A SHEPHERD’S GUIDE
The purpose of this curriculum is to guide you in beginning a discipleship-focused relationship. We believe that deep conversations enable true discipleship, and this is accomplished by asking good questions and listening. To this end, these 9 lessons are designed around Scripture in order to build a Christ-centered relationship. The following is an outline for your meetings with the person you will be discipling. Our ultimate hope is grow to be more like Christ, and we hope this can help you do just that.
LESSON 1 - THE BIBLE
LESSON 2 - THE TRINITY
LESSON 3 - TIME WITH JESUS
LESSON 4 - REDEMPTION & APPLICATION
LESSON 5 - GENEROSITY & GIVING
LESSON 6 - SIN
LESSON 7 - SHARING YOUR FAITH
LESSON 8 - CHURCH & SPIRITUAL GIFTS
LESSON 9 - PRAYER
LESSON 1 - THE BIBLE

READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER
For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. **Hebrews 4:12-13**

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

TALK ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF STUDYING THE BIBLE
What is the Bible?

“The Bible is a collection of 66 books written by about 40 authors, in three different languages, on three different continents, over approximately 1600 years. The Bible claims to be inspired and inerrant. This means that the Bible claims to be from God and that it is without error in everything it addresses.

The Bible contains many different styles of writing such as poetry, narration, fiction, history, law, and prophecy and must be interpreted in context of those styles. It is the source of the Christian religion in that the Bible contains the words of God and how the Christian is to apply the words of God to his life.” -Matt Slick

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SCRIPTURE?
For God to receive Glory and to reveal Himself to humankind. We believe that all of Scripture points towards Jesus and the forgiveness and redemption found in Him alone.

God wants you to know and enjoy Him by reading the Bible. The purpose of this time together is to help one another have a better understanding of why we read the Bible, and to give some tips on how to better understand the Bible.

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?
WHY DO WE NEED THE BIBLE?

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. 

Isaiah 55:8-11

Q: How does God present Himself in these scriptures?
Q: What is the purpose of Scripture?
Q: Are God’s ways and nature natural to us?
Q: How does the Word equip us for His purpose?

Why should we read the Bible? The Authority of Scripture. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Q: What happens when we read scripture?
Q: Why should we be teaching Scripture to others?
Q: What can Scripture do in a person’s life?
Q: Is scripture authoritative in your life?

View a simple outline of the Bible to help guide your understanding at this link: www.studyjesus.com/images/General_Bible_Outline1.jpg
Study your Bible using:
Read, Ask, and Pray

Read the Bible thoroughly
- Have a plan (look at the Fellowship app for our church’s Bible reading plan)
- Note the structure
- Mark passages that stick out to you.
- Write down anything that stands out to you in your Bible Reading Journal.

Ask questions to get to the deeper meaning
- Who wrote this book?
- What’s going on in history during this time?
- Who was it written to and why?
- What does the author seem to be saying?
- What’s the purpose of the passage?
- What does my study Bible say about this passage?

Pray over the Scripture
- Before reading, ask God to open your eyes to the scriptures.
- After reading, ask God to help you apply this passage to you through His Holy Spirit.
LESSON 2

THE TRINITY

3 2 1
READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deuteronomy 6:4-5

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER

Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

The purpose of talking about the Trinity

In the last lesson we discussed that the Bible is God’s inspired and inerrant word to us. Through the Bible, God shares with us the truth of who He is, the purpose of creation, the tragedy of sin, and the beauty of His redeeming love!

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

In this lesson, we will spend time talking about an essential aspect to the nature of God, the Trinity. Our Lord God is unique, and different from us in many ways. As God reveals Himself to us through the Bible, there are mysteries that we do not fully comprehend. The Trinity can be just that, mysterious and difficult to understand.

Q: Why study the Trinity if we cannot fully understand it?

WHAT IS THE TRINITY?

“God eternally and necessarily exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.” -Wayne Grudem

From our faith statement: “All believers have access to the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. We know them as the Holy Trinity.” 2 Corinthians 13:14
To get a view of what God tells us about His Triune nature, let’s take a look at two pieces of scripture:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **Genesis 1:1-2**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.…… And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:1-3, 14**

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: How many “persons” of the Trinity are mentioned in these two passages combined?
Q: How many “persons” of the Trinity are mentioned in Genesis 1:1-2? Who are they?
Q: How many “persons” of the Trinity are mentioned in John 1:1-3,14? Who are they?
Q: What is God doing in these two passages?

The Westminster Catechism summarizes the Trinity in this way: There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

**THE TRINITY IS ONE**

(Paul writes to the church in Ephesus) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been
predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:3-14

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: How many “persons” of the Trinity are mentioned?
Q: In what verses do you see each person?
Q: What appears to be God the Fathers’ role?
Q: What appears to be Jesus Christ’s role?
Q: What appears to be the Holy Spirit’s role?
Q: When did God begin His saving works for us?

GOD IS COMMUNAL AND INVITES US INTO HIS COMMUNITY

“Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the others revolve around him. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, and adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, and rejoices in the others. That creates a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love. The early leaders of the Greek church had a word for this – perichoresis – from which the English word ‘choreography’ is derived. It means literally to ‘dance or flow around’.” -Timothy Keller

(Jesus speaks to His disciples) “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. John14:15-20

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: What does Jesus promise His disciples?
Q: How do you see the Father, Son, and Spirit working as one to bring us into His community?
Q: Why should we live in community with fellow believers?
And Jesus came and said to them, “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 28:18-20

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: As a follower of Jesus Christ, what is your mission in life?
Q: Why do we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit?

Essential to the Trinity (From Wayne Grudem)
The Trinity is three distinct persons, and the being of each person is equal to the whole being of God. (John 1:1-2)
There are no differences in deity, attributes, or essential nature between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The only distinction between members of the Trinity are in the ways they have and will always relate to each other and in the ways they relate to creation. (1 Cor. 15:28)
If God were not triune then the atonement, justification by faith, and worship of Christ would be pointless because only God can redeem humanity.

CHALLENGE & APPLY
Continue to Read, Ask, and Pray
Study Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalms 45:6-7, 110:1; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 1 Corinthians 15:28 and see what God’s Word says about the Trinity.
TIME WITH JESUS
LESSON 3 - TIME WITH JESUS

READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER
Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. - James 4:8

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT TIME WITH JESUS
By studying the mystery of the Trinity we have come to discover that God is a personal being who desires to have a relationship with us.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. - Psalms 23:1-4

Our Lord God is steadfast in His pursuit of us. God desires to be in relationship with us and has made a way for this through Jesus. Spending time with Jesus shapes our souls and allows us to grow closer to Him and to know Him in a deeper way.

Q: Why is it important to spend time with God regularly?

It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. - C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory
WHY DO I NEED TO SET ASIDE DAILY TIME WITH JESUS?
The relationship that Jesus Christ offers us is different from any other relationship we have. Let’s take a look at a passage to discover a little bit more about that.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. - Matthew 11:28-30

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: How does Jesus describe all those He is calling to Himself?
Q: What does Jesus ask us to do?
Q: Why do we need rest? Do you get to rest?

HOW CAN I GROW IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?
If we truly believe that there is no greater treasure or value than Jesus Christ then why wouldn’t we want more of Him? If we want our relationship with God to flourish than we must prioritize giving our time, energy, and affection to Him.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. - Romans 12:1-2

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: What makes “being conformed to this world” so dangerous?
Q: How does transformation happen?
Q: How has Jesus transformed your life?

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” - Luke 11:1

Use the above verse to answer the questions below:
Q: Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus how to pray?
Q: What is hard about praying for you?
HOW DO I SPEND MY TIME WITH JESUS? (CHALLENGE & APPLY)

Spending time with Jesus is not just about a checklist of things to do, but about connecting with the Lord. Sometimes, we will feel a strong connection with the Lord and sometimes we won’t. The important thing is to spend time with Him.

*Tell the person you’re meeting with about the specifics of your time with the Lord. It’s best to relate this from a personal place. Spend time in prayer focused on the Lord and His goodness Read, Ask, and Pray from the Bible (download the App, myfellowshipapp.com, if you’re not sure what to read)

FINISH READING LUKE 11:1-13
LESSON 4 - REDEMPTION/APPLICATION

READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER.
But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:5

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT REDEMPTION AND APPLICATION
The Bible tells us the story of our King, and of His mission to free His people from the tragedy of sin and death.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7

Every lesson we have walked through so far is about having a relationship with the living God. The Bible is the authoritative source of what we are to believe, think, and feel toward God. Studying the Trinity helps us to understand God’s character and know that He is a relational God. If we dedicate ourselves to daily time with Jesus, we can grow in our relationship with God. As we move into a study of the redemption we have in Christ and the application of that redemption, our hope is to better understand the sacrifice of Jesus and what that means for our lives.
Q: How does the sacrifice of Jesus affect your daily life?

It is a blessing for us that, as sin lives, and the flesh lives, and the devil lives, so Jesus lives. It is also a blessing that, whatever strength these may have to ruin us, Jesus has still greater power to save us.

-C.H. Spurgeon, All of Grace

WHAT IS REDEMPTION?

Redemption means: the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment, or clearing a debt.

Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28

Use the above verse to answer the questions below:
Q: What was Jesus Christ’s mission?
Q: How did Jesus accomplish His mission?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REDEEMED?

Redemption, for the believer in Jesus Christ, means our debt to God has been paid through our faith in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. It means we have been set free from an eternal destiny separated from God (hell) and now can spend eternity with God. Not only does redemption have a futuristic promise, but it’s meant to change our lives today.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:1-10
Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: What were you a slave to before Jesus Christ freed you?
Q: Why could you not free yourself from sin and death?
Q: What have you been saved into?
Q: Did you do anything to deserve salvation? Can salvation be earned?

AS PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR LIVES?

Having been saved out of the bondage of sin and death, and freed into a new reality of eternal hope and goodness, our lives have new purpose. This purpose should be the daily focus of all believers.

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. **Colossians 3:12-17**

Use the above verse to answer the questions below:
Q: How should your life look differently from those who do not follow Jesus?
Q: What is produced in your life from being redeemed by Jesus Christ?
Q: How do we grow in godliness?
Q: How are you living out your redeemed purpose?

CHALLENGE & APPLY

Write down some areas of your life that you’ve seen growth in your life? (patience, how you treat your spouse, an area of sin, etc.)

Write down some areas of your life that you still need to give over to the Lord.
LESSON 5

GENEROSITY & GIVING
READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER
We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord.

2 Corinthians 8:1-3

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT GENEROSITY AND GIVING
As a redeemed people, who seek to love Jesus Christ on a daily basis, it is important to cultivate a mindset of joy through acts of thanksgiving.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 12:3-6

We want to be generous people, not only in our relationships with other people, but also in our relationship with God. As we have seen in our discipleship time, we have a generous God who has given us so much. This same God desires to be in relationship with us and to conform our character to be like His. He wants us to be generous and to realize that all good gifts come from Him.
The idea of giving goes far beyond the mere act of giving money to the Church. Some people think of giving to God as a legalistic requirement or as an optional part of their faith. Others think it’s a burden, while some think it is a way to gain God’s financial favor. If you give to the Lord, then that does not mean He will automatically bless you monetarily. God created giving to be an act of cheerful thanksgiving that draws us closer to Him in joyful worship.

Q: Do you practice giving as part of your worship of God?

GOD GIVES

“If you summarize the Bible in the simplest sentence possible, it could be ‘God gives.’ He gave his Son. Jesus gave His life. We are made in His image to be givers.” -Robert Morris

Generosity is the only way to make sure we’ll live a life of blessing, because we’re blessing others. By giving to God, we are recognizing that all good gifts come from Him and are not something we earn. If we think of our money as our own because we’ve earned it, then we’ll have a hard time giving a portion of it to God. If we recognize that all blessings come from God, then we will give like He does.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17

Q: What does God give? Why does God give? Does he have to give?

HOW SHOULD WE GIVE?

We should be a generous people, like our God is. Generous people give freely and joyfully.

Because we have been redeemed by the power and goodness of Jesus Christ, we are no longer a lost people living for ourselves. We have a King who has promised an eternal home with Him. As citizens of our Lord’s Kingdom we seek to respond to His kind rule with love, joy, and thanksgiving.

But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. I say this not as a command, but to prove by the
earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. - 2 Corinthians 8:7-9 (It's good to read the surrounding verses to get a better idea of the context)

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: How is giving described?
Q: What does cheerful giving prove?
Q: How did Jesus model giving to us?

ARE THERE RULES FOR GIVING?

It can be hard to understand that Jesus did not come to give us rules to live by. We often just want to know what to do, but Jesus is more concerned with the condition of our hearts than He is rules.

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 2 Corinthians 9:6-10

There is a distinction between tithing and offering. A tithe is 10% of your income, while an offering is something that is given above and beyond this. The tithe is a great place to start in giving to the Lord. If we can learn to trust Him with this then we will learn to trust Him with more.

“Every time you get paid,” Morris says, “are you going to believe that God’s Word works, that 90 percent with God’s blessing goes further than 100 percent without? We live in a cursed world, and what God wants to do is redeem our finances out from under the curse, but it takes our cooperation—to give Him the first 10 percent.”

Once we’ve made this a habit, we can move towards giving in bigger ways.
Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: Do you think Jesus was a bountiful or sparing giver?
Q: How should someone determine how much to give?
Q: Who will provide the opportunity and ability to give?

THE TRUE PURPOSE OF OUR GIVING

Let us always remember that our purpose in life is to know and enjoy Jesus Christ. To experience and believe in the supreme value of Jesus Christ (and then to respond to Jesus Christ by being fully satisfied in Him) is to glorify Him. We glorify God by loving Him and being on mission with Him to reach the world. Giving is one of the things we can do to be on mission with God. Giving is about our relationship with God!

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 9:11-15

Use the above verse to answer the questions below:
Q: What is the result of our giving?
Q: Why has God given so much to us?
Q: Are you giving right now? If you are not giving, what’s holding you back?

CHALLENGE & APPLY

Find a way to give financially above and beyond what you normally do. If you do not regularly give, find a way to begin to do this. Online giving is an easy way to begin the habit.
LESSON 6 - SIN

READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER
The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Psalms 14:2-3

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT SIN
We live in a society that increasingly believes that truth is relative. If truth is relative then who gets to define what is good and evil?

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day:

Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. Isaiah 59:1-4

Why do we need to be saved? Why is this world full of chaos, suffering, and confusion? Sin is real and a dangerous reality for all of creation. It is important that we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, do not become comfortable with our sin. The personal holiness that Jesus gave is a
wonderful treasure that we need to cherish and protect so that we can enjoy our relationship with God.

Q: How do you define sin?

Men will allow God to be everywhere but on his throne.
- C.H. Spurgeon, Divine Sovereignty

What is Sin?
Sin is any practice or thought outside of the will of God.

Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. Deuteronomy 9:7

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 1 John 3:4

Use the above verses to answer the question below:
Q: Who defines good and evil?
Q: How does a person know when they have sinned against God?

HOW DID WE GET HERE?
There has been much debate over how sin came to exist. Although we cannot find one single place in the Bible that fully explains that, there is a scripture that tells us how sin entered into creation.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. - For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. Genesis 3:1-7
Use the above verse to answer the questions below:
Q: How did the serpent tempt Eve?
Q: What does Adam do in this situation?
Q: How does sin still deceive us?

**HOW SIN CHANGES US?**

It can be hard to understand that Jesus did not come to give us rules to live by. We often just want to know what to do, but Jesus is more concerned with the condition of our hearts than He is rules.

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. *2 Corinthians 7:1*

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: Does our sin affect the people around us?
Q: Why does a pursuit of holiness matter?

**WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT SIN?**

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. *Romans 3:23*

Repent of our sins to God. Repentance is an act of declaring our sins to God and then turning away from those sins.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out and times of refreshing may come from the Lord. *Acts 3:19*

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:7-9*

Get accountability. Have a Christian brother or sister in our lives that we can tell about our struggles and who will hold us accountable from continuing in those ways.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. *James 5:16*
SEEK GOD’S WILL AND NOT YOUR OWN.
But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33

Q: Which of the above do you need to grow in? Why?

But we always remember...
There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

CHALLENGE & APPLY
Be accountable to another person this week.
LESSON 7

SHARING YOUR FAITH

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LESSON 7 - SHARING YOUR FAITH

READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER
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. 1 Peter 3:15

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together. Get into a posture of openness and humility.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT SHARING YOUR FAITH
How did Jesus Christ save your soul, and bring you into a relationship with the Living God?

And Jesus came and said to them, “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 28:18-20

The story of God revealing His power and mercy to you is unique. Each person’s story happened at a different time, setting, and place. We all have different circumstances, relationships, and personalities. There are many differences in all of our salvation stories, but they have one thing in common: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The purpose of talking about sharing our faith is to inspire and equip us into action.

Q: Do you have a responsibility to help God’s Kingdom grow?

And what I have said of soul-winners, belongs not to the learned doctor of divinity, or to the eloquent preacher alone, but to you all who are in Christ Jesus. - C.H. Spurgeon, The Soul Winner

How do we come to a saving faith and knowledge in Jesus Christ? Salvation is not about our works or deeds, but it is about trusting in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

**Romans 8:8-10**

Q: What does it mean to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord?
Q: What does it mean to believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead?
Q: What must we “do” to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior?

**WHAT HAS GOD DONE**

Take a moment to think about some of the tenets of our faith. We believe that all mankind has a disease in our hearts called sin, and that our love of sin has led us to despise and rebel against our Creator. The right and just punishment for our transgressions against our God is eternal death! This is a horrifying and tragic reality that every human lives with, whether they chose to except it or not. The good news is that our God is loving and merciful, and has made way for our salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! We are not merely saved from punishment through the Gospel. We are also blessed into God’s family, and as His children we have family responsibilities that we are held accountable for.

And Jesus said… ”For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. **John 3:16-18**

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: How does God demonstrate His great love for us?
Q: Why did God the Father send Jesus Christ to us?
Q: Can someone be saved without Jesus Christ?
Q: What happens to someone if they do not believe in Jesus?
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What you do in the name of Jesus Christ has eternal significance. However, the weight of saving souls does not rest on your abilities, powers, or worthiness.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.  

2 Timothy 1:8-9

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: Whose testimony are we sharing?
Q: Whose power and works does our salvation rest on?
Q: What does that mean for you when thinking about sharing the Gospel with someone who does not believe in Jesus?

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

When we truly believe that there is no greater treasure or value than Jesus Christ, then we want more of Him. God will always give us the ability to do what he calls us to do.

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”  

Romans 10:14-15

Use the above verse to answer the questions below:

Q: Before someone can surrender to Jesus Christ what has to happen?
Q: Who is responsible for that?
Q: How is the act of preaching the Gospel described?

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.  

John 13:34-35

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: How does Jesus reveal Himself to others through us?
Q: What kind of relationships does Jesus want us to have fellow believers in Christ?
We witness to people by loving them and sharing our faith in Jesus Christ. To share your faith, it does not mean that you need to know everything in the Bible or have all the right words. It means sharing who Jesus is and what He's done in your life. Remember you’re not the one saving them, God is saving them.

*Tips for sharing the Gospel
Think about the condition of your heart before you believed in Jesus Christ. (angry, anxious, chaotic, etc.)
Think about the condition of your heart since Jesus has saved you. (peaceful, compassionate, fuller, etc.)
Think about the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, and what stirred you about His testimony.
Work on telling your salvation story in 2 minutes using tips 1, 2, and 3.
Always point people to Jesus Christ, and not to behavior.
Always spend significant time praying over the person you are going to share the Gospel with, and yourself.

**CHALLENGE & APPLY**
In keeping with 3-2-1, who are two people you can “target” to share Jesus with? Write those names down.
READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER
Paul writes..... I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:
He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. 1 Timothy 3:14-16

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT THE CHURCH
What is the Church? What is its purpose, and how does it achieve its purpose? These are all important questions for us to discuss and understand.

Jesus says... And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

The Church is the most important institution on the earth! This is not an overstatement, it is a reality. The Church is more important than any government, corporation, nonprofit, or university. The Church is the bride of Christ, and as His bride we are the ones responsible for displaying His glory to the world!

Q: Why is the Church a people and not a building?

God’s eternal plan has always been to display His glory not just through individuals but through a corporate body. - Mark Dever, The Church: The Gospel Made Visible
WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

God uses his Church in big ways in people’s lives. People grow in their relationship with Christ through their participation in his body.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: Is this passage focused on people or a place?
Q: How are we, as God’s People, described in this passage? What does that mean to you?
Q: What do we proclaim?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Knowing that our God is relational, and that we have been tasked with reaching the lost, it make sense that God would bless us with other believers to help us grow in our faith and witness to people that do not know Him.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. - Ephesians 4:11-16

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: Why did God give us the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers?
Q: What does “equip” mean to you? How do we do this?
Q: Based on this passage, what’s our place in the Body of Christ?
HOW DOES THE CHURCH ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE?

Living in the Information Age presents unique opportunities and challenges. In just minutes, without leaving our homes, we can access information on just about anything that interests us. The world’s best sermons and worship songs are all available. All this readily available Christ-centered information can be a spiritual boon. Especially when taking into consideration the tempo of our lives. However, it can also handicap us from experiencing the deeper joys of growing in our relationship with Jesus Christ if we allow it to become our replacement for gathering. Why is gathering so important? Because the Church is not a building or place, the Church is the corporate gathering of God’s people meeting to help each another to experience and display God’s glory to others.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. **Hebrews 10:23-25**

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: Why do we need to gather?
Q: What do you think love and good works are? Are both a part of your life?
Q: Why do we need others to “stir us to love and good works”?
Q: Why should I care about helping to “stir others to love and good works”?

WHAT IS MY PLACE IN THE CHURCH

We do not just gather with fellow believers to receive help from others, but also to contribute to the growth of others. The Holy Spirit has given each of us gifts to build one another up. No matter who you are, or the range of your abilities, you have a special gift that you are supposed to use to help others grow to be more like Jesus.

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. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: What makes our gifts powerful?
Q: Should we be concerned with the prestige or importance of the way we serve?
Q: What kind of gifting(s) has God given you?
Q: How are you using your gift(s) for the common good of the gathering of God’s people at the Fellowship?

**CHALLENGE & APPLY**

If you aren’t currently serving at the Fellowship, where can you serve? What’s the next step for you using your gifts at the Fellowship?
READ SCRIPTURE TOGETHER.
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
Philippians 4:4-6

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER
Give praise and thanks to God. Ask God to lead your time together.

THE PURPOSE OF TALKING ABOUT PRAYER
Prayer is the gateway to our relationship with God. It’s how we talk to God and grow in intimacy with Him.

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1

Our God encourages us to bring our wants, needs and thoughts to Him through prayer. It is in prayer that we exercise our faith in God by turning our hearts and minds to Him in thanksgiving, and in our acknowledged need for Him. It is our hope that this lesson will help you better enjoy the blessing of prayer.

Q: What is prayer to you?

Of all spiritual disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father. - Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline: The Path of Spiritual Growth

Essential qualities of Prayer
When we pray we share our most intimate thoughts and feelings with the Lord who created us. It transcends all other forms of communication that we have. There are four essential qualities of prayer that teach us the “why” and “how to” of prayer.
QUALITY 1- EARNEST DESIRE
My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. - Isaiah 26:9

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:37-38

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: How do these verses describe Jesus?
Q: How does your desire for Jesus affect how you pray? How often you pray?

QUALITY 2- FAITH
And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. - Mark 11:22-23

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: What is faith?
Q: How does your faith in Jesus Christ affect how you pray? How often you pray?

QUALITY 3- REALIZED EXPECTATION
Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. - Mark 11:24

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:
Q: How do you act after praying about something?
Q: How does having an expectation for my prayer request affect how I pray?
Q: Does this mean that I will receive anything I pray for?
QUALITY 4: RIGHTEOUS REQUESTS

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

1 John 5:13-15

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. - Romans 8:26-27

Use the above verses to answer the questions below:

Q: What do these passages tell us about our requests?
Q: How do these verses provide comfort to the believer who does not know what to pray for?
Q: How do these four qualities work together to draw us closer to God?

CHALLENGE & APPLY

Try praying during the day whenever the thought of God crosses your mind. Even if it's just for a couple of minutes -- wherever you are and whatever is going on.