

WESTSIDE CHURCH

**BELONG
BELIEVE
BECOME**

Participant Guide

A 9-Week Spiritual Strengthening Journey

A practical pathway for one-on-one discipleship, small group discipleship, and personal spiritual growth.

Based on Scripture, Westside Church discipleship practices, and paraphrased themes from Dallas Willard's *Renovation of the Heart*.

Welcome to the Journey

This guide is designed to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus in a simple, practical, and relational way. The goal is not to finish a workbook. The goal is to become more like Christ from the inside out.

Westside's mantra - Belong, Believe, Become - gives us a simple map for spiritual growth. We belong to God and his people. We believe the truth of God's Word and the gospel. We become more like Jesus and help others follow him.

How to Use This Guide

Bring this guide to each meeting. Read the Scriptures before or during the session. Answer honestly rather than perfectly. Choose one weekly practice and follow through. Come back ready to share what God did, what was difficult, and what you are learning.

Standard 60-Minute Session Flow

Part	Time	Purpose
Connection	10 min	Check in honestly and build spiritual friendship.
Scripture	10 min	Read the key text and notice what God reveals.
Teaching	10 min	Receive the core idea and Willard transformation focus.
Discussion	20 min	Talk honestly about the heart, not just behavior.
Practice	5 min	Try a spiritual exercise together.
Prayer	5 min	Make a commitment and pray for grace.

Copyright and Source Note

This guide uses brief paraphrased themes and chapter references from Dallas Willard's Renovation of the Heart. It does not reproduce extended text from the book. Participants are encouraged to read the full book for deeper study.

9-Week Journey Map

Week	Theme	Session	Willard Reference	Focus
Week 1	BELONG	Belong to God	Chapters 1-2: Introducing Spiritual Formation; The Heart in the System of Human Life	Soul and identity
Week 2	BELONG	Belong to the Body	Chapter 9: Transforming the Social Dimension	Relationships and community
Week 3	BELONG	Belong Through Confession	Chapters 3-4 and 10: Radical Evil; Radical Goodness Restored; Transforming the Soul	Honesty, integration, and healing
Week 4	BELIEVE	Believe the Word	Chapter 6: Transforming the Mind, 1 - Spiritual Formation and the Thought Life	Thoughts and narratives
Week 5	BELIEVE	Believe Who God Is	Chapters 6-7: Transforming the Mind - Thought Life and Feelings	View of God and emotions
Week 6	BELIEVE	Believe the Gospel	Chapter 8: Transforming the Will, Heart, or Spirit - and Character	Will, surrender, and grace-based obedience
Week 7	BECOME	Become Like Jesus	Chapter 5 and Chapter 8: The Reliable Pattern of Spiritual Change; Transforming the Will	Intention and practiced choices
Week 8	BECOME	Become Through Disciplines	Chapters 8 and 9: Transforming the Body; Transforming the Social Dimension	Body, habits, and environment
Week 9	BECOME	Become a Disciple-Maker	Chapters 11-13: The Children of Light and the Light of the World; Spiritual Formation in the Local Congregation; The Glorious Local Church	Whole-life integration and multiplication

Week 1 | BELONG | Belong to God

Key Scriptures	Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:15-16; 1 John 3:1
Willard Reference	Chapters 1-2: Introducing Spiritual Formation; The Heart in the System of Human Life
Area Being Formed	Soul and identity

One Thing to Know: I am not trying to earn a place with God. In Christ, I am loved, chosen, and adopted.

One Thing to Do: Practice receiving God's love through five minutes of daily stillness.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard teaches that spiritual formation begins beneath behavior, in the inner person. This week invites you to start not with striving, but with the heart learning to live from the secure reality of belonging to God.

Discussion Questions

- What identities do you function from most often: achiever, helper, failure, victim, pastor's kid, provider, struggler, outsider, or beloved child?
- When do you feel most tempted to prove your worth to God or to people?
- How would your week change if you deeply believed, "I belong to God before I perform for God"?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Each day, sit quietly for five minutes. Pray: "Father, I receive your love. Jesus, teach me to live as your beloved." Write one sentence about what you notice.

My Commitment

This week I will practice daily stillness on these days: _____.

Week 2 | BELONG | Belong to the Body

Key Scriptures	Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Hebrews 10:24-25
Willard Reference	Chapter 9: Transforming the Social Dimension
Area Being Formed	Relationships and community

One Thing to Know: God forms us in spiritual family, not isolation.

One Thing to Do: Initiate one meaningful spiritual connection this week.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard emphasizes that the social dimension of life is part of the person God is transforming. We are shaped by the people, patterns, and communities around us, so Christian community must become a place where love trains the soul.

Discussion Questions

- Where are you present but not truly known?
- What makes it hard for you to receive help, encouragement, correction, or friendship?
- Who in the Westside body could you move toward this week?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Before the group ends, write down one person you will call, invite, encourage, or meet with this week. Be specific about when.

My Commitment

Person I will move toward: _____ . When: _____ .

Week 3 | BELONG | Belong Through Confession

Key Scriptures	James 5:16; 1 John 1:5-9; Psalm 32:1-5
Willard Reference	Chapters 3-4 and 10: Radical Evil; Radical Goodness Restored; Transforming the Soul
Area Being Formed	Honesty, integration, and healing

One Thing to Know: Bringing life into the light opens the door to healing.

One Thing to Do: Confess one real struggle to a trusted disciple.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard describes the ruined soul as fragmented and the renewed soul as increasingly whole. Confession is not shame theater; it is a grace practice that helps the divided self come back into the light of God and trusted community.

Discussion Questions

- What are you most tempted to hide when you want to appear spiritually strong?
- How has secrecy affected your joy, prayer life, relationships, or freedom?
- What would wise, safe, humble confession look like for you this week?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Use this sentence with a trusted disciple: "One thing I need to bring into the light is..." Ask them to pray, not fix you.

My Commitment

Trusted person I will talk to: _____ . By when: _____ .

Week 4 | BELIEVE | Believe the Word

Key Scriptures	Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:105
Willard Reference	Chapter 6: Transforming the Mind, 1 - Spiritual Formation and the Thought Life
Area Being Formed	Thoughts and narratives

One Thing to Know: The Word of God renews the mind and exposes the stories that shape us.

One Thing to Do: Practice daily Scripture meditation using the SOAP method.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard highlights the thought life as a major arena of formation. Our lives are guided by the ideas, images, assumptions, and stories we carry. Scripture gives us a new reality to live from.

Discussion Questions

- What voices most shape your thinking: Scripture, news, social media, fear, family patterns, success pressure, or past wounds?
- What lie or false narrative has had too much power in your life recently?
- What truth from Scripture directly confronts that lie?

Notes

Weekly Practice

SOAP: Scripture - write one verse. Observation - what does it reveal? Application - what will I practice? Prayer - ask God for help.

My Commitment

Scripture passage I will meditate on this week: _____.

Week 5 | BELIEVE | Believe Who God Is

Key Scriptures	Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:8-14; John 14:8-11
Willard Reference	Chapters 6-7: Transforming the Mind - Thought Life and Feelings
Area Being Formed	View of God and emotions

One Thing to Know: My view of God deeply shapes my emotional life and obedience.

One Thing to Do: Replace one distorted belief about God with biblical truth.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard treats feelings as part of the mind that must be formed in truth. We do not simply suppress emotions; we learn to bring them before God and let truth retrain what we fear, desire, and trust.

Discussion Questions

- When life is difficult, what do you instinctively feel God is like: absent, disappointed, harsh, passive, kind, near, faithful?
- Where might your past experiences be distorting your view of God?
- Which truth about God do you need to rehearse this week?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Write one sentence: "God is _____, therefore I can _____." Pray it daily, especially when emotions rise.

My Commitment

My truth statement: God is _____, therefore I can _____.

Week 6 | BELIEVE | Believe the Gospel

Key Scriptures	Romans 5:6-8; Galatians 2:20; Titus 2:11-14
Willard Reference	Chapter 8: Transforming the Will, Heart, or Spirit - and Character
Area Being Formed	Will, surrender, and grace-based obedience

One Thing to Know: Grace is not permission to drift; grace empowers real change.

One Thing to Do: Write and repeat a personal gospel identity statement.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard's discussion of the will helps us see that character is formed when the will increasingly aligns with God. The gospel moves obedience from guilt and image-management into grateful surrender.

Discussion Questions

- Do you tend to obey from fear, guilt, approval-seeking, love, or trust?
- Where are you resisting surrender to God right now?
- How does the cross give you both humility and confidence?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Write a two-sentence gospel identity statement. Example: "Because of Jesus, I am forgiven and no longer need to hide. By grace, I can choose obedience today."

My Commitment

My gospel identity statement: _____.

Week 7 | BECOME | Become Like Jesus

Key Scriptures	Luke 6:40; Colossians 3:12-17; 2 Peter 1:3-8
Willard Reference	Chapter 5 and Chapter 8: The Reliable Pattern of Spiritual Change; Transforming the Will
Area Being Formed	Intention and practiced choices

One Thing to Know: Christlike character is formed through grace, intention, and practice.

One Thing to Do: Choose one trait of Jesus to intentionally practice this week.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard often frames transformation through vision, intention, and means. We need a clear vision of life with Jesus, a real intention to follow him, and practical means that train us into a new kind of person.

Discussion Questions

- What trait of Jesus do you most need right now: patience, courage, gentleness, humility, self-control, compassion, truthfulness?
- Where do your good intentions regularly break down?
- What specific situation this week will become your practice field?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Use the sentence: "When _____ happens, I will practice _____ by doing _____."

My Commitment

When _____ happens, I will practice _____ by doing _____.

Week 8 | BECOME | Become Through Disciplines

Key Scriptures	1 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Mark 1:35
Willard Reference	Chapters 8 and 9: Transforming the Body; Transforming the Social Dimension
Area Being Formed	Body, habits, and environment

One Thing to Know: Spiritual disciplines are training, not earning.

One Thing to Do: Practice one discipline in a simple, repeatable way.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard teaches that the body carries our habits and automatic responses. Disciplines such as solitude, silence, fasting, service, prayer, and Scripture do not earn God's favor; they place us before God so he can retrain us.

Discussion Questions

- What habit currently shapes you more than you want to admit?
- Which discipline feels most needed: silence, solitude, fasting, Scripture, prayer, service, simplicity, confession?
- What is the smallest faithful version of that discipline you can practice this week?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Choose one: 10 minutes of silence, one simple fast, one prayer walk, one hidden act of service, or one screen-free Scripture time.

My Commitment

Discipline I will practice: _____ . Day/time: _____ .

Week 9 | BECOME | Become a Disciple-Maker

Key Scriptures	Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; John 15:8-17
Willard Reference	Chapters 11-13: The Children of Light and the Light of the World; Spiritual Formation in the Local Congregation; The Glorious Local Church
Area Being Formed	Whole-life integration and multiplication

One Thing to Know: A transformed disciple helps others follow Jesus.

One Thing to Do: Identify one person to invest in spiritually.

Willard Transformation Focus

Willard's vision is not private spirituality but transformed people gathered into communities of light. The local church becomes glorious when ordinary disciples learn to live with Jesus and help others do the same.

Discussion Questions

- Who has helped you grow spiritually, and what did they do that helped?
- Who around you needs encouragement, training, friendship, or consistent discipleship?
- What simple rhythm could you begin: weekly prayer, Scripture, check-in, or spiritual practice?

Notes

Weekly Practice

Write down one name and one next step. Pray for courage to initiate a simple, faithful discipling relationship.

My Commitment

Person I will invest in: _____. My next step: _____.

One-on-One Discipleship Check-In Template

Use this simple rhythm each time you meet with someone one-on-one.

Step	Question
1. Connect	What has been encouraging? What has been heavy?
2. Review	How did your weekly practice go? What did you notice?
3. Scripture	What did God show you in the passage this week?
4. Heart	What is God forming in your thoughts, emotions, will, habits, relationships, or soul?
5. Practice	What specific step will you take before we meet again?
6. Pray	Pray for grace, honesty, courage, and follow-through.

Prayer Requests and Next Steps

9-Week Personal Growth Tracker

Week	Practice Completed?	What I Noticed	Next Step
1	Yes / No		
2	Yes / No		
3	Yes / No		
4	Yes / No		
5	Yes / No		
6	Yes / No		
7	Yes / No		
8	Yes / No		
9	Yes / No		

Final Reflection

At the end of nine weeks, ask: Where did I grow? What practice helped most? Who helped me? Who can I now help grow?