The Journey
to
Intimacy with Christ

(Adapted for use in small groups for Fellowship Saturday Night)

“Come to ME....”

Jesus
Acknowledgements

In early 2001, a small group of men made a commitment to begin a spiritual journey together and to assist each other in a growing intimacy with God. The initial purpose of this group was to grow in their understanding of God and to more clearly understand His call on their life. These men met together for almost a year, as they encouraged one another in the progression of their discipleship. After the completion of their time together, these men were so taken by their own personal intimacy with Christ that had developed over the course of the year, they decided to commit together for a mutual mission to help others in the Body of Christ find this intimacy they had discovered.

As a result, The Influencer discipleship ministry was established. At the heart of this ministry is a process of discipleship called The Journey. More than just a curriculum, The Journey is a roadmap that small groups can use to take an individual journey of spiritual intimacy… together.

Fellowship NWA is deeply indebted to The Influencers ministry and Rocky Fleming for giving us use of the material they developed. God has used the men in this ministry, and the material they have developed, to give hundreds of believers a vision to walk with the King more closely and b used in His Kingdom. May their fruitfulness continue to multiply a hundred-fold still!

The following community group material is taken from The Journey. We have taken two of the three segments of that material to use in a Fall / Spring format. Our hope is that it gives you a fresh vision of abiding with Jesus in your daily life. If this community group year whets your appetite for a deeper and fuller experience of God, then we would heartily recommend you go through the full, one-year discipleship process with an Influencer Group. To find out how to do this, contact your community pastor.

May God’s favor be on you as you begin the journey.

Fellowship Saturday Night Community Ministry

For more information on The Influencers ministry, contact:

www.influencers.org
479-876-2854
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Before we begin, some perspective of the overall journey might be helpful.

**OUR DESTINATION**- First and foremost, the goal for our community groups is for each member to experience a more intimate, abiding relationship with Christ, and in turn to bear fruit to His glory. Therefore, *The Journey* is more than just a Bible study. Rather it’s a discovery process from the Bible. Yes, we will study the Bible, for our spiritual foundation is built from God’s word. “All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, correction and instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2Tim 3:16-17).” *But our primary objective is not to study about God; but rather to be led, by His Word, into an intimate, abiding relationship with Him.*

**OUR DIRECTION**- Therefore, our intentional direction for community group is **vertical**! This is not to say that our horizontal relationships with one another are not important. After all, this is a *community* group. But we believe authentic Christian community is experienced as individual believers grow vertically in their relationship with God... together. Caring for one another will still be a priority. But we will care for one another enough to grow more intimate with Jesus, and encourage each other to do the same.

**OUR TOOLS**- All successful journeys require the right equipment. Along with your Bible, each member will need:

- **Field Manual**- This curriculum is a full year’s worth of CG material.
- **Travel Journal**- Each participant will use a personal journal to record their insights, prayers, and reflections. It can be as inexpensive or fancy as you want. This has been the *most valuable part* of the experience for those who have gone before you. Don’t take a short-cut here!
- **Guide Books**- We will read 3 small books throughout the year. Don’t let this intimidate you. They are short and can be read in 1 or 2 sittings.
  - *Journey to the Inner Chamber*- A short allegorical story by Rocky Fleming that gives vision for spiritual intimacy.
  - *The Prayer Cottage & Secret Garden*- Another story by Rocky that gives practical tools for how to enjoy extended prayer with God.

Now… let the Journey begin!
Enlightened

OVERVIEW

See if you can relate to this story shared by a member of Fellowship and one of the founders of the Influencers ministry.

A graduate student and I attended the same wedding. We didn’t know each other, but during the reception our conversation got around to the question of knowing Jesus Christ. He asked the simple question, “When did you come to know Jesus?”

I had been asked this question many times over the past 50 years. I always answered it with a quick testimony of my childhood profession of faith in a little church in Mississippi. But this time something else came out of my mouth.

“When I was 9, I made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ in my church, which indicated that I knew him. But the following years of my life were so filled with darkness I really wasn’t sure if I knew Him at all. Then when I was 21, God showed me some new things about Himself that made me think that maybe I really had not known Him before, and it was at this time I got to know Him.”

“However, when I was 30 years old my father was killed in an industrial accident. I was greatly grieved during this loss. It was during this grieving process I discovered that God wanted to be my Abba Father. I discovered the intimate “Daddy God” that He wants to be to me. So this also caused me to question whether I had really known Him before. Maybe it was then that I really came to know Him.”

“It is now several years later and Jesus continues to reveal new things about Himself to me. Age 40 and 50 stand out as times of new revelations about God. So the question of when I came to know God is a hard one. I have come to understand that I am only getting to know this great and awesome God of the Bible”.

“The better I get to know Him, the more I realize that there is more of Him for me to get to know. I know Him much better than at age 9. But, to really ‘come to know Jesus’? Why, that will take me an eternity.”

Can you to relate to his answer? How would you answer the question?

What are the mile markers on your journey to knowing Christ more intimately?

When did it begin? When did it become more intimate? Where are you now?
Where we’re headed this fall…

Let’s face it. A common problem in the Body of Christ is that we think that we know God, and/or we are content with what we know. However, knowing God is a life journey… and a journey toward LIFE. We never arrive; we simply keep discovering and enjoying. Look at how the Apostle Paul describes his journey.

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Phil 3:8-14  NIV

Our first step must be to have the same spiritual appetite Paul had—to get a better understanding of the God who wants intimacy with us. The believer who enjoys a deep, intimate relationship with God is often rare. But why is this? Most likely it’s because we don’t know this aspect of God—that He wants us to enjoy Him on this level of understanding and intimacy. Or we don’t know how to enter into this kind of relationship with Him—“abiding in Him and He in us.”

For this reason, our first pursuit in The Journey is called “Enlightened.” We will focus on 4 foundational aspects of God. These probably are not new to you. But our goal is go deeper in our knowledge of these aspects of God’s person (attributes). We’re not on a journey of new information about God. We’re on a journey of a fresh discovery of Him (knowing Christ intimately). And these 4 aspects lay the foundation for that.

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<th>(He knows everything about you)</th>
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<td>(He cares about what He knows about you)</td>
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<td>God is Able:</td>
<td>(He is able to do something about that which He knows and cares about, provided there are no obstacles that prevent His work in your life)</td>
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Session 1

ESTABLISHING THE JOURNEY

Before this session…
Read Journey to the Inner Chamber, Pt 1—pages x-xx

What was your general impression of the story? What touched your heart?

Describe the different places in the story. Where in your journey are you now?

- Refugee Camp
- Appetizer Table
- Bridge
- Table of Sweets
- Banquet Table
- Inner Chamber

Describe the different people in the story. Who best represents you now?

- Refugee
- Learner
- Messenger
- Mentor
- Influencer

How much thought have you given to the role that the Great Deceiver or the hideous creatures have played in your journey? See 1Peter 5:8.

The words “Personal Abandonment and Absolute Trust” are written over the door to the Inner Chamber. Why do you think they are there and what do they mean?
Your frequent visits...

Make it a habit to have frequent visits with God. Often, we call these “quiet times.” They are essential for spiritual health. Maybe you’re in the habit of a daily quiet time. If so, keep it up and share with your group your spiritual journey. But if you’re not in the habit of spending regular, quiet time with God, start simple. But start.

In his book, Point Man, Steve Farrar compares a lifestyle of spiritual health to that of physical health. If you were trying to get back in shape, you’d probably start with exercising 3 times per week for 30 minutes. He recommends the same pattern for starting our personal time of intimacy with Jesus. The best time is usually in the morning, but what works for you is all that counts. Make sure to find a quiet place without distractions.

Your travel journal...

We can not over-state the value of journaling during this year. Journaling is a way of talking to God and listening carefully as He talks to you... in a very personal way. Your spiritual experience will come more from these times with Jesus than it will from this curriculum or your community group.

Think of your CG meeting as giving a child a good, strong spin on a merry-go-round. The thrill that child experiences comes after the initial push. Then, every so often, you give the merry-go-round another push to keep the momentum going. Every 2 weeks, we meet as a group to give our spiritual journeys an extra push for momentum. But the real thrill is the ride that happens after this!

Our individual times with God will make our group meetings a momentum-giver for our self and the other members of our group. In a real sense, our quiet times are not just for our own benefit!

Tips for journaling...

- Start with a blank notebook or journal.
- Record the date and the passage of Scripture read that day.
- Write your key thoughts, even questions, about the passage.
- Ask:
  - What does this tell me about the Father... Son... Holy Spirit?
  - What does this tell me about me... my sin... my world?
  - How does this truth apply to my life right now?
  - How should I respond to this promise or instruction?
- Record your prayer requests or the names of those prayed for.
- Record your praises and thanksgivings.
How to enjoy your time alone with God…

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.”

Woody Allen

Devotional writer, Henri Nouwen, seems to agree with Woody Allen when he recommends that we just need to “show up”… arrive at our appointed time and place and just “let the Spirit lead.” Most of us, however, need a bit more structure. Especially in the early stages of our spiritual journey. There are a number of methods that have been developed to help facilitate a meaningful time with God. We’re not prescribing one rote method.

Lisa Prier, a member of Fellowship, has developed a simple, yet profound, method for hearing God speak and enjoying an intimate time of communication with Him. The method is called P R R P.

Pray

Read

Reflect

Pray

Pray- Talk to Him. Use the ACTS method of prayer—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. As part of your prayer before you begin to read His word, ask Him to “open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your Word” (Ps 119:18).

Read- a passage of scripture and let Him talk to you… let Him be your teacher (John 6:45). You might read the passage a few times. God may reveal sin, give you insight, direct your decision, encourage your heart, or just show you more of Himself.

Reflect- Meditate on this scripture. What is God saying to you? What applies to your life? Write down verses that stand out to you and why they do.

Pray- Again, talk to God about what He just said to you. Thank Him for what He taught you. Ask for His help and strength to apply what He showed you. Re-write one of the scriptures in the form of a prayer to Him… personalizing it as you would with an intimate friend.

Whether you use this or another method, the goal is spend time getting to know Jesus intimately. Remember, this relationship is more of a journey than a destination. As you regularly spend time with Him, you will discover that you are enjoying a real, personal, and practical relationship with God. You will realize that you know Him and He knows you (John 10:3-4, 14).

Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, “Speak, for Thy servant is listening.” Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy speaking voice. Amen.

A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God
Session 2

God Knows

For your Community Group this week...

Read Psalm 139

In your journal, describe how God knows you. What are the words that David uses to help us understand this truth?

Focus on verses 7-12. What is the scope of God’s knowledge of you? What are (have been) the darkest places of your life... the place you wished God didn’t know about?

Focus on verses 13-18. What does God feel toward you... even with this knowledge?

What response does this raise in your heart? Write it in your journal.

Read verses 23-24. Write it out in a personalized prayer, asking this all-knowing God to search you thoroughly and lead you well.

Look at the verses on the following pages that list the names and descriptions of God. Which ones jump out at you? Come to Community Group prepared to share which one does and why.
For another Quiet Time this week...

Read Hebrews 4:14-16

Think about the weaknesses that haunt you. Meditate on how much Jesus personally knows about that weakness.

Now, reflect on His desire for you to draw near to Him. He wanted this intimacy enough to make it possible... at great cost to Himself.

What does this provoke in your heart?

Read Hebrews 10:19-25...

What is the assurance that God gives you as you draw near to Him?

Describe all the actions you are supposed to take because of that assurance.

What role does Community Group play in us being able to draw near?
Names, Titles & Descriptions of God
(NIV translation)

**FATHER**

- A faithful God—Deut 32:4
- A forgiving God—Neh 9:17
- A fortress of salvation—Ps 28:8
- A glorious crown—Isa 28:5
- A jealous and avenging God—Nah 1:2
- A Master in heaven—Col 4:1
- A refuge for his people—Joel 3:16
- A refuge for the oppressed—Ps 9:9
- A refuge for the poor—Isa 25:4
- A sanctuary—Isa 8:14
- A shade from the heat—Isa 25:4
- A shelter from the storm—Ps 25:4
- A source of strength—Isa 28:6
- A stronghold in times of trouble—Ps 9:9
- An ever-present help in trouble—Ps 46:1
- Architect and builder—Heb 11:10
- Builder of everything—Heb 3:4
- Commander of the Lord’s army—Josh 5:14
- Creator of heaven and earth—Gen 14:19
- Defender of widows—Ps 68:5
- Eternal King—Jer 10:10
- Father—Isa 9:6, 63:16, Matt 5:16
- Father of compassion—2 Cor 1:3
- Father of our spirits—Heb 12:9
- Father of the heavenly lights—Jas 1:17
- Father to the fatherless—Ps 68:5
- God—Gen 1:2
- God Almighty (El Shaddai)—Gen 17:1
- God and Father of Jesus Christ—Pet 1:3
- God Most High—Gen 14:18-22
- God my Maker—Job 35:10
- God my Rock—Ps 42:9
- God my Savior—Ps 18:46, 27:9
- God my stronghold—Ps 144:2, 2 Sam 22:3
- God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—Ex 3:16
- God of all comfort—Cor 1:3
- God of all mankind—Jer 32:27
- God of glory—Ps 29:3
- God of God—Deut 10:17, Ps 136:2
- God of grace—1 Peter 5:10
- God of peace—1 Thes 5:23
- God of retribution—Jer 51:56
- God of the living—Matt 22:32
- God of the spirit—Num 16:22
- God of truth—Ps 31:5
- God our Father—Col 1:2
- God our strength—Ps 18:2
- God over all the kingdom—Dan 4:17
- God the Father—Col 3:17
- God who avenges me—Ps 18:47, 94:1
- God who relents from sending calamity—Joel 2:13
- Great and awesome God—Deut 7:21
- Great and powerful God—Jer 32:18
- Great, mighty, awesome God—Deut 10:17
- He who blots out transgressions—Isa 43:25
- He who comforts you—Isa 66:13
- He who forms the hearts of all—Ps 33:15
- He who raised Christ from the dead—Rom 8:11
- He who reveals his thoughts to man—Amos 4:13
- Helper of the fatherless—Ps 10:14
- Him who is able to do more than all we ask or imagine—Eph 3:20
- Him who is able to keep you from falling—Jude 24
- Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead—2 Tim 4:1
- Holy Father—John 17:11
- Holy One—Rev 16:5
- Holy One among you—Hos 11:9
- I AM WHO I AM—Ex 3:14
- Jealous—Ex 20:5
- Judge of all the earth—Gen 18:25
- King of glory—Ps 24:7-10
- King of heaven—Dan 4:37
- Living and true God—1 Thes 1:9
- Lord Almighty—2 Cor 6:18
- Lord is Peace—Judges 6:24
- Lord Most High—Ps. 7:17
| Lord is my Banner-Ex. 17:15          | The everlasting God-Isa 40:28 |
| Lord my Rock-Ps. 28:1               | The exalted God-Mic 6:6       |
| Lord of all the earth-Mic 4:13; Zech 4:14 | The faithful God-Deut 7:9   |
| Lord of kings-Dan 2:47              | The gardener (husbandman)-John 15:1 |
| Lord our God-Deut 1:6,10            | The glorious father-Eph 1:17  |
| Lord our Maker-Ps 95:6              | The glory of Israel-Mic 1:15  |
| Lord our shield-Ps 33:20            | The God who saves me-Ps 88:1  |
| Lord who heals you-Ex 15:26         | The God who sees me-Gen 16:13 |
| Lord who is there-Ezek 48:35        | The great king above all gods-Ps 95:3 |
| Lord who makes you holy-Heb 2:11    | The just and mighty one-Job 34:17 |
| Lord who strikes the blow-Ezek 7:9   | The living father-John 6:57   |
| Lord will provide-Gen 22:14         | The majestic glory-2 Pet 1:17 |
| Love-1 John 4:8                      | The majesty in heaven-Heb 1:3 |
| Maker of all things-Eccl 11:5; Jer 10:16 | The one who sustains me-Ps 54:4 |
| Most High-Gen 14:18-22              | The only God-Jude 1:25        |
| My advocate-Job 16:19                | The potter-Jer 18:6           |
| My comforter in sorrow-Jer 8:18     | The rock in whom I take refuge-Ps 18:2 |
| My confidence-Ps 71:5                | The spring of living water-Jer 2:13 |
| My helper-Ps 118:7; Heb 13-6        | The strength of my heart-Ps. 73:26 |
| My hiding place-Ps 32:7              | The true God-1 Thess 1:9      |
| My hope-Ps 25:5, 21                  |                            |
| My light-Ps 27:1                     |                            |
| My mighty rock-Ps 62:7               |                            |
| My refuge in times of trouble-Ps 59:16 |                        |
| My song-Ex 15:2                      |                            |
| My strong deliverer-Ps 140:7         |                            |
| My support-2 Sam 22:19               |                            |
| One to be feared-1 Chron 16:25      |                            |
| Only wise God-Rom 16:27             |                            |
| Our dwelling place-Ps 90:1           |                            |
| Our judge-1 Sam 24:15               |                            |
| Our lawgiver-Isa 33:22              |                            |
| Our leader-2 Chron 13:12            |                            |
| Our mighty one-Isa 33:21             |                            |
| Our redeemer-Isa 47:4; 63:16         |                            |
| Our refuge and strength-Ps 46:1      |                            |
| Righteous father-John 17:25         |                            |
| Rock of our salvation-Ps.95:1        |                            |
| Shepherd-Ps 23:1                     |                            |
| Sovereign Lord-Acts 4:24             |                            |
| The almighty-Gen 49:25; Ruth 1:20    |                            |
| The compassionate and gracious God-Ex 34:6 |                        |
| The eternal God-Gen 21:33            |                            |
| The consuming fire-Isa 33:14         |                            |

**SON (JESUS)**

A Nazarene-Matt 2:23; Mark 14:67
All-Col 3:11
Alpha and omega-Rev 1:8
Anointed one-Acts 4:26; Ps 2:2
Apostle and high priest-Heb 3:1
Author and perfector or our faith-Heb 12:2
Author of life-Acts 3:15
Author of their salvation-Heb 2:10
Branch of the Lord-Isa 4:2
Bread of God-John 6:33
Bread of life-John 6:48
Chief cornerstone-Eph 2:20
Chief shepherd-1 Pet 5:4
Chosen and precious cornerstone-1 Pet 2:6
Christ Jesus my Lord-Phil 3:8
Christ Jesus our hope-1 Tim 1:1
Consolation of Israel-Luke 2:25
Crown of splendor-Isa 62:3
Eternal life-1 John 5:20
Faithful and true-Rev 19:11
Faithful and true witness-Rev 3:14
First to rise from the dead-Acts 26:23
Firstborn from among the dead-Col. 1:18
Firstborn over all creation-Col. 1:15
Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep-1 Cor 15:20
Fragrant offering and sacrifice to God-Eph 5:2
Friend of tax collectors and sinners-­Matt 11:19
God over all-Rom 9:5
God’s son-John 11:4
Great high priest-Heb 4:14
Great light-Matt 4:16
Great shepherd of the sheep-Heb 13:20
Guarantee of a better covenant-Heb 7:22
He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world-John 6:33
He who searches hearts and minds-­Rev 2:23
Head of every man-1 Cor 11:3
Head of the body, the church-Col 1:18
Head of the church-Eph 5:23
Head over every power and authority-Col 2:10
Heir of all things-Heb 1:2
Him who died and came to life again-­Rev 2:8
Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins-Rev 1:5
His one and only son-John 4:9
Holy and righteous one-Acts 3:14
Holy one of God-John 6:69
Holy servant Jesus-Acts 4:27,30
Hope of Israel-Jer 17:13
Horn of salvation-Luke 1:69
Image of the invisible God-Col 1:15
Immanuel (God with us)-Matt 1:23
Indescribable gift-2 Cor 9:15
Jesus-Matt 1:21
Jesus Christ-John 1:17
Jesus Christ our Lord-Rom 1:4; 5:21
Jesus Christ our Savior-Titus 3:6
Jesus of Nazareth-Mark 1:24; Matt 26:71
Judge of the living and the dead-­Acts 10:42
KING OF KINGS-­Rev 19:16
King of the ages-Rev 15:3
Lamb of God-John 1:29; 1:36
Light for revelation to the Gentiles-­Luke 2:32
Light of men-John 1:4
Light of the world-John 8:12
Living bread that came down from heaven-John 6:51
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ-2 Pet 3:18
Lord (Kurios)-Josh 3:11,13
Lord of glory-1 Cor 2:8
LORD OF LORDS-­Rev 19:16
Lord of peace-Eph 4:12
Lord of the harvest-Matt 9:38
Lord of the Sabbath-Matt 12:8
Lord (Rabboni)-John 20:16
Man accredited by God-Acts 2:22
Man of sorrows-Isa 53:3
Master-Luke 8:24; 9:33; Col 4:1
Mediator of a new covenant-Heb 9:15; 12:24
Merciful and faithful high priest-Heb 2:17
Messenger of the covenant-Mal 3:1
Messiah-John 1:41
Morning star-­Rev 2:28
My friend-Jer 3:4
My intercessor-Job 16:20
One who makes men holy-­Heb 2:11
One who speaks to the Father in our defense-1 John 2:1
One who will rule over nations-Rom 15:12
Our glorious Lord Jesus Christ-Jas 2:1
Our God and Savior Jesus Christ-­2 Pet 1:1
Our only sovereign and Lord-Jude 1:4
Our Passover lamb-1 Cor 5:7
Our peace-Eph 2:14
Our righteousness, holiness and redemption-­1 Cor 1:30
Prince and savior-­Acts 5:31
Prince of peace-Isa 9:6
Price of princes-Dan 8:25
Prince of the hosts—Dan 8:11
Ransom for all men—1 Tim 2:6
Refiner and purifier—Mal 3:3
Resurrection and the life—John 11:25
Righteous judge—2 Tim 4:8
Righteous one—Acts 3:14; 7:52
Rock eternal (rock of ages)—Isa 26:4
Ruler of God’s creation—Rev 3:14
Ruler of the kings of the earth—Rev 1:5
Savior of the world—John 4:42
Second man—1 Cor 15:47
Shepherd of souls—1 Pet 2:25
Son of man—John 3:13–14; 5:27; 6:27
Son of the blessed one—Mark 14:61
Son of the living God—Matt 16:16
Son of the Most High God—Luke 8:28
Source of eternal salvation—Heb 5:9
Sure foundation—Isa 33:6
Teacher—Matt 23:10
The amen—2 Cor 1:20
The beginning and the end—Rev 21:6
The bright morning star—Rev 22:16
The exact representation—Heb 1:3
The first and the last—Rev 1:17
The gate (door)—John 10:7,9
The good shepherd—John 10:11
The head—Eph 4:15; Col 2:19
The last Adam—1 Cor 15:45
The life—John 14:6
The living one—Rev 1:18
The living stone—1 Pet 2:4
The lord our righteousness—Jer 23:6
The man from heaven—1 Cor 15:49
The man Christ Jesus—1 Tim 2:5
The most holy—Dan 9:24
The one and only—John 1:14,18
The only God our savior—Jude 1:25
The radiance of God’s glory—Heb 1:3
The rising of the sun—Isa 59:19
The stone the builders rejected—1 Pet 2:7
The testimony given in its proper time—1 Tim 2:6
The true light—John 1:9
The true vine—John 15:1
The truth—John 14:6

**HOLY SPIRIT**

A deposit (earnest)—2 Cor 5:5
Another counselor—John 14:16, 26
Breath of the almighty—Job 32:8
Holy One—1 John 2:20
Holy Spirit—John 1:33
Holy Spirit of God—Eph 4:30
Seal—2 Cor 1:22
Spirit of Christ—1 Pet 1:11
Spirit of counsel and of power—Isa 11:2
Spirit of faith—2 Cor 4:13
Spirit of fire—Isa 4:4
Spirit of glory—1 Pet 4:14
Spirit of grace & supplication—Zech 12:10
Spirit of his Son—Gal 4:6
Spirit of holiness—Rom 4:1
Spirit of Jesus Christ—Phil 1:19
Spirit of judgment—Isa 4:4
Spirit of justice—Isa 59:19
Spirit of life—Rom 8:2
Spirit of our God—1 Cor 6:11
Spirit of sonship (adoption)—Rom 8:15
Spirit of the living God—2 Cor 3:3
Spirit of the sovereign Lord—Isa 61:1
Spirit of truth—John 14:17; 1 John 4:6
Spirit of wisdom & understanding—Isa 11:2
Spirit of wisdom & revelation—Eph 1:17
The gift—Acts 2:38; 10:45
The promised Holy Spirit—Acts 2:33
The same gift—Acts 11:17
Voice of the almighty—Ezek 1:24
Voice of the Lord—Hag 1:12; Isa 30:31
What if God cared deeply about everything He knew? What if Jesus didn’t just know you… He cared for you in ways that were better than your best imagination? Would that make a difference?

“What the Lord is my Shepherd—I shall not want.” I am completely satisfied with His management of my life. Why? Because He is the sheep-man to whom no trouble is too great as He cares for His flock. He is the rancher who is outstanding because of His fondness for sheep—who loves them for their own sake as well as His personal pleasure in them. He will, if necessary, be on the job 24 hours a day to see that they are properly provided for in every detail. Above all, He is very jealous of His name and high reputation as “The Good Shepherd.”

He is the owner who delights in His flock. For Him there is no greater reward, no deeper satisfaction, than that of seeing His sheep contented, well fed, safe, and flourishing under His care. This is indeed His very “life.” He gives all He has to it. He literally lays Himself out for those who are His…. From early dawn to late at night this utterly self-less Shepherd is alert to the welfare of His flock.

Phillip Keller, A Shepherd’s Look at the 23rd Psalm

Write in your journal, in detail, the concerns that you are dealing with right now. As you make a clear recording of what they are, think about how much of your time and mental energy they consume.

Now, think about how much more the Lord knows about your concern. And how much more concerned for your welfare He has.

Jesus reveals Himself to us as a Shepherd. Meditate on the metaphor. Write some phrases describing the relationship between a sheep and a shepherd.

What is the sheep’s responsibility?

What is the Shepherd’s responsibility?
Read the verses describing Jesus as a Shepherd.
“Good” - John 10:11,14  “One” - John 10:16  “Chief” - 1 Peter 5:4

Write a sentence or two that summarizes the kind of Shepherd Jesus is to you.

For your Community Group this week...

Read Psalm 23

Answer the following questions and record them in your journal:

- Describe the characteristics of the Good Shepherd in this Psalm. What does He do?

- What are some characteristics of sheep that would be similar to God’s children and to you?

- Are there any of these characteristics that are going on right now in your life?

Look at your list of concerns in your journal. Take each of those concerns to the Lord in prayer. Entrust these needs to Him. Ask for His wisdom to know what to do about them. Ask for patience to wait for His solution.

For another Quiet Time this week…

Read John 10:7-18

Observe the closeness of the relationship between the Shepherd and the sheep. How is this relationship described?

What does John 10 tell us about the lengths Jesus will go for His sheep? How does it specifically describe Jesus’ care for us?

Reflect on your list of concerns that you recorded in your journal. Reflect on the great lengths Jesus will go to care for you. How has the Shepherd dealt with those concerns? How has He dealt with you?

“He makes me lie down.” In the Christian’s life there is no substitute for the keen awareness that my Shepherd is nearby. There is nothing like Christ’s presence to dispel the fear, the panic, and the terror of the unknown.

Phillip Keller, Shepherd’s Look at the 23rd Psalm

Write a prayer of thanksgiving for the Shepherd’s presence & care in your life. Record this prayer in your journal.
Session 4

GOD IS WILLING

God knows everything about you. God cares about everything that He knows about you. This alone is good news. But the news gets better. God is also willing to get involved with everything He knows and cares about in your life—your problems, troubles, joys and pleasures. He wants to engage intimately with you!

If you were really convinced that God knows, cares, and is willing to interact with your life, then what would be some of the results that you would experience?

Where have you seen some of these results in your life?

Many times, Christians do not have a hard time believing that God knows them… or even that God cares for them. But to believe that God is willing… He WANTS… to interact with me and relate to me, becomes a harder step of faith. Some believe that God wants to relate closely with others, but He’s not quite as willing to do so for them.

Why do you think this is so?

Look back at John 10:10. Read the verses in their context. Why did Jesus come… and how does this relate to His willingness?

Read Luke 13:31-35. What does Jesus’ agony say about His willingness to engage us?
Read Isaiah 1:18. Notice who initiates intimate relationship. Notice who has broken it and disengaged. What response does this insight produce in you?

We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. “No man can come to Me, “said our Lord, “except the Father who sent Me draws him”… The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following hard after Him. All the time we are pursuing Him we are already in His hand: “Thy right hand upholds me.”

A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

In the Bible, God always initiates with man. He makes the first move in all relationship with Him. Remember, “we love, because He first loved us (1John 4:19). This willing initiative is called GRACE.

We were saved by grace.
We are sustained by grace.
We are sanctified (grown) by grace.
We will finish the journey by grace.

Man’s job is to respond to God’s grace. This response is called FAITH. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us “we are saved by grace.” This salvation experience is more than just going to heaven. Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that you may KNOW Me (John 17:3).” Salvation life includes intimately knowing Jesus in our daily life now.

Experiencing the salvation life of Jesus comes down to a simple, but profound and practical truth—living by GRACE through FAITH... every day.
For your Community Group this week…

If God is full of grace and so willing to interact with us, then why does it sometimes seem like we are just “stuck.” Our Christian experience feels stuck. Our marriages are stuck. Our problems are stuck. Our joy is stuck. Our … Fill in the blank… you know what it feels like at times.

Read these passages and take note of some of the barriers to God’s willingness:

Matt 13:54-58

Mark 6:4-6

Mark 9:16-24

Hebrews 11:1-6

Luke 18:1-8

James 1:5-8,4:3

Psalm 66:18-19

Proverbs 15:29

How would you summarize the role of practical faith in God’s work in our lives?

What are other barriers that block God’s willingness to engage intimately with us?
Father, I want to know You! But my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I can not part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from You the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long, and which have become a very part of my living self, so that You may enter and dwell there without a rival.

O God, I have tasted Your goodness, and it has both satisfied me, and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, Triune God, I want to know You! I long to be filled with a longing. I thirst to be made thirsty still.

Show Me Your glory, I pray You, so that I may know You indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, “Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.” Then give me grace to rise and follow You from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

--A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God

For another Quiet Time this week...


3 stories—the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son. Write in your journal what you see about the heart of God. Where have you seen His willingness to search for you when you have been lost?

Is it hard to picture God being JOYFUL about finding you? If so, why?

What does this tell you about God’s willingness to relate to you intimately?

If you’re overwhelmed by this truth, that’s called AWE and GRATITUDE. Worship happens when awe meets gratitude.

Spend some time worshipping Him.
Session 5

GOD IS ABLE

So far we've dug deeper in some foundational truths about God. Jesus knows everything about you. Jesus cares about everything he knows about you. And Jesus is willing to get involved with everything He knows and cares about you. Now, we come to the rest of the good news. Jesus is not just willing, He’s able to do something about everything He knows and cares about in your life. Theologically, this attribute is called omnipotence. Simply put, God is all powerful.

Why is it so critical that we really embrace this truth? What happens when we don’t fully grasp God’s all-sufficient and absolute power?

If we have faith at all it must be faith in Almighty God; when He has said a thing, He will perform it; we have to remain steadfastly obedient to Him.

-- Oswald Chambers

Read through Ephesians 1:18-20 below.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Eph 1:18-21 NIV

Underline key words showing how Paul describes the power of God? Who is this power for? Where else has God demonstrated this kind of power? For how long is this power of God effective?
Think of an impossible circumstance you went through before, or one you are walking through right now. How have/did you see God’s power on display?

God’s power is for you! What practical response does believing this produce?

For your Community Group this week…

Remember the words written over the doorway to the “Inner Chamber.” All who enter the presence of God must come through “Personal Abandonment and Absolute Trust.”

Why is this kind of Christian walk so difficult for us? To what degree are you experiencing “personal abandonment and absolute trust?” Has this changed since you began the community group a few months ago? How so?

Reflect back on the essential characteristics of God that make intimacy with Him possible… God knows, God cares, God is willing, God is able.

If we are to continue in our journey of intimacy with God, why must we grow in our faith and experience of these 4 characteristics?

How do these characteristics of God relate to our ability to abandon ourselves and trust Him fully?
What areas of life are you having a hard time abandoning? Trusting?

What characteristic(s) of God do you need to focus on more to see this happen?

For another Quiet Time this week...

Read through the following passages on God’s power. Write your thoughts or responses in your journal.

Ephesians 3:14-21

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

Philippians 2:12-13

2 Peter 1:3-4

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

O God and Father, I repent of my sinful preoccupation with visible things. The world has become too much with me. Thou hast been here and I knew it not. I have been blind to Thy presence. Open my eyes that I may behold Thee in and around me. For Christ’s sake. Amen.

A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God
Session 6

An Extended Time with Jesus… Together
(An Evening of Communion & Prayer)

Before this session…
Read The Prayer Cottage and the Secret Garden

In this next community group meeting, we will take an extended time to be with God. To prepare for it spiritually, make this a week of reflection. Make it a point to rise a little earlier each morning and take in the “still water” that God has for you.

Let your “quiet time” be just that. Practice listening. Take in the quietness. It is said that God speaks with a still small voice, and we are often too hurried to hear Him. Give Him a chance to speak to you. After all, He knows you, cares for you, and is willing and able to communicate with you.

“A. C. T. S.” is a good prayer pattern to start with when you are ready to pray.

(A) doration – take time to recognize Who God is and tune in.

(C) onfession – come clean before God and confess any wrongs that you are aware of and that need His forgiveness.

(T) hanksgiving – overflow with gratitude. Think of how blessed you truly are and thank Him. Start with your 2 hands closed. Then thank Him for 10 specific things as you open your fingers… coming to a place of grateful, open-handed surrender before Him.

(S) upplication – take your needs to Him, and remember that He is faithful to keep His Word on something that He has promised to do. Trust Him with it.

Check your motivation and expectations…

Ever caught yourself saying (or thinking) something like this?

“I don’t need to go to Community Group this week. I’m so busy and tired. And all we’re going to do is pray anyway. Since we’re not doing anything, this is a good week to miss.”

This kind of statement says a ton about what we believe about prayer… and praying together. Begin now to ask God to meet with you and your group in a special way. Thank Him for the privilege of being able to come to the buffet table of His presence… as a group. Ask Him for a heart that says:

“I can’t wait for Community Group this week. We’re so busy and tired. We need some real refreshment. We need to pray together. I wouldn’t miss it.”
For your community group this week…

Read *The Prayer Cottage and the Secret Garden*. In story-form, it will give you a pattern for how you can spend extended time with God.

In the *Influencer*’s ministry, these extended times are usually ½ days of prayer (Saturday morning, 8-12). If your community group can do something like this, without a doubt this will bless each of you the most. But if not, take an extended evening of prayer and communion with this session.

Come earlier (or on time!) and plan to stay a bit later. You’ll spend time praying together and time praying individually. Pick a house that has some room to spread out and have individual time with God. If the weather’s nice, use the outside as well.

For another Quiet Time this week…

The disciples had been watching Jesus. How He could pray! And how God moved when He did! So they asked Jesus, “Lord teach us to pray.” This is what He taught them (Matt 6:9-13):

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.*

Begin by worshipping Him for who He is.

*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Acknowledge full surrender to His reign in your life. Ask Him to rule in every area—your work, your home, your play, your mind, your emotions, your deeds, and your words.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

Lift your needs before Him.

*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

Confess your wrongs and receive His forgiveness. Forgive the wrongs done to you.

*Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from the evil one.*

Pray for spiritual guidance, strength, and protection for yourself, your family, and your church family / community group.

*For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory now and forever. Amen.*

Worship Him for what He does!
Suggested Schedule and Format for Extended Prayer Session

The Westminster Catechism says that “The chief purpose of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” If there were a chief purpose of our extended time with God today it would be for you to enjoy Him. He invites you to enjoy Him!

In fact, He commands it!

“O taste and see that the Lord is good. How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.” (Ps 34:8).

Let this be a time for you and the Lord to enjoy each other as you dedicate this time for that purpose. Below is a suggested format for the evening.

First 15 minutes
- Gather, dispense any material, and disperse.

Individual Time: 1 hour
- Find a place that is quiet, private and comfortable for your time with God.
- Enter the Grace Room, Examination Room, Forgiveness Courtyard, Intercession Bench, Perspective Place, and Meditation Rock.
- Linger at whatever place you need. The goal is not to rush through the process. The goal is to enjoy God.

Group Time: 1 hour
- Enter the Reflection Pool together. Share your insights with each other.
- Take time to pray for whatever needs come up… or to thank God for the big and small spiritual breakthroughs.
- Enjoy Communion together.

O God, quicken to life every power within me, that I may lay hold on eternal things. Open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception; enable me to taste Thee and know that Thou art good. Make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been. Amen.

A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God
The Prayer Cottage
(from The Influencer’s Study Guide)

The Grace Room – This is a place where we pause, rest and reflect on God's great mercy and grace. In this room, our hearts are prepared with thankfulness and the perspective we need to go further. Start your prayer journey with the Lord here first. Don’t rush this time. Soak in it awhile before going further. Think about the wonderful things your Savior has done for you. Were any of those blessings a result of your deserving it or was it because of His unconditional love? Stay in this room and reflect on the blessings in your life until a spirit of thankfulness begins to emerge. It’s OK if it takes awhile; for it is necessary to get the right perspective about God’s love for you. Take a moment to jot down the things that came to your mind.

Grace Room Reflections:
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The Prayer Cottage
(from The Influencer’s Study Guide)

The Examination Room – This is where we ask God to examine us and show our sin, disobedience or areas in our lives that are not pleasing to Him. In the story there was a particular sin that was not obvious, and the Lord had to reveal it. If you are conscious of sin in your life, *repent and be forgiven. If you are not aware of anything, ask God to reveal anything that you are blind to. Ask Him to open up those dirty closets in your life and reveal to you areas that are displeasing to Him. This time could be painful, but it is necessary. After your time feels complete in this room, move to the next area.

*Note, in the story, “repent” means to be in agreement with God about a sin in your life. Don’t rush through the, “I’m sorry stage.” It needs to be heartfelt and sometimes painful, but it will be good to get it out in the open. This is where we ask God to help us overcome the temptation to repeat it. After you’ve addressed those issues that you need to take to the Lord, write down any revelations that were revealed to you in the Examination Room.

Revelations In The Examination Room

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The Prayer Cottage
(from The Influencer’s Study Guide)

The Courtyard - When we repent of our sins, God is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is the area of the cottage where you receive His cleansing. Take whatever time you need during this time to bask in His forgiveness. When God forgives us our sins, He remembers them no more. You do the same. Take a symbolic bath to wash away the effects of your sin, and let it end here. Don’t keep beating yourself up over a particular sin that God has forgiven you. Deal with it as God has. Claim it as forgiven and move on without taking it with you. Many people are debilitated in their spiritual growth because they won’t receive the forgiveness God has for them. Therefore, take the fresh, clean robe of being in right standing with God and put it on. This represents the new life of a repented, forgiven and washed clean child of God. You will need to remember this time as you move further into the Garden. Make note of the forgiveness and fresh life God has given to you.

Special Forgiveness Noted and Accepted in the Courtyard

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The Intercession Bench— Are there people for whom you want to seek God’s help? Take each of these people to the Lord, and ask that He bless them. If you are aware of any specific needs they have, ask God to show you what you may do, as an extension of His hand, in helping with that need. Write in the following space things that were revealed to you that you might do, as an instrument in God’s hand, for the people you have just prayed for. If you do not know specific needs that they have, just take their name and what comes to your mind about them to our Savior. He delights in your prayers for other people. He knows their needs. He may choose to reveal to you something you can help Him with on their behalf.

Thoughts from the Intercession Bench of who and how to help

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The Sacred Garden
(from *The Influencer’s Study Guide*)

**The Perspective Place** - Do you need perspective about an “irregular person” in your life? Clearly voice your exasperation to the Lord, and try to listen to His advice as to how He would deal with that person(s). Do you need to give grace to this person? Would it help to know that when you give this person unconditional love and acceptance you are worshipping God? Rather than trying to ask God to change the person, consider asking God to change your thinking about the person and look at this person with His compassion.

After you have spent time taking these people to the Lord and seeking His perspective, is there a particular thought idea or action that comes to your mind that you think He is telling you to do concerning this person? Write your answer in the following space.

**Thoughts from the Perspective Place**

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The Sacred Garden
(from The Influencer’s Study Guide)

**The Meditation Rock** - Read 2 Peter 1:3-4. What does He promise you in this passage? Do you need some special wisdom or understanding? Spend some time in this part of your prayer journey and look for promises in His word that deal with your need. Ask Jesus for insight and see if He is ready to discuss the answers with you. God’s word gives us timeless guidelines that deal with your needs. When you do find a promise that speaks to your need, record your thoughts in the following space.

Special wisdom found at The Meditation Rock

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Valley of Abundance - What needs do you have that need to be clearly articulated to our Savior? Philippians 4:19 promises that all of your needs will be supplied from God’s glorious riches. Read this promise. Think about it. We’re talking about the King of the Universe meeting your needs according to His ability and resources! Can you exceed that resource? Do you believe that this promise applies to you? Remember the definition of faith given to us in Hebrews 11:1? “What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot see.” Take a little time, and think about these promises and then take those needs to your Lord and Savior. After you have done this write down some special assurances that have been given to you at this time.

Needs expressed, entrusted and claimed in the Valley of Abundance

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The Sacred Garden
(from The Influencer’s Study Guide)

**The Shadow of Death** - Read Habakkuk 3: 17-19. What special thing are you going through that God is asking you to trust Him with? Is there something that is frightening you? Is your logic getting in the way? Is your fear robbing your joy, your rest, your peace? Then this is where you take a step on your “High Places.” This is where you commit your fear to the Lord and ask for His assurance. This is where you step out in faith and trust Him to keep you steady. This is where you give to God this thing that is frightening you and face it with Him. Psalm 37: 23-24 reads, “The steps of the godly are directed by the Lord. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by hand.”

By the way, if you have a problem considering yourself godly, think of your time in the Courtyard. Remember the cleansing and forgiveness you received. You were asked to make special note of it. Remember, the forgiveness found in Christ Jesus makes you in “right standing” with God. “Right standing with God” is called “righteousness” in the Bible. Righteousness is another word for “godly.” So you see, God’s complete forgiveness of your sins causes Him to consider you “godly”, and the above verse applies to you. He is holding you by your hand right now. He will not let you fall. You might be seeing some things that would indicate some frightening and impossible conditions as it was with Habakkuk. But the Sovereign King of the universe, Who can do all things, holds your hand and will not let you stumble. Believe this and claim it.

After you have committed to trust God with those fearful things that you are dealing with, write any thoughts of assurance and instructions that you feel the Lord is impressing on you to step out in.

**Steps to take in my High Places**

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Restoration Pool - Are you tired and weary? Has your life’s journey taken its toll on you? Do you need to be ministered to in a special way that even you do not know what would be required? Well consider this: He who created you knows all your needs. He knows just what you need, and this is the place to find it. This is where you just rest in His presence. Form a mental picture of a lamb resting in the shadow of his shepherd. It's a hot day in the desert. There is a pool of water, but there is no shade. The lamb places his body in the shadow of his shepherd and rests. Think of the relief the lamb feels to find shade from the hot sun. Think of the relief that he feels because he is so close to his shepherd that he doesn't have to fear one thing. With that picture in mind, go to your Bible and read Psalm 91. Put yourself in the promise found in this passage. Lay down by “Restoration Pool” and in the shadow of the Almighty God, and let Him restore you. Take all the time you need. After you've spent this time resting at the “Restoration Pool,” consider writing any reflections from this time.

Reflections from The Restoration Pool

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