

# DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS

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**A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ**

by Greg Ogden (Illinois: IVP Connect, 2007)

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*a book review by Jack De Vries*



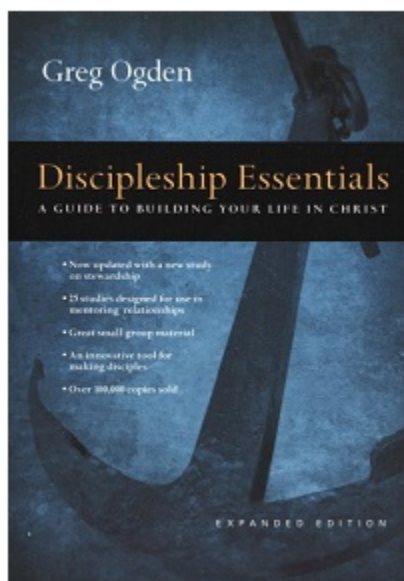
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About the author:

**Greg Ogden** (D.Min., Fuller Theological Seminary) is executive pastor of discipleship at Christ Church of Oak Brook in Oak Brook, Illinois. Previously he was academic director of the doctor of ministry program and associate professor of lay equipping and discipleship at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. A pastor for 23 years with the Presbyterian Church, USA, he also served for nine years as senior pastor of Saratoga Federated Church in Saratoga, California. While there, he developed a discipleship program used by over 15,000 people and resulting in his book, *Discipleship Essentials*. Ogden has also written *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Zondervan), *Leadership Essentials* and *Transforming Discipleship* both from InterVarsity Press



When I began church planting in the late 1980's I was determined to pattern myself after the great commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19ff: making disciples. It just so happened then that Greg Ogden came out with his book, *A Disciple's Guide For Today*. This book promised to be an innovative tool for making disciples, and it was true to its promise. I began to use this book as the primary resource for making disciples: taking irreligious people and assist them to become fully yielded followers of Jesus. This helpful tool has since then been republished and expanded into *Discipleship Essentials*.

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## Discover the fullness of life in Christ.

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Here is the publisher's description of this book:

"We grow in Christ as we seek him together. Jesus' own pattern of disciple-making was to be intimately involved with others and allow life to rub against life. By gathering in twos or threes to study the Bible and encourage one another, we most closely follow Jesus' example with the twelve disciples.

"This workbook by Greg Ogden is a tool designed to help you follow this pattern Jesus drew for us. Working through it will deepen your knowledge of essential Christian teaching and strengthen your faith.

Each week contains the following elements:

- a core truth presented in a question-answer format
- a memory verse and accompanying study
- a field-tested inductive Bible study
- a reading on the theme for the week
- questions to draw out key principles in the reading

"This material is designed for groups of three. It has also been used successfully as an individual study program, a one-on-one discipling tool and small group curriculum.

“Jesus had a big enough vision to think small. Focusing on a few did not limit his influence. Rather, it expanded it. *Discipleship Essentials* is designed to help us influence others as Jesus did--by investing in a few.”

When I arrived in Australia to begin working with the Christian Reformed Churches, we joined up with Bray Park Community Church, a CRC church in a northern suburb of Brisbane. It soon became apparent to me that this church, like so many others, did not have a specific discipleship strategy to help people discover the fullness of life in Christ. But as leaders we sensed the need and importance of making disciples.

It was then that I introduced the leaders of the church to *Discipleship Essentials* as well as Ogden companion book for developing leaders: *Leadership Essentials*. And a number of men and women began to be discipled using these resources. Some focused on *discipleship* while others, like myself, focused on *leadership*. But the strategy is the same: meet regularly in groups of 3 (a triad) to go through the five elements of discipleship mentioned above. Last year I met with two up and coming leaders in the church and went through *Leadership Essentials*. This year they are doing the same with two or more others and I am meeting with two new men. This alone underscores the power of discipling. Last year we met as 3; this year there are 10 people meeting; next year there is a potential of more than

*True to its subtitle **Leadership Essentials** shapes vision, is a great tool for multiplying influence, and developing character. It did for me and has encouraged me to share with others. It is a great tool for growing kingdom building leaders.*

*Phil Lethborg  
Youth Pastor*

30 being discipled just from the initial triad that met together last year. And then there are other triads meeting as well. Before you know it there will be hundreds of people being discipled in the faith and discovering the fullness of life in Christ.

If you are serious about making disciples and growing leaders, then catch the vision, order 3 copies of *Discipleship Essentials*, and invest yourself into making disciples. You will not be disappointed!

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What some others have said:

“Not only have I enjoyed the fellowship of meeting together with two other "leaders" and the accountability and prayer time, but digging into God's word and seeing how we as leaders need a Christlike attitude in all aspects of our daily living, has been very beneficial. The verses that applied to each lesson brought new meaning after studying the lesson that coincided with it. We have an awesome responsibility of leading people to Christ and being His representation in the world around us and we need to constantly review our lives through the eyes of the Bible and doing this course together keeps our focus clear!”

Jeannie De Vries

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“I have found *Leadership Essentials* beneficial for three reasons: First, there are the bible studies which give you a deeper biblical

understanding of leadership compared to just reading about the principles or character traits of leadership. Second, the leadership exercises made you take a hard look at your own personal walk with God and leadership style/thought/behaviours. Third, and the most beneficial for me, was the interaction with the discipleship group members which helped you share your struggles and learn from one another. I think the group dynamic of 3 to 4 people is a great model for discipling.”

Wayne Crouch