

**YOUR**

**ONE**

**LIFE**

**OWN IT. LIVE IT. ENJOY IT.**

**“I have come that they may have life,  
and have it to the full.” John 10:10**

# Your ONE Life Leader Guide

We are so thankful that you've decided to lead a Connect Group at theChapel! The atmosphere that you create will help people connect with each other, and experience the kind of life God created us to live. We've created this resource to help you facilitate discussions within your Group.

This 6-week study is adapted from a book authored by a friend of theChapel, Lance Witt. It's all about making the most of Your ONE Life – taking control of this precious gift from God, and enjoying the journey each day. We'll be walking through this study at the same time the content is being shared at theChapel on the weekends. The goal is to hear the message, and then extend the conversation with your Group. If you have readers in your group, you may also opt to read the book as we go. The book chapter numbers that correspond to each week are listed along with your discussion notes below.

This series is not just things we need to know. It's packed with things to do, and sometimes more importantly, things to NOT do! It's a great opportunity to put into action the principles and habits that are suggested. Help your Group to keep an action-oriented approach beyond your meeting time – applying what is learned,

and reaping the benefits of strategic living right away.

At the end of each week's guide, you'll see a section called "Overtime." If your Group is still in it, and hungry for more, these additional questions can extend the conversation a bit. You'll also find some tools to help your Group pray and take next steps throughout the week. Here we go! It's time to dig in! Thanks again for leading!

# It's Later Than It's Ever Been - Week 1

**Start** by having someone in your group read Romans 13:11-12 NLT.

*This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.*

**Pray** that God would give us a sense of urgency in the way we go about our lives. Ask Him for daily reminders that He created us for a full life, and thank God for the gift of each day that we live. Amen!

Time is precious! It's the one resource we have that is non-renewable. Every minute that ticks off the clock is one we will never get back. Now, that's not meant to create a sense of fear, but rather a sense of urgency. Your days have been numbered by God, and you will not live one second beyond what God has appointed for you.

Now, thanks to God's Word, we know that THIS life is not all there is. The Bible says that your soul is eternal. You are going to live somewhere forever. Let that sink in a minute. Compared to eternity, our lives on earth are a blip on the radar. But there is still great significance in what we do with our lives on earth. The choices and decisions I make in this life have a

defining impact on eternity. There is an unbreakable link between this life and our eternal life. In fact, our eternal life already began – the day we were born. It's already underway, and it's later than it's ever been!

- If your current life was going to go on forever, would you be happy about it? Why, or why not?
- What kind of life would you want to live forever?

Jesus announced the intention for our lives when he said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." That word "abundant" denotes the idea of overflowing. Many of us are living overflowing lives, but they are overflowing with the wrong stuff. They are over-scheduled, over-tired and overwhelmed.

- What are the things that are overflowing your life that God didn't put there?
- What do you imagine Jesus meant by, "life more abundantly?"

We have three challenges in front of us this week:

1. Live with a sense of urgency.
2. Live with a sense of eternity.
3. Live with a sense of priority.

Let's start with urgency. We know that urgent doesn't mean frantic. That's definitely something we observe around us, and even in our own lives. When

we live frantic: We cut corners, miss opportunities, and we miss life. However, we know from the scripture that “Time is running out!” We’ve got to take seriously the limited time we have left and make the most of it.

- How would you describe the differences between living frantic and living with a sense of urgency?
- When you take an assessment of your daily pace, do you feel the need to speed up or slow down? Why?

The 2nd challenge was to live with a sense of eternity. As much as it is a mistake to take today for granted, it is an even bigger mistake to take eternity for granted. The way that we do that is by remembering that today is not all there is. The big question for all of us is this: Are we spending too much of our time, energy and attention on things that are temporary – the stuff that is going to wear out, rust out and burn out?

- What eternal things frequently have your attention?
- What temporary things have too much of your attention?

The first two challenges really inform this final challenge to live with a sense of priority. When we live with one eye on today, and one eye on eternity, we’ll have to resolve the conflict of what comes first. We value most what we put first.

- If you only had 90 days left to live, how would your priorities be different?

## OVERTIME

Re-read Romans 13:12 aloud:

*So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.*

The word picture that Paul uses here is the image of taking off and putting on clothes. That may be the biggest part of adjusting how we live our lives. There are things we have to take off to make room for the kinds of things God's given us to put on. The final questions here are for personal reflection. Take a moment to write down your answers to these questions. I'll give time after each one to allow you time to write your responses.

- *How will I take off my busyness, and put on a sense of urgency?*
- *How will I take off my goals to build wealth, and put on goals to build relationships?*
- *How will I take off my distraction, and put on a strategy for living?*

# PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to open your eyes to see where there is too much attention on temporary things. Pray for God to stir up your passion for living the abundant life that Jesus came to give us. Thank Him for each moment, and then make the most of it.

# NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Try a “no regret” week. Whatever you do or say, do it the best you can!
- Prioritize a relationship. Who do you need to get with for an unhurried lunch?
- Walk / drive slower, but be clear about where you’re going. Pay attention along the way.
- Read Chapters 1-5 in the book, “Your ONE Life” by Lance Witt.



# You Are Ridiculously In Charge of Your Life - Week 2

**Start** by having someone in your Group read Philippians 3:8-14 (NLT) aloud.

*Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 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, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

**Pray** for the courage and attention to make knowing God our highest aim. Ask for the grace to establish powerful routines that keep our hearts aligned with

Him. Thank God for creating this relational moment to shed our old lives, and walk forward to the future he created us for. Amen!

Everybody wants to win. Unbelievable effort and resources are poured into creating winners in our culture. Think about what it takes to become a gold medal winner in the Olympics. Think about the adrenaline rush it must be to perform in front of a stadium full of people, and to have your efforts applauded.

The apostle Paul, a master of word pictures, compares our lives with Christ to a race. Paul's thought is this: What is true for athletes in a race, is true for Christians in life.

- What are some words that describe what it takes to become an Olympic gold medalist?
- How have you learned to integrate some of those same values into your life with Christ?

Olympic races aren't won passively. We can't be passive either. We are each responsible for our own lives. We will someday give an account to God for our one and only life. There are limitless options for what you could do with your life – what you think about, what you spend your time doing, what you spend your money on, what you choose to love, what matters to you, and what decisions you'll make. With so many options, it's easy

for us to get distracted, and swept along in the current of everyday life. We can find ourselves wandering (or scrolling and clicking) through our days without really making an active decision about what we're doing.

- Where do you find yourself passively allowing life to happen to you?
- How have you learned to more proactively steward your life toward what matters most?

Others can support, care, encourage, instruct, challenge, rebuke, and mentor us, but we must lead ourselves. A good leader has amazing focus on the target, and that's an area we are vulnerable to distraction. Paul identified the bullseye on his target, and by extension ours when he said, "Everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." That's the bullseye: Knowing God! The goal of life is not just raising good kids. The goal of life is not to have a tidy nest egg for retirement. The goal of life is not owning a business. The goal of life is not to see and experience the world. The goal of life is not influence and notoriety. The goal of life is not even to be a productive worker for Jesus. The goal of life is to know God. Everything else is worthless in comparison.

- How would your life look different if your whole goal was about knowing God?

- What other goal is competing for the top spot in your life today?

If our relationship with God is going to be our highest priority in life, we will have to see Him involved in more than just church on the weekend, a Group meeting and even our morning devotion time. He has to be in everything. How do we involve God in everything we do? Much like the Gold medal athlete wraps their life around their training schedule, we wrap our lives around our relational connection with God.

- What spiritual disciplines have helped you to maintain an all day focus on God as the centerpiece of your life?
- Is there anything you will add to your training regimen to help you focus on your relationship with God?

## OVERTIME

Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV) aloud.

*Train yourself to be godly. 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.*

The way that we train as believers and followers of Jesus is through spiritual disciplines. For this last part of our time together, I'm going to list several helpful spiritual disciplines. For each one, let's write down the last time we did it, and what we remember about the results.

Underline the ones you'd like to engage with more.

(pause a little bit between each one)

- Unhurried Prayer - a solid chunk of time with no agenda beyond communicating with God.
- Fasting - intentionally removing something from your life (usually food), and replacing it with time with God.
- Silence / Solitude - stepping away from the noise of the day, and just being in the presence of God listening for His voice.
- Retreat - a day or multiple days away with the purpose of connecting with God.
- Scripture Memory - committing a passage of Scripture to your memory so it can be recalled quickly as a way of drawing strength from it.
- Scripture Meditation - repetitive reading of the same passage of Scripture allowing God to bring another level of understanding to His Word.
- Sabbath - a weekly day set aside to rest and enjoy God's provision in your life.

# PRAYER POINT

As you pray this week, be focused on training. Don't be passive or casual, focus on engaging God in a growth-oriented kind of way – always getting better. Ask Him to sharpen your spiritual senses. Ask Him to show you truth from the Word that can be put into practice, and thank Him for the strength to pursue a stronger relationship with Him.

# NEXT STEPS

- Choose a spiritual discipline that has not been a strength for you, and dive in.
- Write out a life purpose statement. What does it look like for you to live for the purpose of Knowing God?
- Read chapters 6-10 in the book, “Your ONE Life” by Lance Witt.

# Who Are You Really? – Week 3

**Start** by having someone in your group read Romans 8:15-17 (NIV) aloud.

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

**Pray** that God would show us more about the true identity He created in us. Ask Him for the practical application of how to live out of a full soul. Thank Him for caring deeply about the deepest parts of each one of us. Amen!

Today we’re talking about the human soul. Our lives are a lot like an iceberg. The part that sits above the waterline is the visible part of your life. It’s how we show up to the world: What we do – what we say, but the soul is the massive part of us that is underneath the waterline. It is the part no one sees. It’s not the doing part of us, it’s the being part. It’s the action happening backstage that makes what’s happening on the stage of our lives go really really well, or really really poorly.

- If you were asked what a soul is, what would you say?

- If you were asked the question, “How is it with your soul?” What would you say?

Genesis 2:7 (NIV) says, “*Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*” The Hebrew word for “being” is literally the word soul. God created man’s body, but it wasn’t until God breathed life into him that he became an eternal soul.

Our soul is the real us! It needs care and feeding even more than the physical part of us. Jesus called out the Pharisees for only focusing on external things, and neglecting matters of the soul. Some of us have even tried to approach our relationship with Jesus by what we do, and what we don’t do. Our actions are wildly important, but so much more important is the Christ-centered soul that directs those actions.

- What gets most of your attention: What’s happening on the inside with your thoughts and emotions, or what’s happening on the outside with your appearance and work? Why is that?
- What are the ways you have learned to care for your soul?

Sometimes what we project into the world isn’t the real us. We live in a culture where we frequently assess each other based on a highlight reel from social media, or observing each other in a carefully controlled environment. But we



aren't seeing what people are feeling and experiencing inside, and to be honest, we'd rather they not see our reality either. We can be a "hot mess" on the inside, and still look pretty good – for a while. But eventually the lack of care backstage will begin to affect what's happening on stage, and we find ourselves very far from where we wanted to go. We hear about the abundant life that Christ wants us to have, and we want that to be our experience, but unaddressed past hurt, habits and destructive patterns of thought steal it away from us. God wants to heal that stuff – from the inside out.

- What are you projecting into the world that is not really true of you?
- What is in the backstage part of your life that needs a healing touch from Jesus?

God knows that we have broken souls in need of repair. God has already made the way for that to happen by making us ready by the blood of Jesus, and then putting the Holy Spirit on the inside of us. Day by day that Spirit from God is healing and re-shaping the broken soul until it looks more and more like Jesus. The real us is being gradually replaced by the real Jesus. But we don't have to wait on the transformation work to be done. We can just have His identity today. According to Romans 8, here are 4 descriptions of what that identity looks like:

1. We are no longer slaves to our history. We are sons and daughters for eternity. (vs. 15)
  2. We no longer see God as distant, but we see him as Daddy. (vs. 15)
  3. We are no longer confused about who we are. We are confident. (vs. 16)
  4. We are no longer lacking anything. We have everything we need. (vs. 17)
- Which of those four descriptions do you resonate with the most?
  - Which ones do you resonate with the least?

## OVERTIME

Read Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) aloud.

*The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.*

In the Old Testament, on special occasions, people would speak a blessing into someone else's life. They were words of encouragement, hope, faith, and affirmation. The blessing was a way of saying "This is what I see in you." Or, "Here is how I see God working in you and through you." It's not just an Old Testament idea, and we don't need a special occasion. With our identity in Christ under a cultural attack, we need words of

blessing spoken into our lives more than ever before.

- Is it natural or unnatural for you to speak blessing over people as you interact throughout the day? Why?
- How does knowing that you did not earn the blessing of God change the way you bless others?

## PRAYER POINT

This week, ask the Lord to secure your identity in Him. Ask for daily reminders that we are hidden in the name of Jesus, and thankful to be hidden inside of Christ.

## NEXT STEPS

- This week, commit to being a person who speaks words of blessing into the lives of others. Choose 2 people, and surprise them by speaking a blessing.
- Google Bible verses about your identity in Christ. Write out 3 of those verses on index cards. Review those 3 verses every day for the next week.
- Complete Growth Track and discover your purpose.
- Read chapters 11-15 in “Your ONE Life” by Lance Witt.

# Just Stop It – Week 4

**Start** by having someone in the group read aloud Exodus 20:8-10 NLT.

*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.*

Pray for courage to explore a new mindset and rhythm. Ask God to show us the patterns He set up to meet the needs of those He created. Thank Him for the precious gift of Sabbath rest. Ask that we would come to know even more what that means, and how to experience it the best way. Amen!

Ever seen a plate spinner. It's pretty impressive to see them start spinning one plate on a little wobbly stick, but then they add another plate – and then another. Before you know it, there are an insane number of dinner plates in motion, and you're just waiting – almost praying for one to drop. Plate spinning is a great metaphor for how many of us live our lives. We keep just adding one more thing to the mix while we frantically try to keep all the other commitments in our life from dropping. It can be exhilarating, and exhausting at the same time.

We kissed work / life balance goodbye long ago, but that's ok. That's not really Biblical anyway. Scripture advocates for a different goal. It's called "rhythm". The

word rhythm portrays something very different from balance. Rhythm allows for busy seasons and the unexpected. Rhythm acknowledges that life can be intense at times, and isn't always orderly. But it also allows for an ebb and flow that we desperately need. The rhythm of life goes like this...

Work, then rest.

Produce, then recover.

Go hard, then stop.

Exert energy, then replenish energy.

Empty our bucket, then fill our bucket.

- What word or two would you use to describe the pace of your life over the last 3 months?
- In what ways have you seen an unhealthy rhythm take its toll on you personally or on your family?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to rest? Why?

If we polled the room, probably most of us would say that we feel some level of overwhelmed with the number of commitments in our lives. That's not necessarily bad, we were made to stretch and work hard. We just can't do it all the time. There has to be a break in the action, and that's where the great gift of the Sabbath Day comes in.

- What is it, that when you actually do it, replenishes you?

- When you hear the word “Sabbath,” what comes to your mind?

The Sabbath pattern is 6 and 1. For six days, we go about the wise execution of our life’s mission. Unless you are working hard and being fruitful you can’t really appreciate the value of God replenishing you through the practice of Sabbath. Then, we follow that up with one day to enjoy all that God created. Sabbath rest doesn’t happen by accident. It takes a plan to have an effective Sabbath.

- How do you prepare for your Sabbath?
- What do you typically do on your Sabbath Day?
- Is there anything you find frustrating about your Sabbath?

## OVERTIME

Read Psalm 116:7 (NIV) aloud.

*Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.*

Scripture calls the Sabbath a “delight”. It is not drudgery or religious obligation. So, what is it you enjoy? What is it that is life-giving to you? Too many of us are delight deficient, and Sabbath can help! When was the last time you allowed yourself the space for?

- Beautiful music to hear
- Majestic nature to see
- Sweet delicacies to taste
- Colorful flowers to smell

- Soft hands to touch and hold

God gave us our senses for more than just staying alive and getting things done. They are meant also to give us the ability to enjoy life. We're going to wrap up our time with an exercise:

Complete the "Replenishment Cycle" exercise.

### [Click Here for Replenishment Cycle](#)

- In each of the 5 rectangles on your sheet, write down an activity that is rejuvenating or restful for you.
- Next, write down how frequently you need to do each activity to be at your best.
- After that, assign a status green, yellow or red to each box. GREEN if you're getting enough time to do it. YELLOW if you'd be better with more time spent on that activity, and then RED if you're critically low on the energy you draw from that activity.
- Lastly, circle the one that is most critical to you staying in a healthy place.
  - What do you need to adjust in your calendar to create the space to replenish, and enjoy life?

# PRAYER POINT

This week as you pray, allow God to show you how to delight in Him. Ask for open hands to allow joy to flow in you and through you. Thank Him for the rhythm of work and rest, and for creating Sabbath rest for us.

# NEXT STEPS

Here are a few things you can share with your Group to help them have some action steps to work on.

- Sit down with your calendar, and do an honest evaluation of the last 60 days. How was the pace of your life? Next, take a look at the next 60 days. What do you need to adjust to have a healthier rhythm and pace of life?
- Have a close friend or your spouse complete the “Replenishment Cycle” sheet as well, and then talk about it together. Make a plan to do more of the red and yellow activities.
- Commit to a Sabbath Day. Just one to start out. Prepare for it, and then give yourself the whole day to rest and replenish.
- Read chapters 16-20 in “Your ONE Life” by Lance Witt.



# Shock and Awe - Week 5

**Start** by reading Luke 11:1,5-8 (NIV) aloud.

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples"... Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.*

**Pray** for God to reveal more about the power in prayer today. Ask for that shameless audacity to keep coming again and again to the feet of the only one who can truly help. Thank Him for making away by the blood of Jesus for us to come straight to Him, and receive what we ask.

The passage we read from Luke 11 had a gap in it. We read verse one where, after observing Jesus' prayer, the disciples asked for a prayer lesson. Then we skipped down to verse 5 and heard about borrowing bread from a neighbor in the middle of the night. What happens in

verses 2-4 is actually familiar to most of us. It's the Lord's prayer – Our Father. But our focus today is on the 2nd lesson. The Lord's Prayer taught the disciples "WHAT" to pray, but it's the 2nd lesson that taught them "HOW" to pray – the attitude that we bring into prayer.

- What is a word or phrase that would describe your current prayer life?
- What's different about your attitude toward prayer, and the attitude of the one in the Scripture?

The bottom line of the lesson comes in verse 8: "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need." It wasn't because you're a cool guy that the neighbor got out of bed, and started throwing bread out the front door. It was because you didn't stop asking. Your boldness and "shameless audacity" won the day.

The word for shameless audacity in the original language means a lack of sensitivity to what is proper. It means to do something with no respect, or no modesty. When you are desperate, you don't worry about good manners or what someone might think. God blesses desperation, and he always has.

- Tell us about a time you were desperate to receive an answer to prayer?

- How do you reconcile the difference between coming to God with boldness and coming to God with arrogance?
- What are some of the reasons you might not pray with boldness?

In the passage, the first thing this guy does is go to his neighbor and start knocking on his door. He didn't ponder his dilemma overnight. He didn't call a brainstorming session. He immediately went to the one who could help him. Prayer is our first response, not our last resort.

- Where do you typically go first to find the answer to a problem?
- When do you instinctively begin to pray about something?
- For you personally, what are barriers or roadblocks to prayer?

## OVERTIME

Read Luke 11:11-13 (NIV) aloud.

*“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

As Jesus wraps up this teaching in verse 13, he throws us a bit of a curve ball. It's

this piece about the gifts that parents give their kids. They give them what they ask for, but instead of saying that God will give US what WE ask for, it says He will give the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us in prayer:

You ask for the gift. God provides the giver.  
You ask for a drink of water. God gives you a well.  
You ask for money. God gives you a bank.  
You ask for a cookbook. God gives you Bobby Flay

Sometimes we don't pray because we don't know if God wants to give us what we're asking for. Maybe we don't even know if we're asking for the right thing. We even find ourselves sometimes not sure of what to pray for at all. We don't have to have the answers to any of those questions ... we just have to know the one who does.

We're going to wrap up our time together today, not just talking about prayer. We're going to boldly pray for each other right here, right now.

(Ask the Group who has a prayer need, and then gather everyone around them to lay hands on them and pray. Continue with this as long as there are more needs. Pray with shameless audacity for the power of God in each situation.)

## PRAYER POINT

This week, pray persistently. Bring every situation to the Lord, and invite God to meet your needs. Ask and keep asking. Seek and keep seeking. Knock and

keep knocking until the Lord displays His awesome power in your life.

## NEXT STEPS

Let's also put that faith to work! Here are some helpful suggestions we can implement this week to strengthen our foundation:

- If someone asks you for prayer, pray for them right then and there. Don't wait until later.
- When you feel the impulse to "Google it" or phone a friend, PRAY FIRST.
- Read chapters 21-25 in "Your ONE Life" by Lance Witt.

# Love is Messy – Week 6

**Start** by having someone in your group read Romans 12:10 (NIV) aloud.

*Be devoted to one another in love.*

*Honor one another above yourselves.*

**Pray** that God would open up to us His vision for our relationships. Ask Him to bring the best people close, and to work through us to build one another up. Thank Him for the rich life we live with each other, and for the Holy Spirit that brings us together as one. Amen!

Most of us pride ourselves on our spirit of independence and strong individualism. We generally leave each other plenty of space to have our own opinions and make our own decisions. After all, we're Americans – land of the free. We don't need anything from anybody, but that's not altogether true, is it? Some would say that our relationship with God is our own business. But the truth is, you can't live as a believer and follower of Jesus on your own. Your faith is PERSONAL, but it is NOT PRIVATE.

- Who are your most important relationships, and why do they matter to you?
- Who has intimate knowledge of your personal relationship with God?

Relationships are in the DNA of creation. It's in the genetic code of how God created the universe. In fact, God is a

relationship unto Himself: Father, Son & Holy Spirit. They are three distinct personalities, but they live in perfect unity and interdependence.

Relationships are also hard-wired into us personally. In Genesis 2, for the very first time, God looked at something he made and said, “It is NOT good”.

*“And the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him.”*

*- Genesis 2:18 (NLT)*

We all long to belong. It is hard-wired into us. We can't help it.

- Where do you go to experience the greatest sense of belonging, and what makes you feel like you belong there?
- When was the last time you felt like you didn't belong? Describe the feeling.

Relationships are also hard-wired into the church. We choose to be in a relationship with God, and that welcomes us into a family of believers with Jesus at the head. But like every family, sometimes we get some dysfunctional things going on. God uses both the warm and embracing hospitality of our church family, as well as the grinding pressure of conflict in our church family to give us what we need, when we need it.

- How have the relationships with others in your church helped you to grow and develop in your faith?

- How do you use your time, talent and resources to build up and serve others inside and outside of your church?

The truth is that relationships are messy and sometimes hurtful. Chances are that some of us are navigating a dysfunctional and painful relationship even now.

C.S. Lewis said, “To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one.”

We ride a difficult tension sometimes. There is risk in relationships, but it is relationships that make life worth living.

- What is your greatest current relational challenge? How are you managing the tension?
- What are some practical ways that we can love people better?

## OVERTIME

Read Matthew 9:36 (NIV) aloud.

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”*

One of the great things about following God is knowing that He pays attention to us. There are all kinds of people just waiting to be noticed, to have someone just pay attention to them. You have to



slow down to really see people. Jesus never seemed to be in a hurry. The speed of our lives sometimes causes us to miss people who God wants us to notice.

- In what areas of your life are you moving too quickly to pay attention to the people around you?
- What keeps you from hearing what others have to say?

Let's wrap our time by fulfilling some of this need today. Let's break off into smaller Groups of 2 or 3, and here's the assignment: Have a conversation together about anything. There are two rules:

1. Everyone has to be 100% fully present in the conversation. No phones. No distractions. Just 10 minutes of undivided attention.
2. At some point in the conversation, slip in something meant to encourage and build up the others.

(Allow about 10-15 minutes for people to engage one another in conversation. Then quickly wrap up so they can keep talking if they are really in it.)

## PRAYER POINT

When you spend time with the Lord this week, ask for help to slow your pace, and appreciate the relationships in your life. Thank Him for making people his prized possession, and then giving us the chance to bring blessing and honor to them.

# NEXT STEPS

Here are a few practical things your Group can do to finish strong:

- Consider dropping a kind note in the mail this week to express your gratitude to someone who made a difference in your life.
- During your conversations this week, make it a point not to look at your phone.
- Complete Growth Track, and get on the Go Team.