. In a nutshell: be yourself, meet people right where they are, serve them without looking down on them, and really be there with them in what they're feeling and going through.



LEARN - Watch Session Video - 25 MINUTES



PROCESS - Discussion Questions

- *Can you name someone in the Bible that God used mightily despite his or her personal weaknesses?*
- *What is a divine appointment? Do you believe that God is in control and can set you up with the right person, for their sake and for yours?*
- *What would permission-based care look like when discipling someone in your church?*
- *Of the four traits of a Life Disciple, which is your strongest? Which is your weakest?*



BE ENCOURAGED - You're not alone...

If you are approaching this ministry with some fears about your qualifications, you are in good company with countless humble servants that God has used. You may have named some Biblical examples in answer to the first discussion question, and hopefully, you realized that you can relate to any other people who are training alongside you.

But you're not just in good company with your initial concerns. Much of this course has been developed in light of decades of experience and the best practices within Care Net's network of 1,200 affiliated pregnancy centers. When it comes to things like permission-based care, you're not alone because many of you have experts nearby! On the following page, we'll help you find the closest pregnancy center(s) to you.

Additionally, one resource that you can start using right away is Care Net's Pregnancy Decision Line. This is a national call center where anyone can call to talk with trained advocates about a pregnancy decision.

STARTING TODAY, YOU CAN OFFER THIS
RESOURCE TO ANYONE YOU KNOW WHO NEEDS
HELP: [PREGNANCYDECISIONLINE.ORG](https://pregnancydecisionline.org)



 **GROW & GO** - This week

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