



FOUNDATIONS
of FAITH
Bible Study

Part 4 - Family Members

In Christ you are brought into a new family
with new benefits and responsibilities.

Introduction to the Foundations Bible Study

The Foundations of Faith Bible study walks through key Scripture passages that explain the foundational question of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. The intent is to answer this important question in a way that gets people engaging first hand with the Bible so they can understand the beliefs and practices that flow from it.

Foundations encourage people to explore the Bible in simple, honest, and engaging manner. You don't need prior knowledge or firm beliefs to participate—just a willingness to explore, ask honest questions, and consider what you encounter. At the same time these are not just beginner steps—they are lifelong rhythms. The most mature followers of Jesus don't move beyond them; they return to them again and again, going deeper over time.

Foundations has six parts that are arranged based on six identities of a Christian as a: Worshipper, Follower, Steward, Family Member, Helper and Witness. Each part consists of multiple Bible readings that develop and explain that identity, and each lesson focuses on one passage so that passage can be thoroughly understood before building on it.

The Foundations study will provide some key components for your journey:

- **The Scripture passage.** This is the passage the lesson will focus on and we recommend reading it a few times. Most Bibles have a table of contents at the beginning in which you can find the books of the Old and New Testament. The first number is the chapter and the second number after the colon is the verse number.
- **Guide to the Word.** This provides background and insight into the Scripture passage to help uncover its meaning and significance. Questions are also provided to help guide your understanding of the passage and important details.
- **Guide to Response.** Offers thoughtful prompts to reflect on how the passage speaks into real life—beliefs, decisions, relationships, and priorities of today.
- **Guide to the Lesson.** This equips group facilitators with practical suggestions for leading discussions, fostering openness, and navigating common challenges.
- **Discovery Group Questions.** These questions are part of our Discovery Bible Studies and are good questions to work through for each passage.

We encourage people to go through the Foundations study with other believers and a group leader so they can learn from others and experience Christian community. Many people will begin the course on their own and independent of a group. If you start on your own we would love to know and support you and would be glad to connect you with a group at any point.

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Overview of Journey 4 - Family Members

Mantra: In Christ you are brought into a new family with new benefits and responsibilities.

Key Passage: “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph 2:18-19).

Beginning Journey Questions: Answer questions 1-4 below at the beginning of the journey, and review your answers at the end and answer number 5.

1. What does it mean to be a family member of God’s household?

2. What is the family of God?

3. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate yourself as a family member?

4. What do you hope to learn in this journey?

5. After completing this journey, what stood out to you the most in this journey?

Key Points of the Journey

- Church is God’s Plan A for changing the world.
- Commitment to Jesus leads to a commitment to his people.
- In the church believers share many benefits and responsibilities.
- Church is essential, not optional, to following Jesus.

Lesson 1: Ephesians 2:11-22 - A New People

A. Guide to the Word

The book of Ephesians begins with one of the most wonderful and amazing sentences of what God has done for his people. He has “blessed them in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:3). Chapter 2 begins with an incredible explanation of the gospel, that people were dead in their sins and transgressions (v1) but have now been made alive through Christ (v4), and it is all a gift of God. Ephesians 2:11 builds on these with a teaching on the church, the gathered community of God’s people. This new community is the focus of this lesson and journey.

The Ephesian church consisted of Jewish and Gentile people from various backgrounds. The Jewish people regarded all other nations as pagans and outside the promises of God. God’s promises were first given to Israel, and circumcision was the main sign for that community. To be uncircumcised was to be outside the community of God’s people, and even more outside his law, his kingdom, and his promises—that is effectively without God and without hope. But in Christ Jesus those who were alienated and cut off are being brought in. Walls of hostility and separation are demolished and peace is established. Jews would not even eat with Gentiles (John 4, Gal 2), but now they are considered brothers and sisters in Christ and of the same family! Gentiles were “far” and Jews were “near,” but both needed the blood of Jesus to cover them. God is creating a new people not based on ethnicity or marks on a body, but based on faith in Jesus and his reconciling work. As people are reconciled to God, they are reconciled to each other.

Those who are in Christ are now members of the household of God (2:19). They are connected to a new family and are to center their lives on the word of God and the salvation in Jesus. God has a purpose for each and every individual who trusts in him, and part of that purpose is to join the community of his people, his temple. It is together in the community of God’s people that they are being built together, they rise together, and experience the fullness of the presence of God. This fullness and moving is experienced not in church buildings but in a redeemed community; alive, committed, and centered on Jesus.

This church is the visible expression of the grace of God. God is reconciling people, and as they are reconciled to him, they are reconciled to one another. The physical ingathering of disparate people reflects the gospel. This community rises like a holy temple (v21), visible to a watching world, and it is through these people, the church, that the many-sided wisdom of God is being declared to all the universe (Eph 3:10).

What Paul says of the church here is much different than what most today think of church. Most view the church as unnecessary and unimportant, but here in this Scripture we see that belonging to and participating in the community of believers is one of the most significant things we can do, and it is the way God is making himself known

to the world and universe. The disparity between what Scripture says about the church and what people typically think about the church shows how greatly we need to regain a biblical understanding of church.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What words describe the status of a person who has, and a person who has not, trusted in Christ? How does one's status in Christ change their status with other believers?

2. What does the familial relationship of believers declare about the reconciling work of Jesus?

3. What is the foundation of this community (v20)?

4. What do verses 21-22 show God is doing in and through the church?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. People who are brought into the family of God through Jesus ought to welcome other believers into their lives as family members.
2. God's people are not to remain disconnected strangers but to draw near to God by drawing near to each other as committed members of God's family.
3. Christians proclaim the power of the gospel through the love and unity they have with other family members.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. What does it mean to be brought near by the blood of Jesus (Eph 2:13)? Have you trusted in Christ?

2. In Christ all people are considered one family. Is there anyone in the church you would not welcome into your home as a brother or sister? What does this passage say about God's work in that person and how you should treat them?

3. What does your commitment currently look like to God's word and God's household? What might you be missing by not being a committed member of a church?

E. Guide to the Lesson

This lesson begins to expose people to God's intention for his people to be in a church community committed to him and his ways. This is one of the most challenging doctrines for Christians today. Some will agree with it and yet live out of alignment with it. Others will be completely unfamiliar with this. People can "do church online," and some say "they just need Jesus and not the church," but these things are not true. Participating in church is a matter of obedience. We also live in a time of great loneliness, and the attractiveness of being in a community that loves and accepts one another, and is actively encouraging each other to know God more, will be extremely attractive and even longed for. Jesus brings people into the deepest level of human relationships, which is our fellowship with God. Believers should be eager to enter into this community.

This is a rich passage with lots of imagery and allusions. You might consider acknowledging that to the group and walking through what each few verses mean. There is a clear logical progression to the passage, and what is established in the beginning gets built on. Help the group see this. As they see the progression, they will see God's plan culminating in his work through the church (v21).

A good ice breaker to begin this lesson with is to ask them what comes to mind when they hear the word "church." Perhaps ask them to define church and what their experience has been in a church. Be prepared to hear good and bad. Don't be too

concerned if people share negative experiences. It happens, as churches are not perfect. Trust that by reading God's word they will better understand what church is supposed to be. Some people may have hurts and disappointments that need to heal, and you want to be respectful of that, but also remind people that you heal the quickest and most completely by following God. The church is a hospital that administers the balm of God's grace, and if you are hurting you need to check yourself in. Encourage them to start now, but continue loving them regardless of when they begin to take steps. True healing is a process. Meet them where they are, and keep pointing them to where they need to be.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 2: Acts 2:41-47 - The Church in Action

A. Guide to the Word

The book of Acts is a narrative of the early church and is like a documentary giving an inside look at the early church. In Acts chapter 2, revival breaks out and three thousand people trust in Christ. They are baptized and then begin life together as the body of Christ. Their gathering is not forced, but rather is the result of people wanting to know, encounter, and share Jesus Christ.

The New Testament **church** is an organized and committed gathering of believers who are seeking to honor and make Jesus known. In Acts you get to see it in action with a behind-the-scenes vantage point. The believers are devoted to God and devoted to each other. When people come to Christ they want to know Christ and help others come to him. They become followers of Christ who are helping others know and follow Christ. This brings them into a deep commitment and fellowship with each other.

Fellowship means “holding something in common” and is used 20 times in the New Testament (Acts 2:42, Phil. 2:1-2, 1 John 1:6-7). It describes the unity of the Spirit that comes from Christians’ shared beliefs, convictions, and culture. This fellowship produces mutual cooperation in worship of God and the work for God. This purpose so outweighs everything else in life that unity in it causes people to hold all things in common.

Another key word in this passage is **devotion**, which means “to continually do something” or “to give persistent attention.” They are devoted to knowing God’s word and being with other believers. Following Jesus is not something that is done occasionally or when convenient, but is a commitment to sacrificing other things for him. Relationships and impactful communities don’t just happen; they require constant attention and effort. Such a community is not found like a pot of gold, rather it is built like a building, with much work and effort. Believers are to apply themselves to this task.

In this passage a life of rich **relationship** is being experienced. The deepest level of human relationship is relating with others on our experience and relationship with God. In the church there should be a depth of genuine, honest, and meaningful relationships that stems from our relationship with God. Rich personal relationships with people is the byproduct of knowing and following Christ. This is a relationship that the world does not know, but is hungry for.

This community is not being forced into what they are doing. They are focused on knowing Jesus more, and as they do this the rich community and life are a byproduct. They are committed to praying and doing whatever they can to help others know Jesus. This sacrificial lifestyle speaks of the importance of Jesus in their life and sends a powerful message to the rest of the world, and as a result, people are continually added to their number.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What did all the people baptized in verse 41 do after baptism (v42)?

2. What are the things the believers devoted themselves to? Why are these important?

3. What were they doing in their homes? What does this communicate about their devotion to Jesus and his church?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Those who trust in Christ follow his command to be baptized and take their place in the community of believers.
2. Believers devote themselves to God's word, fellowship, service, and prayer.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. Have you been baptized to profess your faith in Jesus? What was your experience of this like?

2. What is your experience of church and gathering with believers?

3. Have you devoted yourself to the word, fellowship, prayer, etc., like these believers did? What would your life be like if you did that?

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4. What can you do to experience and help others experience this kind of life with Jesus?
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E. Guide to the Lesson

Everyone has a longing to know and be known by others. Relating with other believers on their relationship with God brings people into the deepest and most meaningful relationships a person can experience. It is deeply rewarding, but in our individualist and self-sufficient society, people do not plan for or make time for relationships, much less church. Everyone longs for and needs this, but it can only be found in Christ.

Our restless and bewildered society will look on this passage with great longing, and even lament not experiencing it, but they cannot experience it without trusting in Jesus. The passage conveys life as God designed it, rich in relationships with others, focused on him, and committed to the greatest cause, which is helping others to know Christ. The church is a beautiful picture of a Christ-centered community.

Baptism and church are both talked about in this passage. Baptism is what one does when initially believing in Jesus. Church is the ongoing participation in God's community. Both are important steps to take in order to follow Jesus. They are matters of obedience. The chosen verses for this lesson intentionally start with people trusting in Christ, being baptized, and then participating in the community of believers. Many people hear the importance of baptism but are not instructed to the next step of the community of believers. This passage shows a clear connection of walking in obedience to baptism and life in the family of God.

The church is a team of believers seeking to know and make Jesus known. On a team people have a sense of belonging, purpose, and significance. They accomplish more together than they could by themselves. Jesus brings us into the most significant team there is, his church. Consider doing an ice breaker in this lesson on "What was your best experience of being a part of a team? What made it so special and what do you miss? There will be many parallels to what the church is supposed to be and do.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 3: Hebrew 10:19-31 - Stirring Up One Another

A. Guide to the Word

This passage begins with reminders of what hope in Christ leads to. In him we have forgiveness and that leads to confidence before the throne of God. It's astounding that sinners can now have boldness to enter the presence of God! This builds on the previous chapters of Hebrews that give great details of what Jesus has done and accomplished as our priest. Because of him we are not separated but can draw near. Guilty consciences should not condemn us or keep us away.

This then leads to a series of exhortations in v 22-24 that encourage the church to take action based on Christ's word. Let us draw near...let us hold fast...Let us not give up meeting together...If Jesus has given us access to God then let us take advantage of that. Believers must be proactive in following Christ and not drift into complacency and inattentiveness.

A key component of standing firm in the faith is that believers "do not give up meeting together" (Heb 10:25). Some of the Hebrews had developed the habit (literally *ethos*) of neglecting the corporate meeting. It's not that they missed occasionally, but rather they ceased to make gathering a way of life. They neglected the body of Christ and left it in straits. The exhortation to meet together is strong. Christians are commanded to be a part of the community of believers. The word for "neglecting" the gathering means to forsake or abandon, and it is also used of Jesus being forsaken by his disciples at the cross (Matt 27:46). Neglecting to gather is forsaking the assembly.

One of the chief actions and benefits of their meeting is that they are to "stir up one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24). This attitude is lost in much of the church today where meetings are a time to walk in unobstructed, sit passively for a period of time, watch others minister and pray, and then leave with little being required. This is not the intent of "church." Each Christian is to consider how to provoke others to faithfulness toward God and service to others. The church needs to reclaim this today, and it is good for people to reflect on their participation and commitment to the church community. Do they come to be passively entertained or do they come to actively build up the faith of others.

This passage ends with a strong warning. They should not continue to deliberately sin. Those who do so only have a fearful expectation of judgment and fire (Heb 10:27). God is gracious, but he calls his people to respond to his grace. A vital part of the Christian life is drawing near to God by drawing near to other believers. It's an essential, and not an optional, part of following Christ.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. How does Jesus make a way for people to draw near to God?

2. What should the church do for each other (v24)?

3. What does it mean to deliberately go on sinning? What are the consequences? How does this relate to meeting together as the church?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Believers are eager to stir up one another to love and good deeds.
2. Believers are devoted to the family of God and make it a habit to gather together.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. What have you done recently to stir others up to love and good deeds? What could you do this week to stir up someone's faith?

2. What does your schedule or calendar reflect about your habit of being a part of the church?

3. What is your attitude toward gathering with believers? How does this passage encourage or challenge that attitude?

E. Guide to the Lesson

A Christian who is not in church is like a fish out of water. It won't live long in that condition. Many die a slow death by quietly drifting away. Drift happens slowly and at a rate you don't notice until you are a great distance from where you should be. We want people to recognize where they are and where God calls them to. This passage calls people to be devoted to gathering together and can help people realize how they have drifted from God's design.

Too many Christians today have an unbiblical view of church. They view it as a non-essential and optional part of life that they participate in "when they can." This passage contains a strong warning for those who do this. Verses 19-25 contain positive exhortations to take advantage of what Christ has secured. Verses 26-31 give strong warnings on what happens if we fail to do so. Help the group see both sides of this. There are great encouragements, but also sober warnings.

A main reason people neglect church is because their church experience looks very little like the church in the New Testament. The church today is often viewed as a dull lecture and impersonal meeting that doesn't connect to life. People drift from their faith and have no one to stir them up to faithfulness. If people want to serve Jesus they need others pushing them along. This is the church in action!

If people begin to admit their drift then ask them what took them away. This gets below the surface to root issues. Also ask them what it will take for them to begin trusting and following God's word. It doesn't mean that they have to do this now, but it does help them to think through their walk with God.

A good way to add some action to the group is to challenge them to think of a way to encourage one person each day for the next seven days. Have them discuss ways to encourage people. Push them to provide thoughtful and specific encouragement. Not simply, "Have a great day!" or "I'm praying for you!" It may be more personal and Scriptural: "I read this verse and wanted to share with you," or "I know you have this going on and I am praying for..." Or they might find some ways to serve the person with good deeds.

Ice breaker, have you ever gotten in trouble for neglecting/forgetting something (taking care of a pet, missing a meeting at work, losing a business deal, forgetting an anniversary)? This can be interesting and funny, but may connect pointedly to the passage: are you neglecting or forgetting the body of Christ?

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 4: 1 Peter 1:13-23 - A Holy People

A. Guide to the Word

The work of Jesus brings believers into a relationship with God in which they call on him as “Father,” and it brings them into relationship with other believers in which they are called children of God (v14). As children of God, they are promised a future inheritance that does not perish, spoil, or fade. This is the doctrine of adoption, and it shows the great benefit of our reconciliation with God. Through Christ we are brought into the family of God. We are sons and daughters with a promised inheritance!

It is amazing news. But some will hear this grace and mistakenly decide they don’t need to run that hard. After all, it’s all by grace. The New Testament speaks differently, and this passage directly addresses that. The grace of our future inheritance should create a focused and determined devotion to God. There is a call to prepare for action, be disciplined, and set our focus on Jesus (v13).

The church is the gathering of God’s people, and it is to be marked by a call to action with their minds singularly focused on God. They are to seek to be like their God who is holy. That means he is their standard in all that they do. They do not seek to be like the world or other people. They conform to the mold of Jesus Christ (v14).

Believers purify their souls by living in obedience to the truth. Their previous lives were empty and now there is something more precious to live for (v18-19). They are becoming more pure as they are obedient to the truth of God’s word. But there is also another key expression of their devotion: obedience to the Word and love for their brothers, the family of God (v22). The Greek word used here is *philadelphia* (brotherly love). The word for sincere means without hypocrisy. Believers are to be true and genuine in knowing and being known by other believers.

Many Christians have such a faint commitment and participation in church that they can scarcely mention how they might care for others in the church. This is contrary to the love that Jesus calls his followers to have for each other. As one knows the holy and pure love of God, they will increasingly want to share that love with others who have experienced it. They cannot help but love those for whom Jesus died, and that means spending time with them. They are made alive through Christ, and they are united in a familial relationship to others who have life in him. They earnestly and sincerely love those of the redeemed community (v22).

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What does it mean to be holy? How does one focus on this?

2. What does it mean to be ransomed by the blood of Jesus?

3. Why is the church called to “sincere brotherly love” and from “a pure heart” (v22)? Why would this be important for Christians to practice?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Believers are to live their whole life in purity and holiness to Jesus.
2. The church is to have a gospel simplicity where they are singularly focused on the grace that will be brought at the revelation of Jesus.
3. God knows everything about us, so believers cast aside façades and live sincere and genuine lives with one another.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. What are you most focused on in life? How focused are you on God’s purposes for you?

2. How are you demonstrating brotherly love to the family of God? How can you demonstrate humility by helping others or letting others in on the burdens your are carrying?

3. How are you making time to know and love your fellow believers? What does this say about your devotion to God?

E. Guide to the Lesson

This lesson continues the theme of the importance of the family of God and being an active participant in the church. This passage begins with a view of all life committed to God and narrows in on the specific pursuit of loving the believers. Most today do not make church and relationships with the church community a priority so they have a hard time even knowing how to love. They can't even name a need in the church because they don't know people. Help the group see the connection: you won't know how to love others if you don't even know them. Love for God should lead to making time for church.

Loving the believers will flow over from a devotion to God. As God calls his people to be holy it can be helpful to reflect on the Ten Commandments. One of these commands is to make the Sabbath holy. Many fail in church because they are not really pursuing God. You can point that out, but also remember this passage is ripe with powerful gospel imagery. As we serve Jesus we are investing in a rich, not empty, way of life; a glorious, not dull, purpose.

Encourage them to make church a habit. If they are not attending anywhere then encourage them to go to a good church. Invite them to come with you. Showing up to church or small group is an act of obedience and also of love. What does your presence or absence say about your pursuit of God and interest in the people of the group? Attending is saying that those people are more important than the other things you could be doing in life. Love is often demonstrated by what you are willing to sacrifice to be with the one you love. Ultimately, it is all a demonstration of the love for God and our commitment to honor him.

A question to end with may be to have people share one thing they could do to go deeper in to express their love for the church.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 5: Romans 12:9-21 - Love One Another

A. Guide to the Word

Jesus gave his disciples a new command (John 13:34-35). It was to love each other. It was a restatement of an old command (Lev 19:18), but he gives them a new example of how to do it. They are to love as he has loved. He then said to them that people will know we are his disciples by the love we have for one another. His disciples would not be known for their athletic achievement, intellectual prowess, million dollar bonuses, or acquisition of rare sports cars. It will be by their love. And it's not just love in general but a love for one another, for fellow believers. It should not surprise anyone to see that throughout the New Testament there is a call for Christians to love each other.

Romans 12 begins discussing the grace of God and how it transforms people and causes them to offer themselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). In verse 9 instructions begin on how the church is to love. Such love is the necessary outworking of understanding God's grace.

The church is to love. Love is to be a mark of Jesus's church and people. They are to love each other with brotherly love, and ought to go so far as to try and outdo one another in showing love and respect. People compete in many things: weightlifting, guitar playing, trivia, spelling, but love? Yes, love. There is to be an eagerness in this and not a miserly approach, doing as little as possible to get by. They are to love those in the church like they were their own flesh and blood. The church is to be a place of deep and abiding love that makes people think they are seeing a new family.

Verses 14-20 focus on how we are to love our enemies. This is important to read and understand for those who might have hurt you, opposed you, or wronged you. It also means that if believers are to show this kind of love to their enemies, then they certainly ought to show love to those in the church, and those who may have hurt them in small and less significant ways. Families see each other at their best and worst, and have many peccadillo (small sins) like being rude and selfish, forgetting to say sorry, etc. In these they can still love each other. Their goal is to seek harmony with everyone and repay no one evil for evil. Love is not just sentimentalism, but an active demonstration of care and concern. When people cut others off or stop going to church it is often an indication that their love for Jesus has dried up.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What does this passage say should be done to others? What does it say should not be done to others?

2. How does one's faith in Jesus provide a basis for loving others?

3. In what ways does Romans 12:13 specify how one should love other believers?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Christians are to love all people, and have a particular calling to love the church by meeting needs and showing hospitality.
2. Loving others includes sharing in needs, showing hospitality, praying, enduring, and living peaceably with others.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. What have you done recently to love other believers in the church?

2. Many people will stop going to church or relating to other believers when someone does something they do not like. What does this say about how they are loving others?

3. What does your commitment to and participation in God's family look like?

E. Guide to the Lesson

God's grace transforms people. You can't receive God's unmerited favor and pardon and then show bitterness and resentment to others. If Christians have been forgiven and loved by God because of what Jesus Christ did for them, then they have a God-sized

portion of love to share with others. The gathering of God's people and their interactions should be characterized by love and harmony.

Many people have been snubbed and disappointed by people at church. This shouldn't surprise you because people fall short and because even Jesus was hurt by "the church" too! It also shouldn't surprise you because this gives you an opportunity to love unconditionally as Jesus loved. Those who cut themselves off from the church show that they are not that interested in following Jesus and being his disciple. A key reason many do not participate in church is not that they have been hurt or disappointed, but rather because they do not want to love like Jesus. They return evil for evil.

Consider taking time to ask people what their commitment to the church, the body of Christ, the family of God, says about their love for God and for his people? Invite them to go to church with you, or encourage people to take a challenge to go to church each week for the remainder of the journey. Some people may still be committed to the church but lost the fervency of their love. Help them see how this passage helps one navigate those hurts and disappointments.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 6: Colossians 3:12-17 - New Life in Christ

A. Guide to the Word

In the book of Colossians, the apostle Paul challenges false teachings for the first two chapters, and then in chapter 3 he gives a basis for their new life in Christ and the new lifestyle that faith in Christ brings. If you are raised with Christ then your mind should be focused on the things he has secured for you. Verses 5-11 then speak directly to what believers should put off or cast aside. In verses 12-17 Paul deals with the positive things they are to do. The new life in Christ does not mean you just refrain from the really bad things in life; it also involves a commitment to a life of honoring God. This week's passage shows what the family of God, the church, should look like.

The first traits listed in how to live up to their calling deals with how to treat others. Compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience all relate to loving our neighbors and are particularly poignant to God's chosen, holy, and beloved people, his church (Col 3:12). They are to bear with one another. They are to show a love and tolerance that reflects the grace of God. They are not to excuse blatant sin and heresy, as these should be corrected, but they are also to bear with the weaknesses of fellow believers. They don't just get offended and leave; they love and stay.

There is no such thing as a perfect church, but there are healthy churches. Healthy churches are those that demonstrate love and work through issues in a way that honors the Lord. The fact that they will need to be humble and meek and patient shows that there are going to be differences in the church. Many see the problems in the church community and want to avoid it, but these imperfections are the means through which God matures his people and allows them to show grace to others just as he has shown grace to them (Col 3:13).

Another aspect of this community is that the Word of God is to have a prominent place. God gave his word so that people could know him, and through it they are fully equipped for everything he calls them to. This word is not just a list of things to do and abide by like the local housing code at city hall. It is a word to delight in, share, sing, and rejoice in (Col 3:16). Every believer is to have the word dwelling in them, and they are to share it with others and encourage them with it.

This loving community is to be characterized by love, grace, and rejoicing, which are all fruits of the Spirit and evidence of delighting in God's word and ways. These are to be marks of the church, and so believers should intentionally pursue cultivating these in their relationships with other believers.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. Before listing things believers are to do, the passage begins reminding the church they are “God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved.” Why is this important to remember before doing anything?

2. How are believers called to treat others?

3. What is the role of God’s word in the family of God?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. God’s people are chosen, loved, and sanctified in Christ, and they ought to treat others with love and holiness in all they do.
2. Believers bear with the shortcomings of others and are not easily angered or offended.
3. Believers fill their minds with God’s word and seek to share it with others.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. How do you treat people when they don’t do what you want or offend you? How ought you to treat them?

2. How do you create time to dwell in God’s word and share encouragement from it with others?

- 3.

4. How can you give thanks for what God has done for you? How can you give thanks for the challenges you have with other people?
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E. Guide to the Lesson

The church is called to be the light of the world and a city on a hill and light (Matt 5:14), and a main way it shines is by the love that is among those in the church. It is to be a familial love that runs deep, shows patience and kindness and endures the faults of others. One of the biggest reasons for people leaving the church is because they saw things that concerned them or that they didn't like. Instances of sin and disobedience must be confronted, but there also needs to be patience and love shared with others. This love, holiness, and endurance points to the hope they have in Jesus and that they are new creations with new life.

People may have questions about what this really is to look like. Questions on how to embody this. Provide time for them to ask questions about the passage and to share their experiences. Take time to discuss this, as these are important questions. But don't let their experience deflect from their need to do their part in the community. If they have experienced problems in church, listen to these, but also ask how they should respond or should have responded to these situations. Talk about how this passage informs their relationships within the Christian community.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 7: Gen 2:18; Eccl 4:9-10; Prov 18:1; 15:22 - A Community of Wisdom

A. Guide to the Word

This lesson is a collection of important verses that instruct people on how to involve others in their lives. God did not create people to be alone, but to be in a relational community. This community reflects the community God has within himself as Father, Son and Spirit. Most people today live in isolated loneliness and out of line with God's design. An important way to experience God's grace and the joy of the family of God is by intentionally seeking the counsel and company of others.

Pride pushes people to self reliance and self sufficiency that does not allow anyone in. Even if they are living in spatial proximity to others, there is often a relational gap that doesn't allow real community. These passages show the importance of being with others and being known by others. Many people fall and have no one to help them up (Ecc 4:9-10). That is not a wise way to live because everyone will trip and fall at some point. These passages from Genesis and the wisdom literature of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes offer powerful insight on why and how to live in meaningful community with others.

Life is hard and sin always makes circumstances more complex. Such situations can leave one bearing burdens they were not meant to bear alone. They isolate and fail to benefit from the wisdom and advice of others. Proverbs 15:22 points to the importance of having counsel for life as "plans fail for lack of counsel." Counsel is friendly, confidential advice. There may be times and issues to seek professional help, but if we are living in a community of transparency and love, then there will be opportunities to seek advice from friends. The more this happens the less likely we are to need professional help for complicated situations. Asking for advice and input will deepen and enrich the relationships you already have.

Many people lament not having significant spiritual relationships, but the key for developing these is being in committed relationships in the body of Christ in which you seek to know Christ and learn from and serve others. The church community is the central place we are to find spiritual counsel and companionship, and that means we make building relationships in the church a priority.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. In what ways do you see people are made to be in community?

2. Why is it a mistake to live in isolation?

3. What happens when you get counsel from other people?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Living in community means opening yourself up to others for counsel, advice, and support.
2. The enemy isolates people; the redeemer draws people together.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. How are you doing living in community with others? Who really knows you and who do you feel like you really know?

2. What does getting counsel from others look like in your life? Who are your spiritual mentors you seek to learn from?

E. Guide to the Lesson

There is an old saying in church about “putting on your Sunday best,” and it means you wear your best outfit to church on Sunday. Many do this as a way to show reverence to God, but others use it as a way to hide. They come to church having a really hard time but they look good and tell people, “Everything’s just fine.” This is the wrong way to view church, and it actually pushes God and others away from you. The church should do just the opposite. In light of what God has done for us and what he knows of us, it ought to lead us to live transparent and authentic lives. We are not trying to hide things from others; we are trying to bring our lives to light so that we can live more faithfully to God. This is key to developing real relationships that are spiritually nourishing.

Such community cannot be forced upon someone, but it can be taught, modeled, and encouraged. As you go deeper in your group, and have probably talked about many

substantive issues, this lesson provides an excellent opportunity to continue going deeper relationally with others. At the beginning of each group meeting there is time to share highs and lows so people should be getting to know each other more. This may be a time to point out that being in a small group has provided a deeper understanding of each person. Ask people to share how this group has helped them see the need for others and how it has been a source of counsel on various issues.

Help others apply this lesson by asking if there are things going on that they might want the input of the group, or perhaps just want the group to pray for. The goal of the group is not to provide on-the-spot solutions for every issue. No group could do that! But it is to come alongside others, hear what is going on, pray, and—when appropriate—share thoughts, encouragement, and advice.

This lesson is unique in that rather than being a continuous passage, it instead pulls together many short verses from different parts of the Bible. It is a short survey of verses that point to the need for community. It fits within the journey *Family Members* as another facet of the rich life believers are to have in the church, and specifically it points out the need to humbly go to others for community and wisdom.

A good ice breaker for this lesson is to ask if there was ever a time in your life you were in a really difficult spot and had to call someone for help? Who did you call and why?

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 8: 1 Peter 5:1-11 - Shepherding the Flock of God

A. Guide to the Word

Elders, pastors, overseers (bishops) are various terms used to denote the leadership of a church. The qualifications of elders are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, their primary responsibilities in Acts 6:2-4, Heb 13:7,17, and how to handle charges against them in 1 Tim 5:19-20. The church or family of God is an organized gathering of believers. Organizations have leadership, and the church is no different. Christians who chide organized religion have not read their Bible! Elders served as leaders in all the New Testament churches. Here the apostle Peter addresses the elders of this church and exhorts them to shepherd the flock of God. This provides an important lesson in spiritual leadership and the nature of the church.

Shepherds are not to “lord it over” their flock (v3). Peter doesn’t even do this with the elders he is addressing. Though Peter was chosen to be a rock and to have a prominent role in the church, Peter exhorts these elders simply as “fellow elders.” Spiritual leadership is not making demands of people, but giving direction and encouragement in the hope they will take it to heart and run with it.

The role of elders turns to a discussion on humility (v3). Sheep hear their shepherd’s voice and they follow. In the same way the church is to willingly listen to the teaching of the elders and follow them as they follow Christ. Elders are to be among the sheep and not remote and distant so that they do not know or understand the sheep. This is a stark contrast to today “doing church online” where no one knows each other. The church is a relational community, and where the relationships break down, so does the church. Pastors and sheep know one another, and elders and congregations should also know each other. Pastors are to be found with and “among the flock” (v2) not separated from or above them.

The chief motivation for being faithful in this is receiving the “unfading crown of glory” (v4) that will one day be given. There is also a sobering warning in this passage. The whole church is to be sober-minded, constantly looking to the chief shepherd, because they have a very real enemy. Satan prowls around looking to devour the church just as a lion looks to devour a sheep (v8). One of the greatest ways to resist Satan is to grow in humility. This is done by depending on God and engaging in the community of God’s people and seeking after the advice of spiritual shepherds.

Peter also tells the church they are going to experience hardships and suffering just as all the other family of God is experiencing throughout the world. They should not be surprised when hardship comes. Their hope is not in this life but in the life to come. It is when Jesus returns that the God of all grace “will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10). The church has great reason to hope and trust in Christ while it endures many different trials. God is able and will restore whatever they

might have lost. For now, though, God’s people gather themselves into organized communities to wait faithfully for the coming of their Savior.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What are elders exhorted to do? How should they do this?

2. What is the connection to the role of elders (v1-4) and the exhortations to the young and proud (v5)?

3. How does this passage inform your understanding of a church—the people and the leadership?

4. What does Satan seek to do? How does he do this?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Churches are organized communities with leaders who seek the wellbeing of the whole flock, and the church should listen to shepherds with humility.
2. Satan is a very real enemy who must be resisted.
3. Believers should be committed members of church communities where they know and are known by elders and others.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. Who are the spiritual shepherds in your life that know you and whom you seek out for guidance?

2. Are you a committed member of a local church? What does this say about your humility and desire to have spiritual leaders?

3. How have you seen pride in your life push people and or spiritual leaders away? How have you seen humility bring healing and restoration?

E. Guide to the Lesson

We live in a time of online church where people can simply turn on their computer and from the comfort of their home “do church.” They get it done with a click and move on without any inconveniences or anyone even knowing them. That is not church! The role of elders in the church shows church is an organized gathering, and it also shows there is a relational connection to the whole.

One of the reasons the church and many individuals are floundering today is because of spiritual pride. People feel no need to have others in their lives, and they certainly do not want to have spiritual guidance from the church on the issues they are dealing with. For the church to be the church people must humble themselves and move toward God and his purposes in the church. As they do this, they will find grace.

Many view church as merely something to attend. This passage brings corrective insight to that. It is a place to belong, to be known, and to know others. It is not merely a good thing to do, it is a spiritual necessity in which one evades the prowling lion of Satan. The church has leadership, and that means it is an organized group of people committed to each other and to making Jesus known.

An ice breaker for this lesson is to have people share an important mentor in their life or someone who had a big impact on their spiritual journey. Encourage them to have spiritual leaders in their life who know them and can shepherd them. This entails being a committed member of a local church—something people often overlook, and yet it is a vital part of their spiritual life.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 9: Revelation 2:1-11 - Reviving Lost Love

A. Guide to the Word

Throughout the New Testament, and throughout this journey, exhortations are given calling for vigilance in the faith. There is much opposition and danger in the path of following Jesus, and believers can grow cold in their faith, and so Jesus here calls his people to heed his words, take them to heart, and repent of those things. A cold church that has lost its first love of Jesus is in a dangerous place.

Revelation 2-3 consists of seven addresses to seven churches. Jesus dwells in the midst of his churches, and he calls them to renewal (Rev 1:12-19). Jesus is present in his churches and so if one wants to encounter Jesus they should be in his church (Rev 2:1 and 1:20). In each address it is clear that God knows the circumstances of each church and sees everything they are going through. He has commendations in certain areas and warnings for other areas. Each church is to take these warnings to heart. This lesson goes through the addresses to two of those churches.

The first address is to the church in Ephesus. God knows their works, their resistance to evil and their testing of false apostles. They are enduring much hardship and doing it faithfully. It is a reminder that everything believers go through is in full view of the Lord. He knows them and will reward them in the end, but they must continue pursuing him and putting him first.

While this church has done some things well, they have also fallen short in other ways. God finds fault with them, and most notably is that they have lost their first love. They have lost the love, zeal, and ardor they had when they first heard of Christ and trusted in him. They have now grown cold and complacent. This is similar to the church in Laodicea that is not hot nor cold but lukewarm in their walk with Jesus (Rev 3:15-16)

The church is called to repent, and this shows that one can and should repent of a lack of love. People can change from the inside out, and it begins with seeing the grace of God and that Jesus continues pursuing them. Jesus tells them to repent and do the works they did at first (Rev 2:5). This includes serving the church as they did at first. There is a clear and definite connection to loving God and loving his people. Growing cold in one is often a reflection of growing cold in the other.

If they do not change, God will remove their lampstand. He will remove the church (Rev 1:20). It is a serious matter and should be taken to heart. The one who has ears to hear this ought to hear with their ears and their heart (Rev 2:7, 11). Lost love can be regained, but it takes returning to the one who should be first in life. Those who do so are promised to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God (Rev 2:7).

God will care for his faithful church and reward them with the most amazing and fulfilling blessings there are. The question remains, do you love God enough to help his people and church grow deeper in their love of him? Is the church a more loving place

because of your participation, or have you also grown cold and indifferent to Jesus and his mission? If so, repentance is the path to spiritual renewal.

This passage also shows that God will call all people to account. God holds out the crown of life to those who are faithful to him and overcome (v10), but those who continue to resist him will experience death. This most important thing in life is being faithful to God, and it will have ramifications for eternity.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What does God know about these churches?

2. What does God promise to do for those who repent and for those who do not repent?

3. Why is losing your first love so dire?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. God is to be first in all of life.
2. When believers lose their first love for God they become in danger of losing the very thing that makes them a church.
3. Repentance is a gift of God through which one encounters mercy and new life.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. On a scale of 1-10 (1 cold, 5 lukewarm, 10 hot) what would you rate your temperature for Jesus? How do you feel about this rating? How might you return to your first love?

2. Do you know individuals or churches who have lost this first love?

3. What are you doing to help the church grow in its love of Jesus?

E. Guide to the Lesson

Jesus said his disciples would be known by the love they have for one another. That love is a reflection of the love Jesus has shown to them. When believers lose this love they are in great danger. That in turn leads them to focus on the wrong things and do the wrong things. The church in Ephesus continued to do some good things, but they were going through the motions of faith without the most important thing.

The gift of repentance allows people to experience new beginnings. Repentance is acknowledging something is wrong and turning from it. When one recognizes they have not put God first, they can turn from their ways. It is said that if loving God with all your heart is the greatest commandment, then the greatest sin must be to not love God with all your heart. God wants our hearts. Regaining this love involves reprioritizing God's place in our lives and doing the things he calls us to do.

Many people are in or have gone through seasons of dryness and distance from God. Not all of them repent of this. Many of the people who are not in church are those who have not repented. It can also be those who are in church every week, but they have not really given him their whole lives. Loving God comes from the heart and involves doing the things he commands with joy and delight. It's much like a relationship with another person where they are going through the motions of doing things for the other, but their heart is not in it. There is distance in the actions. But also note how quickly relationships can be rekindled when one person confesses their sin and a desire to break from it.

Take time to discuss what it looks like to love God with all one's heart and also discuss what can be done when love for him has waned. In families, all members have responsibilities, and in the family of God the greatest responsibility is to keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 1:20-21). Ask people to share a season in life where they had grown cold to God and then ask if and/or how they regained that love. This will help them see the grace of God at work.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?

Lesson 10: Matt 18:15-20 - When a Family Member Sins

A. Guide to the Word

A healthy church community is not a perfect church. Much like a healthy immune system is not one that never faces contagions, but rather one that is able to deal with problems when encountered. This passage in Matthew shows how sin and accusations of sin are to be dealt with in a healthy church community.

The first step to take when a family member sins is to go directly to the brother (or sister) and tell him his fault. When something of concern arises, you don't overlook it, and you also don't go to others to discuss. You go to him first. This keeps the matter private and prevents gossip. It also gives each person a chance to understand each other and see the fuller picture.

The whole purpose of "going to a brother" is in hopes of gaining him back (Matt 18:15). Correction is meant to be redemptive and not punitive or defamatory. Godly correction is done with an earnest desire to help the offending person. Those correcting should examine their motives in bringing the correction.

If the offending person does not listen then things get heightened and one or two others are needed to approach him. The one or two additional people are important in order to establish if there truly is a sin and if God's commands have been broken. If no one agrees that a sin has been committed then the offended person will need to drop the matter. Testimony requires at least two people in order to have an established charge (Deut 19:15). If two others do agree then they go together to present their concern.

If two or three go and the person still does not respond, then the issue is escalated and goes before the whole church. This last and more formal step is known as church discipline. The whole church is made known of the issue and the person is given another opportunity to respond to God's word. If it is established there is a sin and the person still doesn't repent, then he is removed from the church community (excommunicated). This shows the importance of keeping God's commands and also shows love to the person who is sinning. Love does not allow someone to continue disobeying God. This also allows the church to maintain its integrity and witness, as it holds members accountable in walking with the Lord.

After this, the person in sin loses their rights, privileges, and responsibilities within the community of God. They are now treated not as enemies, but as tax collectors and sinners. They are treated like all other non-Christians. The church can still show love but will not allow them back into the fold until there is repentance. A healthy church community addresses sin in its members in a biblical and loving manner.

This passage shows that it is the responsibility of the whole church to make sure those who are part of the church community are living out their faith. In a day where people complain about the lack of holiness in the church, and yet people don't commit to

the church or show up for the hard parts of church life, we see just how needed it is to recapture a biblical view of church membership and church discipline.

B. Going Deeper in the Word

1. What are the main steps of the process for going to a person who has sinned?

2. How does this process show respect for both the accused and accuser?

3. What does the following passage of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35 add to this passage about restoring a family member?

C. Guide to Obeying

1. Believers are to deal with the sins and offenses of other family members in a God-honoring way.
2. In any sin, believers are to have as their chief concern the restoration of that person to God.
3. Followers of Jesus do not leave churches when members sin, but rather they stand firm in God's word and ensure a biblical and redemptive process is followed for appropriately dealing with the one who sinned.

D. Going Deeper in Obeying

1. How have you dealt with the sins of other people? How does this passage shape the way you think about those issues now?

2. How have you seen people bypass this process? What does that say about those people?

3. How committed are you to dealing with the sins of other people in a biblical manner? How does this passage teach the importance of formally belonging to a church?

E. Guide to the Lesson

“When the going gets tough the tough get going” is a popular saying, but unfortunately it often seems that when things get tough everyone runs and hides. This is not how it is to be in the church. Churches should patiently bear with the faults of others, and that includes confronting and working through sin in a biblical manner. When this process is followed the entire church is strengthened, fallen members are restored, church families regain their family members, and a watching world witnesses a community that fears God, loves each other, and doesn't give up on fallen members. Even when wronged and/or offended, the church is to handle things in a God-honoring manner. Churches that handle sin appropriately help individuals learn how to handle the problems in their life.

Being a part of a family has many benefits, but it also has many responsibilities. Christians are to follow Jesus's words on going to a family member when they sin. It is unacceptable to just be mad, hold a grudge, broadcast the offense, or sever the relationship without giving them an opportunity to respond or repent. Most people are unfamiliar with this process and that a church should follow it. People need to see their responsibility in this.

Many people will quit going to church when issues like this arise. They view church discipline as the church getting sidetracked, but this is actually embracing the calling of a church. Churches need committed members who are willing to do the hard work of ministry. As this is the last lesson in the journey, encourage each person to find a church community to commit to and to be willing to do some of the hard work that goes with being part of a healthy church community.

Since this is the last lesson in the Family Member Journey, talk to your group about doing another journey. Also encourage them to go back to the beginning of this journey to look over their answers to the Introductory Questions to see how they have grown.

Discovery Group Questions

Building Community. What are you thankful for? What is stressing you out?

Do you have any updates to share from the last meeting—action steps taken, or people you encouraged? How is God working in your life?

Learning God’s Word. What stood out in the passage? How would you summarize this passage and its main points? What does this passage teach about God, yourself, and the world you live in?

Obeying the Lord. In what ways does this passage encourage, challenge, or inform you? Where do you see God’s grace? What action steps should you take to respond to this passage?

Sharing Hope. Who else might benefit from hearing this passage or what you are learning? What would you say to them?

Praying. How does this passage guide your prayers for yourself, your group, or others?
