

SENT

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS PLAN REVEALED



SENT

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS PLAN REVEALED

White River Christian Church's leadership dedicated 2017 to better understanding God's mission for the local church. The Bible vividly portrays God as a missionary God who first sent His son Jesus and the Holy Spirit into the world, and today sends His church into the world for the purpose of reconciling all people back to Himself.

We believe it is critical that WRCC recovers God's original intent for His church, for much of what was God's original intent for the local church has been blurred through the centuries. Today, we have come to embrace this idea:

God's church does not have a mission—God's mission has a church.

Living on mission is the God-given privilege of every person who claims Christ as their Lord and Savior. For White River, we are beginning to understand this principle: God created YOU with a purpose and a part to play in His mission. Our hope is that each person at WRCC (beginning with you) will embrace this mission of Connecting Every Life to Jesus in the days in front. We join in the prayer of Teresa of Avila:

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which He blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are His body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

We are praying for you and asking God to awaken your heart to what His plans have always been just for you. I can't wait to watch the Holy Spirit do miracles of life-change within our church family here in central Indiana and to the uttermost parts of the world.

Grace and Peace,

TIMOTHY BROCK

Senior Pastor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6	INTRODUCTION
9	OUTLINE OF EACH SESSION
10	WEEK 1: GOD'S MISSIONARY HEART
15	SMALL GROUP PACT
22	WEEK 2: GOD'S PLAN FLESHED OUT
32	WEEK 3: GOD'S CHURCH UNVEILED
42	WEEK 4: GOD'S MISSION RECOVERED
54	WEEK 5: MISSIONAL LIVING EXPOSED
66	WEEK 6: FIRST BEING ...
78	WEEK 7: ... THEN DOING
88	APPENDICES



“

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

TERESA OF AVILA

”

INTRODUCTION



SENT: GOD'S MYSTERIOUS PLAN REVEALED

From the beginning of creation, God has been a missional God. He created humans to dwell in relationship with Him, and when we rejected Him, He immediately devised a plan of reconciliation. God's desire to be reconciled with His people is woven throughout the Old and New Testaments. There is no greater picture of this than the Creator of the universe taking on human form in order to walk amongst and rescue His people. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is God's ultimate statement of love for His people.

And yet, there are hundreds of people we interact with on a daily basis who do not know the heart of our good Father. We live among broken people who need to be reconciled to their Creator...who need to know that they are loved and valued. We, the church, have been entrusted by God to be His agents of reconciliation to the world. This is a weighty calling, but we don't walk it alone. We have a community of believers walking it with us, and even more importantly, we have the Spirit of God within us empowering us to accomplish His purposes.

Maybe as a church universal, we have been asking the wrong questions all together. *Does the gospel we cherish embrace a picture of a God choosing to work through His people to reconcile the world to Himself? Does it push us to carry a vision of the Kingdom that impacts the neighborhood, workplaces, and families in which the Lord has placed us?* We need to elevate our vision of God's purpose for our lives to a place that is far richer than a mere "ticket into heaven." The Bible paints a picture of Jesus that is so compelling that it instantaneously birthed a worldwide revolution of love. This story that God has been writing from the foundation of the world calls each one of us to participate in it. It's beautiful, crazy, and paradoxical...all at the same time. We worship a God who chooses to fulfill His mission through His church, and that means we all have a part to play.

LIVE MISSIONALLY: DEFINED

So let's breakdown what it means to live missionally. It certainly does not mean you offer gospel tracts instead of tips at restaurants, or that you constantly hound your coworkers about their lifestyle choices. But, it does mean that we are called to love others as we have been loved. If you have experienced the overwhelming love of God, it only makes sense to live out of this overflow and love those around you. Living missionally means going the extra mile for your coworker or neighbor, helping them move, or bringing them a meal in a time of need.

Living missionally also means believing that all of these relationships God has placed in our life (neighbors, coworkers, friends and family) are not a mere coincidence, but rather God wants to use you to be an agent of His grace in their lives. This hope you have found in Jesus was designed to move through your life to redeem the lives of others. We love our neighbors first and foremost because God cares deeply about them. Every single person we meet has unsurpassable worth in the eyes of God: every single person. And we are called to be His hands and feet as we live spirit-empowered lives here on earth.

We hope that these next several weeks in community will remind you that this mission God has called us to was never meant to be accomplished on our own. In fact, it is impossible to do this alone. God has placed us in community to build us up and encourage us so we will not lose hope in the mission He has given us. Not only that, we pray that it causes you to invite your neighbor to join you at church or to your small group to experience this community too. In our isolated culture, people are in desperate need of genuine friendships. We at WRCC hope to offer them not just a safe community of friends, but also (and most importantly), a loving relationship with their Father in Heaven.

It's our belief that once you get caught up in the mission of God, you will experience a joy in following Him like never before. Let's commit to not settling, but rather longing to see a vision of God's Kingdom reigning on earth as it is in Heaven.

TOM RICH

Faith Development Pastor

USING THIS WORKBOOK



This workbook is a great resource to engage in the *Sent: God's Mysterious Plan Revealed* experience and connect with what God is doing at our church. It contains group discussions, a daily devotional plan, and a place to keep sermon notes. This workbook is designed to be used by anyone but is intended to be used in the context of your small group. A small group is the best place for you to be cared for and challenged to deepen your faith in Jesus. Be sure to take time before your first meeting to familiarize yourself with this format, so you can get a sense of the journey on which you are about to embark.

Be sure to use this workbook as a guide, not a straitjacket. If the group responds to the lesson in an unexpected but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than the one in the lesson, ask it! Your group has the freedom to ask the questions that the Spirit is prompting. If you are facilitating the group time, be sure to read through the appendices section starting on page 88. There you will find some important instructions and information for your group.

If you approach each meeting with prayer and a little preparation, you will find this guidebook easy to use. Know that you are not alone on this journey; as a church we want to support you and your group along the way. Feel free to contact our Faith Development Pastors, Tom Rich at trich@wrcc.org and Tim Garner at tgarner@wrcc.org, with any questions or concerns you have regarding your group.

OUTLINE OF EACH SESSION

It can be easy for small groups to struggle with the very basic question: What do we do when we meet? That is why we have tried to provide more than enough content and questions for you. Inside this workbook you will find teaching, discussion questions, and even some content for you to explore on your own during the week.

A typical group session for *Sent: God's Mysterious Plan Revealed* will include the following:

SERMON NOTES - Be sure to take this workbook to our weekly services to jot down notes from that session's sermon. Your sermon notes will help add to the discussion in your weekly group experience.

SHARE YOUR LIFE - Our lives weren't created to be lived in isolation. It's essential that we connect with others as we follow God together. Relationships are built when we share our stories with people we can trust and depend on. For some, this can feel intimidating at first, but we encourage you to take the risk of sharing your story and the things God is putting on your heart. This section includes some simple questions to get you talking. Share as much or as little of your story as you feel comfortable. Ideally, everyone will share no more than a few minutes each.

THE LAUNCH - Read this section aloud to help set up the discussion portion of your time together. This short segment will help orient your hearts and minds around the main concept you will be discussing that particular week.

VIDEO & DISCUSSION - In this section, you'll read aloud passages of Scripture relevant to the week's topic, watch the video lesson, and discuss the teaching using the questions provided. In this study, you'll have an opportunity to go beyond Bible study and into biblical living. This section also has a question or two that will challenge you to deepen your faith in Jesus. This is the time where we talk about how He is developing our faith so we reflect His character to the world.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE - The book of James tells us, "Faith without works is dead." We are going to heed this truth by engaging in a new challenge each week designed to develop our faith. Transformation happens when we are intentional about putting what we learn into practice. So, we encourage you to take up this challenge...we think you'll be surprised at what God does in and through your life!

PRAYER & PRAISE - Life can be tough. Every week, it's important to spend about 15 minutes hearing about the things that are weighing on your hearts. Be sure to use the space provided to jot down your group's prayer requests so you can be praying throughout the week.

THE DAILY - During the week, the daily scriptures and questions will help you continue to solidify the truth of the study into your heart and life. This provides you with a chance to begin building a personal devotional life by slowing down and reflecting on a small portion of Scripture each day. Use the space provided to answer the devotional questions or write out prayers. We encourage you to take this opportunity to gain even more insight and confidence in God's promises for you.

GOD'S MISSIONARY HEART

01.

WEEK ONE

SHARE YOUR LIFE

Leader: If your group is new, welcome newcomers. Introduce everyone--you may even want to have name-tags for your first meeting. Allow each person to share what they do and what they are hoping to get from this experience in a small group.

Open your group with prayer. This should be a brief, simple prayer in which you invite God to be with you as you meet. Next, have each person answer the following questions:

- ▶ How would you define the term "mission"?
- ▶ Share about a time when you had a particular mission or purpose in mind, but it got derailed.

THE LAUNCH (READ ALOUD)

Over the next several weeks, we will be reading about God's missionary heart and our role in His mission. The Bible is a missionary book; all of scripture points to a God who longs to be with His people. He created Adam and Eve with the goal of dwelling with them in the garden. After the fall, He immediately began working toward His plan of redemption – to gather all people to Himself through Jesus Christ.

God's aim in history is to create a community in which He dwells as the chief sustainer and provider. This is God's mission, to dwell with His people—all of His people! Nobody is excluded from the kingdom of God; we are all invited to be a part of this glorious community. As we listen to this week's teaching and read this week's texts, let's think about how God's mission both includes and empowers us to live intentionally in the world.

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ ROMANS 5:12-15

- ▶ What was the result of Adam's sin?
- ▶ How was Adam a "representation of Christ"? What else, compile a list of 10 other things that resulted from Adam's sin.
- ▶ Just as Adam's sin spread to everyone, so God's gracious gift of salvation is available to everyone. From the very beginning, God was planning our redemption and the redemption of the whole world! What should our response be to this truth?

READ PSALM 67

- ▶ What does this psalm tell us about God's heart for the nations?
- ▶ It was not always easy for Israel to understand that God's desire was for all nations to worship him. How do we (in the present day) resist God's heart for the nations?

READ EPHESIANS 3:2-6

- ▶ What is "the mystery of Christ" to which Paul was referring?
- ▶ Why do you think this was kept a mystery?
- ▶ How do you think the church received these words from Paul? How do you receive them?

SENT SATURDAY | GROUP SERVICE OPPORTUNITY (READ ALOUD)

Join us on September 30th from 12-5 pm. Our entire church is going to go on mission together! That afternoon will be all about blessing the community surrounding our new Hamilton North location. The vision for WRCC is to be ONE church in multiple locations transforming lives in Jesus' name. We believe that acts of service go a long way into opening the hearts of others, so we are excited to join as one church to bless the people in Cicero, Arcadia, and Atlanta.

Information and registration for SENT Saturday can be found at wrcc.org/sent. It is our hope that entire groups come out to serve, but please still register even if only a handful can make it. This is going to be an awesome event!

WEEKLY CHALLENGE (READ ALOUD)

The book of James tells us, "Faith without works is dead," We are going to heed this truth by engaging in a new challenge each week designed to develop our faith. Transformation happens when we are intentional about putting what we learn into practice. So, we encourage you to take up this challenge; we think you will be surprised at what God does in and through your life!

And just a heads up, each week we will begin small group by checking on how the Weekly Challenge went for you.

The kick off of our Weekly Challenge is two-fold:

- ▶ Do "The Daily ": You will notice on the following pages that we have put together a daily devotional guide to stir your heart and mind towards this study with intentionally chosen verses and reflection questions. This provides you with a chance to begin building a personal devotional life by slowing down and reflecting on a small portion of Scripture each day. Use the space provided to answer the devotional questions or write out prayers. We encourage you to take this opportunity to gain even more insight and confidence in God's mission.
- ▶ Register for SENT Saturday: The second part of the weekly challenge is simple! Simply register for SENT Saturday! Go to wrcc.org/sent.

Leader: Before moving on to taking prayer requests, take a moment and read through the Small Group Pact on the next page. Go around the circle and have each person read a portion of the pact. As an act of commitment, take some time to have everyone actually sign the document in their own manuals.

PRAYER AND PRAISE SECTION (READ ALOUD)

Life can be tough. Each week, it's important we spend about 15 minutes hearing about the things that are weighing on our hearts. Be sure to use the space provided to jot down your group's prayer requests to include in your prayers throughout the week.

SMALL GROUP PACT (READ ALOUD)

Small Groups at White River Christian Church are designed to be safe places where you are cared for and challenged to become more and more like Jesus. Go around the room, each person reading one rule. Agreeing to these rules will help everyone get the most out of this group experience.

I commit to participate all seven weeks and engage in this community to be cared for and challenged, as well as to care for and challenge others by living out the following:

MAKE GROUP A PRIORITY: I'll prioritize the scheduled group meeting and communicate in advance if I'm going to miss a meeting. I know that inconsistent attendance is one of the major factors that will keep this group from flourishing.

TAKE OWNERSHIP: The group will be as good as I make it. I'll share roles within the group and help challenge everyone to grow.

ENGAGED BUT SELF-AWARE: I'll stretch myself to be as open and honest as I can with my perspectives and experiences. I understand some of us are talkers and some are more quiet, so I'll be aware of not dominating the discussion or always leaving the weight of discussion to others.

FACE CONFLICT: Community can often be very messy, and conflicts may arise. I'll offer grace to others and won't leave the group over disagreements, realizing God might use conflict to develop my faith in some way I don't currently understand.

HONOR OTHERS: I'll accept everyone without judgment. I will model James 1:19, in that I will be quick to listen, and slow to speak. I'll listen well and refrain from giving quick answers, simple fixes, or engaging in side conversations.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE: I will work to make this a safe space for others to take risks in sharing their story and burdens. I will see their honesty as a gift and honor it by safeguarding it. What I hear and say in the group stays in the group. Period.

Sign and Date

THE DAILY

DAY 1:

Genesis 12:1-4

- ▶ God blessed Abram so that he may bless others. How have your blessings enabled you to bless others?
- ▶ God's promise to Abram was that all the families on earth would be, blessed through him. How is the church still a part of fulfilling this promise?

DAY 2:

Isaiah 12:1-6

- ▶ What does this verse tell us about God's mission?
- ▶ What are some ways that we can "make known his praise around the world" (vs. 5)

DAY 3:

Jeremiah 31:31-34

- ▶ How is the new covenant different from the old covenant?
- ▶ What do you think it means to have God's instructions written on our hearts?

DAY 4:

Romans 1:16-17

- ▶ What is the good news?
- ▶ What does Paul mean when he says that salvation is "accomplished from start to finish by faith"?

DAY 5:

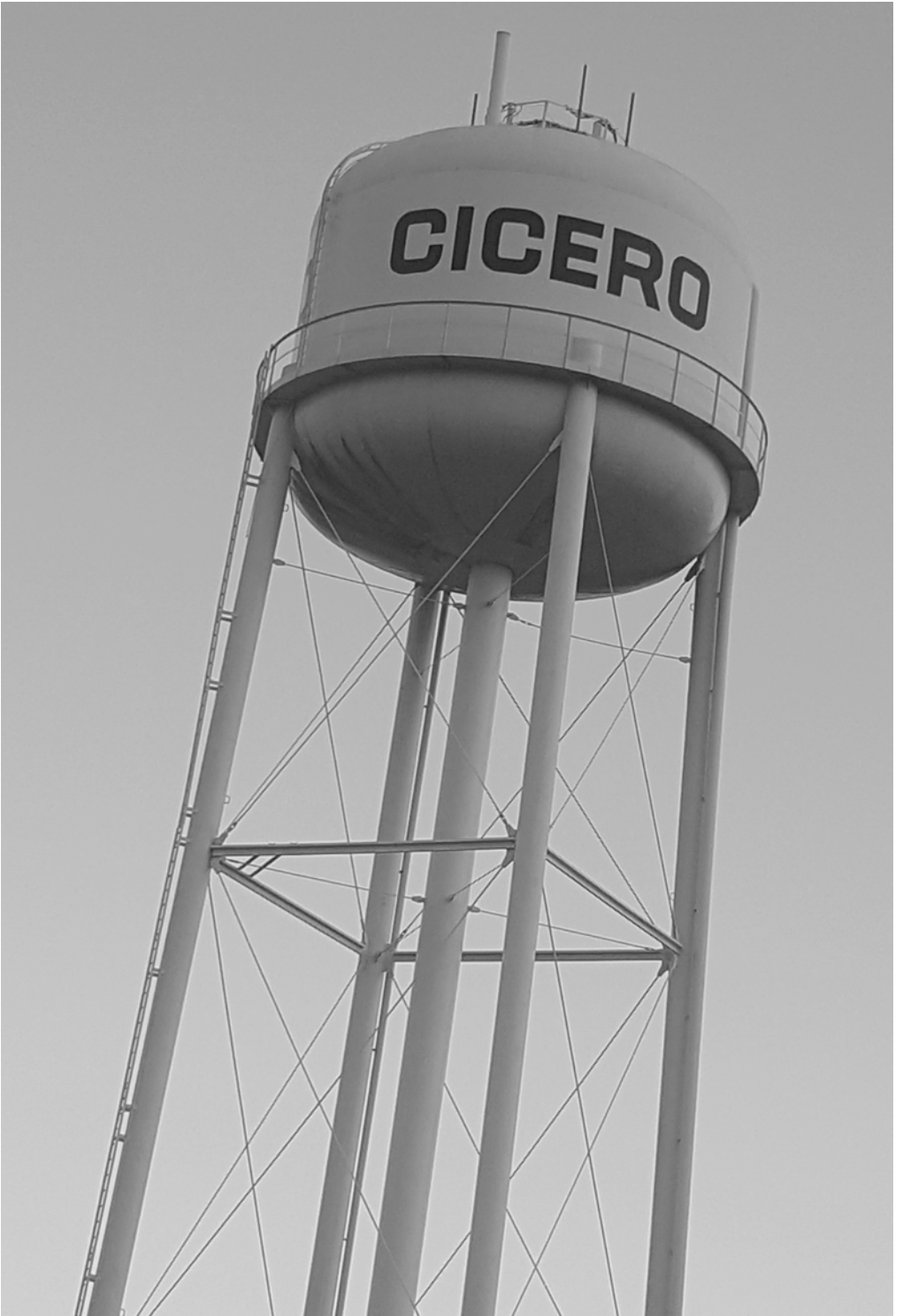
John 20:19-23

- ▶ Before sending them out, Jesus tells his disciples twice "Peace be with you." Why do you think he does this?
- ▶ What does Jesus' command to the disciples tell us about God's mission?

DAY 6:

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- ▶ What is the "message of reconciliation" (vs. 19)
- ▶ You are Christ's ambassador. God is making his appeal through you! How can you apply this truth to your life today?



GOD'S PLAN FLESHED OUT

02.

WEEK TWO

SHARE YOUR LIFE

- ▶ What sort of things do you believe God is up to in the world today? How do you see him at work in the world around you?
- ▶ Did you register for Sent Saturday? What did you note while doing "The Daily" this week?

THE LAUNCH

"The call of God is to share in His own mission in the world. First, He sent His Son. Then He sent His Spirit. Now He sends his church, that is, us. He sends us out by His Spirit into His world to announce His Son's salvation. He worked through His Son to achieve it; He works through us to make it known." ~John Stott

Chronologically, God's plan was "fleshed out" first throughout the Old Testament, then, through His Son and now through His Spirit leading the church. His plan all along is to reconcile the world to Himself, and we are invited to be a part of it! Though it can be daunting to join in such a large-scale mission, it is freeing to know that we are not the initiators in this grand story. Not only that, the Spirit of God empowers and enables us to live missional lives. When we were adopted into God's family, the Spirit was placed in our hearts as a means of drawing us to the Father's heart. This mission began in the heart of the Father before the world was created, was inaugurated by the Son through the crucifixion and resurrection, and is sustained by the Spirit as He works in and through the church. He goes before us, ahead of us, and still manages to be ever-present with us. As we listen to this week's teaching, let us remember that we are not in this alone!

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ GALATIANS 4:4-7

- ▶ What is the significance of God's son being "subject to the law"?
- ▶ Abba is a term similar to our term "daddy". It is a picture of a father who is caring and loving toward his child. Can you think of a time in particular that you have experienced the Spirit's work in your heart drawing you to your "Abba, Father"?
- ▶ How has your identity changed due to the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

READ 1 JOHN 1:1-4

- ▶ According to John, Jesus is eternal and existed from the beginning...and yet he was made known at a specific time as a human being that could be touched and seen. What does this tell us about God's mission?
- ▶ John is writing his letter so the people reading could fully share in His joy. This is a great way to think about proclaiming the Gospel to others; we want them to fully share our joy! How can this help you to share your faith with others?

READ JOHN 14:16-20

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is described as our Advocate, one who will never leave us. Not only that, but He lives in us. How would you define the term Advocate in your own words?
- ▶ How have you experienced the Holy Spirit being an advocate for you as you go through your days?
- ▶ The sending of the Holy Spirit is part of God's plan to be with us. What are some ways that the Holy Spirit makes God's presence known to you?

READ ACTS 9:31

- ▶ In this verse, who or what is responsible for the growth of the early church?
- ▶ How can we apply this verse to the mission of the church today?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

We hope last week's challenge was a fruitful experience! For this week's challenge, we would like you to do an intentional act of kindness for someone in your life. It could be mowing your neighbor's grass, bringing a meal to a friend, buying coffee for your coworkers, etc. Be creative with it! We will be reporting back to our groups next week, so be prepared to share about your experience.

Don't forget to register for SENT Saturday.

THE DAILY

DAY 1:

John 1:1-16

- ▶ Who is "the Word"?
- ▶ What do these verses impress upon you about the mission of God?

DAY 2:

John 14:16-20

- ▶ What are some roles of the Holy Spirit, according to these verses?
- ▶ Pray for the Holy Spirit to "lead you into all truth" today.

DAY 3:

Acts 9:1-31

- ▶ What sticks out to you about Saul's conversion story?
- ▶ What was Saul's purpose in God's mission, according to vs. 15?

DAY 4:

Ezekiel 36:26-27

- ▶ According to these verses, is transformation our doing or God's doing?
- ▶ Spend some time praying for your heart to be continually formed into one that is tender and responsive toward God.

DAY 5:

Ephesians 1:9-14

- ▶ What was God's purpose for Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews)?
- ▶ What is one role of the Holy Spirit, according to verse 14?

DAY 6:

Ephesians 2:19-22

- ▶ Though Gentiles were once outsiders, God's mission was to make them citizens along with all His people. Who are the "outsiders" in our culture today?
- ▶ We are a house and holy temple, where God lives by His Spirit. Pray for the body of Christ today, that we would continue to be "joined together in him" (vs. 21).



GOD'S CHURCH UNVEILED

03.

WEEK THREE

SHARE YOUR LIFE

- ▶ What was your relationship with the church growing up? How would you have described the mission of the church?
- ▶ Share about your intentional act of kindness last week. How did it go?

THE LAUNCH

"It is insufficient to proclaim that the Church of God has a mission in the world. Rather, the God of mission has a church in the world. Grasp this inversion of subject and object, and participation in God's mission will become a joyous, life-giving privilege. Miss it, and mission involvement will eventually degenerate into a wearisome, overwhelming duty." ~ Tim Dearborn

God's church does not have a mission; God's mission has a church. God's church is the means by which God's mission is unveiled to the world. As we continue to discuss God's mission, it is important to remember who goes before us. This is not "our thing". This mission was formed in the heart of God before the world began, and we are lovingly invited to be a part of it. We have been ushered into the same covenant that God had with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Paul, and we share with them in this mission of reconciling the world to God. Though we may have ideas about what this mission should look like, it is only by reading the Bible with Spirit-inspired eyes that we can grasp the true nature of this mission. As we listen to today's message, let us think about and discuss the kind of mission that we've been invited to join.

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ ACTS 1:6-8

- ▶ According to verse 6, how did the apostles understand the extent of God's mission?
- ▶ How does Jesus' broaden their perspective of God's mission?

READ ACTS 2:38-47

- ▶ What verses 38-39 tell us about God's mission?
- ▶ What sticks out to you about the way the early believers lived together? How did this help further God's mission?
- ▶ How did the early believers' way of living differ from that of the culture around them?
- ▶ How could we apply the early church's way of life to our context today?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:12-15

- ▶ According to Paul, how are we supposed to act in the midst of a broken culture?
- ▶ How can we show the "results of our salvation"? What sorts of characteristics does this entail?
- ▶ Do you see the people of God "shining like bright lights" in our culture today? Share an example of this.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week's challenge is to write a WRCC Missionary partner a note of encouragement. The mission field can be a lonely place, so we'd love for our missionaries to feel the love and support of their WRCC brothers and sisters! Please place these letters at the Outreach counter in the lobby, and we will take care of sending them to the missionaries.

For a list of missionaries we support, visit wrcc.org/missionaries.

PRAYER & PRAISE

THE DAILY

DAY 1:

John 7:37-39

- ▶ "Anyone who is thirsty" may come to Him! Who are some "thirsty" people in your life?
- ▶ We have been given the Spirit, and thus we have "rivers of living water" flowing from our hearts. Pray about how you can offer this living water to those who are thirsty.
- ▶ Where do you most need living water?

DAY 2:

Hebrews 10:24-25

- ▶ What are some ways that you can motivate those around you to acts of love and good works?
- ▶ How has meeting together in a small group these past three weeks encouraged you in your faith?

DAY 3:

Isaiah 2:1-4

- ▶ What do these verses tell us about God's mission?
- ▶ Pray for the nations of people who do not know Jesus and for the missionaries who are bringing His word to them.

DAY 4:

Matthew 16:15-19

- ▶ What did Simon declare to earn himself his new name and title?
- ▶ What does Jesus' promise to Simon tell us about the strength and power of the church in the world?
- ▶ To what degree do you believe this for yourself today?

DAY 5:

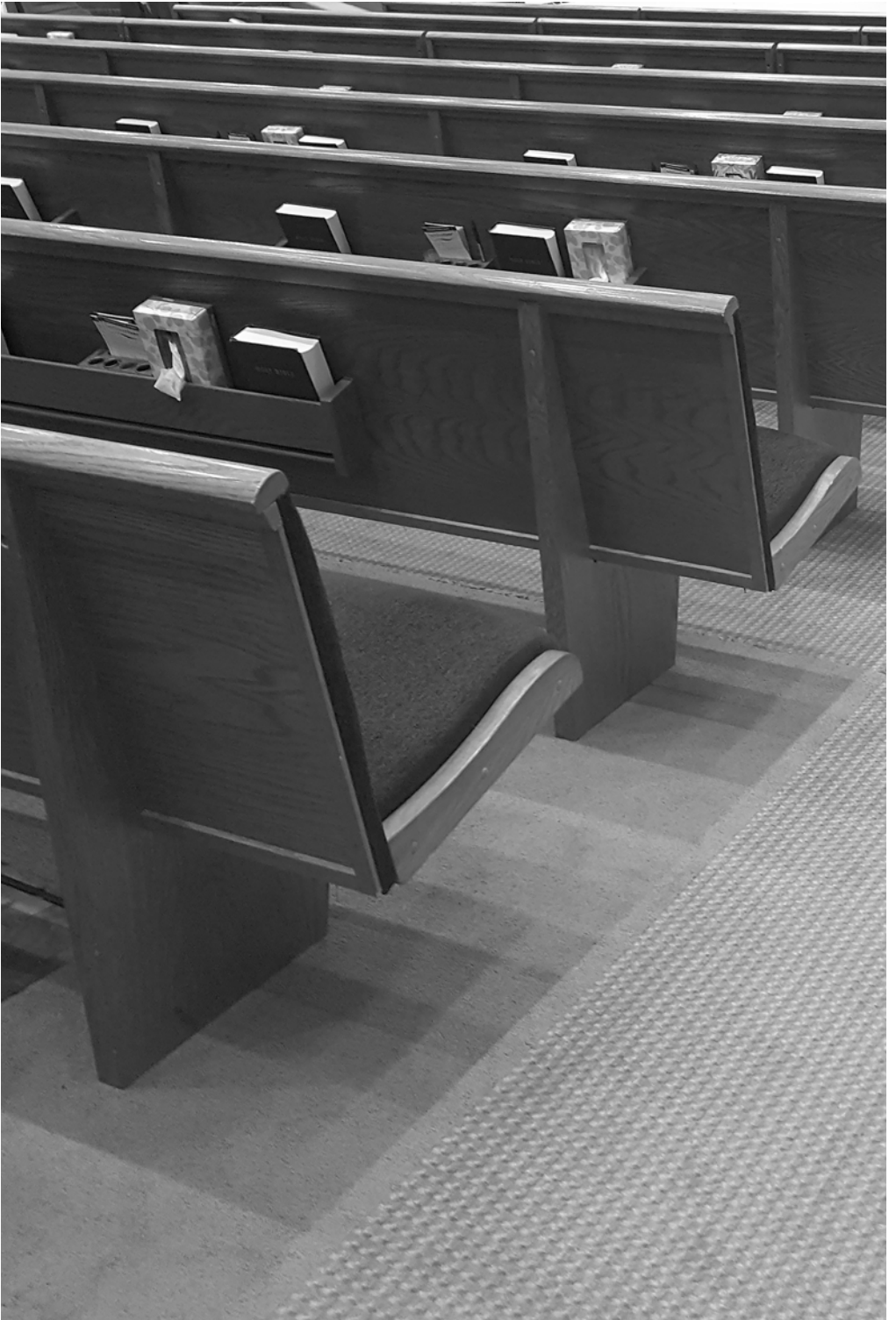
Colossians 1:16-23

- ▶ What does this passage tell us about the importance of Christ?
- ▶ What are Paul's warnings in vs. 23? Think about how you can heed this warning today.

DAY 6:

1 Peter 2:9-12

- ▶ What are some descriptions of God's chosen people in (vs. 9)?
- ▶ How can we "live properly among our unbelieving neighbors" (vs. 12)?
- ▶ What are some things we can do to set ourselves apart as God's people?



GOD'S MISSION RECOVERED

04.

WEEK FOUR



SHARE YOUR LIFE

- ▶ Who are some people in your life you have a hard time reaching out to with the message of Christ? Why do you think this is?
- ▶ Did you write a note to a WRCC missionary? Did this help you to feel more connected to the mission of the church?

THE LAUNCH

"We have inherited a story which needs to be told in such a way that the many painful wounds about which we hear day after day can be liberated from their isolation and be revealed as part of God's relationship with us."

~Henri Nouwen

God has entrusted us with his mission, which is a message of reconciliation for the lost. Our world is full of deeply broken and disconnected people, and we have been given a message of hope for them. There is a God who longs to dwell within every single person we encounter, and He is working within us to bring them home to Him. As we consider our role in this mission, we need to remember that God is already up to something good in this world. He is already working in the heart of your neighbor or coworker, lovingly inviting them to Himself. We are simply entering a story that God is already writing, a story in which He invites us to be a part of. Are we willing to lay down our lives and enter into this grand tale? As we discuss today's lesson, be thinking of ways in which God's mission can be recovered or expanded through us.

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21

- ▶ Vs. 14 says that Christ's love controls or compels us. It is not our love that propels this mission, but God's heart for his people. How does this distinguish the mission from something we are doing on our own?
- ▶ In vs. 18, Paul describes our assigned task as reconciling people to God. What do you think this looks like in our day-to-day life?
- ▶ What does it mean to be "Christ's ambassadors" (vs. 20)?

READ LUKE 15:1-7

- ▶ Jesus told this story in defense of the "tax collectors and other notorious sinners". Who are the "notorious sinners" around us today (i.e. the ones we wouldn't be comfortable eating with)?
- ▶ There is more rejoicing in heaven over one conversion than over ninety-nine others who haven't strayed. Do you feel the same joy about those who come to the Lord?
- ▶ How can we begin to reach out to those among us who are the most broken and in need of Jesus?

READ MATTHEW 22:34-40

- ▶ Why were the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus? What was significant about Jesus' response?
- ▶ What do you think it means that "the entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments" (vs. 40)?
- ▶ In what ways do living out these commandments further God's mission?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, we challenge you to have an intentional spiritual conversation with your kids, a family member or non-believer. An intentional spiritual conversation can vary between asking thoughtful questions about what they think about God to you being deliberate in sharing with them how God is shaping your life. We have even given you an exercise on the following page of your workbook to help prepare you for that. We call it "Own your story" exercise. "Own Your Story" exercise is simply about sharing the amazing things God is already doing in your life.

OWNING YOUR STORY

Here's a three-minute plan for telling your story:

30 seconds: Tell what your life was like before you confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord & Savior.

30 seconds: Explain how God caused you to turn to Him, confessing His Son as your Lord & Savior.

60 seconds: Share the circumstances of how you confessed Jesus as your Lord & Savior.

30 seconds: Repeat the prayer you prayed when you confessed Jesus as your Lord & Savior.

30 seconds: Explain how your life has been transformed since Jesus became your Lord and Savior.

OUTLINE FOR YOUR FAITH STORY

1. Your life before Jesus

2. How you began your relationship with Jesus

- ▶ How did you hear about Jesus?
- ▶ What did you hear about Jesus?
- ▶ How did you respond to Jesus?

3. Your life after beginning your relationship with Jesus (the difference He Has made). Answer this key question: "What difference does Jesus make in your life... as a spouse, a parent, a friend, a worker, in your hard times, celebration times, in your lonely times?"



THE DAILY

DAY 1:

Genesis 1:26-27

- ▶ What was God's purpose in creating human beings?
- ▶ Every single person has been created in the image of God. Think about the difficult people in your life and pray about how you can see and treat them as image-bearers of God.

DAY 2:

Mark 12:28-31

- ▶ Write out the two greatest commandments in your own words.
- ▶ How can you put these into practice today? (plan to share what you did at your next meeting)

DAY 3:

Matthew 11:28-29

- ▶ Are you carrying heavy burdens today? Picture yourself walking up to Jesus and exchanging your burdens for his easy, humble and gentle yoke.
- ▶ Think about the people in your life that are burdened and weary. Pray for them to discover the rest that is only found in Christ.

DAY 4:

Psalms 34:4-7

- ▶ What fears keep you from fully embracing God's mission?
- ▶ Only God can save us from our fears. He promises us that we will never be put to shame. Spend some time offering up your fears to the Lord in prayer.

DAY 5:

Ephesians 3:6-9

- ▶ According to Paul, what is "God's plan"?
- ▶ Paul believed that sharing the good news was a privilege. Do you see it as that?

DAY 6:

Luke 15:11-32

- ▶ How does the father respond to his younger son upon his return?
- ▶ Why is the older brother angry?
- ▶ Do you identify with him or do you identify more with the younger brother?



MISSIONAL LIVING EXPOSED

05.

WEEK FIVE

Week 5



SHARE YOUR LIFE

- ▶ Which personal strengths (gifts, talent, abilities, character trait, passions) do you most appreciate? What do others say about you?
- ▶ How did your intentional spiritual conversation go? Did you find the exercise helpful?

THE LAUNCH

"In the midst of all the daily demands and duties, surely our heart tells us something that is true: that we have a unique calling and responsibility, something that in the long run is greater than the daily tasks that confront us. This does not mean those tasks are not important, rather we realize that our lives have a purpose." ~Gordon Smith

Each and every one of you have an important role to play in God's mission. We have been immensely blessed by God in order that we would in turn bless others. In order for the church to be an agent of reconciliation in the world, each person must be using all their gifts. This is missional living exposed; the church cannot function without people living on mission to volunteer their time and energy. As we begin to realize our giftedness, it is important that we seek to use these gifts to further the body of Christ and help bring others into it. What are your gifts, and how can you use these gifts to further God's mission? As we watch this week's video and discuss the text, let's think about how we are all a part of this grand story together. We are all important to this mission!

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ ROMANS 12:1-8

- ▶ In vs. 2, God challenges the believers to let God transform them into a new person by changing the way that they think. How can we allow God to accomplish this transformation in us?
- ▶ Why is it important for us to not think we are better than (or less than) we really are (vs. 3)? How are we supposed to evaluate ourselves according to this verse?
- ▶ What do verses 6-10 tell us about the importance of using our gifts in the body of Christ?

READ 1 PETER 4:10

- ▶ This is a simple but powerful verse! How would our church function differently if everyone put this into practice?
- ▶ Do you know your spiritual gifts? How do you use them to serve at church?

READ EPHESIANS 4:1-16

- ▶ What do vss.1-6 tell us about the importance of unity in the body?
- ▶ While unity is essential, uniformity is not. We are each given unique gifts to serve the body of Christ. Why is it important that “each part does its own special work” (vs. 16)?

READ EPHESIANS 2:10

- ▶ Each of us is brought into this mission as a masterpiece, created anew to do good works. There are no unimportant or nonessential people. Do you believe that God has good works planned for you in his kingdom?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, we challenge you to meet your neighbor. Our culture is so individualized that we often don't know the people who live next door to us. Maybe you know some of them, but not all of them. Choose someone you don't know well and reach out to them this week. Use the Neighborhood Matrix to help you with this challenge.

NEIGHBORHOOD MATRIX



The Neighborhood Matrix is a handy tool to help you get to know your neighbors better. Follow these steps to start getting to know your neighbors:

1. First, write down your address in the center block.
2. Think about the 8 neighbors closest to you. Do you know their names? Write them down on the top of each of the blocks surrounding yours. **If you don't know your neighbors' names yet, make it a point to introduce yourself and find out.**
3. What is something you know about each of your neighbors beyond what you can see on the street? Write that in the middle of each block. **Continue the conversation to find out more about them.**
4. Then, at the bottom of their block, write anything of depth that you know about them. What are their hopes and dreams? Do you know where they are on their spiritual journey?

Take the time to really get to know your neighbors.

EACH OF YOU SHOULD USE WHATEVER
GIFT YOU HAVE RECEIVED

TO SERVE
OTHERS...

1 PETER 4:10

THE DAILY

DAY 1:

Ephesians 2:8-10

- ▶ You are God's masterpiece! Do you believe this? How can you better walk in this knowledge?
- ▶ What good works do you think the Lord has planned for you to do today? Pray for Him to reveal to you His plans.

DAY 2:

Romans 8:26-29

- ▶ How does the Holy Spirit help us in our weaknesses?
- ▶ If we love God and are called by Him, He causes everything to work out for good in our lives. How does this encourage you to live fearlessly for him?

DAY 3:

Luke 12:6-7

- ▶ God has the hairs on your head numbered; He knows you intimately. Pray for the Lord to reveal this love to you.
- ▶ In this same vein, God loves your neighbor just as much as He loves you. Pray for the Lord to reveal to you His love for those around you today.

DAY 4:

Psalms 139:

- ▶ According to this psalm, What kind of relationship does God have with us?
- ▶ What does it tell you about God's knowledge and pursuit of you?
- ▶ Do you believe that God knows, protects and searches you this deeply?

DAY 5:

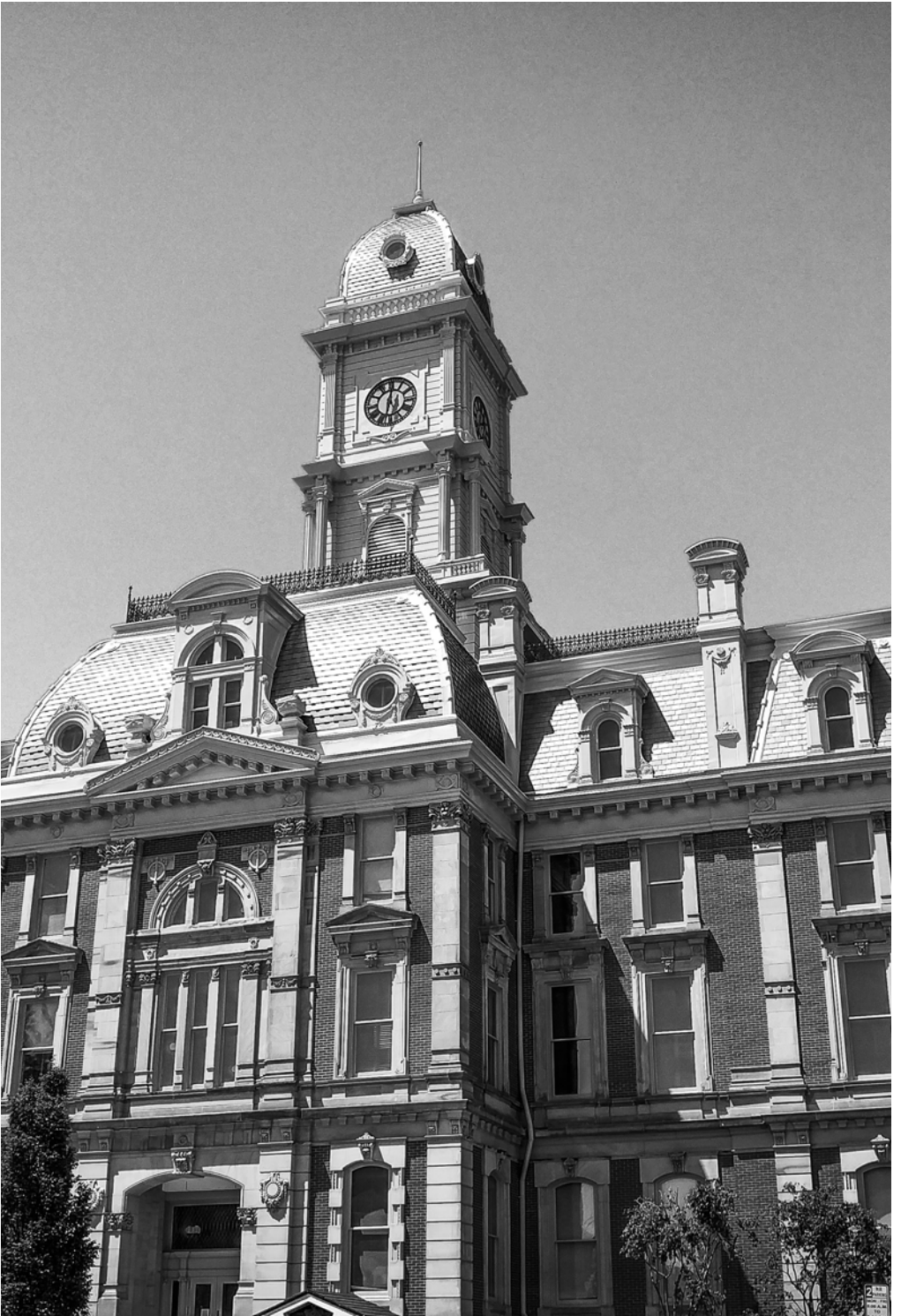
2 Corinthians 1:3-5

- ▶ Even our troubles are used to bless others! How has the Lord used your trials to be a comfort to others?
- ▶ Pray for the Lord to continue to use your sufferings to build you into an empathetic, generous, and caring person.

DAY 6:

Ephesians 4:11-16

- ▶ According to these verses, what happens when we are all using our gifts?
- ▶ How can you use your gifts to strengthen the body of Christ?



FIRST BEING...

06.

WEEK SIX



SHARE YOUR LIFE

- ▶ Are you a person who works better alone or with a group of people? Why?
- ▶ Did you meet a new neighbor last week? How did it go?

THE LAUNCH

“God longs to have a friendship with us. But He wants more than that. He wants a close friendship. And this is the only way we can bear the fruit God wants. As Jesus said, ‘I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from Me you can do nothing’ (John 15:5).”

~Joshua Choonmin Kang

At Jesus’ baptism, God declared Jesus to be His dearly loved Son in whom He was well pleased (Matthew 3:17). It is essential to notice that He did this at the beginning of His ministry, not after He had completed His mission. He was loved because of who He was and not what He had done. For the Father, it was first about being, not doing. As a result, Jesus’ ministry flowed out of His identity as a dearly loved Son who already brought His Father great joy. And it is the same with us! Before we do anything for God, He declares us to be His beloved children. We do not walk alone, but as dearly loved children, we walk with God. And our service to others is birthed out of the overflow of our lives lived with Him. This is a “with-God” lifestyle: a life lived with God, focuses on first being, then doing. As we watch this week’s video and read the texts, let us think about how we can focus on first being with God.

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ MATTHEW 3:13-17

- ▶ Why do you think Jesus' baptism was an important way to begin His ministry?
- ▶ The Father's love for us is the same as his love for Jesus (John 17:22). Do you believe that He looks at you and says "This is my dearly loved Son/Daughter, who brings me great joy"? If yes, how does this direct your actions? If not, why is this difficult for you to believe?
- ▶ Would you say that your actions define you or your identity in Christ defines you?

READ MATTHEW 28:18-20

- ▶ How do these verses define God's mission?
- ▶ While the Great Commission is likely familiar to us, we often forget the last part of this verse "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." We NEVER walk alone! And we can only live in this mission if we remember who walks with us. Do you think of yourself as walking "with God"? If so, how?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

- ▶ God "brought us back to Himself through Christ" and then gave us the task of reconciling others to Himself. Why is it important for God to bring us to Himself before entrusting us with the task of reconciliation?
- ▶ How can we speak this message of reconciliation to the world in a way that is truly "wonderful"?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Have you noticed how quickly our lives can be dominated by negativity? We need God's help to remind us of the good things he is constantly doing all around us. When we give specific attention to the things we have to be grateful for, our souls are reinvigorated to participate in God's mission! We are reminded that God is with us in all things and that we are never alone! Over the next six days, along with working through The Daily, we have created a space for you to journal things that you are grateful to God for. This can vary from a specific blessing, to a relationship, to even a challenge where God is forming your character. God is at work and we will see it more clearly when we take time to reflect on it.

THE DAILY

DAY 1:

John 15:1-5

- ▶ What do you think it means to “remain” in Christ?
- ▶ Remaining in Christ is essential to being fruitful in God’s kingdom. Pray for the Lord to help you to dwell and flourish in His presence today.

GRATITUDE:

- ▶ What are you grateful for?

DAY 2:

Ephesians 3:14-21

- ▶ What do these verses tell us about the love of Christ?
- ▶ It is through His mighty power at work within us that we are able to be fruitful and accomplish more than we could imagine (vs. 21). Pray that this power would be at work within you today!

GRATITUDE:

- ▶ What are you grateful for?

THE DAILY

DAY 3:

Matthew 12:33-35

- ▶ Can a bad tree produce good fruit? If we are producing good fruit, what does that speak about our heart?
- ▶ What kind of fruit are you producing?

GRATITUDE:

- ▶ What are you grateful for?

DAY 4:

Philippians 4:6-7

- ▶ In our busy and driven culture, anxiety comes easily. But a “with God” lifestyle means telling God about all our anxieties and receiving his peace. What are you anxious about today?
- ▶ What are you thankful for today?

GRATITUDE:

- ▶ What are you grateful for?

THE DAILY

DAY 5:

Colossians 2:6-7

- ▶ How can we ensure that our roots grow deep into Christ?
- ▶ Have you ever felt like you were overflowing with thankfulness? What brought that about?

GRATITUDE:

- ▶ What are you grateful for?

DAY 6:

John 17:20-21

- ▶ Who is Jesus praying for in this passage?
- ▶ Why is it important that the body of Christ be “one”?

GRATITUDE:

- ▶ What are you grateful for?

...THEN DOING

07.



WEEK SEVEN



SHARE YOUR LIFE

- ▶ What does your typical work day look like?
- ▶ What was your experience in developing a gratitude journal? What did you learn about God and His mission through this experience? Is this something you would like to continue?

THE LAUNCH

“Jesus Christ calls His disciples to ‘ministry,’ that is, to service. He himself is the Servant par excellence, and He calls us to be servants, too. This much then is certain: if we are Christians we must spend our lives in the service of God and man. The only difference between us lies in the nature of the service we are called to render.” John Stott

As a part of the church, you have been invited and drawn into God’s great mission for the world. Once we learn how to simply “be” with God, we can turn to the “doing” part and live out of the overflow of our hearts. Each and every one of you deeply matters to the body of Christ; we cannot function without you! Not only that, but you have been planted in your vocation with a purpose. Whether you sit in a cubicle during the day, drive a bus, or are the hardest worker of all: a stay at home mom, you have been entrusted with this message of reconciliation. The way you present this message will be based on your specific gifts, but it must always be presented out of love. As we listen to today’s teaching, think about ways that you can bloom where you are planted. Who around you needs to be shown the love of Christ? How can you bring God’s message of reconciliation to your workplace?

WATCH VIDEO >>>

DISCUSS THE LESSON

READ MATTHEW 5:13-16

- ▶ What do you think it looks like to be the “salt of the earth”? What does it look like to lose your “saltiness”?
- ▶ We are the light of the world—like a lamp on a stand, giving light to all the house. In what ways does our culture need light? How can we be that light?

READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

- ▶ What sticks out to you from this passage?
- ▶ According to this text, what are the characteristics of “the holy people God loves”?
- ▶ Vs. 17 tells us that whatever we do, we should do it as a representation of the Lord Jesus. This means that our whole lives should be lived out our love for Him. How can you live out this verse in the workplace?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

- ▶ This verse is simple but powerful. Do everything with love. Think about some of your day-to-day tasks; what does it look like to do these things “with love”?
- ▶ What are some situations in which you find it difficult to be loving? How would things change if you began to embody the love of Christ during these times?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Over the last seven weeks, we have talked about this great mission God has called us into. We have read powerful scriptures, heard amazing stories and have even been given some difficult challenges. **Our final challenge is very straightforward: Invite four to five friends to our next sermon series entitled, “Messy Families.”** We are coming up to the holiday season where we get to be surrounded by family, and we all know how messy that can be. Invite four to five of your friends, neighbors, or coworkers to join you at church to be equipped to navigate the holiday season, and learn how to strengthen relationships. Most importantly, come and experience the goodness of Jesus – the One who stepped into our messy world and has created a family for Himself through the church.

We will provide an invitation for you this week during service or you can find the invite at wrcc.org/sent.

THE DAILY

DAY 1:

Matthew 6:9-13

- ▶ How does this prayer speak of God’s mission?
- ▶ To live missional lives, we must begin with prayer. Spend some time praying these verses this morning.

DAY 2:

Luke 22:25-27

- ▶ Just as in Jesus’ day, our culture is full of people who “lord it over” other people. But among us it will be different. What are some ways we can exhibit this type of humble behavior in today’s culture?
- ▶ We are called to be as Jesus was, one who serves. Pray about how you can serve those around you today.



APPENDICES

HOSTING A SMALL GROUP

This journey of faith was never meant to be walked out on our own; we need each other if we are going to follow Jesus in a meaningful way. Groups at White River Christian Church are designed to be safe places where you are cared for and challenged to become more and more like Jesus.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Establish Faith



Form Character



Live Missionally



Influence Others

ESTABLISH FAITH

A posture of trust and repentance in Jesus

FORM CHARACTER

The process of becoming more like Jesus

LIVE MISSIONALLY

Partnering with God in His Kingdom work

INFLUENCE OTHERS

Participating in the lives of others and sharing the love of Christ

wrcc.org/faithdevelopment

LEADING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Take a breath...feel better? Hosting a group is not nearly as difficult as you may have built it up to be in your mind. No one is expecting you to be a spiritual giant. This workbook is designed so that you can come alongside of one another as co-learners. Hosting a group is as simple as opening your home, reading Scripture and questions aloud, playing a DVD (or streaming online at wrcc.org/sent), and having a conversation from the heart. Trust us, after your first meeting, you'll find that your group will fall into a familiar rhythm and this whole process will become less daunting.

Here are a few tips for you as you get ready for your first meeting:

LEAD WITH HOSPITALITY - Creating a warm and welcoming environment is the first step of hosting a group. Who doesn't like the idea that someone is expecting them? Keep in mind that for many people, the thought of going to someone's house to have a "spiritual conversation" can be intimidating. It can trigger all kinds of insecurities. Be mindful of this in all your interactions with your group... from email communication, to the way you greet them at the door, a warm and welcoming environment will go a long way toward easing their fears.

KNOWING NAMES IS IMPORTANT - Cheat with name-tags. For new groups, it's especially hard to remember the flood of new names that come rushing at you and you are embarrassed to ask once you get to week three! So, for this seven-week journey, have name tags available to deepen connection within the group.

START WITH INTRODUCTIONS - Especially for week one, hearing stories trumps getting through content. We want to Our heart at WRCC is that you find a group that allows you to develop your faith, and to become all that He has called you to be that is why our Faith Development Plan is at the center of our teaching. Take time to go around the circle and have everyone introduce himself or herself. Share some of the raw data from their life (family, occupation, etc.) but also include one significant thing about their life that would be good for the group to know about them.

GROUP PACT - The key to getting off on the right foot with your group is to appropriately discuss and set expectations. During week one, you will read through the Group Pact on page 15 and have an opportunity to lay out clear expectations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I reach out for help from the Faith Development Team?

Anytime you want! Sincerely, we want to hear from you! Don't feel like it has to be something big or really important to contact us. We love to be a sounding board for you. Call us early. Call us often. Contact Faith Development Pastors Tom Rich at trich@wrcc.org or Tim Garner at tgarner@wrcc.org.

Is it okay to invite someone to the group who is not a member of our church?

If the person does not have a home church or doesn't yet have a relationship with Jesus, a group can be a great 'on-ramp' to the Christian faith while providing a good connection to the local church. Joining a group also provides a way to get to know other church members on a deeper level and develop new relationships with neighbors in your area. If the person has a home church, ideally they would get connected in their own church, however, there are times when it may be appropriate to make an exception.

What should we do if a member misses a meeting (or several)?

Define mutual expectations early on with the Group Pact. If attendance becomes an issue with someone in the group, address it with them in person, not via email. Again, in this type of situation, err on the side of grace. Be in a place emotionally where you are more saddened you didn't get to see the person at group than you are frustrated they didn't show up.

How long will this group meet?

Your commitment to this group is through the duration of the seven-week Sent series. We certainly hope and pray that your group will continue to meet well beyond the length of this campaign, but we are structuring this campaign so that people who have always been hesitant about getting connected to a group will be able to experience the blessing of living their faith within community. At the end of this study, each group member may decide if he or she wants to continue on for another study. Some groups launch relationships for years to come and others are stepping-stones into another group experience. Either way, enjoy the journey.

If your group decides to continue meeting, we recommend jumping on to RightNowMedia and deciding as a group what the next study should be for your group. You can access a FREE subscription to RightNowMedia through wrcc.org/rightnowmedia. Study guides or other materials to support those studies can be purchased online via amazon.com or christianbook.com. For other recommendations, feel free to contact our Faith Development Pastor, Tom Rich at trich@wrcc.org.

How often should we meet?

During the Sent Campaign, groups meet every week. After the campaign, we recommend that groups meet three weeks a month and take the fourth week off. This works with busy schedules while also helping to maintain a sense of community. We need an occasional break, but we also need to be intentional with one another. Some groups choose to meet every other week. One of the challenges of meeting every other week is that if someone misses group, it will be a month since you have met with them. Therefore, groups that meet every other week will need to be intentional about looking for additional ways to build a sense of community. Plan to build a service project into your group 2-4 times a year.

What if this group is not working for us?

You're not alone! This could be the result of a personality conflict, life stage difference, geographical distance, or any number of things. Relax. Pray for God's direction, and at the end of this seven-week study, decide whether to continue with this group or find another. You don't typically buy the first car you look at or marry the first person you date, and the same may happen with a group. However, don't bailout before the seven weeks are up—God might have something to teach you. Also, don't run from conflict or prejudge people before you have given them a chance. God is still working in your life, too!

Who is the leader?

Most groups have an official leader. But ideally, the group will mature and members will rotate the leadership of meetings. We have discovered that healthy groups rotate hosts or leaders and homes on a regular basis. This model ensures that all members grow, give their unique contribution, and develop their gifts. This workbook and the Holy Spirit can keep things on track even when you rotate leaders. Christ has promised to be in your midst as you gather. Ultimately, God is your leader each step of the way.

How do we handle the child care needs in our group?

Very carefully. Seriously, this can be a sensitive issue. We suggest you empower the group to openly brainstorm solutions. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room and to share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can watch the kids in a different part of the house. This way, parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home. A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults. A final option is to decide you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually or as a couple and to make your own arrangements for childcare. No matter what decision the group makes, the best approach is to dialogue openly about both the problem and the solution.

SMALL GROUP CALENDAR

Planning can help ensure the greatest participation at every meeting. At the end of each meeting, review this calendar. Be sure to include a regular rotation of host homes/leaders, and don't forget birthdays, socials, church events, holidays, and mission/ministry projects.

DATE	LESSON	HOST HOME	REFRESHMENTS	LEADER

SMALL GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL



whiteriver
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



connecting every life to Jesus