

MIRACLES

THE POWER OF JESUS

**FALL 2018
LIFE GROUP
CURRICULUM**
BASED ON THE
SERMON SERIES

MAKING DISCIPLES THAT MAKE DISCIPLES BY LIVING LIFE TOGETHER

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september

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october

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november

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Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light 'day,' and He called the darkness 'night.' Evening came and then morning: the first day.

⁶ Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.' ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse 'sky.' Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹ Then God said, 'Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land 'earth,' and He called the gathering of the water 'seas.' And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.' And it was so. ¹² The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ Evening came and then morning: the third day.

¹⁴ Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for festivals and for days and years. ¹⁵ They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.' And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to have dominion over the day and the lesser light to have dominion over the night—as well as the stars. ¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, ¹⁸ to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God said, 'Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.' ²¹ So God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² So God blessed them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.' ²³ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God said, 'Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds.' And it was so. ²⁵ So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.'

²⁷ So God created man in His own image;
He created him in the image of God;
He created them male and female.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.'

²⁹ God also said, 'Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you, ³⁰ for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it. I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

2 ¹ So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ² By the seventh day God completed His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. ³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it He rested from His work of creation."



COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Honoring others by welcoming & valuing them

OPENING PRAYER

Inviting God's Holy Spirit into our presence

PURPOSE

Remembering why we are here

GROUND RULES

Establishing healthy boundaries for LIFE Groups

ICEBREAKER

Setting the stage for trust, transparency and relationships

CELEBRATION

Recognizing what God has done in our group

TOPIC

Discussing God's Word together

TAKEAWAY

Applying what we have learned to our lives

CLOSING PRAYER

A time to praise God and share our requests and needs

PLACES TO PLAY

Allowing others to lead in LIFE Group the following week by assigning them one of the components

GROUND RULES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

NO CROSS TALK

DON'T RESCUE

NO FIXING OTHERS

USE "I" STATEMENTS

LISTEN & PAUSE

STAY ON TOPIC

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK

We are committed to resolving conflict biblically according to **Matthew 18**

WELCOME _____

OPENING PRAYER _____

PURPOSE (WHY ARE WE HERE?) _____

GROUND RULES _____

ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

From the beginning of time, culture to culture, there have been common questions asked: "When did the world begin?"; "Who created the world?"; "Does God exist?"; "How many gods are there?"; "Was the world even created, or did it just happen?" So many stories and ideas have been tossed around such as the big bang, evolution, steady state, and pulsating theories. Yet there is only one true story that is far from a theory. It is the story straight from the One and only Creator of the universe. Today we will explore God's Word and hear about the true beginning of the world, life, and everything else in and around us.

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Although there are many theories as to how this world began, there are distinct differences to the uniqueness of creation by God, the Creator. God reveals His identity in that He has always and always will exist. Because He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, He has no rival. He literally created everything out of nothing and merely spoke all things in to existence with authority. We will see that in this miracle He puts the highest value on us as humans, so much so that He created us from His own image and wants us to have a personal relationship with Him and others.

U

As you are listening today, be thinking of the value that God places on you personally over all other things He created.



KEY VERSE

WEEK 1
SEP 16 - 22

Genesis 1:31

"God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

GENESIS 1:1-2:3 CREATION

12
MIN



For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

SUMMARY

God is the Creator of all things

God has authority over all things

God wants us to value all things He has created

God created us in His own image

Why was the world created?



What does God's Word say about the time it took Him to create all things? (Caution: Be careful not to get caught up on this question as a group.)

What did God see at the end of each day?

What did you learn about God's character in this story?



What are some ways God created you differently than anything else He created?

What does this story say about the value of God's love for you individually?

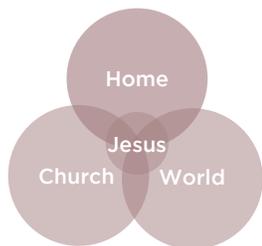


Intentionally focus on the miracle of creation this week and how it defines your faith and direction.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

CLOSING PRAYER: _____

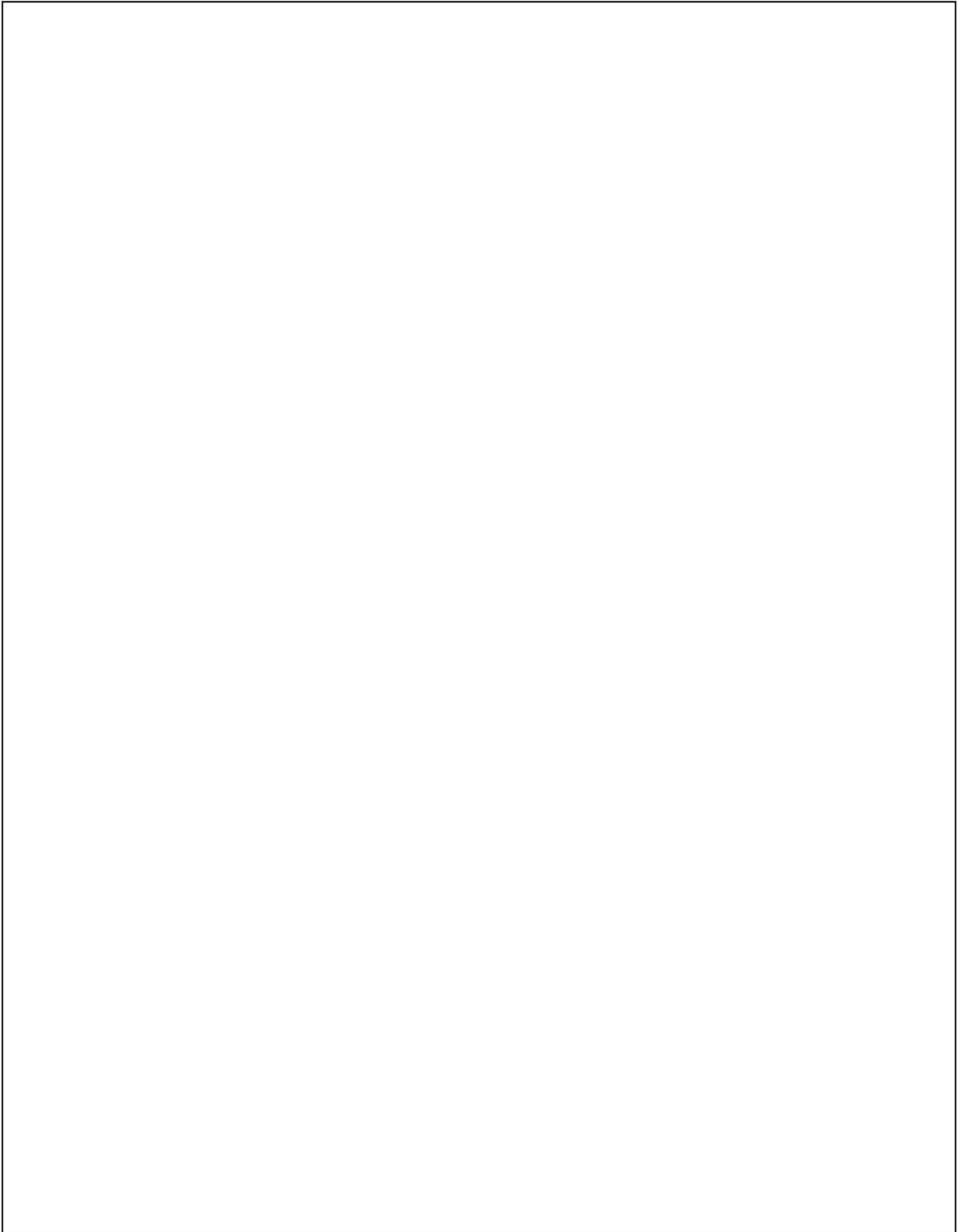
Who's your
ONE?



LIFECIRCLES



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] told them, 'Let's cross over to the other side of the sea.' ³⁶ So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸ He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?'

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Silence! Be still!' The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ Then he said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

⁴¹ And they were terrified and asked one another, 'Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!'"



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CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

In ancient Israel, the seas were known to be very dangerous. Many believed them to be a place of chaos and mystery, having the power to possess waves that could manifest in an instant, capsizing boats and threatening everything in their paths. The Sea of Galilee for example is 680 ft below sea level. When winds arise, they intensify as they grow closer to the Sea, causing violent storms. In today's story, we see the disciples, many of who were experienced fishermen, on a boat with Jesus after He spoke to a crowd about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Suddenly, something happened to them that they did not expect.

H.....



As a Christian, we seem to have more storms in our lives than calm seas. Nowhere in God's Word does it tell us that once we believe in Jesus, our lives will be easier nor will they be without storms. The disciples needed rest after a long day, but what they encountered was anything but restful. They had spent much time with Jesus and thought they knew Him well, yet we will find out that they still didn't trust Him to rescue them in the storm. We have had access to Jesus through His Holy Spirit for the last 2000 years and have a passport to all knowledge of His power and might, but we still underestimate His power over the storms in our lives.

U

As you are listening to today's story, be thinking of things in your life that dampen your faith during the storms.

KEY VERSE

WEEK 2
SEP 23 - 29

Mark 4:41b

"...Who then is this?
Even the wind and
the sea obey him!"

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

MARK 4:35-41

WIND AND SEAS OBEY JESUS

12
MIN



For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

SUMMARY

Jesus, being fully man and fully God, has authority over all creation

God controls the storms of nature and the storms of the troubled heart

When life storms come, we must lean into the wind and trust God

Just as Jesus calms the waves, He can calm whatever storm we face in life

How did the disciples react to the storm?



How did their focus shift to Jesus?

Why did Jesus chastise the men?

What are some things in your life that dampen your faith during the storms?



Sometimes storms can creep up on us. What are some storms in your life right now?

What does this story reveal to you personally about what it means to "follow Jesus"?



Think of some current or upcoming storms in your life. Be intentional about crying out to God first for His help.

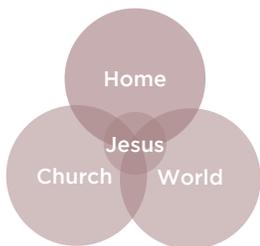
PRAYER REQUESTS:

CLOSING PRAYER: _____

45
MIN

10
MIN

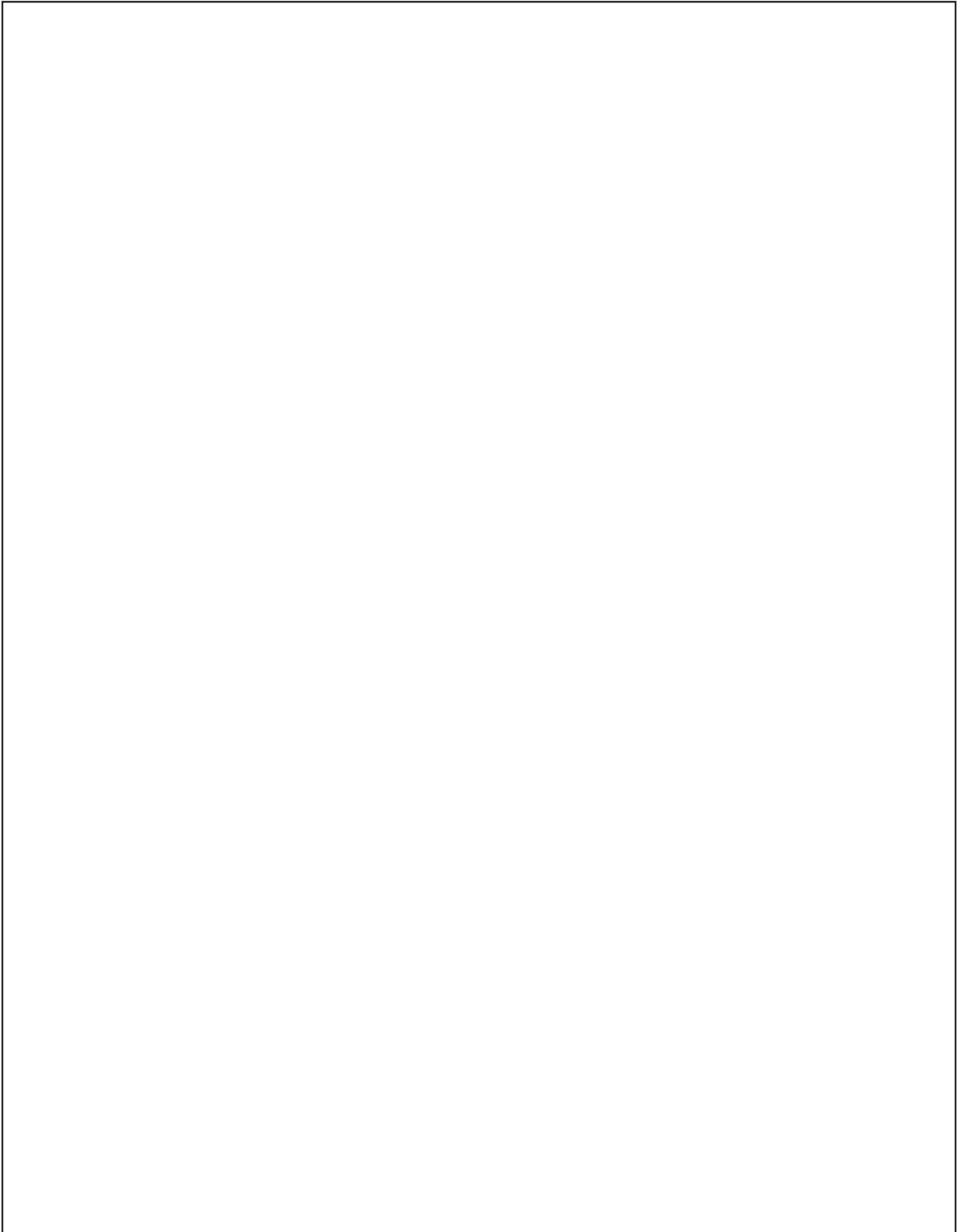
Who's your
ONE?



LIFECIRCLES



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



Luke 8:26-39

²⁶ Then they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ When he got out on land, a demon-possessed man from the town met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and said in a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torment me!" ²⁹ For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was guarded, bound by chains and shackles, he would snap the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted places.

³⁰ "What is your name?" Jesus asked him.

"Legion," he said, because many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged him not to banish them to the abyss.

³² A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged him to permit them to enter the pigs, and he gave them permission. ³³ The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

³⁴ When the men who tended them saw what had happened, they ran off and reported it in the town and in the countryside. ³⁵ Then people went out to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had departed from, sitting at Jesus's feet, dressed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-possessed man was delivered. ³⁷ Then all the people of the Gerasene region asked him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear. So getting into the boat, he returned.

³⁸ The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said, ³⁹ "Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you." And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him."



COMPONENTS

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ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

Jesus was becoming more and more well known by His teachings and miracles. The people of this time craved miracles yet didn't see the need for salvation. By this point, Jesus and His disciples were very tired, but Jesus valued the teachable moments that presented themselves, knowing He only had a short time left to coach His disciples. In today's story, we see Jesus willingly come into contact with some men most people would be afraid to encounter. As a matter of fact, these men were so rejected by the community because of their situation that they lived in the tombs outside the city. Pagans would come and offer food to their deceased loved ones, and these men would scare them away in order to keep the food for themselves.

H
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God's Word tells us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens." (Ephesians 6:12) This may seem unfathomable to us, but it isn't supposed to make sense, as long as we trust that God is constantly fighting for us, which He is. Sometimes we tend to sit in our little bubbles and think that the good and bad things that happen around us are because of something we did right or wrong. The truth is that the forces of darkness may be invisible, but they are real. When we fail to realize that, we diminish the power Jesus has over darkness. Darkness is nothing but the absence of light. Jesus exposes darkness and replaces it with His light. We must be careful not to attach the spiritual forces around us to a realm that we can control.

U



As you are listening today, be thinking of ways in your life you diminish Christ's authority over spiritual darkness.

KEY VERSE

Ephesians 6:12

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens."

SUMMARY

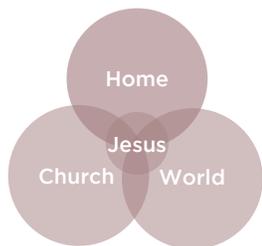
Spiritual warfare: The struggle against the forces of evil, which is a constant feature of the life of faith

"Submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

We must put on the full armor of God daily so that we can stand against the enemy

Who's your ONE?



LIFECIRCLES

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

LUKE 8:26-39

JESUS DRIVES OUT DEMONS



For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

How did the men greet Jesus, and how did they know it was Him?

What did they ask Jesus to do?



How did those who were tending the pigs respond to what happened?

What did the man do after the demons left him?

In what ways do you fail to recognize spiritual warfare when it happens in your life?



What ways do you diminish Christ's authority over spiritual darkness?

In what ways can you sit at Jesus' feet when He delivers you from darkness?

Think of a time when Jesus delivered you from darkness, and share your testimony with someone this week.



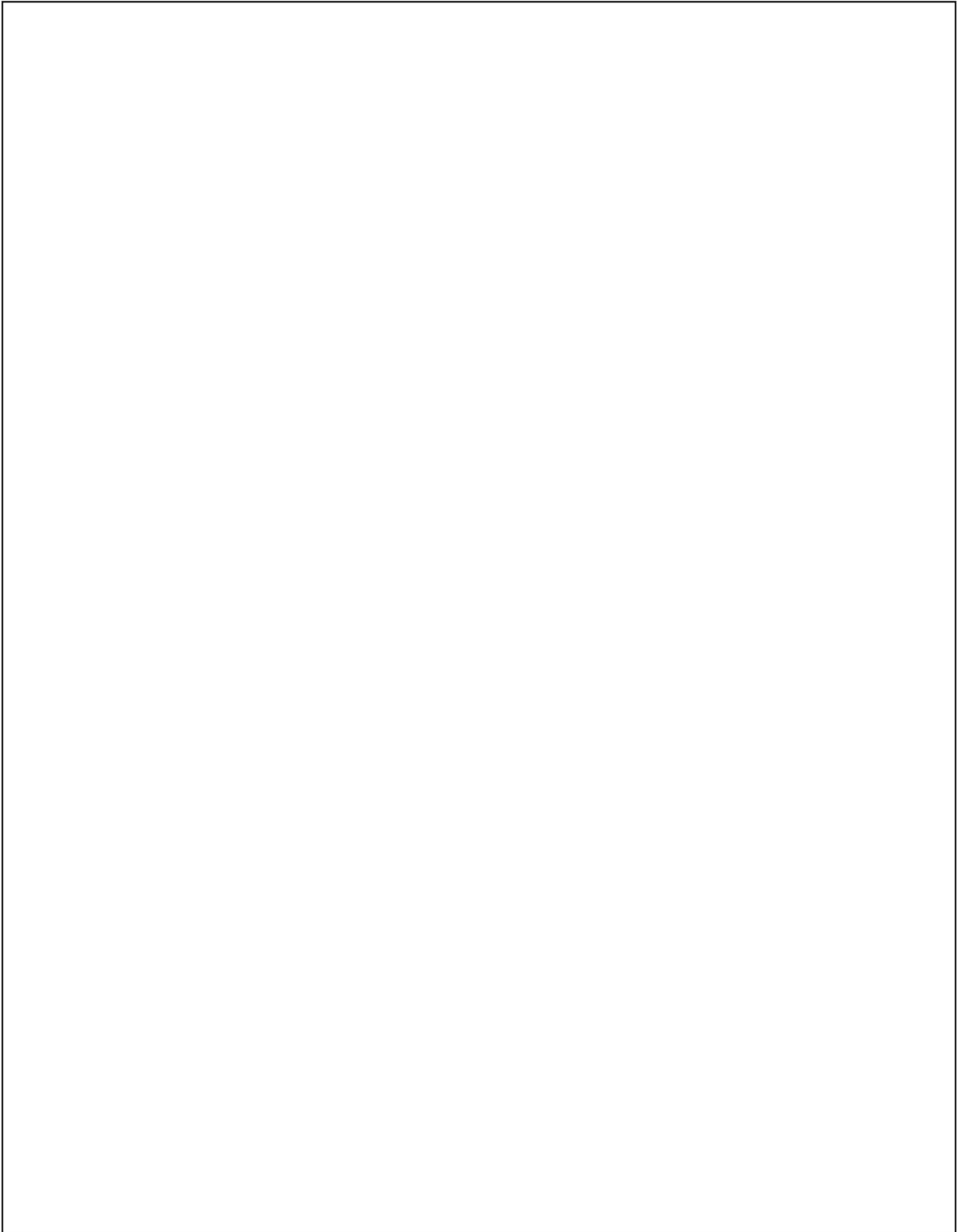
PRAYER REQUESTS:



CLOSING PRAYER: _____



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



Luke 5:17-26

¹⁷ On one of those days while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea, and also from Jerusalem. And the Lord's power to heal was in him. ¹⁸ Just then some men came, carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed. They tried to bring him in and set him down before him. ¹⁹ Since they could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the stretcher through the roof tiles into the middle of the crowd before Jesus.

²⁰ Seeing their faith he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'

²¹ Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to think to themselves: 'Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

²² But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus replied to them, 'Why are you thinking this in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

²⁴ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he told the paralyzed man, 'I tell you: Get up, take your stretcher, and go home.'

²⁵ Immediately he got up before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. ²⁶ Then everyone was astounded, and they were giving glory to God. And they were filled with awe and said, 'We have seen incredible things today.'"



COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Honoring others by welcoming & valuing them

OPENING PRAYER

Inviting God's Holy Spirit into our presence

PURPOSE

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GROUND RULES

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ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

Before Jesus went back to His own town, He traveled with His disciples all over Galilee, intentionally investing into their lives, teaching the masses with authority, and healing the sick and lame. As word spread fast of His miraculous powers, people from far away places came with their ailments and diseases, pushing through the crowds, desperately seeking His healing touch. Each time someone came to Him, He healed them instantly without hesitation. Sometimes with a touch, sometimes with a word, and other times just being in the mere presence of the one needing healing.

H
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Whether or not we'd like to admit it, we are all paralyzed in one way or another. Sin can infect our lives in a way that confines us to spiritual paralysis. It causes us to subtly drift farther and farther away from God, and we frequently don't see it happening. Sin will take over all facets of our life and eventually our eternity unless we willingly seek God for His redeeming power and healing. Jesus knows our need for healing and has no prejudice as to where we are in the depth of our sin or how we got there. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that "The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with us, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." So why do we so oftentimes desire physical healing over spiritual healing even though we know that Jesus cares so much more about our spiritual health than our physical health?

U

As you are listening today, be thinking of whom you are more like in the story and why?



KEY VERSE

Psalm 103:3

"He forgives all your iniquity; he heals all your diseases."

WEEK 4
OCT 6 - 13

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

LUKE 5:17-26

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

12
MIN



For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

What was Jesus' first response to the paralyzed man?

What was the reaction of the Pharisees? The onlookers?



How then did Jesus respond to the Pharisees and what did the man do?

Are you the skeptical Pharisees who criticized the good things happening in the body of Christ, or are you the men who went above and beyond to help the man in need? Why?



In what ways do you personally concentrate more on Jesus' power to heal physical sickness than His power to forgive your spiritual sickness?

Jesus proved that actions speak louder than words. How well do your actions back up what you say as a believer?



Many people have both spiritual and physical needs. How can you move with compassion this week and use the power you have through Jesus to help someone in need?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

CLOSING PRAYER: _____

45
MIN

10
MIN

SUMMARY

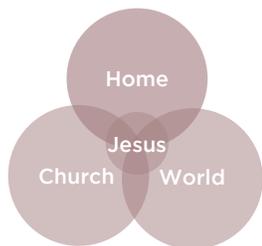
Jesus is not partial to anyone at any level of society

God is more concerned about our spiritual ailments than our physical ones

Spiritual health only comes from the healing touch of Jesus

Jesus' words offer hope, freedom, comfort, and eternal life with God

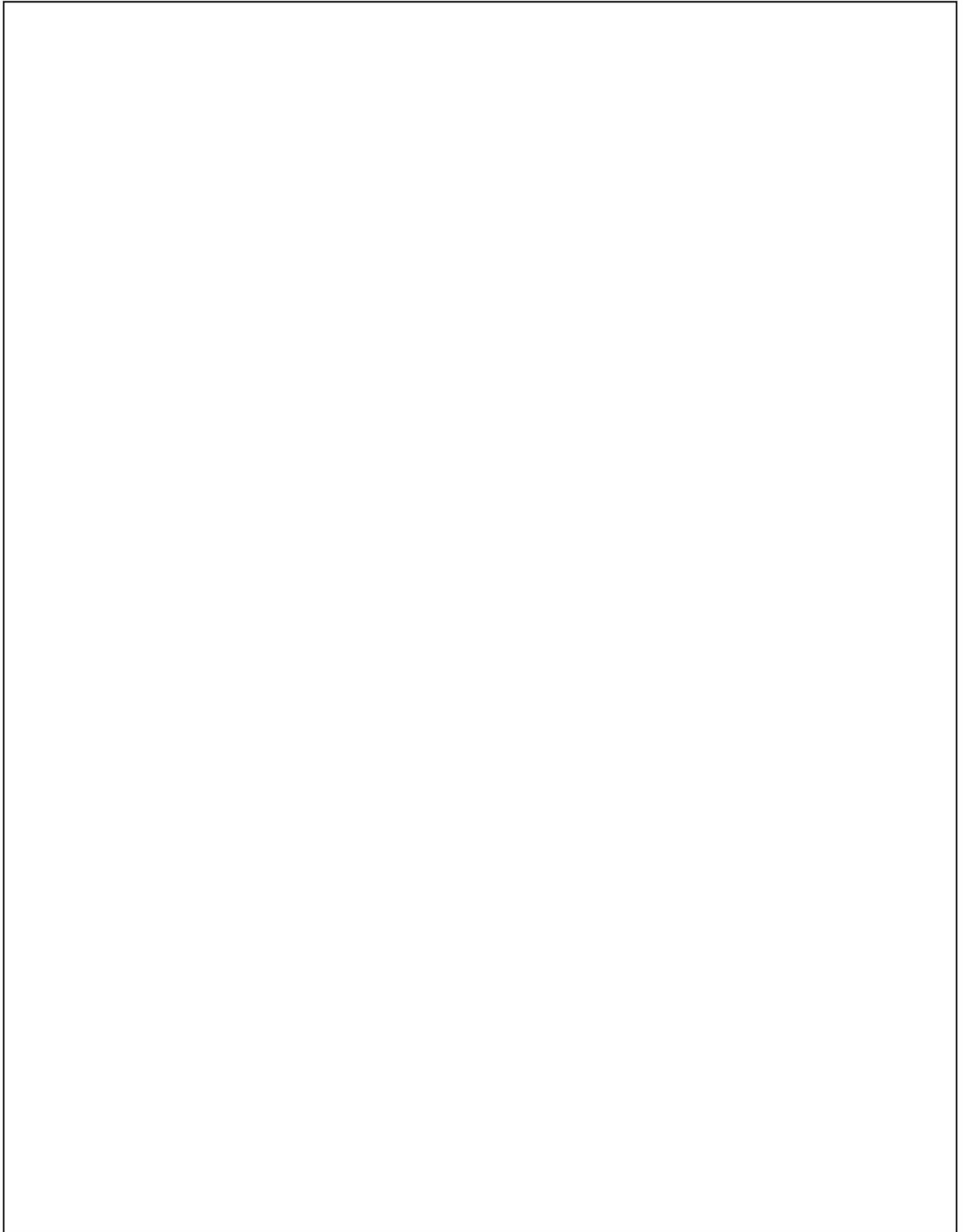
Who's your ONE?



LIFECIRCLES



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



Luke 19:1-10

"He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd, since he was a short man. ⁴ So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus, since he was about to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house.'

⁶ So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. ⁷ All who saw it began to complain, 'He's gone to stay with a sinful man.'

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much.'

⁹ 'Today salvation has come to this house,' Jesus told him, 'because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.'"



COMPONENTS

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CLOSING PRAYER

A time to praise God and share our requests and needs

PLACES TO PLAY

Allowing others to lead in LIFE Group the following week by assigning them one of the components

GROUND RULES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

NO CROSS TALK

DON'T RESCUE

NO FIXING OTHERS

USE "I" STATEMENTS

LISTEN & PAUSE

STAY ON TOPIC

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK

We are committed to resolving conflict biblically according to **Matthew 18**

WELCOME _____

OPENING PRAYER _____

PURPOSE (WHY ARE WE HERE?) _____

GROUND RULES _____

ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

During this time, the Romans contracted out the duty of collecting taxes in any particular area to the highest bidder. The one who took on this undertaking did not receive any salary for his work but collected as much money as he could from the people. He would then have a handsome commission after paying the Roman government their designated sum. Tax collectors were despised not only by the Romans but also by their own people. When a Jew willingly chose to work for the Romans, they were considered traitors. The Jews opposed these taxes because they supported a secular government and pagan gods, yet the Jews were still forced to pay.

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The word "transformation," according to Merriam-Webster, means "a complete or major change in someone or something's appearance, form, etc." This gives us a basic definition of transformation as a kind of change. But what does transformation mean for us as believers? Does it mean we clean up our act, change our behavior to be more Christ-like, or live by a new set of rules and regulations? When we look closely in today's story, we find that transformation actually means something different from all of these things. Jesus doesn't want us to just go around saying we are a Christian and do good things with a humanitarian effort. He wants us to truly believe, trust, and follow Him. Then He will change us from the inside out.

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As you are listening to today's story, be thinking of how you have personally experienced transformation and what changes you still need to make to fully follow Jesus.

KEY VERSE

Luke 19:10

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

SUMMARY

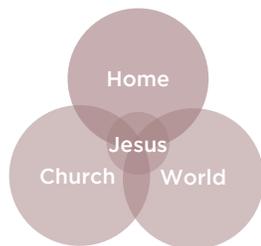
Following Jesus in our head alone is not enough; we must also change our behavior

Jesus came to save all the lost, regardless of their previous way of life

Through faith and repentance, the lost can be forgiven and made new

Jesus was not concerned about who saw Him talking to the lost, He wishes that none would perish

Who's your ONE?



LIFECIRCLES

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

LUKE 19:1-10
JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS



For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.



What did Jesus do to build a relationship with Zacchaeus?

How did the people respond to what Jesus said?

How was Zacchaeus transformed by his encounter with Jesus?

In today's society, who would be considered the "tax collectors" in the eyes of the "religious"?



How have you personally experienced the transformation of Jesus in your life, and what changes do you still need to make to fully follow Him?

How do you personally feel when a "tax collector" you know begins a change towards following Christ?



How can you be a witness this week to Jesus' transforming power in your life?



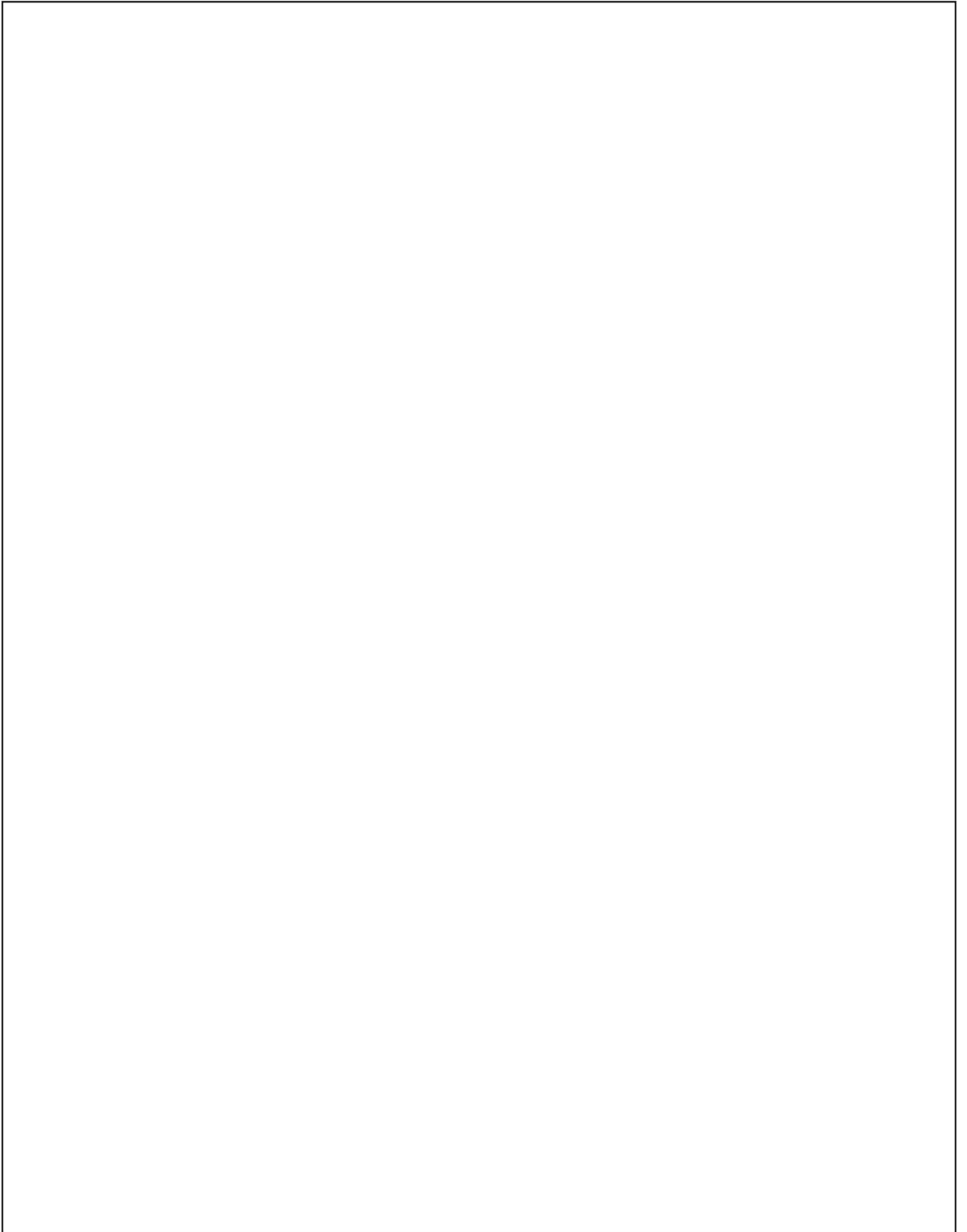
PRAYER REQUESTS:



CLOSING PRAYER: _____



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



2 Corinthians 12:5-10

⁵ I will boast about this person, but not about myself, except of my weaknesses.

⁶ For if I want to boast, I wouldn't be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I will spare you, so that no one can credit me with something beyond what he sees in me or hears from me, ⁷ especially because of the extraordinary revelations. Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to torment me so that I would not exalt myself. ⁸ Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.'

Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. ¹⁰ So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."



COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Honoring others by welcoming & valuing them

OPENING PRAYER

Inviting God's Holy Spirit into our presence

PURPOSE

Remembering why we are here

GROUND RULES

Establishing healthy boundaries for LIFE Groups

ICEBREAKER

Setting the stage for trust, transparency and relationships

CELEBRATION

Recognizing what God has done in our group

TOPIC

Discussing God's Word together

TAKEAWAY

Applying what we have learned to our lives

CLOSING PRAYER

A time to praise God and share our requests and needs

PLACES TO PLAY

Allowing others to lead in LIFE Group the following week by assigning them one of the components

GROUND RULES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

NO CROSS TALK

DON'T RESCUE

NO FIXING OTHERS

USE "I" STATEMENTS

LISTEN & PAUSE

STAY ON TOPIC

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK

We are committed to resolving conflict biblically according to **Matthew 18**

WELCOME _____

OPENING PRAYER _____

PURPOSE (WHY ARE WE HERE?) _____

GROUND RULES _____

ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

Paul had written a letter to the church of Corinth in response to their questions, which were very similar to the same questions that plague our churches today. These ranged from relationship to worship to spiritual gifts and even the resurrection. Soon after the people recieved this letter, however, there were some false teachers who were slandering Paul and denying his authority. To vindicate his position as an apostle, Paul wrote a second letter to denounce those who were twisting the truth. In this letter, Paul wrote openly about his personal experiences in Christian ministry. Today's story is one that almost every Christian can relate to.

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Paul speaks of a "thorn in the flesh," which over the years has provoked many discussions on what he meant by this. While Paul never stated what his literal "thorn" was, we as Christians often place so much emphasis on this that we have a hard time reflecting on our own lives and relating to the reason why he had this affliction. Paul's "thorn" was given to him in order to subdue his pride. Yet no matter how many times he asked God to remove it, the Lord's silence was evident that he was to remain tormented by its existence. The passage today gives us an understanding about God's perspective on our imperfections and how He uses our shortcomings and infirmities for the advancement of His Gospel.

U

As you are listening to today's story, be thinking of the "thorn" in your life and how God wants to use it to advance His Kingdom.



KEY VERSE

2 Corinthians 12:10

“So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

SUMMARY

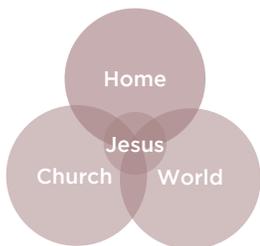
When we humble ourselves before God, He strengthens us

Our spiritual condition is always more important than our physical condition

When we are strong in our abilities, we must be careful not to try and do God’s work for Him

Just because God doesn’t answer, it doesn’t mean He isn’t listening

Who’s your ONE?



LIFECIRCLES

WEEK 6
OCT 21 - 27

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God’s Word as best as you can without teaching. You don’t have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

PAUL’S THORN IN HIS FLESH 2 CORINTHIANS 12:5-10



12
MIN

For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

What is Paul saying in this passage?



Why was Paul given a “thorn” in his flesh?

How did God respond to Paul when he asked for the “thorn” to be taken away?

What is a “thorn” in your life that you’ve asked God to remove yet He remains silent?



How does this “thorn” affect your pride?

How can you see God working through your weakness?



How can you encourage someone in your life circles this week who may be struggling with their own “thorn in the flesh”?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

CLOSING PRAYER: _____

45
MIN

10
MIN



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP

ICEBREAKER QUESTION IDEAS: (QUICK ONES ARE IN BOLD)

1. **What was your first job?**
2. Tell of a memorable time of cooking in the kitchen?
3. **Act out your favorite animal in 10 seconds.**
4. **What was your favorite pet growing up?**
5. Say a line from your favorite movie (see if group can guess it).
6. Share of an interesting encounter with a police officer.
7. **What is the weirdest job you've ever had?**
8. **What is your worst habit?**
9. **If you could be any item in the grocery store what would you be?**
10. What is your middle name and the meaning behind it?
11. Share of an encounter you had with a famous person.
12. What was your favorite hangout as a teenager?
13. Act out your favorite scene in a movie.
14. What is the worst meal you've ever made?
15. **What is one non-living item you can't live without?**
16. **If you could only eat one thing for dinner (breakfast or lunch), for the rest of your life what would it be?**
17. **What's the last song you listened to?**
18. **Share of two words that describe you best.**
19. What is your biggest phobia?
20. If you were in the Olympics, what sport would it be for?
21. What is one moment in your life that has defined you?
22. **If you could only have one of your five senses, which one would it be?**
23. Share of a time when you laughed at an inappropriate time.
24. (pt 1) If you knew one non-family member had one week to live, what would you do with them? (pt 2) What is keeping you from doing that with them now?
25. If you could be a fly on a wall, where would you most want to be?
26. **What is your favorite soda?**
27. **If you were a magazine, which one would you be?**
28. **If you could be a fictitious superhero, who would you be? Or what super power would you most want?**
29. Greatest peer pressure as an adult?
30. **What is your favorite music genre?**
31. How do you react when people sing "Happy Birthday" to you in a restaurant?
32. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
33. **Who is your favorite singer?**
34. **What is your favorite musical instrument?**
35. What is at the top of your bucket list?
36. How would you describe God to a child?
37. What color best describes you and why?
38. What was the high point of last week? The low point?
39. **What one word would be your theme for the year?**
40. Name one person who has had the biggest impact in your life and why?
41. **If I could visit any place in the world, it would be...**
42. If I had a million dollars to spend for the benefit of mankind...
43. The thing that causes me the greatest satisfaction is...
44. What is your favorite memory as a child?
45. Share something you fear.
46. What's your most embarrassing moment?
47. What would you do with an extra free day off of work?
48. Where would you go if you could go anywhere in the world?
49. **If you could become an animal for one day, which one would it be?**
50. **What is one secret place in your house that you only clean on special occasions (like mother-in-law visiting)?**
51. If you knew your time was cut short, what's one thing you'd change about the way you are now living?
52. If you could be famous, what would you be famous for?
53. If you could go back in time and not return, what would you try to accomplish even if you knew you might change the course of history?
54. If someone were to write a book about you, what do you think the title and theme would be?
55. If your animals could talk, what would they tell you?
56. Which emoji best describes you and why?
57. **What was the make / model / year / color of your first car?**
58. What's your biggest pet peeve?
59. **What's your first name and an adjective that starts with the same first letter, that best describes you? (ie: Carl:Caring)**
60. Favorite Christmas Carol and why?
61. If you could have coffee with anyone in the history of ever, who would it be and why?

COMPONENTS OF A LIFE GROUP

WELCOME

- Makes new believers, visitors, and members feel valued and welcomed
- Begins with our phone calls, continues as they enter our homes, and until they leave
- Establishes a foundation for relationships
- Makes them aware of what's going on and brings focus

OPENING PRAYER

- Invites God's Holy Spirit into our presence
- Prepares our hearts for what God has for us
- Shifts our attention from individual fellowship to the group

PURPOSE

- Express the purpose of why we are meeting as a LIFE Group (to make disciples, reach the lost, connect the unconnected, etc.)
- Helps prepare our hearts and minds for the group
- Must be in alignment with Glen Meadows Vision and Mission

GROUND RULES

- Establishes agreed upon boundaries for a healthy group
- Establishes a safe environment where everyone can share openly and honestly
- Provides biblical guidance for healthy conflict resolution

ICEBREAKER

- Activity that sets the stage for transparency and trust
- Helps create a safe environment and levels the playing field
- May involve low-risk participation
- Game, Testimony, Question, etc
- Celebrating the "wins" and what God is doing through our group

TOPIC/STORY

- This is the "meat" of the group
- Story from God's Word

CLOSING PRAYER

- Re-Focuses our attention to God and His provision
- Personal requests, Group needs, Praise God

PLACES TO PLAY

- Providing others with opportunities to lead by assigning them with components, builds confidence, and models servant leadership and reproducibility

GROUND RULES

WHY GROUND RULES?

Many of us find ourselves cringing when the subject of rules come up. Rules can often indicate limits or restrictions that impede our desired actions. The ground rules we will abide by are specifically designed to give freedom rather than restrictions. It is our desire that through effective ground rules each person will feel the freedom to share from their hearts, feel the assurance of confidence, and experience a group willing to listen. When interacting as a group, we can find ourselves checking out or shutting down for the smallest of reasons. Being aware of our impact on each other is paramount for a safe environment.

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY:

We will all do our part to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with our struggles and victories. What is said in the group stays in the group.

NO FIXING OTHERS:

Try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they'll ask for it. If people think that as soon as they share a problem or issue everyone is going to immediately try to fix them (offer advice/solutions), often they simply won't share at all.

LISTEN & PAUSE

Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Don't think about what you're going to say next or how you're going to respond; really listen. After someone shares, give a pause to allow the group to feel the weight of what is being shared and fully consider it before the next person shares. This pause also gives the person time to reflect a little deeper while continuing to share more. Remember, SILENCE IS OK. It gives time for reflection and others to begin sharing.

DON'T RESCUE:

When people are sharing something deeply personal and painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and result in not going as deep as they intended. Resist the temptation to rescue people. We must be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is doing in their life.

USE "I" STATEMENTS:

It's easy to talk about the issues of others; in LIFE Groups we will use "I" statements. We will try to avoid words such as "them," "the church," "us," "we," "he/she," etc. Using "I" statements helps us to focus on what God is doing in our lives and gives us opportunity to self-reflect. This allows maximum potential for effectual change in our lives.

NO CROSS TALK:

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, texting, or phone calls. Cross talk devalues the person sharing and communicates that they are not as important as what you may be doing. (Be sensitive to those with cell phones—kids, family issues, on-call at work). Remember, when going over the Ground Rules in your group, give those who may be on-call or have children the opportunity to communicate that they may need to take a call or text during group.

STAY ON TOPIC:

Much time and prayer is put into the determination of the biblical direction our church is headed. We must value the importance of that direction in taking it to a heart level in our LIFE Groups during the week. In addition, LIFE Group leaders prepare according to this direction and the topic for each lesson. Rabbit trails may devalue the unity as well as what the Lord is doing in our church body. In honoring each individuals time & schedules, please try to stay on topic with every group question. Rabbit trails can also add time to the end of the LIFE Group and does not honor others in our group who may need to get to their families and/or may need rest for the next day's busy schedule.

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK:

We all have a story or response to share, making it important that we value each other during LIFE Group. Sometimes we may find ourselves overtalking out of nervousness or even habit. However, to honor each person and their time, we must do our part by keeping our own talk time limited and to the point, giving each person an opportunity to interact.

ADDITIONAL NOTES / PRAYER REQUESTS

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