

# What does a healthy disciple look like?

## Signs of healthy living

### Teacher Notes – extra notes not in participant notesheet have shaded background

By Dave Batty

#### Overview

In this workshop we explore some of the practical ways you can measure a person's growth as a disciple of Jesus. We are not looking at mastering theological beliefs. What we want to assess is how healthy is their practical daily interaction with others.

When David Wilkerson started his ministry in New York City, he experienced success in getting drug addicts to pray to receive Christ into their life. However, many of these young people were back to using drugs in the next two or three weeks. When asked why, they responded, "We don't know how to live for Jesus."

The staff at Teen Challenge realized that they would have to add discipleship training to their evangelism outreaches to see long term success in the lives of these new believers.

Another reality soon became clear. Salvation does not automatically or instantly turn you in a healthy Christian disciple. When a dysfunctional sinner becomes a Christian what you may have is a dysfunctional Christian. Even though they have experienced salvation, they have not yet learned how to live a successful (healthy) Christian life. So how does one become a healthy Christian? The answer: Christian discipleship!

#### How do you reach the full potential in life that God desires for you?

What does the Bible say?

##### **Jeremiah 29:11 NIV**

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

What are the plans that God has for you specifically?

Jesus from the Parable of the Sower explained what a healthy disciple looks like.

##### **Matthew 13:23 NIV**

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

What would your life look like if you were producing a "hundred times" what was sown?

## What does God look for to determine if a person is a healthy disciple?

What does the Bible say?

### Psalm 1:1-3 NIV

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

<sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

## So how do you measure the progress of a new Christian's growth?

### How do you know if this person is on a path to healthy spiritual growth?

In this workshop we will look at some of the practical ways you can measure a new believer's growth. We are not looking at mastering theological beliefs. What we want to assess is how healthy is their practical daily interactions with others.

The tool we will use in this workshop comes from the book: [The Life Model: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You: The Essentials of Christian Living](#) by James Friesen, E. James Wilder, Anne M. Bierling, Rick Koepcke, and Maribeth Poole. This book is available in Russian and in Spanish, and soon in Portuguese.

This tool describes these as "Stages to maturity". With each stage to maturity, you will see what the person needs to master to achieve maturity at that stage in life. With each stage, the rest of the family members and community need to be helping this person along. If the family and community do not provide the right kind of help, then it will be much harder for that person to achieve maturity. Failing to master each step to maturity creates problems.

In this workshop we are going to look at these stages of growth and connect them to the new believers you are training. Below are all the stages covered in the book *The Life Model*. In this workshop, we will only be looking at the first 2 stages of life. We strongly recommend you purchase this book and study the remaining stages of life.

## Teacher Notes

Quickly read over the 5 stages of life, and the age descriptions of each.

### Stages of life / Stages to Maturity

1. The Infant Stage      Birth to 3
2. The Child Stage      Age 4 - 12

- 3. The Adult Stage      Age 13 – to birth of 1<sup>st</sup> child
- 4. The Parent Stage    Birth of 1<sup>st</sup> child until youngest child has become an adult
- 5. The Elder Stage      Beginning when youngest child has become an adult

At the top of the next page you will see a brief overall description of what a person needs to master at this stage of life to be mature. The good news is that even if you did not master these skills as a child, you can learn them now.

**Column one** lists the tasks that you need to master.

**Column two** describes the ways that family members and friends can assist you in mastering each of these tasks. The guidelines given in column two also identify the most helpful things you can do as a staff member to help your students develop the life skill listed in column one. These describe how you can create a positive environment for God to work in their life.

**Column three** identifies the problems that are common when one fails to master the skill listed in column one. If you see the problem in column 3, then look at column 1 for a solution.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
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If you want to achieve life to the full potential that God has for you, then each “Personal Task” is one practical step that can take you on this path to real maturity. These “Personal Tasks” are not a self-help path to health and maturity. We need to ask these questions:

- How do I master these personal tasks as a healthy disciple of God?
- How do I “follow Jesus” in each of these areas of my life?
- What is God’s path for me to master each of these areas in my life?

As you seek to help the students in your Teen Challenge center, you need to first take a close look at how you are doing in your own life. Then you can begin to help your students assess their areas of strengths and weaknesses and begin to make needed changes.

In doing a self assessment, you can first rate yourself on how well you are applying each personal task in column one. You may also want to rate yourself on the problems identified in column three and ask yourself, “How significant are these problems in my life?”

As you begin to apply each life skill (column one) in your own life, then you will be better equipped to help others who need to grow in their lives.

With each of the tasks in column one, you can identify specific scriptures that speak to the development of that area of your life. You can do the same for all the problems in column 3. What scriptures speak to God’s perspective on this problem, and God’s way out of this problem?

## Teacher Notes

### 1. Introducing the Infant Stage

Point out at the top of the page, above the chart, the **Primary Task** for them to complete during the Infant Stage—Learning to Receive.

Also point out the **Primary Resulting Problem** in adult life if they fail to achieve maturity in each of these areas: They will have weak or stormy relationships.

When presenting Stage 1, the Infant Stage, point out that these are personal tasks that a child can master by age 3. If a person has not yet mastered any one of these personal tasks, they can begin today!

### 2. Present the Personal Tasks column

When you present this chart, read all 5 of the Personal Tasks in the left column. Briefly illustrate them. Do not at this point discuss the material in the other 2 columns.

### 3. Present the “When Tasks Fail” column (column 3)

After going through all 5 personal tasks, come back to Task 1, and go through the right column “When the tasks fail.” Point out that if a person fails to master the “Personal Task” in column 1, then as they get older they will evidence the problems listed in this 3<sup>rd</sup> column.

Perhaps give an example, or challenge them to think of a person who evidences the problems described in this 3<sup>rd</sup> column. Point out the relationship to column one.

Go through each of the corresponding boxes of Column 3 for all 5 of the Personal Tasks.

### 4. Present the middle column of the Infant Stage “Community and Family Tasks.”

In presenting the middle column, you may want to first discuss one or two of these strictly from the parent's role in raising a new child.

Then you may want to go through two or three of these and discuss how you as a staff member can do these tasks to create an environment where their students can develop the Personal Task in Column 1. Point out how significant their role is as a staff in creating this environment for healing and growth.

You may also want to point out that the family of each TC student may have failed in a significant way to help this person when s/he was a child. They may be living out the damage of parents whose failure makes it very difficult for them now as an adult to master the Personal Task. This may be especially true with Personal Task #2, "Develops trust." If they grew up in a particularly dysfunctional or abusive home, and did not experience love from their parents, they may find it very difficult to trust anyone today—including the staff. Or they may have the opposite problem—they trust everyone, even people who should not be trusted.

**The Life Model: MATURITY INDICATORS**

**The Infant Stage: Birth through Age 3**

(Newborns and toddlers are included here, up to the age where they can effectively say what their needs are.)

**Primary Task** to be completed during this stage. Learning to Receive

**Primary Resulting Problem** in adult life when this task is not completed: weak or stormy relationships.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Lives in joy. Expands capacity for joy, learns that joy is one’s normal state, and builds joy strength.	Parents delight in the infant’s wonderful and unique existence.	Weak identity; fear and coldness dominate bonds with others.
2. Develops trust.	Parents build strong, loving, bonds with the infant – bonds of unconditional love.	Has difficulty bonding – which often leads to manipulative, self-centered, isolated, or discontented personality.
3. Learns how to receive.	Gives care that matches the infant’s needs, without the infant asking.	Is withdrawn, disengaged, self-stimulating, and unresponsive.
4. Begins to organize self into a person through relationships.	Discovers the true characteristics of the infant’s unique identity, through attention to the child’s behavior and character.	Has an inability to regulate emotions.
5. Learns how to return to joy from every unpleasant emotion.	Provides enough safety and companionship during difficulties, so the infant can return to joy from any other emotion.	Has uncontrollable emotional outbursts, excessive worry and depression. Avoids, escapes or gets stuck in certain emotions.

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**Personal Assessment**

1. Go through each of the 5 personal tasks in column 1 and assess yourself. How effectively are you living out each of these tasks today?
  
2. Reflecting back on your childhood, how effective were you at living out each of these tasks as a child? As a teen?
  
3. Look at the community and family tasks in column 2. Rate your family on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is no help to 10 is excellent help provided by your parents and others close to you during your childhood years.
  
4. Look at the problems listed in column 3 and do a personal self-assessment. Which of these problems do you struggle with today?
  
5.
  - A. Which of all the problems listed in column 3 is your greatest challenge today?
  
  - B. Look at the corresponding personal task in column 1. Do you see the connection between your problem and the personal task not mastered in your life? What steps can you take to master that personal task in your life today? Remember that those close to you have a key part in helping you master that task—column 2.

## A closer look at Stage 1: The Infant Stage

Each person needs to take the time to do a personal self assessment of each “Personal Task”. The Personal Assessment questions on the previous page can be used for this.

### Teacher notes

Point out that as they seek to help their students at TC, they need to first take a close look at how they are doing in their own life. As they master each personal task in their own life, they will be able to assist the students in mastering each of these Personal Tasks.

Encourage them to do a careful personal assessment of each Personal Task, as well as the issues raised in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Column “When the Tasks fail.”

This assessment can point them to areas where they need to begin working on their own life.

Now let’s take a closer look at each personal task and brainstorm some possible ways we can master this in our life. As we stated earlier, even though a person has the potential to master each of these Personal Tasks by age 3, many adults have not yet done so. Today is a great day to get started!

The Notesheet for this workshop only includes a detailed look at 3 of the 5 Personal Tasks for Stage 1, the Infant Stage. Depending on the time you have to teach this workshop, you may want to also cover the other 2 not detailed on the next pages.

However, if you are teaching this to Teen Challenge staff audience, then make sure you have enough time to cover Personal Task #2 in Stage 2, Child Stage, since this directly relates to addiction.

Personal Task #1	Bible Verses	Action Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lives in joy.</li> <li>➤ Expands capacity for joy.</li> <li>➤ Learns that joy is one’s normal state.</li> <li>➤ Builds joy strength.</li> </ul>	1 Thessalonians 5:16 Nehemiah 8:10 Psalm 118:24 Luke 10:20 John 15:11 John 16:24 Romans 15:13 2 Corinthians 7:4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wake up in the morning and quote Psalm 118:24 to myself.</li> <li>➤ Look for things today that I can be thankful for and rejoice in them.</li> <li>➤ Choose to be joyful as I do the work that I must do today.</li> </ul>

Teacher notes for this Personal Task #1 are on the next page.

**Teacher Notes:**

The example of Personal Task #1 (on previous page) includes several verses on joy, but challenge them to add more scriptures. Encourage them to memorize these verses and then to set personal application goals to begin to put them into action in their daily living. They must be intentional about developing the skills needed to reach the maturity that God desires for this Personal Task.

You may have additional action steps that you would like to add to Column 3.

Ask those you are training to consider doing a personal journal on the experiences they are facing which give them an opportunity to apply this Personal Task in their life.

They could also include verses and personal experiences that relate to the opposite of each Personal Task—the problems (Column 3) that develop when they fail to mature in the Personal Task of Column 1.

What scriptures speak to God’s perspective on this problem, and God’s way out of this problem?

Personal Task #2	Bible Verses	Action Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develops trust</li> </ul>	Proverbs 3:5-6 Psalm 143:8 Psalm 40:4 Proverbs 11:28 1 Corinthians 13:7 Proverbs 28:26 Matthew 25:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How can I trust in the Lord with all my heart today?</li> <li>➤ How does my love for this person relate to my ability to trust this person?</li> <li>➤ What has this person done to cause me to not trust them?</li> </ul>

Personal Task #5	Bible Verses	Action Steps
Learns how to return to joy from every unpleasant emotion.	1 Thessalonians 5:16 Nehemiah 8:10 Psalm 118:24 2 Corinthians 12:7-11 James 1:2-5 2 Kings 18:5 John 16:21-22 Psalm 103:19 Romans 8:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How can I apply each of these verses in my life today?</li> <li>➤ James 1:2 says I need to face the problems in my life. What problem do I need to face today instead of ignoring it or running from it?</li> <li>➤ How will I return to joy from:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Anger</li> <li>➤ Depression</li> <li>➤ Fear</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Go back to page 5 and look at Column 3 and the problems related to each of the Personal Tasks. Each of these problems also provide specific issues that we can look at in putting out of our life. It is not enough to just stop doing the things listed in column 3. When we build the corresponding “Personal Task” in column 1, related to that problem, that is one of the best ways to overcome that problem. The more we work on mastering the positive Personal Task, the less likely we are to have the corresponding problem in column 3.

When you master each of the personal tasks at Stage One, that is the best foundation to then move on to the Personal Tasks in Stage Two (see next page).

Give special attention to Personal Task #2, “Learns what brings personal satisfaction.” Take a close look at what problems a person has (column 3) when they fail to master this personal task.

**Teacher Notes**

After you have completed your coverage of Stage 1, the Infant Stage, do a quick summary of the chart on page 4 of the Student Notesheet. Review again at the very top of the page, above the chart the Primary Task to be completed at this stage: Learning to Receive. Also review the Primary Resulting Problem when they fail to master the personal tasks at this stage—they will have weak or stormy relationships.

**Teacher Notes:**

Present State 2: The Child Stage in a similar fashion as you did the Infant Stage. Start by covering the **Primary Task** and **Primary Resulting Problem** when these tasks are not completed.

Make sure you give careful coverage of Personal Task #2 “Learns what brings personal satisfaction,” and the content of Column 3, which speaks directly to addiction.

If you have time, cover in detail some of the other Personal Tasks at this Level.

**The Life Model: MATURITY INDICATORS**

**The Child Stage: Age 4 through 12**

(Age 12 is the earliest age this stage can be completed.)

**Primary Task** to be completed during this stage. **Taking care of self**

**Primary Resulting Problem** in adult life when this task is not completed: Not taking responsibility for self.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Asks for what is needed – can say what one thinks and feels	Teaches and allows child to appropriately articulate needs.	Experiences continual frustration and disappointment because needs are not met; is often passive-aggressive.
2. Learns what brings personal satisfaction.	Helps child to evaluate the consequences of own behaviors, and to identify what satisfies him or her.	Is obsessed with or addicted to food, drugs, sex, money, or power, in a desperate chase to find satisfaction.
3. Develops enough persistence to do hard things.	Challenges and encourages child to do difficult tasks the child does not feel like doing.	Experiences failure, remains stuck and undependable, is consumed with comfort and fantasy life.
4. Develops personal resources and talents.	Provides opportunities to develop the child’s unique talents and interests	Fills life with unproductive activities despite God-given abilities.
5. Knows self and takes responsibility to make self understandable to others.	Guides in discovering the unique characteristics of the child’s heart	Fails to develop true identity, conforms to outside influences that misshape identity.
6. Understands how he or she fits into history as well as the “big picture” of what life is about.	Educates the child about the family history as well as the history of the family of God.	Feels disconnected from history and unable to protect self from family lies or dysfunctions that are passed on.

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**Personal Assessment**

1. Go through each of the 6 personal tasks in column 1 and assess yourself. How effectively are you living out each of these tasks today?
  
2. Reflecting back on your childhood, how effective were you at living out each of these tasks as a child? As a teen?
  
3. Look at the community and family tasks in column 2. Rate your family on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is no help to 10 is excellent help provided by your parents and others close to you during your childhood years.
  
4. Look at the problems listed in column 3 and do a personal self-assessment. Which of these problems do you struggle with today?
  
5.
  - A. Which of all the problems listed in column 3 is your greatest challenge today?
  
  - B. Look at the corresponding personal task in column 1. Do you see the connection between your problem and the personal task not mastered in your life? What steps can you take to master that personal task in your life today? Remember that those close to you have a key part in helping you master that task—column 2.

### A closer look at Stage 2: The Child Stage

We are going to take a closer look at Personal Task #2, listed below. Notice what are the resulting problems (Column 3) when a person fails to master this personal task: They are obsessed with or addicted to food, drugs, sex, money, or power, in a desperate chase to find satisfaction.

Fill in your ideas in the chart below for columns 2 and 3.

#### Teacher Notes

This could easily be an activity where you break the class up into small groups and have them identify Bible verses and Action Steps for Columns 2 & 3 below. You could then have them report their results to the whole group. If you don't have time for that, it would be good to get a copy of what they came up with for this activity so you have their input for future trainings.

Personal Task #2	Bible Verses	Action Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learns what brings personal satisfaction.</li> </ul>		

#### Teacher Notes

In wrapping up this workshop, encourage them to follow up on each of these Personal Tasks in their own life and work with their students as well. Challenge them to read the book *The Life Model*, and study the other 3 Stages of Life that we did not cover here in this workshop.