

VALLEY REAL LIFE

**DNA**





# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME



### TABLE QUESTIONS

Introduce yourself and tell us how long you have been coming to VRL.

What brought you to the DNA Class?

What do you hope to come away with after the class?

We are thrilled that you are interested in learning more about Valley Real Life! We are honored that you would take time out of your schedule to hear about our church "DNA." This class is designed to: 1) Give you a 10,000 foot flyover view of our church's beliefs, mission and vision for making disciples who make disciples; 2) Provide an on-ramp on how to best connect to Jesus and others; 3) Offer you an opportunity to officially make VRL your church home. It is our hope that over the next couple hours as you hear more about who we are, our purpose, and where we're going, that you will consider joining our family and team.

*The goal of Valley Real Life is to be and make disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 4:19). A disciple is one who follows Jesus, is changed by Jesus, and is on mission for Jesus. We call this our ABCD process.*

### THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THIS CLASS

The local church is the most important institution on the face of the earth because it was instituted by Jesus (Matt.16:18) and purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). God ordained the church to be the vessel through and by which the world would come to know Christ. Everyone needs the local church.

The Bible is very clear: Christians are to belong to a church-to belong to the body of Christ. That word, "belong," is kind of a tricky word, because it means more than "just show up as often as you can on Sundays." We use the word "belong" the same way you would if you were saying you belong to your family. When you "belong" to your family, it doesn't mean you just show up to be fed when you are hungry, rest when you're tired, and use the family name for applications when needed.

Paul writes to the Galatians, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of God. A family is a place where we love and are loved in a way that helps us become all we should be. When we belong to a family, we are in relationships with the other members of our family. We are part of something bigger than ourselves.

As part of a family, we are valuable, contributing members, not just attendees. We contribute our

time, money, ideas, and energy. We are not only served, but we serve as well. We are together for times of celebration, challenge, and everything in between.

You've heard the phrase, "blood is thicker than water." That phrase is typically used to describe the bond there is in a family. It is the same in the church. We are connected through the blood of Christ and are sisters and brothers in God's family. Ephesians 2:19 says, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household." We are part of God's family. As members of the church, we

don't attend, we belong.

In the New Testament, there's not one example of a believer or believers refusing to become part of a local church, or of someone saying they were only part of the "invisible" church... whatever that is...Scripture never mentions it. In fact, believers in the New Testament found their identity through the local church. There were the churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, etc.—it didn't matter where you were, if you were a believer, you were a part of a local church. When the Apostle Paul went on missionary journeys, he went to establish more churches and visited existing churches. When he returned from his journeys, he went to the church in Jerusalem.

We understand if you don't want to make VRL your church home/family. Our goal and desire for you is that you find a church to connect to and grow in your relationship with God and others.

As believers in Christ, we are admonished in Scripture to submit to spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13), to place ourselves in a position of mutual accountability with other believers, (Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11-16; Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:16, 19-20), and meet together regularly for worship and instruction in the Word so we can encourage and build one another up in the faith through words and deeds (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:46-47; 20:7). The only way to do that is to be an active, viable family member of a local church.

# WHO WE ARE

## OUR CHURCH STRUCTURE

We are an autonomous congregation governed solely by the Word of God and biblically qualified leaders selected from within our local fellowship. The church was never intended to be a democracy ruled by the popular vote of the congregation. Rather, the church is a "theocracy" divinely led by God and His Word through a plurality of godly leaders called elders. The elders are entrusted by God with the responsibility of being the spiritual and organizational leaders of the church (1 Timothy 5:17) under the authority of Christ, who is the Head of the church. (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18)

### GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH

#### JESUS – THE OWNER AND HEAD

**Colossians 1:18 (NLT)** *Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.*

#### ELDERS – THE GENERAL MANAGERS AND LEADERS

**1 Timothy 5:17 (NLT)** *Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching.*

#### PASTORAL STAFF – THE COACHES AND EQUIPPERS

**Ephesians 4:11-12 (NLT)** *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ.*

#### CONGREGATION – THE PLAYERS AND MINISTERS

**1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)** *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.*

### ELDER LEADERSHIP AT VRL

Our church is led by a plurality of godly leaders from our local congregation who serve as

elders in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:17, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." (NIV) They are charged by God with the spiritual oversight of our fellowship, business responsibilities and obligations of our church family as well.

Our elders do not vote on decisions. We follow the practice of unanimity. In other words, if we are not all in complete agreement we will not proceed until, after a time of prayer and reevaluation, we are able to be completely unified in regard to a particular decision. It's okay to agree to disagree as long as we walk out of a room united. We do not hold elections or ask our people to vote on leaders, business matters or our annual budget.

Our leaders are held accountable to the highest of biblical standards and expectations by the family members of our congregation. We encourage ideas, input, and questions from prospective family members and encourage people that once they become part of the VRL family, to feel free to continue to ask any questions they may have about any area of our ministry.

### BIBLICAL STANDARDS FOR ELDERS

**1 Timothy 3:1-8 (NLT)** *This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position." So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap. In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money.*

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

Self-controlled	1 Timothy 3:2 Titus 1:8	Not overbearing	Titus 1:7	Respectable	1 Timothy 3:2
Hospitable	1 Timothy 3:2 Titus 1:8	Not quick-tempered	Titus 1:7	Not given to drunkenness	1 Timothy 3:3 Titus 1:7
Able to teach	Titus 1:9	Loves what is good	Titus 1:8	Manages his own family well	1 Timothy 3:4
Not violent but gentle	1 Timothy 3:3 Titus 1:7	Upright, holy	Titus 1:8	Sees that his children obey him	1 Timothy 3:4-5 Titus 1:6
Not quarrelsome	1 Timothy 3:3	Disciplined	Titus 1:8	Does not pursue dishonest gain	Titus 1:7
Not a lover of money	1 Timothy 3:3	Above reproach (blameless)	1 Timothy 3:2 Titus 1:6	Holds to the truth	Titus 1:9
Not a recent convert	1 Timothy 3:7	Husband of one wife	1 Timothy 3:2 Titus 1:6		
Has a good reputation with outsiders	1 Timothy 3:7	Temperate	1 Timothy 3:2 Titus 1:7		

## HOW ELDERS ARE CHOSEN

- Identified through relationship (small groups and ministry service)
- Interview process (candidate/spouse by elders)
- Attend regular elder meetings
- An unspecified time as an apprentice elder to determine fit and availability
- Presentation to congregation with one week objection period (biblical reason why this person should not be installed as an elder in our church)
- Installed as an elder (if no biblical objection is found)

## BIBLICAL STANDARDS FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH - THE CONGREGATION

**Hebrews 13:17 (NLT)** *Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.*

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## OUR CORE BELIEFS THAT UNIFY US

### ABOUT UNITY

Jesus died so that his followers would be united in humility, not divided over theology. We must strive to find common ground with one another rather than find reasons to break off. Love and freedom must replace judgment and dogma on issues that frequently divide Christians.

*John 17:20-21; Philippians 2:1-2; John 13:34-35*

### ABOUT GOD

God is Creator and Ruler of the universe. There is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He is Holy and Righteous. The only way to have an authentic relationship with God is through Jesus Christ.

*Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14*

### ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was with God in the very beginning, and God created the universe through Him. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, took on flesh and blood, and made His dwelling among us. His physical death on the cross saves us from our sin. His bodily resurrection changed the course of history and created the path to eternal life with God.

*Colossians 1:15-20; Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-4, 3:16, 14:6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8*

### ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He makes us aware of our need to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. He gives us guidance and leadership on a daily basis so we can obey God's Word and do what is right. He gives each of us spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving the Body of Christ. We seek to live under His control in all situations.

*John 16:8-9; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 1:13-14, 3:16, 4:30, 5:18; Galatians 5:16, 25; 1 Corinthians 12, 13*

### ABOUT THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God and the final authority for all matters of faith. The Bible is God's word to all people.

*Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105, 160*

### ABOUT MAN

We believe that man, created by God, willfully sinned, and as a result is lost and without hope apart from Jesus Christ.

*Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 53:6, 59:1-2; Romans 3:23, 5:8*

### ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is a free gift of God. The death of Christ on the cross is the only sufficient payment for our sins. Every person has sinned, but every person can also be forgiven and saved by Christ. By placing your faith in Jesus you will have your sins forgiven, you will be filled with the Holy Spirit and you will receive eternal life. Faith is both internally experienced and externally displayed through belief, repentance, a public confession of faith and baptism.

*Romans 3:23, 6:23; John 3:16; Romans 10:9; Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19; Matthew 3:13-17*

### ABOUT ETERNITY

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through the forgiveness of our sin. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally with God is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

*John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Cor 2:7-9*

### ABOUT THE CHURCH

The church is the Body of Christ on earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue the task of leading others to faith in Christ and teaching followers of Christ to obey and serve Him. Involvement in a local church is critical to individual growth, fellowship and support for life's day-to-day challenges.

*Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-7; Ephesians 4:1-16; Ephesians 2:19*

### ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER

Every Christian is called to "full-time" Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every person to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading. Every Christian is an evangelist as they share their faith with those around them by word and by action.

*Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:9*



## ABOUT COMMUNION OR THE LORD'S SUPPER

Communion is the remembrance of Christ's death on the cross. The bread symbolically represents His broken body and the juice symbolically represents His shed blood. Communion is offered to all believers upon personal reflection.

*1 Corinthians 11:23-28*

## ABOUT STEWARDSHIP

The church is to exist on the tithes and offerings of the people attending the church. Tithing is the practice of giving 10% of your income for the support of Christ's body, the church, and doing so because you believe it is God's command and is a part of worship. Offerings are gifts given that are above and beyond the tithe. These gifts are often sacrificial and/or spontaneous. Both tithes and offerings are critical to Christian stewardship.

*Numbers 18:6, 21; Malachi 3:7-12; 1 Corinthians 9:3-10, 13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9*

We have other beliefs that can be summed up as following what the Bible clearly teaches on a subject. We will not allow the culture to change or redefine what the Bible has to say. (Example would be on creation, sexuality or sexual sin, marriage, pride, drunkenness, reality of heaven and hell, etc.). If it's not clear then we will not make it a divisive issue and expect you to do the same in order to protect unity here at VRL.

To preserve unity at VRL we will not allow one's opinion on the following matters to divide us. We will also not let a controversy on these issues derail our church from the mission that God has called us to:

- Spiritual Gifts
- End Times
- Calvinism or Arminianism

Bottom line: In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, love.

-----BREAK-----

# OUR VISION, MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS & VALUES

## OUR VISION

Reaching the world for Jesus Christ, one person at a time.

## OUR MISSION

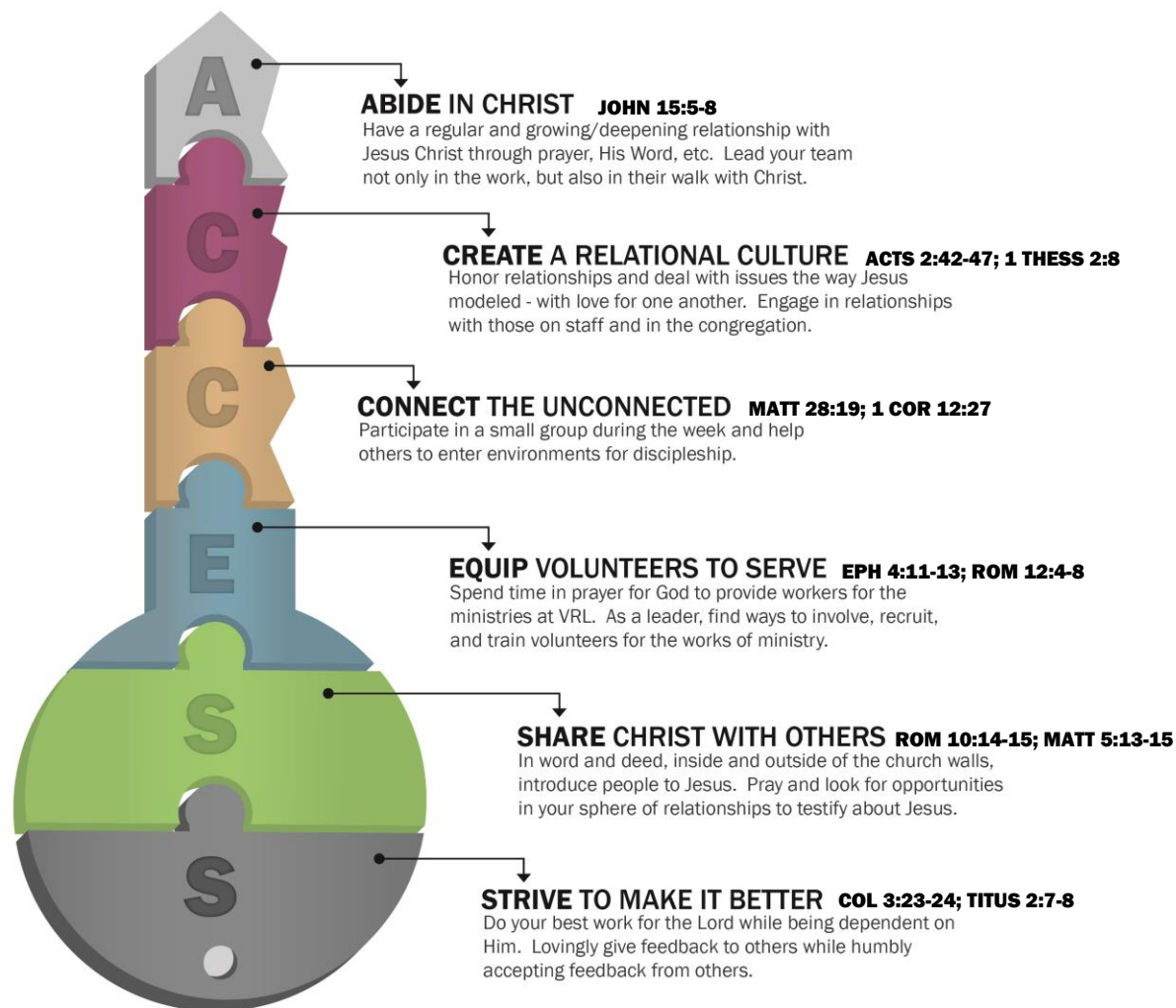
To be and make disciples of Jesus.

## OUR DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

Accept, Belong, Contribute, Disciple

## OUR VALUES

At VRL we are disciples who make disciples of Jesus as we:



## THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

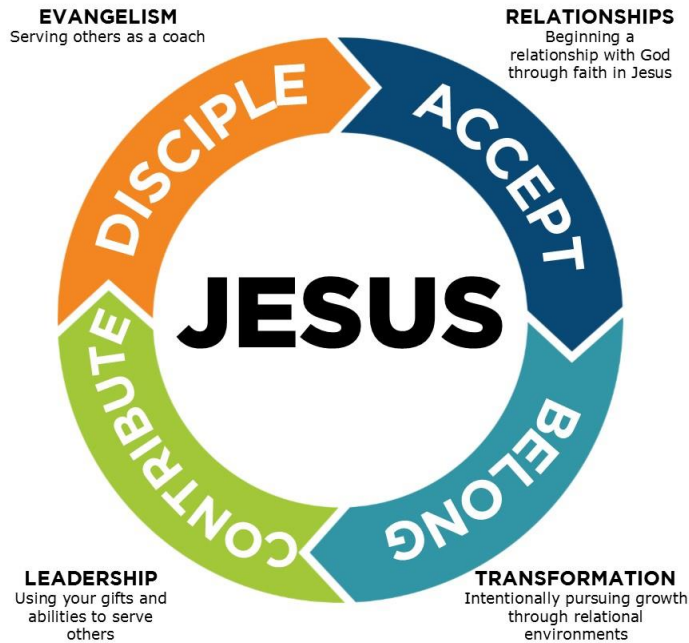


### TABLE QUESTIONS

What is your favorite hobby or interest?  
 Who taught it to you and what did they do?  
 Who are you teaching it to?

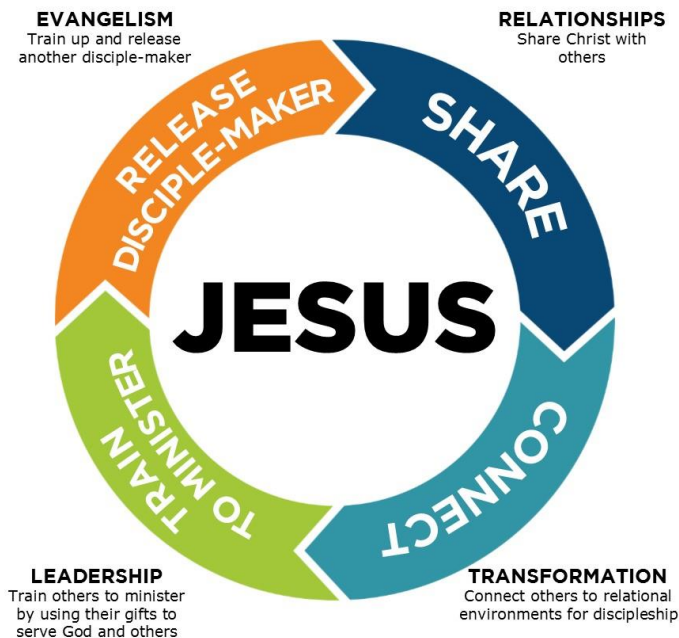
### THE ABCD GROWTH WHEEL AS A DISCIPLE:

Our purpose/mission as the church: **To be** and make disciples of Jesus. How?



### THE ABCD GROWTH WHEEL AS A DISCIPLER:

Our purpose/mission as the church: To be and **make disciples** of Jesus. How?



## WHY ABCD?

To better explain the ABCD process it may be helpful to understand the biblical principle attached to each one:

### ACCEPT

The most important decision you will ever make is the decision to ACCEPT Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The Bible teaches that Jesus gave up His life to save yours, and that by placing your faith in Him you will have your sins forgiven, that you will be filled with His Holy Spirit, and that you will receive eternal life. Practically speaking, the Bible outlines four responses that are expected when a person begins an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus: Belief, Repentance, Public Confession of Faith and Baptism.

We exist to share Christ with a dying world.

**Luke 19:10 (NLT)** *For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.*

**2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)** *The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.*

God has given us a mission.

**Matthew 28:19 (NLT)** *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

**2 Corinthians 5:20 (NLT)** *So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"*

### BELONG

Fresh faith needs a relational environment to grow into vibrant, lasting faith. That's why once you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior your next step is to BELONG to a small group of people who are also committed to growing in Christ. Jesus set a small group precedent for us in His earthly ministry when He gathered a group of 12 men and poured into them over a three-year period. He chose ordinary men who had very simple faith in Him and turned them into fully devoted followers and leaders of the first churches. They grew because He created an environment where they were able to ask questions, try things, and fail without being rejected. Just like the disciples, you need to belong to a small group with an intentional leader to help your relationship with Jesus grow.

We have been created to live in community and do life together.

**Romans 12:4-5 (NLT)** *Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.*

Authentic biblical relationships produce the best environment for growth.

**Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)** *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper) and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

### CONTRIBUTE

Once you have accepted Christ and belong to a small group, your next step is to CONTRIBUTE your gifts and abilities to serve others. Jesus expects His followers to possess the same revolutionary attitude toward reaching and serving others that He did during his earthly ministry. To embrace the call to care for others you will need to find a ministry that fits you well and where you can serve God joyfully. Most importantly, you will need to undergo a major transformation in thinking. You will have to realize that life is not about your wants and needs. It's about leading others to Christ and serving Him. Is your next step finding a ministry where you can CONTRIBUTE your gifts?

God's plan is that we discover and use the abilities God has given us for His purposes.

**1 Corinthians 12:27 (NLT)** *All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.*

God's plan is that we become a team, all using our abilities together for His purposes.

**1 Corinthians 12:12, 21, 25-27 (NLT)** *The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part*

*suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.*

As we grow in Christ we move from serve us to service.

**Mark 10:45a (NLT)** *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve others...*

**John 13:15 (NLT)** *I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.*

## DISCIPLE

Jesus intentionally invested Himself in His disciples and He changed the world forever. His example shows us that the only thing more powerful than serving selflessly is serving strategically. The result of His ministry to these men was so effective and so powerful that a new term was invented just to describe His style of leadership. The term is "discipling." When you DISCIPLE someone you maximize your impact in the kingdom of God because you are reproducing yourself in others and empowering them to reproduce themselves in

others. This is the highest calling! And you were made for it!

This is an intentional process.

**2 Timothy 2:2 (NLT)** *You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.*

Our children are our first disciples. They will have to share with their children.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NLT)** *"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."*

# ACCEPT

## SALVATION AND BAPTISM

### WHY AM I HERE?

God made me to love me!

**Jeremiah 31:3a (NLT)** Long ago the Lord said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love.

**Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)** Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.

We were created to have an intimate personal relationship with God.

**Genesis 1:27 (NLT)** So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.  
**John 10:10b (NLT)** My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

When we know and love God, and live in harmony with His purposes for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our lives:

Clean Conscience—Romans 8:1  
Life and Peace—Romans 8:6  
Help with Weakness—Romans 8:26  
Purpose—Romans 8:28  
Confidence—Romans 8:31  
Security—Romans 8:39  
Power and Strength—Philippians 4:13  
Fulfillment—Philippians 4:19  
Freedom—John 8:32, 36

This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then aren't most people really happy?

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Humans have a natural desire to rebel and ignore God's principles for living.

- "Look out for number one."
- "Do your own thing."
- "If it feels good do it—regardless of what God says about it."
- "It's my life and I will do what I please."

**The most important decision you will ever make is the decision to ACCEPT Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The Bible teaches that Jesus gave up His life to save yours, and that by placing your faith in Him you will have your sins forgiven, that you will be filled with His Holy Spirit, and that you will receive eternal life. Practically speaking, the Bible outlines four responses that are expected when a person begins an intimate, personal, relationship with Jesus: Belief, Repentance, Public Confession of Faith, and Baptism.**

The Bible calls this attitude sin.

**Isaiah 53:6a (NLT)** All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own.

**1 John 1:8 (NLT)** If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live outside of His will.

**Isaiah 59:2a (NLT)** It's your sins that have cut you off from God.

**Romans 3:23 (NLT)** For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

When people have problems they often try many different ways of coping before turning to God.

**Proverbs 16:25 (NLT)** There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try the wrong ways of getting to know Him:

- Salvation by Acquaintance - "My mother is a Christian so ..."
- Salvation by Sincerity - "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere."
- Salvation by Abstention - "I'll give up all my bad habits."
- Salvation by Works - "I'll work real hard and earn it."
- Salvation by Morality - "I'll be religious and go to church."

## WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus would not have had to come. The way is a person!

**John 14:6 (NLT)** Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

**Romans 6:23 (NLT)** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

**Romans 5:8 (NLT)** But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

### BELIEVE

**John 3:16 (NLT)** For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

**John 3:36 (NLT)** And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment.

### REPENT

**Acts 2:38 (NLT)** Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Luke 13:3b (NLT)** And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God.

### CONFESS

**Romans 10:9 (NLT)** If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Matthew 10:32-33 (NLT)** "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven."

### BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION

**Acts 2:38 (NLT)** Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive

the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**1 Peter 3:21 (NLT)** And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## BAPTISM FAQ'S

### Q: Who should be baptized?

**A:** Every believer who has repented of sin and confessed Christ as Lord and Savior.

### Q: Why be baptized by immersion?

**A:**

Because the Greek word for baptize is *baptizo*, which means "to immerse or dip under water."

Because Jesus was baptized that way.

**Matthew 3:16a (NLT)** After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water...

Every baptism in the New Testament was by immersion.

**Acts 8:38b-39a (NLT)** ... they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water...

### Q: What is the meaning of baptism?

**A:**

It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:3b-4 (NLT)** Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

**Colossians 2:12 (NLT)** For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with Him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

It illustrates our new birth as a Christian.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)** This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

**Romans 6:4 (NLT)** For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

## Q: Why should I be baptized?

A:

To follow the example set by Jesus.

**Mark 1:9 (NLT)** One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized Him in the Jordan River.

Because Christ and the Apostles commanded it.

**Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)** Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

**Acts 2:38 (NLT)** Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

It publicly demonstrates that I really am a follower.

**Acts 18:8b (NLT)** Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers and were baptized.

**1 John 2:3 (NLT)** And we can be sure that we know Him if we obey His commandments.

Because every conversion account in Acts includes it.

**Acts 2:38-41 (NLT)** Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God." Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!" Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

**Acts 8:12-13 (NLT)** But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed.

**Acts 8:35-38 (NLT)** So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look!

There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

**Acts 9:17-18 (NLT)** So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.

**Acts 10:47-48 (NLT)** "Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

**Acts 16:13-15 (NLT)** On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her guests. "If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my home." And she urged us until we agreed.

**Acts 16:30-34 (NLT)** Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

## Q: Can my family be baptized together?

A: Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation. We encourage children to meet with our pastors about baptism before they are immersed. However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith and obedience, not a family tradition.



**Q: What about infant baptism?**

**A:** We believe the Bible teaches that baptism is a choice made by a believer to publicly express their own decision to enter into a relationship with Christ through faith in Him and His sacrifice on the cross. Since this is a personal choice and not a "by proxy" choice, Valley Real Life does not practice infant baptism. We do celebrate a ceremonial commitment called "Child Dedications." This commitment is a parent led public commitment, to join with the Church to raise their child to follow Jesus.

**1 Peter 3:21 (NLT)** *And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience.*

**Q: When should I be baptized?**

**A:** *In the book of Acts people were baptized immediately after they accepted Christ. We encourage the same sense of urgency and timely*

*act of obedience when a person comes to faith in Jesus and an understanding of His will for us.*

**Q: What should I wear when I am baptized?**

**A:** A dark t-shirt, shorts, or other appropriate clothing. What matters is what God does to you at baptism, not what you wear to your baptism.

**Q: Will I have to say anything?**

**A:** Yes. We will ask you to confess that you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that you have accepted Him as your Lord and Savior.

**Q: What if I was baptized by immersion in another church?**

**A:** That is fine, as long as you were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5) or in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28).

**The following are practical expectations we would have for those who are taking their family commitment seriously as it pertains to ACCEPT:**

- **Has made a public confession of faith and commitment to Christ as Lord.**
- **Has a growing and abiding relationship with Christ.**
- **Has been baptized by immersion.**
- **Prays regularly for those in their sphere of influence who don't know Jesus.**
- **Shares the gospel with others through word and deed outside the church walls.**
- **Invites the un-churched on a regular basis (Matthew 28:18-20).**

-----BREAK-----

# BELONG

## OUR PURPOSE, PATTERN & PROCESS



### TABLE QUESTIONS

Have you been in a small group before? If so, what do you appreciate about small groups? If not, what has kept you from participating in one?

### OUR PURPOSE

Valley Real Life exists to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Jesus: To love God with all our heart, mind and strength; to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to make disciples of all nations. Said succinctly, we believe our God-created purpose is to follow Jesus together and help others do the same.

#### THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

**Mark 12:28-31 (NLT)** *One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."*

#### THE GREAT COMMISSION

**Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)** *Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

### OUR PATTERN

When we say we are following a pattern, we simply mean we are following the pattern for the church that is given to us in the New Testament. Specifically, in the Book of Acts.

*Fresh faith needs a relational environment to grow into vibrant, lasting faith. That's why once you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior your next step is to BELONG to a small group of people who are also committed to growing in Christ. Jesus set a small group precedent for us in His earthly ministry when He gathered a group of 12 men and poured into them over a three-year period. He chose ordinary men who had very simple faith in Him and turned them into fully devoted followers and leaders of the first churches. They grew because He created an environment where they were able to ask questions, try things, and fail without being rejected. Just like the disciples, you need to belong to a small group with an intentional leader to help your relationship with Jesus grow.*

Acts was written by a physician named Luke, a close associate of the Apostle Paul. He records for us the miraculous birth and growth of the first church. No church has ever grown quite like the first church recorded in Acts. Why did they grow so fast and become so strong?

Luke gives us the answer in Acts 2:42-47. In just six short verses, he gives us the FOURTEEN ESSENTIALS that enabled that first church to literally explode and turn their world upside down. These fourteen ingredients form the pattern by which our church is organized. You'll be surprised as much by what isn't listed here (the things people tell us we have to have today) as you will by what is listed here. They devoted themselves to:

#### 1) STUDYING THE WORD

They submitted themselves to the teaching and instruction of their spiritual leaders. (Acts 2:42a)

#### 2) FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

Being an active, involved, committed family member of the local church was considered essential not optional. (Acts 2:42c)

### 3) BREAKING BREAD

This included both sharing a common meal and observing the Lord's Supper or Communion. (Acts 2:42c)

### 4) PRAYER

This was the "power source" for the early church and still is for every church that really wants to grow and be all God wants her to be. (Acts 2:42d)

### 5) BEING FILLED WITH AWE

They never lost the wonder of it all. What a contrast from the modern day "ho-hum," "take-it-or-leave-it," "so what" attitude found among too many church members in the average church. (Acts 2:43a)

### 6) THE POWER OF GOD

They believed that God could do anything. And He did! (And He still can!) (Acts 2:43b)

### 7) UNITY

Because of their great love for Jesus, they naturally had a great love for one another. (Acts 2:44)

### 8) SACRIFICIAL GIVING

They sold their possessions and goods so they could give. Today, many people can't give sacrificially because of all the monthly payments they have to make on the possessions and goods they've bought for themselves. (Acts 2:45)

### 9) MEETING NEEDS

They looked for needs and found creative ways to meet those needs. (Acts 2:45b)

### 10) CORPORATE WORSHIP

Today, it's a struggle for many people to come to church. These people made worship a daily priority. (Acts 2:46a)

### 11) HOSPITALITY

They opened their homes and got involved in each other's lives. (Acts 2:46b)

### 12) PRAISING GOD

They never took credit for what happened. They gave all the credit, glory and honor to God. (Acts 2:47a)

### 13) GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH OUTSIDERS

This was not an obnoxious bunch. They were contagious and had the admiration and respect of people outside of their fellowship. (Acts 2:47b)

### 14) EVANGELISM

People got saved. When you realize the kind of church they were, it's not hard to see why so many people got saved. (Acts 2:47c)

## OUR PROCESS

Jesus has called us to *be* His disciples and to *make* disciples. The church's primary responsibility is to be focused on intentional and relational discipleship. We know that discipleship doesn't take place apart from relationship—relationship with God and relationship with others.

Our strategy for making disciples is to place people in small groups and to move them through an intentional process where they are coached through specific growth stages. We have broken down discipleship into four distinct phases: **ACCEPT, BELONG, CONTRIBUTE** and **DISCIPLE** or **ABCD**.

## WHY SMALL GROUPS?

This is the methodology that Jesus used. This is the methodology the early church used. Real discipleship includes several components:

### AN INTENTIONAL LEADER

- Shepherds
- Facilitates
- Models
- Coaches

### A RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- A group of 3-20 people. A group larger than 20 people is neither relational nor small. There is not an opportunity for everyone to share.
- Learning happens through relationship not just lecture.
- Relational learning provides accountability. Authentic, biblical relationships produce the best environment for spiritual growth.

## A REPRODUCIBLE PROCESS

- Discipleship is not an accidental process and needs to be approached with intentionality.
- A process that can be easily taught and understood by another person will ensure that every person can be equipped to disciple others.

## HOW CAN I GET CONNECTED TO A SMALL GROUP?

- Go to [www.vrl.church](http://www.vrl.church). Click *Ministries & Classes*, click *Small Groups*, click *Search for a Group* & make contact with the leader.
- Visit the Connecting Point in the lobby. Ask for a Connection Booklet. Contact the Group Leader/Host.
- Contact Jeremy Anglin, Community & Men's Lead at 509.232.0840 or [janglin@vrl.church](mailto:janglin@vrl.church).

***The following are practical expectations we would have for those who are taking their family commitment seriously as it pertains to BELONG:***

- ***Has attended and will continue to regularly attend worship services (Hebrews 10:23-25).***
  - ***Welcomes the un-churched and visitors on a regular basis (this is your home).***
- ***Has committed to a small group or finding a small group.***
  - ***Helps others to get into a small group.***
- ***Has completed, signed and agreed with VRL's DNA Class and "Family Commitment."***
  - ***Encourages others to commit to VRL by asking them to attend DNA class.***

# CONTRIBUTE

## INVESTING MY LIFE

### TO INVEST IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Develop authentic loving relationships with others in the church and establish significant relationships with those who do not yet know Christ. (1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:22; Matthew 28:19-20).

### TO INVEST IN YOUR RESOURCES

The church is to exist on the tithes and offerings of the people attending the church to support the Gospel here and worldwide. Tithing is the practice of giving 10% of your income for the support of Christ's body, the church, and doing so because you believe it is God's command and is a part of worship. Offerings are gifts given that are above and beyond the tithe. These gifts are often sacrificial and/or spontaneous. Both tithes and offerings are critical to Christian stewardship. (Numbers 18:6, 21; Malachi 3:7-12; 1 Corinthians 9:3-10, 13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9)

### DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH FINANCIAL GIVING

Look around you at VRL. What do you see? We see people connecting with God and each other on a regular basis, thus fulfilling the primary purpose of the church. People are visiting and enjoying a cup of coffee. Our worship band is leading people in worship. People are learning about God's word, and hundreds of people over the years have committed their lives to Christ through baptism. First time visitors are receiving their gift at the Connecting Point and finding out ways they can get connected and grow in their relationship with Christ and others at VRL. Children from birth through grade school are learning about God in age appropriate settings.

During the week people like you are connecting in Community Groups, studying God's word in Bible studies and seeking the help they need for their

personal struggles through our counseling programs, recovery and support classes.

***Once you have accepted Christ and belong to a small group, your next step is to CONTRIBUTE your gifts and abilities to serve others. Jesus expects His followers to possess the same revolutionary attitude toward reaching and serving others that He did during His earthly ministry. To embrace the call to care for others you will need to find a ministry that fits you well and where you can serve God joyfully. Most importantly, you will need to undergo a major transformation in thinking. You will have to realize that life is not about your wants and needs. It's about leading others to Christ and serving Him.***

Each of these ministries is possible because VRL is a member-supported church made up of people who are committed to giving to the Lord through VRL. Without the tithes and gifts of our members and attendees, it would be impossible to offer ministries that help people to become fully developing disciples of Jesus.

### WHY SHOULD I GIVE?

#### IT IS ANOTHER STEP IN YOUR GROWTH AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

One measure of spiritual maturity is how we manage the resources God has given us. This is called stewardship. Our time, talents, and financial resources are all managed through stewardship, and God has called us to be good stewards. (Matthew 25:14-30)

Being a good steward is part of being a disciple, and the Bible calls us all to become disciples of Jesus. As we grow in our discipleship journey, our focus changes as we begin to understand that everything we have is from God and should be used for His kingdom.

#### YOUR TITHES AND GIFTS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EXPAND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Stewardship, specifically tithes and gifts, are part of being a committed family member of VRL. When you tithe and give to VRL it supports what God is doing in and through His church here in the Spokane Valley and around the world.

Is God calling us to expand our facilities here? Is He asking us to add more staff to support the growing needs of our church family? What opportunities is He revealing where we can be involved directly in our community and around the world? These questions and many others are

currently being explored, and we know God's leading will come at a cost financially--directly or indirectly.

## HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

God wants you to be a cheerful giver and trust Him in this area of your life. The Bible encourages every believer to give 10% of their income, a tithe, to their local church. (Malachi 3:8-12, Proverbs 3:9-10, Matthew 23:23) Anything over 10% is called an offering or gift. We understand that 10% may seem impossible, especially when your faith is new; however, we encourage you to take whatever step God is leading you.

**2 Corinthians 9:6-7** Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.

*"If you cannot live off 90% of your income, then you cannot live off 100%. It does not require a miracle for you to get through the month. I think that if you sit down and look at your budget, you will see that you can make it while giving at least 10%. Read the Bible and take from it what you will, and if you tithe, do it out of love for God, not guilt." Dave Ramsey*

Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University (FPU) is offered twice a year at VRL. The 9-week class will teach you to have a plan for your money, get your finances under control, get rid of debt, spend and save wisely, and give like never before! Visit our website for more information.

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT GIVING?

The Bible says more about giving than almost any other subject!

### FAITHFUL GIVING DRAWS ME CLOSER TO GOD

**Matthew 6:21** "Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will be also."

### FAITHFUL GIVING IS A KEY TO A FULL LIFE

**1 Timothy 6:18-19** "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. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good

foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

### FAITHFUL GIVING BLESSES ME IN RETURN

**Malachi 3:10** "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!"

### FAITHFUL GIVING REMINDS ME THAT EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD

**Deuteronomy 8:18** "But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth."

### FAITHFUL GIVING HELPS ME TRUST AND SERVE GOD MORE THAN THE RESOURCES HE PROVIDES

**Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

## WAYS TO GIVE

- Set up your giving through your bank's Bill Pay system. This service is normally free to you and this electronic option saves VRL 3% in processing fees compared to other electronic methods. Use the following address for Bill Pay: Valley Real Life, PO BOX 397, Spokane Valley, WA 99016.
- Text to give at 509-620-6880. In the body of text type: \$(insert your contribution amount). Example: \$100. You will receive further instructions by text to finish your contribution.
- Give during services using a giving envelope with your cash or check. Envelopes are at the Connecting Point and at the entrance into the auditorium. You can drop it in the offering container as it is passed or in the drop box on the wall as you exit the auditorium. Or you can mail your check to VRL. Mail to PO BOX 397, Spokane Valley, WA 99016.
- Give online at [www.vrl.church](http://www.vrl.church) under the GIVE page. While there is no cost to you for this service, VRL will pay almost 3% of your tithe/gift as a service fee to the processing company.

All contributions are tax-deductible as long as we know who they came from. Please put your name

on your giving envelope so we can record your tithe correctly. You will receive a year-end statement for tax purposes.

## INVEST YOURSELF IN SERVICE

Every Christian is called to “full-time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every person to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading. Every Christian is an evangelist as they share their faith with those around them by word and by action. (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:9)

Participate in the life of the congregation through ministering to others in the church. (Hebrews 10:23–25; Galatians 5:13)

Is your next step finding a ministry where you can **CONTRIBUTE** your gifts?

**John 2:1-11 (NIV)** On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and His disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to Him,

“They have no more wine.” “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. Then He told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which He revealed His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum with His mother and brothers and His disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

***The following are practical expectations we would have for those who are taking their family commitment seriously as it pertains to CONTRIBUTE:***

- ***Has a place or is committed to finding a place to serve within the VRL body (Rom. 12:4-8; Galatians 5:13).***
  - ***Allows church leaders and teachers to equip them for service (Hebrews 13:20-21).***
  - ***Recruits, equips, releases volunteers for acts of service.***
- ***Has a place or is committed to being a servant to those in their area of influence in their homes, neighborhoods, work and leisure environments.***
- ***Committed to give of their finances regularly and generously to God through VRL; specifically working towards a tithe (2 Corinthians 9:7).***

-----BREAK-----

# DISCIPLE

## COMMITMENT FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

**Remember: The goal of Valley Real Life is to be and make disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 4:19). A disciple is one who follows Jesus, is changed by Jesus and is on mission for Jesus. We call this our ABCD process.**

A disciple literally means learner. Biblically, a disciple is someone who submits to the words and actions of the person they are following. In a good way, it's like a willing servant to a master or a Padawan to a Jedi. Jesus is not just our Savior, but our Lord. A disciple is one who is committed in their relationship with others and to following Jesus' words and deeds. Our goal is to look and act more like Jesus every day. We do this best through:

- A commitment to His church (Hebrews 5:11-14)
- Deep relationship with Jesus (John 15:5)
- Deep relationship with others, with Jesus at the center (Romans 1:11-12)
- Committed to helping others in their relationship with Jesus.

The goal of discipleship is to find a comrade in arms and help them go on this journey. At first there were 12 disciples, which swelled to 150, and then became over 3,000. People understood that it wasn't just enough for them to follow Jesus, but to be His disciple to help others do the same (Matthew 28:18-20). We are only here today because they took that humble role seriously. What about you? Are you ready to go on a discipleship journey with God and others here at VRL? That is the choice before you, and we call that a commitment to Jesus and the VRL family.

***Jesus intentionally invested Himself in His disciples and He changed the world forever. His example shows us that the only thing more powerful than serving selflessly is serving strategically. The result of His ministry to these men was so effective and so powerful that a new term was invented just to describe His style of leadership. The term is "discipling." When you DISCIPLE someone you maximize your impact in the kingdom of God because you are reproducing yourself in others and empowering them to reproduce themselves in others. This is the highest calling! And you were made for it!***

### WHY IS COMMITMENT IMPORTANT?

Here are four reasons we believe that commitment matters:

#### IT'S BIBLICAL

God's plan to care for people and change the world is found in the church. "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).

#### IT'S CULTURALLY EXCEPTIONAL

It is an antidote to our society. We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything or live sacrificially. This attitude has produced an unbiblical "what's in it for me" primary mindset. Family commitment swims against the current of nominal, consumer religion. Christ has called us to live out our faith in loving, committed community.

#### IT'S PRACTICALLY BENEFICAL

It defines who is on the team and who can be counted on. Every team has a roster. Every school has an enrollment. Every army has an enlistment. Commitment identifies our team.

#### IT'S PERSONALLY HEALTHY

It produces spiritual growth. God has ordained the church as the place for believers to be nurtured, transformed, protected, and equipped. "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green" (Psalm 92:12-14).



***The following are practical expectations we would have for those who are taking their family commitment seriously as it pertains to DISCIPLE:***

- ***Is committed to becoming more and more like Jesus in becoming and making disciples of others. (1 John 2:6, Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:20)***
  - ***Who has God put in your life that you can start pouring into spiritually and journey through the ABCD process with?***
- ***Will protect the unity of Jesus through our church by:***
  - ***Treats others with love and respect (Ephesians 4:1-3).***
  - ***Refuses to gossip (Psalm 15:1-3; Ephesians 4:29-32).***
  - ***Follows their church leaders (Hebrews 13:17).***
- ***Will support the testimony of Jesus through our church by:***
  - ***Sets a grace filled biblical example of godly living for their family, friends, and neighbors (Philippians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:16).***
  - ***Continues to grow and abide in their relationship with Christ (2 Peter 3:18; Romans 4:20-21).***



## TABLE QUESTION

What is one thing you love about VRL?

## VALLEY REAL LIFE'S FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

The following are practical expectations we have for those who are taking their family commitment seriously:

### HOW TO BECOME A PART OF THE VRL FAMILY

Being part of the Valley Real Life family is not just having your name on a list. Being a family member indicates a willingness to partner and potentially lead with us in our mission to engage people with the love of God, introduce them to Jesus, and help facilitate their growth to full maturity. In other words, to be a disciple and make disciples of Jesus.

In order to accomplish this, it is important that we have unity. A church is no stronger than the mutually supportive relationships found within its church family. One way of achieving unity in our community is to clearly state what is expected as a family member of Valley Real Life. Here are our basic requirements expected as they relate to our ABCD Discipleship Process.

The following is what I am committing to as long as God has me here at VRL:

#### ACCEPT (BE A DISCIPLE)

- Has made a public confession of faith and commitment to Christ as Lord.
- Has a growing and abiding relationship with Christ.
- Has been baptized by immersion.

#### SHARE (MAKE A DISCIPLE)

- Prays regularly for those in their sphere of influence who don't know Jesus.
- Shares the gospel with others through word and deed outside the church walls.
- Invites the un-churched on a regular basis (Matthew 28:18-20).

#### BELONG (BE A DISCIPLE)

- Has attended and will continue to regularly attend worship services (Hebrews 10:23-25).
- Has committed to a small group or finding a small group.
- Has completed, signed and agreed with VRL's DNA Class and "Family Commitment".

#### CONNECT (MAKE A DISCIPLE)

- Welcomes the un-churched and visitors on a regular basis (this is your home).
- Helps others to get into a small group.
- Encourages others to commit to the VRL family by asking them to attend DNA class.

#### CONTRIBUTE (BE A DISCIPLE)

- Has a place/is committed to finding a place to serve within the VRL body (Rom. 12:4-8; Gal. 5:13).
- Allows church leaders and teachers to equip them for service (Hebrews 13:20-21).
- Has a place/is committed to be a servant to those in their area of influence in their homes, neighborhoods, work and leisure environments.
- Committed to give of their finances regularly and generously to God through VRL; specifically working towards a tithe (2 Corinthians 9:7).

#### TRAIN TO MINISTER (MAKE A DISCIPLE)

- Recruits, equips, releases volunteers for acts of service.

#### DISCIPLE (BE A DISCIPLE)

- Is committed to becoming more and more like Jesus in becoming and making disciples of others. (1 John 2:6, Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:20)
- Will protect the unity of Jesus through our church.
  - Treats others with love and respect (Ephesians 4:1-3).
  - Refuses to gossip (Psalm 15:1-3; Ephesians 4:29-32).
  - Follows their church leaders (Hebrews 13:17).
- Will support the testimony of Jesus through our church.
  - Sets a grace filled biblical example of godly living for their family, friends, and neighbors (Philippians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:16).
  - Continues to grow and abide in their relationship with Christ (2 Peter 3:18; Romans 4:20-21).

#### RELEASE DISCIPLE-MAKER (MAKE A DISCIPLE)

- Who has God put in your life that you can start pouring into spiritually and journey through the ABCD process with?

# JOIN THE VRL FAMILY

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and in agreement with VRL's family expectations and excited about VRL's vision and mission, it is my intent to make VRL my church home. As a member of the VRL family, I commit to the following by completing this page and returning it to the DNA leader.

Note: If more time is needed, this can be filled out later (one form per individual) and returned to our office: Valley Real Life | P.O. Box 397 | Spokane Vly, WA 99016 | Att: Sandee Franklin

**1. I have committed my life to Jesus Christ and accepted Him as Lord and Savior.**

Yes  No      Where? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. I have committed my life to Christ and have been baptized by immersion.**

Note: If you have not previously been baptized by immersion but desire to do so, circle "No" and one of our pastors will follow up with you about your next step.

Yes  No      Where? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. I have completed Valley Real Life's DNA Class and am willing to be held accountable, in love, with its expectations.**

Yes  No      If "yes", what date did you complete the class? \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I attend the:  Barker Campus     Freeman Campus     Otis Campus

How did you hear about Valley Real Life? \_\_\_\_\_

I am in a small group:  Yes  No    If yes, group leader's name: \_\_\_\_\_

If "no", and you want to be in a group, what night(s) of the week work best for you (circle all that apply):

Monday    Tuesday    Wednesday    Thursday    Friday    Saturday    Sunday

Do you need a group with childcare:  Yes  No

Are you serving in a ministry at VRL?  Yes  No

If "yes", which ministry do you serve in? \_\_\_\_\_

If "no", where would you like to serve (see Serve booklet): \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be added to the email distribution list for:  Men  Women  Adult Senior Ministry

I hereby authorize and consent to the use of images of myself by Valley Real Life for church purposes, including but not limited to: still photography, video, social media, electronic and print publications and websites by my signature below:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY:	RETURN DATE _____	EXCEL ENTRY _____	LTR SENT _____
	ROCK INFO UPDATED _____	ROCK DNA GRP _____	

