

GOLIATH MUST FALL //

IT'S COMPLICATED

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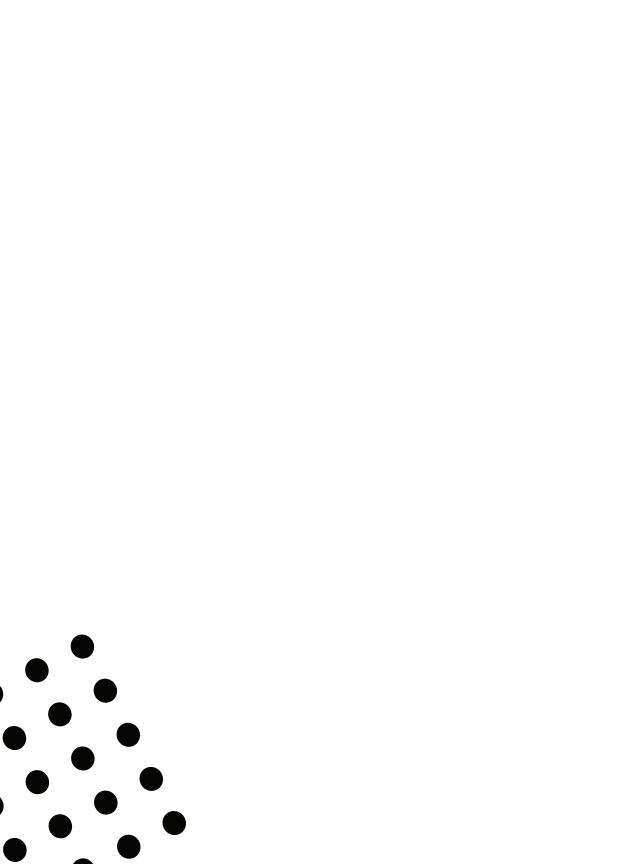
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GOLIATH MUST FALL

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GOLLATH MUST F4//



GOLIATH MUST FALL //

THE STORY.

SERMON NOTES // SUNDAY, SEPT. 12

Notes / Thoughts / Scribbles / Questions "Worship is simply a shift our souls, bringing God clearer into view. That's important for all of us, off the rails."

of attention that allows us to see God better. Worship is like corrective lenses for especially when life goes

- Louie Giglio

TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // We all love a good underdog story. Can you name a few underdog stories as a group? (i.e. Rudy, 1969 'Miracle' Mets).



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- How familiar are you with the story of David and Goliath? If time allows, read the story together in 1 Samuel 17:20-50. Did anything surprise or resonate with you?
- As a group, come up with a list of 5-10 of the biggest emotional or spiritual 'giants' you think we face in everyday life. Is there one on the list that tends to give our culture (or if you feel comfortable: you/your family) more challenges than others?
- Over the next several weeks, we will be working together through some of the giants we tend to face. The first one being the giant of fear. What is causing fear, anxiety, or worry in your life? Why?
- As we explore in the daily devotionals this week, the opposite of fear is not courage; it is trust. It was David's trust in God, not just his courage, that gave him the confidence to stand in the battle. Why is this an important distinction?
- Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." How can prayer be an effective tool against fears or worries we face?
- Do you struggle to hand your fears/anxieties/worries over to God in prayer? Why or why not?
- Take some time to pray for one another. If you feel comfortable, have everyone share one fear they're facing and pray through that together.



CHAIR TIME // MONDAY, SEPT. 13

Fear chews away at our lives and erodes our sense of confidence and well-being. It robs us of sleep and rest. Fear blinds us and steals our praise.

- Louie Giglio



Scripture

Goliath taunted the Israelites: "I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

- 1 Samuel 17:10-11

Comments/Questions

Fear, anxiety, and worry can all be intimidating giants in our lives. Some of us have learned to hide these emotions and to others, we might seem very confident and secure. But deep down, we all have emotions that cut to the core of who we are.

- Which of these do you struggle with the most?
- Does anyone know that you struggle with this? Who?
- If not, who could you be honest with about your emotions this week?

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Prayer

Father God, I am often overcome with fear, anxiety, and worry. But You do not want me to live in fear. You have not given us, your children, a spirit of fear. I ask that Your Spirit build trust where I feel fear. I want to trust You more and more. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAIR TIME // TUESDAY, SEPT. 14

Fear doesn't always look like fear. And this is where this giant gains a buy-in from huge amounts of people. It often shows up as anxiety or nervousness or worry or stress or dread or tension or stomach problems.

- Louie Giglio



Scripture

See, God has come to save me. I will trust him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.

- Isaiah 12:2

Comments/Questions

■ Why or why not?

The opposite of fear is not courage; it is trust. And the object, or person, in which we place our trust is vitally important. We see David as the courageous warrior, but it was his trust in God that gave him the confidence to stand in the battle. It was God's victory.

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Prayer

Father God, I believe You are all-powerful and all-knowing and all-loving. You know what is deep within me. And You have the power to transform my fear into faith. I will trust You today, for You are my foundation and my strength. Help me to live in joy today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHAIR TIME // WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15

Faith (trust) is the antidote to fear. Faith is saying, "I have confidence (trust) in God that He is bigger than this giant."

- Louie Giglio



Scripture

David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's armies, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will conquer you..."

- 1 Samuel 17:45-46

Comments/Questions

In *Goliath Must Fall*, Louie Giglio gives these four steps for us to work on conquering our giants of fear:

- 1. We remind ourselves that God is able.
- 2. We set Jesus before us; we fix our minds on Him.
- 3. We name what is taunting us.
- 4. We fill our mouth with praise.
- Which of these comes easiest for you?
- Which is most difficult for you?

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Prayer

Father God, You are able to do all things. Today, I fix my mind on Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith. ______ is stealing my attention and my joy today. Give me the strength and courage to trust You in this. Where I doubt, build my faith today. In Jesus' name, Amen.



CHAIR TIME // THURSDAY, SEPT. 16

I have learned to place what I do know about God above what I don't know about the future or what I might not understand about people. And as you trust God more, and as you grow in that, even when you're feeling feelings of fear, you do know deep down that God is good, that God does good, and he's going to work all things together for good.

- Christine Caine



Scripture

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me."

- Jesus, John 14:1

Comments/Questions

Do you find that your fears and anxious thoughts are based more on the unknown than what you do know?

Lean into what you do know about God as you begin to trust Him more and

more. God, I trust You because... (make a list of why you trust Him)

Prayer

Father God, I trust You today. I will not sit in or rest in fear. I will lean into You. I will not allow what I don't know about the future to override what I do know about You. I love You Father. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // FRIDAY, SEPT. 17

Normally, our fears have to do with 'what if's'. What if this doesn't work. What if this person hates me? What if this? What if that? So you have to get to a place where you put what you do know about God above what you don't know about the future.

- Christine Caine



Scripture

But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Comments/Questions

God has promised that His loyal love and faithfulness will never run out on us. And Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead, would always be with us. You can plant yourself in that truth, and you can trust Him as you battle any giants in your life.

What characteristic or attribute of God do you need to rest in today? Write it

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Prayer

Father God, I choose to trust in You. You are my hope and my confidence. May my life be firmly planted in the truth of Your compassion and graciousness today. Amen.





GOLIATH MUST FALL // WEAK IS THE NEW STRONG.

SERMON NOTES // SUNDAY, SEPT. 19

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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // Is there anything funny (that's appropriate to share) you never confessed to your parents (or a teacher or coach) that would surprise them?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- America tends to be an image-focused culture where we do everything we can to keep up appearances. David experienced this when Saul tried to dress him in armor (1 Samuel 17:38-40). Have you experienced something similar in your own life?
- How might an overly image-conscious mindset lead to addiction or hidden habits?
- One of the first steps in overcoming an addiction or bad habit is in sharing that struggle with others. But confession is increasingly rare and difficult in our culture. Why do you think that is?
- Do you have friends/family/mentors/accountability partners that you feel you can be totally honest with? What makes that relationship a safe place to share openly and honestly?
- Two opposing desires tend to compete with an abundant life in Christ and draw us further into an addiction—withdrawing into comfort/safety or grasping for control/power. How have you seen these desires play out in your own life?
- The Apostle Paul seemed to wrestle with these competing temptations as well. As a group, read 2 Corinthians 12:8-11. How is Paul able to say that when he is weak, he is strong?
- The rituals that surround addiction can be one of the most challenging aspects of recovery. For example, someone trying to give up alcohol might have a harder time saying goodbye to drinking buddies than the alcohol itself. Brainstorm as a group a few rituals that might be able to root someone in Christ's strength and positive activities instead of an addiction.
- Is there one of these activities that would be good for you to focus on this week, even if you're not struggling with an addiction?
- Take some time to pray for one another, asking Christ to be a source of strength in the midst of our weaknesses.

CHAIR TIME // MONDAY, SEPT. 20

Whenever a problem is concealed, it finds power in the darkness. But when a problem is confessed, it loses that power. Confession brings the light of Christ to shine upon that problem.

- Louie Giglio



Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin.

– Psalm 51:1-2

Comments/Questions

Addiction is a tricky subject. The truth is, most of us are addicted to something, but we often refuse to identify it as addiction because we think we are in control. You could be addicted to approval or health pursuits (lifting weights, dieting), work or screens (video games, Netflix, Instagram), shopping or saving, porn, or substances. All of these have the same thing in common—they are giants that may start small, but often begin to rule, and ultimately destroy, our lives.

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Prayer

Father God, through Christ, You have overcome all giants, all strongholds in our lives. I need freedom over ______.

Help me trust You as I break free by the power of Your Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // TUESDAY, SEPT. 21

There is no sin too great for God's grace. There is no habit too big for His healing. There is no label too strong for His love.

- Craig Groeschel



Scripture

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me – now let me rejoice.

– Psalm 51:7-8

Comments/Questions

Confession and repentance is all about turning back to God and being honest about what He already knows. It humbles us and opens our hearts to be made new.

Is there anything you need to confess to God? If it helps, write a prayer of

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Prayer

God, purify me from my sin. I need Your power and presence to wash me clean. And give me joy as I trust You more and more. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 22

It's not food's job, alcohol's job, Amazon Prime's job, Instagram's job, or coffee's job to deliver you – not from your weariness or your loneliness, your physical ailments or emotional pain. Jesus alone is Savior – let Him save! Here's why: Every battle belongs to the Lord when we belong to the Lord!

—Wendy Speake



Scripture

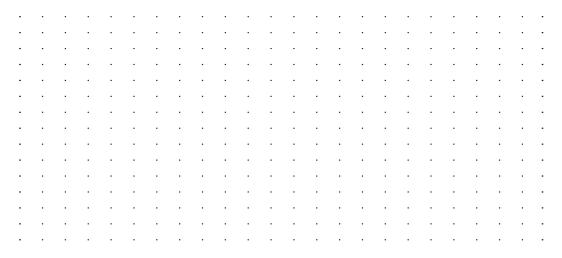
Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

- Psalm 51:10-11

Comments/Questions

This week, we're learning to be honest with God, to trust Him with the deepest, darkest part of our lives. We're opening up about the giants that are taunting and controlling us. God wants to give you a clean heart, a renewed mind, and His very Spirit.

Write out the above verse in your own words (or use David's words -
Psalm 51:10-11).



Prayer

God, You have loved me with an unfailing, loyal love. Jesus, You have saved me by Your sacrifice on the cross. Spirit, You are transforming me with Your presence and power. I need You. I yield to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // THURSDAY, SEPT. 23

No amount of self-loathing, nor an addiction to heroin, or to eating or alcohol or shopping or television or partisan politics or gossip, nor self-destructive decision making, is any match for the kindness and mercy of Christ. Christ is risen, Christ is with us, and Christ is for us.

-Ann Voskamp



Scripture

You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

- Psalm 51:16-17

Comments/Questions

Jesus has ensured us that nothing can keep us from God's love and grace. Nothing. God has removed all obstacles. He wants nothing more than His children to return to Him. Let's not allow our shame or regret to keep us from Him.

Is there anything in your life – your past or present – that you believe keeps

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Prayer

Father, I confess that sometimes I distance myself from You. I put up barriers, smoke screens, and have even flat out ignored You. I'm sorry for doing that. I want to move close to You today. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // FRIDAY, SEPT. 24

Freedom starts with honesty. We aren't doing ourselves any favors by defining ourselves as good and others as bad. Let's just agree that we all need help, that we are all in this together.

- Judah Smith



Scripture

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness.

If we've walked through this week without identifying any addictions, sins, or

- 1 John 1:8-9

Comments/Questions

harmful habits, we have not been honest with ourselves. Before we can walk in the victory God has for us, we have to name the giants in our lives. The first step is honesty with ourselves and honesty with God—where are you in this process? And the good news is that He already knows, yet loves us more than we could ever imagine.

Prayer

God, I'm sorry for ______. I need Your grace, mercy, and love today. Thank You for loving me even when I'm at my worst. You are so good. Amen.



be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.

Colossians 3:12



GOLIATH MUST FALL //

LEAN ON ME.

SERMON NOTES // SUNDAY, SEPT. 26

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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // Which TV series about relationships would you pick to watch: Friends, The Office, Seinfeld, or Cheers? Why?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- How would you describe an ideal community? Come up with a list of characteristics together.
- Read Colossians 3:12-14 together as a group. Is there anything you would add to your list after reading this?
- What are some of the roadblocks or adversities to creating the kind of community described in the passage above?
- One of the giants that will hinder us from experiencing the kind of community God wants for us is cynicism. We can become skeptical that acquaintances, our church community, friends, or even family have our best interests in mind. Have you struggled with cynicism in the past? Why or why not? Is there anything that tends to make you feel skeptical about becoming close with others?
- Read 1 Samuel 17:26-29 as a group. Can you spot the cynicism in this passage?
- Have you ever had someone write an untrue story about your motivations or actions? How did that make you feel?
- The antidote to cynicism can be learning to forgive and love and trust again in community. What should forgiveness look like in a healthy church community?
- Is there anyone God has put on your heart who you need to forgive this week or ask forgiveness?



CHAIR TIME // MONDAY, SEPT. 27

Life in community reveals who we really are. We bring our best and worst to our relationships with one another. Our sense of belonging is where we may feel the most wounded and where the gospel of Jesus offers us the greatest hope.

- Mark Scanderette



Scripture

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

- Colossians 3:12

Comments/Questions

Cynicism slowly gains a foothold in our lives, and then begins robbing us of joy. It often grows out of the pain we experience when we've trusted someone—and that trust turns to disappointment. Slowly, we begin to believe that we can't trust certain people.

- Have you found cynicism starting to find its way into your life? Cynicism isolates us over time, which keeps people at a distance.
- Do you have a small group of people you can trust with the giants in your life (addictions, sin, fears, worries, pains)? Write their names below.

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Prayer

Father God, thank You for the community You've given me in this church family. I pray that You would help us be a people full of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. In Jesus' name. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // TUESDAY, SEPT. 28

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.

- Corrie Ten Boom



Scripture

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

- Colossians 3:14

Comments/Questions

Paul is reminding these young Christians that we all need grace and space for the mistakes we will inevitably make and the pain we will cause. We don't just ignore it, but we forgive one another, which requires relational engagement and proximity.

- Is there anyone in your life you need to forgive?
- What has stopped you from forgiving them?
- Name an example of a situation where your family, or close friends, have forgiven you for a mistake or pain you've caused.

Did that forgiveness	have any effect on	you?



Prayer

Father, thank You for forgiving me. I need Your mercy and grace in my life. As I have experienced Your forgiveness, help me to extend forgiveness to those who have hurt me. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 29

We don't learn to love each other well in the easy moments. Anyone is good company at a cocktail party. But love is born when we misunderstand one another and make it right, when we cry in the kitchen, when we show up uninvited with magazines and granola bars, in an effort to say, I love you.

– Shauna Niequist



Scripture

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

- Colossians 3:4

Comments/Questions

- What are you wearing right now? Why did you pick that to wear today?
- Look up 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5:22-23. In both passages, there is a list of what love looks like. Make your own list of practical ways you could wear love this week.

■ \	What characteristic o	flove do y	ou most need	to work on	in your life?
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Prayer

Father God, bring to my mind the name of someone I need to love today. As Your Spirit nudges me, I will respond with a phone call, a text, a hug, an act of kindness, or in whatever way You lead. Mark me with the same love Jesus has. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // THURSDAY, SEPT. 30

The church is God's world-changing social experiment of bringing unlikes and differents to the table to share life with one another as a new kind of family. The church is God's show-and-tell for the world to see how God wants us to live as a family.

- Scot McKnight



Scripture

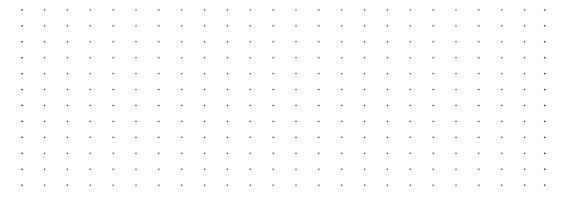
And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

- Colossians 3:15

Comments/Questions

Jesus promised us a peace that the world cannot offer. The world thinks of peace as simply the absence of conflict or war. The peace Jesus offers isn't just the absence of conflict, but one of contentment, harmony, hope, and joy. It is so much deeper and richer and relational than what the world has to offer us.

- Why do you think peace is an important component of the Christian community?
- How might you actively work for peace in your home, in your workplace, in your neighborhood, and in your community of friends?



Prayer

Father, I desire Your peace, true peace, in my life and in my relationships. Please give me the wisdom, discernment, and a gritty persistence I need in working toward peace today - wherever that may be. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // FRIDAY, OCT. 1

Spiritual formation cannot, in the nature of the case, be a 'private' thing, because it is a matter of whole-life transformation. You need to seek out others in your community who are pursuing a renovation of the heart.

- Dallas Willard



Scripture

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you might be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

- James 5:16

Comments/Questions

A wise theologian once suggested that it is possible to confess our sins to God each day, but continue to struggle with those same sins throughout our lives. However, when we confess our sins to a small group of trusted, committed, loving friends, healing can actually begin to happen. Confession leads to accountability and long-suffering with one another. It's messy, but powerful in our walk of faith.

Do you have a group of trusted, committed, loving friends who provide a
safe, sacred place for brutal honesty? If so, write their names below. If not,
contact one of your pastors about joining a group, or invite a small group of
friends to begin a journey together. Pick a book or sermon series to study, or
simply have a meal together once a week. It may take time to build the trust
and safety, but it is well worth the time invested.

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Prayer

God, You know my greatest joys and my darkest sins. And You know the areas in my life that I need the greatest healing. I ask that You help me to be honest and transparent with a trusted friend this week. Put that person on my heart and give me the courage to be honest with them. Amen.



EPHESIANS 4:26

GOLIATH MUST FALL //
GOOD FRUITS.

SERMON NOTES // SUNDAY, OCT. 3

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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // What is your favorite fruit? And your favorite fruity dessert?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- Psalm 143 is often associated with the story of David and Goliath. Read this Psalm together as a group.
- What is David's approach to dealing with the challenging situation before him?
- Do you approach your 'giants' similarly to David in Psalm 143? Why or why not?
- Is there anything that stands out to you in the way David contrasts his own spirit (verses 4 & 7) with God's Spirit (verse 10)?
- What role should prayer play in dealing with the giants we face in life? Do you find it difficult to pray when going through challenging times? Why?
- One of the most famous passages about the Spirit is in Galatians 5:16-26. Take a couple minutes to read through this passage together. What stands out to you? What does it mean to 'keep in step' or 'walk by' the Spirit?
- Which 'acts of the flesh' (verses 19-21) do you see the most of in our culture?
- Which fruit(s) of the Spirit (verses 22-23) would you most like to see growth in your own life?
- What is one way you could practice cultivating that fruit in your life this week?
- Take some time to pray for one another, asking God to help each of you walk in step with the Spirit as a means to overcoming the giants we face.



CHAIR TIME // MONDAY, OCT. 4

One thing's for sure, we live in a broken world, and that gives us plenty of reason to be angry. But being angry and allowing the giant of anger to cut the heart of joy out of our chests are two different things. Living with a smoldering fire is a sorry way to live.

- Louie Giglio



Scripture

And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

- Ephesians 4:26-27

Comments/Questions

It's interesting how anger will often take control when our buttons are pushed. All of us have experienced a moment where anger rose up from within us and took the lead in our words and actions. Some of us experience this giant on a very regular basis. For others, anger is the smoldering fire just beneath the calm exterior of our lives—we know it's there, but others only catch a glimpse once in a while.

- Where and when have you seen the giant of anger in your life?
- Can you pinpoint the initiator of that anger?

Does it come from selfish desires that others get in the way of	of? Is	it
unresolved issues from the past? Somewhere else?		

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Prayer

Father God, I want to live free from the relentless giant of anger. Whether it is unresolved issues from my past, or issues of selfishness and control in the present, or painful experiences with others who let me down, I want to let go of control and trust in Your love, Your grace, Your forgiveness, and Your plans. I trust You today. Give me peace. Amen.

CHAIR TIME // TUESDAY, OCT. 5

Whatever it is that anger and outrage are helping you accomplish, love will do a better job.

- Bruxy Cavey



I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.

- John 14:16-17

Comments/Questions

Jesus was pure, unfailing love in the flesh. And the Holy Spirit wants to lead us to live that same kind of love in our daily interactions with everyone we encounter.

- Think about the moments anger or outrage rise up in your life. What do you think that anger and outrage accomplish?
- Read the quote above from Bruxy. Do you agree with him—that love can accomplish more than anger or outrage? Why or why not?

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Prayer

Father God, thank You for promising the Holy Spirit who would never leave us. I need the Holy Spirt to guide me today. May I not only know Your love, but may I live out Your love in every encounter I have today. In Jesus' name. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // WEDNESDAY, OCT. 6

Your fruit will outlast your life. You can't always see the effects	, because
they are eternal, but one day you will.	

- Beth Moore



Scripture

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 4:6-7

Comments/Questions

The outer fruit of our lives will either feed or poison those around us. And the effects of that fruit will have impact far beyond what we see or know. When we allow unhealthy emotions to produce unhealthy fruit in our lives, there is a ripple effect that continues beyond our circles of influence.

- Write down the ongoing, unhealthy emotions that you recognize in your life.
- Write a simple, short prayer asking God to intervene when those emotions rise up within you. Then, as you begin to recognize those emotions, ask God for help.

Prayer

Father God, I know ______ (anger, jealousy, lust, etc) have incredibly damaging effects on my life and the lives of those I love the most. Would You help me to trust You more and keep my eyes focused on Jesus when I am overcome with ______? Thank You for Your promises and Your presence and Your power in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAIR TIME // THURSDAY, OCT. 7

The Holy Spirit is not only the presence of God in our lives, but He is the power of God in our lives. And God's power far outweighs any emotion or habit or weakness that has taken root in our soul.

– Matt Anderson



Scripture

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

- Galatians 5:22-23

Comments/Questions

The past few days, we've named the unhealthy emotions, or fruit, that are giants in our lives. Let's turn our attention to the fruit God wants to develop in us.

From this list in Galatians, write down two or three fruit that you need more of in your life. Then, write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit

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Prayer

Holy Spirit, I need more _______ in my life. I can't create this on my own. I need Your presence and power to grow this fruit.

Help me to recognize Your conviction and encouragement, and then help me to respond and cooperate with Your work.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAIR TIME // FRIDAY, OCT. 8

Once you know who you are and who God is, there is no telling what kind of peace you can bring to the world.

- Danielle Strickland



Scripture

You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

- James 1:19-21

Comments/Questions

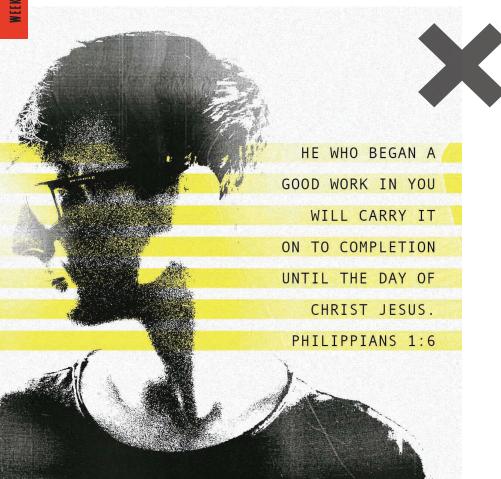
Spend a few minutes reading the above passage. Read through it as you normally would. Then, read it slowly. Notice the instructions. Notice what God has already done. Now, ask God to highlight what you need in your life during this season. Write it down.

How might you practice that in a practical way today?

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Prayer

Father God, I know anger does not produce the righteousness You desire. It often produces pain and broken relationships. You've planted Your Spirit in me. Help me to identify and cooperate with that Spirit for my own good and the good of those in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.



GOLIATH MUST FALL // THINK MARATHON (NOT A SPRINT) // RUN FOREST RUN .

SERMON NOTES // SUNDAY, OCT. 10

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"You can lift up your hands regardless of how you feel; it is a simple motor movement. You may not be able to command your heart, but you can command your arms. Lift your arms in blessing; just maybe your heart will get the message and be lifted up also in praise."

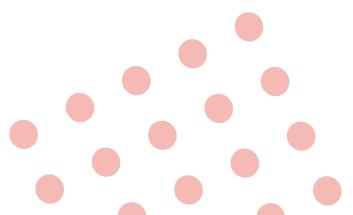
- Eugene Peterson

TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // What skill do you wish you could go back and practice from the time you were a child? (musical instrument, sport, hobby, etc)



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- What season(s) of your life have you seen the most transformation or closeness to God?
- What do you think helped create or nurture that closeness?
- Throughout this series, we've talked about trusting God, the power of community and confession, and learning to nurture good fruit in our lives. Giants begin to fall when these become foundational in our lives. Which of these areas do you feel would be most helpful for you to spend more time working through?
- Giants re-emerge when we drift back into places of temptation and disengagement. What does your plan look like to avoid drifting back toward the giants you face?
- Read Hebrews 12:1-3 together. What does this passage tell us about the sufferings or trials we go through? Is that encouraging to you? Why or why not?
- What lessons have you learned through perseverance in difficult times?
 Can you share a story where you persevered?
- Is there anything you're facing that you could use the support and encouragement from this group?
- How can you fix your eyes on Jesus this week?
- Take some time to pray for one another.



CHAIR TIME // MONDAY, OCT. 11

God is the God of right now. He doesn't want you sitting around regretting yesterday. Nor does He want you wringing your hands and worrying about the future. He wants you to focus on what He is saying to you and putting in front of you...right now.

- Priscilla Shirer



Scripture

For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

– Psalm 107:9

Comments/Questions

Think back over the journey we've been on. We've talked about trusting God, the power of community and confession, and learning to nurture good fruit in our lives. Giants begin to fall when these become foundational in our lives. Giants re-emerge when we drift back into places of temptation and disengagement. Don't give up. Continue this long obedience in the same direction.

- Write these phrases down: TRUSTING GOD || BEING HONEST || CHOOSING GOOD
- Circle which one is most difficult for you. Why is that difficult?

	What steps can	you take to	develop more	of that in your	life?
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Prayer

God, I know that You want to fill me with good things. But I also know the enemy wants to distract me, discourage me, and define me by my weaknesses. Help me to trust You more and more. Give me the courage to be honest when I'm weak and struggling. And strengthen me to do the right thing in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAIR TIME // TUESDAY, OCT. 12

There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness.

- Eugene Peterson



Scripture

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

- Philippians 1:6

Comments/Questions

In our day and age, we want change to take place instantaneously. Not many people value the long processes often necessary to bring about lasting change. But the life of faith is a journey. The good news is that we're not left alone. The same God who began this work is the same God who will not give up on you along the way. He will see it to completion.

- What can you identify in your life that has taken years to bring about? Think about skill, vocation, retirement funds, a healthy marriage, etc.
- Do you believe faith is similar—that there are compounding effects over time? Why or why not?



Prayer

Father God, You began a good work in me. And You are continuing that work, even when I might not notice it. Help me to recognize and respond to the work You are doing in me. In Jesus' name, Amen.



CHAIR TIME // WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13

Courage is not something that you already have... Courage is what you earn when you've been through the tough times and you discover they aren't so tough after all.

- Malcolm Gladwell



Scripture

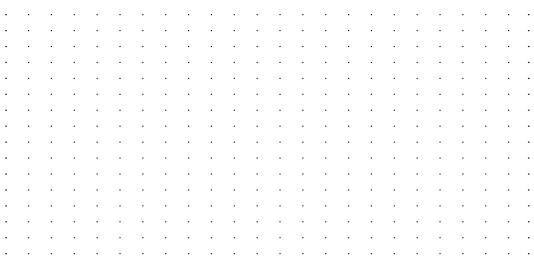
But I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

- Philippians 3:13-14

Comments/Questions

Paul isn't saying that we ignore the past and fail to learn from it. He's saying that we forget it, not allowing it to define us, so that we can look at what is before us. There's a reason the rearview mirror is only a fraction the size of the windshield in our cars.

Is there anything or anyone in your past holding you back? Name it. Write
it down. And then write a prayer asking God to help you focus on what is
before you.



Prayer

Jesus, I fix my eyes on You. I don't want to live in the past. Today, help me press on to receive all You have for me. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // THURSDAY, OCT. 14

We were not meant to carry the weight of life on our own. The church was intended to be a relational body that bears the weight of life together.

- Matt Anderson



Scripture

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

- Hebrews 12:1-2

Comments/Questions

If you've ever run a marathon, you know how important every person along the journey is. The people running alongside you keep you moving. Water is handed to you at aid stations, keeping you hydrated. The course has been marked out by someone so that you don't venture off along the way. And all along the race, people stand and cheer you on. It seems like the writer of Hebrews is painting this same picture for the faith journey we're all on.

Who are the people in your life playing the roles listed above (close friends,

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Prayer

Jesus, I am grateful for the community of people You have surrounded me with. I especially want to thank You for _____ (write someone's name). Please continue to surround me with people that inspire me in my walk with You and want the best for me. Amen.



CHAIR TIME // FRIDAY, OCT. 15

The hard work of sowing seed in what looks like perfectly empty earth has, as every farmer knows, a time of harvest. All suffering, all pain, all emptiness, all disappointment is seed: sow it in God and he will, finally, bring a crop of joy from it.

- Eugene Peterson



Scripture

When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

- James 1:2-4

Comments/Questions

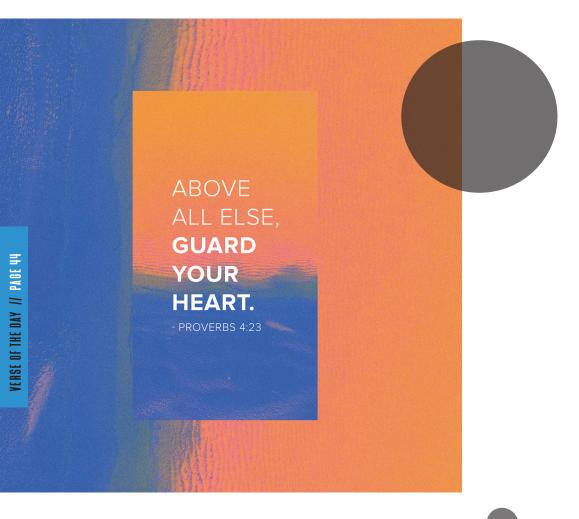
We're on a lifelong journey, not a short-term sprint. We need endurance and perseverance to sustain victory over the giants in our lives.

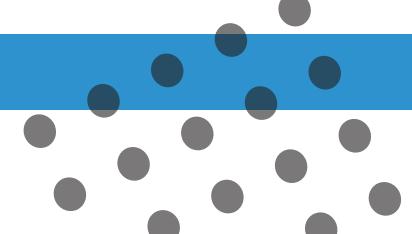
- Is there anything in your life that feels as though it will be a lifelong battle?
 Write it down
- Have you shared it with anyone? Asked anyone to hold you accountable?
- If so, who? If not, write the name of someone you could talk with about it. (spouse, close friend, counselor, etc)

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Prayer

Father, help me to be patient and steadfast in my walk with You. Some days are easier than others, but I know that You are good, that You love me, and that You will use every season of my life to bring about good, Kingdom fruit. May You direct my steps as I continue to lean into You. Amen.





SERMON NOTES // SUNDAY, OCT. 17

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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // Name a book that left a lasting impact on you (fiction or non-fiction). What was it that you loved about the book?



- Flip through the next 5 days' devotionals if you haven't already. Which one of these daily verses most grabs your attention? Why?
- The writer of Hebrews tells us that scripture is actually 'living and active' (Heb. 4:12). What does that mean? Have you found that to be true in your own life?
- Do you have any resources for reading and understanding the Bible that have helped you?
- If you're willing, share something God has been teaching you or doing in your life over the past few months. It could be related to marriage or parenting or work or spiritual formation or just life in general.
- Have you done anything fun as a group this season? If not, is there something you could plan to do in the next week or two?
- Spend some time in prayer for one another.



Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
- Proverbs 4:23

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The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

- 2 Peter 3:9

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And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hand.

- Isaiah 64:8

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Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

- Psalm 23:6

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Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal.

- Matthew 6:19

Comments/Questions —																					
TREASURES ON EARTH																					
■ What are some examples of earthly treasures? What earthly treasures															;						
tend to grab your attention the most?																					
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LOVING LIFE FEELING GREAT DOING GOOD

IT'S COMPLICATED

MEH FALLING APART END OF MY ROPE



WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE YOU ARE



TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // What is something you wish you could go back and tell a younger version of yourself? How might that have changed the trajectory of your life?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- Why do you think self-awareness is an important element of spiritual growth?
- Have you ever used personality/self-awareness tools to find more out about yourself (like the Enneagram, Myers-Briggs, DISC Assessment, SHAPE)? Share with the group which tools you've used, and what they have said about your unique wiring.
- How have those tools helped you in your personal and spiritual development?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-12 together. Did anything stand out to you? How does it say these different gifts are provided? And why are they given (verse 7)?
- What are some gifts or talents you've witnessed from others that have inspired you in your walk with Christ or drawn you closer to Him?
- Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 together. Paul seems to think our experiences are never wasted—but rather a gift that can be used to help others. Have you found this to be true? Can you share any examples?
- Is there something you've recently gone through, or are currently going through, that you feel God wants to use to comfort or encourage others?
- Take some time to pray for each other, thanking God for the many gifts, talents, and potential you see in one another.



This week, we're digging into self-awareness. Each day, we spend a few minutes with a resource designed to help us better understand how we're wired. Here's where we're headed:

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

- 1. The Enneagram
- 2. Myers-Briggs
- 3. Spiritual Gifts
- 4. Personal Reflection
- 5. SHAPE

Recommended Reading

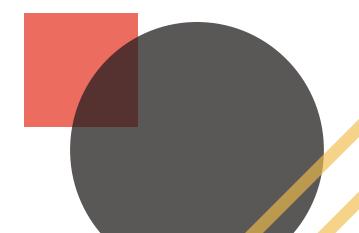
The Road Back to You: An Enneagram Journey to Self-Discovery - Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile

S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life

- Frik Rees

A Million Miles in a Thousand Years: How I Learned to Live a Better Story

- Donald Miller



You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

- Psalm 139:13-14

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

1. The Enneagram

_Comments/Questions

The Enneagram is a unique tool to help us understand basic personality types based on our core fears and desires. It can be a helpful way to describe why we think, feel, and behave in the ways that we do.

• Circle your type (if you already know it), or circle 3 that you relate to.



If you've never looked at the Enneagram, explore some of these resources: Read - The Road Back to You by Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile. A book written from a Christian perspective that might help you dig into the Enneagram and self-awareness.

Explore - www.enneagraminstitute.com

Listen – *That Sounds Fun*, a podcast by Annie F. Downs.

Follow - @yourenneagramcoach on Instagram

The true purpose of the Enneagram is to reveal to you your shadow side and offer spiritual counsel on how to open it to the transformative light of grace.

– lan Crohn

ENNEAGRAM TYPES



PERFECTIONIST: Known for being a little hard on themselves, these people bring a lot of order to our everyday life. They find ways to improve, not only themselves, but the world around them. Acts of service tend to go a long way for ones.



HELPER: Motivated by a desire to genuinely help and serve other people, love is the language of a two. Very intuitive and empathetic, they will always be thinking of you. They don't tend to ask for help, so be sure to help them out whenever you see an opportunity.



ACHIEVER: These are high achievers, which comes from a desire to live up to expectations of others, and those they set for themselves. While they tend to crave your approval and appreciation, they also need to hear often they're more than the sum of their accomplishments.



INDIVIDUALIST: Creative and authentic, they cultivate beauty and meaning in all aspects of life. They long to be accepted and have a desire to be known for their uniqueness, but they also want to get to know the real you.



INVESTIGATOR: The deep thinkers. They have a voracious appetite for knowledge and precision. But this is often rooted in a desire to feel competent and in control. Fives might not bring much emotion, but they really value you and crave clear expectations and boundaries.



LOYALIST: Sixes are motivated by feeling safe and secure. Constantly mitigating risk by thinking through all the potential scenarios and outcomes. Very loyal and eager to protect the people they love, but deep down they need the support and patience of their posse.



ENTHUSIAST: Life of the party. Adventurous dreamers. Preferring to live in a free and unencumbered environment, they welcome daily interruptions. While bringing endless energy and joy, it could be rooted in wanting to escape the realities and challenges of life.



CHALLENGER: Strong, reliable, and brave, they're always up for a challenge. Motivated by autonomy, self-reliance and control, they consistently come to the rescue of the underdog. They never want to appear weak or unprepared. They work hard and expect the same from you.



PEACEMAKER: Compassionate and caring, they make great friends and mediators. They are inclined to maintain internal peace and stability, which can translate to a desire to avoid conflict. Nines don't want to stand out in the crowd, but their insights should be taken seriously.

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

- Psalm 139:14

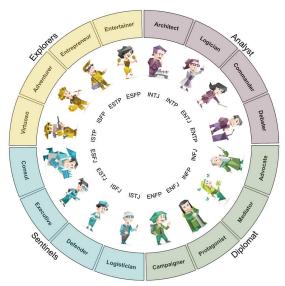
5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

2. Myers-Briggs

- Comments/Questions

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is another personality tool to help us understand how we're wired. Not an excuse for behaviors, the MBTI is intended to help us better know ourselves, relate to others, and make better decisions in life. *16personalities.com* – This site uses the MBTI to define the 16 personality types and gives a wide range of tools that speak to relationships, work, parenting, and careers.

Circle one of each pair on the next page that you most relate to. Look at 16personalities.com and find your descriptor. What did you find interesting about that descriptor? What did you disagree with?



16personalities.com

Knowing yourself – knowing your type – isn't enough, because the knowledge isn't enough to set us free. We are still a people in need of a Savior, no matter which four letters the Myers-Briggs test assigns us.

– Erin Straza

MYERS BRIGGS DICHOTOMY

Where do we get our ENERGY?

EXTRAVERSION INTROVERSION

Introverts: They are energized by spending time alone or with a small group of people. They tend to be independent and reflective, and have deep friendships with a few people.

Extraverts: They are energized by spending time with larger groups of people or in exciting, active environments. They are often described as a "people person" and have a large range of friends.

How do we take in INFORMATION?

SENSING INTUITION

Sensing: They focus on their five senses and are interested in information they can directly see, feel, hear, taste, and smell. They are often hands-on learners and use facts to form a bigger picture. They tend to be described as "practical" and concerned with the present.

Intuition: They focus in a more abstract way of thinking and tend to be more interested in possibilities, theories, patterns, and explanations. They're often open to new or different ideas and more concerned with the future. Often described as "creative."

How do we make DECISIONS?

THINKING FEELING

Thinking: They tend to make decisions with their heads. They're interested in finding the most logical and reasonable choice and tend to enjoy more scientific or technical fields.

Feeling: They tend to make decisions with their hearts. They're interested in how a decision will affect people, and whether it fits with their values. They often choose tact over logic.

How do we organize our WORLD?

JUDGING PERCEIVING

Judging: They appreciate structure and order. They like things planned, and do not like last-minute changes. Tend to enjoy making lists and accomplishing tasks before relaxing.

Perceiving: They appreciate flexibility and spontaneity. They like to leave things open and can often change their minds. Tend to work in short bursts and intermix work and play.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

- 1 Peter 4:10

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

3. Spiritual Gifts

Comments/Questions

Those who follow Jesus are given spiritual gifts, or divine empowerment by the Spirit, to serve and love others. You have been given a gift (or more than one), that God wants to use to expand His Kingdom and help the people around you.

Do you know your spiritual gift(s)? If so, write it below and some ways God might be using that unique gift to bless/equip others for Christ.

If you don't yet know your spiritual gifts, you can take a free test here: gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey and/or set up a time with one of your pastors to explore your gifts and how they might be used to serve others.

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions



Leadership is stewardship—the cultivation of resources for God... Christian leaders faithfully steward the gifts they receive from the Holy Spirit, and they help those they lead to do the same.

- Timothy Keller

God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

- 2 Corinthians 1:34

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

4. Personal Reflection

Comments/Questions

Each of us is shaped by the people and experiences we encounter in life, but we don't always take time to think about how those moments are influencing who we become.

Write down the names of 3-5 people who had the most influence in your life. Write down 3-5 major life events that have impacted who you are today. What effect do you think those people and experiences had on you, your relationships, your journey, your vocation, etc?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions



Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

- Ephesians 2:10

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

5. SHAPE

Comments/Questions -

In his best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Pastor Rick Warren popularized the acrostic S.H.A.P.E. (spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences) for how God has intentionally and uniquely created you and me to bless others and bring glory to Him. You are not an accident. You are a masterpiece, created in the image of God on purpose and for a purpose. Take a few minutes to consider what you may have learned about yourself this week or what might continue to help you discern your God-given SHAPE:

- What is your Spiritual gift(s)?
- What are 1-2 needs you see in our world your Heart is most drawn to?
- What are a few Abilities or skills you have picked up over time?
- What does your Personality (MBTI/Enneagram/etc.) tell you about the kind of environment or activities you're best suited for?
- What is an Experience you have faced that God may want to use to encourage others?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions

You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense.

- Rick Warren

A DIGITAL DIVIDE



- Notes / Thoughts / Scribbles / Questions ————————————————————————————————————																					
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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // If you could invent an app or some type of technology, what would you create? How would it help people?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- What are some good uses of digital platforms? What are harmful uses of digital platforms?
- Can you share any examples of where a technology or device has been more divisive and destructive than good? How so?
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:12 together as a group. What is Paul trying to say in this passage?
- Have you ever felt mastered by technology or a device?
- Why do you think technology or social media can be so addictive?
- Do you have a regular rhythm of using and resting from your device? What is it? Why do you feel that's helpful?
- What sorts of things do you fill your time with when you take a rest from the digital world? Do those things help bring rest to your soul? Why or why not?
- How might a device distract us from being present with other people in our everyday, ordinary lives? Do you have any tips for combatting the temptation to be distracted by a device when at dinner, at a meeting, spending time with others, etc?
- Share with the group one tweak or change to your weakly digital use you would like to make. How can you put that into practice this week?
- Spend a few moments in prayer together as a group.



You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything.

- 1 Corinthians 6:12

5 TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL

1. Own It. Don't Let It Own You

Comments/Questions

We will either control our devices and media, or we will be controlled by them. In fact, a lot of money is spent by large companies to capture our attention, influence our decisions, and control our lives.

Most devices track how much time is spent using them each day. If your device does this, find and write down how much time, on average, you spend using the device each day.

- What are the most used apps?
- Do you feel like you're in control of your device or does it 'own' you? Why?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." - Jesus, Matthew 5:9

5 TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

2. Make Peace, Not War

Comments/Ouestions

The digital world tends to be a place of harsh division. Algorithms are created to feed us more of what we believe is true, which in turn causes us to dismiss those who may have a different perspective. When given the choice of better or worse, choose better. And rather than posting/sharing harsh, judgmental statements, use questions to spark conversation.

- Do you find yourself using digital platforms to make or share strong statements? If so, has this ever caused division between you and family members, friends, and colleagues?
- What do you think are the best uses of digital platforms?
- What are the ways it has become more divisive in our culture?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions



Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. - Romans 12:15

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

3. Develop Compassion & Empathy

Comments/Ouestions

Technology has provided us with seemingly endless amounts of knowledge, content, and information. With a swipe of the finger, we now see more images and news headlines than any prior generation. But the overexposure to anything can desensitize us. Our virtual world has the potential to numb us to things in the real world. We can be over-exposed to graphic violence or sexuality. We can overlook significant needs that exist in the hurting world because it is 'just another headline.' We ignore people who are using social media to call out for help with depression, loneliness, or mental illness.

- Ask God to bring to mind a major event, issue or need you may have swiped past or overlooked recently.
- How can you be compassionate or empathetic toward that person or issue today?



"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

- Jesus, Matthew 11:28-29

5 TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

4. Demand Rest

Comments/Questions

The internet never stops. At any point in time, you can jump onto the hyperspeed of a world that doesn't sleep. For many of us this creates a gravitational pull of staying plugged in to a device at all times—a fear we might be missing out, a desire to keep up with the pace or stay 'connected.' But moderation is key to having a healthy relationship with technology. Our brains require rest. Maybe you need to create a rhythm to put your technology to 'bed' at a certain time each day and wake up before it does. Andy Crouch, in *The Tech-Wise Family*, says that he and his family implemented a rule to pause from devices for 1 hour/day, 1 day/week, and 1 week/year.

- Do you have a healthy rhythm with your device?
- What rhythm of resting from the digital world do you need to create in your life?
- And when your device is off, what is something you can do that brings rest to your mind/heart/soul?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions



EK 2 // PAGE 72

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity...

- Ephesians 5:15-16

5 TOOLS FOR DEEPER SELF-AWARENESS

5. Choose Presence Over Distraction

Comments/Questions

A new sensation began a few years ago with the creation of mobile phones: phantom vibration syndrome. It's when you think your phone is buzzing when it's not. Has this happened to you? Experts think it's caused by an overdependence on our phones especially when we've become used to someone trying to reach us all times of the day. It leads to a fear of not having our phones handy. But it also leads many to be borderline obsessive about checking their phones and getting distracted when in face-to-face conversations. If people are in the room, we should be present with them. Maybe that means you leave your phone in the car during the lunch meeting or have everyone at the table place their device in a certain spot until the meal is finished. Show the people around you they're important.

- Have you ever felt like someone was more interested in their device than you?
- How did that make you feel?
- What can you do to minimize the distraction of your phone when having a conversation, around the dinner table, in a meeting, etc.?



5 TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL WORLD

- 1. Own It. Don't Let It Own You
- 2. Make Peace, Not War
- 3. Develop Compassion and Empathy
- 4. Demand Rest
- 5. Choose Presence Over Distration

Recommended Reading

The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place - Andy Crouch

Every Parent's Guide to Navigating Our Digital World

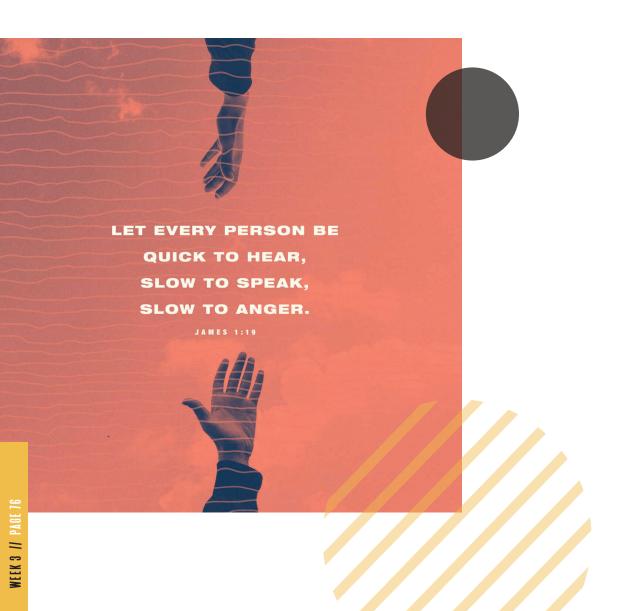
- Kara Powell, Art Bamford, Brad M. Griffin

Before You Hit Send: Preventing Headache and Heartache

- Dr. Emerson Eggerichs



HAPPILY EVER AFTER



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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // Which sport would you say best describes your marriage: boxing, volleyball, basketball, tennis, football, golf, or soccer? Why?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- How might you describe the concept of marriage to someone from another culture who had never heard of it before?
- When do you feel the most spiritual intimacy with your spouse? In what ways do you find it most difficult to grow together spiritually with your spouse?
- Read Ephesians 5:21-33 together as a group. What stands out to you in this passage?
- What does it look like for a couple to love and serve one another the way Christ does the church?
- In the devotionals this week, we talk about five commitments to build a better marriage. Why is 'commitment' such an important word in a healthy relationship?
- Which of the five commitments (seek God, fight fair, have fun, serve first, find friends) would you most like to work on in your marriage? Why?
- What does it look like to 'fight fair' in a healthy marriage?
- What is something you can do this week to start working toward the commitment you chose above with your spouse?
- Spend some time in prayer for one another.



Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. - Colossians 4:2

5 COMMITMENTS TO BUILD A BETTER MARRIAGE

1.	Seek	God	(Pray	Together)
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Comments/Questions

There are many ways for a married couple to seek God together, but the one that could be the most impactful is simply praying together. For some reason, many of us find it incredibly difficult to pray with our spouses. It seems intimidating and too private. But the compounding impact over the years is worth the early anxiety. Craig and Amy Groeschel give these three tips:

- Keep it short.
- 2. Keep it consistent.
- 3. If you miss a day, don't miss two.

If you've never prayed together, start simple. Ask one another if there is anything they want you to pray for. Then pray like this: God, thank you for today. I pray that you would be with _____ as they have a busy day ahead with _____. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

- James 1:19

5 COMMITMENTS TO BUILD A BETTER MARRIAGE

2. Fight Fair

Comments/Ouestions

All married couples fight. You can't live with someone for any length of time before conflict arises. It's natural. How we fight is incredibly important. Many of us can recall a fight we had that quickly escalated, and led us down a path that was in no way related to the original fight. We get defensive and dig in our heels. We say things we wish we could take back. Craig Groeschel writes that "Healthy couples fight for resolution. Unhealthy couples fight for personal victory." Humility. True forgiveness. When we embody these two characteristics, we begin to fight fair, and fight for resolution.

- On a scale of 1-5 (1 = we fight dirty // 5 = we fight fair), where would you place your marriage fights? Why?
- How might you commit to humility the next time there is conflict in your marriage?

Seize life! Eat bread with gusto, Drink wine with a robust heart. Oh yes -God takes pleasure in your pleasure! Dress festively every morning... Relish life with the spouse you love each and every day of your precarious life. Each day is God's gift.

- Ecclesiastes 9:7-9 (MSG)

5 COMMITMENTS TO BUILD A BETTER MARRIAGE

3. Have Fun

Comments/Ouestions

Anything we do regularly has the potential for being taken for granted. Eating, exercising, spending time with God. And marriage can unfortunately follow the same pattern. We can get stuck in ruts that leave us feeling disconnected or more like roommates than in a marriage. We can forget to have fun, to laugh, to continue dating one another. We can forget to simply enjoy the person we fell in love with and the importance of finding fun things to do together.

- When was the last time you and your spouse had a fun outing? What made it special?
- What can you do today and/or this week to foster a joyful connection with your spouse?

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her.

- Ephesians 5:21-22; 25

5 COMMITMENTS TO BUILD A BETTER MARRIAGE

4. Serve First

Comments/Questions

There's a saying in sports: "Don't get caught flat-footed." It happens when you relax a little too much or drop your attention on what's going on around you. This can happen in a marriage, too. We tend to wait to be served and loved by the other person instead of initiating it ourselves. Many of us sit back and wait, rather than creating opportunities to serve, care for, and meet the needs of our spouse. Jesus modeled the importance of serving and loving first. He even says that He didn't come into the world to be served, but to serve and give up His life for others (Matt. 20:28).

- How have you been caught 'flat-footed' in your marriage?
- What can you do to serve or care for your spouse today?



And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- Hebrews 10:24-25

5 COMMITMENTS TO BUILD A BETTER MARRIAGE

5. Find Friends

Comments/Questions

We were never meant to do life alone. God created us to be in community—yes, with our spouse—but also with friends. It's important to be surrounded by people who we enjoy spending time with as a couple. Friends that will walk with us through the joys of life, who will be there in the challenges, and who can inspire us in our relationship with Christ. But it takes a lot of commitment to create and maintain that kind of community.

- Who are those friends for you? If you feel like you're still searching for those friends, take some time today to pray for that kind of community. Start by reaching out to a someone today—thank them for being your friend and showing up for you.
- A next step is to schedule a time for you and your spouse to hang out with another couple this week.
 And if you're not in a small group, talk to your spouse about joining or starting one with friends.

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions

WEFK 3 // PARE 83

5 COMMITMENTS TO BUILD A BETTER MARRIAGE

- Seek God
- 2. Fight Fair
- 3. Have Fun
- 4. Serve First
- 5. Find Friends

Recommended Reading

From This Day Forward

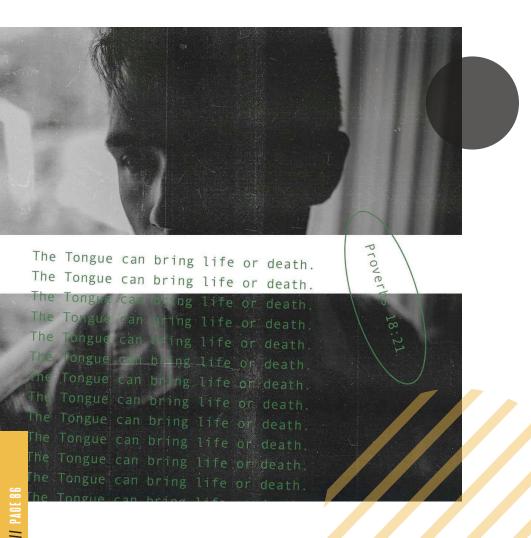
- Craig & Amy Groeschel

Sacred Marriage

- Gary Thomas



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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // What's your favorite Christmas or Thanksgiving family tradition you had growing up?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- What is the best piece of wisdom on parenting you have learned? How has that helped you parent or interact with kids/grandkids?
- Read Luke 14:28-33 together as a group. This passage is about being a follower of Jesus. But how might this passage also apply to the parenting journey?
- What does a 'good foundation' look like in parenting?
- Is this something you have seen modeled well by someone in your life?
- Building a foundation of thankfulness, compassion, and humility can be difficult with kids. How are you working toward building those principles into your children?
- Another big piece of parenting is being present and available when kids need to talk about things, or when they simply want to you to be available. What are some ways you can work on being in proximity, and/or present and available to your kids in the coming week?
- What are some ways we can be praying for you and your parenting journey this week?





Train up a child in the way they should go and when they are old, they will not depart from it.

- Proverbs 22:6

5 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY PARENTING

1. Build a Foundation

Comments/Questions

No matter where you are on the parenting journey, you can build a stronger foundation for your kids with these three things:

- 1. Pray for each of your children daily, by name.
- 2. Model the behavior the priorities, the words, the actions you hope they will display.
- 3. Commit to faith formation in your family. If your kids are still at home, make gathering with a body of believers at a local church a weekly priority. If your kids are out of the house, talk with them about how your faith is growing on a regular basis and ask guestions about their faith.
- Which of these jumps out to you the most?
- How could you work on that in your family this week?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions

EEK 4 // PARE 89

Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit - you decide.

Proverbs 18:21

5 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY PARENTING

2. Choose Words Carefully.

Comments/Questions

There was a day when we owned cassette tapes that were recordable. If you wanted to listen to a song over and over, and didn't want to purchase the entire album, you listened to the radio until the song came on. Then you hit 'record' on your trusty cassette player. That terrible recording was now yours to listen to until your heart was content (or until the tape wore out). Our minds are almost like cassette tapes in that they record words that are spoken to us throughout life. Some of the most influential words are spoken to us, or about us, or over us from our earliest days. The words you speak to your children could become the soundtrack they replay over the rest of their lives.

- What kind of words would you want them to remember? (Write some of those phrases below.)
- Will you choose to speak those words to them on a regular basis?



Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.

- Philippians 2:3

5 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY PARENTING

3. Widen Perspectives.

Comments/Questions

"This might be the world you always see, but it's not the world everyone experiences in their lives." We've often said things like this to our kids. So many of us live in a part of the world that is insulated from some of the poverty and pain, the scarcity and sickness that is found all over the globe. It's important that we, as parents, create an attitude of thanksgiving for what we experience, a heart of generosity in sharing what we have, and an eye to see what and who God sees. One of the ways to do that is to pray together at meals, thanking God for His provision and goodness. And one of the foundational things we can do for our kids as Christians is engage in a regular position of servanthood.

- When was the last time your family thanked God for His provision?
- When was the last time you served together in your church or your community? Find an opportunity to serve together in or around your church community in the next month.

Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

- Colossians 4:6

5 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY PARENTING

4. Normalize Conversations

Comments/Questions -

Talking with your kids is the best way to connect with them and create the trust needed when difficult conversations arise. In research from Fuller, a common habit among healthy families was prioritizing time for regular conversation. Until your kids turn 16, there are 3 or 4 times that could serve as the most important conversational times in your family: in the kitchen, in the car, around the dinner table, and just before bed. After your kids turn 16, we must get creative in finding time for regular conversation. In those later years, it's often the most inconvenient times that youth want to talk (think of the hours between 10pm and midnight). However you're able to build a regular time for conversation, know that you are laying the groundwork for the more difficult and incredibly important conversations that will inevitably come.

- Does your family have 3-5 nights together around a dinner table?
- If so, do you find that good conversation often emerges? If not, why not?
- What other times do you find are good for conversation with your kids?

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

- Colossians 3:14

5 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY PARENTING

5. Increase Proximity

Comments/Questions

Let's pile on to yesterday's content. Conversations are incredibly important. And more often than not, conversations are born out of proximity. The more you are together, the more opportunity for lifegiving and transformational conversations. One of the words used when describing healthy families is 'withing'. Healthy families find a rhythm to being together. While this is much easier to do when kids are young, it is not impossible as kids grow into their teenage years. As parents, we set the expectations in our homes. Dinner around the table might be the best way for your family to be together for a set time each day. And eating at home (don't worry if you don't like to cook - takeout counts) removes many of the distractions when we're in a restaurant or on the go. When we set the expectations when our kids are young, the rhythm will remain. And proximity will lead to conversation, which will build lifelong bonds and influence.

- What are a few of your family's greatest memories together? A vacation? A road-trip? Game night? Movies?
- How can you prioritize proximity in the stage you're currently in?

5 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY PARENTING

- 1. Build a Foundation
- 2. Choose Words Carefully
- 3. Widen Perspectives
- 4. Normalize Conversations
- 5. Increase Proximity

Recommended Reading

Parenting Beyond Your Capacity

- Reggie Joiner and Carey Nieuwhof

Growing With: Every Parent's Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in Their Faith, Family, and Future

- Kara Powell and Steven Argue



OA'S



- Notes / Thoughts / Scribbles / Questions ————————————————————————————————————																					
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TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Icebreaker // Which TV, film, or book character do you most wish you could be friends with in real life? Why?



- What is something from this week's sermon that stood out to you?
- Our world is more relationally 'connected' (via internet, technology, devices, travel, etc.) than any generation before. What are some benefits to that kind of connectivity?
- What are some challenges, or negatives, to that kind of connectivity?
- Throughout the New Testament, the phrase "one another" is used frequently for how followers of Jesus are called to treat each other. Here are some examples: submit to one another, forgive one another, encourage one another, love one another, be kind and compassionate to one another, restore one another, accept one another, care for one another, bear one another's burdens. Which of these do you find most difficult for you to practice? Why?
- Which of these, when you either practice it or receive it, brings you the most joy and fulfillment?
- Do you think Christians, or those inside the church, are known in a positive way for how they *one-another* one another? Why or why not?
- What are two or three ways you can show some one-another kindness and love to your family, friends, neighbors, and/or those in your community this week?
- Take some time to pray for one another.



So encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:11

5 OA'S TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY

1. Encourage One Another

Comments/Ouestions

To reach our full potential as followers of Jesus, we need a community around us that can encourage us. Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes a healthy person as not just having a sense of belonging to community, but someone who is regularly encouraged, supported, and given confidence from the people in that community. In doing so, we're helping them become the healthiest version of who God created them to be.

- Who has encouraged you lately?
- What did they say?
- Text or call at least 2 people today to encourage them.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- Colossians 4:6

5 OA'S TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY

2. Bear One Another's Burdens

Comments/Questions

Navy SEALs have rigorous training and exercises. One of those tests is called Log PT, where a group of cadets must lift a heavy log for an extended period. It's much harder than it sounds, and if the team doesn't work together, it can be excruciatingly painful. When Paul tells us to bear one another's burdens, I imagine him saying something similar. The weight of life can be excruciating on our own, but together we can make it through any challenge.

- Who is someone in your life who could use some help or has been going through a difficult time?
- What is something you could do today to help lift some of the burden they're carrying?

Prayer - People / Circumstances / Thanksgiving / Questions

1 PARE 100

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

- James 5:16

5 OA'S TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY

3. Pray For One Another

Comments/Questions

If we believe that God loves us and hears us, then we should also conclude that prayer is one of the most important and practical things we can do for others. Unfortunately, many of us are guilty of telling someone we'll be praying for them and then forget or get distracted.

- Today, commit to pray for 2 people (friends / neighbors) / classmates / coworkers). Write their name down.
- Ready for the next step? Send a handwritten note letting them know you're praying for them. This is a great way to give them some encouragement too (remember the OA from Monday?).

Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

- Ephesians 4:32

5 OA'S TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY

4. Forgive One Another

Comments/Questions

When we talk about community, we tend to share how lovey-dovey it is and all the benefits that come with it. And we tend to gloss over the fact that community can be really hard—and messy. No matter what kind of community we're in, we are going to need forgiveness. We might accidentally bump into someone carrying coffee or step on toes just walking down the street. But we're also capable of saying something intentionally painful to someone that lingers for years. The good news is that we have a God who loves us and is willing to forgive and restore us. The challenging thing is that He calls us to do the same for others.

- Are you holding any grudges? Angry at anyone?
- How could you take a step to forgive them, or work towards reconciling the relationship today?
- Will you do it?

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So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another.

- John 13:34

5 OA'S TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY

5. Love One Another

Comments/Questions

True love is a verb. It requires loving action. You can't really love someone without showing love toward them. That's why Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us is remarkable. It's God's tangible evidence that He loves us. It shows us the extent He was willing to go to prove His love - standing in our place. He didn't just say that He loved us, He showed it. Maybe for you, a small act of love could make all the difference today—like purchasing flowers for someone or offering to buy their dinner, or even just sending a text of encouragement.

What is something practical you could do to love someone in your sphere of influence today? Give a gift? Write a note? Call? Don't get stuck in just thinking about it, come up with a plan and make it happen. Even small acts of love can make an enormous impact.

5 OA'S TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY

5 OA's to Practice Every Day

- 1. Encourage One Another
- 2. Bear One Another's Burdens
- 3. Pray for One Another
- 4. Forgive One Another
- 5. Love One Another

Recommended Reading

Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love

- Mark Scandrette

Forgiving As We've Been Forgiven: Community Practices for Making Peace

- L. Gregory Jones & Célestin Musekura

