



Life Group Playbook

Mature in Community // Deepen with Jesus // Develop Others on Purpose
Nobody stumbles into spiritual maturity. It's the fruit of God's' work, our choices, and trusted community. The aim of a Life Group is to intentionally pursue spiritual maturity through a deepening relationship with Jesus that results in a multiplying effect of sending others to do the same. It doesn't matter how much or little you know about the Bible, as long as you are willing to engage. Life Groups are for anyone who chooses to do the work that growing and maturing require.



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Overview of a Life Group



Live Connected Focus

(Typically lasts about 5 – 7 months)

1. Next Steps from message series (2-6 weeks) : https://www.gatewaychurch.com/next_steps/
2. Starting Point Series (7 weeks) - p. 14
3. Trust Christ Outcome (All together - no homework assigned) (3-4 weeks) - p. 22
4. Soul Revolution (includes Life Group Alliance) (6 weeks) - p. 44
5. RCA: Reflect, Celebrate, Anticipate (1 week) - p. 67

CHRISTMAS BREAK / SUMMER BREAK

6. Ask and Close Group (1 week)
7. Story weekend (weekend) - p. 54



Be Transformed Focus

(Typically lasts about 17- 19 months - includes 6 months of taking a break or connecting socially)

11 pre-selected outcomes + 5-7 group selected outcomes + RCA about 5x*

* Group should do a “Reflect, Celebrate, & Anticipate” exercise after every 3-4 Outcomes completed

Love God:

- Study God- (Do 1st in Be Transformed stage)
- Obey God

Build Character

- Stay Connected to God’s Spirit
- New Creation
- Freedom

Love People

- Peacemaker
- Humility
- Self-Awareness

Be the Body

- Financial Generosity
- Multiplication

Additional Resources for Life Group Leaders:

[Gatewaychurch.com/lifegroupleader](https://www.gatewaychurch.com/lifegroupleader)



THE STORY OF A LIFE GROUP

A Life Group is an unfolding story of people finding life and freedom in Christ for themselves and others.



Key principles that define and distinguish a Life Group (from a small group, bible study, etc.)

Intentional

Life Groups have a clear target - the members pursue spiritual maturity. Community is a means and a byproduct, but not the main target.

Method

How you journey along the path matters: thoughtfully consider location, environment, meeting frequency, size of group, clarity of purpose, & format (guided conversations vs teaching).

Ask and Close

Group members have accepted the invitation to “do the work” to mature. Spiritual maturity is never accidental. (Hebrews 12:5-13, Philippians 2:12-13).

Materials

Focused Spiritual Outcomes and handpicked resources

Becomes a Movement that Multiplies

Life Groups are the primary way that we spiritually mature people at Gateway, who become spiritual leaders, who will develop new life groups that will spiritually mature people, who become spiritual leaders, that will develop new life groups....it’s how we spiritually care for and grow the whole church.

Transferable

“Able to be transferred, especially to someone else’s ownership. To cause to pass from one person to another, as thought, qualities, or power.” (Matt 28:20, 2 Tim 2:2) Method, materials, destination are all done in such a way that once you’ve experienced it, you are able to pass it on yourself. There’s no need to create something new or go get “expert training.” Simply take others through the same experience you went through yourself, with the support of a Grow staff member.



Spiritual Maturity is the Point

Colossians 1:28-29 “He (Christ) is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend.”

Paul strenuously worked to help people become mature in Christ. The Life Group environment is the space we created where this can happen.

Ephesians 4:1,13-14 “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received...become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body.”

Maturity is the goal. Living more fully in who God designed us to be.

Notice the contrasts in the following verses:

Luke 8:14-15 “The seed that fell among thorns stands for those people who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.¹⁵ But the seed on good soil (the person that does mature) stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by enduring produce a crop.”

Philippians 3:12-14 “Not that I have already reached the goal or am already fully mature, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and intensely reaching forward to what is ahead.”

Hebrews 5:12 “Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

“No one stumbles into Spiritual Maturity.” Dallas Willard

1 Timothy 4:8 “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

Paul compared godliness to physical training for a reason.
Maturity requires our attention and takes intense effort!

2 Timothy 2:2 “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

Multiplication is both a result and a means of being Spiritually Mature.



Spiritual Outcomes

Life Groups are at the very heart of Gateway and speak to the value we call Be Transformed. Nobody stumbles into spiritual maturity. It's the fruit of God's' work, our choices, and trusted community. The aim of a Life Group is to intentionally pursue spiritual maturity through a deepening relationship with Jesus that results in a multiplying effect of sending others to do the same. It doesn't matter how much or little you know about the Bible, as long as you are willing to engage. Life Groups are for anyone who chooses to do the work that growing and maturing require.

DISCOVER

In the discover season, we work toward a single spiritual outcome: Trust Christ*

DEVELOP

Love God:

- Relate to God
- Trust God
- Obey God*
- Worship God
- Study God*

Build Character:

- Stay Connected to God's Spirit*
- New Creation*
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Confession
- Freedom*

Love People:

- Relationally Engaged
- Peacemaker*
- Build Others
- Humility*
- Self-Awareness*

Be the Body:

- Serve
- Spiritual Gifts
- Financial Generosity*
- Outreach
- Intercession

DEEPEN

Love God:

- Surrender
- Self-Feeding

Build Character:

- Wisdom
- Steadiness and Perseverance

Love People:

- Sacrifice
- Faithfulness

Be the Body:

- Ministry
- Multiplication*

* = Pre-Selected Outcome



Sample Schedule for February Launch:

Months 1-12

February – message series (4wks)
 March – Starting Point (7wks)
 April – Continue Starting Point
 May – Trust Christ [Outcome 1 of 11] (3wks)
 June – Soul Revolution (6wks) / Summer Connect
 July – Summer Connect
 August – Summer Connect
 September – Soul Revolution / RCA
 October – Ask and Close /Outcome 2 of 11
 November – Outcome 3 of 11
 December – Outcome 4 of 11 / BREAK
 January – Outcome 5 of 11 / RCA

Months 13-24

February – Outcome 6 of 11
 March – Outcome 7 of 11
 April – Outcome 8 of 11 / Outcome 9 of 11
 May – Outcome 10 of 11
 June – RCA / Summer Connect
 July – Summer Connect
 August – Summer Connect
 September – Outcome 11 of 11 / Outcome A
 October – Outcome A / Outcome B
 November – RCA / Outcome C
 December – Outcome D / BREAK
 January – Outcome E / RCA / Deepen

Sample Schedule for September Launch:

Months 1-12

September – message series (4wks)
 October – Starting Point (7wks)
 November – Starting Point
 December – Trust Christ [Outcome 1 of 11] (3wks) / break for Christmas
 January – Soul Revolution (6wks)
 February – Soul Revolution / RCA
 March – Ask and Close /Outcome 2 of 11
 April – Outcome 3 of 11
 May – Outcome 4 of 11
 June – RCA / Summer Connect
 July – Summer Connect
 August – Summer Connect

Months 13-24

September – Outcome 5 of 11
 October – Outcome 6 of 11 /Outcome 7 of 11
 November – Outcome 8 of 11
 December – Outcome 9 of 11 / RCA
 January – Outcome 10 of 11
 February – Outcome 11 of 11 / Outcome A
 March – Outcome A / Outcome B / RCA
 April – Outcome C / Outcome D
 May – Outcome D / Outcome E
 June – RCA / Deepen Phase / Summer Connect
 July – Summer Connect
 August – Summer Connect





Change Your World

Matthew 28:18-20 “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

2 Timothy 2:2 “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

Multiplication is both a result and a means of being Spiritually Mature

7 groups x 10 = 70 people in groups, 2 people per group that will start new groups
 2 x 7 = 14 new groups = 12 groups that will make it = 120 people in groups (3 years)
 2 x 12 = 24 new groups = 20 groups that will make it = 200 people in groups (6 years)
 2 x 20 = 40 new groups = 38 groups that will make it = 380 people in groups (9 years)
 2 x 38 = 76 new groups = 75 groups that will make it = 750 people in groups (12 years)
 [Total of 1,520 in groups in 12 years]

7 groups x 10 = 70 people in groups, 3 people per group that will start new groups
 3 x 7 = 21 new groups = 20 groups that will make it = 200 people in groups (3 years)
 3 x 20 = 60 new groups = 55 groups that will make it = 550 people in groups (6 years)
 3 x 55 = 165 new groups = 160 groups that will make it = 1,600 people in groups (9 years)
 3 x 160 = 480 new groups = 470 groups that will make it = 4,700 people in groups (12 years)
 [Total of 7,120 in groups in 12 years]

3 x 470 = 1,410 new groups = 1,400 groups that will make it = 14,000 people in groups (15 years)
 3 x 1,400 = 4200 new groups = 4,190 groups that will make it = 41,900 people in groups (18 years)
 3 x 4,190 = 12,570 new groups = 12,550 groups will make it = 125,500 people in groups (21 years)



Differences Between a Life Group and Community Group

Community Group	<i>Which group best fits your next step?</i>	Life Group
Live Connected		Be Transformed
Belong to community Encounter Jesus Live on purpose	Aim & Outcome	Mature in community Deepen with Jesus Develop others on purpose
Come as you are; no previous knowledge or experience required	Prerequisite	Come as you are; no previous knowledge or experience required
Open group	Method	Closed group
Flexible expectations, largely dependent on the Community Group	Expectations	Dedicated members committed to pursuing spiritual maturity together
No pre-work; deeper dive into Sunday's message and further conversation	Content	Pre-work; Bible reading, working through the Spiritual Outcomes, conversational learning
6 to 20	Size	6 to 14
Meets weekly for 6-16 months	Timeframe	Meets weekly for 24-30 months, then shifts to once a month
Members move to a Life Group or move to a new Community Group	Beyond Timeframe	Members launch new Life Groups, Community Groups, or lead/serve in other areas to help others grow

Mature in Community // Deepen with Jesus // Develop Others on Purpose
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Hosting a Great Life Group

House Prep

- "Welcome to life group, come on in!" on the door (or something of the like)
- Name tags and sharpies + a sign in sheet to verify contact info is correct for first few meetings
- Water, coffee, tea and cups are helpful touches
- A clean house is inviting, but don't worry about small stuff (like dust on the windowsill)
- Put on the "come as you are" mindset
- Think through potential distractions - smells, noises, and distracting visuals (TV on or dog barks)

Welcoming Strangers into Your Home

- Welcome each person and thank them for coming OR recruit someone welcoming to greet each person at the door
- Help newcomers get oriented with the house - water, nametags, bathroom, where you are meeting. Give them a timeline idea (ie: "We'll get started in 10 minutes, 5 minutes, etc.")
- Introduce them to someone else and get them talking
- If someone enters late, stand and welcome them

Attendance

- Please take attendance each week so we can ensure people are invited back.
- You will get an email the day after group reminding you about attendance - please make this a priority each week.

How to Get the Group Started

- Introduce yourself and express gratitude for those checking out a life group
- Start with a quick ice breaker. "Let's go around the circle and share our first name, how long you have been at Gateway, and a favorite hobby."
- As people share, you might write down each name in order so you can refer to them by name.

How to Wrap Up

- Watch the clock. Honor their time by ending on time.
- If you are in the middle of a deep conversation you can politely interrupt and say, "Let's push pause there...I want to honor everyone's time. We can continue next week." Or if it's off the tracks then just wrap up with prayer.
- Pray quick prayers for closing. No "our father who art in heavens." Keep it short and sweet.

How to Invite Back

- When you wrap up, let them know, "next week we will meet right here same place same time" I will send you a reminder email.
- Send a very short reminder email with time and address. Make sure you have email addresses.

How Will I Know If My Group is Successful?

- Good conversation around the content given
- People are forming friendships
- Attendees are taking next steps (i.e.: Starting Gate, serving on a serve team, making daily time to be in Scripture, etc.)



Communication Guide & Taking Attendance

There are a few administrative tasks we ask you to complete to help us keep better records of people's connectedness to Gateway. Thanks for helping us do this well!

Group Inquiries

- When your group is starting, it will be listed on our Group Finder Page: www.gatewaychurch.com/groups
- When someone expresses interest, you will receive an email like this:



- Please respond to each inquiry within 24 hours by emailing them at the email address they gave, NOT by replying to the email (that will just shoot it back to us).
 - We recommend reaching out 2-3 times when someone inquires for more information about your group:
 - First, an email that welcomes them, provides your address, and answers any questions they might have asked or tells them more about the group.
 - If they don't respond or show up to group within 1-2 weeks, try texting them and inviting them that way. (This helps prevent someone falling through the cracks if they make a typo/don't check their email address).
 - Third, if they haven't shown up or responded to either communication method within a few weeks, send a follow-up email offering to connect them elsewhere at Gateway. Please cc the Grow Admin at grow@gatewaychurch.com

Group Attendance

- You will receive an email notification the day after your group meets to fill out attendance for your group.
 - If you do not receive this email, please email the Grow Admin at grow@gatewaychurch.com so we can correct the issues.
- This link will bring you to MobileTools, our platform for tracking who is connected in groups.
- For each meeting, please select the people that were present.
 - Don't see your people listed? There are two ways to update group rosters:



- Email grow@gatewaychurch.com with the names, emails, and phone numbers of everyone who attends your group.
 - If someone comes once to check it out and does not return, we would love to know that so we can follow-up with them on potential other options.
 - If someone stops coming to your group, please update your Grow Pastor and grow@gatewaychurch.com so we can track that and follow-up.
- If you'd like to change the roster yourself, you can do so on the MobileTools website, by clicking "Groups Manager" → Your group name → "Add" Group Member

Ongoing Communication

Communicating with your group via email both helps the group connect with one another and keeps them informed of what's happening. It's often helpful to send an email mid-week, as opposed to right before group or right after group, to keep group meetings on their radar. You might email group members to invite them to pray for one another, to encourage them to be taking next steps from your previous group discussion, or to invite them to connect outside of group.

Once the group is more established, you might even form a group text (or GroupMe, What'sApp) to connect with each other throughout the week. You might also email someone individually to connect with them outside of group and get to know them one-on-one. Great communication will help your group get off to a strong start!

We are so grateful for how you lead! By helping us with these administrative tasks, we will be able to serve our people well and make changes as needed. If you have any questions or any issues arise with administrative tasks, please reach out at grow@gatewaychurch.com



82 Icebreaker Questions

1. Who is your hero?
2. If you could live anywhere, where would it be?
3. What is your biggest fear?
4. What is your favorite family vacation?
5. What would you change about yourself if you could?
6. What really makes you angry?
7. What motivates you to work hard?
8. What is your favorite thing about your career?
9. What is your biggest complaint about your job?
10. What is your proudest accomplishment?
11. What is your child's proudest accomplishment?
12. What is your favorite book to read?
13. What makes you laugh the most?
14. What was the last movie you went to? What did you think?
15. What did you want to be when you were small?
16. What does your child want to be when he/she grows up?
17. If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?
18. What is your favorite game or sport to watch and play?
19. Would you rather ride a bike, ride a horse, or drive a car?
20. What would you sing at Karaoke night?
21. What two radio stations do you listen to in the car the most?
22. Which would you rather do: wash dishes, mow the lawn, clean the bathroom, or vacuum?
23. If you could hire someone to help you, would it be with cleaning, cooking, or yard work?
24. If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?
25. Who is your favorite author?
26. Have you ever had a nickname? What is it?
27. Do you like or dislike surprises? Why or why not?
28. In the evening, would you rather play a game, visit a relative, watch a movie, or read?
29. Would you rather vacation in Hawaii or Alaska, and why?
30. Would you rather win the lottery or work at the perfect job? And why?
31. Who would you want to be stranded with on a deserted island?
32. If money was no object, what would you do all day?
33. If you could go back in time, what year would you travel to?
34. How would your friends describe you?
35. What are your hobbies?
36. What is the best gift you have been given?
37. What is the worst gift you have received?
38. Aside from necessities, what one thing could you not go a day without?
39. List two pet peeves.
40. Where do you see yourself in five years?
41. How many pairs of shoes do you own?



42. If you were a superhero, what powers would you have?
43. What would you do if you won the lottery?
44. What form of public transportation do you prefer? (air, boat, train, bus, car, etc.)
45. What's your favorite zoo animal?
46. If you could go back in time to change one thing, what would it be?
47. If you could share a meal with any 4 individuals, living or dead, who would they be?
48. How many pillows do you sleep with?
49. What's the longest you've gone without sleep (and why)?
50. What's the tallest building you've been to the top in?
51. Would you rather trade intelligence for looks or looks for intelligence?
52. How often do you buy clothes?
53. Have you ever had a secret admirer?
54. What's your favorite holiday?
55. What's the most daring thing you've ever done?
56. What was the last thing you recorded on TV?
57. What was the last book you read?
58. What's your favorite type of foreign food?
59. Are you a clean or messy person?
60. Who would you want to play you in a movie of your life?
61. How long does it take you to get ready in the morning?
62. What kitchen appliance do you use every day?
63. What's your favorite fast food chain?
64. What's your favorite family recipe?
65. Do you love or hate roller coasters?
66. What's your favorite family tradition?
67. What is your favorite childhood memory?
68. What's your favorite movie?
69. How old were you when you learned Santa wasn't real? How did you find out?
70. Is your glass half full or half empty?
71. What's the craziest thing you've done in the name of love?
72. What three items would you take with you on a deserted island?
73. What was your favorite subject in school?
74. What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?
75. Do you collect anything?
76. Is there anything you wished would come back into fashion?
77. Are you an introvert or an extrovert?
78. Which of the five senses would you say is your strongest?
79. Have you ever had a surprise party? (that was an actual surprise)
80. Are you related or distantly related to anyone famous?
81. Does your family have a "motto" – spoken or unspoken?
82. If you were ruler of your own country what would be the first law you would introduce?



Starting Point Leader Guide

Starting Point Series Objectives:

1. Build a Biblical foundation and common language for the group around faith in Christ (and allow for everyone to be in process and at different places in their faith journey).
2. Build towards a Transparent Community (allow the questions from each week to become a way for everyone to hear and share much of their own story and share their current position in their journey).

Setup for Starting Point Series:

It's often believed that being a mature or "deep" Christ follower is mostly about what you know regarding the Bible and God. The temptation in any "good" small group is to start with learning more Bible Truths.

But for what we know about the Bible or God to have any real meaning in our day-to-day life - it must first be rooted in a trusting relationship that we have with Jesus.

When what we know about God is not rooted in relationship with him — our Bible knowledge easily becomes a false god and the platform from which we judge and measure others and ourselves. We easily forget about relating to Jesus because of all the good "Bible Stuff" we know now.

At the Core of a Life Group is Relationship!

This means relationship with God and with others. It's from this foundation of relationship that we learn and experience real and lasting growth = becoming a mature Christ follower.

Real maturity shows in how we trust and obey God from a position of grace, not in Bible knowledge. (If you **love me** you will obey my command - If you are **my disciple** you will follow my teaching - both rooted in intimate relationship with Jesus, not simply knowing the commands or teaching.)

It's also from this foundation of relationship that knowledge starts to take its' proper place - knowing Jesus personally and relating to him gives the right context for all that we learn from Him.

This series goes straight to the heart of our relationship with God and how we think of and relate to Jesus. It will also be a great place for us to build relationship with each other as we share what we think of Jesus, how we relate to Jesus, and how we got to the place we are now.

Each week you'll start with a few questions before you watch a video that will help you connect with each other and share some of where you are in the process of relating to God. (And, by the way, there's no right or wrong in how you relate to God. All of our relationships with Him are different.)



*Access the videos for this series: <http://www.startingpoint.com/member/welcome> to watch the Starting Point videos created by North Point Community Church, Andy Stanley.

Start by reading the following: Everything has a beginning. Every person, every idea, every journey starts somewhere. Whether it's one small step in a new direction or a major event, from that point forward nothing is ever the same. It's not always comfortable. It's not always easy. But it's a start. Starting Point is an 8-week gathering where your questions about God turn into a conversation about faith. In this Starting Point series, you can discuss your doubts and explore the trickiest topics of faith, free from pressure and judgment.

We are going to have great conversations in the coming weeks. We'll spend about 15-20 minutes on a few questions, then watch a 20-minute video, and wrap up with a few more questions.

Week 1 – Start

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions Options: 1) Read all three questions first, and then have each person choose just one question to answer (takes less time) or 2) Read questions one at a time and everyone answers each question (takes more time).

1. When you think about God's involvement with the world, what are three words that come to mind?
2. What one thing do you most associate with Jesus?
3. What story, person, or experience has influenced the way you look at God?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched, what caught your attention – and why?

1. How and when did your faith journey get started?
2. How would you currently describe your perspective on faith?
3. How well has your faith held up under the rigors of life?



Week 2 –PROBLEM

During childhood, you may have been handed a faith framework through which you began to view the world. For a lot of us, that childhood framework didn't survive the rigors of adulthood. It's not enough to say, "The Bible says..." in the face of real-life tragedy. Adults often need a new starting point.

But the starting point for Christian faith isn't, "The Bible says..." It's better than that. It's Jesus.

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think our culture is uncomfortable with the word "sin" ?
2. Do you see evidence of sin in the world around us? If so, where?
3. What kind of reaction does the word "sin" stir in you? What do you associate with it?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched, what caught your attention – and why?

1. During the message, Andy said, "Jesus' agenda in pointing out our sin was not condemnation but restoration." Is that statement difficult for you to believe? Why or why not?
2. Read Luke 15:11-32. What's most surprising to you about this parable? How does it challenge the way you view God?
3. Do you resist the idea that you are a sinner? Is there something offensive about that? If so, why? If not, why not?



Week 3 – TRUST

Three major world faith traditions—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity—claim the same starting point: a man named Abraham. All three agree that sin made a mess of the world and God started his clean-up operation with Abraham. God made a series of promises and Abraham’s response to those promises didn’t just have implications for his personal starting point or the starting points of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. It had implications for your starting point as well. That is what we’ll be talking about tonight – so let’s start with a few questions:

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following reflects your view? Why? How did you come to that view?
 - God accepts me based upon my birth.
 - God accepts me based upon my behavior.
 - God accepts me based upon my belief.
 - God accepts me based upon some combination of the above.
2. Have you ever taken a first step in restoring a relationship? If so, what was it like for you?
3. Do you believe adversity is part of God's plan? Why or why not?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched, what caught your attention – and why?

1. In what area(s) of life do you still lack trust in God? Why?
2. What experiences have you had that have made it difficult to trust God?
3. In what area of your life is God currently calling you to trust him? What is one thing you can do this week to trust him? What can this group do to support you?



WEEK 4 – RULES

Practically speaking, rules are often the centerpiece of religious life. Many people think the Ten Commandments are rules that make a relationship with God possible. If you follow the rules, God will be happy. If you don't, he won't. But what if a relationship with God doesn't depend on our obedience?

When it comes to your relationship with God, what is the role of rules? That is what we'll be talking about tonight – so let's start with a few questions:

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In general, how do you react to rules? What rules are the hardest for you to keep?
2. What is it about a rule that makes it feel controlling instead of caring?
3. What happens to a relationship when someone breaks a rule?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched, what caught your attention – and why?

1. Talk about a time when you made rules for someone else. What was the purpose of those rules?
2. Growing up, did you feel like religion was based on the family model, the club model, or the neighborhood association model?
3. How about now? Which model – family, club, HOA – best reflects how you relate to God now?
4. Do you primarily relate to God through the means of faith or have you been trying to behave your way in to the relationship?



WEEK 5 – JESUS

Guilt is powerful. Shame can be crippling. We all have things in our pasts that haunt us. We have sin. It only takes a word, a picture, or a name to bring it all back. We know we can do better from this point forward, but how are we supposed to fix the past? We can say we're sorry. We can ask for forgiveness.

But some of the things we've done hang over our lives like a cloud. What can wash away our sins? That is what we'll be talking about tonight — so let's start with a few questions:

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Growing up, did Christianity seem to be about what God wanted from you or what God had done for you? Explain.
2. What are some potential consequences of living with guilt and shame? How have you seen guilt and shame affect your life or the lives of others?
3. Is there anything about Jesus you find difficult or confusing? If so, what?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched, what caught your attention – and why?

1. What are your thoughts on God providing Jesus to take away your sins?
2. In a longer version of this message, Andy said, "The sin debt we hold over our own heads has already been canceled. We don't have to forgive ourselves because, through Jesus, God has already forgiven us. Your role is to accept what has been done for you. If God does not condemn you, who are you to condemn you?" If that's true, how might it change the way you live and how might it shape your relationship with God?
3. How does it feel to know your sins are already forgiven? Do your daily thoughts and actions reflect that you believe this? If yes, how so?



WEEK 6 – GRACE

At some point in your faith journey, you will settle into a bargaining posture with God.

“God, if you will... , I promise I will...” We all do it. That's just part of religion—every religion. In fact, it's so much a part of human nature that even some atheists and agnostics do it when they find themselves in desperate circumstances. But is that really how God wants us to relate to him? The problem with a bargaining posture is we never keep up our end of the bargain, do we? That is what we'll be talking about tonight — so lets start with a few questions:

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about a time when someone let you off the hook or forgave a debt. How did it make you feel?
2. What do you believe God wants from you?
3. Do you see yourself as a person who needs God's grace? Why or why not?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched, what caught your attention – and why?

1. In the message, Andy said, "God doesn't negotiate because he doesn't want something from you. He wants something for you." Respond to that statement. If it's true, how would it change the way you view God and your relationship with him?
2. What standard do you most often use to determine your standing before God - your behavior or God's grace? What circumstances or situations cause you to move from one to the other?
3. Most people respond to the idea of unconditional grace with, "But what about...?" What's your "But what about...?" What's your push back to unconditional grace?



WEEK 7 – FAITH

The ability to believe is the most powerful force at mankind's disposal. Everything that has been done, for good or bad, was done because someone believed it could be or should be done. Every problem that has been solved was solved because someone believed it could be or should be solved. We constantly look for evidence to support what we believe is true. In the case of religious belief, that means if you believe deeply enough any religious system becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If that's true, isn't it possible that Christianity is just an example of groupthink on a massive scale? That is what we'll be talking about tonight — so let's start with a few questions:

PRE-VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of a belief you hold—religious, political, economic—that has a major influence on the way you live your life. In what ways do you look for evidence to support that belief? In what ways do you filter out evidence that contradicts that belief?
2. When you think about Jesus, do you tend to focus on his teachings or his death and resurrection?
3. How does that focus influence the way you answer the question, "Who is Jesus?"
4. Read Acts 17:31. Do you agree that the "proof" of Jesus' resurrection is a compelling basis for personal faith? Why or why not?

(WATCH VIDEO)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

General thoughts from what we just watched – what caught your attention – why?

1. Did you find parts of this message disturbing? If so, which parts and why?
2. In the message, Andy said, "We don't believe in the resurrection because the Bible says so — that would be easy. We believe because of the eye witness accounts." How do you respond to that?
3. The gospels record that when Jesus died, his disciples' faith died. But when they finally came out of hiding, their messages weren't, "Believe what Jesus taught." It was, "You killed him. God raised him. We've seen him. Say you're sorry." In what ways do the disciples' behavior and message challenge your assumptions about Christianity?
4. In the message, Andy said, "A single event—the resurrection—changed how those closest to Jesus answered the question "Who Is Jesus?". How much does that single event, the resurrection, shape the way you respond to the question "Who Is Jesus?"





LOVE GOD TRUST CHRIST

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DEFINED

Firmly believes that Jesus is the Son of God and that His death and resurrection secures forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God, relying on Him as the Lord and leader of all of life.

“Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.”

- C.S. Lewis

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DESCRIBED

Because of the bold and profound claims Jesus made about His identity as the Son of God, we must all make a decision about who He is. British writer and theologian, C.S. Lewis, explains the implications of this decision:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. - C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Lewis exposes the absurdity of claiming Jesus is just some “great moral teacher” because the things He said about Himself would immediately discredit His teaching and ministry. When Jesus said He was God, He drew a line in the sand- either you believe He is who He says He is and choose to follow Him, or you don't and must admit that He was crazy. If Jesus truly is Lord, this changes everything!

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). His sacrifice on the cross was the payment for our sins that makes a relationship with God possible. By coming to Jesus and resting in what He has done for us, we are restored to the loving relationship that He always intended and granted eternal life with Him. Salvation in Jesus is solely based on His work, not ours. There is nothing we could possibly do to earn this wonderful gift because it is just that- a gift!

Trusting Christ is also much more than a one-time decision for salvation from sin and death, but an ongoing choice to follow Jesus and allow Him to transform you inside and out. His death on the cross was not only sufficient for our salvation, but for our growth as well. This growth does not come from merely believing facts about Jesus and intellectually acknowledging who He is, but from knowing Him personally. This truth is central to Christianity and sets us apart because it's not based on a method or concept, but on a relationship with a real person who gave His life to be with us! When we daily put our trust in Jesus and pursue a relationship with Him, we become more like Him, the way God desires and designed us to be.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Colossians 2:6-7).

EVIDENCE OF THIS SPIRITUAL OUTCOME IN A PERSON'S LIFE

- Believes Jesus is the Son of God, the only way to the Father and relies on Him alone for salvation.
- Accepts and lives in the forgiveness and freedom that God offers.
- Has experienced transformation in the way one thinks and lives as a result of trusting Christ.
- Seeks to follow Jesus in all areas of life.

GUIDANCE

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

ROMANS 3:23-24

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you feel like there is something separating you from your relationship with God? What is it?

COLOSSIANS 2:13-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you feel like you owe something to God because of your sins? Why or why not?

JOHN 14:6

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you trust that Jesus is the only way to have a relationship with God? Are there other ways you are trying to access a relationship with God?

ROMANS 8:31-32

Observations:

Discernment Question: Is there someone or something getting in the way of your relationship with Christ? Do you trust God on a daily basis? What does that look like?

ROMANS 5:8

Observations:

Discernment Question: How do you feel knowing that God sent His only son to die for you, though you didn't deserve it?

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Observations:

Discernment Question: *“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.”* What does it mean to make Jesus the Lord of your life?

JOHN 3:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you believe that God sent His son Jesus to us? Why or why not?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage claims that Jesus had victory over death, just as earlier scriptures had prophesied. What significance does that have in you putting your trust in Him? Why is the resurrection part of Jesus' story necessary?

ISAIAH 53:4-6

Observations:

Discernment Question: This passage describes us all as having turned to our own way. Is there an area in your life currently in which you need to trust Christ? What would that look like to trust Christ in this area?

EPHESIANS 2:4-9

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you ever find yourself trying to earn God's favor and gift of salvation? Why or why not?

JOHN 20:24-30

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and had victory over death? If you have, how have you seen Jesus show up in your life since trusting Him?

NEXT STEPS

What are practical next steps you will do based on what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on Trusting Christ? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.

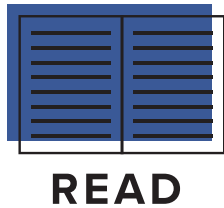
MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

John 14:6, NIV

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 5:8, NIV

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.



LOVE GOD TRUST CHRIST

Adaptation of Robert Boyd Munger’s, “My Heart Christ’s Home”

In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, we find these words:

“That according to the riches of his glory [God] may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Ephesians 3:16-17a). Or, as another has translated, “That Christ may settle down and be at home in your hearts by faith.”

One of the most remarkable Christian doctrines is that Jesus Christ Himself, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, will actually enter a heart, settle down and make Himself at home there. Christ will make the human heart His permanent residence.

Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14:23). They had a hard time understanding this. How was it possible for Him to make his home with them in this sense?

It’s interesting that Jesus is repeating a theme that He spoke of with them earlier: “ I go to prepare a place for you...that where I am you may be also “ (John 14:2b-3). Jesus was promising his disciples that, just as He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them and would welcome them one day, now it would be possible for them to prepare a place for Him in their hearts and He would come and make His home with them.

The disciples couldn’t understand this. How could this be?

Then came Pentecost. The Spirit of the living Christ was given to the church and then, they understood. God didn’t dwell in Herod’s temple in Jerusalem! God didn’t dwell in a temple made with hands; rather now, through the miracle of the out-poured Spirit, God would dwell in human hearts. The body of the believer would be the temple of the living God and the human heart would be the home of Jesus Christ Himself.

One evening I invited Jesus into my heart. Boy, did He make an entrance! It was not a spectacular, emotional thing, but very real. He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the cold fireplace and banished the chill. He put on some music where there had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful presence.

This, of course, is the first step in making the heart Christ’s home. He has said, “ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me . “ (Revelation 3:20). If you’re interested in making your life a residence of the living God, let me encourage you to invite Christ into your heart and He will surely come.

After Christ entered my heart and in the joy of this new relationship I said to Him, “Lord, I want this heart of mine to be Yours. I want You to settle down and be perfectly at home here. Everything I have belongs to You. Mi casa es tu casa. Let me give you a tour and show you all the cool features of the home.” He was excited to come in, of course, and glad to be given a place in my heart.

THE OFFICE

The first room to show Him was the study. We'll call it the office of the mind. Now in my home, this room of the mind is a very small room with very thick walls. But it's an important room. It's like, the control room of the house.

He walked in with me and looked around at the books in the bookcase, my laptop on my desk, the magazines on the table, the pictures on the walls. As I followed His gaze I began to squirm. Strangely enough, I hadn't felt bad about this before, but now that. He was there looking at these things, I was embarrassed. There were some books there that I knew at that moment did not fit with my new life in Jesus. There was a lot of trash on my computer and images on the TV that were not honoring to God or others.

I turned to Him and said, "Lord, I know that this room needs a radical renovation. Will You help me make it what you desire it to be? - to bring every thought captive to you?" "Absolutely!" He said. "I'm happy to help you. First of all, take all the things that you are reading and looking at which are not helpful, upright, good and true, and throw them out. Now put on the empty shelves the books of the Bible. Fill the room with my words and meditate on them day and night. As for the pictures on the walls, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but here's something that will help." He gave me a full-size portrait of Himself. "Hang this in the center of the room," He said, "on the wall of the mind that you might remember me and that I have come to free you from these thoughts and replace them with what is good and true." I did just that, and I have discovered through the years that when my thoughts are centered upon Christ Himself, His presence and power cause impure thoughts to retreat. So He has helped me to take my thoughts captive for Him.

May I suggest that if you have difficulty with this little room of the mind, bring Christ in there. Pack it full with the Word of God, meditate upon it and imagine Jesus' constant presence there.

(Romans 12:2)

THE KITCHEN

From the office, we went into the kitchen, the room of appetites and desires. This was a very large room. I spent a lot of time in the kitchen and worked hard to keep it stocked with all my cravings. I said to Him, "This is a favorite room. I'm sure You'll love what I serve here."

He sat down at the kitchen table with me and asked, "So, what's on the menu for dinner?" "Well," I said, "my favorite dishes: money, academic degrees, Netflix shows, sports teams, and several of my social media platforms." These were the things I thought were feeding my soul - stuff that made me feel good about myself or when I didn't, could make me forget about myself. When the food was placed before Him, He said nothing about it. However, I noticed that He didn't eat it. I said to Him, somewhat offended, "Lord, don't You like the food? What's the matter?"

He answered, "I don't think you understand. I have much better food to eat than you could imagine. And it is much more rich and satisfying than what you have here. Remember, I came that you might have life, and have it in abundance. You could settle for this food, but I offer you a feast fit for a King! Seek Me and my Kingdom and that food will satisfy you like nothing ever will. And your cravings and desires for this other food will diminish the more you feast on the delights of the Kingdom. Taste and see for yourself!" And there at the table, He held up a spoon and gave me a taste of valuing the things God values. Mmm! What flavor! I'd never tasted anything so delicious and so filling. There's no food in the world like it. It alone satisfies. It made everything I had set before him look and smell spoiled. My taste buds had completely changed and I knew I would never taste things the same again.

Now if Christ is in your heart, what kind of food are you serving Him and what kind of food are you eating yourself? Are you living for the desires that belong to the old self? Or are you choosing God's desire for your food and drink?

(1 John 2:15-17)

THE LIVING ROOM

After finishing dinner, I took Him to the living room. This room was cozy and comfortable. I liked it. It had a fireplace, overstuffed chairs, a sofa, and a quiet atmosphere. He also seemed pleased with it. He said, "This is a nice room. Let's hang out here often. It is secluded and quiet, so we can have some good conversations here." Well, naturally as a young Christian I was ecstatic. I couldn't think of anything I would rather do than spend time hanging out with Jesus.

He promised, "I'll be here every morning. Meet me here, and we'll start the day together." So, morning after morning, I would come downstairs to the living room and see Him there, waiting. He would take the Bible from the bookcase and we would read together. As He read, the words came alive because I had the Living Word right in front of me. I was encouraged, challenged, convicted and inspired. Each day I grew to know Jesus better and I found myself wanting to be more like Him. I would go throughout my days thinking about Him and imitating Him in my thoughts and interactions with others. Over time, I discovered how much knowing Jesus helped me to truly know myself and who He created me to be. These hours together were the best hours of my day.

But, little by little, as my responsibilities and the pace of life increased, this time grew shorter. I don't know why, but I thought I was just too busy to spend time with Christ. This wasn't intentional, you know; it just kind of happened. Finally, not only was the time shortened, but I began to miss a day now and then. There were people to see and places to go, work emergencies to deal with. I was needed elsewhere. So, I would miss this time together two days in a row and often more.

I remember one morning when I was in a hurry, rushing downstairs, anxious to get out the door, I passed the living room. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Him, sitting by the fireplace. Suddenly in dismay, I thought to myself, "He was my guest. I invited Him into my heart! He came as Lord of my home. And here I am neglecting Him as if we were merely roommates." I turned and went in. With a downcast glance, I said, "Oh, Lord, forgive me. Have You been here every morning?" "Yes," He said, "I told you I would be here every morning to meet with you." Then I was cut to the heart. He had been faithful in spite of my faithlessness. I asked His forgiveness and He readily forgave me as He has promised to do when we humbly turn to Him.

He said, "The problem is this: you have been thinking of our time together as something to check off your list, but you have forgotten that this time is about being together and growing in intimacy. I am not a task to be accomplished. I'm a real person with real feelings. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at great cost and I deeply value our relationship."

You know, the truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He loves me, wants me to be with Him, wants to be with me and waits for me, has done more to transform my time with God than any other single fact. Don't let Christ wait alone in the living room of your heart, but every day make some time when you may be together with Him.

(Psalm 119:105, John 17:3)

THE WORKROOM

Before long, He asked, "Do you have a workroom in your home? Let me see what you've been up to with your time and talents I've given you."

Down in the basement of the home of my heart, I had a workbench and some equipment, but I was not doing much with it. Once in a while, I would play around with a few little gadgets, but I wasn't producing anything substantial or fruitful.

I led Him down there. He looked over the workbench and said, "This is well furnished. You've got some good stuff in here to work with. How are you using these things to live out who I've designed you to be?" He looked at one or two little projects that I had thrown together on the bench and held one up to me. I said, "Lord, that is the best I can do. I know it isn't much, and I really want to do more, but after all, I have no skill or strength to do more."

“Would you like to do greater things than these?” He asked. “Certainly,” I replied. “All right. Let me have your hands. Now relax and let my Spirit work through you. I know that you feel unskilled, clumsy and awkward, but the Holy Spirit is the Master-Worker, and if you let Him, He’ll control your hands and your heart, He will work amazing things through you. You just need to ask and be available for Him to work.” And so, putting His great, strong hands over mine, controlling the tools with His skilled, creative fingers, He began to work through me. Joy welled up in me as I saw what we created together. It felt natural and organic to be working with Jesus- like this is exactly what I was made to do. There’s much more that I need to learn and ways I need to grow, but I do know that whatever has been produced for God has been through His strong hand and through the power of His Spirit in me. And His work is beautiful and never goes to waste. Give your talents and gifts to God and He will do things with them that will surprise you.

THE REC ROOM

I remember the time He asked me about the rec room. I was hoping He wouldn’t ask about that. There were certain associations and friendships, activities and amusements that I wanted to keep for myself. I didn’t think Christ would enjoy them or approve of them, so I avoided the question.

But there came an evening when I was on my way out with some of my friends, and as I was about to cross the threshold, He stopped me with a glance and asked, “Are you going out?” I replied, “Yes.” “Good,” He said, “I’ll come with you.” “Oh,” I answered rather awkwardly, drawing circles on the floor with my toe. “I don’t think, Lord Jesus, that You would really want to go with us. You’d probably get bored. Let’s go out tomorrow night. I bet we could find a prayer meeting to check out, but tonight I have other plans.” He said. “Oh, I thought that when I came into your home, we were going to do everything together, to be close friends. I just want you to know that I am not only willing, but I want to go with you.”

“Well,” I deflected, “we’ll go someplace together tomorrow night, I promise.”

That evening I had a miserable time. I felt awful. What kind of a friend was I to Jesus when I was deliberately leaving Him out of my social spheres, doing things and going places that I knew very well He would not enjoy? When I returned that evening, I saw his light on in His room, so I went up to talk it over with Him. I said, “Lord, I’ve learned my lesson. I can’t have a good time without You. From now on we will do everything together.”

Then we went down to the rec room of the house and He transformed it. He brought into it real life, real joy, real happiness, real satisfaction, real friends, real excitement, and real fun! Laughter and music have been ringing through the house ever since. How could I forget that this Jesus, who turned water into wine, knows how to throw a good party?!

(1 Corinthians 10:31)

THE HALL CLOSET

There is just one more room that I need to tell you about.

One day I found Him waiting for me at the front door. A perplexed look was in His eye. As I entered, He sniffed the air, “Do you smell that? There is a strange odor in the house. Smells like something died around here. It’s upstairs. I think it is in the hall closet.”

As soon as He said this, I knew what He was talking about. Yes, there was a small closet up there on the landing, just a few square feet, and in that closet, behind lock and key, I had two or three little personal things that I didn’t want anyone to know about and certainly didn’t want Jesus to see. I knew they were dead and rotting things left over from my old life. And yet I loved them, and I couldn’t bring myself to part with them, so I was afraid to admit they were there.

Reluctantly, I went up with Him, and as we climbed the stairs the odor became stronger and stronger. He pointed at the door. "It's in there. Something dead." I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the library, the dining room, the living room, the workroom, the rec room, and now He was asking me about a little two-by-four closet. I thought to myself, "This is too much. I've already given him access to everything else. I am not going to give Him the key." "Well," He said, reading my thoughts, "It doesn't belong here anymore now that I'm your guest. I came to make this place new, right? This thing belongs to your old heart. I died that you might be free of this. If you don't let go of this stuff, it's just going to create distance between us and eventually stink up the whole house. This stuff has got to go!"

Then I saw Him start down the stairs. When you have come to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen is to sense His fellowship retreating from you. I had to surrender. "I'll give You the key," I yelled out, "but You'll have to open the closet and clean it out. I don't have the strength to do it." He turned his head, "I know. I know you don't. That's what I'm here for. All you have to do is give me the key. Just authorize me to take care of that closet and I will."

So, with trembling fingers, I dropped the key in His hand. He walked over to the door, opened it, entered it, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there, and threw it away. Then He cleaned the closet from top to bottom, painted it, and fixed it up. I can't tell you what a relief it was to have those dead things out of my life! It was like a weight lifted from my heart and I was freer than I thought was possible.

(Sometimes those dead things attempt to creep back into that closet, but I've learned that I need to keep passing that key over to Jesus and He'll take care of it, every time.)

(Galatians 5:16, 1 John 1:9)

TRANSFERRING THE TITLE

Then a thought popped into my head. I said to myself, "I have been trying to keep this heart of mine clean for Christ. I start in one room and no sooner have I cleaned that than another room is dirty. I begin on the second room and the first room becomes dusty again. I'm so tired and weary of trying to maintain a clean heart and an obedient life. I'm just so over it!" So, I ventured a question: "Lord, is there any chance that You would take over the responsibility of the whole house and operate it for me and with me just as You did that closet? Would You take the responsibility to keep my heart and life the way you want it to be?" I could see His face light up as He replied, "Absolutely, that is what I came to do. You can't manage this place on your own strength, nor are you meant to. Let me do it through you and for you. But," He added, "I'm not the owner of this house. I'm just a guest. I don't have the authority to proceed since the property isn't mine."

Dropping to my knees, I said, "Lord, You have been a guest and I have been the host. From now on, you're going to be the Owner and Master and Lord of it all." Running as fast as I could to the lock box, I took out the deed to the house describing its assets and liabilities, location, situation, and condition. I eagerly signed it over to belong to Him alone for time and eternity.

"Here," I said. "Here it is! Here is everything. All that I am and have forever is yours. Now You run the house. I'll remain with You as a servant and friend." He took the deed to my life that day and I give you my word, my heart is infinitely better in the hands of its Maker. Don't get me wrong, it's not perfect, but it is a work in progress. And it is a beautiful one!

May Christ settle down and be at home in your heart as Lord of all!

(Galatians 2:20)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The first step in making Christ at home in your heart is to invite Him in. Jesus, in Revelation 3:20 says, “ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” Have you opened the front door to let Him in? If not, what is holding you back?

2. If you have invited Jesus in, how are you becoming more of your true self with Him there? How are your delights and desires shifting?

3. Imagine yourself walking through these different rooms with Jesus. Which rooms have you yet to give Him access? What about those places makes it difficult to let Jesus in?

4. Are there any additional rooms that are in the home of your heart? What are they and how are you experiencing Christ in them?

5. Do you spend time regularly with Jesus? What differences do you notice in yourself in times when you do versus times when you don't?

6. If Jesus sat down for a meal in your kitchen, what are the things you would try to serve Him? Does it reflect the abundant life that Jesus promises us when we come to Him for our sustenance? If it doesn't, what is Jesus offering to replace it with?

7. What closets exist in your heart that you are hesitant to show Jesus and let Him clean? What step do you need to take to let Him do His work there?

8. What do you think about Jesus wanting to go wherever you go? How are you aware of His presence in your social activities? Does this awareness change how you spend your time and with whom you spend it?

9. What are you creating in the workroom of your heart? Is there something more Jesus wants to do through you? What holds you back from fully opening your hands to allow the Spirit to do new things?

10. Is Jesus a guest, roommate or the owner of your heart? What does it look like to have Jesus reside in your heart as the Creator, Lord, and Owner of your life?



LOVE GOD TRUST CHRIST

Read the following prayer out loud:

*Dear Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and rose again that I might have new life and eternal life with you. By faith, I trust you, Jesus, as my Lord and Savior. Forgive me for my sin and help me to turn from my old life apart from You and walk in the truth and freedom You have purchased for me on the cross. I give my life to You and ask that you would lead me in everything I say and do. Thank you for welcoming me into an eternal, loving relationship with you.
In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

Would you consider this prayer a declaration from something you already believe or something new, perhaps this is the first time you have seen such a prayer to God? Does this prayer bring up any new thoughts or emotions you haven't experienced before?

Perhaps the prayer doesn't sit right with you for some reason. If so, why is that?

MY FAITH STORY

A faith story is simply what it sounds like, the story of when and how you came to faith or where you are at in your faith/trust in Christ. If you are still in the process of exploring what it means for you to trust Christ, share about what events or people led you to this place of exploration. Use the following questions to help guide you in shaping your faith story.

My life before trusting Christ ...

When or where did you first remember hearing about Jesus or were serious about learning more about Him?

What was your life like before knowing or trusting Christ?

The moment or series of moments that lead me to trust Christ...

When did “trusting Christ” become a reality for you? When did you believe Jesus is who He said He was? Do you still believe that?

Who helped in explaining the good news of Jesus to you?

What does it mean to you to believe in Jesus?

My life after trusting Christ...

How did your life change after trusting Christ?

What does it look like in your life currently for you to trust Christ on a daily basis and not just the one-time decision?

In what areas are you still hesitant or find it difficult to trust Christ? (relationships, finances, addiction, work)

A faith story can help build others up and encourage them, letting them know where you have come from and how you have grown. In 3 minutes, share your faith story with someone else in the life group.

What Next?

We see in scripture that after people believed in Jesus and trusted Him, they were baptized.

But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. -Acts 8:12

Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. -Acts 8:13

We get baptized because...

Jesus was baptized. So, we follow His example.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." -Matthew 3:13-17

Jesus told us to get baptized. The very last thing Jesus told his disciples was to go out, tell others about Him and baptize them. These people then did the same as did the people after that. Because of their obedience in this great mission, we have the privilege of hearing about Jesus and receiving His baptism today!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:19-20

What is baptism?

- Baptism celebrates the beginning of our faith journey. It is a public declaration that we have given our life to Jesus and choose to follow Him.
- Baptism is a symbol, an outward expression of the inward spiritual change that has taken place. In it, we identify with Jesus in His death and resurrection, demonstrating that we have died to our sin and have been raised to new life.

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. Romans 6:3-5

- Baptism demonstrates our entrance into a new family. As we publicly identify with Christ in our baptism, we acknowledge that we are now a part of, and belong to, the family of God.
- Baptism does not save us. Remember, baptism is something we do as a response to following Christ.
- Baptism does not wash away our sin. As a symbol, it represents something that has already taken place in the heart. Therefore, we only need to be baptized once, just as Jesus was baptized once.

Have you been baptized? What did that experience mean to you?

If you haven't been baptized, is that something you are interested in? What questions do you still have?

If you know baptism is your next step, talk to your leader about how to get baptized.



Leader's Guide: **TRUST CHRIST**

FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION:

As you lead your group through the outcomes, your role will not primarily be to teach, but to ask questions to facilitate self-reflection and discussion. **This is the first outcome you will go through together, so take the time to walk through it during your allotted group time in order to demonstrate how they will work through the outcomes on their own.** Refer to the "Get Curious" page in the playbook for more direction in how to ask good questions.

Consider the following questions as a way to guide your Life Group through the Study. Each Outcome Study includes five sections (Outcome Defined, Described, Evidence, Scripture and Next Steps). You will want to go through each section (not necessarily using every question). Page one of each study will help your group get beyond the surface of the specific spiritual outcome, so don't rush through it. You may need two weeks to get through the Study portion of the Outcomes.

SET UP THE DISCUSSION:

- What does it take to trust someone?

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DEFINED:

Read the definition and ask one or two of the generic questions listed here first and then ask the specific question. Remember the goal is to get them thinking about what you are about to look at with more detail.

- How do you feel/what do you think about the definition?
- Is there anything new or surprising about the definition?
- Is there anything you'd add or take away from the definition?
- As the outcome stated, one aspect of trusting Christ is allowing Him to be Lord and Leader of all of life. There are a multitude of things with which we can choose to trust Christ or not (job, relationships, health, finances, etc). All those things add up to how we are doing with trusting Christ each day. With that in mind, on a scale of 1-10 (1 being, "I don't trust Him at all", and 10 being, "I trust Him with everything") how would you rate your everyday trusting in Christ? Why do you answer with that number today?

****Tip:** If someone says, for example, "I'm at a 6 with trusting Christ every day because I am having a hard time trusting Him with my finances", you follow up with a question: "What would it look like for you to take a step toward trusting Christ in that specific area?" If they say, "I don't know", you follow up with: "Well if you were to guess at what that might look like what would you guess?"

SPIRITUAL OUTCOME DESCRIBED:

The description has several good thoughts that might get your group opening up quickly. As it relates to the Spiritual Outcome, don't be afraid to camp-out here for a while and let people share what aspect of the description grabbed their attention.

- C S. Lewis makes a strong statement about the identity of Jesus. Do you agree, disagree, or somewhat agree and what makes you answer that way?
- The description says the first step to Trusting Christ is declaring he is God. Is there anything that holds you back from affirming that belief or are you more comfortable declaring he was crazy?
- In what ways are you seeing transformation in your life from trusting Jesus? In what areas have you yet to see transformation as a result of not trusting Christ?

You can follow up with these questions, but they may not be needed at all. This section is just to get the conversation going

- What grabbed your attention in the description? What stands out to you here?
- How do you respond to that description?
- What questions come to mind as you read the description? Anything you didn't understand?

EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL OUTCOME:

Read the "Evidence" list and ask the following questions:

- In what ways are you seeing evidence of this outcome in your life?
- In what area would you like to see growth?
- Is there any evidence of this outcome that you can think of that is not listed?

SCRIPTURE AND DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS:

This section will be the meat of the conversation. It's in this section that you'll want to let the Scripture readings teach and inform your group on what this outcome is all about.

Since this is their first experience with an outcome, you'll need to explain and demonstrate how to read and reflect on a passage. Select 3 or 4 passages prior to your meeting that you will lead them through.

Observations:

This section will be the meat of the conversation. It's in this section that you'll want to let the Scripture readings teach and inform your group on what this outcome is all about.

- What passages of Scripture stood out to you the most and why?
- Did you learn anything new from these passages of Scripture?
- What did you learn about God as you engaged in this outcome? What did you learn about yourself?

Discernment Questions:

****TIP**** For each Outcome Study, as your group does the study on their own before group, have them star or highlight at least two scriptures and two discernment questions that grabbed their attention or caused them to ask deeper questions of themselves.

****Repeat this with the other passages you have selected****

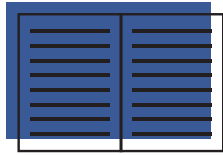
NEXT STEPS (SO IMPORTANT-DON'T SKIP!):

Be sure that you leave enough time to explore what next steps could be for each person. Encourage them to consider what it would look like to apply whatever it is that God revealed to them in this outcome. It's in this section that you'll ask "so what?"

- How do I apply these things I've learned to my life?
- How does this lead to transformation in my life and not merely remain information?

Consider some of the ideas that were brought up and ask one or two questions;

- So what? – how will this impact my life four days, two weeks, a year from now?
- What do I need to start doing or stop doing to make this true of my life?
- What barriers are in my life right now that keep me from walking in these truths?
- How does my thinking need to shift in order to embrace and apply these truths?



READ

Leader's Guide: **TRUST CHRIST**

Adaptation of Robert Boyd Munger's, "My Heart Christ's Home"

- Have your group read this section and answer the reflection questions as homework before coming to group. To promote discussion, choose a handful of the reflection questions to invite the group to share their findings.

*Make sure to end with a "Next step" question. How are they going to apply what they discovered about themselves in the reading?



Leader's Guide: **TRUST CHRIST**

Leading the discussion:

- For this section, they will need time for personal reflection, so have them walk through it on their own as homework.
- This will be your opportunity to get an idea of where everyone is in their relationship with Christ.
- For discussion, pick one or two questions from each section and invite the group to share. Be aware of those who are more quiet so you might draw them out. This will be a great way for the group to get to know one another better through hearing about their spiritual background.
- As always, don't forget to ask them what their next step is!

Soul Revolution: Discussion Guide

Soul Revolution is a great book, written to help us stay connected to God’s Spirit moment by moment and to break free from relational, addictive or any other patterns that keep us from growing closer to God.

As a group, you’re going to read through and study 6 Chapters in 6 weeks. These 6 chapters will set your group up well as you move into the outcome studies that are a majority of the Spiritual Growth Path. We understand some of you might hate to jump into the middle of a book - and some of you might want to cover other chapters once you get started. Feel free to read the entire book! But for group study, we have selected the 8 most essential chapters to cover crucial spiritual truths.

Pre-work: Every group member will need to read the chapters on their own before the group meetings. However, they DO NOT need to work on the 60/60 exercises, unless so indicated on this study guide or they want to. In your group meetings, use these discussion questions to help process the chapters you have read. If a certain question appears important for the group, feel free to take time for that and omit some other questions.

Content:

1. Chapter 3: Doing Life with God
2. Chapter 8: Reconcile 1
3. Chapter 9: Reconcile 2
4. Chapter 10: Reformation 1
5. Chapter 11: Reformation 2
6. Chapter 12 Habit Breaking Intentionality



Chapter 3: Doing Life with God

The idea of continuous conversation with God may seem foreign or daunting to you. On a scale from 1–10 (1 being scary or totally strange; 10 being joyful or life-giving) how do you feel about this idea of doing life with God moment by moment? Share your thoughts! (Remember you don't have to do the 60/60 as you read this book, but it is a very helpful practice that turns your attention to God every 60 min, so feel free to do it.)

1. John says in this chapter: "people complain about not feeling close to God, not sure they can trust Him or if He cares. But they never commit to staying connected to God in their daily life." How can you see staying connected helps to trust God, feel close, or know He cares?
2. How does staying disconnected from God affect spiritual growth according to this chapter? (Consult pg. 55 if needed). Do you agree or disagree and why?
3. God longs to have a loving relationship with us, but it's not easy to respond to that. Where do you struggle in trusting him in relationship?
4. If you have ever tried to learn listening with spiritual ears, how did you experience that? Have you ever felt more distant from God because you don't think you have spiritual ears?
5. Whether staying connected to God is a new concept or you want to grow in that intimacy, what are some practical ideas you think could help you get started or dive deeper?

*Challenge: Talk with God this week and ask Him to let you hear His promptings, then act on them (Scripture tells us to test promptings: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 : Don't suppress the Spirit, and don't stifle those who have a word from the Master. On the other hand, don't be gullible. Check out everything, and keep only what's good. Throw out anything tainted with evil.). Be ready to share with the group next week!

*Pre-work for next week: Read ch. 8



Chapter 8: Reconcile 1

Despite our best intentions in our friendships, marriages, and in the church, conflict happens. We each have the opportunity to set aside old patterns of conflict resolution that don't work for us, and with the help of the Spirit, learn new ones!

1. Think back to when you were growing up. How was conflict handled inside your home?
2. Look over the list of four ways to act in conflict:
 - a. Going for the KO: "I win, you lose"
 - b. Running from the ring: "We both lose"
 - c. Taking a dive in the ring: "I lose, you win"
 - d. Fight for truth and love: "We both win"

Which of the four is your current conflict resolution style? What's appealing in it?

3. Is there anyone you are at odds with or avoiding that you need to make amends with? How would it look like to resolve that situation with a goal of "we both win"? What help do you need from the Holy Spirit to make this happen?
4. Read Colossians 3:9-10, 13-14. Pause to consider the fact that by accepting the grace offered by Jesus your sins, past, present, and future are all covered and you are forgiven. How can remembering what Jesus did for you help you to extend grace and forgiveness to someone else as mentioned in this passage?



Chapter 9: Reconcile 2

1. Read Matthew 18: 15-17. In this passage Jesus shares a guide for healthy conflict resolution. According to this, what's your responsibility if someone wrongs you? How well in line is your natural approach with this approach? What can go wrong even though following Jesus order to go to the person? How to avoid that?
2. Notice in the passage that Jesus says if you are sinned against, go and talk about it, just between the two of you. Have you ever been tempted to talk about the person and the problem to everyone else around you rather than going to that person? Why?
3. How does pride show up in your current conflict resolution style? How could swallowing pride and being more humble help you use more "I" statements instead of "You" statements?
4. Is there a relationship or situation that you need to compromise in to see conflict resolved? Or is there one in which you've tried the first steps lined up in Matthew 18 and it's time to bring in someone else and intervene?

*Challenge: Memorize Romans 12:18: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." *Pre-work for next week: Read Ch. 10



Chapter 10: Reformation 1

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “reformation”?
2. What was one thing that stood out for you in these chapters?
3. Have you ever wished God would simply take away a disruptive pattern or behavioral problem in your life? Why do you think God often doesn’t do that?
4. Read 1 Cor. 3:6-9. What is needed for people to really change? If needed, consult your books (pp.144-145) and as a group, write down a sum of what’s needed for true change: $x + x + x + x = \text{Reformation (Growth)}$
5. Distribute slips of paper and pens. Have each person anonymously rate (from 1 to 10) how “transparent and loving” they experience the group to be currently. After everyone is finished, collect the slips and then read the scores aloud, one at a time. Then ask:
 - a. What’s your reaction to hearing these scores?
 - b. What would have to happen for this group to be a “10” in transparency and love?
6. What role can you play in creating a loving and accepting environment for spiritual growth in this group?

Look at the Running Partner guidelines on page 147. How could your life be different if you met regularly with a Running Partner? If you don’t already have one, how can we help you to find one?

*Pre-work for next week: Read Ch. 11 and do spiritual inventory in the 60/60 experiment at the end of Ch. 11.



Chapter 11: Reformation 2

1. Ask two volunteers to read aloud James 5:16 and 1 John 1:5-9.
 - a. What is powerful about confessing your sins and struggles with others? What's the benefit?
 - b. In the context of living in transparent, loving relationship with others, what does it mean to "walk in the Light as He is in the Light" (1 John 1:7)?
 - c. How can we practice it in this group?

2. Did you make your spiritual inventory? How was that process for you? Do you have a plan to share that with someone this week?

*Challenge: Share the spiritual inventory that you made this week with your Running Partner, close friend, or spouse. Have the other person read page 164 under: "Rules for the listener."

- Additional advice for the listener:
 - After your pair has read the inventory, read them 1 John 1:9 and assure: you have confessed your sins to God and to me and by the authority given by Jesus, your sins are forgiven (Mt. 16:19).

*Pre-work for next week: Read Ch. 12.



Chapter 12: Intentionality & New Habits

1. These chapters talk about living spiritually free. From what did Christ set us free? For what did Christ set us free?
2. What might keep us stuck, despite the work Christ did for us?
3. When you fall into the Sin Cycle (described on page 169-171 and seen in Romans 7 & 8) how do you feel about yourself? How do you think God sees you? (*see Romans 7:24-25)
4. Read Romans 8:5-6. What stands out for you in regards of living a spiritually free and abundant life?
5. Which of these is your natural starting point when trying to break a habit: Reordering will, Thoughts, Feelings, Imagination or Body? How could it help you to include the other areas?

WRAP UP:

1. What was your biggest takeaway from this book?
2. How will you continue to put into practice the things you have learned from these chapters?



Beginning the Outcomes

The aim of a Life Group is to pursue and become spiritually mature. Specifically, to become the kind of person who is able to say, “Follow me as I follow Christ,” and who is also able to pray “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”

Each Outcome is designed to focus on different aspects of a person’s life to help them increasingly become the kind of person who can say and pray these words. More than ever, the world needs and is looking for men and women who can give grace, truth, and love that overflow from a life surrendered to God and His ways of seeing his people

Your group will now begin working through the outcomes. This is a great opportunity to dive deeper into scripture together AND help your group members adjust to having “homework” each week as they intentionally train to become spiritually mature.

You’ll start with the Love God – **Study God** Outcome . In this outcome your group will gain confidence to study the Bible and learn how to understand what they are reading.

<https://www.gatewaychurch.com/outcomes/>

You’ll also want to use the Love God – **Study God** leader guide, which you can find here under the “Be Transformed Resources”:

www.gatewaychurch.com/lifegroupleader



Life Group Alliance

An alliance is a relationship among people, groups, or states that have joined together for mutual benefit or to achieve some common purpose.

As we journey towards a deepening relationship with Jesus and spiritual maturity, it is important we agree on how to travel together so we can best honor, support, and encourage one another. As a Life Group we each agree to ...

SHOW UP. Keep in mind that the purpose of a Life Group is intentional spiritual maturity through community. I will do my best to show up unless sick or out of town.

COMMUNICATE. We will give priority to the group meetings. We will call or email the group leader if we are unable to attend or are running late.

KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY. Guard each other's privacy and be trustworthy with each other's vulnerability. What is shared in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN. Listen for God's guidance and God's voice in scripture, in each other other's reflections, and in our own lives.

SHOW GRACE. Extend grace to each other, resist comparisons, and encourage each other in each individual's current season of life and spiritual maturity.

DON'T FIX. Value listening as being more important than talking. Avoid interrupting, speaking for others, or trying to "fix" another's problems. Allow people to be in process.

BE GENTLE. We will not expect perfection from each other since we are aware of our own shortcomings. When needed, we will gently point each other toward a better way.

DO THE WORK. Make faithful attendance and preparation of study materials a priority. Be open to the ways God will work in our lives through participation in this Life Group.

DON'T GENERALIZE. I will speak from my own story. "We all have this issue" may not be true. It's more powerful to own what's true for the individual as we all work towards transformation.

Are there other agreements that would support our group and that we want to consider adding?



As a Life Group we each agree to...

-
-



How to Share Your Story

Everyone loves to hear a good story. During your Life Group experience, telling your story and hearing everyone else’s will be one of the most powerful things that you will do.

This exercise is meant to grow your group’s level of understanding, care, and trust in the relationships with one another. This exercise is a great opportunity of reflection for yourself as well. Not everything will be a joy to reflect on, but can be helpful as you consider how you’ve arrived to the person you are now and how you would invite Jesus into the areas of hurt, growth and celebration as you begin the Life Group journey. Use one (or a combination) of the storytelling methods on the following page to help you share your life journey.

You will have 30 – 40 minutes to share your story. You’ll want to make sure that you don’t linger too long in one area that you don’t have enough time to share what’s been most important in that last five or ten years of your life. (ex. you could easily spend a lot of time during the glory years of high school or college and only have a few minutes to share about becoming a parent a few years ago)

Consider the ideas below to help you recall some of your journey and prepare your story for the method you’ve chosen. Use this as a guide to get you thinking but don’t feel limited to this list or that you need to have something for every idea.

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dad | Jr. High | Sports |
| Mom | High School | Dating |
| Siblings | College / Post High School | Marriage |
| Relatives | Post College | Life Hurts |
| Holidays | Jobs | Life Highlights |
| Hometown | Best Friends | How Faith Journey Started |
| Pre School days | Worst Enemies | Meeting Jesus |
| Grade School | Holidays | Church Experience |



Be creative, prayerful and have fun!

Story Telling Method #1 – Sticky Note Method

Use three different color, standard size, sticky note pads and an 11” by 18” pieces of construction-paper. Use one color of sticky note to write out 7 or more ‘highlights’ in your life. Use another color of sticky note to write out 7 or more ‘lowlights’ in your life. Divide up the construction-paper into four sections by writing these headings at the top of the page: Childhood, Teenager, Early Adulthood and Late Adulthood. Place your sticky notes into the proper category for their high and low experiences. With the last color sticky note, answer the question, “Where was God in my life during this period?” and stick it on your paper.

Story Telling Method #2 – Drawing Method

Using colored pencils or crayons and a large piece of paper or multiple pieces of paper, draw six to eight (6-8) significant events that have shaped who you are as a person. These events should include both good and bad, highs and lows. Use your drawings to share your story.

Story Telling Method #3 – Decades Method

Using a large piece of paper or multiple pieces of paper, write a “high” (something good that happened) and a “low” (something negative that happened) for each decade of their life. For example, if you lived in the 80’s, 90’s, 2000’s and 2010’s what are the five high-lights and five low-lights from those decades in your life journey? Use these highs and lows to share your story.

Story Telling Method #4 – Picture Method

Using six to eight (6-8) printed pictures (ex. your camera, magazines or the web) that would represent significant events that have shaped who you are as a person. These events should include both good and bad, highs and lows. Use your pictures to share your story.



DISCLOSIMONY

dis·close (dis'klōz/) allow (something) to be seen, especially by uncovering it.

tes·ti·mo·ny ('testə,mōnē/) a public recounting of an experience, usually of a religious nature.

dis·clos·imo·ny (dis'klōzə,mōnē/) allowing a spiritual experience to be seen, by uncovering (recounting) it publicly.

A “disclosimony” is looking for opportunities to share (disclose) what you are currently learning or processing related to your relationship with Jesus and pursuit of Christ-likeness (testimony).

The Disclosimony generates two significant opportunities:

1. Deeper learning for yourself – allows you to more deeply internalize and act on what you're learning and processing
2. Invitation for Others – creates space for others to see you process and invites them to do the same

Deeper Learning for Yourself: “If you can't say it, you don't know it.”

If this axiom holds true, sharing with others can help to reveal the aspects of any topic or area of life you understand well and areas you don't. There's something powerful about saying “it” out loud. As the idea passes from thought to words, the process of speaking it often helps us see it more clearly. This can be helpful with areas of our spiritual life as well as all areas of learning. It also helps identify what next step you might need to take.

Invitation for Others: Authentic - it's what our culture longs for.

A disclosimony gives opportunity for others to hear that Jesus and a Godly life are real and relevant to your day-to-day life rather than just Christian/Religious rhetoric and meaningless rules. It invites them into your spiritual journey and gives them permission to look around, ask questions and see the good, the bad, the ugly as well as the life and freedom that are part of following Jesus.

It's how we do life, we share what we're doing, experience and learning from others.

Discussing the things that we're discovering, things we're celebrating, mourning, ideas or situations we're pondering and processing.

Have you read ..?, Did you see ..? Last weekend I ..!, I've been thinking about... what about you?

It's the way we grow, learn and deepen personally, relationally and spiritually. Disclosimony uses this normal way of sharing with others as a means of having spiritual conversations and seeing what might happen. It's not a high-pressure, “come to Jesus” talk. We simply share authentically about what we're



learning or how we're experiencing God, the beautiful, confusing, or frustrating conversation we're processing with him, drop a "seed" and notice if it takes root and grows.

WHY

- Helps the learning and processing go deeper for you personally
- Kickstarts the "doing" related to the learning
- Helps you be salt and light
- Shows Jesus and the Christian life to be relevant to our day-to-day lives
- The more I make normal what is happening in me spiritually the more my spiritual and physical worlds meet.
- What I'm learning and processing can encourage and help someone else
- Normalizes spiritual conversation
- Create curiosity in others
- Deepens relationships

HOW

- An answer to: "How are you?" "What's going on?"

WHEN

- Pray for and look for opportunities
- Anytime with anyone

WHAT IT'S NOT

- A long discussion (keep it short and see if they ask for more)
- Weird (people flocked to Jesus, He did not repulse them)
- A "bait and switch" (not an ask to church, etc. – though that could be a next step, be wise)
- Inauthentic sharing (don't make stuff up, just be you)
- A teaching (make them curious, don't lecture)
- Political or "Hot Button" issues (enough said)

EXAMPLE:

Setting: Lake Travis - Kenny just got done surfing and is climbing aboard. Chris is getting ready to jump off the boat for his turn but grabs a water and asks Roger a question.

Chris: What's new with you, Roger?

Roger: I have a little bit more work to do but getting ready to retire and looking forward to that. What's new with you?

Chris: Well, this month I've been taking a look at the topic of humility, and I've learned some new things I have never thought about.



Roger: Really? Like what?

Chris: I always thought that humility was thinking of yourself in a position to serve others, humbling yourself to a lower place. I took a look at the two different places in scripture where Jesus is experiencing foot washing. In one place it shows him washing his disciples' feet, but in another place, we see Jesus allowing someone to wash his feet. He was actually displaying humility in both cases, operating in the fullness of who he was. That's something new for me to think about.

Roger: Hmm. That's interesting.

(deeper learning happening and seed planted) Chris jumps off the boat to surf.

What's something that you're learning or processing right now? About God, your walk with Jesus, your spiritual life, in Life Group? Look for and pray for an opportunity to share your disclosimony.



Life Group Apprenticeship Info Sheet

Definition: A Life Group Apprentice is one who is learning to be a Life Group Leader by observing and practicing leadership skills through the example and training of their Leader.

The Ask: Pray about and consider slowly taking on more leadership responsibilities throughout the course of your Life Group in order to learn by experience how to lead your own.

Requirements:

- Must be aware that this is not primarily a teaching role, but rather a facilitator role-asking questions and guiding others in conversation.
- Must be on board with and committed to living out the vision, mission and values of Gateway Church and using the Life Group Path and Spiritual Outcomes.
- To begin officially apprenticing, you must agree to start working through the Commissioning journal with the goal to complete it through Day 11 (The Beliefs section) by the end of your apprenticeship process.
- Must be committed to completing the commissioning process before moving on to lead your own Life Group.

Process:

Phase One (2-4 wks): Leader does; you watch.

- In this phase you will be invited to observe how your Life Group Leader leads the group and have the opportunity to meet to debrief and ask questions with your leader.

Phase Two (4-6 wks): Leader does; you help.

- In this phase you will be given opportunities to lead in various, small ways with the help of your leader.

Phase Three (6-8 wks, or for the duration of the LG): You do; leader watches.

- Once you feel confident in phase two, you will be given the opportunity to lead a portion or all of the main material by yourself.
- Once you feel confident, you will have the opportunity to lead the entire group session by yourself.

Phase Four : You do; someone else watches...

- This is where multiplication truly happens, when you will take all that they have learned and begin the process with your own group.
- Once you have **completed their commissioning process**, you will be free to start leading their own group.



Life Group Apprenticeship

Definition: A Life Group Apprentice is one who is learning to be a Life Group Leader by observing and practicing leadership skills through the example and training of their Leader.

As disciples of Jesus, our primary purpose is to know and enjoy Jesus and fellowship with Him to the fullest! The beautiful byproduct of this intimate relationship is that we get to invite others to follow Him in the way we have experienced and equip them to go out and do the same. Identifying and initiating an apprentice early on in the journey of your Life Group will help ensure that the pattern of discipleship will continue long after your group comes to a close.

When should you begin looking for an apprentice?

From day one of your group, begin praying for and looking out for someone. Ideally, you will have identified someone to invite to apprentice within **four to six months** into your group.

Step One: Identify a potential apprentice (around 4-6 months in)

Look for a person who is showing the qualities of a spiritual leader- One who is dependent on God rather than self, who seeks to serve others rather than be served, and who doesn't necessarily have all the answers, but directs others to the One who does.

Look for a person who is **FAST- Faithful, Available, Spirit-led, Teachable**

Faithful (Exhibits the quality of faithfulness and **moving toward growth in the following ways**):

- Committed to attending the group and being an active participant.
- Regularly attends the Sunday Inspire services.
- Pursues a life submitted to Christ.
- Trustworthy, honors the confidentiality of the group.
- Has integrity and does what they say they will do.
- Committed to living out the vision, mission and values of Gateway.

Available (Moving toward growth in the following ways):

- Willing to create margin in their life to serve/grow/learn.
- Willing to prioritize the group.
- Emotionally available and mature.

Spirit-Led (Learning from God, seeking to be led by God and **moving toward growth in the following ways**):

- Has a regular practice of spending time with God through prayer and reading scripture.
- Has learned how to submit to God and to those God has placed in authority over them.
- Speaks with wisdom and love into others' lives in the group.



- Can point to specific examples of obedience in their life, both things they've started doing and things they've stopped doing as a result of seeking to be Spirit-led.
- Naturally talks about what God's doing in their life.

Teachable (Exhibits a teachable spirit and **moving toward growth in the following ways**):

- Exhibits humility (being the fullness of who they are, no more, no less, in Christ).
- Gives and receives feedback well.
- Is aware of others in the group and does not dominate the conversation.
- Has the posture of a learner, willing and able to be open to new concepts, ideas, and ways of doing.
- Pursues learning outside the group.
- Appropriately transparent and vulnerable, not pretending to have it all together.
- Applies what is being learned or coaching received.

Person considered: _____

FAST qualities:

Prerequisites to beginning apprenticeship:

- Must be aware that this is not primarily a teaching role, but rather a facilitator role, asking questions and guiding others in conversation.
- Must be on board with and committed to living out the vision, mission and values of Gateway Church and using the Life Group Path and Spiritual Outcomes
- To begin officially apprenticing, they must agree to start working through the Commissioning journal with the goal to complete it through Day 11 (The Beliefs section) by the end of their apprenticeship process.
- Must be committed to completing the commissioning process before moving on to lead their own Life Group.

Step Two: Life Group Leader Meet with Grow Staff:

- Once you've identified a potential apprentice, set up a meeting with just you and your Grow Staff to help discern the readiness of this person and possible next steps.

Notes:

Step Three: Begin Onboarding Apprentice:

- When you and your Grow Staff are in agreement, meet with the person for an "I See in You" conversation.



- Express to them the ways you have witnessed their **FAST** qualities.
- Share with them how these qualities demonstrate their leadership potential and that you believe they would one day make a great Life Group leader.
- Explain the **difference between a leader and a spiritual leader**. A spiritual leader is one who is dependent on God rather than self, who seeks to serve others rather than be served, and who doesn't necessarily have all the answers, but directs others to the One who does.
- Explain to them that being a **Life Group leader is not a teaching role** and doesn't require them to know everything or be perfect to lead, but it is a facilitator role, one where you ask questions and stay curious in a way that encourages the group to discuss and share what they are learning.
- Give them an **overview** of what the process would look like. Give them the Apprentice Info Sheet for them to look over with you.
- Ask them if they would **pray and consider** slowly taking on more responsibility as an apprentice leader of the group.
- If yes, **connect them with a staff member (Grow Staff)** to explain the commissioning process and get them started on the journal.

Notes: _____

Step Four : Begin the Apprenticeship Process:

(It's likely that the completion of these phases will take the duration of your Life Group.)

Phase One (2-4 wks): I do; you watch.

- In this phase you will invite the apprentice to meet 15 minutes before the group to share what you'll be doing and why.
- Ask them to observe carefully how you lead the group and then you will plan a time to debrief what they observed (this can be a short phone conversation).
- In this phase you will also invite them into evaluating how to lead the group better through asking the questions, "What worked?" "What didn't" and "How can we improve?"

Notes: _____

Phase Two (4-6 wks): I do; you help.

- In this phase you will begin to give the apprentice opportunities to lead by asking them to prepare an ice breaker to start the group, opening/closing the group in prayer, recording prayer requests, following up with group members etc.



- Assure them that you'll be there to help if they need it. Plan a time to meet in between groups to debrief how it went and what questions or concerns they have.
- Share with your group that this person will be serving as an apprentice and will be slowly taking on some leadership responsibilities.

Notes: _____

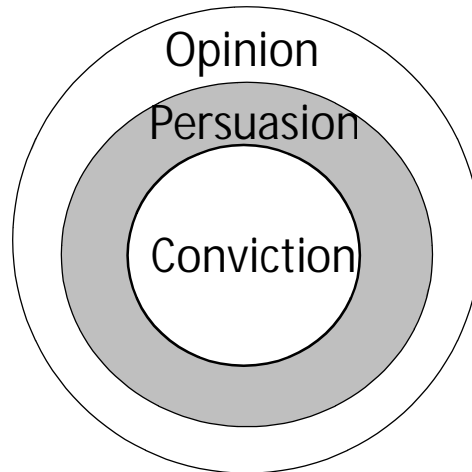
- **Phase Three (6-8 wks, or for the duration of the LG):** You do; I watch.
Once the apprentice seems confident in phase two, have them lead a portion or all of the main material by themselves.
 - Give them plenty of time to prepare and **check in on them** to see how prep is going. (Helpful tools to send them: Leader's guides for outcomes, Get Curious sheet in Play Book)
 - **Debrief after**, expressing and celebrating the things they did well and how they can improve. For every critique, give at least two positives.
 - Once they feel confident, have them **lead the entire group session** by themselves.
 - Give them more opportunities to lead the group.
 - Once you think they are comfortable and confident in this phase and have discussed with your Grow Leader, share with them that you think **they are ready to lead their own group**.

Notes: _____

- **Phase Four :** You do; someone else watches...
 - This is where multiplication truly happens, when the apprentice takes all that they have learned and begins the process with their own group.
 - Once they have **completed their commissioning process**, they will be free to start leading their own group.
 - Encourage them to continue with your group until it ends, if at all possible. Or, they can wait till the group ends to begin their own group.



Three Levels of Belief



Conviction: A belief that is central to the Christian gospel itself; non-negotiable eternal truths; found in the scriptures, these are things or beliefs we hold that we are willing to suffer persecution for. These are the few areas we hold as a capital “T” truth and would draw a line in the sand with those who do not also hold them to be true. EX: Deity and humanity of Christ, salvation by grace alone through faith.

Persuasion: Important Biblically held views and ideas we have on debated topics. These are open to debate and we are willing to cooperate in ministry with those who do not hold the same views. EX: The age of the universe, end-times views, spiritual gifts used in the church.

Opinion: Personal beliefs and preferences which each individual hold to be true. These are views that change over time and with education or changes in society. EX: Style of worship music, version of the Bible you read.

In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity

Understanding the different levels of belief is important so that we don't hold conviction level (non-negotiable) beliefs the same way that we hold persuasion level (negotiable) beliefs.

The cumulative weight of seven key areas can help to determine where a certain topic may fall;

1. biblical clarity;
2. relevance to the character of God;
3. relevance to the essence of the gospel;
4. biblical frequency and significance (how often in Scripture it is taught, and what weight Scripture places upon it);
5. effect on other doctrines;
6. consensus among Christians (past and present);
7. effect on personal and church life



Word of the Year

Your word of the year...it's different than resolutions. It isn't a constant reminder of what you "should be doing," and instead, stands as an inspiration of who you really are in Christ and how you want to live. So the invitation stands to think about who you want to be, who God created you to be, and choose a word that will help you become that.

Key reminders as you step into discovering your word:

Be authentic. Your word should reflect YOU, and no one else. It's easy to listen to others' words and then pick one that sounds good. But you want a word that's uniquely yours. One that resonates with you on a deep level. One that God can use to challenge you and strengthen you.

Don't overthink it. There's no wrong answer so just breathe and enjoy the process. There's no need to stress or overthink it.

1. Take time to reflect on what Jesus has been saying to you recently through his Word, music, and your life. Anything that sticks out to you? Any lessons you feel like God is trying to teach you? Jot these thoughts down.
2. Write down the words that come to your heart and mind after reading through your thoughts. Review the list and circle any words that stand out to you. Does anything jump out at you? Is there one word that embodies several of the words you have circled?
3. Your word may come to you immediately or may require more listening and processing. Know that it is okay to reflect and pray on it and seek input from God and others. It's not about whittling down a long list of words; it's about identifying the word that keeps coming back to nag at your heart.
4. Continue in the reflecting, listening, and praying process until the magical light bulb goes off and the heavens part and a dove descends with your word written on a white, gold plated letter. Just kidding. That won't really happen. But there will come a moment, when in the stillness of your heart, you will know and then you can write in the blank below...YOUR word.



So ... now you have your word! What can you do with it? Every word has different actions attached to it. Especially how it relates to your story. But there are things you can do every day of the year, regardless of what your word is:

- Write your word – With ink, pencil, paint, in sand, on your computer, on a typewriter, wipe off board, print a picture and frame it.
- Find your word – On billboards, in ads, books, movies, Scripture, daily conversations. Just keep your eyes and ears open!
- Journal your word - Why did you choose this word? What do you want to get from your word? How do you want to change, grow, learn?
- Wear your word- Make or buy bracelets, charms, keychains, etc. with your word on it.
- Share your word - Let those around you know about your word. Have them join you in the journey. Invite them to pray about your word for you and hold you accountable to living it out!
- Post your word - Around your house and around your work. Use post-its, dry erase boards, refrigerator magnets, or maybe keep a one word journal for throughout the year.
- Study your word - Find things that focus on your word. Look up the definition. Set out to learn as much as you can about your word and see how it specifically shows up for you.
- Pray your word - Specifically ask God to show up for you and to show your word to you.
- Claim your word - Own it. Live it out.
- Celebrate your growth in living out your word! - Celebrate the small and big wins! Celebrate getting back up after you've gotten knocked down! Celebrate persevering in your word! Celebrate what God is doing in and through you related to your word!



Reflect // Celebrate // Anticipate

As part of the rhythm of a Community Group, we want to encourage groups to stop and celebrate. Our culture doesn't do the best job at celebrating, but when we look at scripture, we see God's people regularly stopping to celebrate what God had done in and through them. So, use this as a time to reflect on the work you have done, celebrate the growth you have seen, and wonder about what might be next for you as your group moves into the next outcomes.

1. Reflect

Leaders, to prepare for this exercise, bring children's building blocks or rocks or jars or note cards for each group member to start building a "stone of remembrance" of what God has done in their lives. (See pictures below). Each person will write one thing per block/rock/card and then share with the group.

As a group, read through the following passage in Joshua to set up the group discussion and activity:

One place we see God's people stopping to remember and celebrate what God has done is in Joshua 4:1-7. God has just brought His people to the Jordan river (out of the desert where they have been living for the past 40 years) and they are preparing to go into the promised land. God has just made the waters of the Jordan river stop flowing so the people can cross and that is where Joshua 4 picks up.

Joshua 4:1-7 ¹When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ²"Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, ³and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.'" ⁴Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. ⁵And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, ⁶that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' ⁷then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."

Tell your group that today we want to STOP and REMEMBER what God has done over the past several outcomes. We will build our own memorial, or stones of remembrance to help us reflect and celebrate how we have grown.



Select one or two of the following questions to help your group members identify the areas of growth in their lives:

- What new insight and understanding have you gained through discussing spiritual topics with others?
- What kind of change can you identify in your life?
- How do you experience more freedom now than before?
- How has your perception of yourself changed during this season?
- In what areas of life have you taken new steps of faith?
- What kind of answers have you received for your prayers or questions?

Have each person write down 1 or 2 things they want to celebrate and remember on their block, index card, stone, etc.

2. Celebrate (each other)

After everyone has shared what God has done in their lives, take some time to encourage each other. Pick one of the following ways to help people do that:

- How has God used others in this group to encourage and help you grow?
- How have you seen God at work in each other's lives?
- What do you appreciate about each other? You may do this as a chain: one person starts by sharing about another, who then in turn shares about another etc. until everyone has shared and everyone has received encouragement.

3. Anticipate

Ask the group one of the following questions or lead them through one of the following exercises. This will help your group get excited about what God might be up to next!

- What do you want to be true of you by our next celebration?
- Take 10 or 15 minutes of quiet and ask the Holy Spirit what He is highlighting for you to focus on in this season moving forward.
- A letter to God. In a moment of silence, write down how you want to thank and praise God for what he's done and who you have experienced him to be. He loves to hear what's in our heart!



Make Your Own Memorial Examples / Stones of Remembrance



Gather old blocks from members in the group to build a stack for each person to write down what they are learning and celebrating.



Buy index cards to hand out for people to write down their learnings/celebrations.



Gather stones from outside and old spaghetti or jam jars. Write words that will help you remember how you are growing and what you are celebrating.



Be Curious

The way we can BEST help people grow is not to TELL them what to think, but to help them land on answers by asking good questions.

We call this Being Curious.

Normally, listening looks like this: Ask questions, listen to what the other person is saying for 5-10 seconds and then start formulating our response that typically has to do with us, our story and our 2 cents on what they should do next.

Instead: Ask a question, listen to what they are saying and be prayerful while listening. Listen for where they are wrestling, something to celebrate, or what might be the underlying belief or thought that has their focus right now. Then, ask a question that helps that person explore more. Self-Discovery is the best tool, as someone is more likely to own it and act on it if they discover it on their own.

Those questions could be:

- Tell me more? (Say more about that.)
- What's challenging about that?
- What comes up for you as you process that?
- Several other examples are listed on the following page

Application Questions: Once someone has more clarity about why something is coming up for them then we can help them explore how they might move to applying what they are discovering.

Application Questions help them move from knowledge to taking practical steps to help bring about lasting transformation.

- What do you think Jesus wants you to do?
- What is your best sense of God's call and how are you responding to that?
- How will you respond to that?
- What do you need to do about that?
- Several other examples are listed on the following page

Learn to see when people have a lightbulb moment and then help them process: what do you need to capture about what is coming up for you right now, so you can revisit this later? (ie: how will you keep that in front of you?)



Be Curious Questions

After they share, use a follow-up question to draw out more:

- Tell me more?
- Say more about that.
- What’s important about that for you?
- What’s challenging about that for you?
- What comes up for you as you process that?
- What is exciting for you about that?
- Has this been something God has brought up before?
- What do you think about that or How do you feel about that?

What Now?

After they discover a new truth or gain new insight, ask “what now”:

- What do you need to do about that?
- What do you think Jesus wants you to do?
- How will you respond to that?
- What will you do with that?
- What step could you take in the next few days?
- How will you keep that in front of you?
- What’s your best sense of God’s call and how are you responding to that?



Additional Resources for Life Group Leaders:
Gatewaychurch.com/lifegroupleader



