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# Healthy Spirituality

B-Group Lesson #1

## Icebreaker

Think for a moment about a time that you had to wait on someone. Why were you waiting? What was your response? (Husbands and wives may need to be careful on this one!)

## Prayer

Father, help us to know what healthy spirituality is and the life-giving value of remaining and waiting in Christ Jesus.

## Key Scripture

John 15:4–5 AMP: “Remain in Me, and I [will remain] in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself without remaining in the vine, neither can you [bear fruit, producing evidence of your faith] unless you remain in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him bears much fruit, for [otherwise] apart from Me [that is, cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.”

## The Big Idea

Jesus' idea of healthy spirituality does not include a microwave option. Nonetheless, we often want to see the fruit of our faith immediately. Jesus, however, likened healthy spirituality to gardening. Fruit comes in seasons. As we remain in Him, the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control slowly develops. Keep in mind that the fruit of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5) is not a by-product of how hard we work; it is a by-product of the work of God's Holy Spirit in our lives.

If remaining in Christ is so important for healthy spirituality, what exactly does it mean? The word remain means “to wait, to abide, to last, to be held or kept continually.” Think about a tree. A tree “remains” in the ground and waits on the rain. Its fruit does not happen because the tree works for it; the tree's fruit comes as the tree remains in the ground. No tree uproots itself and moves to a different location out of anger that the rain has not yet come, but that is what we often do as Christians. We get frustrated when fruit does not come as quickly as we'd like, and we move on to other things to distract us from our frustration. Keep this in mind, though. Remaining (waiting) in Christ Jesus cultivates the soil of our soul to receive whatever God wants to give us whenever He wants to give it. Jesus wants us to know the joy of developing a healthy spirituality that waits expectantly on Him to move in our lives.

Healthy spirituality is more about utilizing prayer, Scripture reading, church going, and other similar activities to position ourselves to receive from God instead of performing to earn from God.

## Questions for Discussion

- Do you have a hard time waiting on people? Why or why not?
- Do you find it difficult to wait on God, especially when you are praying for something specific and feel as though He has not heard or answered you? Explain your answer.
- What do you think it means to position yourself to receive rather than perform to earn?
- How might our discussion today help you become healthier spiritually?

## **Application**

Use the Christian disciplines of Bible study, prayer, and church attendance as ways to position yourself to wait on and receive from God instead of as ways that you might perform to earn something from Him. This is, to a large degree, based upon your perspective and attitude.

At our next meeting, we are going to talk about having a healthy soul, which is composed of our mind, will, and emotions. It's going to be great stuff!

## **For You, the Leader**

Build relationships with your B-Group members. As the semester progresses, you will build upon those relationships. Find out who they are as people and where they are in their relationship with God.



## Icebreaker

Have you ever made a New Year's resolution? If so, did you keep it? Why or why not?

## Prayer

Father, thank You for love and grace. Help us to see the importance of our thoughts and how to bring them into agreement with Yours.

## Key Scripture

Philippians 4:8 NKJV: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—think on these things."

Isaiah 26:3 NKJV: "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV: "Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

## The Big Idea

What has been on your mind lately? Every thought is significant because thoughts become the rudder that sets the course of our lives. What we think (the content) and how we think (the perspective and process) form our words, decisions, and actions.

Every positive or negative action has its roots in a thought. A mind that is running wild and undisciplined will often respond and react to life's challenges in ways that are later regretted. Negative and ungodly thoughts will lead us down a path contrary to God's Word and God's ways. For this reason, we must be "transformed by the renewing of [our] mind" (Romans 12:2 NKJV). The renewed mind processes life's experiences through the Word of God, with God's perspective and an attitude of life and faith.

A person whose mind is fixed on the Lord is kept in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3) and able to make wise, life-giving decisions. Learning to think differently is similar to learning a new language. It requires dedication and practice, but the rewards are great. We start by reading and acknowledging God's Word and coming into agreement with Him. When we believe His Word, we gain His perspective. In any situation, we should always ask ourselves what Scripture says about that situation.

Next, we must learn to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5) When we recognize a negative or unhealthy thought, we must interrupt the thought and replace it with the truth of God's Word. Remember, this takes practice. Also, we must fill our minds with God's Word, reading, hearing, speaking, and meditating on the Word until it dwells richly in our hearts. Our faith will grow. As a result, we will think on "whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report" (Philippians 4:8 NKJV).

## Questions for Discussion

- Have you ever done or said something that you later regretted? Can you think back and recognize the thought process that led to that action? How would a renewed mind have thought and responded differently in that situation?
- Is it easy for you to maintain positive thoughts, or do you tend to dwell on the negative? Explain your answer.
- What are some areas of your life that would benefit from bringing your thoughts into agreement with the way God sees these areas?

## **Application**

We all have areas of our minds that need to be renewed. This week, practice taking your thoughts captive and replacing them with the truth of God's Word. Meditate on Scriptures in areas where you struggle. If you constantly think about financial needs, then meditate on verses about God's provision until faith grows and you are able to think and focus on the promise in God's Word.

## **For You, the Leader**

Continue to get to know your group members. Begin thinking about where they are in the discipleship process. The goal is to help them move just one step forward. Do they need salvation, water baptism, or to attend the Bethany Experience? Are they connected with a B-Group? (The answer to this will be "yes" because they are connected to you.) Have they been through the Cultivate growth track (C1, C2, and C3)? Have they been to an Encounter?



# Healthy Emotions

B-Group Lesson #3

## Icebreaker

Have you ever ignored a problem? How did that work out for you? Did ignoring the issue make it better or worse? Why?

## Prayer

Father, thank You for Your grace and mercy. Help us to see clearly beneath the surface of our lives and to trust You with what we see.

## Key Scripture

Proverbs 4:23: "Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life" (NET).

## The Big Idea

Have you ever seen an iceberg? The people on the Titanic surely did! On April 15, 1912, the Titanic was sailing through the waters of the north Atlantic Ocean. After only 37 seconds of warning, it struck an iceberg and sank, killing hundreds of people. They saw the iceberg but didn't have time to react in a way that would save lives. That's because 90 percent of every iceberg is underwater; the majority of the iceberg is not visible from the surface. What was under the surface had as much to do with the Titanic's sinking as did the ice above the surface.

Emotionally healthy spirituality is much like an iceberg. The 10 percent that is visible may look good to others, who see our outward behavior. They see us going to church, reading the Bible, praying, serving others, etc., but what is going on beneath the surface?

Knowing what is beneath the surface starts with understanding emotional health. In general, emotional health is connected to a number of things, which are mentioned below (Scazzero, 2006, p. 45). As we read through them, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you about where you are with each one:

- Naming, recognizing, and managing our feelings
- Having active compassion for others
- Initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships
- Breaking free from self-destructive patterns
- Being aware of how our past impacts our present
- Developing the ability to express thoughts and feelings
- Respecting and loving others without having to change them
- Asking for what we need, want, or prefer clearly, directly, and respectfully
- Accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits, and weaknesses and sharing them with others
- Learning to resolve conflict in healthy ways that consider others' perspectives
- Distinguishing and appropriately expressing our sexuality and sensuality
- Grieving well

Biblically, we see the importance of paying attention to the heart; that is, the part of the iceberg that is underwater.

Psalm 119:9–11 reminds us that we treasure God's Word with our hearts, not just with our heads. Our key scripture in Proverbs 4:23 states that we should guard our hearts, for from the heart flow the sources of life. God's desire for us is that we prosper as whole people: spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and physically.

## Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think about when you hear the term emotional health, and how did the descriptions in this lesson impact you?

2. Now that you have an idea about what emotional health is, think back to a time when you thought you were lacking spiritually but were actually lacking emotionally (for example, burnout). Share your experience and what you learned.
3. In which of the areas of emotional health are you strong? What are the areas in which you need to grow?

## **Application**

From this lesson, you may realize that you have not been paying enough attention to your emotional health. Acknowledge that you must shift the way you think about it, and then commit to pursuing emotional health in the necessary areas.

## **For You, the Leader**

1. If people are interested in following up on this lesson, they have several outlets:
2. Cultivate Growth, which is C1, C2, and C3. This year, each will be available in booklet form and through an app. Your B-group members can read through each and process their thoughts with you.
3. Cultivate freedom classes: These are Cultivate specialties that are usually being taught on Sundays at every campus.
4. Spiritual formation and pastoral counseling: They can call the church and schedule an appointment with a pastor or lay leader trained to provide these services.
5. A great read is Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scazzero.

## **Reference**

Scazzero, P. (2006). Emotionally healthy spirituality. Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN.



## Icebreaker

When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Do you remember why you wanted to be this?

## Prayer

Father, thank You for guiding us into all truth. Reveal to us areas of our lives that need to be yielded to Your leading.

## Key Scripture

Matthew 16:24–25 NIV: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life [literally, “soul”] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”

## The Big Idea

The mind’s filters determine both what and how a person thinks, but the will is the mechanism by which choices and decisions are made. The will is just like the wheels of a car. It is the part of the soul that says, “I want and I do.” Thoughts, words, and actions are choices; that is, acts of the will.

A healthy will is fueled by the desire to live in a deep relationship with God. When our ultimate desire is to walk in partnership and oneness with the Father, our will becomes focused on the leading of His Spirit, not the desires of the flesh. Aligned with God, our will holds steady even when our thoughts and emotions are reeling under the pressures of life. Regardless of how we feel, we are positioned to ask, “Is this decision wise?” and “Is this decision in line with God’s Word?”

Our decisions reflect the focus of our will, whether we are motivated by self-ambition or yielded to the Lord’s will. God’s intention is for us to use our free will (the ability to choose) to partner in purpose and fellowship with Him, to express the goodness of His kingdom on the earth. When we choose to submit our will to His will, we are choosing to partner with His life and His Word. His plans and thoughts for us are greater than ours could ever be. When we submit to Him, we do not lose our freedom, but rather, we access His empowering grace. This grace positions us to live a life beyond what the natural mind could imagine.

No one can experience the fullness of His goodness while refusing to yield to His leading. When a person’s will is dominated by the “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16 NKJV), the choices made and resulting consequences can be disastrous. We are deceived if we think that living by the “I want” of the soul is the avenue for meeting the desires of the heart. Jesus taught the contrary, saying, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life [literally, “soul”] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matthew 16:24–25 NIV).

Jesus knew that true life can be experienced only when the will of man is directed toward the heart of the Father. Simply put, the main purpose of our will is to choose—not between good and bad—but between life and death. So choose Life Himself!

## Questions for Discussion

1. Have you ever made a decision that you knew was contrary to the Word of God? How did it work out, and why do you think it happened that way?
2. Have you ever yielded your will to God and made a decision based on His Word rather than what you wanted to do? What was the result?
3. Often we are too stubborn to follow God’s leading because of pride, dependence on our natural understanding, or fear. Is that true for you? If so, what steps could you take to change?

## Action Point

The life of Jesus is a great example of a man who lived with a healthy, God-focused will. Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 NIV). This week begin to pray that way and ask the Holy Spirit if there are specific areas of your will that you need to yield to Him. The goal is to give Him the steering wheel of your life—Your will, the way you make decisions—so that you can partner with Him and see His will done on the earth.

## For You, the Leader

1. Encourage group members to do the following:
  - Pray for and touch base with another member before next week.
  - Invite someone to attend the group and/or church next week.
  - Encourage someone in the faith.
  - Spend time with God daily in prayer and Scripture reading.
2. Remember, you want to help your members move just one step forward in their walk with the Lord. What step do they need to take?
  - Salvation?
  - Water baptism?
  - Bethany Experience?
  - B-Group connection?
  - Cultivate growth track?
  - Encounter attendance?



# Healthy Relationships

B-Group Lesson #5

## Icebreaker

Discuss fond memories of your earliest and/or longest friendships.

## Prayer

God, help us to develop and maintain healthy relationships with others.

## Key Scripture

1 John 4:7–8 NKJV: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

## The Big Idea

Jesus commanded us to love one another (John 13:34–35). In order to complete this directive, we must place others’ needs before our own. All healthy relationships begin with love, which is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), but Christianity gave love new meaning. Christian love, or agape love, denotes an undefeatable kindness and unconquerable goodwill that always seeks the highest good of the other person, no matter what he or she does. It is a sacrificial love that gives freely without asking anything in return, and it does not consider the worth of its object. It describes the unconditional love God has for us.

Love is a summary of God’s moral laws. First Corinthians 13 has been called the “love chapter” of the Bible. It explains the absolute necessity of love, defines the essence of love, and contrasts the eternal quality of love with the temporal qualities of gifts. When love is the basis for a relationship, unity is possible, and unity is utterly important in developing healthy relationships. As Amos 3:3 says, “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (NKJV).

Because of our willingness to love as God loves and to share in His sufferings, we also share in the glory of the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit empowers us to love in this way. Have there been times in your life when a loved one wronged you, but love allowed you to be patient and tolerant of their behavior and to forgive them? Or maybe you had a disagreement with a neighbor who spewed anger or bitterness toward you, but you prayed quietly instead of spouting back harmful or injurious remarks. Those are examples of the God kind of love.

Love builds character. Character is what’s on the inside of us. It’s our personality or the attributes that develop as a result of our experiences in life. Love builds character when someone makes slanderous, degrading remarks about us on Twitter or some other social media, but we continue to smile, perform acts of kindness, and show love towards them without even acknowledging that we read the derogatory comments. Love builds character when we have been verbally or physically abused by a loved one, but instead of assaulting them with words or actions, we engage in spiritual warfare with God’s Word and pray that He will shower His blessings upon them.

## Questions for Discussion

- What other characteristics besides love foster healthy relationships?
- In spite of the way others may treat us, how can we demonstrate God’s love towards them?
- How do you handle conflict?

## Application

Love was the motivation for our creation. Love is the impulse of God engaging us through the Holy Spirit; it moves us to minister and sets us apart for God's mission. God keeps pouring His love into our hearts. He is so generous that He provides us with the overflow of His love for other people. God gives us His Holy Spirit, who transforms our thinking and makes His love real to us.

When you face ridicule, misunderstanding, or even persecution, draw on the strength that comes from the unconditional love and compassion of the Holy Spirit. Healthy relationships can be the catalyst for God's love to flow into your life. Ask God to manifest His nature in you. As you place God first, His love will become apparent through your actions.

## For You, the Leader

1. Encourage group members to do the following:
  - Pray for and touch base with another member before next week.
  - Invite someone to attend the group and/or church next week.
  - Encourage someone in the faith.
  - Spend time with God daily in prayer and Scripture reading.
2. Remember, you want to help your members move just one step forward in their walk with the Lord. What step do they need to take?
  - Salvation?
  - Water baptism?
  - Bethany Experience?
  - B-Group connection?
  - Cultivate growth track?
  - Encounter attendance?



# Healthy Body

B-Group Lesson #6

## Icebreaker

Have you ever made a New Year's resolution to exercise or work out? What about to eat better? Anyone ever do Whole 30?

## Prayer

Father, help us understand the importance of caring for our bodies. Amen.

## Key Scripture

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 NKJV: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God with your body."

1 Timothy 4:8 ESV: "While bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

## The Big Idea

Our primary focus should be on having a healthy spirit as the Holy Spirit empowers us to live in a way that brings glory to God and fills us with joy. Nonetheless, we should not neglect our physical bodies. We are spiritual, psychological (that is, we have a soul), relational, and physical beings. What happens in one area impacts the other areas. For example, some people may struggle with depression for years and conclude that something is wrong with them spiritually or psychologically, when in reality the depression is the result of a thyroid problem. Another example deals with sleep. Lack of sleep impacts the brain's ability to function properly, causing or exacerbating problems related to focus, anxiety, etc. Additionally, a poor diet can impact health, which has a domino effect on our overall ability to function. This in turn hampers our ability to engage with God's call on our lives and to serve our families

## Questions for Discussion

1. What are some important ways that we can take better care of our bodies?
2. What goals do you need to set to achieve better physical health?
3. Who could serve as an accountability partner to help you reach your health goals?

## **Application**

Pay attention to your level of exercise, your diet, and your sleep habits. Could you change one of these areas to improve your health?

## **For You, the Leader**

1. Encourage group members to do the following:
  - Pray for and touch base with another member before next week.
  - Invite someone to attend the group and/or church next week.
  - Encourage someone in the faith.
  - Spend time with God daily in prayer and Scripture reading.
2. Remember, you want to help your members move just one step forward in their walk with the Lord. What step do they need to take?
  - Salvation?
  - Water baptism?
  - Bethany Experience?
  - B-Group connection?
  - Cultivate growth track?
  - Encounter attendance?



# Healthy Sexuality

B-Group Lesson #7

## Icebreaker

Have you ever given someone a gift, then watched them ignore it, break it, or misuse it? What was that like for you? Did you have a difficult time not taking it personally?

## Prayer

Father, help us to see You more clearly and bring glory to Your name in the area of our sexuality. Amen.

## Key Scripture

Romans 11:36 ESV, emphasis added: "From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV, emphasis added: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God."

## The Big Idea

Scripture verses are not just great ideas; they shape worldview. Our key verses are no different, especially when all things and whatever you do refer to human sexuality. Our sexuality is a gift from God that we can delight in and enjoy, but only within the parameters set forth by the giver of this great gift. Our focus in this lesson will not be on all the ways in which sexuality can go wrong, but rather, we are going to briefly discuss some core aspects of healthy sexuality. It is worth noting that many people have struggles in this area of their lives. This lesson is not meant to be condemning, but only to paint a big picture so that we can turn to God and receive all that He has for us, including healthy sexuality.

First, understanding healthy sexuality starts with using Scripture as our guide. We all have real experiences and attractions, and culture says that these experiences define us. But that is not true. Experiences do not define us, no matter how powerful they are. The meaning we assign to those experiences is what defines us. Scripture points us to Jesus so that we can see Him and hear Him speak to us about our identity in Him. Our identity and behavior flow from our delight and love in our relationship with Jesus.

Second, healthy sexuality is meant to occur in one relationship only, and that is marriage between a man and a woman. This represents God's original creation and intent when He breathed life into Adam and fashioned Eve. This also mirrors Jesus as the bridegroom and the church as His bride.

Third, we must understand that healthy sexuality is more about what we can give than what we can get. In mutual giving, people are satisfied and intimacy develops. Jesus gave Himself for the church; we in turn give ourselves to Him. Selfish sexual behavior sees people as objects and even breeds anger towards the object of sexual gratification. Intimacy does not occur, but disrespect and devaluation do.

In the big picture, healthy sexuality reveals Jesus more clearly, and unhealthy sexuality distorts our image of God.

## Questions for Discussion

1. How does this discussion about human sexuality contradict the sexual messages we receive from culture?
2. We mentioned the relationship between experience and meaning. Who has been giving your experiences meaning: the culture, you, your family, your friends, or the enemy? What changes do you need to make in this area?

## **Application**

Spend some time this week asking God to reveal to you both the healthy and unhealthy areas of your sexuality. As He shows you, thank Him for the healthy areas and seek help for the unhealthy areas.

## **For You, the Leader**

The topic of human sexuality can be a difficult topic. Remember, the goal of this lesson is to facilitate discussion, not argue. If someone becomes argumentative, tell them that you can tell this is a subject of much interest to them, and suggest that you meet at a separate time to discuss any differences of opinion. Refer people to pastoral staff as needed.

1. Encourage group members to do the following:
  - Pray for and touch base with another member before next week.
  - Invite someone to attend the group and/or church next week.
  - Encourage someone in the faith.
  - Spend time with God daily in prayer and Scripture reading.
2. Remember, you want to help your members move just one step forward in their walk with the Lord. What step do they need to take?
  - Salvation?
  - Water baptism?
  - Bethany Experience?
  - B-Group connection?
  - Cultivate growth track?
  - Encounter attendance?



# Healthy Treasure

B-Group Lesson #8

## Icebreaker

When you were a kid, what was something that you wanted so badly you would have given up almost anything to get it?

## Prayer

Father, help us see how great You really are so that our hearts treasure You above all else.

## Key Scripture

Matthew 13:44–46 NIV: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

## The Big Idea

Have you ever observed your lifestyle and thought, “Wow, I am loving so many things more than I love God right now”? Tough question, I know, but it is vital that we pay attention to the leanings of our hearts because “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21 NIV). Think for a moment about a husband who brings his wife flowers. She loves them until he says, “I was just doing my duty.” Whoa—mood killer! But what if the husband gives the flowers and says, “These are yours because I love you so much and wanted to somehow show you.” That kind of action flows from a heart of love that recognizes the value of the wife. As we grow in our knowledge, love, and delight in Jesus, we actually want to give up everything this world has to offer so that we may connect with Him.

The kingdom of heaven is the presence of God in our lives at any given moment. As our hearts connect to the love of God and our souls delight in Him, we realize that His present kingdom—His power, love, joy, peace, righteousness—is worth more than anything this old world has to offer. For some of us, “selling everything” might mean letting go of a relationship, a friendship, a job, an old habit, or a future goal centered on personal gain.

In order to reset our priorities, we must take time to ask ourselves whether we really understand in our hearts the value of God and His eternal plan for our future. The point in asking ourselves this question is to reevaluate whether or not we acknowledge God as the ultimate treasure. Remember, anything we value in this life is worth sacrificing for the gain of an intimate relationship with the King and for the presence of His kingdom in our lives.

## Questions for Discussion

1. What do you find yourself treasuring the most?
2. Are your plans and goals for your future centered on yourself, or are they in accordance with advancing the kingdom of heaven?
3. How can you practically take steps towards having an eternal perspective on life?

## **Application**

Spend some time this week identifying what you really treasure. Ask God whether these treasures are important. Do you treasure God more than any of these other things? Ask God to help you value Him above all else.

## **For You, the Leader**

1. Encourage group members to do the following:
  - Pray for and touch base with another member before next week.
  - Invite someone to attend the group and/or church next week.
  - Encourage someone in the faith.
  - Spend time with God daily in prayer and Scripture reading.
2. Remember, you want to help your members move just one step forward in their walk with the Lord. What step do they need to take?
  - Salvation?
  - Water baptism?
  - Bethany Experience?
  - B-Group connection?
  - Cultivate growth track?
  - Encounter attendance?



# Healthy Followers of Jesus

B-Group Lesson #9

## Icebreaker

As a kid, did you ever get lost? How did you feel when you were found?

If you never got lost, did you lose something important to you? Did you find it? If so, what did it feel like to find it?

## Prayer

Father, help us see that part of our health as Your children is in serving others and pointing people to You.

## Key Scripture

Galatians 5:13–14 ESV: "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Matthew 28:19–20 ESV: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

## The Big Idea

For several weeks now, we have been discussing the importance of being a healthy and growing follower of Jesus. Two main points remain: serving others out of love and making disciples for Jesus.

Serving others is easier than you think. Love is a gift from God, and as He fills our hearts with love for others, we have a natural desire to serve the needs of others. Serving is basically identifying and meeting the needs of the people around us. As we identify need, we serve by meeting that need. In fact, serving others is part of what we call missional living. What is missional living? It is living with intention and purpose, asking God daily to show us how He wants us to serve others. It may be encouraging the person who serves us coffee at our favorite cafe, mowing the grass of a neighbor who is injured, praying with a sick friend, and the list goes on.

Making disciples for Jesus is like introducing people to our favorite kind of music. We introduce people to Jesus through sharing our testimony, inviting them to church, inviting them to our B-Group, and this list goes on as well. As people see Jesus, we invite them to enter into a relationship with Him. As they become followers of Jesus, we walk with them and help them to learn more and more about Jesus with both their heads (theology) and their hearts (relationship). Perry Noble says, "Found people find people." The more we realize what Jesus did for us, the more we will naturally point others to Him.

## Questions for Discussion

1. What are some simple ways that you could serve others around you? Think outside the box. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind anyone that He may want you to serve.
2. What are some ways that you could live a more missional life; that is, live more intentionally?
3. What are some ways that you could help others become followers of Jesus?
4. What are some ways that you could help new Christians learn more about being in a relationship with God?

## **Application**

Ask God to speak to you over the next few days about ways to serve the people around you. The goal is to find a natural rhythm that fits into your life. In other words, look for needs that are right in front of you. Also ask God to open your eyes to at least one opportunity to tell someone what Jesus has done for you. Finally, encourage another Christian in his or her walk with Jesus.

## **For You, the Leader**

1. Encourage group members to do the following:
  - Pray for and touch base with another member before next week.
  - Invite someone to attend the group and/or church next week.
  - Encourage someone in the faith.
  - Spend time with God daily in prayer and Scripture reading.
2. Remember, you want to help your members move just one step forward in their walk with the Lord. What step do they need to take?
  - Salvation?
  - Water baptism?
  - Bethany Experience?
  - B-Group connection?
  - Cultivate growth track?
  - Encounter attendance?