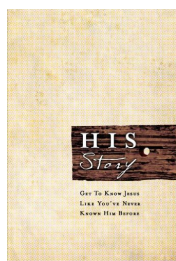


Community Group Curriculum
Participant's Guide

CHANGING LIVES WITH THE TRUTH



Week 5-9



The Follow Series is being used with the book HIS Story

Follow - Participant's Guide
Know Jesus Like Never Before

WEEK 5: Crowds Grow as Jesus' Power is Revealed

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Luke 8:22-39
HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 5

Discussion Idea: Jesus reveals the Father by telling of the kingdom of God and displaying his power over disease, death and storms. He is moved with compassion and longs for his followers to respond with faith.

WEEK 6: Jesus Calls For Commitment

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5-7.
HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 6

Discussion Idea: Jesus has a mission to tell lost children about their heavenly Father and the kingdom of God. He is moved with compassion and expands the involvement of the team of people committed to following him.

WEEK 7: Jesus Trains His Disciples

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Matthew 18:21-35
HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 7

Discussion Idea: As Jesus trains his followers he consistently challenges them to live differently. He directs them live with faith, humility, compassion, conviction and forgiveness. As his followers model what Jesus lived the kingdom of God is expressed and experienced here on earth.

WEEK 8: Jesus Sends His Disciples Out

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Luke 10:25-37
HIS Story (*book*): Read Chapter 8

Discussion Idea: Jesus does not waver from his mission of reflecting the heart of his Father. He cuts through all the laws and traditions by keying on two critical commands. Love God and Love others. Practicing these relationship commands are at the center of following Jesus, becoming like Jesus and being on mission with Jesus. Living this will stretch our hearts to love unexpected people in unexpected ways.

WEEK 9: Jesus Teaches About True Discipleship

Bible Passage(s) for Group Discussion: Luke 18:1-8

His Story (*book*): Read Chapter 9

Discussion Idea: Jesus' time with his disciples is winding down. He is preparing them for his death and to carry on the mission they have begun with him. While he has promised he will return he instructs them on the importance of remaining faithful until he does. Persistent prayer and humility are part of remaining faithful and on mission.

THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

We exist to reach the world for Jesus, one person at a time. We feel that is best done in small, relational environments, where biblical disciples can be made. Community groups are the primary vehicle by which we may carry out the vision of Victory.

VISION:

Reaching the world for Jesus, one person at a time.

MISSION:

We will be a church that makes disciples, who make disciples of Jesus

METHODOLOGY & STRATEGY:

We will create Biblical disciples in relational environments.

John 15:4: *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

Matthew 22:37:39: *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*

Matthew 28:18-20: *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Acts 2:42-47: *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: GROUP GUIDELINES

Setting some basic group guidelines for how we will honor one another in our group discussions is important.

- Ground rules give boundaries for people to operate within.
 - They help with the flow and pace of discussions.
 - They help us value one another.
 - They help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.
-

SAFE GROUP: We strive to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their struggles and victories.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth, and point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are

honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (*there are many others*).

- If someone sins against you – ***Matthew 18:15-20***
- Restoring someone in sin - ***Galatians 6:1-5***
- Forgive a sinner - ***Colossians 3:12-13***
- Reconciling differences – ***Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5***

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

USE “I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church”, “us”, “we”, etc.

Follow - Week 5 The Crowd Grows

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 5** From His Story **or:**

Day 1: **Luke 7:1-8:56:** Jesus heals, raises dead, challenges to believe him.

Day 2: **Matthew 11:20-30:** Jesus teaches forgiveness and fruit.

Day 3: **Matthew 12:22-13:58** - Jesus debriefs parables and the kingdom of God.

Day 4: **Matthew 9:18-34:** Jesus has authority over storms and demons.

Day 5: **Mark 3:6:** Jesus continues his mission in the midst of growing opposition.

GROUP TIME:

- **SUMMARY** - This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:

Jesus responds to the faith of a Roman, acts with compassion towards a widow, gives hope to the doubting prisoner - John, and challenges those who won't repent. He discusses shallow love and being forgiven with a Pharisee and a prostitute. He uses parables to express what the kingdom of God is like to the crowd. Then he explains them to his disciples. He calms raging storms as he challenges fearful disciples about their lack of faith. He frees a man from demons, a woman from bleeding, a girl from death, and beggars from blindness. Crowds are in awe; Pharisees accuse him of being the prince of demons while his hometown rejects him. Jesus is not a neutral figure as he turns the world upside down with his teaching, his authority and a life that touches the unexpected person.

DISCUSSION IDEA: *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus reveals the Father by telling of the kingdom of God and displaying his power over disease, death and storms. He is moved with compassion and longs for his followers to respond with faith.

BACKGROUND: *Setting the stage for today's discussion:*

The crowds are growing as Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of God. He demonstrates his power by the blind seeing, lame walking, lepers made whole, and the dead raised to life. The crowds are curious, the Pharisees are skeptical and the disciples are committed yet slow to understand.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: *Luke 8:22-39; (His Story pages 95-97)*

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the Group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out?

Luke 8:22-39: *Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. ²³ But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. ²⁴ And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" ²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" ²⁹ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. ³⁰ Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. ³² Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. ³³ Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. ³⁴ When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. ³⁷ Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (Adjust the questions as needed for your group)

1. What do you see Jesus doing here?

2. If you were a disciple with Jesus as this happened what would be going through your minds all this happened?
3. What power did Jesus display here?
4. What power has Jesus displayed in your life? Share specific experiences.
5. The disciples feared for their life in the storm. The man was tormented. Neither of these are easy. What situations have rocked your faith? What storms has Jesus calmed in your journey?
6. Where do you need Jesus' power and presence in your life today?
7. In your own journey right now, which do you identify more with the curious crowds, the skeptical ones, or the committed followers learning?
8. Jesus said, "Let's go to the other side." Is there something the Lord is asking you to do that seems challenging? What is your next step to follow Him?
9. This week, with whom will you share what you are discovering about Jesus and what He is doing in your life?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK:

Read Chapter 6 of *His Story*

Jesus Calls For Commitment

Bible Passage for Next Community Group Discussion: ***Matthew 9:35-10:5-7***

Follow - Week 6
Jesus Calls For Commitment

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 6** From His Story or:

Day 1: **Matthew 9:35-11:1** - Jesus prepares and sends His disciples.

Day 2: **Matthew 14:1-36** - King Herod and John the Baptist.

Day 3: **Mark 6:6-56** - Jesus' disciples return, crowd needs fed.

Day 4: **Luke 9:1-17** - Storms, water walking & hard hearts.

Day 5: **John 6** - Jesus wants to give more than bread.

GROUP TIME:

- SUMMARY - This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:

Jesus and his disciples traveled around, teaching, healing and announcing the good news about the kingdom. He told his disciples that to follow him they have to deny themselves. He had compassion on the growing and hurting crowd so he sent his disciples out to tell others about the kingdom of God and minister. Jesus reminded King Herod of John, whom he beheaded. When the disciples returned from their ministry experience Jesus encouraged them to continue to have faith and compassion on a harassed and hungry crowd. He then fed the crowd. While he was praying alone he saw the disciples who were caught in a storm in the middle of the lake. He walked out to them. Later, He challenged the crowd to want more than bread but to believe he is the Son of God. This hard challenge causes some to stop following him.

DISCUSSION IDEA: *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus has a mission to tell lost children about their heavenly Father and the kingdom of God. He is moved with compassion and expands the involvement of the team of people committed to following him.

BACKGROUND: *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus' world is intensifying. He has been ministering to the Jewish nation for 2-2 1/2 years. The Pharisees are opposing him, his home town is offended by him and the crowds are drawn to him. He sees the hearts and needs around him. He turns with his concerns to those who have intentionally been following him for the last year.

Jesus begins to release his disciples to minister to the Jewish people.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: Matthew 9:35-10:5-7 (HIS Story: page 102)

Read or Tell the Passage

Rebuild the Passage: Have the Group recreate the passage together

Ask: If the passage was told and not read, ask if anything was added or left out?

Matthew 9:35-10:7: *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. ³⁶ But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

10:5-7: *These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. ⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you see Jesus doing in this passage?
2. What does He ask of His disciples?
3. What harvest was Jesus referring to?
4. Where are you growing in compassion for the people in your world? Who do you see with compassion, recognizing their need for a shepherd?
5. Jesus asked those with Him to pray for workers in the harvest. What has Jesus been asking you to pray for?
6. Jesus sent out the twelve disciples. He gave them authority and focus to share about the kingdom of God. How is Jesus sending you into your world? What do you need to be able to join Him? What has He given you?
7. What is helping you spend time with Jesus? How is that impacting how you see your world?
8. What would you have to rearrange or adjust in your life to take your next step in being more involved in Jesus' mission?

9. Who in your world is harassed and helpless? What is your part in helping them experience and hear about God's love and kingdom?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK:

Read Chapter 7 of *His Story*

Jesus Trains His Disciples:

Bible Passage for Next Community Group Discussion: ***Matthew 18:21-35***

Follow - Week 7

Jesus Trains His Disciples

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 7** From His Story or:

Day 1: **Matthew 15:1-17; 13** - Jesus challenges Pharisees and His followers.

Day 2: **Matthew 17:14-18; 35** - Jesus responds to the Gentile woman and crowds.

Day 3: **Mark 7:1-9:13**— Jesus asks His disciples what they think; life intensifies.

Day 4: **Mark 9:14-50; John 7:1-10** - Jesus talks about faith and being humble.

Day 5: **Luke 9:18-56** - Forgiveness, not thunder.

GROUP TIME:

- SUMMARY - This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:

As tension with the Pharisees increased Jesus taught his disciples that it is the heart that matters. Jesus continued to show the disciples to have care and concern for the least like the gentile woman. Again, he asked them to feed a crowd and showed them how. He wanted his disciples to understand the harm of deceptive teaching but they are slow to understand. Later, he pointedly asked the disciples who they thought he was. As they replied he was the Messiah he told them how a community of believers would be built, prayers would be answered, power released. He also called them to deny themselves as they follow him. He began to tell them he would go to Jerusalem, die and rise again. To three of them he showed more of his glory on a mountain. He showed his disciples and the crowd that it is faith that moves mountains. Intensifying the time he spent with the disciples he taught about being humble servant leaders in the kingdom, how to restore people when offense had occurred and to be persistent in forgiveness and restoration.

DISCUSSION IDEA: *The target for today's group discussion:*

As Jesus trains his followers he consistently challenges them to live differently. He directs them live with faith, humility, compassion, conviction and forgiveness. As his followers model what Jesus lived the kingdom of God is expressed and experienced here on earth.

BACKGROUND: *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

As Jesus' followers grow in being on mission with Jesus they wrestle with who is the greatest. Jesus teaches them over and over that humility, obedience, compassion,

and forgiveness are His way.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: Matthew 18:21-35 (HIS Story: pages 136-137)

Matthew 18:21-35: *Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.²⁴ And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.²⁵ But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.²⁶ The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’²⁷ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.²⁸ “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’³⁰ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.³¹ So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does this story explain or demonstrate about forgiveness and unforgiveness?
2. What is Jesus causing His followers to ponder?
3. Peter was talking to Jesus about giving forgiveness when it was especially hard, costly, or needed repeatedly. Can you share a time when you received this kind of forgiveness from someone else or have given it or watched someone give it?
4. For you, what can make forgiveness challenging (either to give or to receive)? In what ways are you seeing how critical forgiveness is to your relationship with Jesus and others?
5. How do you normally deal with conflict? (Not how should you but how do you usually? If you are daring, have a conversation with your spouse, family or friends about how they see you handle conflict and forgiveness.

6. In what ways would you like to grow in dealing with offense, forgiveness and conflict?
7. How do you practice being aware of how God has forgiven you?
8. Is there any relationship in your life, family, fellow believers, workplace, or community where you need to extend forgiveness or to seek forgiveness? Ask God to give you strength to forgive, seek forgiveness and to release from unforgiveness?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK:

Read Chapter 8 of *His Story*

Jesus Sends His Disciples Out

Bible Passage for Next Community Group Discussion: ***Luke 10:25-37***

Follow - Week 8
Jesus Sends His Disciples Out

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 8** From His Story or:

Day 1: **John 7:11-10:18** - Jesus challenges beliefs in Himself at the festival.

Day 2: **Matthew 8:19-22** - Jesus heals a blind man & challenges the blindness of others.

Day 3: **Matthew 12:22-45** — Jesus sends out the 72 and points to the greatest commandments.

Day 4: **Luke 9:57-11:53; 12:1-14; 24** - Jesus teaches on prayer, obedience, & wealth.

Day 5: **Mark 3:20-30** - Jesus continues to teach about the kingdom of God.

GROUP TIME:

- SUMMARY - This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:

At a festival Jesus' teaching cause crowds to argue over who he is and the Pharisees to seek for his arrest. He heals a blind man to expose the Pharisees blindness. He sends out seventy-two disciples giving them authority. Jesus points to loving God and loving your neighbor as the greatest commandments and illustrates it with a parable of a Samaritan loving his neighbor. His disciples ask to be taught to pray. He teaches them to also be prepared and serve others well as he warns against hypocrisy.

DISCUSSION IDEA: *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus does not waver from his mission of reflecting the heart of his Father. He cuts through all the laws and traditions by keying on two critical commands. Love God and Love others. Practicing these relationship commands are at the center of following Jesus, becoming like Jesus and being on mission with Jesus. Living this will stretch our hearts to love unexpected people in unexpected ways.

BACKGROUND: *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus continues to challenge the Pharisees' forms of religion without compassion and they discount his life and ministry. He, then, sends out 72 disciples to share the news of the kingdom of heaven. During this time one of the people who knew the law best asked about how to get eternal life. Jesus tells him a story to help him live

out the greatest commandments God gives.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: Luke 10:25-37 (HIS Story: pages 155-156)

Luke 10:25-37: *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"²⁷ So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"²⁸ And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."²⁹ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"³⁰ Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.³¹ Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.³² Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.³³ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.³⁴ So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.³⁵ On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'³⁶ So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"³⁷ And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What stands out to you about the conversation between Jesus and the one asking the question?
2. What do you notice about the parable Jesus told?
3. Describe the different ways you see the Samaritan demonstrate love to the injured Jewish man.
4. Jesus describes loving God with your total person – heart, soul, mind, and strength. As we have been looking at Jesus what are you learning about loving God with your total person?
5. Think of the 'neighbors' in you life. When is it easy to love? When is it challenging to love?
6. In your life who has modeled the kind of love Jesus is talking about? What can you glean from their example?

Jesus took the conversation from talking about an idea to intentional action when he said to go and do the same

7. Is there anything you personally or your family are doing differently in your relationship with God since we started the Follow series? If you are willing, share with the group.
8. What does it look like for you to practically love others in your life? What could that look like this week? (Try to answer as specifically as you can).
9. How are you experiencing “Love God and Love others” becoming a part of how you respond to various situations in your life?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK:

Read Chapter 9 of *His Story*

Jesus Teaches About True Discipleship

Bible Passage for Next Community Group Discussion: ***Luke 18:1-8***

Follow - Week 9
Jesus Teaches About True Discipleship

During The Week: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in His Word, prayer and reflection. Read the passages below throughout the week prior to community group.

Daily Reading Plan:

Read **Chapter 9** From His Story or:

Day 1: **Luke 14:25-19:28** - Jesus uses parables to teach the cost of following Him.

Day 2: **John 11; 12:1-11** - Jesus and His friend, Lazarus.

Day 3: **Matthew 19:1-12; 20:34** — Jesus teaches His disciples to pray.

Day 4: **Matthew 26:6-13** - Jesus interacts with the rich young man.

Day 5: **Mark 10:1-12; 14:3-9** - Jesus encounters Zacchaeus.

GROUP TIME:

- SUMMARY - This is the summary for the weekly HIS story chapter:

With large crowds following Jesus teaches the cost of being his disciple. He challenges the Pharisees' hearts with parables of lost sheep, coins and sons. Jesus instructs his followers about wealth, divorce and gives a glimpse of life beyond death. His friend, Lazarus, becomes deathly ill. Jesus demonstrates that He is the resurrection and life. He continues to instruct his disciples on how the kingdom of God works, his coming death and his certain return. He teaches them the necessity of prayer. He challenges a rich young man who is seeking to gain eternal life. At Jericho he seeks out Zacchaeus. Finally, Mary anoints him preparing him for his death; the cost of the perfume she uses irritates some of the disciples.

DISCUSSION IDEA: *The target for today's group discussion:*

Jesus' time with his disciples is winding down. He is preparing them for his death and to carry on the mission they have begun with him. While he has promised he will return he instructs them on the importance of remaining faithful until he does. Persistent prayer and humility are part of remaining faithful and on mission.

BACKGROUND: *Setting the stage for today's passage:*

Jesus has angered the Pharisees by challenging their lack of love for people, and their love of money. They are now plotting his death. He has demonstrated he is the resurrection and life by raising Lazarus from the dead. He has told his followers of what the times will be like before his second coming. Then on the way to Jerusalem he teaches his disciples about their need for persistent prayer. He does this by contrasting an unjust judge to God and by contrasting a self righteous approach to a

humble repentant heart.

BIBLE PASSAGE(S) FOR DISCUSSION: Luke 18:1-8 (HIS Story: pages 187-188)

Luke 18:1-8: *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.³ Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ ⁴ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man,⁵ yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” ⁶ Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷ And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus contrasts how an unjust judge responds to a widow to how God will respond to his children. What does Jesus want his followers to understand about God?
2. What is Jesus encouraging his disciples to understand about prayer?
3. From what Jesus says, what encourages you to not lose heart but be persist in prayer?
4. What can discourage you in prayer – maybe even cause you stop praying? What encourages you to pursue prayer?
5. In what ways does trusting that God has a heart to hear and respond impact your prayers?
6. How do you nurture the healthy habit of prayer in you life?
7. For several weeks we have looked at Jesus’ life and his training of his disciples. What are you discovering about being a disciple of Jesus and making disciples of Jesus?
8. How are your discoveries impacting your own walk with Jesus, or your family, or your relationships with other believers? What about how you interact with people in your neighborhood. work place, or the places you recreate?

PRAYER TIME

NEXT WEEK: Read Chapter 10 of *His Story*

Jesus’ Triumphant Return To Jerusalem