

SMALL GROUP AND SUNDAY SERMON SERIES



JOURNEY WITH US AS WE EXPLORE THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE

7 June - 26 July 2026

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

Practising the Way

Week 1 — WALKING IS THE WAY

Week 2 — COMMUNAL HARMONY

Week 3 — THE WAY IS COSTLY

Week 4 — BEING AUTHENTIC

Week 5 — WALKING THE WILDERNESS ROAD

Week 6 — STRENGTH FORGED IN STRUGGLE

Week 7 — THE JOURNEY IS UNFOLDING, AND NEVER FIXED

Week 8 — ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD

*Friends, according to our Christian calendar we are moving into 'Ordinary Time'. This refers to the numbered weeks outside of the major liturgical seasons, lasting about 33-34 weeks each year, and focuses on living out the teachings of Christ in daily life. It emphasizes the ongoing mission of the Church, discipleship, and growth in faith rather than commemorating a single event like Christmas or Easter. Ordinary Time in the Christian calendar is often misunderstood as "plain" or "less important", but it's **the season where discipleship is lived out in daily life**. It is about applying faith in everyday life, not just during festive seasons. Ordinary time reminds Christians that faith is not about high holy days but also about consistent practice and witness in daily life. It provides space for teaching, reflection, and mission, grounding believers in the rhythm of ordinary weeks.*

*I have titled our series "**Practising the Way**". Practising the Way means actively following Jesus' way of life, not just believing in Him. Many churches emphasize belief but neglect formation and this leads to the crisis of discipleship, "**Practising the Way**" addresses this gap. **Practising the Way is essentially about intentional discipleship – ordering life around Jesus' teachings and example, within community, to grow in faith and mission.***

*John Mark Comer wrote a book titled "**Practising the Way**" to help believers move beyond simply believing in Jesus to apprenticing under him. Comer argues that everyone is being formed by something – whether culture, media, or habits – and that Christians must intentionally choose to be formed by Jesus. The book begins by exploring what it means to be an apprentice to Jesus drawing on the ancient rabbinic tradition where disciples*

would follow their teacher closely, imitating not just their words but their way of life. Comer insists that discipleship is not passive belief but active practice, requiring rhythms that open space for God's Spirit to transform us. He frames this apprenticeship around three movements – (e, Become, Do):

- *Being with Jesus* – emphasizes cultivating presence through prayer, silence, scripture, and sabbath. This is about learning to live in constant awareness of God's presence.
- *Becoming like Jesus*: He explains that transformation of character doesn't happen overnight or through sheer willpower alone but through intentional practices – fasting, simplicity, community, and generosity – that reshape desires and habits. These practices are not ends in themselves but means of opening our lives to God's work.
- *And doing as He did*: is about living missionally in the world: serving others, pursuing justice, and sharing the good news in everyday life.

Comer's vision is that discipleship is not reserved for spiritual elites but is the ordinary calling of every believer: to apprentice under Jesus, to be transformed by him, and to live out his way in the world. The book speaks to Christians navigating distraction and hurry, offering concrete steps to integrate faith in ordinary life.

I have chosen the theme 'Practising the Way' to help us see how faith isn't just celebrated in high feasts but embodied in ordinary rhythms. It is about discipleship as a lifestyle rather than a one-time decision. So, Practising the Way is about embodying Jesus' way of life here and now – a radical apprenticeship that reshapes how you spend time, use resources, and relate to others. It is about transformation – not just believing in Jesus but allowing his Spirit to reshape our character so that we increasingly reflect his life. For us, this is a call to slow down, to be present with Jesus, and to let discipleship permeate ordinary routines. To invite believers to see everyday life – work, rest, relationships, service – as the arena where discipleship is lived out. This theme reminds us that discipleship is lived out in the everyday; in how we speak to our families, how we handle work pressures, how we respond to neighbours, and how we steward our time. It is about becoming more Christlike not just in sacred spaces but in the ordinary rhythms of life. Over time, this path produces the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – making believers living witnesses of Jesus in ordinary settings.



Conclusion: As we journey through this series, may we discover that practising the Way is not about perfection but about persistence – not about rigid formulas but about unfolding faith – not about escape from the world but about engaging it with Christ's love. It is not a single step but a lifelong road. So, let us go forth with courage, knowing that the wilderness will not defeat us, the struggle will not break us, and the cost will not outweigh the eternal reward. Practising the Way is walking with Christ – and in Him, the journey itself becomes our joy. Enjoy the journey, for it is the Way of Christ.

God's blessings, Zamani Sikupela.

Week Three: 21 June 2026

Theme: The Way is costly!

Scripture: Psalm 34: 18-22; Proverbs 23: 19-26; 2 Timothy 3:10-17; Matthew 16:24-28

Worship Song: Will your anchor hold in the storms of life.

<https://youtu.be/UQQO8v-0VBo?si=dLvGEUbGhYHOPy8z>

The way demands surrender, sacrifice, and steadfastness. Walking the way of Christ demands denial of self – letting go of pride, ambition, and comfort. It means choosing Christ's will over our own desires. The Way is costly – it calls for surrender of self, endurance through trials, and faithfulness in witness. You have to say: "not my will but yours be done". Yet in walking it we find true life and eternal hope in Christ. The cost is outweighed by the surpassing joy of knowing Christ and the eternal hope He gives. Though costly, the Way leads to life, joy, and eternal hope. The cost is real, but the reward is greater.

Reflection on the Scriptures written by: REV HILTON VOLKWYN

From the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy, we glean that he is urging his protégé to stand steadfast in the face of opposition. He is hinting to the fact that anyone who stands for righteousness' sake will face opposition. He warns that everyone living a godly life will face similar trials. So, we need to put it out there that being a follower of Christ does not automatically exonerate you from trials and obstacles in life. On the contrary it will be even more difficult at first.

And so, Paul encourages Timothy to remain steadfast to teachings he learned and the faith he has adopted so that when faced with opposition that is bound to come his way he can draw from that well. He reminds Timothy of his heritage, having known the Holy Scriptures since childhood, which provide the essential wisdom needed for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

And when we read the gospel message and hear Jesus say "*Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me*" (Matt. 16:24), we sense a call to be resolute in our following of our Saviour. A call to not give up but to carry on.

And while all this sounds like it could be burdensome following Jesus, we can take heart from the fact that Psalmist reminds us that God remains our constant companion. Even when we may feel like we are under tremendous strain and cannot go any further, he says "*The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all...*" (Ps. 34:19)

In James 4:7 we read "*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*" The verse is a core principle of spiritual resilience and outlines two main steps for overcoming temptation:

1. **Submission:** Yielding and dedicating yourself to God first.
2. **Resistance:** Actively standing firm against negative influences or temptations.

It emphasizes that when you align yourself with God, you have the authority to push back against negativity, and it will retreat.

You and I have experienced God's love for us through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. We know that through Him we have victory over sin and death. We rejoiced over Easter and celebrated at the Ascension, now we must live as those who believe. And even if it is costly we must still unyieldingly stay steadfast and Practice the Way.

And so, while "Practising the Way" may be costly, our Omnipotent God is still on our side when we stay steadfast in our walk.

Life group Questions (taking discussions deeper):

1. Where are the places or situations that you experience most, the opposition of You being a Christian?
2. What are the learnings that strengthen me to Practice the Way of Jesus?
3. Share with the group a time when you realised that God gave you the courage to face opposition.

Daily Memory Verse and Prayer:

MONDAY

Memory Verse: "*The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*"— Psalm 34 34:18

Prayer: Lord, thank You for being near to us in every moment of weakness and sorrow. Surround us with Your comfort and restore our hearts with Your peace.

TUESDAY

Memory Verse: "*My son, pay attention and turn your ear to wisdom; apply your heart to understanding.*"— Proverbs 23:19

Prayer: Father, give us hearts that are teachable and eager to grow in wisdom. Help us make choices today that honour You and reflect Your truth.

WEDNESDAY

Memory Verse: *"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of."*— 2 Timothy 3:14

Prayer: Lord, strengthen us to remain faithful to Your Word in every season. Keep our faith steady and our hearts anchored in Your truth.

THURSDAY

Memory Verse: *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."*— 2 Timothy 3:16

Prayer: Father, let Your Word shape our lives and renew our minds today. Teach us through Scripture and lead us in paths of righteousness.

FRIDAY

Memory Verse: *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*— Matthew 16:24

Prayer: Jesus, help us to follow You with courage, humility, and wholehearted devotion. Teach us to trust Your ways above our own desires.

SATURDAY

Memory Verse: *"For what good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"*— Matthew 16:26

Prayer: Lord, keep our hearts focused on what is eternal and truly valuable. Help us live each day with wisdom, purpose, and devotion to You.

Family Devotion: The way is costly: Compiled by: Jenny Blake

Scriptures

- Psalm 34:18–22
- Proverbs 23:19–26
- 2 Timothy 3:10–17
- Matthew 16:24–28

Worship Song

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5DHCCFuWmw>

Opening Question

Ask everyone: **"What is the hardest thing you've ever worked for?"**

(Perhaps learning to ride a bike, studying for a test, practising a sport, or learning an instrument.)

Ask: **"Was it worth the effort?"**

Some things are valuable because they require commitment and perseverance. Following Jesus is the greatest journey we can take, but Jesus tells us that it is not always easy.

Short Devotion

When Jesus called people to follow Him, He never promised an easy life. In Matthew 16, Jesus says, *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

That sounds difficult! But Jesus was teaching that following Him means putting God first, even when it costs us something.

Sometimes following Jesus means:

- Telling the truth when it would be easier to lie.

- Being kind when others are unkind.
- Forgiving someone who has hurt us.
- Standing up for what is right, even when others disagree.

Paul reminds Timothy that he faced many hardships because he followed Jesus, yet God remained faithful through them all.

The good news is that we never walk alone. Psalm 34 tells us that God is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. When following Jesus feels hard, God gives us strength to keep going.

The way of Jesus may be costly, but it is always worth it because it leads to life with Him.

Object Lesson

Backpack Challenge

Fill a backpack with a few heavy items (books, tins, or water bottles).

Ask a volunteer to carry it around the room.

Then remove one item at a time and ask:

"Does it feel easier now?"

Explain:

Sometimes following Jesus means carrying responsibilities and making difficult choices. It can feel heavy. But Jesus helps us carry our burdens and gives us strength when life is hard.

Discussion Time

Younger Children (Ages 4–8)

1. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
2. What is one hard thing Jesus asks us to do?
3. How does God help us when we are sad or struggling?
4. What good choice can you make this week?

Older Children & Teens

1. Why do you think Jesus warned that following Him would be difficult?
2. What pressures do people your age face when trying to follow Jesus?
3. When have you had to do the right thing even though it was hard?
4. How can God's Word help us stay on the right path?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us the way to live. We know that following You is not always easy, but we trust that You are always with us. Give us courage to do what is right, strength when life is hard, and faith to keep following You every day. Amen.

Family Challenge for the Week

Choose **one difficult but loving thing** to do this week:

- Forgive someone.
- Help someone without being asked.
- Tell the truth even when it is hard.
- Pray for someone who has upset you.

At the end of the week, talk about how that choice helped you grow as a follower of Jesus