

Small Group Guide



Icebreaker

Question: What's the most memorable Super Bowl party or community gathering you've attended? What made it special?

Key Sermon Points

1. **Culture Shapes Us** - We are constantly being influenced by the world around us, particularly American individualism
2. **Created for Community** - God designed us for relationship, not isolation
3. **In Christ vs. In the Flesh** - Paul contrasts two ways of living throughout his letters
4. **The Local Church Matters** - Spiritual growth happens best in community, not isolation
5. **Environment Affects Growth** - Like a goldfish, we grow according to our environment

Discussion Questions

Understanding Cultural Influence

Q1: The sermon mentioned that billions of dollars are spent on advertising because "it works." How have you noticed culture shaping your desires, priorities, or beliefs?

Q2: American culture celebrates independence and self-reliance. How does this cultural value conflict with biblical teaching about community? Where do you see this tension in your own life?

Q3: Read Ephesians 2:1-5. What does it mean that we were "dead" in our sins? How does this challenge the idea that we can "fix ourselves"?

Life in Christ

Q4: Paul frequently uses the phrase "in Christ" throughout his letters. Based on the sermon, what do you think it means to live "in Christ" rather than "in the flesh"?

Q5: Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Paul urges believers to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received." What specific behaviors does he highlight as essential for community life?

Q6: The sermon states, "Christ is magnified and God is glorified" when diverse people come together under Christ's authority. Have you witnessed this in your own church experience? Share an example.

The Power of Connection

Q7: JD shared his personal journey from having zero friends at church in 2017 to now seeing the church as his family. What resonated with you about his story?

Q8: The sermon used the goldfish analogy—a goldfish grows small in a bowl but large in a pond. How does this illustrate spiritual growth in community versus isolation?

Q9: What fears or obstacles keep people (maybe even you) from connecting more deeply in the church community? How can we address these barriers?

Q10: JD mentioned that "at some point, the next step is yours to take." What small step could you take this week to deepen your connection with others in the church?