

Follow me and
I will make you
fishers of men.

Matthew 4:19

Reteaching Guide



CROSS POINTE CHURCH

A Word from James Merritt

Dear Fellow Learner:

Each week when I prepare to preach at Cross Pointe Church, I seek to make the Word of God—the Bible—the central character in my teaching. It's the Scripture, not me, that speaks, inspires, educates, motivates and applies to our daily lives. I hope you as you study the message outlines and other notes that you collect over time that you will see the beauty and the awesome power of God's Word.

I want to challenge you to do something that will help you learn God's Word and apply it daily through life. Don't let Sunday messages be a collection of "fill in the blanks" that exist merely for your own personal growth. Instead, as you study God's Word, use what you are learning to teach others. Don't just listen to a Sunday message for yourself—listen intently so that, in turn, you can reteach it to someone else.

Sound radical? In fact, it's the very same framework Jesus used to teach His disciples. Our Communications Team has prepared this simple guide to help you absorb God's Word during your personal worship time, then transform that knowledge into application as you teach others. My prayer is that the Sunday teaching times at Cross Pointe will grow beyond the opportunity to be "fed," but will be seen as a springboard from which you can feed others as you become a disciple-making minister of the Word.

Ready? Let's go!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Merritt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

James Merritt
Senior Pastor

How Jesus Taught

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

The essence of Jesus’ leadership is in the opening words of Matthew 4:19: “Follow me...” When Jesus began to teach His disciples, He had no formal school, no seminary, no membership class, no highly organized procedures. Jesus was His own school and curriculum. His instruction to His students was simple: *be like Me. Watch Me and do as I do.* All Jesus asked of His disciples was that they would be with Him (Mark 3:14).

Step One. Jesus commands us to do the very same thing. Do you want to be more like Christ? Then step one is: Be with Jesus, observe what He did, and follow His example. It really is that simple. In fact, there is no step two or three. The Apostle Paul understood this when he said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

Follow the Leader. As we imitate Christ, we say to those around us, “Follow me.” Our goal is to be like Christ, and lead others to do the same. The secret to Jesus’ incredible influence in the lives of those around Him was that He did not ask anyone to do or be anything that He had not first demonstrated in his own life. When Jesus discipled His followers, He did not give them a list of destinations or tasks to go or do. Instead, in all areas of His life, He modeled Himself, built relationships with His followers, and told them to observe His life and be like Him.

Observing and following. How do we observe and follow Christ today? We have God’s Word, the Bible. It is a complete and accurate picture of God and His Son, Jesus. As we study the Bible, we observe who God is, who we are in relationship to Him, and who Jesus is and how He lived during his time on earth. All that is required of us is to study, observe, learn His ways, and do likewise in our own lives, so others will follow Christ as they see Him in us.

How to Listen to a Sermon

”Glorify God in your listening.”

You mean there’s a *way* to listen to a sermon? Well, yes, at least in the form of these suggestions. The teaching of God’s Word is the central ingredient of our time in corporate worship. Here’s a quick guide to help you make the most of that hour each week:

Take it in. Come with an open mind, ready to learn. And come on time—the teaching time doesn’t start when the pastor stands at the pulpit. From the first moment of the service, God is speaking, through music, drama, video, baptism—if you come just for the “preaching,” you’re missing half of what God wants to tell you! When you come to the worship service, come to take it all in.

Write it down. Scholars tell us that your ability to retain what you learn increases 80% when you write it down, rather than just hearing it. Weekly we provide a “fill in the blanks” outline to help you follow along—but don’t stop there. Write additional thoughts, questions, scripture references in the margins. Write as if you had to reteach it from your notes (hopefully, you will).

Think it over. Use your notes during the week to begin to apply the message to your life. Look back over key points and Scripture. When you pray, ask God to reveal areas of your life that can be affected and changed by what you’ve heard and learned. If your finished notes stay stuck between the pages of your Bible for the rest of their existence, they aren’t doing you or anyone else much good.

Live it out. Hearing, understanding and applying God’s Word will have a visible effect on your life. Your attitudes, actions, dreams, goals, plans, focus, family relationships, business dealings—all of these will be influenced and even profoundly changed by God’s Word when you commit to live out what you are learning.

Take Note

Why do you take notes during Sunday messages? If it's just for your own personal growth or to help you remember, then you're missing half the opportunity of the message. These notes and your Bible are tools you can use everyday to teach others how to follow Christ.

When you listen and take notes knowing you are going to share the information with someone else, it changes the way you engage in the teaching time. Going "beyond the blanks" when you take notes will help you get the most of a message or lesson.

Write the reference. Whenever you hear a scripture reference, write it down to refer to later.

Names, dates, places. When you hear examples or background information, write down important facts like names, dates and places. They can form a trail of "bread crumbs" to jog your thoughts when you review later on.

Questions? Does hearing something during a lesson sometimes spur a question for you? Well, you likely can't interrupt the sermon to ask, but write down questions that come into your mind during a lesson so you can follow up later on to find the answers.

The power of the line. Underlining especially poignant thoughts, Bible verses or phrases, and application points lets you emphasize for yourself what God is teaching you.

The Seven Day Sermon

I heard, and I forgot.

I saw, and I remembered.

I did, and I understood.

One of the best ways to learn Scripture is to teach it to someone else. As you organize your thoughts and begin to apply what you know, sharing this information with others will bring it alive in your own life.

When a sermon is being taught, who learns the *most*? Not the congregation—it's the Pastor. As he studies and applies the Bible in a way that he can teach it to others, it becomes a part of his own life in the process. So, if you want to become a serious learner, the message is clear—become a teacher.

This week. Here's a challenge—use this guide with your weekly message notes to become a teacher in seven days. Now don't get caught up in that “only some are called to teach” mumbo-jumbo. While it's true that some folks really are gifted teachers, *everybody* has the ability to learn and to share with others what you are learning.

Over the next seven days, use the suggestions in this guide to review the message, apply it to your own life, organize your thoughts, and pass it along to someone else.

Day One

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”
Hebrews 13:7

Just read. Go back over your notes from the message or class several times. Don't mark anything today—just refamiliarize yourself with what you've heard.

Be sure to also go back and read from the Bible any verses referred to in the lesson. And pay attention to cross references. If your Bible has links to other verses in the margin, skip over to those and read them as well. It will help you put the verses you are reading in context.

Discuss it with someone. The best way to retain knowledge is to share it. As you review the lesson, share the basic outline and verses with someone else. It might be a friend or your spouse.

The main reason God is providing you with instruction in His Word is not for self-consumption, but to pass it on. By passing what you are learning on to someone else, it will solidify even more in your own life. Find the opportunity today to begin a conversation about the lesson you are studying this week.

Remember, too, that a conversation can have many forms. Don't let the fact that a one-on-one meeting may not be possible deter you. Phone calls, email, cards, notes, letters—all these are forms of communication where you can share with others what you are learning.

Day Two

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4:6

The heart of a learner. As a student of God’s Word, it’s important to have communication with the Teacher. That’s why prayer must be central in your daily time to review Scripture in order to pass it on to others. God desires this time in prayer to show you not only how this lesson applies to your own life, but how you can most effectively share it with those around you.

The best way to learn how to pray... is to pray. This sounds overly-simple. There are many prayer formulas and books on prayer available, but simply praying—having a conversation with God—is the best way begin. As you pray, you will begin to see how God answers prayer through actions, attitudes and circumstances in everyday life. This will give you greater insight into how to pray. So the experience of prayer itself becomes the prayer-teacher.

Pray a Scripture. God will always act in a manner consistent with His Word. He will always do what the Bible says He will do. One great way to begin your prayer time each week is to choose a key scripture from the message or lesson, and to pray that verse the entire week.

Write down the verse(s) on an index card and put it on your bathroom mirror, your car dashboard, or your computer monitor at work. Use it as a reminder not only of what you are learning, but of what you can be teaching to others.

Day Three

“I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.”
2 Thessalonians 3:17

Read and mark. Today as you review your notes, mark with a highlighter or pen those areas that are especially meaningful to you. Do the same in your Bible to key passages. You can use different kinds of marks or highlighting colors to represent various kinds of emphasis:

Circle words that are repeated, either in the Bible passage or the outline. Repeated words are often very important.

Underline passages or phrases that are especially meaningful to you or cause you to examine your own life with respect to the Scripture.

Star or box in “big thoughts,” those things you are reading that are your primary take-aways. Look for that one key thing God may be showing you through His Word through the passage or lesson.

Talk it out. Share something you learned today with someone else. It could be a mother, father, son, daughter, co-worker, friend, associate, fellow Wal-Mart shopper, checkout clerk at the grocery store, the bank teller—anyone you meet is another opportunity to share what you are learning.

What verse are you praying today?

Day Four

“I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.”

Psalm 119:15

Hit the highlights. Today read over the portions of your notes and Scriptures that you marked yesterday. Try to recall why you marked those phrases or words and commit that thinking to memory.

Choose a key thought or theme. Based on your marked text, choose the one Bible verse or sentence from your notes that best summarizes what God is teaching you through the lesson.

Meditate means to “reflect, ponder or contemplate.” When you meditate on God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will begin showing you how to apply it to your life *and* share it with others. If you keep a prayer journal, be sure to write down and pray about what you are learning today. If you don’t have a prayer journal, today is a great day to begin one!

Share it! Always take the opportunity to share what God is showing you with someone else. Before you share, pray your verse for the week.

Day Five

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.”

Proverbs 3:3

Read and mark... again. Today is you review your notes, begin to look for other things to re-read and underline. Highlight new areas that might support what you are already learning.

Write it out. When you are committing what God is teaching to your own life, a great way to remember is to write it out for yourself. Start with a blank sheet of paper (or a journal page). Write out the key verses you've read over the past few days. Also write out the key thoughts from the lesson or class outline.

“For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Make it personal. Think about your own personal illustrations and stories that go with what you are learning. Is there a circumstance or situation in your own life (past or present) that you can recall where this lesson is applicable?

Sometimes you won't have an illustration from your own life. In this case, think through any illustrations the teacher may have used. Think about what you would do in a similar situation or circumstance.

Compare and share. Today is a great day to compare what you have learned during the first half of the week to your insights from the first day. Remember that person you contacted on Day One? Today is a great day to contact them again and share the additional information you've gained by marking and re-reading.

Day Six

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

James 1:22

Apply. Re-read again today, but don't mark anything. Instead, make a list of application questions. Application questions are those that will lead you to become more like Christ as you apply the answers in your own life.

Some sample questions to ask when looking at Scripture or a Bible lesson are:

- Is there a sin I need to confess?
- Is there a promise of God that I can claim?
- Is there an attitude I need to change?
- Are there instructions I need to follow?
- Is there an example I need to follow?
- Is there a prayer I can apply?

You'll be able to generate additional questions for application from your lesson this week.

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” 2 Timothy 2:2

A little less conversation. Now that you've spent a whole week learning and applying what God has taught you through a message or lesson and talking about it with others, set about to intentionally model what you have learned in your own life.

The best way you can instill what God has revealed to you into your own life and to others is to model it. “Flesh it out” in your own life through what you say, how you act, what you choose to do or not to do.

Day Seven

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Ephesians 4:14-15

Preparing for the next lesson. What happens at the end of this week? Now it’s time to prepare for the next message or lesson.

A great privilege. As you attend church each week and look forward to the teaching time, realize that you are doing something that nearly 200 million Christ-followers around the world cannot do. The majority of believers in our world are persecuted, and do not have access to the church, even the Bible, as freely as you do. Look at the opportunity to go, to receive teaching and to reteach as a *privilege*. It will change your outlook on the importance of learning and sharing God’s Word.

Before worship. When you wake up on Sunday, begin to focus your mind on the time to come. In the car on the way to church, are you fussing over clothes, quieting the kids or stressed over being late? Let this be a time of prayer for the coming service as you get your heart and mind ready to hear from God (moms and dads, what an example to set for your children as you *pray with and for them* on the way to church!).

You are the church. How will your friends, business associates, family and others hear about Christ and know who the One True God is? Through the Bible, and more importantly, the example of your life as you live out Scripture, they will hear and see Christ in you. *You* are the church. Christ is not a *part* of life—He has come so that “you might *have* life” (John 10:10). Let your life in Him reflect His Word and ways at all times!

Got the Context?

Want to go even deeper? So much of the Bible is best understood *in context*. That is, when you study a verse or group of verses, also study the chapter, the other passages before and after what you are reading, and cross-references to other areas of Scripture.

Using a commentary or online reference tools (crosswalk.com or blueletterbible.com are great places to start), take the verses you've been studying this week and research the answers to the following questions:

- Who was the author?
- At what time in their life were they writing?
- Where were they when they wrote this material?
- What characteristics of the author are revealed here?
- What were they experiencing at the time?
- What is the underlying tone of the passage?
- What is the author's primary purpose in writing this passage?
- What major truths or concerns and convictions does they present to bring out their purpose?
- How have they arranged their material to emphasise their purpose?
- What are the key words they use?
- Who are the intended readers, and how does this affect the author's purpose?

Using these questions and answers, it's possible to continue your study of this lesson as you learn additional truths from God's Word. Also, pay special attention to cross-references between the Old and New Testaments. People in the New Testament often quote passages from the Old Testament. These two portions of the Bible are intricately connected and related to one another. To fully understand the New Testament, you must have a passion for the Old Testament—and vice-versa.

A Few More Tips

All or part? Does reteaching weekly messages or classes need to consume your entire devotional or quiet time? Not necessarily. Studying to re-teach each week is a great foundation for a quiet time, but perhaps you'd rather use another resource and let this be just a part of your daily time with God. It's your choice.

All the answers? When you talk about what you've been learning with others, it'll quickly become clear that you don't have all the answers. Guess what? Nobody does.

Based on Scripture, it's easy to see that God set it up this way, so that He gets the credit. That's why "His strength is perfected in our weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Always know as you are teaching that you are also learning. It's okay to say, "I don't know. I'm learning with you, too."

More messages. Remember that Cross Pointe messages are always available online at www.crosspointechurch.org/messages. These MP3 downloads allow you to retrieve audio messages for your computer or iPod, and using software like iTunes you can burn your own CDs to give to friends or listen to in the car. These messages are available free online, and on CD at the church Resource Center for a small charge.



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