



## Welcome to the ROAD Map!

This Map is meant to aid you as you follow Christ. It's more than just study material. There are both individual and group activities for each of six rhythms.

## What are rhythms?

We want to emphasize six things that should be a part of the lives of every believer: evangelism, intentional relationships, prayer, worship, multiplication, and discipleship. These are not one-off things we do or classes we attend. They are things that should be ongoing parts of our lives—rhythms.

## How to use the material

- Identify a group of people to go through the ROAD Map with. They could be people you know well or people you don't know well. They could be people similar in age or of different ages. You will learn and grow both individually and as a group.
- Decide where to start. You can start at the beginning and work your way through or pick any rhythm to go through. Whatever rhythm you choose, make sure you start at the beginning of the rhythm, though.
- Decide if you want to use supplementary material or not. You could just do the activities as listed and nothing else. Or you could combine them with a book/Bible study as additional activities that you do. Check the Resources page on the Perkinsville website for recommended books that coincide with the rhythms.

Take a look at the meeting template on page 67 in the Resources section to help you know how to structure your time together.

# Table of Contents

## Rhythms of a Disciple

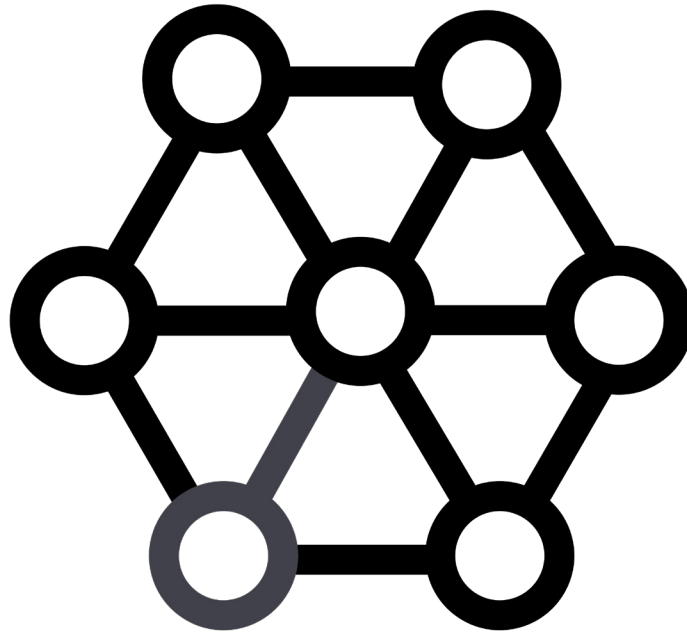
|  |    |
|--|----|
| <i>The Gospel &amp; Evangelism</i>       | 4  |
| <i>Intentional Relationships</i>         | 16 |
| <i>Abiding Prayer</i>                    | 22 |
| <i>Gathering Together (Worship)</i>      | 28 |
| <i>Multiplication &amp; Discipleship</i> | 32 |

## Resources

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <i>Meeting Template</i>                                      | 67 |
| <i>Oikos Map Instructions</i>                                | 69 |
| <i>Prayers of Paul</i>                                       | 70 |
| <i>Lead Us to Repentance: A Prayer Journey From Psalm 51</i> | 72 |
| <i>Who I Am Diagram</i>                                      | 75 |
| <i>Inner Self: Sin Exercise</i>                              | 76 |
| <i>Inner Self: Blind Spots</i>                               | 78 |
| <i>BBC Radio Talk: “Beyond Personality—Mere Men”</i>         | 81 |
| <i>Outward Self: Personal Time</i>                           | 83 |
| <i>Outward Self: The Body of the Christ, the Church</i>      | 85 |
| <i>Commissioned Self: Vocation</i>                           | 87 |
| <i>Commissioned Self: Beyond</i>                             | 88 |
| <i>Commissioned Self: Next Steps</i>                         | 90 |



# The Gospel & Evangelism



**Evangelism**

Evangelism is proclaiming the Good News to others. But part of the rhythm of evangelism is being sure we know and remember this Good News. It is not something we believe and then move on from. It is the same Truth that holds us until the day we die. It is the same Truth that holds us when we stand before God one day.

We want to know the Gospel, love it, believe it, and then share it with hearts of worship, thanksgiving, and obedience. You'll be led through some exercises to do on your own and some that you'll come together for. Some of the activities together will involve discussion, some planning and praying, and some will involve taking action. Don't lose heart!

# Ephesians 2 Testimony (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To be reminded of what God has done. Before we can consider sharing the Gospel with others, we need to be reminded of the Gospel for ourselves. This exercise will help you think about your testimony through the lens of Scripture.*

## What do I need?

A Bible, notebook or paper, and something to write with

## What to do?

### 1. Read Ephesians 2:1-3

Consider your life before Christ and answer the following questions:

*Note: When answering, don't just think in terms of the "really bad" sins but think of the more subtle sins as well such as pride, self-serving, joy in tearing others down, disobedience to parents, arrogance, self-reliance, etc. Don't gloss over it. For help, look at 2 Timothy 3:1-17.*

- How did your desires oppose God?
- How did your actions oppose God?
- How did your words/mouth oppose God?
- In what other ways did your life oppose God?

### 2. Read Ephesians 2:4-9

Based on these verses, describe in your own words what it means that God, through Christ Jesus, saved you.

- How does it make us rely on God further?
- How would you explain to someone the joy of salvation?

### 3. Read Ephesians 2:10

*Note: When answering the following question, don't just think about things within the church, but think more broadly.*

- God has called you for something. To start thinking about calling, think about these criteria and write down what comes to mind: What brings you joy? What are you good at? What have people told you you're gifted in?

### 4. Now write your testimony in paragraph form using the following prompts:

- Apart from Christ, I was \_\_\_\_\_.
- This is what it means that God saved me: \_\_\_\_\_.
- This is how God is changing me and these are the ways He's given me to walk out my new life in Christ: \_\_\_\_\_.

# Ephesians 2 Testimony (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To remind ourselves of what God has done for us and to tell others. Our testimony is not only for non-Christians but is something to be shared and celebrated by brothers and sisters in Christ. This is also a great way to get to know others in a meaningful way if you don't yet know them well. Another purpose is to learn to share your testimony in a meaningful and succinct way.*

## What do I need?

Ephesians 2 testimony

## What to do?

1. Share your written-out testimony with your small group. Try to share without reading the paper. Remember that the goal is to be able to share your testimony in a meaningful, genuine, and succinct way.
  - Feel free to ask one another follow-up questions and go deeper into each other's testimonies once you've shared.
2. Share your testimony with at least two other people one-on-one outside of your group time. They can be Christians or non-Christians.

# Making an Oikos Map (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To help you think about those who are close to you geographically or relationally but far from God. The map is a prayer guide to pray for these people on a regular basis and ask God to save them by His grace.*

## What do I need?

Your notebook or piece of paper and a pen

## What to do?

1. Find the Oikos Map instructions on page 69 in the resources section that will teach you how to create an oikos map.
2. Now, take time to pray for the people on your map.
3. Commit to praying for them each day.
4. Check out the BLESS app. It's a helpful tool that can lead you through the same thing that these activities are designed to do.



# Oikos Map (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To have others pray for your lost friends, neighbors, and family together with you.*

## **What do I need?**

Your oikos map, paper, and pen

## **What to do?**

1. With your small group, spend time praying over each other's maps.
2. Write down the names from the other people's maps or take a picture of their maps.  
Commit to praying for them regularly and pray each time you get together.



# Questions in a Box (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To get comfortable engaging others with meaningful questions and turning those conversations to Gospel conversations.*

## **What do I need?**

Download the app “Questions In A Box”

## **What to do?**

1. Practice using the Questions In A Box app with your small group
2. With your small group, practice transitioning from the questions to Biblical truth, the Gospel, and/or your testimony.
3. Outside of your group time, use the questions with one person from your oikos map. Try moving to a Gospel conversation.

# Gospel-Sharing Training (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To get some practical tips on Gospel-sharing and then practice them.*

## What do I need?

A phone or computer

## What to do?

1. [Watch this 7 minute video from Dare 2 Share](#) on how to engage people in conversations that can lead to the Gospel. This can be done in a group or individually.
  - Click on one of the links further down on the site and learn more about how to share the Gospel with people of different worldviews.
  - Note this site is for reaching teenagers with the Gospel, but it applies to anyone.
2. [Watch this 5 minute video from Dare 2 Share](#) on sharing the Gospel. This can be done in a group or individually.
3. Discuss what was helpful about these videos.
4. Practice using this tool either by just sharing it with each other or by role-playing (one person chooses a non-Christian identity and someone shares with him/her starting with Ask, Admire, Admit).
5. Pray for opportunities and boldness to share with others, particularly those on your oikos maps.



# Going Public (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To get comfortable engaging people you don't know in meaningful conversation. Also, before you do the activity, take time to think about that person as someone created in God's image who desperately need Jesus.*

## **What do I need?**

Nothing!

## **What to do?**

Go to a restaurant and ask the server how you can pray for him/her. If possible, try to pray for that person while he/she is still there with you.

# Remembering the Gospel (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To be reminded of the Gospel once again.*

## What do I need?

A phone or computer, your notebook or piece of paper, and a pen

## What to do?

1. [Watch this video from the BibleProject](#). This can be done in a group or individually.
2. Write down answers to the following questions:
  - What is your reaction to the video?
  - What encourages you?
  - What is something from that video that is a new idea to you?
  - What should cause us to worship God?
  - Why should this compel us to tell others about Jesus?
3. Answer the question “What did you think about the video?”



# Prayer Walking (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To pray for the lost*

## **What do I need?**

Nothing!

## **What to do?**

1. Choose a place where you or someone in your small group lives, works, or plays.
2. Go to that place and pray over it. Here are some things you can pray for:
  - Pray for spiritual awakening.
  - Pray for God to show people of peace (Luke 10:6) who are open to hearing the Gospel or a bridge to others in that community.
  - Pray for boldness in sharing the Gospel.
  - Pray for it to be a place of blessing to others.
  - Pick a passage of Scripture and pray the truths found in that passage.
  - Pray the Lord's prayer for that place and those people.
  - Pray Ephesians 2: acknowledge the truth of verses 1-3 then pray that what is in verses 4-10 would come true for them.

# Plan an Event (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

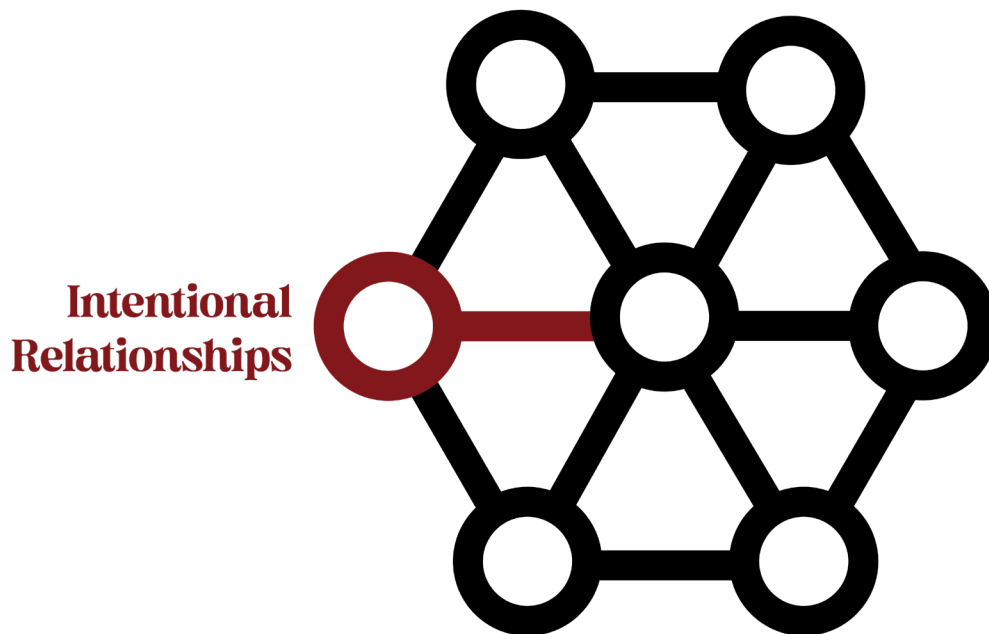
*To engage with people on your oikos map in a meaningful way.*

## **What to do?**

1. Plan an event—it can be large or small—to invite someone (or multiple people) from your oikos map.
2. You and your small group can plan it and carry it out together or you can do it separately.
3. Pray for one another and pray for the event.
4. Consider and plan what you can do to bring up the Gospel.
5. Meet afterward and pray for fruit to come from the event and discuss ways to continue what was started.



# Intentional Relationships



The Bible tells us that there were 120 people who consistently followed Jesus. Of the 120, there were 12 that He spent intentional time with teaching, modeling, sending, praying for, correcting, and more. Within the 12, there were 3 with whom Jesus revealed Himself on a different level. This was an intimate, deeper relationship.

As followers of Christ, we should recognize that God has given us people not just to satisfy our own needs and desires, but so that we can learn the meaning of friendship. In friendship, sometimes you take and sometimes you give. Sometimes you sacrifice—you give of yourself even when you're tired and don't feel like it. You do it because that is the example of Jesus and because in sacrificial giving, we learn to die to ourselves.

Being intentional in relationships means you don't just casually hang out, but you do things with purpose. You ask, "what would you have me do or say, Lord" when you are with people. Just having fun can be part of it, but it is not all that meaningful relationships are for.

Through this rhythm, there will be activities that you do on your own and some that you do with others both inside your group and outside your group. But your group will be your anchor throughout.



# Gospel Foundation (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To remember that each rhythm should be understood in the context of all other rhythms and that all of them depend on the Gospel.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible and your Ephesians 2 testimony. If you have not done that yet, it is the first activity under The Gospel and Evangelism.*

## What to do?

1. If you haven't already shared your Ephesians 2 testimony with your group, take turns doing so.
2. The go through the following questions together:
  - Read Ephesians 2:11-22.** Write down answers to the following questions:
    - Describe the collective aspect of our salvation that we see in this passage (in other words, how is our salvation not just about us individually but contains an “us” aspect to it?)
    - How does our salvation fit into a bigger plan that God is accomplishing?
  - Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.** Write down answers to the following questions:
    - Based on this passage, how should we view other Christians?
    - How does this passage help us avoid both of the following errors: a) idolizing relationships b) avoiding intentional relationships.
  - Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.** Write down answers to the following questions:
    - How does this passage help us understand the way we should view both Christians and non-Christians around us?
    - How does this passage help us not idolize comfort and security?
3. Answer the following questions based on the above questions:
  - What challenges you most in these passages?
  - How does the Gospel compel us to be more concerned about others than ourselves?
  - What boundaries does God's Word give us to avoid idolizing comfort and security?
4. Write down ways you need to pray for yourself based on what God's Word has taught you. Consider:
  - How do you need to be guarded?
  - What needs to change in your understanding?
  - What needs to change in your behavior?
  - Where do you need to trust and obey?

# Inner Circle (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To identify specific people you will consider over the next few months and, hopefully, beyond.*

## What do I need?

*Your Oikos map from the Evangelism Rhythm exercise. If you haven't made an oikos map, take a few minutes and make one using the instructions in the resources section.*

## What to do?

1. ID your 3: Identify three Christians who are in your life that you have the opportunity to mentor/influence.  
*Note: If you can't identify three, your focus over the course of this rhythm will be praying that you would find three people who fit that description. If there is no one who fits that description, your goal is to pray and seek out one person.*
2. Make your Inner Circle: Identify three people on your oikos map that you have the closest relationship to or you'd like to have the closest relationship to. Remake your map so that there is a circle around you that contains those three names plus the names of the three people you identified in the previous step.
3. Prayer Plan
  - Consider a specific prayer for the people of your Inner Circle. It could be a specific prayer from Scripture such as one of Paul's Prayers (can be found on page 70 in the resources section). Plan pray this for them by name.
  - Tell them you're committing to pray for them. Ask for something specific you can pray for over the next month.
  - A month later, check in and ask how to continue praying or what else you can pray for.
4. Share your Inner Circle with your group.

# The Why (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To understand the biblical reason behind intentional relationships.*

## **What do I need?**

*Your Bible*

## **What to do?**

1. In your small group, read Philippians 2:1-11.
2. Discuss (or, if you're doing this alone, write down the answer to) the following questions:
  - Describe the attitude we should have toward others.
  - How is the attitude described in this passage a uniquely Christian attitude?
  - How does this passage put the proper boundaries on relationships so that people do not become idols?

# Meaningful Act (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To do something intentional with or for others. Please keep in mind that the relationships are not the end goal of this rhythm. Relationships are a gift from God, but they can become idols (rather than gifts from God to be used for His glory). Part of the purpose of these meaningful acts is to enhance your relationship with others, but it is not the only purpose. The purpose is to consider others in light of who they are as God's creation and who we are in Christ. The purpose is not to have new best friends but to learn how to honor God in and through relationships.*

## What to do?

The goal is to plan one meaningful act for each person in your Inner Circle. Consider different types of meaningful acts:

- 1. Meaningful time:** Spending time with the person but being intentional with the time. This means that as you spend time with them, you are engaging with them and being fully present. Meaningful time could also mean thinking about the activity and choosing something meaningful to you, to the other person, or to both.
- 2. Meaningful words:** Write or say something meaningful. Spend time thinking through what should be said. It could be something encouraging or helpful, something to challenge them, something to offer hope, etc. Be specific and truthful as well as inspiring.
- 3. Meaningful gift:** Consider something that would have meaning to them. A meaningful gift could be meaningful because of what the gift actually is or simply because it was given.

Talk through your plans with your small group. Be as specific with your plans as possible. Give yourself deadlines (and share them with your group) for the purpose of accountability.

# Meaningful Conversation (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

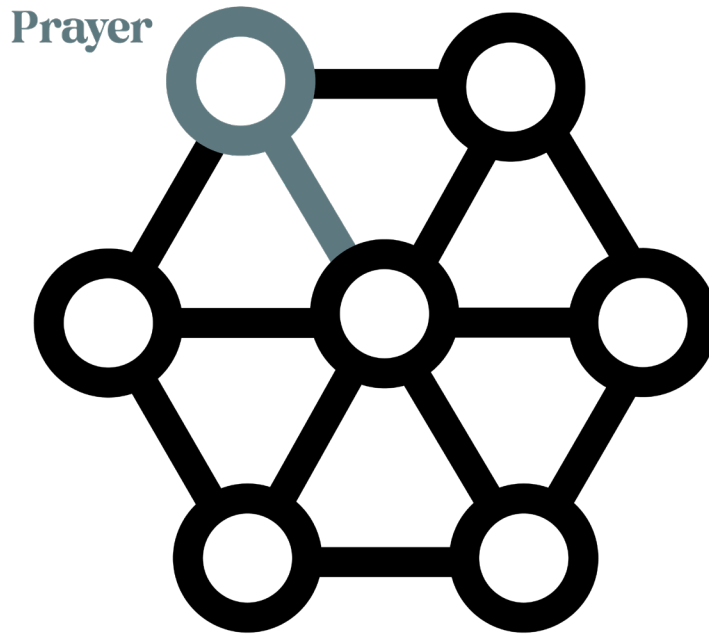
*To have conversations with intention and purpose. This could be done in conjunction with the previous activity.*

## What to do?

1. Plan a follow-up to the Meaningful Acts activity. Consider what type of conversation it should be. Consider the following:
  - Do you need to get to know the person? (in other words, is it someone you know well or could this be a “get to know you better” conversation)
  - Is the person a Christian or not?
  - Do you have a meaningful connection to the person already that you can use as a springboard?
  - Is there a specific way you need to encourage or challenge this person?
  - What element of God’s Word needs to be brought into the conversation?
2. Often we get nervous about meaningful conversations because we’re unsure of what to say or how to say it. Have an idea of what you should say, but be more intentional about the questions you ask. Thoughtful and meaningful questions lead to thoughtful and meaningful discussions. Think about what questions you could ask that would lead to a thoughtful and meaningful discussion.

*Tip: look through the Questions In A Box app for examples of meaningful questions*
3. Plan when you will get together with each of the people in order to talk to them. Be as specific with your plans as possible. Give yourself deadlines (and share with your group) for the purpose of accountability. Share your plans with your group and pray before.
4. Plan a time to get together with your group to give updates, celebrate, and pray for the people you interacted with.

# Abiding Prayer



Prayer is when we talk to God. That should be a mind-blowing concept—that we can talk to God, the Creator of the Universe, the Judge of all mankind, the One who is providentially carrying out all His plans throughout our history. It is a privilege. It is also a command. We are told to pray. Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow as an example of how tenacious we should be in prayer.

Jesus demonstrates the importance of prayer by going away to talk to His Father. He teaches how to pray, the Gospel of John records a long prayer of Jesus. In prayer, we are humbled before God, we are strengthened for the tasks we are given, we acknowledge our need in all things, we get to ask and then watch God work through our prayers.

Throughout this rhythm, you'll be encouraged to pray in different ways for different people. There will be time to pray alone and time to pray together: to confess, petition, and worship. In all of it, lean hard into the Father who hears you, loves you, and answers prayer. Pray as one who trusts in God.

# Lead Us to Repentance (Individual Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To set the stage for a deeper focus on prayer.*

## **What do I need?**

*Your Bible, notebook, and the Lead Us to Repentance exercise in the Resources section on page 72.*

## **What to do?**

Go through the document and write down anything from the prompts that specifically stands out to you.

# Prayer Routine (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To identify specific ways to pray for different types of people over the next few months and beyond.*

## What do I need?

*Your notebook and your Inner Circle from the Prayer rhythm activity.*

## What to do?

You may want to break this up into several sessions.

In each of the categories below, list out people and ways to pray. Make a schedule of when you'll pray for each of the people/areas below. Consider using an app like [Echo Prayer](#) to help you keep the schedule:

### 1. Self:

- What prayers do you need for yourself? Write out at least one thing in each of the following categories:
  - Things to overcome
  - Things to start
  - Things to persevere in
  - Things to remember

### 2. Inner Circle & Small Group:

- Ask them for specific things to pray for.
- Pray Ephesians 3:14-21 for them as part of your prayer routine.

### 3. Church

- Commit to pray for specific people and ministries in the church.
- Pray for your Community Group. If your Community Group doesn't have a systematic way to pray for one another, consider leading that charge.
- Pray for deacons, elders, and other leaders using [www.perkinsville.org/staff-and-leadership](http://www.perkinsville.org/staff-and-leadership).

### 4. Government and Leaders

- The Bible instructs us to pray for those in authority (2 Timothy 2:1-4). To find out who your local and state government leaders are, you can use the website [usa.gov/elected-officials](http://usa.gov/elected-officials).

### 5. Boone and Beyond

- Pray for Perkinsville Mission Partners. You can find them listed at [www.perkinsville.org/mission-partners](http://www.perkinsville.org/mission-partners).
- Go to [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net) and choose a people group to commit to pray for. Go to [prayercast.com](http://prayercast.com) and find the nation of the people group (that you chose at Joshua Project) to pray for.



# Pray (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To pray as a group for those on your prayer list.*

## **What do I need?**

*Your prayer schedule/list from the previous activity*

## **What to do?**

In your small group, take turns praying out loud for the people on your list. You could pray for these people groups each time you meet.

# Prayer Activity (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To pray outside of the normal meeting time as a small group.*

## What do I need?

The [Holy Here app](#) to track your prayer walk

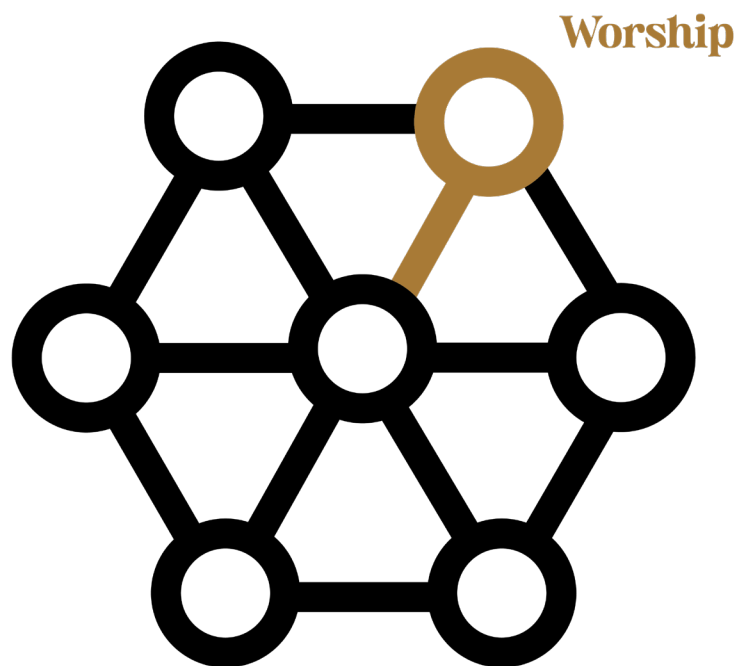
## What to do?

1. Download the Holy Here app (search Holy Here in your phone's app store). This is an app that allows you to track your prayer walks. It keeps record of prayer walks that anyone does using the app and keeps them recorded for all to see.
2. Choose any or all of the following to do together as a group:
  - a. Pick a place that is important to you: somewhere where you live, work, or play. Prayer walk around the place praying for those you encounter there.
  - b. Prayer walk at specific places in Boone such as King Street, App State campus, or places of local government.
  - c. As you prayer walk, turn on the app to track your walk.

*Note: This does not record any personal information, but tracks all places that anyone who has used the app has prayer-walked.*
  - d. Attend 24-hours of prayer at Perkinsville as a group. This usually happens in January every year. If you are going through this at a different time of year, maybe plan a dedicated prayer time with some other people.



# Gathering Together (Worship)



The rhythm of worship is about more than gathering to sing or personal expressions of worship. The big emphasis is on the importance of gathering together as a church. Hebrews 10:25 warns us not to neglect gathering together.

We gather for many reasons, but at the center of our gathering is worship of God. We gather to worship. We worship because God alone is worthy of worship. We are rehearsing for when our worship of God becomes eternal and face to face.

We need the body of Christ and the body of Christ needs us. Each one of us, individually, makes up the body of Christ. God has given us everything and everyone we need. By taking our eyes off of ourselves and putting them on Christ, our Head, we function together in a supernatural way as an act of glorious worship.

The activities of this rhythm are a little bit different. It is more rooted in the study of a book since the action part of gathering together happens weekly already. We want to better understand the why and what behind our gathering together.

# What is True Worship? (Small Group Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To think about the concept of worship in general before applying it corporately.*

## **What do I need?**

*A Bible to follow along, a notebook to write down your thoughts, and the link to this sermon: [Spotify Link](#) || [YouTube Link](#).*



## **What to do?**

Listen to the sermon called True Worship. In this sermon, John Piper explains why Jesus is utterly central in true worship by looking at John 4:20–24. Take notes on your main thoughts and takeaways. This can be discussed in a small group or just done alone.

# Corporate Worship (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To understand the purpose of corporate gathering. For many of the discipleship rhythms, we are better at learning about them and not as good as putting them into action, hence the activities are a variety of learning and doing. The focus of this rhythm is on the gathering of the church (in any context). This is something we do without always understanding the why behind it. Therefore, this time, the rhythm will focus on learning. Of course, please continue being active in the church by gathering for worship, serving, and discipleship!*

## What do I need?

The book *Love Your Church* by Tony Merida and the [supplemental discussion guide](#).

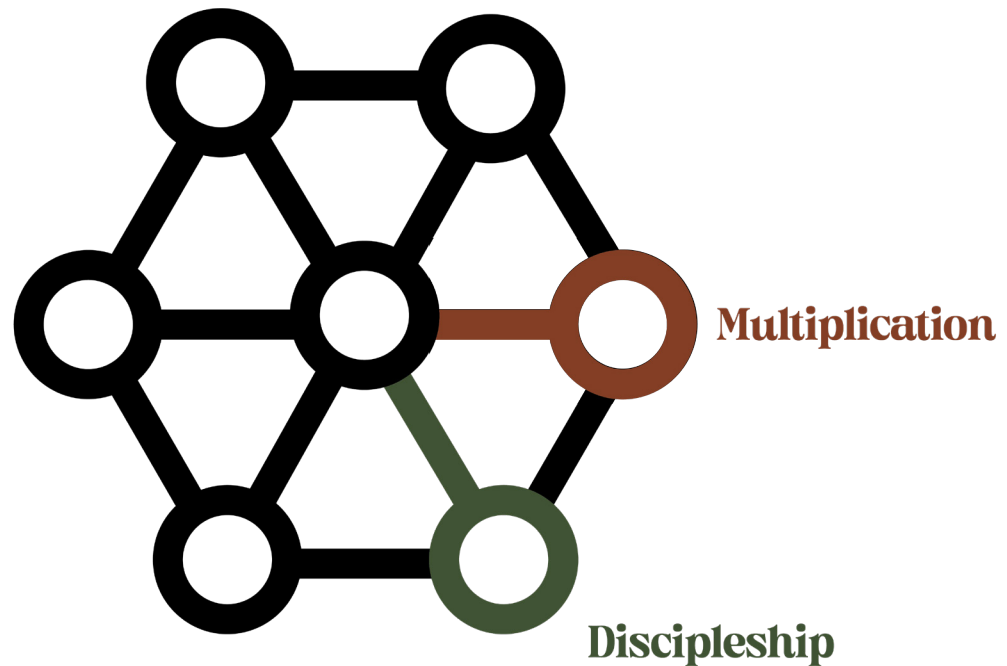


## What to do?

Either on your own or in a small group, make a plan for going through the book. Decide how many chapters you'll discuss at each meeting. Make sure to read the chapters in advance, then use the discussion guide to go through the chapters at each meeting. The book is a short and easy read but should provide good discussion on our purpose in the church and how to live out that purpose.



# Multiplication & Discipleship



Unlike the other rhythms, these two are put together and the bulk of the ROAD Map material is in these two rhythms. Also, unlike the other rhythms, you will probably want to only do the material presented here and not try to combine with anything else.

The purpose of the material in these rhythms is to understand yourself better, but in community with some trusted brothers or sisters. And through understanding yourself better, develop a fuller picture of the good works that God prepared beforehand for you to walk in (Ephesians 2:10).

The reason this is two rhythms is because of the amount of material, but also because at the end of this, you will be encouraged to consider specific action steps to take which may involve leading a group yourself (multiplication) which then leads to greater discipleship. It also is attempting to give you a picture of what discipleship can look like by considering all aspects of your life.

Each element has both an individual activity and small group activity.



A few things to keep in mind:

- Unless otherwise instructed, everyone should answer every question. If time is an issue, there are questions in red that you should prioritize.
- It's important to commit to listening to one another as each is answering the questions. This is how you can help one another to learn and grow, but it's also a good habit to develop.
- It will be important to do the homework and come prepared so that you get everything out of it that you can.

# Inner Self: Gospel History (Individual Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To prepare for the initial meeting.*

## **What do I need?**

*Your Bible, your journal, and Who I Am Diagram on page 75 in the Resources section.*

## **What to do?**

1. Review the *Who I Am Diagram*. This will structure how the material is presented in these two rhythms.
2. Read Ephesians 1:1-14. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
3. In your journal, write the answer to the following question based on the above passage:  
*For what purpose were we saved?*

# Inner Self: Gospel History (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To think about how God brought us to salvation and how we grew in that.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible and your journal*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians 1 reading.
2. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. When did you first start attending church?
  - b. What made you start?
  - c. When do you first remember understanding the Gospel?  
*Note: Not necessarily in a saving way, but just in some sense.*
    - How old were you?
  - d. From whom did you learn what it means to be a follower of Christ (either by explicit teaching or example)?
    - How old were you?
  - e. Open question: What do you think is most important for someone to know and do when he/she first begins following Christ in order to grow in his/her walk with Christ?

# Inner Self: Personality (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*Understand something about your personality and how we should think about personalities.*

## What do I need?

Your Bible, your journal, and the [Enneagram](#).



## What to do?

1. Read Ephesians 1:15-23. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.  
*Note: This will be something you do as part of every individual activity. What you write could be a summary in your own words, an observation, a question, anything that comes to mind. The main purpose is to pause and engage thoughtfully with each verse. Writing slows our brains down enough to think.*
2. In your journal, write the answer to the following question based on the above passage:  
*Based on Paul's prayer, in what ways do we need to grow in light of the salvation described in v. 1-14?*
3. Take the Enneagram. At the link, click FREE ENNEAGRAM TEST
  - Something to keep in mind as you take these tests: in order to get more accurate results, you need to be brutally honest. Don't answer the questions based on who you would like to be, but who you are—good, bad, and ugly. Ask someone who knows you well if you get stuck.
4. Read more about your Enneagram type in the email you get after taking your test.
5. Make sure that you understand the gist of the Enneagram by carefully reading through your personality type. Get a good feel for what is meant by terms such as “core weakness” and “core longing”. Understand these basic elements:
  - The Enneagram focuses on core motivations rather than behavior or personality (in the typical sense).
  - There aren't “good” and “bad” types.
  - It essentially says: this is who you are. It can look a certain way when you're healthy (emotionally, mentally, spiritually, etc.), but it can have a negative side when things are not going well. But they're both sides of the same coin.
  - Core weakness shows where you tend to go in thought or behavior when things are not going well whether because of excess stress, not walking well with Christ, etc.
  - Your core longing shows what you are desiring deep inside and what you truly need in order to be satisfied. Core longings are more than just desires; they are things that satisfy the deeper part of who we are. Often, we look in the

## **Multiplication & Discipleship**

wrong places for these satisfactions. For instance, maybe we look to others for validation and identity instead of looking to what Scripture says is our identity.

Understanding our core longing can help us understand why we do certain things and also help us understand temptations that we may uniquely deal with.

6. Personality tests are not foolproof and are not perfect windows into one's soul. However, they do help us to consider a little more fully how God created us and the strengths we have that can be used for His Kingdom through serving others and growing as individuals. They can also help show us our weaknesses - things that can cause us to turn away from God, turn more toward ourselves than to others, and lead us deeper into sin. Although not perfect, the Enneagram is a helpful tool to help us begin to understand ourselves as God made us in order to know better how God wants us to live based on how He made us. Rather than focus on surface elements of how we portray ourselves or look on the outside, the Enneagram tries to help us think through the motivation behind our actions and attitudes; it helps us get to the core of who we are.

# Inner Self: Personality (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To understand how your personality plays out practically.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, Personality Tests Results, and [Summary of 9 Enneagram Types](#)*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity part of the Individual Activity.
2. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. **Pick one of these two scenarios to discuss:**
    1. You walk into a group of people who are trying to make a fairly big decision (it could be at work, church, family, or anywhere). What part of the decision-making process do you want to be a part of (if any of it)?
    2. You're going through your normal day, making decisions, thinking through things, etc. When you are doing these things on your own, what does that look like in your head? Is there a group of people that you discuss things with? A single voice? Other?
  - b. **How does your response to the scenario presented relate to aspects of your personality type?**
  - c. How have you seen the strengths of your personality play out? How do you see God using your personality strengths in a positive way (for yourself and others)?
  - d. **If you were Satan, how would you exploit the weaknesses of your personality?**
    - Have you seen that play out some?
  - e. **How should Christ satisfy your "core longing"? Think beyond the surface level/obvious answer – go as deep to the heart of the matter as you can.**
  - f. Examine different things that you're required to do in your life (vocation, family life, community). Based on your personality, what things are predictably challenging and what things are you able to excel in (get input from the group as well)?

*Note: The purpose of this question is not to make excuses for hard things or to suggest that they should be eliminated. It is meant to bring about a level of self-awareness and help us realize that we cannot be good at everything and some of the stresses of life come in these areas. Likewise, there are areas that we're drawn to and excel in that others might view as daunting. Maybe changes do need to be made or maybe we've been pursuing something because we thought we should for different reasons, but we're just spinning our wheels. This could obviously go deep and long, so don't feel like you have to mine everything out of this one question. This type of self-reflection will be a recurring thing.*

# Inner Self: Sin (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To see the effects of sin in us.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and the Inner-Self: Sin Exercise on page 76 in the Resources section.*

## What to do?

1. Throughout the week, pray Paul's prayer from Ephesians 1:15-23 for a different person from each of the following categories each day.
  - Someone from your group (also ask him/her if there are any specific things to pray for)
  - Someone that fits in such categories as "gets on my nerves", "immature", "frustrating", "enemy", etc. It doesn't have to be someone you know personally.
2. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
3. In your journal, write the answer to the following question based on the above passage:  
*According to this text, what was true of you and what is true about you now?*
4. Complete the Inner-Self: Sin Exercise on page 76.

# Inner Self: Sin (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

To understand the roots of sin in our lives.

## What do I need?

Your Bible, your journal, Personality Tests Results, and [Summary of 9 Enneagram Types](#)

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Read this together:

*The goal of this time is not to lay all our individual sins on the table. The hope is that, by already having thought through these individually, you can now talk about these things in a broader sense that helps get to the root. So the goal is really to try to think through some of the roots of our sin.*

*This should be a hard topic. It should really capture the first part of Ephesians 2. The point is not to leave defeated, but to recognize the sinfulness that still exists within us and that we battle. The Enemy wants us to think that hiding it is the best option. But, like Adam and Eve, only when we are exposed to God can we truly be healed by Him. What great grace God has shown us starting in verse 4!*
3. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. What was most challenging about this exercise? What was most beneficial?
  - b. Was there anything that you can relate back to personality (not that it can just be chalked up to personality, but is something that could be exploited)?
  - c. Open question: What lies do we believe that make us, in the church, reluctant to admit to sin beyond surface level, “acceptable” sins?
    - Of the things listed, have you hit on the reason(s) for yourself?
  - d. Think about some of the big ideas/themes from the Individual Activity to help answer these questions: What are the things that you struggle with that you might call “besetting sins” or “strongholds”? Those things that seem ready to pounce from the moment you wake up. The root sin that results in the actions and attitudes.

*Note: If a behavior was named, try to go deeper to the root of that behavior. Also, don’t just go for the “big sins”, but consider that any sin, once it takes root and grows, is deadly and destructive. We’re used to identifying a specific behavior like getting drunk or sexual sins of the mind, like lust. But pride and selfishness are just as destructive in our lives and as they work themselves into our other relationships.*
  - e. What good longings/desires are you trying to satisfy when you sin?

*Note: Tracing desires can point to root sin. What desire is the sin trying to meet? What dissatisfaction is trying to be satisfied?*
  - f. Does anyone in the group have a testimony of God delivering him/her from this stronghold-type sin?



## **Multiplication & Discipleship**

*Note: By focusing on specific sins as we often do in accountability groups/ partners, you can end up just doing behavior modification where you confess the same sin over and over. When God reveals the root sin, the symptomatic, or outward, act. Additionally, not everyone will have something to share and maybe no one will and that's fine.*

4. Read Ephesians 2:4-10 and pray a prayer of thanksgiving.

# Inner Self: Blind Spots (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*Utilizing others in the body of Christ to help us see our shortcomings and sin.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and Blind Spots exercise on page 78 in the Resources section.*

## What to do?

1. Throughout the week, pray that each person in your group would overcome the sins mentioned at your last gathering, and that they would walk in God's grace and forgiveness; not in shame and defeat. Pray that God would reveal the root sin in their lives.
2. Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
3. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*Describe the change in relationship that we have undergone (hint: not just our relationship with God).*
4. Complete the Blind Spots exercise on page 78 on in the Resources section.

# Inner Self: Blind Spots (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To understand the roots of sin in our lives.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and results from the Blind Spots exercise.*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. Was there any overlap in some of the things you wrote in the Individual Activity (either about yourself or ways you view others) and what you heard from others?
    - Were there some gaps that you realized when you did the Individual Activity?
  - b. What was your reaction to the responses you got from others? (surprised, angry, not surprised, hurt, indifferent, etc.)

*Note: If it was fairly indifferent or thoughts of “not that big a deal”, pursue that a little more. This is probably an indication that it actually is a blind spot. If it wasn’t a big deal to the person, it wouldn’t need to be brought up.*
  - c. Was there anything that was either confirmed or clarified from the previous week?
    - What sin are these blind spots rooted in? Get input from the group as well.
  - d. What are the different ways that these blind spots affect the different circles (either that you have seen upon reflection or that you can imagine now)?
  - e. Are there any action points as a result of things learned? Changes that need to be made, people to talk to, etc.?

*Note: If there isn’t time for this question, this can be done during the Individual Activity for next time.*

# Inner Self: The Gift—Who Are You Now That You Have the Spirit? (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*Understanding how God has gifted us.*

## What do I need?

Your Bible, your journal, and [Spiritual Gifts Survey](#)



## What to do?

1. If you didn't get to action points from the Blind Spots discussion, take time to work on that. Share your action points and pray for each person to follow through.
2. Read Ephesians 3:1-13. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
3. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*What can we understand about stewardship and ministry (not just for Paul, but ourselves)?*
4. Take the Spiritual Gifts Survey.
  - When you take the test, just like with the personality test, it's important that you be brutally honest with yourself about yourself. Don't answer what you think the "right" answer should be, but what is actually true. Ask for advice from a close friend if needed.

# Inner Self: The Gift—Who Are You Now That You Have the Spirit? (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

To further understand our gifting.

## What do I need?

Your Bible, your journal, results from the Spiritual Gifts Survey, [Beyond Personality Recording](#), and the BBC Radio Talk: “Beyond Personality—Mere Men” on page 81.



## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Read this together:

*Paul seems to distinguish between a gift and the stewardship of that gift, or the administration of that gift. Another word for administration, or stewardship, is ministry. We will return to the topic of gifting in a different week and further consider the administration—how this works itself out in other areas such as within the home, within the church body, etc. Today, the focus is more on the gift itself—how gifting speaks to aspects of who we are. The past two weeks helped us consider what things look like in us when God’s good design has been distorted and corrupted. This week looks at the flip side: how does the Spirit breathe life into us so that we are transformed from desiring, feeling, and thinking like rebels against God to desiring, feeling, and thinking like children of God? What is that gift of grace that is not just our salvation that we receive, but something for us to steward—to use—and how does it affect who we are?*
3. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. How does the modern understanding of “church” and “vocational ministry” make it challenging to think of yourself as belonging to one of these categories?
  - b. Open question: What’s the difference between thinking of gifting in the sense of who we are versus just what we do?
  - c. Look at your results from the test when answering this question:
    - Look at the things you do in life, especially the things that you excel at and really find purpose in (whether it’s at work, hobby, home, church, etc.). Now look at the descriptions of your test result (ignore the “title” if it is a

## Multiplication & Discipleship

hindrance). Do you see overlap? In what way?

- What are some ways that Satan could minimize the fruitfulness or effectiveness of your gifting? Or what might he make you believe to silence your gifting? Consider:
  - Think about some of the core aspects of it and how they could be twisted into a sinful misuse.
  - Based on the core aspects, what would be some indications that you're not in a healthy place? For example: when a shepherd isn't caring about people.
- This is not a question: We'll return to this in a later week, but begin considering what it looks like when the Gospel is combined with your gift.

4. Listen to the Beyond Personality clip while also reading along. As you listen/read, underline the things that really hit home or stand out.

*Note: The first few paragraphs are not in the audio clip, so someone can read them out loud before starting the clip)*

- What stuck out to you and what ideas here are helpful when considering how to put the past 5 weeks together and wrap up The Inner Self?

*Note: If time is an issue this can be homework. Then, post in a group chat the ideas that stuck out or that resonated.*

# Outward Self: Interests (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To begin to think about how our Inner Self displays itself practically in our lives.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible and your journal*

## What to do?

1. Read Ephesians 3:14-21. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
2. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*What do the riches of His glory grant us?*
3. Prepare for your next get-together: Think of something you've done at any time in your life (accomplished, made, created) that you're especially proud of and represents something about you. Be prepared to describe it or show it (if possible).

# Outward Self: Interests (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To discuss and demonstrate how God has made us.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and your Show and Tell topic/item*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Read this together:

*We are moving to Outward Self; this is where we look at the first circle of our lives where our inner self aspects play out. Some might think of this as our “private life”. The reason we don’t use that term is because it implies that it’s only ours and has nothing to do with others except maybe immediate family. We hope to consider how even these aspects of our lives as part of God’s formation of us and are meant to be used for His greater purposes.*
3. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. **Think back to when you were a kid: what would the perfect day have looked like? Draw it in your journal then explain to everyone what you drew.**

*Note: This isn’t to see how well you draw; it’s just a different way of thinking about ideas and expressing them. You can draw it any way you want—an actual scene drawn out, representative objects, or even a chart or table. Take 3 minutes for this exercise.*
  - b. How did some of your childhood interests morph and change over time and which ones remain (although they probably look very different)?
  - c. **Think about your childhood interests. If you had to pick ones that you’d pass on to a younger person—for example, your child, grandchild, a niece/nephew, or a younger person you know at church—which ones immediately come to mind?**
    - **Why do you think it’s important for you to pass those along?**
  - d. **Do Show and/or Tell and answer the following questions after you present:**
    - What interests does this represent and can you trace it back to one of the interests you mentioned that you had as a kid?
    - **What part of your personality and gifting does this satisfy?**

*Note: “Satisfy” here is referring to the joy or pleasure you get from doing this. So, the intent is to tie it back to a root part of who we are.*
  - e. How do your interests play out in your home?

*Note: This is not a question just for someone who is married/has kids; it’s more a question about what you do to play out/satisfy your interests.*
  - f. How do your interests involve others?
  - g. **Open question: What does the world tell us about understanding and pursuing**



## **Multiplication & Discipleship**

interests? What are the main considerations and restraints?

- How does the concept of biblical stewardship give a fuller and greater purpose for interests?

# Outward Self: Personal Time (Individual Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To assess our personal time and how we use it.*

## **What do I need?**

*Your Bible, your journal, and Outward Self: Personal Time exercise on page 83 in the Resources section.*

## **What to do?**

1. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
2. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*What is the purpose of and what goal is accomplished in the church through the variety of giftings that God gives to the church?*
3. Do the Personal Time exercise.

# Outward Self: Personal Time (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To understand that our personal time is one of many things given by God for us to steward.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible and your journal*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Read this together:

*We are defining “personal time” as time outside of work/school where there are no external forces dictating what you must do with that time—often these are early mornings, evenings, and weekends. We’re trying to consider that next level of the circle where we are who we are in private.*
3. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. If there were no limitations (time, money, family, job, etc.), what would you enjoy spending a whole day doing if you could choose?
    - What prevents you from doing those things more often or even all the time?
    - For you, what are the “musts” in a day (or even think in terms of a week). What’s most influenced you when it comes to those “musts” and what they are?
  - b. Who was most formative in teaching you spiritual disciplines (see homework exercise for definition of “spiritual discipline”) either through actual teaching or just example? How does that teaching/example show up in your current disciplines and what you emphasize?
  - c. If we think of time, interests, and abilities as something given to us by God to use for a purpose, how does that affect the way we think about our time and what’s important?
    - For example: If we have this innate sense that we should work, work, work or we’re wasting time, is God pleased with that? Maybe so, maybe not. When we live like that, what else are we neglecting that God has given us to steward?
  - d. Open question: Does anyone in the group have examples of ways they’ve learned to make the most of their time to accomplish things that might normally get dismissed because of not having enough time?
  - e. Are there things you see that you could or should do differently with your free time based on today’s discussion? Share and write these in your journal. If there isn’t time, do this as homework.

# Outward Self: Your Formation (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To consider how our past has shaped our present.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and Outward Self: Your Formation exercise on page 83.*

## What to do?

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
2. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*Describe the dichotomy and difference between who you were (and who the world still is) and who you are now able to be. And what does being “renewed in the spirit of your mind” have to do with it?*
3. Do the Your Formation exercise.

# Outward Self: Your Formation (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To discuss how our past has shaped our present and to think about our future.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, Personal Time exercise results, and [The Gun Lap Audio Clip](#)*



## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Go through the following discussion questions:

- a. **Think back to what kind of home you grew up in. In your journal, draw a representation of what comes to mind when you think of it.**

*Note: This isn't to see how well you draw; it's just a different way of thinking about ideas and expressing them. You can draw it any way you want—an actual scene drawn out, representative objects, or even a chart or table. Take 3 minutes for this exercise.*

- b. **Of those things, which element had the most impact on you (doesn't have to be just positive or just negative; speaking in general)?**

*Note: One way to tell is, which element did you focus on most? Parent relationship? Environment of the home? Activities/things happening? A specific event?*

*Note: If you are only doing the red questions, you can combine this question with the next red questions.*

- c. What are some positive memories from growing up (in general, not just home life)?
- d. Are there any family traditions you remember?
  - Are there some practices you still do today that you learned as a child?
- e. **What are some life events that shaped you. They could be positive or negative.**
- f. **Listen to an audio clip of Robert Wolgemuth talking about the idea of culling that he writes about in his book *The Gun Lap*.**

*Note: Before answering the question below, make sure that the idea of "culling" is clear to everyone. If not, discuss that first.*

- **Look at the Individual Activity: what are things you need to cull?**

*Note: These might not be things that you carried with you, but maybe you're reacting against some things which can equally shape you.*

# Public Self: The Body of Christ, the Church (Individual Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To think about how we fit within the Body of Christ.*

## **What do I need?**

*Your Bible, your journal, and Public Self: The Body of Christ, the Church exercise on page 85.*

## **What to do?**

1. Read Ephesians 5:1-21. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
2. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*How does Paul use the idea of darkness and light to describe what the lives of those in the church should look like?*
3. Do the (Church) Body exercise.

# Public Self: The Body of Christ, the Church (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

To discuss how you fit into the Body of Christ based on how God has made you, your experience, etc.

## What do I need?

Your Bible, your journal, and The (Church) Body exercise on page 85.

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.

2. Read this together:

*We are moving on to Public Self. We will be focusing on two elements of church. This is where we see the immediate working out of the good gifts God has given us. It does not imply that these gifts should only be used within the four walls of a building, but to realize that God's purpose for church extends further into the world.*

3. Go through the following discussion questions:

- a. Do this exercise in your journal: Look up at the sky (go outside for a few minutes if you're inside). Reflect on what you see and write down what thoughts come to mind as you look at it.

*Note: The exercise is purposefully vague to allow for a variety of responses, so if further direction is asked for, just encourage them to write whatever thoughts come to mind about the sky. Take 3-4 minutes for this exercise, then share what's written. You'll refer to this exercise later.*

- b. How long have you been a church member/attender (of any church during your life) and what types of churches have you been a part of (size, denomination, demographic, etc)?
- c. Open question: How would you describe the purpose of the church (the ideal; not specific to your church. In other words, not your church that you are a part of, but church generally speaking)?
- d. Open question: How does the Bible's illustration of the church as a body help with the idea of unity and diversity?
  - How does the initial exercise help demonstrate this?
- e. Open question: How do you understand your purpose in the church and the church's purpose for you?

*Note: You can answer generally for anyone or specifically for yourself.*
- f. What are different ways that you've been shaped, helped, and discipled by others in the church over time? If there are a lot of different ways you can think of, focus on some of the most impactful.
- g. Look at the mentor chart: How did the process of filling it out go for you?

### **Multiplication & Discipleship**

- Were some sections easier to fill out than others? Why?
- How did you answer Part 3? For reference: Who, if any, of these would you consider if you were going to start a discipleship group, join a community group, or serve alongside in another capacity either inside or outside the church?



# Public Self: The Body of Christ and Gifts (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To begin thinking about the application of gifts.*

## What do I need?

Your Bible, your journal, and [Sermon on spiritual gifts](#)



## What to do?

1. Begin praying about next steps after you're finished going through the discipleship group material. Will you continue with the same group? Lead a new group? Both?
2. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
3. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*How does this passage teach us that marriage is a gift to be stewarded for God's purposes and not something that exists merely for our personal fulfillment?*
4. Listen to or read the sermon on spiritual gifts.
5. Write the answer to this question in your journal: "What's something that you would want to do even if there was no pay - something that you consider worth sacrificing your time and energy to do; not from a sense of duty, but from a sense of longing to do it? Something you'd do even amidst resistance and no praise."
6. Ask a few trusted brothers/sisters ways that they've seen you encourage and strengthen others' faith (or encourage those without faith to have faith). In your journal, write their responses.

# Public Self: The Body of Christ and Gifts (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To discuss how your gifts have fitted you for something within the Body of Christ.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, Spiritual Gifts Survey results (from Inward Self: The Gift on page 44), and Reflections and Responses from Individual Activity questions*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. Open question: Was there anything in the John Piper sermon that was different from what you typically hear about spiritual gifts?  
*Note: If someone hasn't read or listened, take 5 minutes and read the first two sections (down to "Spirit-Wrought Faith Encouraging Others").*
  - b. Questions about your gifting from others:
    - What responses did you get from the homework question?
    - Is there anything else you can add to that list that you remember?
      - Were there times when you were a vessel for bringing faith to someone who wasn't a believer?
    - What have others told you is your gifting in the past?
    - What do others in the group think?
  - c. What gifts of other people do you especially need to fill weaknesses and gaps that you have? This can be based on specific responsibilities you have or just in a general sense.  
*Note: If needed/helpful, the group can give input into this.*
3. Group Exercise:
  - First, as a group, pick an event/task that is normal in the church life rhythm, but is not necessarily a weekly thing (if you're having trouble thinking of one, choose from the following: a cookout, a mission trip to Boston, a community outreach).
  - Second, think about people with different gifts might apply his/her gifting to the event/task that you chose. In other words, how might this person use the event/task for a greater purpose based on his/her gifting?
  - Open question: How is this different from other ways that people might apply the idea of gifting in this setting?

# Commissioned Self: Vocation (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To begin thinking about calling.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, Short passage on Vocation on page 87, [Article about the Bible and Vocation](#), and [Podcast on Understanding God's Call on Our Lives](#)*



## What to do?

1. Keep praying about next steps after you're finished going through the discipleship group material.
2. Read Ephesians 6:1-9. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.  
In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*How does God use authority (both having it and being under it) to sanctify us based on what Paul teaches in this passage?*
3. Read the short passage on Vocation.
4. Read the article about the Bible and Vocation. Read at least until "Freedom in Christ". If able, read the whole article.
5. Listen to the podcast on understanding God's call on our lives.

# Commissioned Self: Vocation (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To gain greater understanding of how everything comes together to create your calling.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and Vocation Homework sheet*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.

2. Read this together:

*We are moving on to Commissioned Self. This is where we consider how God has uniquely enabled us to engage the world not just with the Gospel message (which we're all called to do), but by using the gifts, talents, interests, and abilities as God intended for us to do. The question this seeks to answer is: "If you take all the previous circles and put them fully into action, what would it look like?"*

*The word "vocation" is just another word for "calling". Often it gets limited to just a paid job, but it has a much broader application and meaning to describe our larger, specific purpose in life that can include our jobs, but is not limited to just a job.*

3. Go through the following discussion questions:

- a. When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up? Do you remember why?
- b. Answer all of these questions about your occupation at once (in other words, don't go around the circle for each question, but each person answers all the questions before moving on to the next person):
  - What's your occupation and how did that come about? If you're still a student (or recently were), what occupation are you pursuing? If you're retired, talk about what your main occupation was.
  - What led you to it?
  - What makes you good at it?
- c. When answering this question, think about what you've been taught to believe; it doesn't necessarily mean that you agree with it right now:
  - What have you been taught to believe about enjoying what you do for a living? Whether it's something you were explicitly told or an attitude you grew up around.

*Note: The question is not about what people think now, but how they were raised.*

- d. There are different ways that people think about enjoying our work or enjoying our service to God. The following are some of the ways people see enjoyment in relationship to work/service:
  - Joy and work/service are compatible

## Multiplication & Discipleship

- Joy and work/service are contradictory
  - Joy in work/service is unnecessary
  - Joy in work/service can be a helpful indicator (meaning joy or lack of joy tells us something important)
  - Joy in work/service can be a sign of Idolatry
  - Other?
- e. Which of the six options above represent how you think about enjoyment in work and service to God?
- f. Open question: What were some of your big takeaways from the article and podcast about work and calling? Were there any ideas about work and calling that they challenged?
- g. Open question: How does the passage from Return of the King help us think about vocation and our motivation (if needed, read through the parts in bold together)?

*Note: One of the big ideas here is that we can be tricked into not being content with what we have and what we're doing. We might not believe that God has gifted us with what we have for where we are. Instead, we can start to believe that we should be the best and most influential. This belief diminishes the value of where we are and those we currently influence; not because we might be influencing a future president unawares, but because the future local florist has as much value as a future president.*

# Commissioned Self: Beyond (Individual Activity)

## Purpose

*To consider what next steps could be for you as you walk in your calling.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, and Commissioned Self: Beyond exercise on page 88.*

## What to do?

1. Keep praying about next steps after you've finished going through the discipleship group material.
2. Read Ephesians 6:10-24. Write verse by verse thoughts in your journal/notebook.
3. In your journal, write the answer to the following prompt based on the above passage:  
*For what purpose do we have these things that Paul refers to as the "whole armor of God"? And for what purpose do we see prayer in this passage?*
4. Do Beyond exercise.

# Commissioned Self: Beyond (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To think through concrete ways to walk out your calling.*

## What do I need?

*Your Bible, your journal, Beyond exercise, and Who I Am diagram on page 75.*

## What to do?

1. Read your answers to the question from the Ephesians reading part of the Individual Activity.
2. Go through the following discussion questions:
  - a. What keeps people from walking in faith and obedience in the works that God has prepared beforehand? Which statement do you most identify with (either right now or at other points in your life):
    - “I’ve always thought that doing something God called me to meant working for a church or becoming a missionary (in other words, I have to quit what I’m doing now)”
    - “I’ve known what God has called me to and created me for, but I’ve been afraid”
    - “I’ve never thought about it before”
    - “I didn’t/don’t see how I can do that in my life as it is now” (Either because there are things that need to change or I need help thinking through it)
    - Other
  - b. In Genesis 25:8, it says that Abraham died old and content. When you are an old man/woman and you stand back and survey your life, what would bring you a sense of satisfaction?
    - What areas in the circles need work now in order for that to happen?
  - c. Taking the ideas of gifting, talent, experience, personality, etc., what are things you (and the group) can see that God has created you to do/be a part of?
    - This can be specific in terms of a job or task or it can be general (such as being an encouragement to people who need it or being an evangelist).  
*Note: For this exercise, each person should answer for him/herself and then one other person should either affirm or add to what’s said.*
  - d. Share what you wrote for the Individual Activity.

# Commissioned Self: Next Steps (Individual Activity)

## **Purpose**

*To get specific in planning out your Next Steps.*

## **What do I need?**

*Commissioned Self: Next Steps exercise on page 90.*

## **What to do?**

1. Do the Goal-Making exercise and write out some specific goals to share with the group.



# Commissioned Self: Next Steps (Small Group Activity)

## Purpose

*To share and evaluate your goals.*

## What do I need?

*Goals that you made from Goal-Making exercise on page 91.*

## What to do?

1. Answer the following questions:
  - a. How have you grown in your understanding of what it means to be a disciple?
  - b. What is the difference between these two statements:
    - “Do as I say”
    - “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1)
  - c. How do those two approaches play out in discipleship?
2. Share goals that were made during Individual Activity. Give feedback to each other. Do they follow the Tips for Making Goals on page 91?
3. Discuss plans for moving forward as a group. Consider the following options:
  - a. Continuing to meet as you have been going back through the discipleship material and using a different hammer (see [www.perkinsville.org/discipleship](http://www.perkinsville.org/discipleship))?
  - b. Some or all starting your own groups?
  - c. Starting new groups and continuing to meet at least periodically for accountability and encouragement?

# Resources

# Meeting Template

Have an idea of how much time you want each section to take so that you know how to move things along; the bulk of the time should be spent on the discussion questions

## Small Talk/Catching Up

- Don't underestimate the importance of just talking. But don't let it go on too long; there will be plenty of time to talk during the meeting time.

## Prayer

- Open with prayer specifically for the meeting time.
  - Maybe have a different person pray each time, but you model the prayer the first time.

## Discussion

- Go through group material
- For the last five minutes of meeting:
  - In your journal/notebook, write down big takeaways/big ideas about yourself or things you heard from others. Or simply summarize what you said about yourself. If there's time, those who want can share what they wrote with the group.
  - Write down one way the group can be praying for you specifically based on something related to that day's content.

## Prayer

- Share the prayer request you wrote down.
  - Please stick to the request you wrote down in your journal. It's tempting for prayer request time to become about sharing every single struggle and challenge you have. If there is something particularly challenging you are going through, a one-on-one conversation might be more appropriate. Otherwise "prayer request" time can dominate the entire time and turn the time of discipleship into counseling or turn the time into actually being about ourselves.
- Close with prayer for one another about the above requests.
  - You could split the group into two to pray for one another as well.

## **Prepare for next meeting**

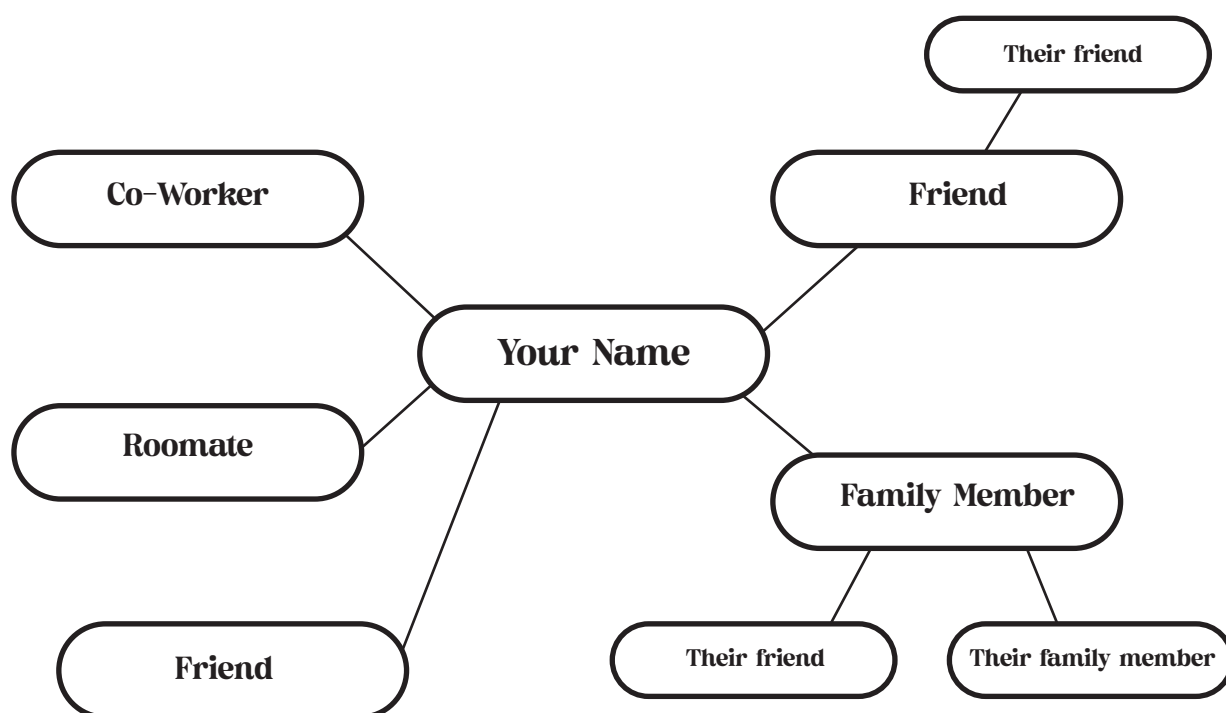
- Look at what's coming up and make sure everyone is clear on what to do before the next meeting (if applicable)
- Make sure everyone is clear about the next meeting place and time.

# Oikos Map Instructions

**Oikos** - a Greek word meaning household or family in Scripture. It's understood as the community around you. You can think of it like a web with you in the middle. An oikos prayer map is a visual aid to help you pray for those around you who are close to you but far from God.

## How to make an Oikos Prayer Map:

1. Write your name in the middle.
2. Think about people who do not follow Christ that you regularly encounter in different spheres of your life such as home, school, work, or recreation. Write their names around the paper and draw circles around each name and draw a line from each circle back to your name.
3. For each name on your paper, think of a few people close to each of them who are not followers of Christ. Write those names in circles and draw lines back to each name they are connected to.



# Prayers of Paul

These are some of the prayers of Paul found in Scripture. These can be a great guide to your prayers for others. Prayer can be something spontaneous, but Scripture also contains prayers to be recited or sung. The strength of our prayers is not in how genuine they feel or how authentic they sound. The strength of our prayers is in God, the One to whom we pray. By praying Scripture, we're speaking the language of God to God.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Romans 1:8-10</b>       | First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.  |
| <b>Romans 15:5-6</b>       | May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  |
| <b>1 Corinthians 1:4-9</b> | I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  |
| <b>Ephesians 1:15-21</b>   | For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. |
| <b>Philippians 1:9-11</b>  | And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.  |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1 Thessalonians<br/>5:23-24</b> | <p>Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.</p>   |
| <b>1 Timothy 2:1-3</b>             | <p>First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,</p> |

# Lead Us To Repentance: A Prayer Journey From Psalm 51

## Read verse 1

Begin your time of prayer and reflection with this verse. Pray this verse to God as a foundation for repentance. Don't move on too quickly. This is the foundation of your prayer and request to God. It's a firm and unmoving foundation. Inspect it and know how trustworthy it is:

- Be gracious/have mercy - reflect upon the grace and mercy of God. What verses come to mind? What truth comes to mind? This is the beginning of the request. What's it built on?
- His loving kindness/faithful love/steadfast love. This is the Hebrew word "hesed". It's used throughout the Old Testament to describe God's goodness and kindness that is enduring and faithful.
- The abundance or multitude of His compassion/tender mercies. It's a word that has a familial sense - a brotherhood; or like a motherly affection.
- These strong foundations lead David to his bold request: blot out his transgressions. Will a just and wrathful judge do that? Yes! According to His steadfast love and abundant compassion. He will not simply overlook, but the price has been paid and the just judgment rendered.

*Pray these truths back to God and believe them with your heart and mind.*

## Read verses 2-3

Don't jump too quickly to forgiveness. But know that it is there. But what is sin? David was very much aware of his sin when he came before the Lord to write this psalm of restoration. Are you aware of your sin? Not your general sinfulness but specific sin dwelling in you now – sinful actions taken; sinful words spoken; sinful attitudes of pride, arrogance, selfishness, and self-righteousness.

- Engage in this exercise and don't hold back: think of the wrongs others have committed either against you or others – those things that you feel acutely. Things that break your heart; that frustrate you; that anger you. Name the sin specifically. Write it down.
- How did this psalm come about? Not just from David trying to deal with something he'd done, but the sudden, full realization of the reality of its filthy, disgusting wrongness. He suddenly knew and felt the weight of it. How? The prophet, Nathan, told a story of another man's crime and David became so angry at what this man had done. He was indignant and couldn't believe such a thing could be done and declared that such a man deserves to die. "Who was it, Nathan?" "You are the man," Nathan famously replied. It's not definitely true, but perhaps the deep-seated anger and frustration you feel towards others is because "you are the man". Is it actually your own sin? (Perhaps there's two, but we'll get there). Look back at that list. Comb through the depths of your heart. Shine the Light Of Truth on it. Is it there? Are you "the man"?



**Read verses 4-5**

We can't move on from the guilt of sin yet. there's no excuse that can dismiss it. No euphemism that can diminish it. No human sense of right and wrong or justice can fully capture it. God is the offended party and the judge. You are guilty of sin before a holy and just God. You aren't just a little guilty – you are fully sinful from birth. Why are you “the man”? Because there aren't degrees of guilt. Because God is not somehow more impressed with you though you may or may not be slightly less sinful.

Imagine you have a vial of the most deadly poison and a bowl of soup. Whether you pour out the whole vial or a single drop, the effect is the same. And you're holding that out to God as if He should be impressed.

Jeremiah 17:9 is true! The heart is deceitful and exceedingly wicked!

*Feel it, know it, confess it to God. He already knows it.*

**Read verses 6-12**

This is the plea to God and the plea reflects the need – not an outward course correction, but an inward, heart-level purity.

But who can deal on that level? Who can cleanse at the source? Who can remove the poison once it's been poured out? What can wash away my sin?

*Pray these verses to God. Don't rush through them. Meditate on them, their meaning, their reality, their possibility. Don't miss the beauty of crushed bones rejoicing; don't fail to see the victory of your defeat; don't forget that resurrection comes by way of crucifixion.*

**Read verse 13**

Once the seed is buried in the ground and dies, it bears much fruit. Do you see that log of sin laying at your feet and no longer blocking your vision? Now you can see clearly to help your brother with the speck in his eye. He needs your help. But your eye must be clear first. How do you know? Are you looking at him through the lens of frustration, judgment, bitterness, hurt, failure, hatred, self-righteousness, and pride?

Or through the lens of the joy of your salvation? With a right spirit? Through the lens of the Holy Spirit? An eye bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? In humility - are you ready to serve your brother? To wash his feet, and in so doing, removing the speck from his eye?

**Read verses 14-17**

*Pray these verses and look for their fruit.*

We don't fix our sin by making atonement ourselves. Wallowing in shame will not appease God. Kicking ourselves enough will not remove our sin. God does not ask us to bring more sacrifices. He has sacrificed. But what does please Him? When pride is broken and shattered. When our hearts have been humbled and broken and we can present ourselves

before God and others in true humility; seeing ourselves and others as God sees – with faithful love and abundant compassion; hearts that well up with praise so that our mouths cannot be silent. This is pleasing to God! God is pleased with you. Is anything better or fuller than the pleasure of God shining forth and pouring out on us?

*Don't rush on; know His pleasure as an intimate friend.*

### **Read verses 18-19**

The final result is a community of people who come together under the pleasure of their God. A people who prosper under God's name. What is prosperity? It's not in things. God gave Israel great material blessing. But He warned them not to get so caught up in it that they forgot who gave it. Not to look around and desire what the other nations had. Not to worship idols made with hands – the gods we can control.

Remember the Lord your God. The true blessing is God Himself. Prosperity is joining in with others and fellowshiping with God Himself. The church is the place of God's good pleasure; of prosperity. It's where God is pleased to gather His people of broken and humbled hearts and dwell in their midst. It's where no further sacrifice need be made because the final sacrifice has been made. Behold, the Lamb of God is slain and He's taken away the sins of the world! The altars are closed, but the hearts are open, the mouths are open, and praise and teaching pour forth.

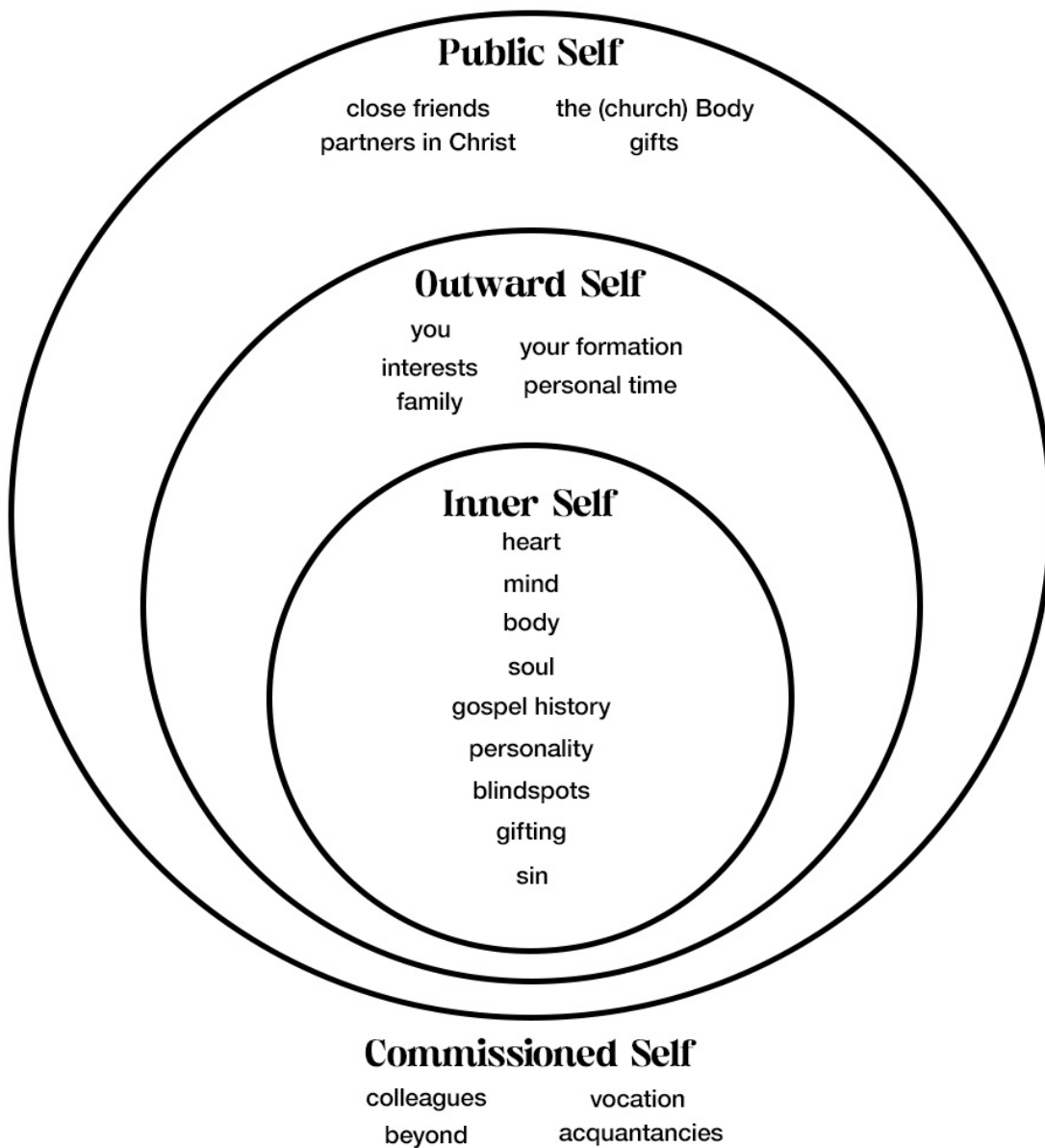
He is gracious and our foundation is the steadfast love and abundance compassion of God, cleansed with blood, and sealed with His Spirit. We are the people of God.

*Praise Him. You can use the slightly reworked lyrics of this early 20th century hymn to get you started:*

### **Search Me, O God**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart today  
Try me, Oh Lord, and know my thoughts, I pray.  
See if there be some wicked way in me;  
Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.  
I praise You, Lord for cleansing me from sin;  
Fulfill Your Word and make me pure within.  
Fill me with fire where once I burned with shame;  
Grant my desire; Lord, to bless Your name.  
Lord, take my life, for I would live for You;  
Fill my poor heart with Your great love so true.  
Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride;  
I now surrender; Lord, in me abide.  
O Holy Lord, revival comes from You;  
Send a revival, my own heart renew.  
Your Word declares You will supply our need;  
For blessings now, O Lord, I humbly plead.*

# Who I Am Diagram



# Inner Self: Sin Exercise

*This session and the next could be very difficult, yet they may be the most profitable. Only do this when you have time to sit uninterrupted. Before beginning, take a few minutes to quiet yourself before God and ask for eyes to see, even if that means looking at something you'd rather not look at. Strongly consider fasting at least part of the day leading up to this as a way to fully set your heart and mind toward God. Also, make sure you have done the Ephesians reading for this week before you embark on this exercise.*

— — —

Will Mancini developed a tool called LifeDrift. It summarizes all temptation and sin in three broad categories: appetite, ambition, and approval. It takes this categorization from Luke 4:1-11 where Jesus is tempted by Satan. Here is how he describes the three categories from that passage:

*In the desert, Jesus was tempted...*

*...to turn stone into bread, **the temptation of appetite** (becoming one's own provider rather than trusting God to provide)*

*...to gain authority over all kingdoms by worshiping the devil, the **temptation of ambition** (justifying legitimate ends by any means necessary)*

*...to leap off the roof of the temple in view of the people below, the **temptation of approval** (using a valid identity to create a selfish spectacle)*

*These three drifts summarize every human being's impulse to have more (appetite), to accomplish more (ambition), and to be more (approval).*

Read Genesis 3:1-7 and 1 John 2:15-16. Do you see these three categories in each of these passages? Take a few minutes and think about the three categories. All human action, thought, and intention that is against God can be put in one of these three categories.

Think through how we see them work out in our world. What does it look like? How does it feel? What harm does it do? How does it offend a Holy God? How does it harm God's good design?

Think through how you see these work themselves out in your life. What

does it look like? How does it feel? What harm does it do? How does it offend a Holy God? How does it harm God's good design?

Honestly, thoughtfully, and carefully reflect on the following questions and write the answers in your journal:

- When you look at the three categories, which one do you have a particular disdain for?
- Looking over your life, which of the three areas (or maybe more than one) do you see your heart particularly drawn to?
- How do these things manifest themselves in your life (either in action, thought, temptation, etc.)?
- In what context/environment do you usually do it?
- What is your typical reaction/response when temptation toward this area arises?
- What is your typical reaction/response when you sin in this area?
- What other areas of your life and people in your life are affected by these sins (how does it affect the other layers of the Who I Am diagram?)
- What good longings are you trying to fulfill in the wrong way?

Read Psalm 51 and use it as a guide to pray. *Don't overlook this. Don't rob yourself of the joy of repentance.*

# Inner Self: Blind Spots

In episode 9, season 1 of *The Crown*, a painter named Graham Sutherland is tasked with painting a portrait of an aging Winston Churchill as a gift. He spends many days and countless hours simply studying Churchill and making sketches and paintings. He talks to him about his life and about Churchill's own paintings and what they reveal about him. He learns his fears and some of his weaknesses. Sutherland was looked down upon by Churchill because he was a painter of modern art. In the end, Churchill hated the painting that Sutherland did so much that he had his wife burn it. In the show, Sutherland visits Churchill after the unveiling of the painting to discuss it. After Churchill attacks him, Sutherland responds, "If you see decay, it's because there's decay. If you see frailty, it's because there's frailty. I can't be blamed for what is. And I refuse to hide and disguise what I see. If you're engaged in a fight with something, then it's not with me. It's with your own blindness."

One of the biggest challenges we face—but one we must take up as Christians—is engaging in a fight with our own blindness. God sees us as we truly are. Often we see ourselves as we want ourselves to be, either as better or as worse. This exercise is designed to help us overcome our blindness.

**Exercise Part 1:** Ask three people who know you well to do this exercise. You may want to ask more than three if you think one of the three might not do it. You can use the following message to ask someone to take part. You can copy and paste or use your own words, but make sure to use all the elements of what's written.

I am taking part in a small discipleship group. One of my assignments is to ask trustworthy people to help me see my blind spots. This may not be an easy request for you, and it's certainly not easy for me. Please take time to really think and pray about this question: what are 1 or 2 things about me that you might consider to be negative character traits or even areas of sin that I may not be aware of? Please be honest. I promise to receive these with a spirit of grace and with a recognition that there are areas in my life in which I cannot grow without the help of others. These things you see may be things that I am not aware of and could help me to become aware of deeper sin in my life.

Keep in mind that these things may appear as small—the type of thing that you might say, "I wouldn't normally bring it up, but..." That is

the key to discovering blindness. So, I ask you to be picky even if you feel like you're being petty. It may feel like it belongs more in the category of "pet peeve" than "sin". It may be nothing, but it may be the tip of an iceberg that I am unaware of.

I will not push back against what you say, though I may ask clarifying questions. When you have finished, please send me the 1-2 items in writing. Thank you for helping me to grow in my walk with Christ in this way.

**Exercise Part 2:** Before you read the blindspot responses, answer these questions in your journal. This is a way to try to discern some blind spots on your own.

- Look at Who I Am diagram. In what circles do you usually see more of the good things (from the personality exercise) come out?
- Where do you usually see more of the bad things (from personality and sin exercises)?
- Where are there disconnects and gaps in terms of you walking in obedience?

Some examples:

- You feel a deep concern for others in your heart (maybe when you pray or when you think about them) but when it comes to actually dealing with people, you have a short fuse.
- You have a heart for the lost, but have trouble actually talking to the lost about the Gospel.
- You want to appear like a good, godly person in one of the outer two circles, but there's little to no effort in the inner two circles.
- You can spot sin (and have no trouble identifying it as wrong) in people in the outer two circles, but have a hard time calling it wrong in the innermost circle.
- What things deeply bother you when you see other people in the church doing them? This could be anything from actions to things said to just something about the type of person that someone is.
- When does your "hypocrite" alarm go off? In other words, what do you need to see/hear for you to categorize it as hypocrisy?
- If you could boil down some of your big fears in life, what would they be?
  - This is not fears like fear of heights or fear of spiders. These are fears like fear of being deemed a failure as a \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank: mother, worker, Christian), fear of being "found out", fear in general.

When you are threatened or when you're making decisions, what guides those things that could be in the "fear" category?

Once you get people's responses, write each response in your journal. As Al Newell, the person who originally made this assignment, wrote: "If it didn't 'ouch' a little or if it doesn't hurt a little to write them down, you may not have done this correctly."



# BBC Radio Talk: “Beyond Personality—Mere Men”

(These talks would be compiled into the book *Mere Christianity*)

*Now if we take the step [to become new men/women in Christ], it involves losing what we now call our “selves.” That doesn’t mean that all people who accept Christ are going to be exactly like one another. I know it sounds as if it did. If there’s one Christ, and He’s to be in us all, actually replacing our personalities with His own, what difference will there be between us?*

*Now here I’ve got a rather difficult thing to say. On the one hand, it isn’t true that we shall lose our personal differences by letting Christ take us over. On the other hand, I don’t think Christ can take us over as long as we’re bothering about what will happen to our personality. Let’s take the first point first.*

*If a person didn’t know about salt, wouldn’t he think that anything with such a strong taste would kill the taste of all the other things in any dish you put it into? We know, as a matter of fact, it brings out the real taste.*

*Well, it’s rather like that with Christ. When you’ve completely given up your-self to His personality you will then, for the first time in your life, be developing into a real person. He made the whole world. He invented it as an author invents characters in a book, all different men that you and I were intended to be.*

*Our real selves are, so to speak, all waiting for us in Him. What I call my “self” now is hardly a person at all. It’s mainly a meeting place for various natural forces, desires, and fears, etcetera, some of which come from my ancestors, and some from my education, some perhaps from devils. The self you were really intended to be is something that lives not from nature but from God.*

*At the beginning of these talks, I said there were personalities in God. Well, I go further now: There are no real personalities anywhere else -- I mean no full, complete personalities. It’s only when you allow yourself to be drawn into His life that you turn into a true person.*

*But on the other hand, it’s just no good at all going to Christ for the sake of divinity or for a personality. As long as that’s what you’re bothering about you haven’t begun, because the very first step towards getting a real self is to forget about the self. It will come only if you’re looking for something else. That holds,*

*you know, even for earthly matters: Even in literature or art, no man who cares about originality will ever be original. It's the man who's only thinking about doing a good job or telling the truth who becomes really original -- and doesn't notice it. Even in social life you'll never make a good impression on other people until you stop thinking what sort of impression you make.*

*That principle runs all through life from the top to the bottom: Give up yourself and you'll find your real self. Lose your life and you'll save it. Submit to death, submit with every fiber of your being and you'll find eternal life. Look for Christ and you'll get Him, and with Him, everything else thrown in. Look for yourself and you'll get only hatred, loneliness, despair, and ruin.*

# Outward Self: Personal Time

Write the answer to these self-diagnostic questions in your journal:

1. What are things you tell yourself (even if just in the back of your mind) that you'd do if you had more time?
  - a. Assign to the following categories:
    - Things I would like to do
    - Things I know I should do
2. List out times within the past few years (no more than the past 10 years) when there's been a big change that has allowed for a restructure of your schedule. For example: change of job, summer break, change from student to employee, job/family responsibility change, etc.
  - Did any of those big changes result in adding anything from question 1 (or similar things) into your routine?
3. Think back to some of the habits/disciplines/routines you've developed. Try to think through what it really took to make them a regular part of your life (and what it takes to keep them as a regular part of your life).
4. Think about your spiritual disciplines and answer the following questions:

*Note: We are defining "spiritual disciplines" as personal disciplines that you engage in, such as personal Bible study, prayer, fasting, reading, meeting with others, etc.—things that contribute to personal spiritual development*

  - a. Which spiritual disciplines do you typically prioritize? You can think about it this way: if you're having a busy week, which one or two things will you try to do no matter what, even if only a few times?
  - b. Do you approach them with drudgery or joy (or some of both)?
  - c. How does your approach to spiritual disciplines differ from your approach to other ways you spend your free time in terms of:
    - Attitude: is it something you look forward to and want to do in the same way as other things?
    - Priority: in a week, if you took all of the things you like to do in your personal time, do spiritual disciplines rank near the top, middle, or bottom?
    - Goal: what you are hoping to get from it?
    - Motive: what's the main driving force behind it?

# Outward Self: Your Formation

Use the Who I Am diagram for this exercise

Write the answers to the following question in your journal:

1. What are some of the biggest influences that have shaped each layer, particularly the Inward and Outward Self? This could be people, events, or life situations. Think in terms of both positive and negative influences.
2. Think about some of the negative things that may or may not have come up in some past sessions in either of these layers. As you think about them, they may appear to be small things (similar to the blind spots exercise); just some things that bother you about yourself a little bit. Consider if there's something deeper there. Maybe something small that keeps things from functioning as they ought.
  - Can you trace any of them back to some of those people, events, or life situations listed?

# Public Self: The Body of the Christ, the Church

Draw the chart in your journal and fill out the boxes based on the instructions below.

## Instructions:

When you think of a “mentor” in this exercise, it doesn’t necessarily have to be someone that you have a regular sit-down meeting with. It can be someone you spend regular time with where there is some sort of exchange of knowledge or experience. That exchange of knowledge or experience could only happen through observation or conversation rather than formal teaching.

## Part 1

1. Write your name in the middle box
2. Write the names of those mentoring you in red boxes
3. Write the names of those whom you mentor in the yellow boxes
4. Write the names of those with whom you do peer-to-peer mentoring in the purple boxes

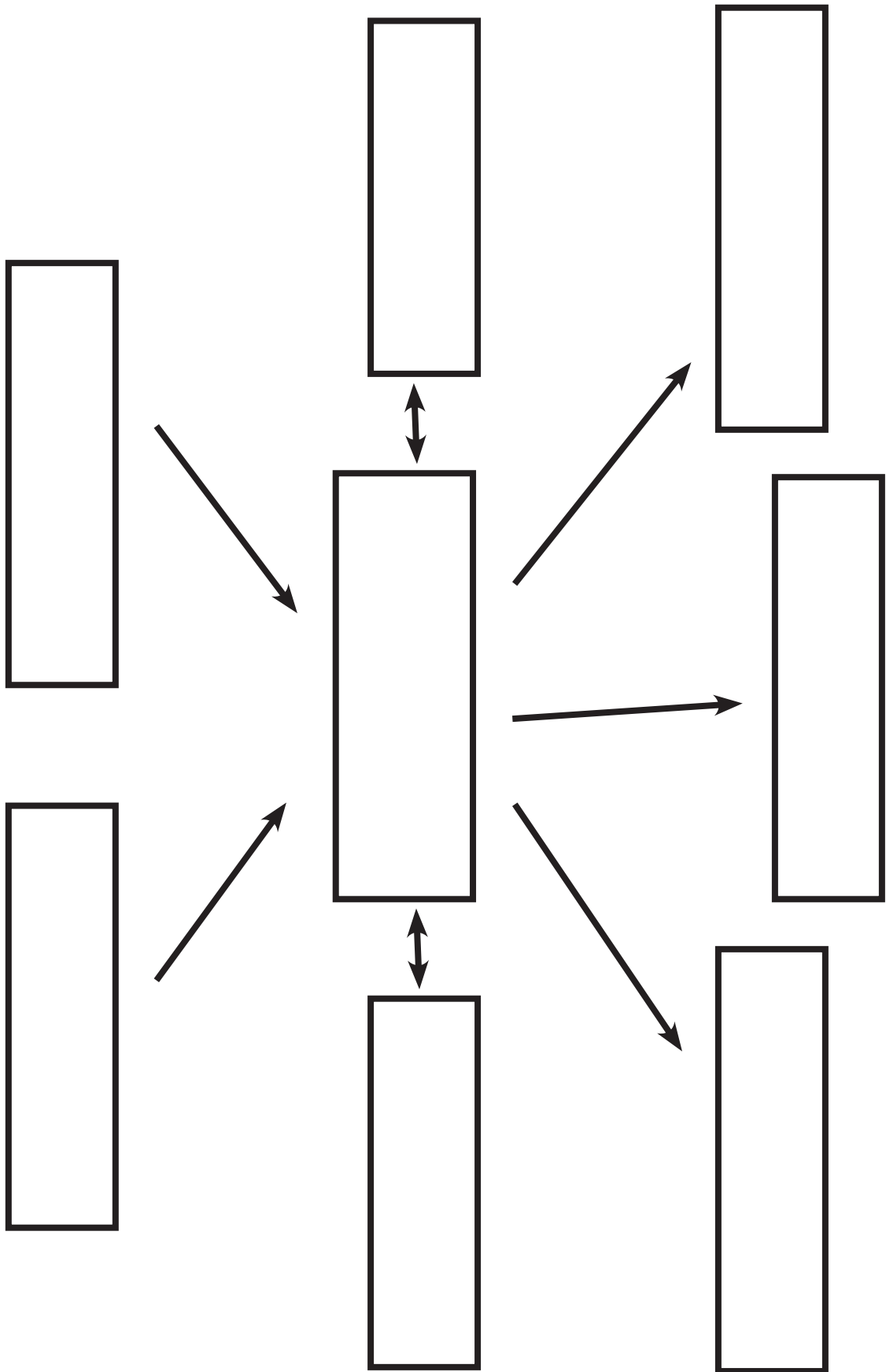
## Part 2

Where there are blanks, consider who you might put in those boxes.

## Part 3

Who, if any, of these would you consider if you were going to start a discipleship group, join a community group, or serve alongside in another capacity either inside or outside the church?

*Note:* While those in the purple and red boxes should probably be followers of Christ, those in the yellow boxes may not be at the moment. Also, all names might not be people within our church, but it would be good to consider those from our church first if adding new names.



## Commissioned Self: Vocation

*The following passage is from Chapter One of JRR Tolkien's book Return of the King. If you're not familiar with the book or haven't seen the movie, much of the story focuses on two very simple people who are tasked with destroying a ring that will bring down the enemy of all the land. But the ring has a power over the one who bears it. To avoid destruction, it plants thoughts of greatness in the mind of the one bearing it. Samwise, or Sam for short, has to carry the ring for a short portion of the story. Sam is a simple gardener back home and only came along on this quest to keep his master and friend, Frodo, company. Note the idea behind the temptation and what it was that helped him overcome it.*

His thought turned to the Ring, but there was no comfort there, only dread and danger. No sooner had he come in sight of Mount Doom, burning far away, than he was aware of a change in his burden. As it drew near the great furnaces where, in the deeps of time, it had been shaped and forged, the Ring's power grew, and it became more fell, untameable except by some mighty will. As Sam stood there, even though the Ring was not on him but hanging by its chain about his neck, he felt himself enlarged, as if he were robed in a huge distorted shadow of himself, a vast and ominous threat halted upon the walls of Mordor. He felt that he had from now on only two choices: to forbear the Ring, though it would torment him; or to claim it, and challenge the Power that sat in its dark hold beyond the valley of shadows. **Already the Ring tempted him, gnawing at his will and reason. Wild fantasies arose in his mind; and he saw Samwise the Strong, Hero of the Age, striding with a flaming sword across the darkened land, and armies flocking to his call as he marched to the overthrow of Barad-dur. And then all the clouds rolled away, and the white sun shone, and at his command the vale of Gorgoroth became a garden of flowers and trees and brought forth fruit. He had only to put on the Ring and claim it for his own, and all this could be.**

**In that hour of trial it was his love of his master that helped most to hold him firm; but also deep down in him lived still unconquered his plain hobbit-sense: he knew in the core of his heart that he was not large enough to bear such a burden, even if such visions were not a mere cheat to betray him. The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command. 'And anyway all these notions are only a trick, he said to himself.'**

# Commissioned Self: Beyond

1) How has God uniquely placed you in this moment in life? Consider the following factors:

**Position:** what place are you most frequently at? (remember home too)

**Ability:** what are you good at?

**Interest:** what do you really enjoy doing?

**Desire:** what is your burning-heart concern?

**Status:** What can I do at this point in my life that I couldn't or may not be able to do at other points in my life? (consider home too)

**Gifting:** do you have opportunities to work out your gifting (either inside or outside the body)?

2) What prevents you from walking in these things? Think through each of these aspects:

**Sin:** Getting caught up in sin and allowing the shame to make you live a life defeated and think that there's nothing worthwhile you could do.

**Pride:** You don't credit God with what you have. Maybe on a surface-level, lip-service way, but deep inside you don't really believe that all you have is from God to be stewarded.

**False humility:** You write off the things you are good at and equipped to do because of some false notion that humility means never excelling at things. This is a mixed-up form of pride because at the core, you are claiming your gifts for yourself. If they are gifts and all things are given by God, then humility is the thankfulness with which you walk in what He allows you to do; not hiding your light under a basket.

**Self-centered:** You can't do anything without desiring man's approval and credit. If you do something, deep in your heart you want to hear your name held up.

**Fear:** If you really step out and live these things out fully, it might require change or doing things that are new or different. This doesn't mean moving away or quitting your job (though it could), but even just changes within your current spheres. Are you OK with stepping out with a little fear?

**No example:** Maybe you've never had a good example of someone living out his/her faith fully and completely in the way that God designed and gifted him/her.



**No Body:** Do you have support from the body of Christ or are you just on the fringe? We weren't meant to live on our own. We need the body to support us.

**Lacking full Gospel understanding:** Do you have a big enough understanding of the Gospel to where it is not just a message to be shared or an idea to be believed, but a life-changing, life-encompassing thing that redirects one's entire trajectory?

3) What are some things that, when you hear others are doing them, you feel like you should be doing them too and you feel guilty that you aren't? Do you think it's just a confusion of calling or something to pay attention to?

4) After you've thoroughly thought through the elements above, write a personal vision statement in your journal based on who you are as God created you, gifted you, etc. and be prepared to share.

# Commissioned Self: Next Steps

Follow these steps below for goal-making. Make sure to read the examples and tips at the bottom. Once you've identified some goals, submit it to the group for "approval". This simply means that the group will help you decide if the goals are SMART (see tips below).

Identify some general areas where you desire to see change. This could be based on areas of sin that have come to light, areas where change needs to take place in order to walk in the things God's prepared you to walk in, or circles of your life where there are inconsistencies.

What are a few specific things that could be done in order to help in these areas? Be as specific as possible.

What are the barriers to accomplishing those things?

Now make a specific goal that will overcome that barrier. It should be specific, practical, and doable (realistic).

Below are a few examples to help you see how it could look in practice.

## Example one

*You know that you need to spend regular, quality time in God's Word to see change in areas in your heart that will then affect how you treat people in your home. But "reading my Bible every day" is not a specific goal. It's the big goal. The barrier may be setting aside enough time because you can never seem to find it. So, ask "what is the best time to do it?" If it's morning, ask "what time do I need to get up and what keeps me from doing it?" The answer to that then becomes your specific goal that you share.*

## Example two

*You have a habit of looking at inappropriate things online that affects areas of your heart and on out into other circles as well. "Not looking at inappropriate things online" is not a good goal because there's no specificity to it and there's no instrument for achieving it. So, start asking more specific questions: when do I usually look at these things? What am I usually doing or thinking about during the day that leads to it? Where am I when I usually do it? Sins of the mind are not usually random or spontaneous; they are usually the culmination of several or many small steps that allow an opening that is just waiting for an opportune time. So, try to consider what some root causes are. Maybe it's not setting your mind on things of Christ first thing each morning.*

*Maybe it's looking into the mirror of God's Word, but walking away and forgetting what you saw (James 1:23). Maybe it's the series of decisions of what you allow your eyes to look at throughout the day. Whatever it is, try to be as specific as possible.*

*Now, what's the barrier? Maybe it's will power. Will power usually only works as long as we're pretty far away from ground zero of the sin. What will it take to overcome that barrier? If will power is the problem, involving several other people might be what it takes. Set up a regular time (maybe daily, maybe several times per day) when you answer very specific questions to these people. Ask them to commit to being on-call at any time day or night. Commit to confessing transgressions and of being reminded (by them) of grace. These then become your specific goals.*

### **Example three**

*You want to address a harmful attitude that you've identified within yourself. Or maybe it's a particular practice that that attitude often leads to. First, consider what areas are most affected by it - is it just yourself or others as well? What does the attitude look like when it expresses itself? What are the immediate situations that it usually arises in? What about things that happened (or didn't happen) earlier in the day that led up to it? Were there some other undealt-with things that came up that made you more susceptible to this "go-to" sin? Addressing some of these "triggers" can be the specific goals that you come up with; such as having someone that you can always confess to when these other things arise so that they don't fester; even if it's just by sending a text message. Don't underestimate the importance of confessing sin to a sister or brother in Christ...or the effects of not confessing it (James 5:16).*

### **Tips for effective goal-making:**

- Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)
- So you're looking for specific, practical, doable things that can be done in order to reach a bigger goal of either doing something or stopping something or changing something. Identify the root practical issue that can be controlled. That's the discipline part.
- If you do not have a regular habit of Bible study and prayer, that is often the root cause of many issues. Consider making this your initial big goal (with specific goals to achieve it) before anything else if it's something you struggle to do consistently.

- Though it's possible to achieve these goals on your own, having an extra layer of accountability—someone you know will ask if you did it and encourage you in it and even to just discuss it with—makes any goal more achievable.