

# LIVE

THE STORY



LEADERS

MANUAL



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(CR/01/LTS/LM2)

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# CONTENTS

1. A Word to Leaders... 4
2. How to Use This Manual... 5–7
3. Welcome and Preparing the Heart... 9–13
4. Why Jesus? ... 14–17
5. The Practices and Slow... 18–21
6. Go... 22–25
7. Show... 26–29
8. Know... 30–32
9. On Earth as It Is in Heaven... 33–35
10. Deep Dive Sessions... 36
11. Deep Dive Slow... 37–39
12. Deep Dive Passages and Other Resources... 40

# 1: A WORD TO LEADERS

*Jesus sat down and summoned the twelve. "So you want first place? Then take the last place. Be the servant of all". Mark 9:35 (MSG)*

**If you are reading this, I want to thank you.**

When my friend Paul and I started dreaming about Live The Story (LTS) and how God could use it to build His Church, we always imagined it would find its way to someone like you.

We imagined people gathered in groups, being led into deeper friendship with Jesus and one another by people who (just like them) longed for Jesus' kingdom vision for their lives.

We imagined passionate prayers, heartfelt conversations, sweet moments of revelation, and bold steps of faith into new ways of living for the glory of God all over the world.

We prayed that God would raise up leaders who carried His servant heart. People who would pour themselves out to see others live the story of Jesus and in so doing would come to live it more fully as well.

**If you are reading this as you get ready to lead an LTS journey, you are quite literally an answer to prayer!**

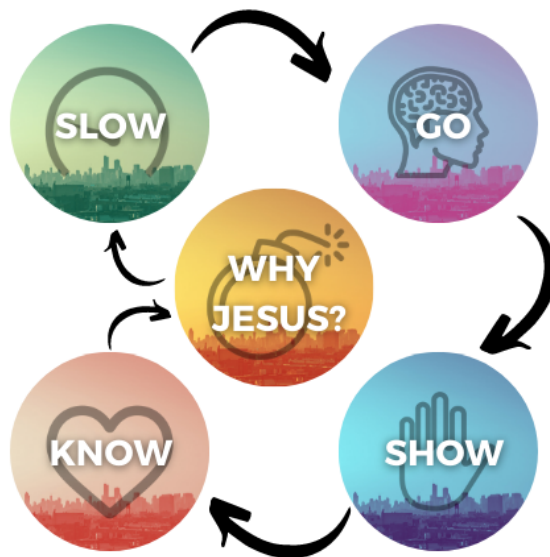
Thank you for saying yes to His invitation. I pray that you would deeply experience the Spirit of God moving in and through you as you serve His people.

Should you need any help please get in touch at [www.mattlewis.co.za](http://www.mattlewis.co.za). I would love to walk with you on this journey.

- Matt -

## 2: HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

LTS is a **5-session** journey that aims to help people move from passive Christianity to active, generative friendship with God. This is motivated by the conviction that belief in Jesus means going beyond simply agreeing with His story to living it out in everyday life. We walk with people through the exploration of **1 core conviction** and **4 simple practices**.



Our prayer is that God would use this to begin a journey toward a new way of thinking and being in the world. More than that, we pray that transformed lives would result in transformed communities for the glory of God all over the earth.

There are **3 elements** to the LTS journey:

**WEEKLY GATHERINGS**  
**DAILY PRACTICES**  
**PERSONAL DEVOTIONS**

Nothing is mandatory. We simply invite people to Jesus in the same way that He invites us anew each day.

*"Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass." Matt 4:19 (MSG)*

**Leader notes:** Throughout the manual, you will find leader notes highlighted in the colours that correspond to each of these outcomes. These notes do not appear in the learner manual. They are there to help you as you lead your group.

# WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Weekly gatherings are the foundation of the LTS journey. Through these gatherings, we hope to achieve **4 key outcomes**:

## Connection:

Community is the context wherein Christianity happens as we discover His kingdom which is “among us”. It is important to remember that we cannot simply fill a room, play a video, and read a manual to run LTS.

We need to think about how we host the people we have invited on the journey. Things like **preparing the space before, being present during, and following up after** each session can help with this.

## Instruction:

Every session includes a video teaching which covers the content for that week. This means leaders do not have the pressure of having to master the material, freeing them up to love and serve people well.

It is of course important to be familiar with the material, but the emphasis of responsibility involves facilitating the environment and fostering relationship for the teaching to have its greatest effect.

## Discussion:

Before the teaching in each session, people **review** the previous week’s teaching and practice to process what they have learned. After the teaching element of each session, people have some **discussion** about what they have heard. The intention of both spaces is to give people space to wrestle with the ideas they are hearing. The leader’s role here is more facilitator than instructor. This is done by asking good questions, recycling ideas within the group, and drawing more introverted people out to create a place of honest dialogue.

## Commission:

Motivated by the conviction that we can do nothing apart from Jesus, and by His instruction to wait for the Spirit before seeking to be witnesses, we want to create space at the end of each session for **commissioning prayer** and general prayer ministry. This time is both a place where people can be awakened to the Spirit of God for themselves and grow in their ability to minister in the Spirit to others. This may be uncomfortable for some. We want to be aware of that without compromising on the Biblical imperative to be Spirit led in our lives and ministry. It is okay if this space is a little “messy”. LTS is intended to be a safe place where people can learn to live and minister in the reality of the Holy Spirit. A place where they can try, fail, and lovingly be coached into greater confidence and proficiency in this element of their faith.

# DAILY PRACTICES

The hope of LTS is to move people beyond information to transformation. Most of us know more than enough to impact our communities in significant ways. What we need more of is the application of what we already know.

**“We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking.”<sup>6</sup>**

With this in mind, each weekly gathering ends by inviting people to carry a practice with them into their everyday lives. Complimentary **Trigger Prayers** that express the main idea of the session are given to trigger people throughout their day helping them put what they have learned into practice. **In times of review**, it is helpful to process not only the taught material but also the practices and trigger prayers. How did people find the practice? What was hard? What was difficult? Where do they need support and prayer? People will almost certainly find these practices challenging, particularly those that call us to action. It is important to extend much grace and encouragement as people learn to grow in the practices.

# PERSONAL DEVOTION

In a further attempt to help people integrate the concepts of LTS into their everyday lives, there is a **LTS daily devotion**. This is a short daily reflection on Scripture that further unpacks each of the sessions and helps people explore the ideas in prayerful contemplation with God. As a leader, encourage people to find time each day to go through these devotions and check in with them on how they are finding this journey. These devotions can be helpful material to discuss as you check in with people throughout the week. Asking questions like, “How are you finding the devotions? What do you sense God might be saying to you? What are you finding challenging about the devotions?” are all helpful.

# REMEMBER

All discipleship is invitation. People grow at the pace of God. We can neither force nor engineer the process; we can simply provide signposts on our common journey and encourage people to follow them to deeper friendship with Jesus. Sometimes people will resist God’s invitation to them in a way that can frustrate you as leader. Take that frustration to God in prayer. Thank Him for how serving others is helping you become a more patient, loving person and ask Him to move in the lives of those He has called you to serve in the way that He deems fit. Then trust Him for the grace to show up again and serve in the strength of His Spirit.

# **THE SESSIONS**



### 3: WELCOME AND PREPARING THE HEART

*Growth point: To grow in expectation for the LTS journey and to leave with a clearer understanding of where you are and where God wants to take you.*

#### CONNECTION

As you prepare to host each session in a way that facilitates community, here is a checklist to go through before people arrive.

**1). Prepare your space.** Clean the space. Put on some music. Maybe have some drinks and snacks set up (you could ask different people each week to bring something for this.) Make sure all your technology is working. If possible, have a few spare booklets ready in case people forget theirs. Spray some air freshener or light a scented candle — small things like this help people feel welcome.

**2). Prepare your mind.** It is one thing to be physically present; it is another to be mentally present. As people arrive, it is likely they will be coming from all kinds of things that happened in their day. If you are mentally preoccupied with unresolved issues and errands, you will not be able to help them feel connected. Take a moment before people arrive to set your own preoccupations aside to be fully present to the people you are serving.

**3). Prepare your heart.** A course does not change people. Only God can do that. If LTS is to be effective in facilitating transformation in and through people, it must be saturated in prayer from beginning to end. If you are going to be effective as a leader, you also need to be saturated in prayer. Spend time in prayer preparing your heart for the session and trusting God to do what only He can do.

Once people have arrived and settled, take a moment to welcome them and to offer a brief introduction of the journey ahead.

Welcome to Live the Story (LTS)! If you are here, it is probably because you have been captured by the story of Jesus. You realise that His is not just one story among many, but rather The Story that matters more than any other.

**If you are here, it is because you are longing for more.**

You want more from your faith than simply agreeing with or admiring the story of Jesus from a distance. You want to live it into reality as you carry it in your everyday life. You want the people who meet you to increasingly encounter Him.

You believe, and quite rightly so, that your Bible is not only a window to the past but an invitation for the present and a path into the future. You want to know how to say yes to that invitation — how to walk that path. Through LTS, our hope is to help you do just that. Together we will explore **1 core conviction** and **4 simple practices**. These tools will help you move beyond information to transformation as you live out new ways of thinking.

## THERE ARE 3 ELEMENTS OF THE JOURNEY

*WEEKLY GATHERINGS, DAILY PRACTICES & PERSONAL DEVOTIONS*

**Weekly Gatherings** create a space where you can hear teachings on each of the key concepts for LTS, discuss what you are learning, reflect of your journey, and spend time in prayer with your group. These gatherings really are the foundation of the LTS journey, and we would encourage you to show up with an expectation for God to meet with you in meaningful ways.

**Daily Practices and Trigger Prayers** help you apply what you are learning each week to your everyday life. As you carry the trigger prayer with you, you are reminded to ask God to help you live out each weekly practice in your everyday life. You will be amazed at how He comes rushing to those kinds of prayers.

**Personal Devotions** lead you into a deeper exploration of the key concepts in LTS whilst looking at them from different angles and helping you process them for yourself.

All of this is done with the help of your leader who is there to pray, listen, and encourage you as you step out with God into all that He is inviting you into in this season.

Here you may want to pause to take any questions for clarity that people may have while bearing in mind that many of those questions will be answered as people progress through the session.

With all that said, let us begin with prayer. After all, none of what we have just described is possible unless God does it both in us and through us.

## PREPARING THE HEART

Every journey has a starting place and a destination. The LTS journey is no different. Before we can move forward together, we need to stop and take note of where we are and where we think God might be wanting to take us in the coming weeks. Even the best map or journey might still leave us lost in the same woods we are trying to get out of if we do not get clarity on either of these issues.

## WHERE ARE YOU?

The wonderful thing about Jesus is He meets us where we are and not where we pretend to be or where we think we should be. The following exercise should help you get a sense of where you are.

### ***PERSONAL REFLECTION***

In a time of personal reflection, ask God to show you where you are. As you listen to His leading, pay attention to any emotions, thoughts, memories, fears, disappointments, etc. that rise from the deep places within you. After a moment of listening, use the space provided or a separate piece of paper to express in words or pictures what you feel God might be saying to you.

Here you may want to play some music in the background and encourage people to find a space somewhere in the room where they can reflect. Give this process about 10 minutes and when people are done call them back to the group. Use this time to set up the God object in the centre of the group. This can be a rock, a lamp, a bowl of water, or anything else that you feel signifies God in some way.

## ***GROUP FEEDBACK***

Once your time of reflection is over, come back together with your group. As you sit in a circle, you will notice an object in the middle. It may be a candle, a rock, a bowl of water, or anything your leader has chosen to represent God. In this time of feedback, you will be asked to briefly introduce yourself (your name, where you are from, and how you heard about LTS) and then you are going to explain what you have drawn or written down. After your explanation, you will be asked to place your booklet/piece of paper as close or near to the object in the middle of the circle as you feel to God in the moment. You will then be asked to place your paper/booklet as close or near to the object as you hope to feel to God at the end of the LTS journey.

Here you want to strike the balance between hearing people's hearts and managing time. Remember in this place we want to honour people's vulnerability in a way that sets the tone for the group going forward. Also, remember the principle that we are always participants and not just facilitators. One of the ways to cultivate vulnerability is to model it yourself.

## **WHERE ARE YOU GOING?**

### ***A LETTER TO YOURSELF***

Make sure you have prepared envelopes, paper, and pens in advance for this exercise. It is typically a good idea to have some reflective music playing in the background during a reflective exercise like this. You could give this about 10 minutes.

Having taken the time to listen to where you are as you start this journey; it is important to listen to where God might be wanting lead you in the coming weeks. In a moment of personal reflection, ask God to show you where He wants to take you. How does He want you to grow? What does He want to heal? In which area does He want to set you free? After a time of listening, write a letter to your future self that expresses what you feel God has said. It might look something like this...

*Dear (insert your name here)*

*It is the (date) and I have been asking God what is on His heart for you as you start this LTS journey. These are just some of the things I feel He might be saying...*

*As you step out in faith to grow in all that God has for you, my prayer for you is this...*

*I love you (Insert your name here)*

When you are done, fold your letter or put it in the envelope provided, write your name on it, and give it to your leader. No one will read this letter except you. When you come to the end of your LTS journey, this letter will be given back to you, and you will be able to celebrate the faithfulness of God who has met you in the places of your deepest longing.

It is important to honour this act of trust from people. These letters are not to be read by anyone other than the people who wrote them. Collect them and keep them in a safe place (locked in a desk or some equivalent.) At the end of the course, give them back to the people who wrote them. This means you need to make sure their names are written on them.

### ***PRAY***

End the session by closing in a time of prayer for one another and entrusting yourselves to God in the coming week as He prepares your heart to jump into the LTS journey.

**To find out more about Live The Story and running it in your community you can contact us at [www.mattlewis.co.za](http://www.mattlewis.co.za)**