

## Your Ministry of Evangelism

OPENER: Tell the group the story of how you decided to become a Jesus-follower.

TRANSITION: Tonight's bible study says that if anyone is in Christ they are "a *new creation*"; the old has gone and the new has come." All this is the result of God loving us and rescuing us through the death & resurrection of His Son. In what follows we will discover some of the *changes* Jesus brings to our lives.

READ: 2 Cor. 5:14-21

1. What is Christ's love like?
2. Why did Jesus die for us (v. 15, 21)?
3. From vs. 15-17 what might it look like to no longer live for oneself?
  - a. How does it effect your relationship with God?
  - b. ...with others?
  - c. ...with yourself?
4. What does reconciliation mean? (Give an example)
5. From vs. 18-21 how would you describe our ministry of reconciliation?
  - a. What is our motivation for our ministry?
  - b. How are we to think about people?
6. What motivates, or inhibits, you from talking about Jesus?
7. What changes will you leave here with tonight regarding your personal identity?

APPLICATIONS: Which non-Christians in this residence hall or on this campus does God want you to spend time with this week in conversation about Jesus?

PRAY: Everyone close by praying for the non-Christians they will speak with this week about Jesus.

## New Kingdom Attitudes

OPENER: Tell about your family and describe each of its members

TRANSITION: When we decide to follow Jesus we leave the kingdom of darkness and become part of the kingdom of God. Many attitudes, actions and ambitions will need to change as we follow our new master (Jesus).

On Your Own...

What are three things you desire the most?

- a.
- b.
- c.

How many hours did you spend in the last seven days focusing on each of the three things you desire most?

- a.
- b.
- c.

As a Group...

READ: Mt. 6:19-33

1. In v. 24 Jesus uses the example of money as a “master.” What other masters might people have in their lives?
2. What alternative does Jesus propose in regard to earthly treasures?
3. In vv. 22-23 what might the eyes represent? What do you think Jesus means when he speaks of light and darkness?
4. What is the link between treasure and heart? Between heart and eye? Between eye and body? Between master and money?
5. How does your choice of treasure, master, and sight affect your attitude about life (vv. 25-34)
6. What does God’s care for the birds and lilies teach you about him?
7. How do your three desires and how you spend your time fit in with Christ’s teaching?

8. How do each of these verse describes God's character?

a. John 3:16

b. Rom. 8:32

c. Mt. 7:11

9. How would such a God desire us to manage his resources?

Mt. 10:8

1 Tim 6:17-19.

2 Cor. 9:6-8

Malachi 3:8-11

Rom. 12:1-2

APPLICATION:      What attitude changes is Jesus prompting you to make?

How much do you trust him to take care of your needs?

What makes it difficult for you to trust him to take care of you?

PRAY: Confess to God the attitude changes you need to make. Ask him to make these changes in your heart, and transform your practices.

## God's Global Mission

### Open

What was the first team or group you ever joined?

How did it make you feel to be a part of the team/group?

### Transition

Tonight our Bible study is about God's people/team, and the purpose he has for his missionary people. God is a missionary God, so his people are all missionary people. We are on his team.

Read Gen. 1:26-28

### Study

1. What responsibilities did God give to humankind?
2. Read Gen. Ch. 3. What is the sad summary of the results?
3. Read Gen. 11:1-9. God started a rescue plan for his rebellious people. What was it?
4. Read Gen. 12:1-3. What did God promise Abram? How was this part of God's rescue plan?
5. Why did God move Abram from his home, family, and country?
6. Read Heb. 10:1-18. What role did Jesus' death and resurrection play in the rescue plan?
7. What can you learn from Rom. 3:19-26?
8. What identity and responsibility are we given in 2 Cor. 5:14-21?
9. Read Mk. 16:15 and Rev. 7:9-10. What is the scoop of God's rescue plan and our responsibility in it?

Apply

Discuss ways your Bible study may partner with God in his global rescue mission.

Pray

Pray for each person to fully understand their identity and personal responsibility as a member of God's missionary people.

## Primary Goals

### OPEN

What goals do you have for your life?

How important is goal-making to you?

### TRANSITION

Tonight we are going to read some primary goals of the Christ-following life.

*Making Disciples who immediately Make More Disciples who...*

1. Know that God loves them (Ex. 34:6-7)
2. Read Scripture daily with God and put it into practice (Jn. 8:31-32)
3. Pray specifically such that God's kingdom comes at their university. (Mt. 6:9-10)
4. Practice faithfully meeting together with Chi Alpha, core, and a local church (Heb. 10:24-25)
5. Seek and are baptized in the Holy Spirit and continue being filled with the Spirit. (Acts 1:8)
6. Work to bring the gospel to every tribe, tongue and nation. (2 Cor. 5:14-21)
7. No longer conform to materialism, but are transformed by giving at least 10%. (Lev. 27:30-34)
8. Practice biblical principles in all their relationships (family, friends, romance and work) (Mark 10:45)
9. Seek and find God's plan for their career/vocation. (1 Cor. 10:31).

## APPLY

These goals build on one another. Which goals do you think you've reached?

Which goals do you want to work on?

## PRAY

Pray for one another that you would grow in your relationship with God using these primary goals.

## God Loves Us

OPENER: Which of your family or extended family members are you closest to? Why? Tell the group about your relationship.

TRANSITION: Tonight's bible study is about God's unconditional love for each of us.

READ: Exodus 34:6-7

1. How does God describe himself to Moses?
2. Define these words: abounding, compassionate, gracious
3. How have you defined God before tonight's study? What changes might you need to make to your definition?

STUDY (Read each text and answer the questions):

1. Rom. 5:8 What do we learn about God's kind of love?
2. Eph. 2:1-10 How much love does God have for us? Because of his love what has he done for us?
3. Isa. 30:18 How is God described in this verse? Is this typical behavior for a king?
4. 2 Cor. 1:3-4 What kind of father is God? What is your father like?

APPLICATION:

Write a definition of what God is like using what we learned tonight.

What are some ways you can experience more of God's love this week?

PRAY: Pray that God will reveal himself more accurately to each group member this week. Pray that each would experience more of His love.



## **A Consistent Relationship with God**

OPENER: Name at least three habits that you do every single day.

TRANSITION:

Is it difficult for you to find regular, consistent time to spend connecting with God? Maybe you're the kind of person who does the best when you have routines set up. Or, maybe you're the kind of person who really dislikes routines, but you love God and know you need to figure out how to spend time with Him. Either way, we all need a strategy to meet daily with God to start our "all-day-long conversation" with Him.

READ: John 8:31-32.

1. What does Jesus say distinguishes someone as His disciple?
2. What do you think Jesus means when He says, "If you hold to my teachings?"
3. In verse 32, Jesus says that knowing the truth will set us free. What are some ways that God's truth sets us free?
4. What do you think are some differences between: 1) what we usually think of as "freedom," and 2) this type of freedom Jesus is talking about?
5. What mindsets, habits, attitudes, or thought patterns would you like to be free of?

READ: John 15:4-5.

6. All this "vine and branches" talk is maybe a little foreign to us, but Jesus was always using analogies that directly applied to the people He was talking with. Why do you think Jesus chose the metaphor of a vine and its branches?

Perhaps now Jesus would say, "I am the power cord, you are the computer. If you remain in me, and I in you, you will produce many high-quality term papers, and YouTube videos. Apart from Me you can do nothing."

7. What do you think it means for us to remain in Him?
  - a. What do you think remaining in Him looks like?
  - b. How do we do it?
  
8. Why is it so important for us to remain in Jesus, and for Him to remain in us?

When was a time when you were remaining in Jesus? When was a time when you weren't remaining? What differences did you notice in your mindset, habits, attitudes, and thought patterns?

#### APPLICATION:

Set a time when you will commit to be alone with Jesus each day.

Set a place you will meet with him and not be distracted.

Where in the bible will you read? \_\_\_\_\_. How many chapters will you read? \_\_\_\_\_.

Who will ask you each day if you did your time with God?

\_\_\_\_\_.

PRAY: Pray for each group member one at a time.

## God as Our Lover

OPENER: Who was your first girlfriend or boyfriend? How did it go? What was your favorite wedding you've been to? Why?

TRANSITION: Tonight's study is about our love relationship with God. The Scripture often speaks of God's People as his spouse or bride.

READ: As a group read Hosea 1-3 aloud

STUDY:

1. How did Gomer treat Hosea?
2. Why does God have Hosea marry an adulterous?
3. What sins do God's people commit against God?
4. How does God treat them?
5. What do we learn about God's love for us from this story?
6. In what ways have we been unfaithful to God?

READ: 1 Jn. 1:9 and 3:1-3

How do we know how God will treat us when we sin?

APPLICATION:

How would you describe your relationship with God at this point?

In what ways has God shown you his love in the past?

What re-commitments to God and his ways is He asking you to make tonight?

PRAY: Confess your waywardness to God (if you have any) and ask him to forgive and restore you. Pray that he will enable you to make and keep your (re)commitments to him this week.

## Seek and be Baptized with God's Spirit

OPENER: What answers to prayer have you experienced this week? Heard that God answered for someone else?

TRANSITION: Tonight's bible study is about our need to be filled with God's Spirit so we may be effective in helping with his global mission.

READ: Jn. 20:19-23

STUDY:

1. Where were the disciples after Jesus was crucified?
2. What were they doing there?
3. What apprehensions do we modern disciples have?
4. READ Acts 2:14-41
  - a. Where are the disciples after they are baptized with the Spirit?
  - b. What message does Peter give the crowd?
  - c. Why do you think God filled them with His Spirit?
5. READ Acts 10:27-48
  - a. What was Peter's biggest hesitation about going to Cornelius' house?
  - b. What groups of students are you most hesitant to spend time with? Why?
  - c. How does God convince Peter to go to Cornelius"? (see 10:10-16)
  - d. What happens while Peter is explaining the gospel to the gathered Gentiles?

e. What is Luke's (author of Acts) point in including this story about the Gentiles being baptized with the Spirit?

6. READ Acts 19:1-7

a. What happens in this story in Ephesus?

b. How were the believer's filled with the Spirit?

c. What was the evidence that they were filled?

APPLICATION:

How do you & I go about being baptized with the Holy Spirit? What do we do?

a. Ask (Lk. 11:11-13)

b. Receive (Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:8)

PRAY: Pray for one another to be filled with God's Spirit.

## How to do a SOAP expanded Bible Study

1. Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to give you understanding of the Bible passage.
2. Preview the text by reading through the section you are studying in order to get the general idea of what is being said. It is best to read out loud.

In your mind answer the “who, what, when, where, and why” questions.

3. Next, read the text slowly, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you to the verses he wants you to apply to your life. Select a few verses to be the focus of your study.

Copy these verses under **SCRIPTURE**.

4. Under **OBSERVATION** write down your observations and interpretations of the passage. You could paraphrase, outline, look up key words, write down questions that require further research, or summarize. Look for the timeless principle that God wants you to apply to your life.
5. Write this principle under **APPLICATION** “knowing that.”

Write how you will put this principle into practice in your life/relationships. Be specific enough so that you can tell when you’ve obeyed. Make your application *measurable*”.

6. Close your study in **PRAYER**, asking Jesus to enable you to complete your application. Ask Him to show you who to tell what you learned.
7. Tell someone what you learned.

## Commitment to Our Campus Ministry

OPENER: What has your spiritual journey been like since the time you decided to follow Jesus?

TRANSITION: In Mt. 16:18 Jesus said he came to build his church. What did he mean? The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. It described a group of people who at times were called out of their place of work to gather together to conduct civic business. He meant he came to establish a people who were called out of a life of sin, to gather to conduct the business of the kingdom of God.

STUDY:

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

1. Why do we need this habit?

Read Acts 2:42-47

2. What activities were the first disciples devoted to?
3. What is your level of devotion to each?

Read Eph. 4:11-12

4. What is one of the main functions of ministry leaders in vv. 11-12?
5. From vv. 13-15 what is the result when this pattern is lived out?
6. According to v. 15 how is the body of Christ built up?

Read Heb. 13:7, 17

7. What is our role as campus ministry members?

Read 1 Cor. 12:12-31

8. Who is important in the Christ's body? Who is more important?
9. How significant is each person's role?
10. What commitments ought we to make to each other as a group? To this campus ministry? To church?

APPLICATION:

In what ways does Jesus see you as doing a good job as part of his body?

In what ways does he want you to improve?

PRAY:

Thank God for every member of the group. Pray to become more and more the kind of members Jesus wants us to be.



## Seek & Find God's Plan for Your Career/Vocation

OPENER: What jobs have you had? What did you like/dislike about them?

TRANSITION: Tonight's study is about finding the career/vocation that God has planned for you.

READ: Eph. 1:3-14

1. According to this text who are we and why did God make us?
2. In what ways should this biblical identity guide our choice of career?

STUDY:

1. What do the words *career* and *vocation* mean?
2. READ Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 10:3; Col. 3:17
  - a. What motivations do these verses give us for living our lives?
  - b. What have been your motives for your career up to this point?
3. READ Esther 4:12-14; Ex. 35:30-35
  - a. Who can summarize the story of Esther?
  - b. What did God say to her through her uncle, Mordecai?
  - c. To what extent do you think God orchestrates where you we will end up working?
  - d. What profession are Bezaiel and Oholiab engaged in? What does God do for them? Why?
  - e. Are some careers more spiritual than other? Why or why not?

4. READ 1 Thes. 4:11; Acts 18:3; Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 4:23-35
- a. What connection does the Lord want us to make between His kingdom work and our employment?
  - b. Does Jesus still call men and women into the ministry today?
  - c. Which people are exempt from joining with God to accomplish His purposes of bringing the gospel to others?
  - d. Discuss these two definitions of vocation: “Vocation is the intersection of what you most need to do and what the world most needs done.” “Vocation is an outward, visible sign of our sacramental partnership with God.

APPLICATION:

1. What did you learn about finding your career/vocation tonight?
2. What steps could you take this week to better prepare for your vocation?
3. Complete the assignment sheet and be ready to discuss your answers next week.

PRAY: That Jesus will guide each person into His will for their career/vocation.

## Career/Vocation Finder Worksheet

Complete the sentence/Answer the question:

1. How would I describe my spiritual life at this point...
2. What are my current areas of activity/service?
3. What are significant experiences that have shaped my heart for ministry and service?
4. I feel I have the ability to...
5. What are some painful times in my life that I could use to help empathize/sympathize with others?
6. My strongest natural ability is...
7. Abilities I desire to develop or mature are...
8. What are some people groups I have affinity/passion/remote concern for?
9. My weaknesses are...
10. What am I passionate about?
11. My work experiences are...
12. I know how to...
13. My people skills are...
14. Where have I been discouraged? Why? In what ways does Jesus wish to work through this?
15. What do I love to talk about?
16. *"Give up your small ambitions; come with me to save the world!" This quote means to me...*
17. How hard working am I?
18. How good am I at persevering to the end?
19. How good am I at being on time?
20. To what degree do people count on me now?
21. Read Gen. 1:26-28. Explain how this does or doesn't guide your goals at this time.
22. How passionate can I be about this job?
23. How could I do this to bring glory to God?
24. How constructive and beneficial is this to a community?
25. To what degree is this career characteristic of the world or the

Father?

26. To what degree might this job lead me into temptation?
27. What negative effects does this business have on people?
28. To what degree does this vocation make me self-reliant or prideful?
29. How does this career allow or prevent me from caring for the people I would work with?
30. Which of these books interests me? Killing Lions-Eldridge; The Purpose Driven Life- Warren; What Color is Your Parachute?- Bowles; Finding the Career that Fits You- Burkett;

## The Purpose of Our Group

OPENER: Introduce yourself to the group. Tell them your major and where you live.

What is your hometown? (What do you like about it? Dislike?)

What do you hope to get out of this group?

TRANSITION: Tonight we will talk about the purposes for our group.

READ and answer the questions:

1. John 13:34-35 What do the disciples learn is the purpose Jesus has for them as a group of his disciples?
2. Philippians 2:3-7 What do we learn about how we should interact with each other?
3. Gal. 6:1-5 How should we care for one another?

\*The words for burden and load in verses 2 & 5 are different Greek words. Burden means something too heavy to carry alone. Load means the normal amount each person should carry.

4. Eph. 4:11-16 How does Paul describe the goals the Ephesians should have corporately? Individually? What is the role of the spiritual leadership? The individuals?

5. Mt. 9:36-38 What does Jesus say the people of his day needed? What are some specific examples that show this is still true today?

6. Mt 28:18-20

- a. What do you think it means to be a disciple of Jesus?
- b. What is **their** purpose regarding those outside of the group?

7. 2 Cor. 5:14-21 tells us we have a new identity—the old way of life is gone and a new way is here. This new way is “the ministry of reconciliation.”

What do you think reconciliation means? What are some examples from your own life or from the lives of your friends/family? What does it seem like Paul means by “ministry of reconciliation?”

- i. How does this affect your relationship with God? With others? With yourself?
- ii. For you personally, what are some of the most difficult aspects of no longer living for yourself?

APPLICATION:

- How can we help carry each other’s burdens?
- How can we grow in making disciples, and our “ministry of reconciliation” on campus?

## PRAY:

Spend a few minutes praying all together about what you've learned as a group and about the vision God has given your group.

## Church Involvement

OPENER: What is your religious background? (Explain what YOUR family believed and *practiced*).

TRANSITION: Is it possible that many of us haven't stopped to compare our religious background with what Jesus intended for us? Let's take a look at a few of Jesus' intentions for His People:

READ: Mt. 16:13-28

1. Why does Jesus call himself the Son of Man? (Dan. 7:13-14)
2. Jesus asked his disciples to take a stand and firmly declare who they thought he was. *Who do you think Jesus is?*
3. What did Peter mean when he called Jesus the Messiah? The Son of God?
4. What point is Jesus making in vs. 17-19. Why v. 20?
5. In vs. 21-23 what was Jesus' purpose? What was Peter's? *What is your purpose in life?*
6. Read Mt. 16:24-28 again...
  - a. What does it mean to deny yourself? To take up your cross?
  - b. *What does it mean to lose your life for Jesus?*
7. *What will Jesus reward you for personally when He returns to earth?*
8. Now we are ready to define what the church is that Jesus came to build.
  - a. According to what we've read, Jesus has several intentions for His People— the members of His Church. What are they?
  - b. How does that contrast with your religious experience?
  - c. For we modern day Christ-followers, what should our church involvement look like?

*Jesus loves his church and has great plans for us. This is why Paul says these words to the Ephesians: "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless." (Eph. 5:25-27)*

Col. 1:18 says this about Jesus: "He is the head of the body, the church."

What exactly was Jesus' idea of "the church?"

- What is the first thing that comes to mind when people hear the word *church*?
- The Greek word for church is ***ekklesia***. It is the word used to describe a group of men who at times were called out of their homes or places of work to conduct civic business.



- **Ek** means “out of,” and **kalien** means “to call.”
- Jesus gave the word His own meaning. So as members of Christ’s *church* we are those He has called out of a life of sin, and gathered together, to conduct His Kingdom’s business.

#### The Body of Christ Analogy

The Bible talks about Christ’s church as the “body of Christ,” with Jesus as the head of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-31).

As members of His body we are therefore connected to each other. We can no more be separate from the other members as a hand could exist disconnected from the rest of the body (It would die and start rotting).

#### APPLICATION:

1. What does Heb. 10:24-25 say?
2. How are you doing at “assembling” and “meeting together” and “conducting the business/ministry”  
as a part of the church (committed to a local church & this campus ministry)?

PRAY: Everyone pray to become a more effective functioning member of Christ’s local church and campus ministry.

A Servant Lifestyle  
(Practicing Biblical Principles in Our Relationships)

OPENER: Share a good and a bad memory from Junior High School

TRANSITION: When you think of Jesus what are some of the first things you think? It is interesting that servant is not what quickly comes to mind. But isn't this one of the primary roles he played? Let's investigate this idea of Jesus being a servant a bit more:

STUDY:

1. How is Jesus defined by the Father in each of these verses?  
Mt. 12:18-21  
Also from Isaiah 53 all, esp. v.11  
Acts 3:11-13, 24-26  
Acts 4:25-28  
Phil. 2:5-7
2. How did Jesus serve? Mk. 10:45
3. What are some ways that Jesus still serves us today? John 13:1-17
4. What does Jesus tell his followers to do? John 13:17; Mt. 20: 20-28
5. What are some ways the disciples served?
6. How did the followers of Jesus think about themselves?  
Peter & early believers Acts 4:29; 2 Pet. 1:1  
Paul Acts 26:16; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10 whose approval do we want?  
James 1:1; Jude 1:1; John Rev. 1:1; Epaphras Col. 1:7; Tychicus Eph. 6:21
7. How should we think of ourselves? What are some ways we may serve?

APPLICATION: We have learned that Jesus came to serve us, that he still serves us, and that we are now to view ourselves as his servants and develop a lifestyle of service.

1. What are some ways Jesus is prompting you to serve this week?
2. Who are some specific people you will serve?
3. When will you do it?

PRAY: Everyone pray for their ministry of serving others this week. Come prepared next week to tell the group how it went.

## Tithing: A Kingdom Principle

OPENER: Tell a story from your life when you were between ages 4-10

TRANSITION: Jesus is the lord and master of our life. This includes all of our finances and material possessions. To free us from greed and to teach us generosity, he tells us to give 10% of our income to God's work.

STUDY:

1. What is the best present you have ever received?
2. What are some of the gifts that God has given us?
3. Read Ps. 24:1. What does this verse teach us? How do you feel about it?
4. Read Lev. 27:30-34. What was the OT concept of the tithe?
5. Read Mt.6:1-4. List three things that describe the manner of giving the Lord blesses:
  - .
  - .
  - .
6. What warning did Jesus give in Luke 12:15? Why do you think He issued this warning?
7. Is the tithe required of Christ-followers today?

## APPLICATION:

What principles of giving should we encourage each other to practice?

How is Jesus prompting you to change your spending and giving habits?

PRAY: Pray for each other to become humble and obedient to tithe.

## Biblical Dating Relationships

OPENER: What have your dating relationships been like? What characterizes your ideal boyfriend or girlfriend?

TRANSITION: Tonight we will try to discover biblical principles that will give us successful dating experiences and prepare us for marriage.

READ: The article Dating Theology

STUDY:

1. What did the author say about dating as being a part of God's People?
2. Why did the author introduce the idea of the "one another" texts?
3. What are some biblical goals for our dating relationships?
4. What role does God's Spirit play in our lives? Our dating?
5. What principle made the most sense to you? Why?
6. As a group brainstorm a list of what the culture looks for in a date, then make a second list of what a Christ-follower looks for in a date.

APPLICATION:

What did you learn from tonight's study?

What specific applications will you make this week?

PRAY: For each other to become datable and marriageable according to God's way of thinking.

## *The People of God*

Do you want to be married one day? Would you like it to last a lifetime? Would you like it to be fulfilling and meet some of your deepest needs? Sure. We all want this. But how do we go about getting this to happen? That's what this article hopes to do—give a few pointers in the right direction.

To be honest about a biblical dating theology we must start by admitting something; The purpose of dating to prepare for and to select a suitable marriage partner. Who will you marry? How will you find them? What is biblical marriage supposed to look like anyway?

To be honest once again we must admit something else: Almost all of us view dating and marriage as a very individualistic sort of thing. BUT...we are forgetting a very LARGE biblical principle. Marriage, and therefore “dating,” falls inside of God's plan to establish a People for Himself. As a Christian, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are now part of God's New Testament People. Jesus said it this way: “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my *church*, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Mt. 16:18).

Church (*ekklesia*) is a translation of the OT Hebrew word *qahal* referring most often to the congregation of Israel. In the New Testament, although salvation is entered into individually, it is rarely if ever thought of as a one-on-one relationship with God. This is included, to be sure, but to be saved means especially to be joined to the People of God. The primary goal of salvation is to be joined to God's holy people and fulfill his purposes for planet earth.

As his people we look forward to the coming of his kingdom on earth and begin to approximate that future life now in the way we live with one another. So it is within the People of God and as part of his purposes for earth we pursue a biblical theology of dating.

What is dating? A social or romantic appointment that is scheduled to socially interact with a member of the opposite sex. The purpose is to

enjoy one another's company, to get acquainted, and to build the beginnings of a relationship. After a date or two, it may also be to determine whether or not the other person is a suitable candidate to get to know more deeply to consider if they might be the life partner you are looking for.

All of this remember is done as a part of the People of God in order to fulfill his purposes for earth. They are not intended for the purposes of simply meeting one's felt needs or to take away loneliness, or to gratify lustful desires. What then might God's purposes for planet earth be, and how might dating help fulfill these awesome plans?

God is creating a community among whom he can live, and who *in their life together* will reproduce God's life and character. The church is to be a living icon of the invisible God, available for all to see his love and his glory. So instead of asking "What would Jesus do?" we ask "What does Jesus look like when we do this, or don't do this? A list of verses that help us visualize what biblical dating might look like are called the "One Another" verses. Here are just a few samples to help you get the idea.

Rom. 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Rom. 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature rather, serve one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Eph. 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Right away we begin to see that our idea of individualism and self-gratification must give way to God's plan for service, harmony and acceptance of each other's short-comings. There is no perfect person out there, but if you pick one with Jesus as the passion of their lives, you will be well on your way to finding what your heart desires!

Furthermore, we realize that our culture's pattern of dating for romance and sex falls short of God's better plan for love, friendship, and meaningful companionship. Too often we have settled for lust, making out, one night stands, and broken hearts. What if you've had sex already, or what if you are hooked on porn, or what if you've experimented with same-sex encounters? This is why Jesus died on the cross. This is why he calls us to repentance. This is why he gives us his Holy Spirit to live inside of us the moment we surrender the control of our lives to him as our Savior and Lord. We are made into a new person we are told in 2 Cor. 5:17. We get to start over and go through the process of learning a whole new way of life.

In regards to dating this brings up the concept of *secondary virginity*. Jesus makes it so we get to start brand new in his sight. Our role from that point on is to cooperate with his Spirit in putting to death our old patterns of life. The mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead lives inside of our bodies. We have the help we need. This new way of living is doable. Rom. 8:13 says, "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."

God is not a magician. The way he fixes us is not instantaneous, but is real, Life-giving and lasting. It starts with demanding that we repent of living for ourselves. Next he says we must believe in his Son Jesus' death on our behalf for the forgiveness of our sins. Then we receive the gift of his Spirit to enable us to live his way in his kingdom, in which we are now his subjects (See Acts 2:38; Mk. 8:34-35; Rom. 8:1-10; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; 1 Jn. 1:9).



Titus 2:11-14 says, “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. “

### *Tips on Dating*

#### **1. The 50-50 principle**

Spend Half your time with your date with true followers of Jesus and the other half just the two of you. Go to your campus fellowship meetings together.

Go out together afterwards (ice cream, pizza, bowling)

When you are alone with each other be choosy where you spend the time.

Never in a bedroom, be in public places. Don't spend more than 3 hours together (You'll likely run out of meaningful things to say/do, and want to start making out)

Make a list of fun things to do. The goal of your dates is to have fun and to get to know one another better.

#### **2. The 11:00 pm principle**

The later you stay up the more trouble you get into. Why? Because you are not at your best. Conversations go downhill and once it starts going downhill it is hard to go uphill. The ways of the world creep in, what the world does late at night is have sex.

### **3. Once you've dated for awhile, make a boundaries list and stick to it.**

When and where you will date. Who you will spend time with. The amount of physical contact you will allow, (e.g. side hugs, hand-holding).

### **4. The accountability principle**

Ask a close friend or mentor to hold you accountable to these boundaries. Give them your written list of boundaries and ask them to quiz you every time you go on a date. Ask them to pray for you. Ask them to tell you how they think the relationship is affecting you (your school work, your job, your spirituality).

### **5. The breaking up principle**

Time and space are the ONLY way to break up effectively. Do not have any communication with each other for 1-3 months is the best way for your heart-affections to completely die toward the person. The goal is not to be friends, the goal is to get free of each other—to sever the heart attachments. The goal is to preserve a Christ-following person, and a positive example within the biblical community

### **6. The asking advice principle**

So you think he/she might be the right one, then ask what others think.

Who might be the best people to ask? Leaders of your biblical community—they know God's purposes. Parents—they know you. Mature Christ-following friends—they have watched your relationship.

# Water Baptism

## OPEN

What is the most spiritual experience that you have had?

## TRANSITION

Tonight's Bible study is about water baptism. Jesus taught his followers that this is something they must do.

## READ & STUDY

1. Read Mt. 28:18-20 and Mk. 16:15-16. What did Jesus teach in these two scriptures?

We see here that Jesus didn't make baptism an option. Therefore, no one should have to "seek God's will" for them about baptism. He has already specified what his will is. It is not something we have to pray about; it is something we have to obey.

2. Read Eph. 2:8-9. How does a person become saved?

Some churches mistakenly teach that a person must be baptized to be saved. If this were true, then we would have to "do" something to earn salvation. Salvation is by grace, through faith alone. Baptism follows salvation. It is our response of obedience...an outward expression of what has already taken place within us.

3. Read Mt. 5:14-15. Is there such thing as a private Christian?

Jesus said that we are the light of the world, and that a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. If we are the light, then we must let it shine for all to see. We are not to hide the fact that we are now a follower of Jesus. In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells us we are to be his witnesses to the whole world. If he is our Lord, then we will obey him in this matter. There is a stern rebuke for those who will not in Lk. 6:46 (Read).

4. Read Romans 6:3-5. What does water baptism signify?

We identify with Christ's death, resurrection, and burial. Just as he died, was buried and then rose from the dead; we die to our old way of life, are buried (symbolically in the watery grave of baptism), and rise to a new life of following Jesus as our Lord (symbolized by coming out of the water). Baptism is a separation between you and the sinful patterns of the past. It is a gateway into the new life of obedience. If we aren't ready to follow Christ in a life of obedience we shouldn't make a mockery of baptism by going through with it. The early disciples were under the threat of death. It is something they took seriously, and so should we.

5. Read 1 Cor. 12:12-26 and Col. 1:18. How is water baptism related to joining the church?

You are not baptized into a denomination or into a local church, but into the universal church of all who believe in Jesus Christ. To become a Christ follower is to become a church member. A Christ follower is described in scripture as a member of the body of Christ - a connected, functioning part of the body (church).

**APPLY**

When were you baptized?

If you haven't been baptized, where are you in the process of becoming a Christ-follower?

Where are you in the process of obeying Jesus' command to be baptized?

What questions do you have?

**PRAY**

Pray for each person's spiritual growth, baptism, and active participation in the body of Christ.