

# **DISCIPLE TESTIMONIES**

## **1) Honey Tan**

**"My fellow DISCIPLE classmates were always there for me... God used all of us to shape and mould one another. "**

2017 has been a very eventful year for me. I signed up for my last DISCIPLE course in this series - D2. I met a fantastic bunch of people. Really awesome!

I also changed job. Just when I thought things were all going right for me, I was put to test. The job that I thought will bring me up the corporate ladder turned out to be a nightmare. I went through a very difficult period, to the extent that I was in depression and constantly anxious. My health was badly affected and my DISCIPLE Study reading was also affected and almost halted. I kept asking why. I turned to my fellow D2 classmates and they were always there for me, sharing their wisdom, their encouragement, their prayers and most importantly, God's word with me.

Often, we place ourselves before God in good times and turn to Him in bad times. I realised that my focus needs to be on Him and Him only. As I stepped back and went back into His words, I found peace and relief. It was as if God was saying, "It's ok my child, I am here." "What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" - Romans 8:31 NLT

It is my strong belief that God has great plans for all of us and nothing happens "by chance". God placed me in this D2 class for a reason. God used all of us to shape and mould one another. We all had our own episodes and encounters, whether in our personal lives or work lives.

Throughout it all, we were always there for one another. We truly experienced Into The Word, Into The World in D2.

## **2) Eileen Chua**

**“I signed up for the course to know God better through the Bible, DISCIPLER 1 had fulfilled my expectations - and more!”**

As a believer from childhood, I've always come into contact with bits of the Bible first through Sunday School, then through church services. I've never thought about systematically studying the Bible, though, as it seemed too daunting.

DISCIPLER 1 was a great first step to a systematic studying of the Bible. I signed up for the course to know God better through the Bible, and DISCIPLER 1 had fulfilled my expectations - and more!

I also found a wonderful group in my DISCIPLER 1 class. Through our 30+ weeks studying together, sharing our experiences and stories, we have grown comfortable despite our different stages of life. Some of us are just getting into work, some have retired, others have children, or have been attending Wesley long before they decided to sign up for DISCIPLER 1. In spite of these differences, we have grown closer and found a community within Wesley to walk closer with God.

I'm glad I signed up for DISCIPLER 1 and found this lovely bunch of people!

## **3) TERESA KONG**

**“Disciple I is an effective platform to gain an overview of God’s salvation plan for mankind through reading the Bible almost from cover to cover.”**

Disciple I is an effective platform to gain an overview of God’s salvation plan for mankind through reading the Bible almost from cover to cover. To me, the most beneficial part of this 34 weeks of Bible Study is that God’s characters being revealed so vividly through the historical events and wonders that I have studied. As a result, I know God better and become closer to Him than before. As His follower, I know I will not be spared from adversities and struggles in life. However, I know I have Him and a hope promised by Him to cling onto amidst these challenges. I am privileged to be called His child. I know there is nothing I could give to repay His kindness because everything I have come from Him in the first place. What I can offer is just my obedience, a willing heart to go where he calls me to be.

#### 4) Peter Goh

**“DISCIPLE 1 was wonderfully planned and structured for a fantastic summary and overview of God's message in the Bible. It helped me appreciate how wonderful God's plan was, is and always will be.”**

DISCIPLE 1 was an eye-opening experience as this was the first time I had ever signed up for any formal bible-study programme. I had done bible study with friends in the university and school and I do daily devotions with my children but I had never done anything with a church group. So embarking on this journey with total strangers, with the only link being our thirst for knowledge and our mutual membership in Wesley, was something which I viewed with excitement, anticipation and also apprehension. Also, and more importantly, I had never attempted a sequential, near complete reading of the bible over a short short period of just 8 months.

Having just completed chapter 32 of DISCIPLE1, and therefore Revelation 22, I have no regrets. I am thrilled to have made new friends and to have gotten to know new brothers and sisters in Christ. I have learned that there are others who are just as mystified about the Bible and the teachings, descriptions and stories, who see things differently and who enlighten me in ways my own limited mind cannot. And at the end of it all, it is the Holy Spirit speaking to us all to give us clarity.

More amazingly, it gave me what I was looking for and hopefully has inspired me to want to continue searching either through DISCIPLE 2-4 , facilitating DISCIPLE or other forms of study and fellowship. It has given me a wonderful overview of the Bible. At first I was perturbed that D1 would be too fast and too superficial. But I realised that as the weeks went by, D1 was wonderfully planned and structured for a fantastic summary and overview of God's message in the Bible. And the reason behind it is God Himself. It helped me appreciate how wonderful God's plan was, is and always will be. It showed me that Jesus is the Word and the Word was there right from the beginning in Genesis when God spoke and this led to Creation. And from there, it has always been about the downfall of man, God always trying to reach out to us to save and redeem us, first through laws and numerous prophets and then when all this proved to be fruitless because of how incorrigible we are, He made the ultimate sacrifice by coming down to us in human form to understand us and to live like us and then to die for us to save us. In Singlish terms, it would be “ Wah. Jia Lat. Better I ownself do!” And He did indeed by showing us the way Himself.

Astoundingly, everything in the New Testament and the new covenant was prophesied in the Old Testament by centuries. So the promise of Revelation will surely be true and we can look forward to triumph and victory when the cycle is complete. Amazing how everything just fits wonderfully together and how it all turns out. As in tonight's lesson on Revelation, the entire Bible just boils down to one thing : God's sovereignty.

It was a difficult 32 weeks. I struggled through portions of the Old Testament, especially Leviticus and the miscellaneous judges, prophets and kings. But through all of it. I realise how impossible it was for us to reach Him on our own. And the only way was and is through God's grace - His sending Jesus to us to save us.

I found the New Testament truly uplifting and Revelation, although frightening at times, invigorating and encouraging. God's ultimate plan is to bring us all back to Him but in order to truly appreciate everything and how magnificent He is, humanity had to go through the entire journey, which is recorded in the bible, to get their and to achieve redemption. Truly the Greatest Story Ever Told. I can't wait to go further in depth and understanding.

## **5) WIL NG**

**“The DISCIPLE course is about the transformation of the heart..... participants typically feel a holy desire to go even deeper into His Word, to grow a deeper relationship with Him.”**

Before joining the Disciple course, I was a clueless non-believer. I had registered to attend Disciple 1 simply because I didn't understand any of the biblical references that were being mentioned in service and in conversations with Christians. I thought that attending the course would provide some kind of structure around understanding the Bible and why it was so central to the Christian faith. I totally did not expect that the Word of God had the power to bring transformation, direction, comfort, and forgiveness into the lives of those who follow Jesus.

The Disciple course is about the transformation of the heart. Participants of the course always begin their journey thinking, “Oh my goodness, thirty-four weeks! How am I going to be able to study the Bible intensely for so long?!” At the end of the course, instead of a sense of relief from the intensity of the course, participants typically feel a holy desire to go even deeper into His Word, to grow a deeper relationship with Him, and being aware of the need to participate in God's Kingdom work on earth. This transformation of the heart is consistent, and I have seen it happen to myself and also to countless participants year after year.

God also brings miraculous healing through the weekly prayer and fellowship format of the course. On various occasions, we have prayed for and witnessed God's healing upon participants who had difficulty having children. We have also seen God bring transformation in the families of participants and watched how forgiveness, kindness, and mercy flowed from His Word to ease family conflicts and tension. Indeed, our God is good.

## 6) Tan Teck Guan

**“The DISCIPLE course was another part on my journey in discipleship. Attending the DISCIPLE course has prompted me to step up and serve.”**

Sometime last year, I learnt about the DISCIPLE course from a member of my small group. At that time, I was on the BSF course. I completed my first cycle of BSF in 2016 and therefore I decided to enrol myself for the DISCIPLE course.

Having attended BSF for the past many years, I was surprised by the class composition for DISCIPLE. We had women and younger participants. I enjoyed the change.

The style of the class was also quite different. In BSF, it was very much lecture style teaching. There were not many opportunities for discussion. Here in DISCIPLE, every class is an opportunity for discussion. Through such discussion, we get a different kind of learning. We get to examine every issue thoroughly and reach consensus.

The reading for each week was good. It provides a systematic method for us to go through almost all the major parts of the bible in 1 year. This was great. It also covered all the major themes/stories of the bible. While we read the bible, the DISCIPLE course book helped to provide context to what we read. It was a good supplement to our reading.

For me, the DISCIPLE course was another part on my journey in discipleship. I remembered coming to church every Sunday, not knowing anyone else in church. I would attend service and leave, not ever speaking with anyone in church. My aim for church then was to send my children to Sunday school.

Next I started to attend a small group. During this time, I also started BSF classes. The small group provided support and encouragement in our walk in life. We did some bible study but more importantly, we enjoyed doing things together, like serving in church, and the fellowship.

This year, I volunteered to serve as usher at the Sanctuary 9.30 am service. I have been very lethargic and I am glad that finally I have taken the first step to serve in church. Attending the DISCIPLE course has prompted me to step up and serve.

This year has been a tough year for me. My mother had a bad fall and has been hospitalized about 2 months. I am having great challenges at work. I am going through much pain and anguish in many circumstances. But through it all, I am glad that I walk through all these challenges with God as my guide and witness.

I give thanks to God for his guidance, peace and love in my life. I would also like to thank Barnabas and all my class mates for their patience and encouragement.

## **7) TEH YOKE KENG**

**“I am very thankful for this opportunity as this has helped me understand the Bible better and also strengthened my faith in the Lord.”**

I have been a Christian ever since I was a teenager of about 15 years old. However, my faith then was weak and shallow as I would rather spend my time out with friends than studying the Bible. Knowing that God is always there, I guess you can say that I took God for granted, going to Him only when I needed help to pass exams or when I encountered difficulties in my life.

However, this changed in later years especially when I stopped work and I started to hunger for His Word. With more time on my hands I wanted to know God deeper and also to have a stronger foundation in my faith. This led me to attend the Disciple classes started by CMC.

I have so far attended D1 to D3 of the Disciple course and I am very thankful for this opportunity as this has helped me understand the Bible better and also strengthened my faith in the Lord. The weekly lessons also ensure that I consistently study His Word as otherwise I might be distracted to spend time on other things. Last but not least, I have made many friends in class who are also hungry for the Lord and this has helped to support my growth as a Christian.

## **8) NELLIE KEE**

**“There are constant pointers to remind us of the need to be more Christ-like and to walk closely with God.”**

Upon completion of D1 and D2, I am now in the midst of attending D3 lessons. I have benefitted greatly from the lessons as we are given insights and in-depth studies into the Bible. Prior to the Disciple courses, I had only a bare knowledge of God's Word, notably from memories of some verses from the Gospel of John.

However, after attending the Disciple courses, I have become more familiar with the Old as well as the New Testament as the lessons provide a close and detailed study into the various segments. In a way, attending the Disciple lessons does command a specific discipline of consistent reading and up-keeping of knowledge of the Bible. Through the discipline of reading, I have become enriched in the historical, spiritual and application aspects of the Bible. In the process, my faith and bond with God are strengthened.

In the course of attending the lessons weekly, bonds with course-mates are forged. There is an assured sense of camaraderie, built on a common faith and seeking of the Word of God. Doubts and questions are cleared through discussions and close references to the Bible. There are constant pointers to remind us of the need to be more Christ-like and to walk closely with God. I would definitely recommend the course to any believer of Christ, be he or she new or old.

## 9) DANILS CHIA

**“The weekly “Marks of Discipleship” provides simply worded but powerful reminders for living the righteous ‘Disciple’ life.”**

Each week’s study highlighted various aspects of “human conditions”. As a result of our rebellious “human condition”, we often ended up being wilful and sinful; often preferring to have our own way instead of maintaining a righteous relationship with God. The weekly “Marks of Discipleship” on the other hand, provides simply worded but powerful reminders for living the righteous ‘Disciple’ life; or at least “attempt” to do so as we face the challenges and struggles of life on earthly journey of sanctification.

## 10) Shirley Tan

**“I want to thank God for His faithfulness in sustaining me throughout the past 9 months. I know that as long as I’m willing and put Him first, He will make all things possible.”**

I made a conscious decision in 2017 that I will attend D1 in 2018, so having done that I put aside all travel plans and other activities that will distract me as I dedicate 2018 for this discipline. I know it will take up a large portion of my time for the reading, etc. And as an honor to God, I want to commit this as my wholehearted sacrifice to Him, to give Him the full dedication of my time to study His word and to be able to attend all the classes, if it is possible.

The journey studying the Old Testament has been one filled with gratefulness and sadness. As we went through the first 5 books of the OT, God reminded me again that he is a God who keeps his promises to his people. He kept his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey – the Promised Land. And like the Israelites, how forgetful I am about his promises and his goodness towards me. It’s here too that I understand why God instructs the Israelites to do all the rituals of worship on a “daily basis”, so that they will remember God and be his distinct people. The application for me is that I should do the same “rituals” daily too, which for me it means adopting regular/daily quiet time with Him, read his word and worship him so that I will not forget what He has done for me.

As I studied these books, I was also journeying with my god-brother who was diagnosed with lymphoma and undergoing chemotherapy. We prayed to God for his mercy and healing as in our minds we think he still has so much to offer to God/church, society and family. But His plans are not our plans and we lost our god-brother in May 2018. But having to read the bible every day and hearing His words pour out of each day’s reading,

helped me feel the closeness of God's presence and this was such a great comfort to me during this period.

The study of books of Samuel and Kings taught me that God may give us something we ask for even if it is not good or wise. He may grant it as a form of discipline which may be unnecessary otherwise. However his punishment is never to destroy us but to restore us back to him.

In Daniel, I received a warning – Dan 5: 24-28 "... you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting..." But in Matt 25, as I wait for His coming, I am to be ready at all times, to use my talent for His glory, to love my neighbours, to be obedient and to use my time wisely.

The study of John and Romans says that "we do not choose Jesus but He chose us and appoint us" – not just to forgive my sins and to give me eternal life but that He wants my life has to be fruitful and productive in fulfilling His purposes. Wow, how audacious of me to think that I was the one to choose to follow him but in His merciful will and grace, He has chosen me first and gave me the gift of eternal life!

I want to thank God for His faithfulness in sustaining me throughout the past 9 months. I know that as long as I'm willing and put Him first, He will make all things possible. Praise God.

The members in the group are a wonderful bunch – we are able to share openly in a safe environment as we know they are not judgmental. Those who are more knowledgeable shared their thoughts so that the rest could learn and also think about some of the issues. I was also able to develop a deeper relationship with one or 2 of them on a more personal basis as we travel home together after class.

1 Cor 15:10 "But by the grace of God, I am what I am and His grace towards me was not in vain".



## 11) Winnie Pua

### “Drawn closer to God”

Drawn closer

From Sunday schools at age 4 with the neighbours

Through the disagreeable teens, to a questioning young adult

God was, is and will always draw me close to Him

Through encounters, rebukes and gentle reminders, You draw me close

A season of flawed churches and leaders

Evoking disappointment, sadness and ultimately apathy Then You draw me close yet again

Marking this Discipleship class our meeting place

Knowing the beautiful life you have planned for me, On this earth and in heaven

Learning, understanding, appreciating and seeing The importance of our hearts over deeds

You planted new friends for this season

We disagree, pray, laugh and encourage

And the veil is lifted, on the march of my Christian heartbeat My rock stabilizes and my heart rejoices

I step out in courage and in inspiration

To live and breathe as you imagined

Sensitive to your loving beckoning calls

Drawing closer to my God

## 12) Ruby Goh

**“As I grow in the Word, there’s a growing desire to be a good disciple and carry on the work that He had commanded. My wish is for the Lord to use me as He wills.”**

I can’t remember when it started but for quite some time, I have a great desire to know God intimately. Pastor Michael Tan once said in a sermon that he had tasted God’s goodness. It reminded me of a time during my postgraduate days when it was the same for me. His message stirred in me a desire to have an intimate relationship with God, one that will “fill my cup and quench my thirsting soul”. To be one to know God’s heart, like King David, is such a privilege, something to hope for, perhaps ask or seek. Nevertheless, I felt unworthy to be one, knowing so little of His Word. Hence embarking on study of the Word was my search to know my God intimately. I believe DISCIPLE 1 was God’s provision for me.

I have been a scientist for a long time. The rigour of the discipline has taught me to question and test one’s supposition and the value in pursuing truth. Bible says “He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life” and “all things work together for good to them that love God”. I love these verses but yet, it was very difficult for me to read the bible with gory details of wars and killings, in the name of a covenant God had made with Abraham.

What made Abraham and Israel so special? Why must a nation be chosen so people can come to know God? Is Genesis 1 a story or truth? Even though I had spent some time on systematic theology, the circular reasoning that the bible is its own validation just do not stand with my scientific reasoning, where proof is by evidence. Until... I encountered God in DISCIPLE 1. I had to step back and view history from afar and far into the early days before man, before Earth. With each lesson in DISCIPLE, I began to see the plan of God for man, and how the journey of one nation will demonstrate His forgiving love and grace. And how my God from the beginning, has His atonement plan all lined up in His Son Jesus Christ. The history of Israel from OT to NT and to present, is the story of God’s redeeming love. I am a part of that biblical story, still ongoing till Jesus comes again.

Disciple 1 has opened my horizon and perspectives, putting me in the biblical framework. Previously, I could see God in the beauty of music, arts, nature and science, domains that I love and appreciate. Now, I see God everywhere, in history, current affairs, relationships, everyday happenings, because my God is in dominion. He is also in my sufferings, journeying with me just like He did with Israel. Yes, there was punishment because of my sins, but there was always grace. I cannot describe the joy and assurance of knowing such a God.

As I grow in the Word, there’s a growing desire to be a good disciple and carry on the work that He had commanded. My wish is for the Lord to use me as He wills. I’m not bold

enough like Isaiah to answer “Here am I. Send me!” But I’m willing to be brave for my Lord when He opens the door. To be like Paul, to run a good race and keep the faith.

Lastly, I like to thank Tim and Catherine for their dedication to the class and programme, and the tons of knowledge and experience they bring to my learning. I’m also thankful to my church and the staff for running the programme, providing the premise and resources. It takes a village to raise a child. In this programme, I’m thankful to be the child.

### **13) Betty Chen**

**“I retired from the Committee in 2016 when I celebrated my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I decided I must complete my DISCIPE course before I meet my Maker.”**

I first joined a DISCIPE I class in the year 2017. I had never found the time as I had been serving as a very active Executive Committee member on the board of the oldest women’s voluntary association in Singapore (formed in 1915) from the year 1970, when I had returned to live in Singapore. After it had celebrated its centenary year in 2015, I retired from the Committee in 2016, when the Club celebrated my own 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I then wanted to spend more time with my husband, who was 5 1/2 years older, and we were able to take several cruises and trips together. We had met at University in Australia in 1943, and had been married since 1948, so we were blessed to have had nearly 75 years together when he passed away in 2017, and my DISCIPE classes had been interrupted.

This year I decided I must complete my DISCIPE course before I meet my Maker. Although I had attended Wesley since I was a child, when my parents came to live here in the 1930s, I had never really been in an adult Bible Study Class, and then the War came, and my mother and children were evacuated to Australia, where we children were fortunate enough to continue our education. My mother, who had never worked before, found a job to support us, and taught us to be independent and resilient.

The past year with DISCIPE 1 leaders, Timothy Ng and Catherine Mah, has not only been an amazing revelation of the Bible to me, but also a most enjoyable and interesting one. God has always been a very real Presence in my life, as I feel He is always with me, and has continuously blessed my family and myself. He has also given us many challenges throughout the years, to teach us values and lessons we need. But now I have read and grown so much in knowledge of the Word, and enjoyed the fellowship of fellow participants who shared their views, as well as their generous refreshments brought with love.

Our two facilitators have guided us so clearly on the doctrines of our faith and how we can be a better Christian. They have also explained the historical context of all the biblical happenings and made it so real for me. I am so glad I embarked on this course, and sincerely wish I could continue the next course with both of them.

## 14) Margaret Zhang

### “Wonderment”

Stepping into the Word

I am filled with wonderment

My whys have become wows

By His Everlasting Love and Promises

By His Goodness and Awesomeness. Stepping into the World

I am filled with empowerment

My woes no longer overwhelms

For His Grace is more than sufficient for me For if He is with me who can be against me?

Something about His Word

Has changeth me

For the humility of Christ has brought the light of salvation

Even to the darkest ends of the earth for the blind to see. Something about this world

Has changeth for me

For the love, peace and joy of Christ springs within and gives hope Even in blistering droughts, raging winds and stormy seas.

Praise be to God!

For this journey of wonderment

Into the Word and into the world

that He has blessed me.

## 15) Alexis Yeoh

**“The DISCIPLE course made me see that all things I have come from God, and it is He who made all things possible.”**

I remembered I signed up for Disciple 1 after Pastor Stanley’s sermon. His sermon scared me and I quickly signed up for this course. After signing up, I immediately regretted. As I thought about the length of this course (34 weeks!) and I kind of doubted I would be able to commit myself to such a long course.

After 34 weeks, I am thankful. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> best decision I have made for my Christian life (1<sup>st</sup> being joining BMC and got baptized). I was amazed myself, that I was able to faithfully attend the lessons week after week, and at times even looked forward to it. All these, because I have a great facilitator and a great bunch of course mates who have taught me many things about the bible, about Christian living and most of all, about myself.

I was baptized in 2011 and I have never been able to consistently read the bible beyond the 4 gospels. This course made me read through almost the whole bible and I learnt about the history and connections between the Old and New Testaments. I can now say that I have gained much more knowledge than I had since the beginning of the D1 course. Of course, I cannot say that I have “mastered” the bible. There are still a lot of things to learn.

Through this course, I learnt that God is faithful and He is merciful. I am grateful that He did not abandon us even when we disobeyed him or did not put him in first place. He is always there for us, waiting for us to turn back to him.

I know I have always been blessed by him throughout my life. But most of the time, I took it for granted or even relied on myself. This course made me see that all things I have come from God, and it is He who made all things possible.

Another good thing about this course is I have made a bunch of nice friends! They shared openly and honestly, and they never judged. And that made me very comfortable. I am really thankful for each and every one of them, including Estella our facilitator. I think I am going to miss them a lot and will be having withdrawal syndrome from now on every Saturday.

So, I have made 3 commitments to myself:

1. To read the bible everyday so that I can continue to learn, and have a closer walk with God.
2. To build the fruits of the holy spirit within me, to be more Christ-like every day. By being more conscious about my actions and decisions, and by prayers.
3. To join a small group.