

ROGER HERNANDEZ

GROUPS
PURPOSE
SERVICE

LEADERSHIP



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PART I



LEADERSHIP



LEADERSHIP

David Is Promoted

1 Samuel 16:12: “So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, ‘This is the one; anoint him.’ So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.”

Group

1. Was God pleased with Saul, the king of Israel? **1 Samuel 15:27–28**
2. What dangerous instructions did God give to Samuel? **1 Samuel 16:1–2**
3. Whom did Samuel want to anoint as the next king? **1 Samuel 16:6–7**. Why do you think God rejected Eliab, if he was the eldest son and a prominent warrior?
4. Did the family invite David to the party? **1 Samuel 16:11**

5. Take note of the way that Jesse spoke of his son David. **1 Samuel 16:11**

He called him _____

He called him _____

Do you think David's father held him in high regard? How do you feel when you are not highly regarded, when you are ignored, when others dismiss you? How do you react?

6. What power came on David when he was anointed and set apart by Samuel? **1 Samuel 16:13**. How can you have that same power?

Purpose

This lesson teaches us three principles:

1. Talent is not enough. King Saul was tall and handsome. David's older brother was a good soldier and the firstborn in his family. However, they were rejected as leaders by God. Both had talent but lacked a godly character. God is looking for people who have a character like Jesus. Do you know someone who has many talents but is wasting them? What are you doing with the talents God gave you?
2. What matters is what God thinks of you. David's father did not think his son could be a king. In his mind, the only thing David could do was be a shepherd. As a young person, perhaps you have run into people who did not think much of you. Have you experienced discrimination? Have you experienced rejection? How do you react when others do not believe in you, when you are cast aside, when you are ignored or passed over for a promotion?
3. To be where you want to be, give your best where you are. David was

David Is Promoted

the best shepherd he could be. He was a leader and a musician, even though they had him tending sheep. He did not become bitter or give less than excellent effort. He did everything with enthusiasm and humility, and God promoted him in His time. Do you think you're at the place in your work, school, or life where you want to be? What kind of attitude do you have while waiting for a better opportunity? Are you giving your best where you are?

Invitation

This week, give your best where you are. Remember that even if others do not recognize your effort, talent, or work, God does. Have faith that, in time, God will promote you.

Service

1. Fill an expired or about to expire parking meter.
2. Leave some extra money in the vending machine.
3. Buy a little extra grocery for the local food bank.



LEADERSHIP

David Is Tested

Psalm 142:3: “When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn. Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me. I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me. Then I pray to you, O LORD. I say, ‘You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life.’”

Group

David had several tests in a short time.

1. What did David lose in one night? There are three important things he lost:
 - His job. What did David do for a living? **1 Samuel 16:22–23**
 - His wife. Who was his wife? **1 Samuel 18:27**
 - His house. Where did David live? **1 Samuel 18:1–2**

David Is Tested

Meditate a moment on the experience of David. How do you think it felt to lose, overnight, his job, house, and wife?

2. Where did David run to when he fled his home? **1 Samuel 19:18**. Who do you go to when you have problems in your life?
3. David had a close friend. What difficult decision did he make as a result of the persecution of Saul? **1 Samuel 20:41–42**
4. Where did David end up and what happened there? **1 Samuel 21:10–15**. (Note the attitude toward immigrants of the people who lived in Gath.)
5. Where does David end up and with whom? **1 Samuel 22:1–2**. Write the three groups here:

The _____

The _____

The _____

Purpose

Here are three points we can apply in our lives:

1. We attract what we are. When David was living in the cave, it was a very difficult time in his life and he was down. The people who approached him were also down on their luck—the people who had debts, the afflicted, those who had problems. What kind of people surround you? Who are your friends? If you want to change your life, change your friends! Friends say more about you than about them.
2. Do your best—be the best you can where you are. First **Samuel 22:2** says that David became captain over the people who came to him. In

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other words, he was their leader. If he could not be a leader in the palace, at least could be the best leader of the cave. Do you find it difficult to give your best when circumstances are less than favorable? How does your attitude reflect the problems in your life?

3. God gave everything back, even better than before. If we read the end of the story, we see God giving back to David all that was lost. That's why he could write **Psalm 142** (see "Reveal" above) when he was in the cave. What have you lost lately? What do you need God to give you back, better than before?

Service

This week, look at the people who are with you and around you. Ask yourself how you can become a leader to encourage, rather than a victim who suffers.



LEADERSHIP

David Is Provoked

1 Samuel 17:45: “David replied to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the LORD rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the LORD’s battle, and he will give you to us!’”

Group

David had to overcome several obstacles and provocations before he could kill the giant.

1. David’s father, who tried to limit him. What did he ask David to do?
1 Samuel 17:17–18. (Note that his father did not ask him to go into

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battle, only to carry out errands and bring back news.) Has someone ever tried to limit you? How did you react? Share your experience.

2. The soldiers, who talked a lot but did not fight. What routine did the soldiers engage in daily? **1 Samuel 17:20–21**. How did they react when Goliath appeared? **1 Samuel 17:24**
3. His oldest brother, who judged his motives. How did Eliab treat David publicly? **1 Samuel 17:28–29**. Why do you think he acted that way toward David?
4. King Saul, who tried to have David do things his way. What was David's reaction as he tried on Saul's armor? **1 Samuel 17:38–39**
5. The words of Goliath to David. **1 Samuel 17:41–44**. How did Goliath speak to David? Note what he did:
 - (a) provoked;
 - (b) insulted;
 - (c) mocked; and
 - (d) cursed.

How do you react when your friends make fun of your religion or insult God with curses?

Purpose

This lesson offers three principles you can act on:

1. Do not let the people around you determine your actions. David ignored the limitations set by his father, the fear of the soldiers, the aggressiveness of his brother, and the controlling spirit of the king. He had a purpose, to kill the giant. How difficult or easy is it for you to

David Is Provoked

ignore other people's criticism and pursue your goals and objectives?

2. Defend the cause of God. Many times we find ourselves in situations where other people are hostile through their words and actions to the cause of God. To be silent in these times is to be complicit. How public is your faith in your school, work, or neighborhood?
3. One person can make a difference. Sometimes we think that a person can't do much on their own. Today's story reveals that this is false. One person can, if they are guided by God. In which areas of your life are you frustrated because you do not receive support from others? Go ahead anyway!

Service

This week, decide to get up and defend the cause of God even when your decision is not popular. When you are alone and no one supports you, trust in God and do the right thing anyway.



LEADERSHIP

Joseph Is Chosen

Genesis 37:5: *“One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. ‘Listen to this dream,’ he said. ‘We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!’ ”*

Group

1. What happened one night to Joseph, that he was motivated to tell his brothers about? **Genesis 37:5**
2. How did the brothers and their father react to Joseph’s dream?
 - a. His brothers _____ . **Genesis 37:8**
 - b. His father rebuked him. **Genesis 37:10**
 - c. His brothers were jealous of him. **Genesis 37:11**

Joseph Is Chosen

- d. His brothers wanted to _____.
Genesis 37:19–20
- e. Eventually his brothers sold him into slavery. **Genesis 37:28**
Why do you think that other people get upset when you do well?
How do you react when someone else is doing better than you?
3. What does the Bible say about how to achieve the dreams and desires God has for us? **Psalms 37:4**
4. What should you do about people who oppose and criticize your ideals and dreams? **Matthew 6:14**
5. In what place did Joseph's dreams come true? **Genesis 37:36**. Even if you are in a place far away from home, what plans and dreams can God give you in a strange land?

Purpose

Take these points and use them in your life:

1. Not everyone will understand your dreams. Joseph's family did not accept the fact that he was special. God gives us dreams, but others may not understand and will try to derail the dreams God has given us. Can you think of an idea, dream, or wish you had that you shared with another but did not find support?
2. The paths of God are not the same as you might want or even imagine. God told Joseph that he would be a leader, but did not tell him where or when. Joseph never could have imagined that he would be a leader in a strange land. Perhaps you have come to this country as an immigrant and do not know what God wants for your life. How does Joseph's story help us to have faith in God's plan and not despair?



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3. God will always find someone to protect you. In the story of Joseph, we see that God put certain people in place to protect and help Joseph. The young man went through testing but was never alone. Who supports you? Who can you turn to when you are in trouble?

Service

1. Instead of just thinking it, compliment someone publicly.
2. Give a sad looking stranger a happy music CD or card.
3. Ask someone “*how are you?*” Mean it. Listen to them.



LEADERSHIP

Joseph Is Jailed

Genesis 39:19: *“Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife’s story about how Joseph had treated her. So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king’s prisoners were held, and there he remained. But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The LORD was with him and caused everything he did to succeed.”*

Group

1. What did Potiphar do after hearing his wife’s lie about Joseph? **Genesis 39:20.** Do you think that the imprisonment of Joseph was fair? How do you react when someone accuses you unfairly?
2. Two phrases are repeated in this story. What is the phrase that gives us confidence even in times of difficulty? **Genesis 39:21, 23**

3. Joseph could have been discouraged and declared himself a victim of injustice. Instead, what did he do? **Genesis 39:22–23**
4. Is it easy or difficult for you to give your best when the circumstances around you are not the best? How can you experience the love of God even in your worst moments?
5. Joseph eventually became leader of Egypt. How did the time spent in prison prepare him for future leadership?

Purpose

The lesson presents three principles for your life:

1. God leads. God knew that Joseph was going to jail. That was the preparation that Joseph needed for later on in his life. The contacts he made in prison connected him with the palace. Sometimes we have to descend in order to go higher. Why is it so hard for us to believe or understand that God continues to be in control when we are going through hard times?
2. God is with you. Twice in the passage, the Bible includes the phrase “*God was with Joseph.*” It seems strange, because a prison cell is not the first place that comes to mind when you think of the love and presence of God. Can you share with the group a moment in your life when you felt God or saw Him act in a place out of the ordinary?
3. God prospers you. The secret of prosperity is to have a relationship with God and not allow yourself to become embittered by negative circumstances. How is your attitude lately?

Service

1. Prepare a meal for a homeless person.
2. Smile more than usual. :)
3. Call your mother or family member to tell them “*I love you.*”



LEADERSHIP

Joseph Is Responsible

Genesis 41:37: *“Joseph’s suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. So Pharaoh asked his officials, ‘Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?’ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours.’”*

Group

1. How did a pagan king receive the suggestions from a former convict?
Genesis 41:37
2. What was it that convinced Pharaoh that he should listen to Joseph?
Genesis 41:38. In what way can you see the Spirit of God in Joseph’s life?
3. Pharaoh called Joseph two things: wise and intelligent. What is the

difference between these two words?

4. Joseph, an immigrant, without many friends or any help from his family, became the second most powerful in the kingdom. What message do you think God wants to give us through that story?
5. Study with me for a moment the word favor. The biblical meaning of the word is that God looks on one of His children in a special and meaningful way. How can you attract the favor of God into your life?
2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 11:27; Proverbs 12:2

Purpose

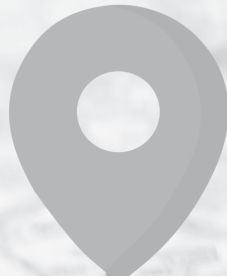
Take these ideas and make them work for your life:

1. Your testimony gives you authority. Joseph spoke with authority because the Spirit of God was with him and in him. The gospel is demonstrated by our actions, not our words. How can you as a Christian improve your testimony?
2. More than “*friends in high places*,” you need the Lord. Joseph was not well connected, and his promotion came directly from God, who ordained a masterfully orchestrated plan to bless him and get him out of prison. What is the danger in self-promotion instead of seeking the promotion of God?
3. The key to God’s favor is to walk with Him. As you walk closer to Jesus, you can clearly perceive His plan. Strive to please God, and you will have His favor. Even though salvation is by grace, why is it important to walk in obedience to experience God’s favor?

Serve

This week, seek to be obedient, and do not indulge in self-promotion. Let God promote you.

PART II



TRANSFORMATION



TRANSFORMATION

From Disease to Health

Read Mark 5:24–34

Group

1. Read together **Mark 5:25–26**. The Bible says that this woman had “*suffered a lot*.” How do you think the disease had affected the most important areas of her life?

- In her role as a wife: _____
- In her work: _____
- In the church: _____

2. What was the plan this woman came up with as she searched for healing?
Mark 5:27–28

3. How long did it take for Jesus to heal her disease? **Mark 5:29**

4. What attitude did the woman have when Jesus “*discovered*” what she had done? **Mark 5:33**

From Disease to Health

5. The woman received two blessings from Jesus that day. Can you identify them? **Mark 5:34**

- a. Emotional Blessing: _____
b. Physical blessing: _____

Purpose

1. What events in your life are causing you pain right now? Write them here.

- a. _____
b. _____

2. What are your plans to solve the problems that affect you?

3. In what areas of your life do you feel fear at the moment?

- a. _____
b. _____

4. What problem would you want Jesus to touch this “*instant*”?

Today we pray for healing, depending on the particular need, which may be physical, emotional, or spiritual. We learned that we have a God so great and merciful that He can heal. Ask with faith!

Service

1. Write a handwritten note (not an email or text) for someone people ignore.
2. Knit a beanie or blanket or buy one for a homeless person.
3. Put change in the washer/dryer for the next person.



TRANSFORMATION

From Nothing to Everything

Read 1 Samuel 1:1–20

Group

1. Today's passage tells us that Hannah had three problems in her life. What were they?
 - a. Her husband had two _____ (1 Samuel 1:2)
 - b. Hannah could not have _____ (1 Samuel 1:3)
 - c. Her rival constantly _____ (1 Samuel 1:6)
2. Where did Hannah go despite having so many problems? **1 Samuel 1:9**
3. What promise did Hannah make to the Lord Almighty if He granted her a son?
1 Samuel 1:11
4. Read the following verses and discover who was the only person who really

From Nothing to Everything

understood the situation of Hannah:

- a. Her rival tormented her (**verse 7**).
- b. Her husband told her not to cry (**verse 8**).
- c. Her spiritual leader scolded her (**verse 13**).
- d. Her God did what for her? (**verse 19**).

5. How did God answer Hannah's prayer? **1 Samuel 1:20**

Purpose

1. In what ways are people in your life causing you suffering and pain?

2. When you have problems, do you run to God and His church, or tend to stay away from Him?

3. What is your most important request at this time? Write it here.

4. What commitment are you willing to make, if God answers your request?

The prayer for this lesson is twofold:

1. Submit to the Lord as you present to Him your special requests.
 2. Tell Him what your commitment to Him will be if your request is granted.
- Now, pray!

Service

1. Call someone you haven't talked to in a while.
2. Give someone a flower ...or a dozen
3. Offer someone else your spot on the bus/train/line.



TRANSFORMATION

From Death to Life

Read John 11:1–44

Group

1. What problem were Martha and Mary experiencing? **John 11:3, 14**
2. How does the Bible describe death? **John 11:11–14**
3. How was the two sisters' attitude toward Jesus? **John 11:21, 32**
4. Consider for a moment the feelings of Jesus (*a Savior who really cares about people*), and re-read John chapter 11, especially the verses listed below. Write in the space provided what Jesus must have felt.

a. **Verse 5:** _____.

b. **Verse 33:** Jesus is _____ and
_____.

c. **Verse 35:** _____.

d. **Verse 38:** Jesus turned to _____.

From Death to Life

5. God loves it when we cooperate with Him in His work. In the miracle that we have studied today, what was the role of Jesus and what was the role of Mary and Martha? **John 11:43-44**

- Jesus _____ (verse 43)
- Mary and Martha _____ (verse 44)

Purpose

1. How have you been able to feel the love of Jesus this week?
2. What differences do you notice between what the Bible says about the state of the dead and what people generally think?
3. Sometimes we think that anger is a sin against God as we express our frustration to Him for not answering as we would like. Today we have seen that God is powerful enough to bear our sorrows. What request have you been submitting to God that has not been answered yet?
4. How can you cooperate with God? What attitudes, habits, or actions must be modified so that He can work with more freedom in your life?

Service

This week our service initiative is to pray and ask God for patience, especially with people that really get on your nerves



TRANSFORMATION

From Sinner to Forgiveness

Read John 8:1–11

Group

1. What was the accusation made against the woman? **John 8:3–4**
2. How was the woman treated by different people after being caught in sin?
 - a. The man who had a sexual encounter with her disappeared (**verse 3**)
 - b. The Pharisees _____ her (**verses 3–4**)
 - c. The law said that she should _____ (**verse 5**)
 - d. Jesus _____ (**verse 11**)
3. What counsel does Jesus give us about the importance of avoiding accusations and gossip? **John 8:7**
4. Can you imagine with me what Jesus wrote on the ground, causing everyone to leave? **John 8:8–9**

From Sinner to Forgiveness

5. Jesus forgives the woman but at the same time gives her an instruction. What was it? **John 8:11**

Purpose

1. Have you ever been used or felt accused and abandoned? Share how you felt.
2. What difference did you notice in the treatment given to the man in this story (*there was a man involved*) and the way Jesus treated the woman? How do you feel, knowing that Jesus can forgive all that you have done?
3. Today's passage tells the story of a woman who had serious problems caused by sexual adventures. How have infidelity and promiscuity hurt you or your friends and family? Have you recovered from that situation or do you need God to heal the wounds that are still open?
4. Maybe you've tried many methods to change your life, but none has worked for you. Today there is only one person who can change you from the inside out. Who is it?

So that Jesus can change your life, today you can follow three simple steps. They will help you confirm your decision for Him:

Step 1: Admit you are a sinner and ask God for forgiveness for your sins.

Step 2: Give control of your life to Jesus. From now on, He is your boss.

Step 3: You decide to live for Him, no matter what.

Service

1. Give someone a hug.
2. Pay for someone's meal.



TRANSFORMATION

From Anxiety to Provision

Read John 2:1–12

Group

1. What huge concern did Mary and the wedding party have? **John 2:1–3**
2. What instructions did Mary give to the servants? **John 2:5**
3. What was the miracle that Jesus did for His mother and the new couple?
John 2:7–9
4. Let's use our imagination. Put yourself in the place of the bride. How do you feel when:
 - a. Someone comes to tell you that the wine is gone

 - b. Mary goes to ask Jesus for help (*remember: Jesus had not done a miracle before*) _____

From Anxiety to Provision

- c. Jesus performs the miracle _____
- d. Ten years later, when you're reminiscing and remember "the miracle at the wedding" _____
5. What purpose does God have when He performs a miracle in our lives?
John 2:11

- He wants to reveal His _____ (*wants you to know He can do it!*)
- He wants you to _____ in Him (*this is the crucial part*)

Purpose

1. Who did you go to when you had your last big problem? How did that person help you?
2. The mother of Jesus said to the servants at the wedding, "Do everything He tells you," and they did. What commandment of God's law seems most difficult to obey for you? Why?
3. What situation are you going through right now where everything has failed and you do not have options and resources to continue or try and resolve it?
4. Are you ready to give complete control of your life to Jesus? What do you need to make that happen?

Today we say to God in prayer that we are willing to do what He asks us, as requested. Jesus wants you to believe in Him, so you can see His power in action. Expect a miracle this week.

Service

1. Compliment a stranger sincerely.
2. Run an errand for someone.
3. Give something awesome away on craigslist.



TRANSFORMATION

From Promiscuous Woman to Disciple
Read John 4:6–39

Group

1. What kind of relationship existed between the lineage of Jesus and that of the woman? **John 4:7–9**
2. The Samaritan woman had led a “*wild life*” (many husbands and little stability). What did Jesus offer her instead? **John 4:13–15**
3. What personal and direct request did Jesus make to her? **John 4:16–18**
4. What did Jesus reveal about Himself in the conversation with her?
John 4:25–26
5. How was her reputation changed after meeting with Jesus? **John 4:39**

From Promiscuous Woman to Disciple

Purpose

1. What kind of relationship do you have with people who are different from you in race, color, religion, or way of thinking?
2. The Samaritan woman shared with Jesus her sad experience in love, and how often she was used and abandoned. In what ways do you identify with her? Is it easy or difficult for you to share with others your personal struggles?
3. What situations have caused instability in your relationships or in your marriage?
4. We all have areas in life of which we do not feel very proud. This often causes pain and, in many cases, anxiety. At times we may feel that these are out of control. Can you identify some of these areas in your life? How can God bring restoration and healing in them?

Today we open our hearts to God, allowing Him to take control of our lives, even in those areas where no one has been allowed to enter. You can experience the health, restoration, and blessing that come only from Him.

Service

1. Send a friend an old photo and recall old times.
2. Send a random person in the phone book a small gift.
3. Send your sibling or family member or co-worker a small gift anonymously.



TRANSFORMATION

From Lost to Saved

Read Acts 16:11–15

Group

1. Let's meet Lydia, a very special woman. According to today's passage, she had the following characteristics:
 - a. She liked to meet with other people to study the Bible (**verse 13**)
 - b. She was a businesswoman, a merchant and seller (**verse 14**)
 - c. She had a heart receptive to the voice of God (**verse 14**)
 - d. She proved to be a hospitable woman (**verse 15**)
2. When and where did Lydia meet for prayer services? **Acts 16:13**. The day and place are important. Why?
3. Where was Lydia when God "opened her heart"? **Acts 16:14**. God can reach you anywhere!

From Lost to Saved

4. What important step did Lydia take after hearing the message? **Acts 16:15**
5. Who else was baptized along with her? **Acts 16:15**

Purpose

1. What did you learn from this study about the importance of attending church regularly, no matter the place or comfort level?
2. Do you think that God would have “*opened the heart*” of Lydia if she had resisted?
3. How close or far are you from surrendering your life to God and being baptized as Jesus was?
4. How important is it to you that your family know Jesus and His truth? What steps are you taking for that to be a reality?

Today we pray for God to put a heart of flesh in us and make us more sensitive to His voice when He calls. Perhaps this is the time to consider the decision to be baptized soon. If you agree, mark your answer with an X:

- I wish to join God and His church through baptism.
- I would like to write down my name for the next baptism.

Your group leader will explain to you what’s the next important step.

Service

1. Spend time with the elderly.
2. Share your secret recipe with a friend.
3. Write a letter of appreciation.

PART III





PLAN

Purpose

Jeremiah 29:11: “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the LORD. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’ ”

Group

There are three negative consequences of not knowing why you exist. (Note: the texts are included here.)

1. If you do not know why you exist, you will always be exhausted, and your life will be tiresome. **Psalm 69:3:** “I am exhausted from crying for help; my throat is parched. My eyes are swollen with weeping.” What are you “tired” of lately?

2. If you do not know why you exist, your life will seem boring and pointless. **Ecclesiastes 1:8, 9:** “Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not

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content. History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new."

Which of these three statements best describes your current status? Mark one of the three.

- I am in a great mood and know that with God's help I will do big things in my life.
- I have fallen into a rut, but I have hope for my future.
- I feel bored and my life seems pointless at this time.

3. If you do not know your purpose, you will become a negative person. **Ecclesiastes 1:14, 15:** *"I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind. What is wrong cannot be made right. What is missing cannot be recovered."*

What dangers can becoming a negative person bring to our lives? Name two:

4. Which of these three feelings do you have at this stage of your life?

- I feel tired Yes No
- My life is boring and pointless Yes No
- I have been very negative lately Yes No

Purpose

There are three benefits of understanding why you exist:

1. When you know your purpose, you will have goals in life. **Philippians 3:13:** *"No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead."*

Purpose

What are some goals that you have in the following areas?

Financial _____

Spiritual _____

Relationship _____

2. When you know your purpose, it will be easier to forget the past. Read **Philippians 3:13**. Is it hard for you to forgive and forget, or does it come easily?
3. When you know your purpose, you are preparing for eternity. **Philippians 3:14**: *"I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us."* How important are spiritual things for you? Do you feel they are a priority in the decisions you make, or are they secondary? Be honest.
4. Which of these three blessings do you need more right now in your life?

Setting Goals

Preparation for eternity

Forgetting the past

What area of your life do you need more help with at this time? How does it feel to know that God can make something beautiful of your life? What do you hope to learn during the coming weeks? Who can you invite next week?

Write their name here: _____

Write your prayer requests on paper, and every week for the next four weeks, add requests and also praises when a request is answered.

Service

1. Introduce yourself to someone you always see around
2. Anonymously send a friend in need some cash
3. Invite someone who is alone over for dinner



PLAN

Worship

Romans 12:1: *“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

Group

1. True worship involves dedication to God. **Romans 12:1**

This text helps us understand that worship has the following features:

- Our worship must be voluntary, not forced.
- We worship God not out of obligation but out of gratitude.
- We worship God every day, with our whole lives, not only for a moment or a day.

Worship

What do you think when you hear the word worship? Why is it so important to worship God at all times, not just when we are in church?

2. True worship involves transforming to the image of God. **Romans 12:2**
What are some things “of this world” that are hard for you to leave behind?

3. In what area of your spiritual life do you do things because you have to, not because you want to? *Examples: attend vespers, read the Bible, pay tithe, forgive, help out in church.*

4. Can you share with your group an area of your life where you see clearly that God has changed you in the past year?

Purpose

Here are some ways you can truly worship God.

1. Change the way you think. You do that by asking the Holy Spirit to give you the mind of Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:16**: “*Who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?*” *But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.*”

What do you think of constantly? Is it easy for you to forget your mistakes and failures, or do you constantly think about them and replay the events in your mind?

2. Change your attitude and learn how to be happy in any circumstance. **Philippians 4:11**: “*I have learned to be content with whatever I have.*”
How can you be happy when bad things happen to you? What is your strategy to stay calm in the midst of your problems?
3. Change your habits. Claim the power of God to help you overcome. **Philippians 1:11**: “*May you always be filled with the fruit of your*

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salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.”

What bad habit of yours does Jesus need to destroy?

What good habits do you need to start practicing?

An important part of worship is expressing our praise to God out loud. All members of the group, on their knees and with eyes closed, can each say aloud a characteristic of God. For example:

- *“God, I praise You because you are holy.”*
- *“Jesus, I praise You because You are my Savior.”*
- *“Holy Spirit, I praise You because You are my guide.”*

At the end, the leader will have a closing prayer.

4. Write prayer requests on paper every week, and remember to praise God when a request is answered.

Service

1. Donate an hour of your professional services.
2. Leave chocolate for your co-worker.



PLAN

Relationships

1 Timothy 3:14, 15: *“I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be with you soon, so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.”*

Group

There are five principles you need to know in order to improve your relationships:

1. We must be real people. **Romans 12:9; Hebrews 4:12**

Why, in your opinion, are so many people hypocritical? What can you do to not be one of them?

2. We must be courteous people. **Romans 12:10; Titus 3:2**

Many people think that the art of courtesy has been lost. What do you think? What practical things can we begin to do to be more polite?

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3. We must be people who do their part with enthusiasm. **Romans 12:11:** “Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.”

Which of the words in these two columns best describes you at work or school? Circle the ones that apply:

Moody	Happy
Apathetic	Spirited
Lazy	Enthusiastic
Flaky	Dependable

4. We must be people who show hospitality to those who have less. **Romans 12:13:** “When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.”

Name three things you can do as a group for those in need:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. We must be people who demonstrate unity and humility. **Romans 12:16**
How can we disagree with others in our opinions while being respectful and courteous?

Purpose

Let’s review:

- a. Which of the previous areas do you feel strong in, and which are you weak in and need help?
- b. How, as a group, could you help someone this week in the church or community?

Service

1. If the church is a family, what part of the family are we neglecting the most? What can we do as a group to change that reality? Who can we invite next week to our small group? Let’s pray for them now.



Transformation

Philippians 2:12: *“Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”*

Group

God uses three tools to make you like Jesus.

1. The first tool is the Bible. **2 Timothy 3:16, 17**

Remember the following:

- God’s will for your life is always in His word.
- The will of God will never contradict the Bible.

Share with your group a Bible verse that has helped you in a situation of your life.

2. The second tool is the power of the Holy Spirit. **2 Peter 1:3; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18.** What changes are you asking God to do in you lately? Have you seen progress?

3. The third tool is the circumstances of life, even the pain! **Romans 8:28, 29** How has God used painful events in your life to teach you, or bring you closer to Him?

Purpose

There are three decisions that will help you be more like Jesus.

1. You can decide what you think. **Proverbs 4:23:** *“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.”* **Ephesians 4:23:** *“Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”*
2. You can choose to rely on the Spirit in every moment and stay connected to God. **John 15:4:** *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.”*
3. You can decide how you will act when negative things happen in your life. **James 1:2:** *“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.”*

Share among the group the ways in which you study the Bible. Encourage each other to study the Bible more this week.

Service

1. Collect clothes to take to a local shelter.
2. Stop to have a conversation with a homeless person.
3. Give an inspiring book to a struggling friend.

PART IV



FUNDAMENTALS



FOUNDATIONS

What Happens When We Die?

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17: “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words”

Group

As you reread the text above, answer these questions:

1. Will the dead precede the living in going to heaven? (**verse 15**)

What Happens When We Die?

2. When will the resurrection happen? (verse 16)
3. Who will call the dead to life? (verse 16)
4. Who will rise first? (verse 16)
5. What guarantees our resurrection (verse 14)?

Purpose

How can we be hopeful in the face of death?

1. Believe in the risen Savior. The most awesome thing about death is that Jesus already defeated it! He even mocks it (**1 Corinthians 15**). But the good news is that He wants to share that victory with us. He created us to live, and as we connect with Him, the source of life, we have life. Have you surrendered your life to Jesus? Trust your life to Him today. Whom have you lost that you would like to see again?
2. Understand death. People have many different ideas about what happens when we die. The Bible is not silent on this subject. Here are some facts: Life equals God's breath + the body (**Genesis 2:7**). Death is the reverse (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**). When we die, we die (**Ecclesiastes 9:5–6; Psalm 104:29; Psalm 146:4; Acts 2:29, 34**). The word soul is a widely misunderstood concept; it means a living being, which the Bible says will die (**Ezekiel 18:4, 20**). People who die are neither in heaven nor in hell. They are asleep. Those who die having accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior are waiting to hear the powerful voice of their Creator. What are some of the misconceptions in movies and TV about what happens when we die?
3. Wait for the Second Coming. The text says that we will enjoy heaven after the second coming of Jesus, not before (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**; see also **Luke 14:14**). Jesus comes to reward each of us according to what we have done (**Revelation 22:12**)—but no one goes to heaven ahead of the rest. We will all go together. We will enter heaven and receive life together. It will be a great reunion. Do you want to be there? Then



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make the best decision ever: Give your life to Jesus today! Live life as if He will come today!

Have you lost a loved one? Maybe a friend in the barrio, a brother, a father? Are you concerned about your own future? This week, find hope in the promise of the resurrection of Jesus.

Service

1. Pay for the person behind you at the drive-thru.
2. Buy dessert for someone eating out alone



FOUNDATIONS

A Day to Renew, Refresh, and Resolve

Exodus 20:8–11: “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy”.

Group

1. Where is the first mention of the Sabbath in the Bible, and what are the circumstances? **Genesis 2:1–4**
2. Is there historical evidence to support the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week, i.e., Saturday?

3. God rested on the seventh day, and it was to be a _____ between Creator and creation. **Exodus 31:17**

4. Are there any real benefits when we “*keep the Sabbath holy*” aside from being obedient to God? **Matthew 11:28–30**

5. Jesus was crucified on the sixth day and resurrected on the first day; what did He do on the seventh day, which was consistent with the commandment in our original verse? **Matthew 28:1–7**

Purpose

1. There are three main ideas in the text above; can you write down your own impressions or understanding of God’s desire for us to keep the Sabbath?
 - a. To remember what? _____
 - b. To rest how? _____
 - c. To restore what? _____
2. We live in a materialistic, “*you are what you produce*” society. Was God a little bit too optimistic by suggesting that we “*take a day off from it all*”?
3. God’s intentions are to repair us through the Sabbath rest; what does that mean to you?
4. God has made you totally free, and the Sabbath is your chance to express and enact your freedoms:

A Day to Renew, Refresh, and Resolve

- a. Free to believe you were made by God. The way the world is set up gives us very little room to remember that our lives are a part of something bigger and far more important than what we see. When we remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, we declare our independence from this world and clearly state that God is in control of our lives.
- b. Free to belong to the family of God. One of our greatest needs is to be loved and accepted. Because of the less-than-perfect lives we live, we don't often feel the love. The Sabbath is a day to remember that we belong to the family of God, in spite of ourselves. Declare your independence from past hurts and pains as you come face to face with the infinite love of God.
- c. Free to become citizens of the kingdom of God. We're all looking for direction. Seems like we spend our lives looking for something that can't be found. We declare our independence from every power that binds us to this limited world, to become citizens in the Kingdom of God. We are free to worship God through eternity; free to drink from the limitless wisdom of God through eternity.

This week, put these three words to work every day: rest, relate, and restore. Take a physical rest from the routine of your day; relate to God through prayer, reading, listening to music, or a sermon for at least twenty minutes per day; then take time to feel renewed and restored for another ten minutes. Practice this as often as you can and begin to see the Sabbath as a whole day to rest, to relate to God, and to be restored by His love.

Service

1. When you go out to eat call the server by their name.
2. Leave a tip bigger than **10%**
3. Ask the server how their day is going.



FOUNDATIONS

Jesus Changes You Forever

Revelation 21:4: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.” **Isaiah 65:17:** “Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth.”

Group

1. How did God want people to live? **Genesis 1:26**
2. What interfered with the plans God had for His children? **Genesis 3:1–13**
3. What did God do to transform the situation? **John 3:16**
4. At what point does our transformation begin? **2 Corinthians 5:17**
5. God promises to transform our reality permanently one day.

Jesus Changes You Forever

What four things does God promise to eliminate forever? **Revelation 21:4**

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

Purpose

The way in which God transforms the human being occurs in three stages:

1. When we accept the sacrifice of Jesus, the transformation begins. Invite Him to live in your life and begin a daily relationship with Him. You are transformed into new creatures. This is known as a spiritual birth or conversion. When did you accept Jesus as your Savior? How did you feel?
2. As we walk with Christ, the transformation continues. Throughout the Christian life, spiritual transformation occurs, and you begin to see spiritual fruit such as patience, kindness, self-control, and joy. The purpose of this process is that every day we look more like Jesus. This stage is called sanctification.
3. When Jesus Christ comes the second time, He will complete the transformation. Christ promised to return to transform the reality of humanity forever.

The Bible tells us, *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone”* (**Revelation 21:1**). **Isaiah 65:17–18** confirms this when it says, *“I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore.”*

4. Identify the things you want God to transform in your life permanently:

- Relationships
- Character
- Finance
- Work
- Decision making
- Other: _____

5. Identify areas of your life in which you have not yet permitted God to transform you:

(family, work, finances, marriage, character, grudges, wounds)

6. Recognize the promise of God to transform your life forever, and memorize **Revelation 21:4**: “He will wipe every tear from [my eyes], and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

Service

1. Mentor local youth.
2. Put **\$10** on a random gas pump.

PART V



RELATIONSHIPS



RELATIONSHIP

Dating

*“Abraham was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him in every way.
2 One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household,
Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh.
3 Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son
to marry one of these local Canaanite women.
4 Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son
Isaac” Genesis 24:1-4*

Group

1. When it was time for Isaac to get married, where did he look for a wife?
Genesis 24:3-4.
2. Why is it important to date people of the same values? **2 Corinthians 6:14-15.**

Dating

3. What were some of Rebecca's specific worthy characteristics? (**Genesis 24:16**) How was her sexuality? **Genesis 24:17-19**. What kind of attitude did she display when asked for a favor? (**Genesis 24:57-58**). How did she relate to her parents?
4. How much time did Isaac date Rebecca before marriage? **Genesis 24:63-66**. Would that work nowadays? Why?
5. Isaac and Rebecca fell in love and stayed together. What steps can you take to make sure your marriage has a high probability of success?

Purpose

In order to have a good dating relationship, practice the following:

1. **Be real.** Dating is a way of finding out whether you are compatible, yet many hide their true identity. Be who you are now, helps the adjustment later. The sooner the other person knows who you truly are, and vice versa, the sooner you can know if this is a relationship worth pursuing. Why are some so afraid to be real when dating?
2. **Be responsible.** Ellen White warns us about "*playing with other people's hearts.*" A responsible Christian will not date "*because I feel lonely this summer,*" or "*because all my friends have girlfriends and I feel left out.*" If you are not sure, don't proceed. Have you seen any of your friends get hurt because of irresponsible dating? What can you do to prevent it?
3. **Be respectful.** Since sex is for marriage, and heavy petting can lead to sex, it is recommended that the physical aspect of dating be kept to a minimum; it should not be the deciding factor on whether you date someone or not. Treat your date like a princess. Treat yourself like you are worthy. Don't let others use your body for their pleasure, for life



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is more than looks. How can you increase your self worth? What if you have already gone too far, what can you do?

Service

Today make the decision to imitate Rebecca. Be extra friendly. Serve without complaining. Send a loving message to parents or family members just because you love them.



RELATIONSHIP

Sex Life

“He (Satan) was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:32, 34, 35. Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:44 (emphasis supplied).

Group

1. What does the Bible call Satan in the text above? Why does he receive those names? Is there any earlier case in the Bible when he lied? When was the “*beginning*”? How does he lie in the sexual area?
2. Satan means “*enemy*.” What does it mean that Satan is your enemy? Does he always come at you like an enemy?

3- Complete the sentence: Everyone who sins is _____.

4- Being a slave means that you have no chance to decide your own future, but somebody else does. Can you describe (in your own experience, or maybe as seen in those around you) how sin enslaves people?

5- Jesus says that the only thing that will set us free from slavery is the _____ (five letters) What is the truth about sex according to God's word?

Purpose

Satan lies to us. That's a fact. And when it comes to sex, he is the father of lies. Satan has a top-notch plan to enslave us through sex by lying about it. You must know three things Satan doesn't want you to know about premarital sex:

- 1- What you do today affects tomorrow. He wants you to think that you can have sex without consequences. He exemplifies that with fiction. In every movie, TV show, and even TMZ-kind of magazines, the leading characters go from bed to bed, sleeping around without consequences. But that is fiction, an imaginary tale. The truth is, "*you reap what you sow*," **Galatians 6:7**. The truth is that premarital sex affects your tomorrow. It can ruin your health (65 million people in U.S. have an incurable sexually transmitted disease), ruin your plans through an unexpected pregnancy (one in five teenagers have to deal with an unexpected pregnancy in high school), and your emotional stability for the rest of your life. The truth is that what you do today, for good or bad, will surely affect your tomorrows.
- 2- Premarital sex trains you for divorce. Maybe you've experienced or you are experiencing the sadness, hurt, and the blues of your parents' divorce. It is such a painful experience. Well, premarital sex is training

Sex Life

for divorce. Satan lies to you that it is okay to move from relationship to relationship. A relationship comes, breaks up, and another one comes around. Things can go wrong in a relationship, but soon you will replace have another partner. But sex is much more than just physical. It has emotional consequences-and mental and spiritual ones too. When you buy into Satan's lies about premarital sex, you are preparing for failure. Is your dream to form a healthy and happy family? Then, trust the truth, not the lies.

- 3- Sex is not for "ready" people, it is for married people. MTV and other TV shows preach that you should have sex when you're ready. But the One who designed and created you tells you that sex is for married people: "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (**Genesis 2:22**). You must trust in God with all your heart and lean not on what your friends and culture may tell you, and God will make your path straight.

This week, while watching television or maybe a movie, challenge yourself to catch the multitude of lies Satan communicates about sex. Decide to have the truth set you free from his lies.

Service

1. Clean up your area at work, and a common one as well.
2. Pick up trash.
3. Pay for the drink, meal, or toll of the person behind you.



RELATIONSHIP

Dealing with Haters

“Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal” Psalms 69:4 (emphasis supplied).

Group

1. What caused concern to the writer of **Psalm 25:19**?
2. What will your enemies try to do to you? (**Psalm 102:8, Psalms 71:10**)
3. It’s tragic and hurtful, but who can also be our enemy? **Matthew 10:36**.
4. Instead of holding a grudge, what counsel does the Bible give us? **Psalm 143:9**.
5. God calls us to love our enemies (**see Matthew 5:43-44**). How can we do this?

Dealing with Haters

Purpose

As you deal with people who don't like you, think of these things:

1. Don't remember. A common response to an offense is to hold on to the pain it causes. This helps no one, especially the one who holds the grudge. Give it to God instead. What are some drawbacks of grudge-holding? How can we overcome the habit of cherishing grudges?
2. Don't relate. One of the most disturbing facts about people who have problems with hate is that they seem to desire to continue relating with those who cause them pain. Find new friends! Go outside your circle. Don't continue in relationships with "toxic people." Can you think of a person, right now, with whom you may need to cut ties?
3. Don't retaliate. Vengeance is God's. He is a just judge who will pay according to people's actions. Resist the urge to treat people with the same hate with which they treat you. Remember, people who hate don't usually love themselves. When you feel like retaliating, what practical steps can you take to overcome that desire?

This week, take some time to write down your list of friends and haters. Then pray for them, one by one, looking beyond their actions to what they truly are: Children of God.

Service

1. Be a courteous driver.
2. Hold the elevator.
3. Visit a lemonade stand or a corner food vendor and buy something.



RELATIONSHIP

Friends for Life

“Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?”
Proverbs 20:6 (emphasis supplied).

Group

1. How should we choose our friends? **Proverbs 12:16.**
2. If you want friends, what should you do? **Proverbs 18:24.**
3. What type of friends should you avoid? Why? **Proverbs 22:24, Proverbs 1:10 & 15.**
4. One of the things we should avoid if we want to maintain a good friendship is gossip. What happens to friendships when we say “no” to gossip? **Proverbs 26:20.**

Friends for Life

5. At the end of the day, who is the one true friend we can always count on?
John 15:15.

Purpose

When choosing friends, keep these three concepts in mind:

1. Is my friend bringing me closer to Jesus? Our ultimate objective is to become Christ-like. The Bible says that “*as iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend*” (**Proverbs 27:17**). That means that friends have a chance either to help us grow in our spiritual walk, or guide us away from God. Think about your friend’s faith. Is he or she the stronger Christian, or are you?
2. Is my friend drawing me closer to my goals? One way of getting ahead in life is by having specific, measurable, reachable goals. What are yours? What career do you want? What about marriage? Where do you want to be in 10 years? Are your friends holding you back, or are they pushing you forward?
3. Is my friend getting closer to me, only because of what he or she can get out of me? Some friends are only interested in what they get from you. Others are very needy and want you so they can unload on you. Both of these kinds of friends are takers, not givers. How can you help your needy/selfish friend stand on his or her own and be a giver, as well as a taker?

Pay close attention to the choices you make. Are you following the crowd, or do you stand on your own two feet? Look for ways to help your friends be independent of you and dependent upon God.

Service

1. Visit a senior center or nursing home.
2. Say “*thank you*” for the otherwise routine, mundane.
3. Pick up trash.

PART VI



SERVICE



SERVICE

I Need to Serve

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” **Ministry of Healing, 143.**

Group

1. What kind of attitude should we have toward others, even if they are different? **Leviticus 19: 18.**

2. Whom should Christians give special attention to?

a. Widows and _____ **James 1: 27**

b. With _____ **Leviticus 19: 34**

c. With _____ **Isaiah 58: 10**

3. Why should we help immigrants/foreigners? **Exodus 23: 9.**
4. How are we truly different from people who are not believers? **Matthew 5: 46-48.**
5. What does Jesus do with barriers of race, gender, or social class? **Galatians 3:28.**

Purpose

1. We are brothers. White and black, Hispanic and North American; rich and poor, we are all brothers. Man makes distinctions and has created barriers, but when we come to Jesus, these barriers are broken and we look at each other as brothers. How can we (as a group), integrate new people who visit us, so they feel part of us?
2. We all have a responsibility. God is clear about our responsibility toward the less fortunate. The Bible teaches this in text after text-about how to treat people who have no resources or opportunities, especially the immigrant. More than 30 verses in the Bible specify that we should give special attention to the “*alien*.” What can you do with your small group to help people who are immigrants in your community? Don’t just talk about it, do it!
3. We all can love, even those who do not love us. We have seen in the study today that we are all brothers. Sometimes other people will not accept our help or our love. The temptation at that time is to forget about them. Do not do so! Continue to love; continue to support; continue to help everyone! This is how we show true Christianity.

Service

The purpose of the following lessons is to help you put your faith into action and get involved in your community’s needs. Discuss as a group a service project to the community and develop it together this month. Let’s make it happen!



SERVICE

Time to Serve

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live” Ecclesiastes 3:12.

Group

1. Look at the text above for a moment (**Ecclesiastes 13:12**). It mentions two important things. One is to be happy, and the other one is to do good. Are they related? How?
2. Before you make a schedule and plan out your activities, what essential component should be considered? **James 4:13-15**.
3. Sometimes we are so caught up in our religious activities that we fail to serve the people that need it most (**Read Luke 10:31-32**). Do you see that happening in your church? What can you do to change it?

4. What clear instruction do we have regarding our time management? **Ephesians 5:16.**

5. If we consistently dedicate time to serve and minister to others, what will happen? **Galatians 6:9.**

Purpose

There are three ways to manage your time in such a way that you can serve others.

1. Slow down. In a recent study, 50 percent surveyed said they “*want to slow down, but don’t know how.*” How do you slow down? One way is to realize that you will never finish everything you have to do. Never! So slow down today, notice the needs of people around you. How can we practice this?
2. Seek God. As you slow down, make sure you include intentional times of prayer and reading of the Word, as well as times for fasting. Ask God to reveal to you hurting people that surround you, and when He does, minister to them. What’s the best time of day to seek God? What happens if you’re a night person?
3. Set goals. Author Brian Tracy says that for every minute you spend planning the day before, you save 10 minutes the next day. How clear are your goals? What specific goals do you have for serving others this year? This week? This decade?

The purpose of this lesson is to help you slow down, so you can put your faith into action and get involved in your community. Discuss as a group how your service project is going. Make it happen!

Service

1. Visit a senior center or nursing home.
2. Say “*thank you*” for the otherwise routine, mundane.



SERVICE

Life is not Self-Service

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? **Matthew 6:25-27** (emphasis supplied).*

Group

1. Look at the verses above. Notice how many times God says the word “you.” His objective is for you to focus on Him and others, and not on yourself. Is that hard for you?
2. This next text is very provocative. Read **Philippians 2:3**. The last part says we should consider others as superior to ourselves. Isn't that dangerous for our self-esteem? What is the Bible trying to teach us?
3. What is wrong with an attitude of me-first, you-never? **Luke 12:18-20**.

4. When we focus on others, who really are we serving? **Matthew 25:34-36**.
5. The phrase “one another” appears several times in Scripture. What can we do to one another? **John 13:35**.

Purpose

There are three things you can do to take your eyes off yourself and focus instead on others.

1. Interruptions. If you think about it, many of Jesus’ miracles were done when He was on his way to do something else. He was being interrupted! Welcome interruptions, especially when they are in the form of a person needing help. How do you react when interrupted, really? How can you improve that response?
2. Invitations. Invite people to share your life. No man is an island. Jesus told His disciples to go and invite people to a banquet. God has given you the opportunity to have a banquet of blessings. Whom will you invite to share those blessings?
3. Imitation. Look to the example of Jesus. Imitate His strategy. The best description of that strategy is found in a book called *Ministry of Healing*. In it Ellen White writes, “*Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’*” **page 143**. With whom are you connecting? For whom are you showing sympathy?

The purpose of this lesson is to help you to look to the needs of others, not as an interruption, but as a welcome part of your life. Discuss as a group how your service project is going. Make it happen!

Service

I challenge you to donate one of your favorite possessions. Or 10% of your clothing.



SERVICE

The Cost of Service

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” Luke 6:38.

Group

1. In the story of the Good Samaritan, what did the Samaritan do besides giving mere moral support to the wounded traveler? **Luke 10:33-35.**
2. How does God feel about people who just say, “I’ll pray for you,” when they see a need? **James 2:15-17.**
3. What happens when people give God what little they have? **John 6:9-11.**
4. Read the following line: “Giving is not giving unless it interrupts your lifestyle.” Reflect on this for a moment. Is your giving following this guideline?

5. How is the principle of giving best illustrated? **Philippians 2:5-7.**

Purpose

There are three things you can do, to combat the monster of materialism in your life.

1. **Give.** In a world of selfishness, where people look for first for their own benefit, God turns materialism on its ugly head and says simply: “Give.” Four powerful letters. Have the freedom to give. What material possession would you give up if asked? Which one would you rather walk over hot coals than give up?
2. **Give first.** Are people “broke” because they do not give, or are they not able to give because they are “broke”? That is an important question, sort of like, “What came first, the chicken or the egg?” Our central text for today answers it unequivocally. Take the first step. Give first. People have it all wrong. They wait on the Lord, then give. That is backwards! Give, then wait on the Lord. He’ll come through.
3. **Give expectantly.** Look at the text for today. In just two lines it mentions the word “will” three times. It will be given to you. It will be poured in your lap. It will be measured to you. We don’t give because we want something in return, yet we can give with confidence that God will take care of us. What are you trusting God to do this week in your finances? What do you need Him to do right now?

The purpose of this lesson is to help you to understand the blessing that giving brings to both the giver and the receiver. Discuss as a group how your service project is going. Make it happen!

Service

1. Let someone get ahead of you in line.
2. Listen intently.
3. Prepare a nutritious sack lunch for a homeless person.

PART VII



DECISIONS



DECISIONS

God First

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’ ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her’ ” (Luke 10:38–42, NIV).

Group

1. Who showed up at Martha’s house? Read **Luke 10:38**. (Clue: It’s more than one person!)
2. Describe Martha’s emotions. Write at least three of them here.

God First

3. The name Martha means “*Is becoming bitter*.” Why do you think Jesus mentions her name twice? What could be making her bitter?
4. As you look at Martha’s attitude, how do you imagine her talking to Jesus in **verse 40**?
5. Jesus told Martha that Mary had “*chosen*” what was better. How hard is it for you to take time out to spend with Jesus?

Purpose

In order to refocus your life, you must make the following three decisions daily.

1. Choose the important over the urgent. Mary chose the important, while Martha chose the urgent. Beware of the “*tyranny of the urgent*” that seeks to divert you from concentrating on the important issues in life, like God, family, and personal growth. What are one or two urgent things you keep doing that keep you away from the important ones?
2. Choose the best over the good. The most difficult decision for a Christian is not the choice between good and bad; it’s between good and better. In what areas of your life are you settling for good enough?
3. Choose the permanent over the temporary. The latest fad—summer blockbuster, phone, clothing—looks to gain our immediate attention.

They all have something in common: they are temporary. Don’t concentrate your efforts on people, pastimes, and problems that will not be here ten years from now. What is one problem you are fretting about that you know will soon pass?

My decision today:

Memorize these three words: important, best, permanent. Every time a decision



Roger Hernandez

needs to be made, I'll ask myself if the choice I'm making is in line with those three words. I will share what I learned this week with a friend who needs to hear it.

Remember, you are not a human doing. Your actions don't make you more valuable to God. The cross reminds you that Jesus died before you could do something to deserve it.

Service

1. Let things go. Laugh heartily at yourself.
2. Share your last bit.
3. Stop everything to help someone else.



DECISIONS

Failure Lessons

We all like winners. That's why we keep score. If we are truthful with ourselves we will admit that there are areas in our lives we could be doing better. Right off the bat, let's remember three powerful principles as we deal with this topic:

- Failure is an event, not an identity.
- You can fail, but you are not a failure.
- Everyone fails—everyone! It's a matter of when, not if.

Group

1. Why do people fail? *"Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall"* (Proverbs 16:18, GNT).

The main reason is that we are _____.

Roger Hernandez

The three most dangerous words in the English language are “*I already know!*” “*Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty*” (**Proverbs 21:5, NLT, emphasis supplied**).

We fail because we take _____
_____.

In what areas of your life do you tend to take shortcuts? Feel free to either share or just reflect privately. Mark all that apply:

Relationships

Exercise/diet

Finances

Education

Spirituality

Other _____

2. When we fail, it's important to examine ourselves and find out why it happened. After we have taken an honest look at ourselves, what is a great step to take? Read **Lamentations 3:40** and write your thoughts here:

3. An important step to take when you fail is to look in Scripture for hope, claiming the promises of God for your life. Read these three beautiful ones that you can apply today:

Psalm 50:5

Psalm 34:7

Isaiah 41:10

Failure Lessons

Purpose

Different people will have different reactions when they fail. Here are three common ones:

1. Some will quit.

“If your boss is angry at you, don’t quit! A quiet spirit can overcome even great mistakes” (Ecclesiastes 10:4, NLT). Don’t give up on God. Don’t give up on relationships. Don’t give up on your dreams.

2. Some will blame.

“Then Sarai said to Abram, ‘This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she’s pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who’s wrong—you or me!’ ” (Genesis 16:5, NLT).

3. Some will grow.

“I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize. My friends, I don’t feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven. This is the prize that God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done” (Philippians 3:12–14, CEV, emphasis supplied).

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21, NIV).

My decision today:

With God’s help I will remember that failure is an event, not an identity. I can learn from my failures, but I won’t be defined by them. Christ’s death and resurrection teach me that from my darkest hour, great blessing can come. I choose to trust Jesus and His plan instead of my idea.

Service

1. Plant a tree.
2. Send a teacher flowers or an appreciation letter.
3. Write a thank you letter to your parents.



DECISIONS

Faith

There are four questions that people like us have asked themselves throughout history.

Where do I come from?
How should I live?
What is my purpose?
Where am I going?

The gospel (*good news*) answers them. The gospel is good news, not just good advice. What's the good news? Let's study the basic tenets of the gospel according to Jesus.

Group

There are five significant components of the gospel:

Roger Hernandez

1. What we are. How does the Bible describe the human condition?

Read **Romans 3:10–12**. We are _____.

Read **Ephesians 2:1**. We are _____.

2. We are accountable for our actions. Every action and decision has a consequence. Read **Hebrews 9:27**. Think about it. Accountability is built into us. We demand it from our civic leaders, teachers, and family. In a macro sense, God will hold us accountable for the decisions we have made.

3. We are unable to “*make it right*” on our own. Enter Jesus! What did Jesus do about our condition? Read **Colossians 2:13**.

4. We can accept or deny a historical fact, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Read **1 Corinthians 15:1–8**. Take your time and analyze the details in that passage.

5. Accepting the gospel results in life transformation. Notice this passage: “*For our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction [in much assurance]*” (**1 Thessalonians 1:5, NIV**).

A changed life is not the means to salvation but is definitely the result of understanding and experiencing the gospel in your life.

Purpose

Here is the best summary concerning the gospel:

1. A relationship with Jesus affects your past. Read **2 Corinthians 5:17**. We have all made mistakes, errors, wrong choices that have produced pain in ourselves and others. The process of dealing with your past starts with two elements:

David Is Promoted

- a. **Confession:** when you confess your sins to God, you admit responsibility.
 - b. **Repentance:** when you repent, you recognize change is needed.
2. A relationship with Jesus affects your present. Living as a person who has been forgiven has practical implications. Notice this passage: *“Put all your rebellion behind you, and find yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O people of Israel?” (Ezekiel 18:31, NLT)*. It’s freeing to know you don’t have to live shackled by past mistakes and worried about future issues. Since you have been forgiven and accepted by God, you can do the same for others.
 3. A relationship with God affects your future. Read **Psalm 31:15**. One of the most important ways the gospel affects your life is in helping you live with the hope of a better future. All through Scripture, prophecies are made about deliverance, salvation, and restoration. We can know our future is secure when we see how God has fulfilled His prophecies in the past.

My decision today:

I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I give control of my life to God and ask Jesus to be my Savior and leader. I believe that no matter how awful the sins I have committed, God is not mad at me. Instead, my heavenly Father allowed Jesus to take upon Himself all the guilt, shame, and rejection I deserve. I choose to follow Christ.

Service

1. Prepare a special meal for the ones that decide for Jesus.
2. Give them a gift that will help them grow in faith.

