

Is Jesus Contacting You?



Participant's Guide

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With excerpts from:
The Holy Bible
Think, Act, Believe by Randy Frazee
And
The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Connect Group Discussions

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• JESUS

Hello
my child

G

Jesus, why
call me?



Meet me
in My Word
Jeremiah 29:11

G

What Drives Your Life?

Connect:

Welcome to the first session of *Is God Calling You?*

Take 10 minutes to check in with each other.

What did you do for fun this summer?

Where did you go? Who/what did you see?

Warm Up:

When have you ever read an Owner's Manual or watched a YouTube video for instructions? Why did you read/watch it?

Chew on this:

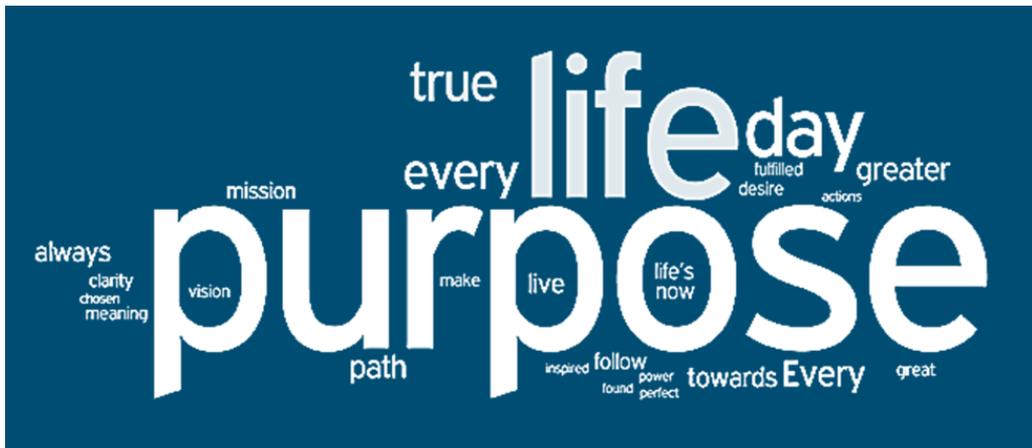
“Without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning. Without meaning, life has no significance or hope. In the Bible, many different people expressed this hopelessness. Isaiah complained: *‘I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing.’* Job said, *‘My life drags by – day after hopeless day’* and *‘I give up; I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense.’* The greatest tragedy is not death, but life without purpose.”¹

Pray:

Father, as we gather together to begin this series of discussions with one another, join with us. You created each of us in your image, so we could be connected with you. Your Word is the “Owner’s Manual” for our lives. In it, we can discover the meaning of life ... our purpose ... Your purpose designed for us from the very beginning!

Holy Spirit, fill us with hope as we discover why we are here in this place at exactly this time. We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.

VIDEO Notes:



What would your family and friends say is the driving force in your life?

**What brings you happiness in life?
Where do you find meaning in your life? Why do these things matter most to you?**

Does happiness have to be connected to purpose?

Bible

Wise King Solomon desperately searched for the meaning of life almost a thousand years before Christ. Everything is meaningless until we know our relationship to God and begin to look at life with an eternal perspective. He writes about it in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-6 (ESV):

“But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.”

**What conclusion does Solomon reach
at the end of his life?**

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (MSG)

“But regarding anything beyond this, dear friend, go easy. There’s no end to the publishing of books, and constant study wears you out so you’re no good for anything else. The last and final word is this: Fear God. Do what He tells you. And that’s it. Eventually God will bring everything that we do out into the open and judge it according to it’s hidden intent, whether it’s good or evil.”

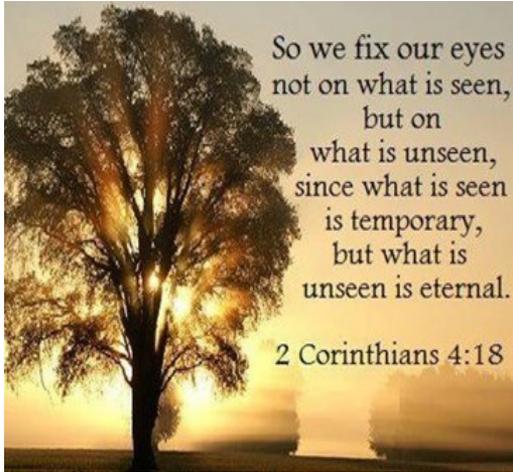
Why does Solomon end his book of Ecclesiastes with “the last and final word”?

Do you agree?

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is dark blue with ripples. In the background, there are several tall, thin structures, possibly buildings or towers, reflected in the water. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

The Lord delights in
those who fear him,
who put their hope in
his unfailing love.
Psalm 147:11

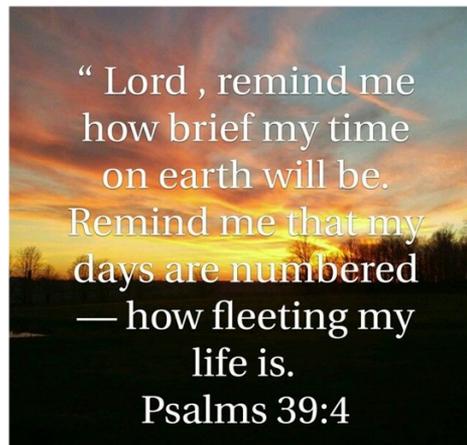
Life is a Temporary Assignment



Compared with eternity, life is extremely brief. Your identity is in eternity and your homeland is Heaven. God is very blunt about the danger of living in the here and now and adopting the values, priorities, and lifestyles of the world around us. Compared with other centuries, life has

never been easier for much of our country. We are constantly entertained, amused, and catered to. It's easy to forget that the pursuit of happiness is not what life's all about. As long as we remember that life is a test, a trust, and a temporary assignment will the appeal of these things lose their grip on our lives. We are preparing for something even better. We are not completely happy here because we're not supposed to be!

**What is God's goal for your life:
material prosperity,
career success, or
something else?**



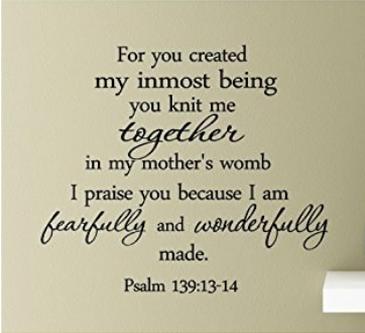
If you knew your time on earth was not the end of your story, what would you change now?

When you die your earthly death, you will go to your home with God, taking your relationship with Him and your relationship with other Christians with you.

What else – or who else – would you want to also take with you?

It's Time to Settle This Issue

Who are you going to live for – yourself or God? You may hesitate, wondering whether you will have strength to live for God. Don't worry. God will give you what you need if you will just make the choice to live for Him. Right now,

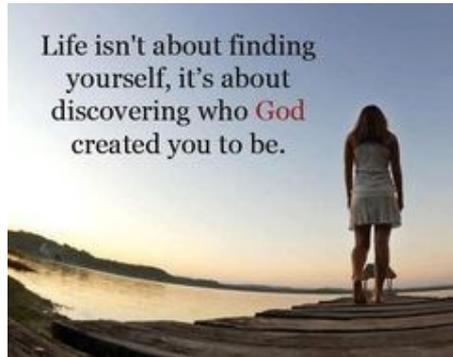


God is inviting you to live in His glory by fulfilling the purposes He made for you. It's really the only way to live. Everything else is just *existing*. Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ.

Believe that God loves you and made you for His purposes. Believe you are not an accident. Believe you were made to last forever. Believe God has chosen you to have a relationship with Jesus, who died on the cross for you. Believe that no matter what you've done, God wants to forgive you.

“It is finished.”

Jesus spoke these words as He died on the cross. What did He finish? He brought you back into a right relationship with the Father and you will never again be separated from Him. You cannot earn God's favor by anything you do or don't do, but you have earned His favor by what Jesus did for you. It has been finished, forever.



How can I be certain I will go to Heaven one day?

What is your God-given purpose here on earth?



Reflect On This:

It's not about me. It's all about Him. Does knowing this change your perspective on life or your purpose for living? How?

Write your personal prayer to God here:

Leaders Notes:

How do we find purpose?

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon concluded that if you don't know the purpose of your life, it ends up being meaningless: tiresome, unfulfilling, and uncontrollable. So, what do you do? When you don't know the point of life, you have just two options:

- ▶ Make up your own
- ▶ Discover God's purpose

You can try to make up some meaning. People do this all the time. They try to create meaning through a hobby, sport, craft, career, or something else. These activities may be fun, but inside people know there must be more to life than this. Something is missing!

Thank goodness there's a second option! God knows the meaning and purpose of your life because He created you. If you want to know the purpose of your life, you must begin with God, not yourself, or what anybody else thinks. You were created for God's purposes.

"It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, He had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose He is working out in everything and everyone."

• JESUS

FOR I
KNOW the
PLANS I have
FOR YOU
DECLARES THE LORD
PLANS TO PROSPER YOU
AND NOT TO HARM YOU
PLANS TO GIVE YOU **HOPE**
& **a FUTURE**

JEREMIAH 29:11



• JESUS

Hello
my child

G

God, what does
spending time with
You look like?



Meet me
in my word
Ps.66:3-5

G

What Makes God Smile?

Connect :

During the last session, we learned that: **“It’s not about me. It’s all about Him.”** We become everything God wants us to be when we shape our perspective this way. How has this truth affected you since the last session?

Warm Up:

**When you were growing up,
what was your picture of God?**

Chew on this:

One of the greatest gifts God has given you is the ability to enjoy life, and the pleasures of life. He wired you with five senses and emotions to fully experience life. He created you in His own image and He has emotions, too. He grieves, loves, delights, rejoices, feels sorrow, and even laughs. The Bible says God is pleased with those who worship Him. Anything you do that pleases God is an act of worship. The smile of God is the first purpose of your life.

Anything you do that brings pleasure to God is an act of worship.

Pray:

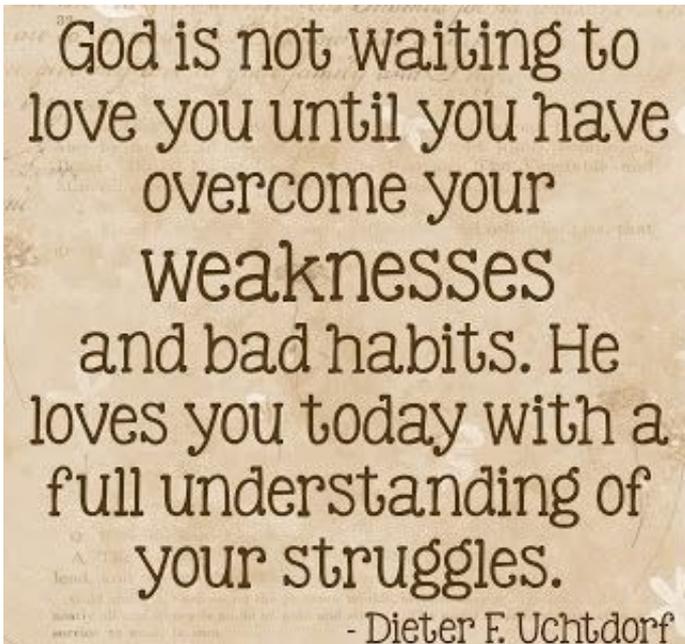
Heavenly Father, You created us to be like You and gave Your Son to provide us the way to You. Help us to trust, obey, and love You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. You know every detail of our lives. We thank you for loving us and caring so much that you provide for all of our needs. You always know what is best for us, so help us to walk faithfully in your light We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

VIDEO Notes:

What does it mean to be a friend of God?

How often do you think of God during the day?

When was the last time you verbally invited God to one of your activities?



Bible

David praises God in the Psalms for delivering the people from slavery in Egypt. God delivers all His people: past, present and future. Underline the phrases in the following verses that express “worship”.

Read Psalm 66:3-5, 69: 30-31 and 86:8-10 (ESV):

“Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name.” Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf!

I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.

Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.”

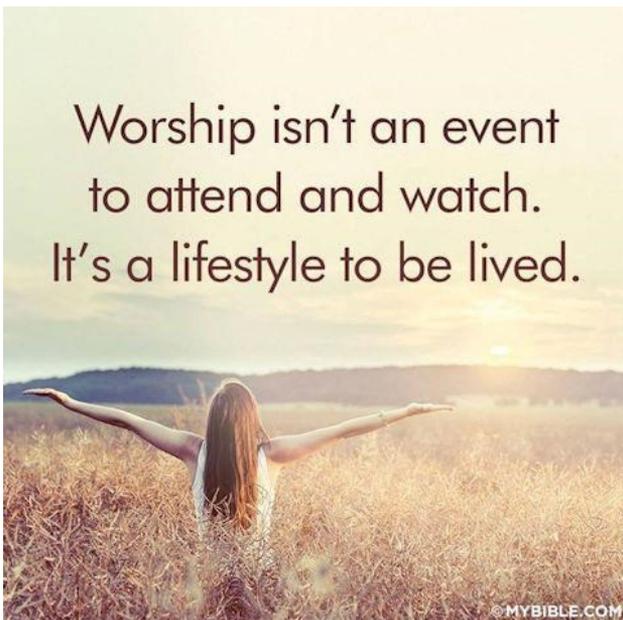
**What significant deeds has God done for you?
How do you praise and worship Him?**

Worship is Far More Than Music

For many people, WORSHIP is just a synonym for music. Or, maybe your understanding is that worship is singing, prayer, sermon, and liturgy. Worship can include all of these elements, but it is far more. Worship is a lifestyle.

Jesus said that the Father seeks worshippers, so it's important to know what worship actually is. Number one, worship isn't for you. It's for God. We don't worship to please ourselves. We worship to please God. In Isaiah 29, God complains about worship that is half-hearted. God's heart is not touched by tradition, but by passion and commitment.

The secret to living a lifestyle of worship is to do everything as if you were doing it for Jesus. Work, leisure, and relationships become worship when you dedicate it to God and perform it with an awareness of His presence. Can you make God smile?



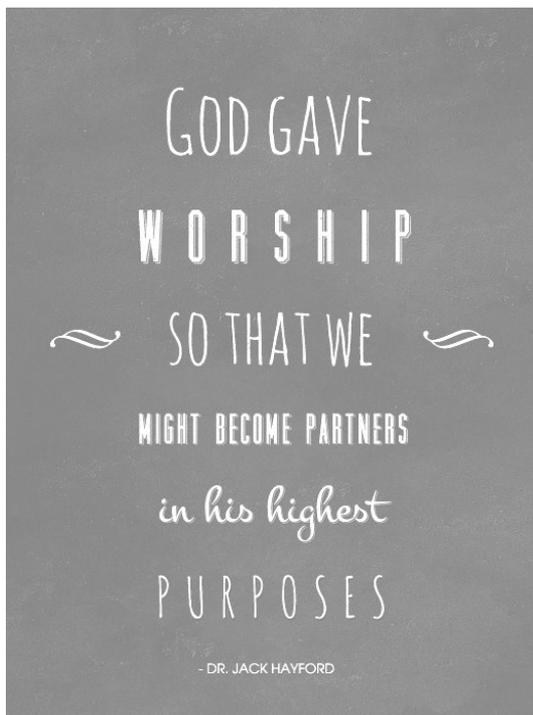
What worship style do you like best? Why?

You are as Close to God as You Want to Be

God doesn't want to be a part of your life. He wants all of it. He asks for all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. He desires your full devotion, not little bits of your life.

When we worship, God sees past our words into the attitude of our heart. Are we authentically representing our love for God? Are we using all our heart, soul, mind, and strength when we speak the words of liturgy in the Sunday morning worship service? Is our focus on God or is our mind wandering off to our "to-do" list?

God wants our worship to be a living sacrifice. In our daily act of worship, our actions reflect our love for God and for His people. We extend kind words to those who may need our comfort. We stop to help the person who can't quite reach that item on the top shelf. We praise God even when we don't feel like it.



**To be a Christian without prayer
is no more possible than to be
alive without breathing.**

Martin Luther

As Christians, we believe and profess that Jesus is our Lord. We hear God's Word in the Bible and speak to Him through prayer. This constant conversation builds and nurtures our relationship with God. Our faith deepens as we experience and recognize God's interaction in our life. Our great love for Him is expressed when we share His love with others.

When God seems distant, know that He is not. Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you". He wants you to know He is still there, even when we walk away. Will you seek Him and continue to love, trust, obey, and worship Him, even when you have no sense of His presence or visible evidence of His work in your life? God is always present—that is a fact, not a feeling. Faith in that pleases God.

Why did God, the Father, allow Jesus to be crucified brutally on the cross? Jesus could have saved Himself. But then He couldn't have saved you. You were saved from eternity in hell and now you share in God's glory forever! Jesus gave up everything so that you could have everything. That alone is worthy of your continual thanks and praise and worship!

What kind of regular “contact” do you have with God right now?

- Attend church
- Pray once a day
- Services once a week
- Pray at every meal
- Pray continually
- Services once a month
- Read the Bible daily
- Discuss God’s Word with others weekly
- Listen to Praise music
- Listen to Christian podcasts in the car daily OR weekly

If you continued this pattern of nurturing your relationship with God, would you grow closer or farther away from Him? Why?

What else do you do regularly in your life that makes God smile?

Leaders Notes:

Your relationship with God has many aspects: God is your Creator and Maker, Lord and Master, Judge, Redeemer, Father, Savior, and much more. But did you know He also wants to be your friend? God's greatest desire—and the story of the Bible—is that He wants to be with you.

Jesus said, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

That God would want me for a close friend is hard to understand, but the Bible says, He is a God who is passionate about His relationship with you. God deeply desires that we know Him intimately. Knowing and loving God is our greatest privilege, and being known and loved is God's greatest pleasure.

Friendship with God is built by sharing all your life experiences with Him. God wants more than an appointment on your schedule. He wants to be included in every activity, every conversation, every problem, and even every thought. “Pray without ceasing” means conversing with God while shopping, driving, working, or performing any other everyday task. Because God is with you all the time, no place is closer to God than where you are right now.

To-Do: Develop ways to remind yourself to think about God and talk to Him more often throughout the day.

• JESUS

Hello
my child

G

Jesus, how will
being part of your
family help me?



Let's look in
My Word
1 Peter 4:8-9

G

Do I Fit Here?

Connect :

Go around the room and share two things about yourself that you think no one in your group knows about you. Can anyone else relate? Try to discover commonalities between group members with these “little known facts” about you.

Warm Up:
How is your
Connect Group
experiencing
Koinonia?

Koinonia = a Greek term for fellowship or Christian friendship, where believers in Christ come together in love, faith, and encouragement.

Chew on this:

Life is meant to be shared. The Body of Believers, i.e., the church, is designed by God to live in community with Him and experience life together with each other. “One another” is found 59 times in the Bible and provides clear instruction about how we are to relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. However, community takes time and commitment. Learning how to think, act, and be like Jesus will take you to the next level in your koinonia with others.

Pray:

Loving Lord, thank You for all my Christian friends, and thank You that You have made us one in You. Instill in each of our hearts a thirst for holiness and righteousness. Help us to know you more and love each other better. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

VIDEO Notes:

In what ways is koinonia challenging?



What are the risks in not gathering together with your Christian friends?

How can the fellowship of your Connect Group grow to a deeper level?

Bible

The early church met in both the temple and in homes. They gathered regularly to share a meal, listen to the Apostles teachings, and pray. This is not unlike today's gathering at the church building for worship on Sunday and meeting in our homes (or other locations) in Connect Groups. Our Connect Groups are devoted to the teachings of the Bible, sharing a meal or snack, and praying together.

Read Acts 2:42-47 (NIV):

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

What were the results of meeting together?

A decorative horizontal branch with small, bright yellow leaves and green stems, arching over the word "they".

they

BROKE bread

in their HOMES

& ate together with

GLAD & SINCERE

A decorative horizontal branch with small, bright yellow leaves and green stems, arching under the word "hearts".

hearts

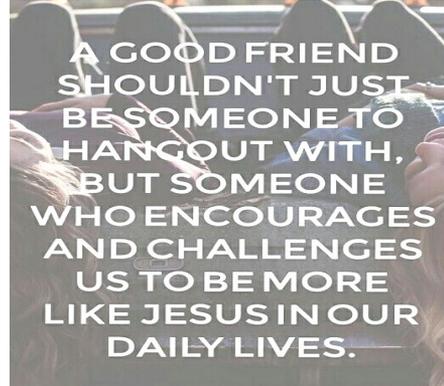
ACTS 2:46

Cultivating Community

Community is not built on convenience (“we’ll get together when I feel like it”) but on the conviction that we need it for spiritual health. If we want to cultivate real Christian friendship, it means meeting together even when we don’t feel like it. Because we believe it’s important.

Real Christian friendship takes :

- honesty
- humility
- courtesy
- confidentiality
- frequency



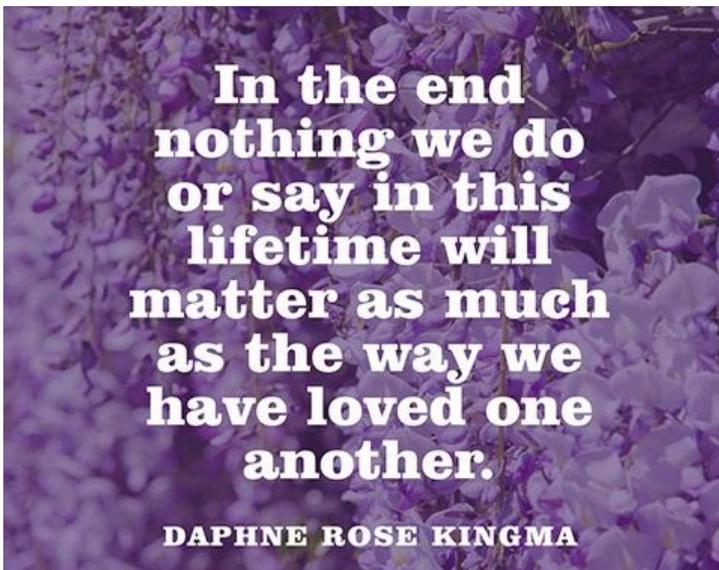
The Bible tells us to “speak the truth in love”. We ought to love our friend enough to be honest with them in the most loving way. When we think more of them than ourselves, we can show grace which comes out of humility. The Bible tells us that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Paul told Titus that God’s people should be bighearted and courteous. Will we love our “difficult” brothers and sisters and treat them with dignity by walking in their shoes? With grace, kindness, and confidentiality, we set up an environment of emotional safety and trust where people open up. Community and friendships take time. Genuine fellowship, or *koinonia*, is rare - It means giving up our self-centeredness and independence to become connected in Christ.

How can we cultivate these characteristics of real community in our Connect Group?

How does God's design for you to be in Christian fellowship change your priorities?

How difficult will it be for you to commit the time required to be in koinonia?

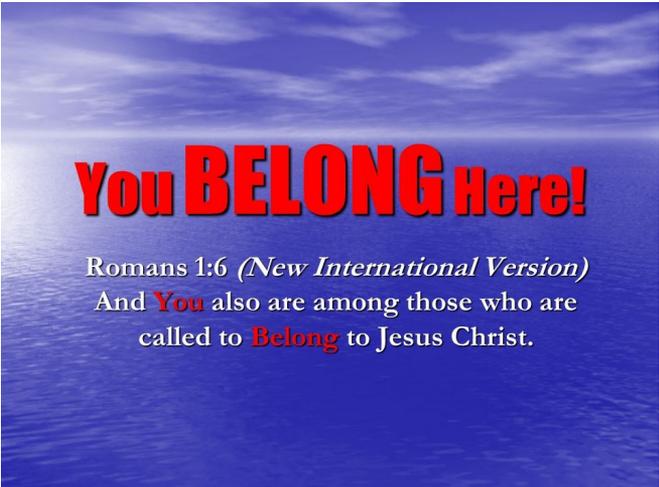


Called to Belong

Biblical community engages all its members to use their gifts, resources, and time together to accomplish tasks important to God's plan. The Bible compares the church to a body, all the parts working together to accomplish what needs to be done. He equips each of us with skills and gifts but it is up to each of us to use those gifts for God's intended purposes. As a community, we must also *decide* to work together in unity. When this happens, amazing things are accomplished. Miracles. Lives changed.

Jesus compares the Christian life to a vine. If we remain in the vine of Christ, over time we will produce amazing fruit at the end of our branches for all to taste and see. Jesus wants us to produce ripe, delicious fruit, but we cannot if we do not remain firmly connected to the vine.

You are called to belong to Jesus Christ. He calls you to belong to a family, or community, of Christians. As part of the family of Christ, you are called to serve your brothers and sisters. And you are called to tell others about the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus.



You BELONG Here!

Romans 1:6 (*New International Version*)

And **You** also are among those who are called to **Belong** to Jesus Christ.

How do you use your God-given gifts and talents? What influence does this have on others?

Ecclesiastes 4:12 speaks of a threefold cord that is not easily broken? What does this mean?

What difference does belonging to a church make in your life? How about belonging to a Connect Group?

Is there someone in your life that needs to “belong” right now?

Reflect On This:

I am called to belong, not just believe. Does my level of involvement in my church demonstrate that I love and am committed to God's family?

Write your personal prayer to God here:

Leaders Notes:

“You are joined together with peace through the Spirit, so make every effort to continue together in this way.”

Ephesians 4:3 (NCV)

“Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony.”

Colossians 3:14 (TLB)

God deeply desires that we experience oneness and harmony with each other. Unity is the soul of fellowship. Destroy it and you rip the heart out of Christ’s Body. It is the essence, the core, of how God intends for us to experience life together in His church.

Nothing on earth is more valuable to God than His church. He paid the highest price for it, and He wants it protected, especially from the devastating damage that is caused by division, conflict, and disharmony. If you are part of God’s family, it is your responsibility to protect the unity of your church.

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Ephesians 4:3 (NIV)

Focus on what we have in common, not on our differences. Be realistic in your expectations. Choose to encourage rather than criticize.



• JESUS

Let's meet in
Colossians
3:14



— — — — —
And above all these put on

LOVE

which binds everything
together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3:14

9:41 AM 100%

JESUS

Hello
my child

G

Jesus, how can
your Love
transform me?



Let's look at
Romans 12:2

G

How Do I Grow?

Connect :

Share experiences you've had with connecting with each other since the last time you met. Was it at church? Did you run into each other at the store? Did you call each other on the phone or get together? Other?

Warm Up:

Do you have a role model? What makes him/her a role model for you?

Chew on this:

From the very beginning, God's plan has been to make you like His Son, Jesus. In all of creation, only humans were made in God's image. But the image is incomplete and has been damaged by sin. So God sent Jesus on a mission to restore the full image that we have lost. He wants us to think, act, and become like Jesus. We are to take on His values, attitudes, and character. God's ultimate goal in this life is not for you to be comfortable, but to develop Christ-like character. The kind of character He describes in the beatitudes, fruit of the Spirit, and Paul's chapter on love illustrate that full image of Christ and the image we were originally created in.

Pray:

Heavenly Father, You sent your Son to restore a right relationship with you. Forgive us for our sins and bring us into that right relationship. We thank you for sending your Son to make things right again with You. Help us to also have meaningful Christian fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.

VIDEO Notes:



**YOU WERE CREATED
TO BECOME LIKE CHRIST**

What do you think the full image of Christ looks like ?

Have you ever had a “character-building” experience?

How did that change you?

How does the Bible help shape your character?

Bible

We are created in the likeness of God. God did not design us to become a god, but wants us to become godly, taking on His values, attitudes and character. In the passage below, underline God's character traits.

Read Ephesians 4: 17-32 (NIV):

“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

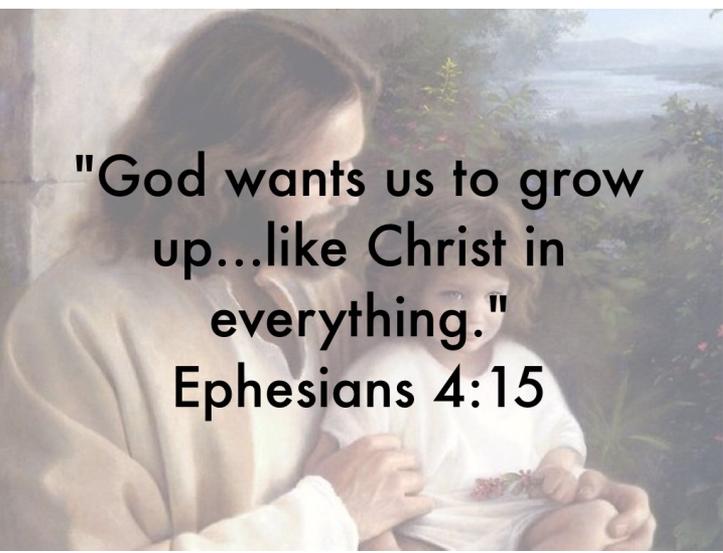
That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

How We Grow

Christlikeness is the result of making Christlike choices and depending on His Spirit to help you fulfill those choices.



**"God wants us to grow up...like Christ in everything."
Ephesians 4:15**

Once you decide to get serious about becoming like Christ, you must begin to act in new ways. You will need to let go of some old routines, develop some new habits, and intentionally change the way

you think. You can be certain that the Holy Spirit will help you with these changes. The Bible says, *“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.”*

This verse shows the two parts of spiritual growth: “work out” and “work in”. The “work out” is your responsibility and the “work in” is God’s role. It’s a collaborative effort. This verse is not about how to be saved, but how to grow. It does not say, “work for” your salvation. You can’t add anything to what Jesus already did. When you “work out” a puzzle, you already have all the pieces—your task is to put them together. Farmers “work” the land—not to get land, but to develop what they already have. God has given you a new life; now you are responsible to develop it.

In your own words, what does it mean to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”?

What Christian leader has personally invested in your growth as a follower of Christ?

When was the last time you made a choice that was not Christlike? How did that turn out for you?

What can you do tomorrow to become more Christlike?

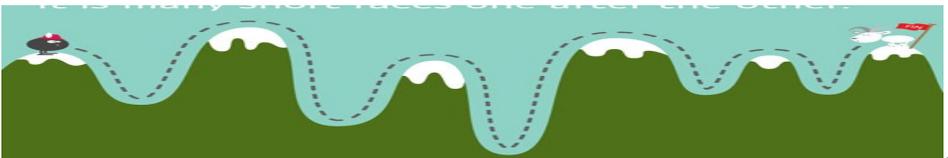
It Takes Time

Why does it take so long to become Christlike? Although, God could instantly transform us, He has chose to develop us slowly. Jesus is deliberate in developing His disciples. Just as God allowed the Israelites to take over the Promised Land little by little, so they wouldn't be overwhelmed, He prefers to work in incremental steps in our lives. There are several reasons He takes time:

- We are slow learners
- We have a lot to unlearn
- We are afraid to humbly face the truth about ourselves
- Habits take time to develop

When Habakkuk became depressed because he didn't think God was acting quickly enough, God had this to say: *"These things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!"* A delay is not a denial from God.

Remember how far you've come, not just how far you have to go. God isn't finished with you yet, so keep on moving forward. Even the snail reached the ark by persevering!



In what areas of your personal growth do you need more patience or perseverance?

When has God's timing been different than yours? What did you learn from that?

Why is it so difficult to give up old habits?

In our fast paced society, how can you embrace a slower pace to spiritual growth?

Be Still AND KNOW THAT
I AM GOD -Psalm 46:10

Reflect On This:

There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity.

What problem in my life has caused the greatest growth in me?

Write your personal prayer to God here:

Leaders Notes:

One of the most concise descriptions of Jesus' character is the fruit of the Spirit: *“When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”*

These nine qualities are an expansion of the Great Commandment and portray a beautiful description of Jesus Christ. Jesus is perfect love, joy, peace, patience, and all the other fruit embodied in a single person. To have the fruit of the Spirit is to be like Christ.

Fruit always matures and ripens slowly. Often, it is through the exact opposite quality that we best learn and experience the ripening of Spiritual fruit. For instance, God teaches us love by putting some unlovely people around us. He teaches us joy in the midst of sorrow. He teaches us patience in circumstances where we are tempted to be angry or have a short fuse.

God uses the opposite situation of each fruit to allow us a choice. You can't claim to be faithful if you've never been tempted to be unfaithful. Integrity is built by defeating the temptation to be dishonest. Humility grows when we refuse to be prideful. Endurance develops every time we reject the temptation to give up. Every time we defeat a temptation, we become more like Jesus!



9:41 AM

100%

• JESUS

Hello
my child,



Jesus, as You
have helped me,
how can I
help others?



Let's look in
My Word
1 Cor. 12:4-11



What Shape Am I?

Connect :

Encourage one another by sharing what strength you see in them. Thank them for being who they are!

Warm Up:

**What activity do you enjoy that your best friend or spouse doesn't enjoy so much?
What do they enjoy that you don't?**

Chew on this:

God created us to add life on earth, not just consume it. God wants us to give back. He has prepared us in advance to do good deeds. These good deeds are your service. Whenever you are serving others, you are actually serving God. You were placed on this planet at this time for a special assignment..



Pray:

Lord God, You prepared work for us to do here on earth according to our gifts and talents. Help us to clearly see the service you want us to do. We know that we cannot by our own strength do the work you have for us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit so that this work will be fruitful and will bless your name. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

VIDEO Notes:



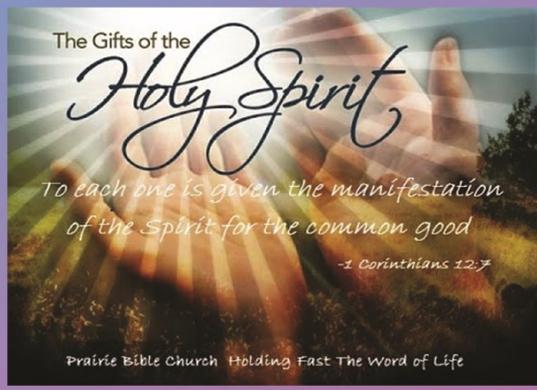
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• JESUS



Let's look in
My Word
1 Cor. 12:4-11





What service or ministry are you involved in at your church?

Is anything holding you back from participating in another ministry opportunity at church?

Do you serve others with your spare time or is your service to others your “first fruits”?

Bible

God designed each of us so that there would be no duplication in the world. No one has the exact same mix of factors that make each of us unique. That means no one else on earth will ever be able to play the role God planned for you.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (ESV):

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”

**What spiritual gifts
does Paul describe here?**

Real Servants

We serve God by serving others. The world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, and position. In our self-serving culture, acting like a servant is not a popular concept.

Jesus measured greatness in terms of service, not status. God determines your greatness not by how many people you serve, not how many people serve you. Thousands of books have been written on leadership, few on servanthood. Even Christians want to be “servant-leaders”, not just plain servants.

Having the heart of a servant is most important. God often tests our heart by asking us to serve in ways we’re not gifted at. Your service is as much where your gifts and talents lie as where you are needed at the moment.

Real servants make themselves available to serve. They jump into service when they are called upon. Much like a soldier, a servant must always be standing by for duty. If you only serve when it’s convenient for you, you’re not a real servant.



What are the rewards God has for us when we serve with a glad and generous heart?

How is being a servant to others contradictory to our society today? Give examples.

How do you know if you have the heart of a servant?

Would you sacrifice your time to help someone in need?
Under what circumstances?

Power in Weakness

God loves to use weak people. We all have weaknesses, whether they are physical, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual. Usually we deny our weaknesses, defend them, excuse them, hide them, and resent them. But God has a different perspective—His thoughts are higher than ours. He will use our weaknesses for His glory and demonstrates His power through you.



The Bible is full of examples of God using imperfect people to do extraordinary things. Moses had imperfect speech, Gideon had deep insecurities, Abraham was fearful, and Peter was impulsive. Paul said, “I am going to boast only about how weak I am and how great God is to use such weakness for His glory.”

What are my main weaknesses?

How do I try to hide my weakness?

How is this hindering my ability to help others?

Reflect On This:

Self-promotion and servanthood don't mix.

Are you living for an audience of one, serving others by serving God first and foremost?

Write your personal prayer to God here:

Leaders Notes:

Is it possible to serve in church for a lifetime without ever being a *servant*? How can you know if you have the heart of a servant? Jesus said, “You can tell what they are by what they do.”

Here are the traits real servants exhibit:

- They make themselves available to serve
- They pay attention to needs
- They do their best with what they have
- They do every task with equal dedication
- They are faithful to their ministry
- They maintain a low profile

Imagine what it'll feel like one day to have God say to you, “Well done my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!”

9:41 AM 100%

• JESUS

G

Hello,
my child

Jesus, I am
ready for Your
mission.



G

Let's look in
My Word
Matthew
28:19-20

What Is My Mission?

Connect :

Share experiences you've had in serving others since the last time you met together as a group. What did you learn?

Warm Up:

When was the last time you met somebody for the first time? What did you learn about the kind of person they were?

Chew on this:

God is at work in the world and He wants you to join Him. Being a Christian in the world includes being sent into the world as a representative of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." What is my mission? Introducing people to God! Once we belong to God and become one of His children, God uses us to reach others.

We are to bring others into God's Kingdom for all eternity. We continue what Jesus started.

You may be the only Christian some people will ever know. What do they see in you? Jesus? Something else? It is an incredible honor to make a positive difference in someone's life. Jesus has secured our salvation. Isn't it a privilege to show others how they can have eternal life as well?

Pray:

Lord and Giver of Life, You are the way to life everlasting. You have given us the greatest news in the world! Help us to share it with others. Teach us to tell others and show others who You are. And may Your Holy Spirit work in the lives of those we share this Good News with. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

VIDEO Notes:

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• JESUS



THE GREAT COMMISSION

John 21:17 (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

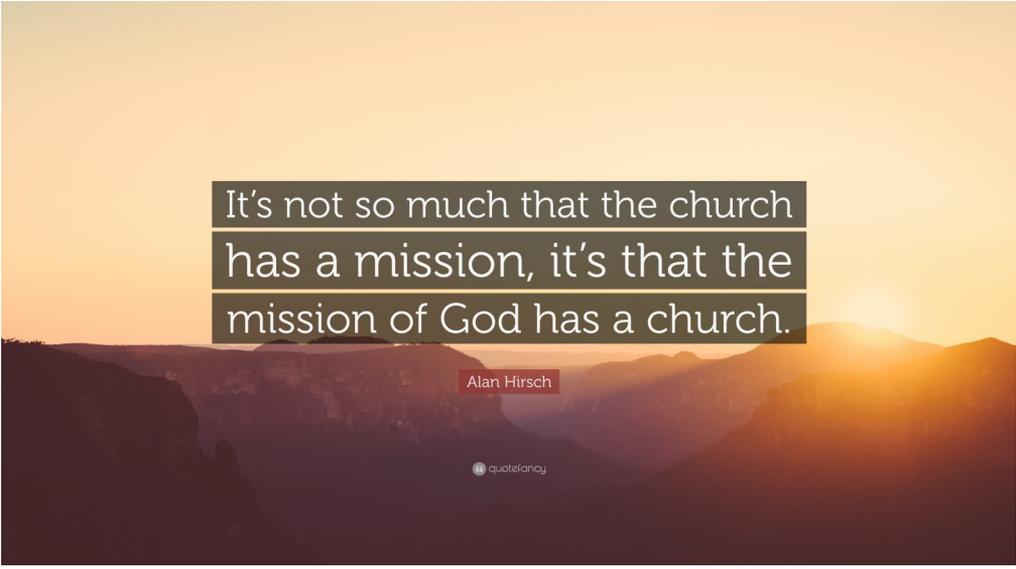
I have a Mission for You



What fears or distractions have kept you from sharing the Good News of Jesus?

How do you know what God wants you to do?

Is Jesus the only way to eternal life?

A quote by Alan Hirsch is centered on a background image of a sunset over a mountain range. The quote is displayed in white text within a dark, semi-transparent rectangular box. The background shows a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow over the silhouetted mountains.

It's not so much that the church
has a mission, it's that the
mission of God has a church.

Alan Hirsch

 quoteancy

Bible

We are created in the *likeness* of God. God did not design us to *become* a god, but wants us to become *godly*, taking on His values, attitudes and character. In the passage below, underline God's character traits.

Read 1 Peter 3: 13-22 (ESV):

“Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.”

How can you “prepare to make a defense”?

God's Messenger

You may feel that you don't have anything to share, but that's the Devil trying to keep you silent. You have a storehouse of experiences that God wants to use to bring others into His family. The Bible says, "Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony of God in them."

What are the most important lessons that God has taught you? These are the lessons and insights you have learned about God, relationships, problems, temptations, and other aspects of life. Do you write your life lessons down? We should be grateful Solomon did this because it gave us the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, which are filled with practical lessons on living.

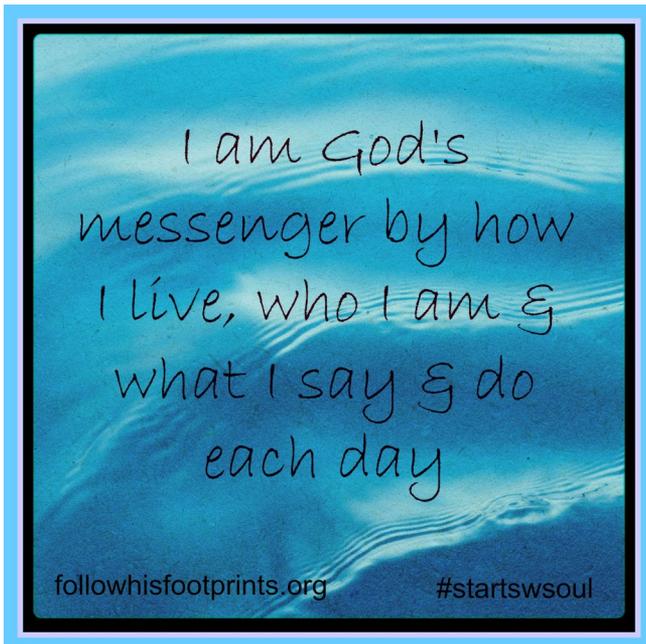
Sharing is most effective when you are passionate about it. God is a passionate God. He passionately loves some things and passionately hates other things. As you grow closer to Him, He will give you a passion for something He cares about deeply so you can be a spokesperson for Him in the world. Whatever passion He gives you, you will feel compelled to speak up about it and do what you can to make a difference. You cannot keep yourself from talking about what you care about most.

God gives us all different passions so that everything He wants done in the world will get done. So don't become discouraged if everyone doesn't share your passion. In the same way, listen to and value each other's mission work because no one can say it all.

What was your life like before you committed it to Jesus?

What is a cause that you are passionate about?
Who else shares your passion?

What has God taught me from my failures?
My successes?



Your Commission

The Great Commission is your commission.

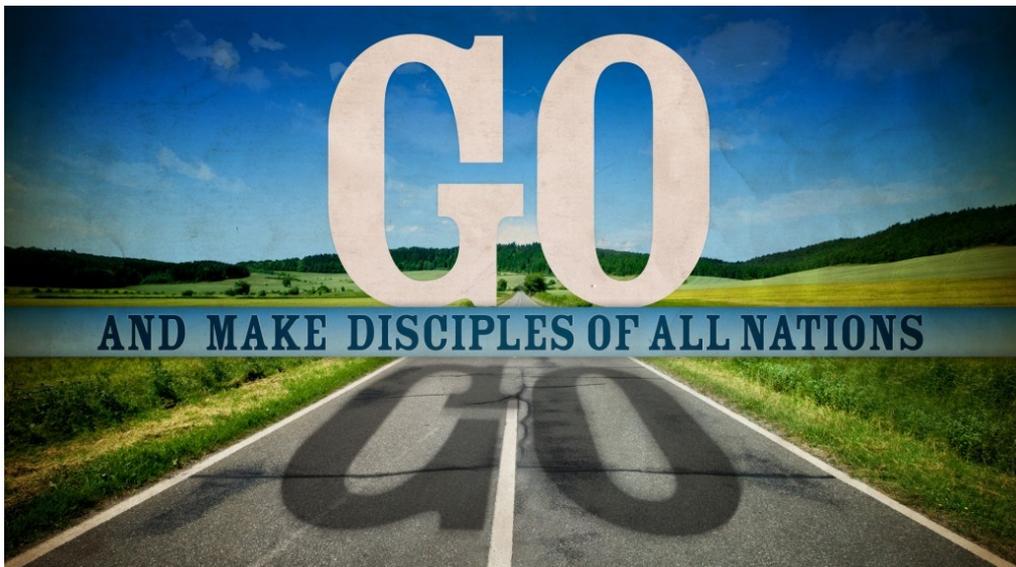
“Jesus came and said to them [the disciples], “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-22 (ESV)

You have a choice to make. You will either be a world-class Christian or a worldly Christian. Worldly Christians look to God for personal fulfillment. They are saved, but self-centered. They want to use God for their purposes instead of being used for His purposes.

In contrast, world-class Christians know they were saved to serve and made for a mission. They are eager to receive a personal assignment from God. They know they’re making a difference.

God invites you to participate in the greatest, largest, most diverse, and most significant cause in history—His Kingdom. History is His Story. He’s building His family for eternity. Nothing matters more, and nothing will last as long. Getting involved as a world-class Christian will allow you to experience a little of what heaven will be like in advance.

Shift from the here-and-now to eternal thinking. This will keep you from majoring on minor issues and distinguish between what’s urgent and what’s ultimate.



Who does God want you to share your story with?

Who are you or can you be praying for right now?

What steps can you take to go on a short term mission experience in the next year?

Reflect On This:

Extract Lessons from everyday experiences.

Write down answers to these questions:

What has God taught me from pain or sorrow?

What has God taught me through waiting?

What has God taught me through illness or injury?

What has God taught me from disappointment?

What have I learned from my family, my church, my relationships, my Connect Group, and my critics?

Write your personal prayer to God here:

Leaders Notes:

To maintain your physical health, you need regular checkups with a doctor who can assess your vital signs—blood pressure, temperature, weight, and so on. For your spiritual health you need to regularly check the five vital signs of worship, fellowship, growth in character, ministry, and mission. Jeremiah advised, “Let’s take a good look at the way we’re living and reorder our lives under God.”

Understanding your purpose for living as a disciple of Jesus and the plan He has for you, focus first on His Kingdom. He designed you to be in a relationship with Him. Are you worshipping regularly with a body of believers? Belonging to a church is fundamental to His purpose for you to have Christian friends that share your joys and sorrows in life. Are you spending time in His Word—the Bible? Individually, in a small group, and corporately in large groups?

Do you recognize the needs of others and what do you do about it? Proverbs tells us, “The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed; those who help others are helped.” If you want to keep growing, the best way to learn more is to pass on what you have already learned. What have you learned from this study? Now pass that on to someone who may not know these valuable lessons!

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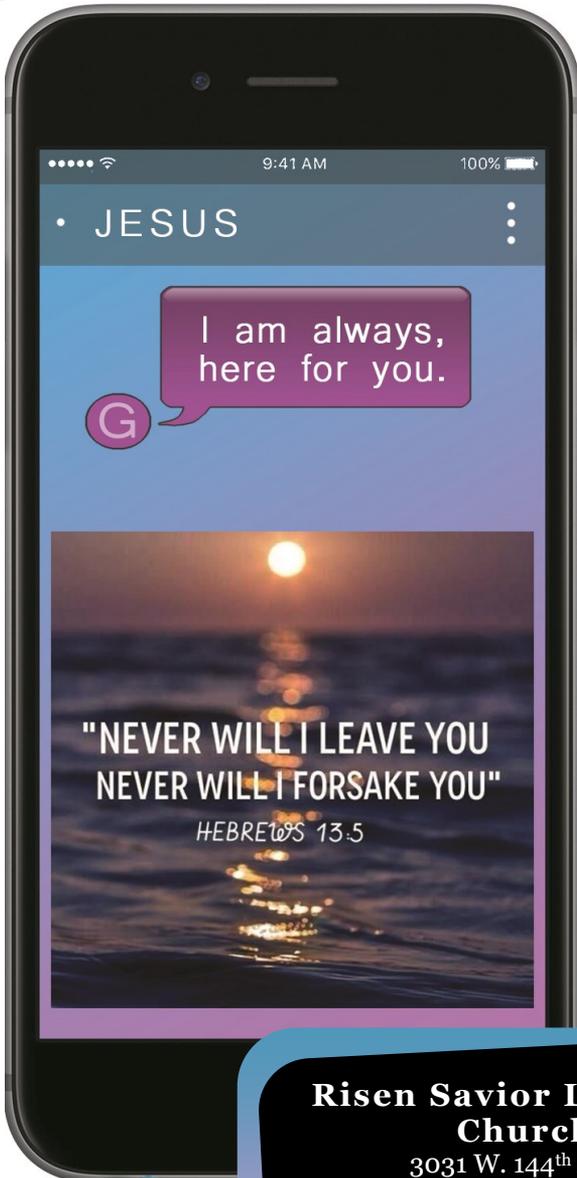
• JESUS

THE GREAT COMMISSION

John 21:17 (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

I have a Mission for You





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