



He Gets Us.®

Personal Devotions & Group Discussion Guide





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This Devotional Guide is designed to be paired with weekly messages from the "He Gets Us" Series at Wawasee Bible. You can view these messages by going to youareloved.church/sermons and navigating to/filtering by the "He Gets Us" Series.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus became like us, so we could become like him. This is the promise of the Incarnation. “Incarnation” is a word theologians use to describe what happened when God became human. We celebrate the Incarnation every Christmas, believing that Jesus became human, adding humanity to his deity—being born as a baby just like us, growing up just like us, living like one of us, and dying like one of us.

When he stepped into our world, when the Incarnation happened, Jesus wasn’t simply intervening for us—he was identifying with us. The Bible says he was made like us in every way. That means experiencing family and friendships, telling jokes and playing games, working hard and experiencing pain. Jesus became like us in every way, so we could become like him. In this series, we will dive into six ways Jesus became like us, and how we can become more like him.

In the face of our insecurity, Jesus became like us, so we could have a clear purpose. It’s so easy for life to squeeze us into inhuman shapes. Like deformed puzzle pieces, we no longer know where we fit. But Jesus shows us what real life is like, reminds us what we were made for, and helps us see where to go. In the face of Jesus, we remember who we are.

In the face of our exhaustion, Jesus became like us, so we could step off the treadmill of comparison and rest on his grace. We can wear ourselves out physically, emotionally, and spiritually climbing today’s ladder of success, only to wake up tomorrow to find the ladder has changed. Jesus invites us to leave the ladders behind and enjoy the unforced rhythms of his grace.

In the face of our anxiety, Jesus became like us, so we could live confidently, trusting in God’s care for us. Where worry can dominate our lives and steal from our future, Jesus frees us to explore our lives, enjoy our relationships, and discover the good things God has planned for us. When we live with Jesus, we find that we have all the time in the world.

In the face of our guilt, Jesus became like us, so we could face our accusers together and he could take our side without proclaiming our innocence or ignoring our guilt. Rather he knows our hearts completely and chooses love instead of condemnation. In the face of Jesus, we find that we are fully known and fully loved.

In the face of our grief, Jesus became like us, so we could no longer be bullied by death. When faced with grief, Jesus didn't dismiss our emotions with hollow reassurances. Instead, he wept. His tears flowed with ours, reminding us that God doesn't expect us to stifle our sorrow. In the face of our grief, Jesus offers us comfort: *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."* (Matthew 5:4 New International Version/NIV)

In the face of our dissatisfaction, Jesus became like us, so we could see how God cares for us. Jesus points us again and again to the God who gives. He reminds us over and over that God knows everything we need. Jesus proves to us once and for all that when we put our life in God's hands, he will give us more life than we ever dreamed.

Jesus became like us in all these ways, and in each of them showed us how we could become more like him. But... *why would we want to become like Jesus?*

Jesus tends to be more famous for the death he died than the life he lived—and understandably so. But it's his life that shows us he understands us. And it's his resurrection that gives life to us.

It takes faith in Jesus to follow Jesus's path. It requires trust in God to be willing to invest our lives learning to become like Jesus in these very human ways. We become like him in these smaller ways, so that we might become like him in bigger ways—in his death and then, finally, in his resurrection (Philippians 3:10-11).

We follow him in life. We follow him in death. We can follow him in resurrection.

As you engage in the He Gets Us experience, remember that Jesus's words and actions are backed up by Jesus's own resurrection. It's on that basis that anything else he said is worth examining. It's on that basis that everything else he did is worth imitating.

USING THIS DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Weekly Scripture and Weekend Message

The weekend message at Wawasee Bible is informed by a weekly Bible passage. All scripture in this guide is from the New International Version (NIV). He Gets Us (HGU) group participants can attend weekend services or watch the message online in preparation for their group discussion. Visit **youareloved.church** for information on service times and/or **youareloved.church/sermons** to see all weekend messages. (Note: If you're using this Devotional Guide at a later date, just navigate to/filter messages by the "He Gets Us" Series at **youareloved.church/sermons**.)

Personal Devotionals

Each week contains five personal devotionals (and one bonus devotional) for individual daily engagement with the HGU themes. **This is a great opportunity to begin or continue a habit of spiritual practice throughout this six-week experience.** *Each devotional is designed to take roughly five minutes.* (Note: For some, five minutes each day will be a stretch. For others, five minutes is just stretching out. Group participants who wish to encourage each other in these devotions can discuss their experiences at each group meeting.)

Many of the devotionals encourage a time of prayer. If Christian prayer is new for you, know that prayer is most often a simple expression of yourself to God. This can be in words spoken aloud, in thought, or even written down. Sometimes prayer can be a wordless expression of your sincere emotions, but sometimes prayer can be a listening experience or a combination of listening and expressing. You will most accurately hear from God when you are reading his Word. Read the passage in this devotional each week, intent on hearing from God through it. Even pray a simple, sincere prayer, *"God, speak to me and let me hear."* before you read.

But above all, be encouraged. The God of the universe likes you and won't judge your form, expertise, or vocabulary.

Group Discussion Guide

The Group Discussion Guide is designed for exactly that, group discussion. The questions are based on both the message and Scripture from the previous Sunday as well as the devotional during the week.

Most often these will be used in Life Groups, but you might also consider starting a gathering with some friends or neighbors during the six weeks of He Gets Us. You can facilitate the group using any of the given elements of the discussion guide to create meaningful spiritual conversations in your group. Notes for Group Facilitators (or Life Group Leaders) can be found at the end of this guide on page 66.

Table Discussions



As you work through this devotional, you'll notice that some questions are labeled with a table icon to their left. These questions can help start or continue a conversation with your family, your friends, your co-workers, or whoever is interested.

They are primarily selected for individuals who interact with one another, but engage in different HGU groups, Life Groups, etc. and want to “cross-pollinate” ideas, experiences, and applications (e.g., the parents are in a Life Group, one child is in a Salt Company, and another child is in Impact, etc.). Topically, they range from non-threatening to deep. Of course, you can select any of the questions in the guide or make up your own.

Who will proactively facilitate these questions in your family or circle of relationships?





Week 1:

JESUS GETS INSECURITY

“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’

¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

LUKE 15:8-10 (NIV)

Week 1:

DEVOTIONAL 1

We've all lost something of value; a stuffed animal, a homework assignment, our car keys, or even a smartphone. Or more seriously, a job we enjoyed, a home where we belonged, or a relationship we cherished.

When we lose something, it can no longer fulfill its purpose. Lost keys can no longer open doors. Lost jobs can no longer provide for our needs. For the woman who lost her coin, the coin could no longer be spent. It was just a piece of metal, somewhere out of reach.

If you have a job, how much do you earn in a day? Perhaps you've received a significant amount of money for a birthday or graduation? For the woman, the coin amounted to something similar. Imagine what you could do with that money. Would you accept losing it without at least trying to get it back?

As Jesus tells this story, it's easy for us to relate to the woman, but Jesus has a surprise for us. The woman does not represent us. The lost coin does! The woman, on the other hand, represents God. That means we are his fortune, his valuable treasure, and the reward for his hard work. But we are lost.

Being lost can generate feelings of insecurity. Where we once felt easy and carefree, we now feel anxious and weary. We don't know why we are here, where we're going, or how to get there.

What is something valuable you remember losing? Do you remember the heartache you felt? God feels that same heartache for anyone who is lost.

Now recall the purpose that thing had in your life. Remember the joy it gave you, that's the kind of joy God has when people return to him.

A coin has a clear purpose. It's meant to be spent. But when a coin is lost, it becomes utterly useless, an inert piece of metal. Even a stolen coin can be used by a thief, but a lost coin has no use.

When we are lost, our own purpose is lost too. We can no longer do what God made us to do. But there is good news; just like the woman, God is turning heaven and earth upside down to find us. He will do whatever it takes, even become human like us, to rescue and restore us.

In the face of our insecurity, Jesus became like us, so we could become like him.

Jesus used a coin in another famous story. This coin was stamped with a silhouette of Caesar, the emperor of Rome. Opponents came along hoping to trick Jesus. They essentially asked, "Should we, the oppressed, pay taxes to Rome, the oppressor?" A wrong answer could have gotten Jesus arrested. However, Jesus took the coin and said, *"give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."* (Luke 20:25)

Jesus' point was profound. God made each of us in his image. We reflect his likeness and glory. Therefore, we belong to him and are made for a purpose.

Just like a divine coin, God's image is upon us. How might God want to spend us?

As we search for where we should go and what we should do, we don't need to look any further than Jesus. We see God's purpose in Jesus. In the New Testament book of Colossians, it says that Jesus is *"the image of the invisible God"* (1:15). Jesus spent his life in relationship with God the Father. He did whatever he saw the Father doing (John 5:19). We can spend our lives doing the same.

We each have one life to spend. We can spend it hiding from God and wondering what we're here for. Vainly, we can try to secure our own purpose and determine our own destiny, or we can choose to come out of hiding and live as Jesus did.

Jesus has given us a great and good picture, a perfect image of God's purpose for our lives. In the face of our insecurity, we can look at the life of Jesus and find our purpose there.

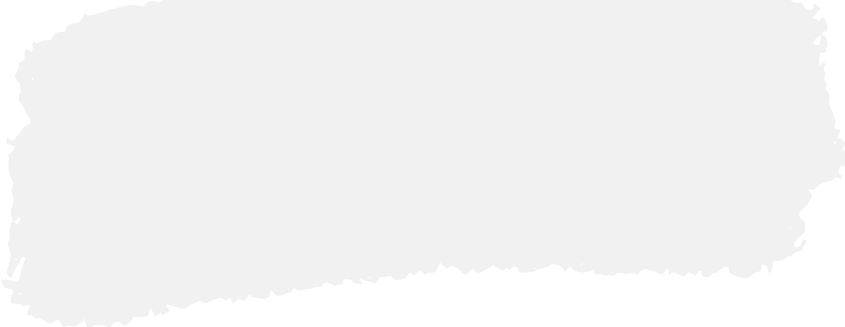
Week 1:

DEVOTIONAL 2

Reread this week's passage, Luke 15:8-10.

Do you see yourself anywhere in this passage? Where?

Is there anything you need to repent of (change your ways on)?



Week 1:

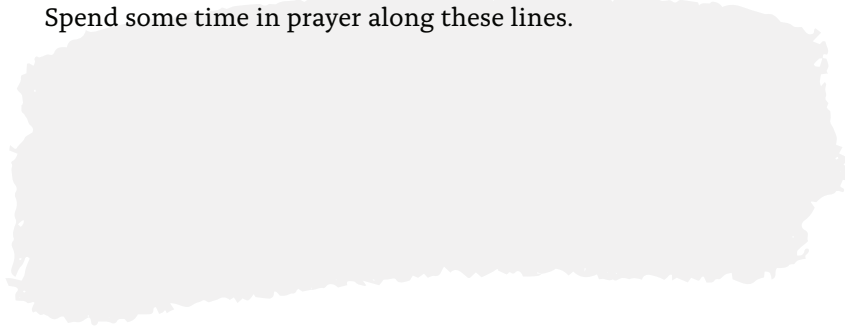
DEVOTIONAL 3

Where, if anywhere, are you being told that you don't matter?

Where do you see value in yourself that few others see?

🗣️ In the last 24 hours, where have you made a valuable contribution?

Spend some time in prayer along these lines.



Week 1:

DEVOTIONAL 4

Read Matthew 19:13-14. Who do you identify with in this brief story? Why?

Why do you think the disciples might not have wanted the children to come to Jesus?

What do you think Jesus “gets” that the disciples don’t?

Do you know anyone who might be feeling devalued? How can you show them that they matter?

Week 1:

DEVOTIONAL 5

Scripture says that you were made in God’s “image”. What do you think that might mean?

How does that make you feel?

In the next 24 hours, where can you make a valuable contribution?

Spend some time in prayer along these lines.

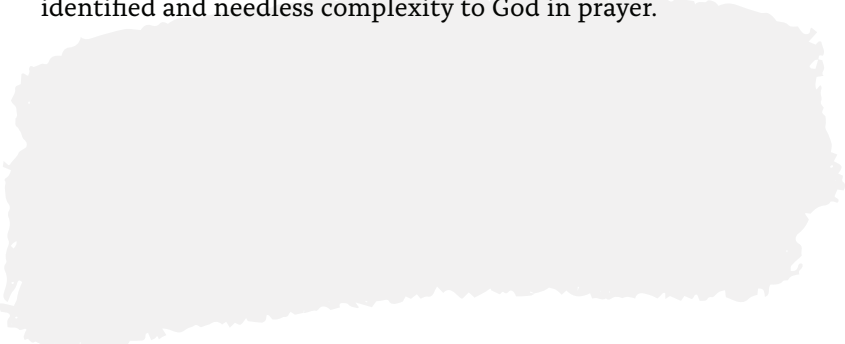
Week 1:

BONUS DEVOTIONAL

How busy or stretched do you feel right now?

Where can you remove something for the sake of simplicity and spiritual health for the duration of the HGU study?

Review and address your calendar, if needed. Bring any identified and needless complexity to God in prayer.



THOUGHTS/NOTES
(OPTIONAL)

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Week 1:

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Starters *(Choose One)*

- Share a time when you lost something valuable.
- Describe a memorable celebration when something lost was found.

Message Reflection

- What stood out to you from the teaching this past weekend?
- What questions did the message prompt in you?

Scripture Discussion (Luke 15:8-10)

- What words or phrases in this passage seem significant or surprising to you?
- What do you think the word “sinner” means in this context?
- What do you think the word “repents” means in this context?
- Who do you think is doing the rejoicing in verse 10?
- How would you summarize this passage, in your own words? (one or two sentences)



Application

- Describe an area of your life that feels insecure.
 - What are you hoping to get out of the He Gets Us experience?
 - How would your environments (school, team, club, work, etc.) change if people understood this message and lived it out?
 - Who do you know that might be interested in next week's topic (Exhaustion)?

Ideas for Group Facilitators

If this is your first meeting as a group, discuss what expectations you have throughout the course of this six-week series. Those could include expectations for:

- » Personal devotionals
- » Weekend service attendance/engagement
- » Group Meetings
- » Each Other





Week 2:

JESUS GETS EXHAUSTION

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (NIV)

Week 2:

DEVOTIONAL 1

It begins in school. Teachers grading our papers and scoring our tests. When we get them back, we soon find ourselves comparing ourselves with our friends. What starts as curiosity soon becomes a comparison game. It then moves on to our clothes, our friends, and our looks.

In the work world, the feedback can be less clear. We might receive sales targets, an annual review, and occasional feedback on our efforts, but there are no letter grades or test scores to neatly determine how we measure up.

So, we search for other indicators, a house, a car, more education, well-behaved kids. We gather “success stories” while we drive through town or scroll our newsfeeds. Anything we see around us that might lure us into the comparison trap.

No wonder we’re exhausted.

The people of Jesus’ day struggled with exhaustion too. This is why Jesus’ call resonated in the Temple that day. *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28) and it’s why his merciful promise still resonates today.

In first-century Judea, the people were exhausted by the religious demands of the Jewish Law. Not only was the Scriptural Law extensive and detailed (613 laws in all), but the religious leaders piled on more laws of their own. These impossible demands exacted a toll, not just spiritually, but socially as the Jewish Law also influenced every Jew’s social status.

Jesus saved his harshest criticism for the religious leaders. He encouraged others not to follow their example for *“They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.”* (Matthew 23:4). Those Jewish leaders were like many of the social media influencers of our day: perfect hair, toothpaste-ad smiles, and impossibly well-behaved children.

But Jesus has good news—rest for our souls. It wasn't the first time God had promised relief for the weary. Jesus was echoing Jeremiah 6:16, *"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"*

God's promise sounds wonderful, but it's followed by an unexpected twist. The people were exhausted and looking for an easier road. But wait... they rejected it??

We might be exhausted too; spiritually, physically, or emotionally, but it turns out we're the ones who built the treadmill! Rather than walking in the way of Jesus, we choose the way of status and symbol. Instead of being known by God, we want to be seen by others. Instead of following him beside peaceful streams and quiet waters, we want to keep climbing the unscalable mountains of comparison.

What are the engines that keep your treadmill turning? The ones that have you exhausted, running to keep up, but getting you nowhere?

Perhaps it's physical exhaustion, running yourself ragged trying to get everything done. Fearing that God won't provide. To your exhausted body, Jesus has an offer, Come.

Perhaps it's emotional exhaustion, fearing your life will lack significance or heaping your own impossible expectations upon others. To your exhausted heart, Jesus has an invitation for you, Learn from Me.

Perhaps it's spiritual exhaustion, believing that you aren't enough, that you don't do enough—for others or for God. To your exhausted soul, Jesus has good news, Rest.

Take his yoke, his easy burden, his light heart. He has everything to give you. Come and rest. Let go of comparison and pointless striving. Step off the treadmill. You don't ever have to go back.

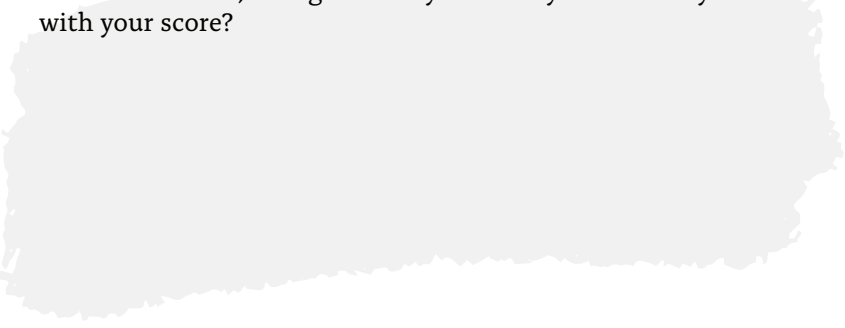
Week 2:

DEVOTIONAL 2

Reread this week's passage, Matthew 11:28-30. Note that Jesus is speaking in this passage.

What, if any, part of this passage is speaking directly to you?

On a scale of 1-10, how gentle do you think you are? Are you OK with your score?



Week 2:

DEVOTIONAL 3

Think back on the last seven days.

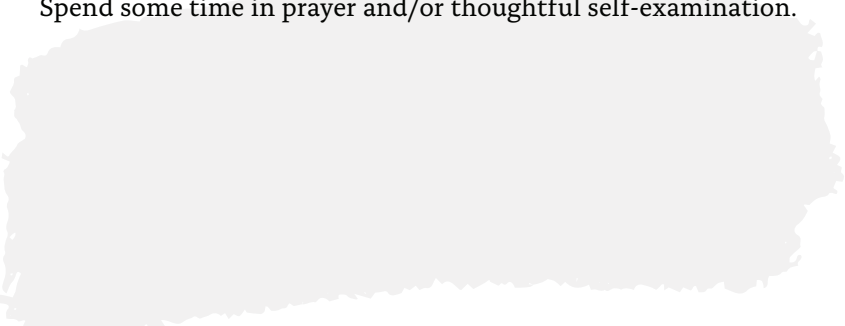
When did you feel rested?

What made it restful?

🕒 When were you most weary?

🕒 Why were you so weary?

Spend some time in prayer and/or thoughtful self-examination.



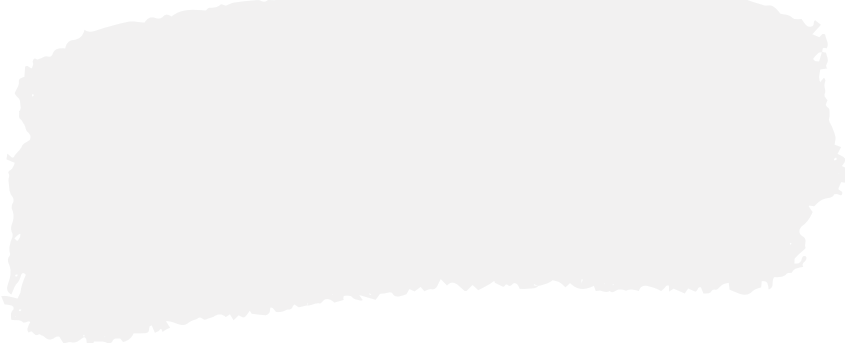
Week 2:

DEVOTIONAL 4

Read John 4:1-6.

What do you notice about Jesus from this passage?

Where might you be on a journey? From where to where?



Week 2:

DEVOTIONAL 5

Where, if anywhere, are you carrying a needless burden of your own choice?

How can you put it down?

Spend some time in prayer along these lines.



Week 2:

BONUS DEVOTIONAL

“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”

GENESIS 2:1-3

How will you emulate God this week in marking out a day for rest?

What plans do you need to make or cancel?

Examine your patterns in general and pray specifically for any needed adjustments this week.



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Week 2:

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Starters *(Choose One)*

- Describe a time when you were exhausted (in any way).
- ☛ Describe a time when you carried a heavy burden (of any kind).

Message Reflection

- What stood out to you from the teaching this past weekend?
- ☛ What questions did the message prompt in you?

Scripture Discussion (Matthew 11:28-30)

- What do you think this passage reveals about Jesus?
- What do you think it means to “learn from” Jesus? (verse 29)
- What do you think are the characteristics of a weary soul?
- What do you think are the characteristics of a rested soul?
- How would you describe Jesus’ yoke and burden? (verse 30)



Application

- Describe an area of your life where you feel soul-weary.
- Where, if anywhere, are you afraid to pick up a burden because the emotional or spiritual resources might not be available to you?
- How would your environments (school, team, club, work, etc.) change if people understood this message and lived it out?
- Who do you know that might be interested in next week's topic (Anxiety)?

Ideas for Group Facilitators

If applicable, discuss how your group can bear each other's burdens as an expression of Jesus' love.

Check in with your group members on how the daily devotions are going now that you are two weeks into the HGU experience.



Week 3:

JESUS GETS ANXIETY

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

MATTHEW 6:25-34 (NIV)

Week 3:

DEVOTIONAL 1

Anxiety tends to creep in unnoticed.

We start out wandering life's aisles, browsing the options available to us, deciding which ones we like and which ones we'll leave on the shelf. Am I good at sports, music, or art? Do I enjoy books, shopping, or video games? We discover things we enjoy, things we do well, and things we believe are worth pursuing.

Consider your own choices—your summer job, the team you are on, the college you selected, the home you bought, the life you've created for yourself and your family, or your place of retirement.

Somewhere along the way, the anxiety begins. Did my choices connect me with the right crowd? Will they still get me where I want to go?

Over time, our choices turn into the skills we are known for. "She's good at sports," or "He's good at music." They are how people know us. In many ways, they are how we know ourselves, and mixed in are the choices we have made about church and faith.

With all these choices, a pious person might expect God to say, "Give up your worldly desires. They are holding you back from deeper spirituality," but Jesus surprises us here. Instead, he says, "*your heavenly Father knows that you need them*" (Matthew 6:32). Food, shelter, relationships—God knows what you need. Jesus doesn't warn us against wanting them. Rather, it's our worry that's the problem.

Why is worry a problem? Because it can dominate our life. It can waste our time and energy when we could be focused on better things. Worry is a thief that steals, kills, and destroys. It focuses our attention on the external and overlooks the inner life where we encounter God's Spirit.

In scary movies, the characters are constantly running away from a menace nipping at their heels. Their attention is consumed, focused on the source of their fear, and so the characters never seem to escape it.

In the same way, worry turns worthwhile goals into objects of fear. Dominating our attention and consuming our lives.

The only way out of worry is to focus on something greater. This is the kind of freedom Jesus is offering. Not merely a freedom FROM worry, but a freedom FOR an abundant life.

Jesus did more than offer us a better way. He showed us a better way.

If anyone had a reason to worry, Jesus did. As he continued to preach in public, his teaching increasingly threatened the powerful. In particular, the religious leaders were furious. They wanted Jesus dead, and they would eventually get their wish.

Yet knowing this, Jesus was not consumed by worry. Looking back, his disciple Peter commented, *"when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."* (1 Peter 2:23) Jesus put his well-being in God's hands. He overcame worry, not with a clever self-help strategy, but with trust.

Jesus showed us that God, when we trust him, will supply our needs. Not always our desires, but always our needs. Beyond any death, there is the hope of resurrection.

When we let worry dominate our attention, we might miss what God is doing. However, when we trust God to supply our needs, we can quit worrying about the possible collision of bad things and start watching for the possible connection of good things.

Jesus knows that *"pagans RUN after all these things"* (Matthew 6:32, emphasis added). Worry can't add a single hour to your life. In fact, it will steal your hours and consume your days. Jesus, on the other hand, offers you eternal life, resurrection life. He offers you the freedom to spend your hours exploring and your days discovering.

Rather than running like the pagans, or strutting like the pious, we can receive the living rest Jesus offers us. Jesus invites you out of your exhausting agenda. He invites you away from your anxious anticipation. He invites you to take up the attitude of King David who, instead of worrying, trusted that *"Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* (Psalm 23:6). Jesus invites you to God, who knows what you need, and he is chasing you with his goodness.

Week 3:

DEVOTIONAL 2

Reread this week's passage, Matthew 6:25-34.

🗒️ How prone are you to worry?

In your own words, what advice do you think Jesus is giving in this passage? (if helpful, write this down as a single sentence)

Week 3:

DEVOTIONAL 3

Ignoring tomorrow's troubles, what troubles are you facing today?

Where might you need God's presence or help in today's troubles?

In prayer, ask God for help.

Week 3:

DEVOTIONAL 4

On the night of his arrest, before his torturous execution, Jesus brought his immediate troubles to God in prayer. Read Matthew 26:36-39.

How would you describe Jesus' attitude toward his troubles?

Does anything here surprise you? Why?

Week 3:

DEVOTIONAL 5

Ignoring today's troubles, what troubles do you expect to encounter tomorrow?

How can you face those troubles without anxiety by focusing on something greater or by being aware of "the possible connection of good things"?

In prayer, ask God for perspective.

Week 3:

BONUS DEVOTIONAL

Practice memorizing Matthew 6 verse 27 or 34. Write and rewrite. Speak it out loud and in your mind. Place the verse in a location where you will see it regularly. Take note of how embedding these words in your mind affects your attitude this week.



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Week 3:

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Starters *(Choose One)*

- What is one of your favorite foods or drinks?
- Share a memorable time when you “dressed up”.

Message Reflection

- What stood out to you from the teaching this past weekend?
- What questions did the message prompt in you?

Scripture Discussion (Matthew 6:25-34)

- If Jesus was here, what question would you ask him about this passage?
- What point(s) do you think Jesus is trying to make with the birds and flowers?
- How would you answer Jesus’ rhetorical question in verse 26? Expand on why you answered in that way.
- What attitude(s) do you think Jesus is trying to encourage?
- What do you think verse 33 means?



Application

- Describe an area of your life about which you are anxious.
- Why do you think it might be difficult to apply Jesus' teaching here (if you do)?
- How might you be able to make this group a better group? (in any way)
- How would your environments (school, team, club, work, etc.) change if people understood this message and lived it out?
- Who do you know that might be interested in next week's topic (Guilt)?

Ideas for Group Facilitators

Someone in your group may be experiencing notable anxiety. Avoid "easy answers" and "fixing" that person. Instead, if appropriate, spend focused time in prayer for that person.



Week 4:

JESUS GETS GUILT

...but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

JOHN 8:1-11 (NIV)

Week 4:

DEVOTIONAL 1

You're in Jerusalem at the Temple. It's the week of an important religious festival so the crowds are bigger than usual, especially here. To add to it, everyone is talking about Jesus, and he's here teaching. The place is simply crowded.

Pressed in among the crowd, you're aware of a commotion off to your right. People stepping aside, a loud mob passing through the middle, heading straight for Jesus. They surround a woman, almost dragging her along. A wave of tension ripples through the crowd.

You catch the word "adultery". More whispers. You remember what the law says. *"Take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death...purge the evil from among you."* (Deuteronomy 22:24). Both of them? But you only see the woman. Where is the man? Something seems off.

Bringing the woman to Jesus, her accusers were not looking for justice, but power. They were not trying to "purge the evil" of adultery from their community. If they had, they would have brought the man too, as the Jewish Law prescribed. On the contrary, they were trying to trap Jesus. If he told them to ignore the law, then the authorities could level one more accusation against him.

They didn't care whether Jerusalem was a place of justice. They wanted a community that cowered in their presence. To them, the woman was a pawn.

They were not only abusing the woman, but they were also abusing God's law, turning a tool of justice into a weapon of abuse. They pretended to be offended by her adultery when the greater evil was lurking in their own hearts.

The woman must have been terrified. In the dark of night, she'd been caught in her sin and then dragged away. They undoubtedly whispered violence in her ears, promising her that the dawn would expose her guilt and end her life.

Now, in the Temple courtyard, the crowds could only see the worst things about her. Not only that, but she was also now in front of Jesus, arguably the most well-known person in Jerusalem. Was there no end to her shame?

Would Jesus be any different than her accusers? Tossed to the ground in front of him, she was afraid to look up. Would she see the same anger and violence in his eyes? Would she find any face of mercy and love in the crowd? Or only more shame, fear, and guilt?

What was Jesus thinking? He saw an angry mob clutching their stones. The leaders were shouting, clutching their accusations, eyes red with anticipation.

Tears streaked down this woman's powdered face. But when Jesus looked at her accusers, their eyes were not on her. They were on him, awaiting his judgment. Everything hung on his next few words.

Jesus understood the guilt that lurked among the crowd, whispering its condemnation. While guilt breathed its threats in everyone's ears, Jesus spoke words, gentle and firm. He made no accusation but defused the terror with thoughtful reflection.

As for me, who am I when stories like this arise today? Am I one of the accusers? Do I secretly thirst for power, willing to use others, and even God, to get what I want?

Am I the woman crushed by condemnation? Are there other voices threatening to expose my guilt? Does my guilt keep me in bondage and isolate me from the people I love and need?

Am I Jesus seeking to love my enemies? Are others trying to convince me to take their side, vindicate their cause, and justify their sin?

"Let any one of you who is without sin..." (John 8:7) In his gentle way, Jesus calls us into this story, to examine our own hearts. It is easy to focus on the guilt of others, but Jesus turns our eyes inward—to see the evil in our own hearts and the pain it has caused. Guiltless himself, yet Jesus understands our guilt.

His words challenge us to drop our weapons and open our hands. In place of our shame, he says, *"Then neither do I condemn you... Go now and leave your life of sin."* (John 8:11) In place of our fear, he gives us freedom. In place of our guilt, he gives us grace and a fresh start.

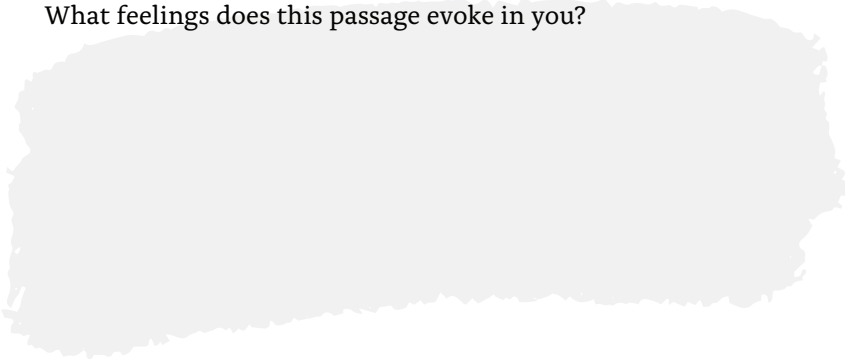
Week 4:

DEVOTIONAL 2

Reread this week's passage, John 8:1-11.

With which of the characters in this story do you most identify?
Why?

What feelings does this passage evoke in you?



Week 4:

DEVOTIONAL 3

🔊 Is it easier for you to see other people's virtues or their vices?
Why do you think this is?

Who, if anyone, deserves a fresh start from your condemnation?
How can you emulate Jesus in this?

Spend some time in prayer along these lines.



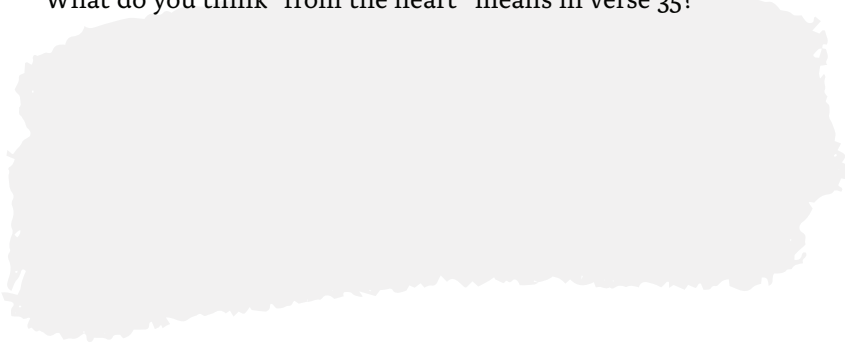
Week 4:

DEVOTIONAL 4

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

What do you think might have been behind Peter's question in verse 21?

What do you think "from the heart" means in verse 35?



Week 4:

DEVOTIONAL 5

What areas of your life are worthy of condemnation?

Jesus is offering you grace and a fresh start.

Spend time in confession-focused prayer.



**"Go now and leave your life of sin."
- JESUS JOHN 8:11**

Week 4:

BONUS DEVOTIONAL

Spend your devotional time in silence. Be still. Keep your mind and body at rest. Actively listen for God or simply rest in his presence.

Afterward, note how easy or difficult this was for you. Was it refreshing or draining? How often is silence a part of your week?



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Week 4:

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Starters *(Choose One)*

- Describe a time when you were “caught”.
- Share a time when you had a fresh start (of any kind).

Message Reflection

- What stood out to you from the teaching this past weekend?
- What questions did the message prompt in you?

Scripture Discussion (John 8:1-11)

- What words or phrases in this passage seem significant or surprising to you?
- In what ways, if any, do you identify with...
 - The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees
 - The crowds
 - The woman
 - Jesus
- What attitudes do you see in each of the above regarding “sin”?
- Why do you think the older ones departed first? (verse 9)



Application

- Where and how can you apply this passage?
- How would your environments (school, team, club, work, etc.) change if people understood this message and lived it out?
- Who do you know that might be interested in next week's topic (Grief)?



Week 5:

JESUS GETS GRIEF

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days...

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

JOHN 11:1-6, 33-38 (NIV)

Week 5:

DEVOTIONAL 1

Imagine having a younger brother and sister who are getting bullied at school. The bullying goes on and on, and no one seems to do anything about it. As it continues, they begin to change their habits. They quit trying out for sports or music in fear of more bullying. They avoid staying after school to talk with friends. They stay home sick. Eventually, they start to lose interest in school altogether. Such bullying would make you mad, right?

Now, imagine that somehow you started attending their classes and experiencing that same bullying yourself, but you knew it was coming. You watched how it affected other students too. Even the teachers seemed anxious and fearful. They would change their plans just to avoid confronting the bullies. You're in disbelief, watching it all happen. Meanwhile, you remember your own school experience and how much fun you had. You know how good school can feel, but this school is living in the shadows. Everyone rushing between classes, hardly stopping to talk. The life and energy draining away. The community of friendships thinning out. All because of their fear.

You would feel angry. You would feel grief. You would be determined to do something, but what?

Jesus witnessed this same situation among his closest friends. Martha and Mary, in a panic, sent word to Jesus that death was hanging outside their door, casting its shadow across Lazarus, their brother. In desperation they called out to Jesus, hoping beyond hope, wondering if there was anything he could do.

When Jesus arrived, it seemed the bully had won. Death had defeated Lazarus and now its threats were seeping into the others' hearts. Lazarus' death was a reminder. Death would continue tormenting them, whispering threats in their ears, intimidating them everywhere they went.

In our own society today, the shadows of death can be neatly tucked away into nursing homes and hospital beds. Perhaps we only face them in moments of tragedy when the shadows can

no longer be ignored. In the ancient world, death was a common part of life—normal, even familiar. Yet that didn't make it easy or any less unnatural. What could they do? Death was a fact.

But when Jesus looked around, he saw what death did to the people he loved. He saw their relationships fracturing. The relationships he had made them for were leaking away.

Jesus, unlike the disciples, did not see death as a fact, but as a figment. Unlike Martha and Mary, Jesus saw death not as a creature of immense power, but as a snake that whispered lies. Jesus knew death was not a powerful bully, but a puffed-up sham, an empty shell. Death was a curse, but it was not a destiny.

Yet, these disciples, the people he loved, were grieving because they believed death had power over them. They were grieving because they were held in its grip. Their fear of death sapped their strength and led them to despair. They believed death would have the final word.

Jesus looked on the people he loved and saw what death was doing. It was convincing them, and he was filled with anger and grief.

Jesus grieves for what death does to us. But Jesus' grief was not exacerbated by despair. His grief did not lead him to give up but to embrace his power of resurrection. Jesus chose to join us in our grief so that we might join him in his resurrection.

The Bible says that Jesus will put death to death (1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 20:14) and that death will be swallowed up in Jesus' victory (1 Corinthians 15:54). The Bible celebrates, saying *"Where, O death, where is your victory? Where O death, is your sting?"* (1 Corinthians 15:55).

Jesus grieves for what death does to us, for how it threatens us, bullies us, and shuts us down. But its bark is worse than its bite. Jesus tasted the bite of death, but he didn't live in fear of it. He didn't despair. Rather he lived in faith that God would deliver him from death. Jesus lived in power and used that power to overcome death and the grave.

Jesus knew the grief of losing loved ones. He was not immune to the heartache of death, but in his grief, Jesus did not lose hope. He did not languish in despair. Jesus grieves with us so that we can celebrate with him. If we'll let him, he will teach us how to grieve with hope, how to die in hope, and how to put our lives and our loved ones in the hands of God who raises the dead.

Week 5:

DEVOTIONAL 2

Reread this week's passage, John 11:1-6, 33-38.

What emotions do you observe in Jesus?

Does this match your expectations for him? Why or why not?



Week 5:

DEVOTIONAL 3

Are you grieving the loss of anyone or anything?

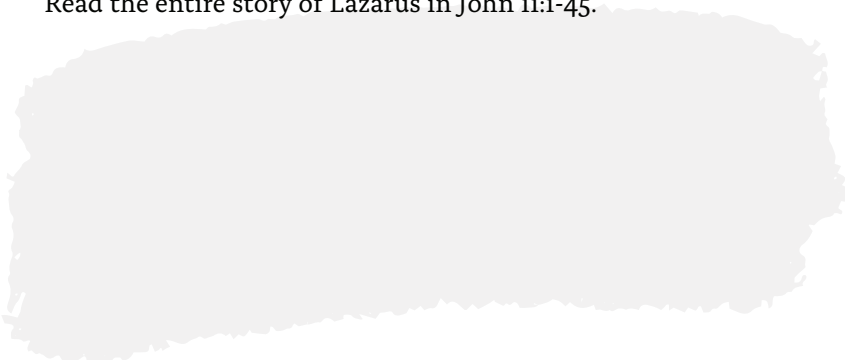
Express this grief to God in prayer. He gets us.



Week 5:

DEVOTIONAL 4

Read the entire story of Lazarus in John 11:1-45.



Week 5:

DEVOTIONAL 5

❏ Who do you know that is grieving the loss of anyone or anything?

❏ Is there a way you can show this person compassion?

Reflect on this and pray for the courage to act.



Week 5:

BONUS DEVOTIONAL

What is on your mind and heart? Write out a prayer of any length along those lines. Choose each word carefully or write in a stream-of-consciousness style. Pray and reflect as you write.

Pray your written prayer back to God.



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Week 5:

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Starters *(Choose One)*

- Describe a time you were asked to do something difficult.
- Share about a time when you wept.

Message Reflection

- What stood out to you from the teaching this past weekend?
- What questions did the message prompt in you?

Scripture Discussion (John 11:1-6, 33-38)

- What emotions do you see Jesus expressing in this passage?
- What do you think Jesus meant in verse 4?
- What else can you learn about Jesus from this passage?
- Why do you think it is the sight of weeping that deeply moves and troubles Jesus? (verse 33)
- Does the response in verse 37 surprise you? Why or why not?



Application

- In what ways, if any, does Jesus' experience of grief offer you hope?
- Who can you share hope with this week?
- How would your environments (school, team, club, work, etc.) change if people understood this message and lived it out?
- Who do you know that might be interested in next week's topic (Dissatisfaction)?

Ideas for Group Facilitators

If it fits your group meeting, you may decide to read and discuss the entire story of Lazarus in John 11:1-45.






Week 6:

JESUS GETS DISSATISFACTION

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

JOHN 7:37-39 (NIV)



Week 6:

DEVOTIONAL 1

The Oxford professor and Christian philosopher, C.S. Lewis once wrote, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." The reality of dissatisfaction is inescapable. It pushes us to look deeper and higher to find true satisfaction.

Today, the variety of ways to search for satisfaction is endless. Billions of people (us included) spend their entire lifetimes, each in their own ways, pursuing some kind of satisfaction.

So, when Jesus in John 7, steps onto the world stage and says, *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink,"* he is making a bold claim. He's not offering a drinking fountain that spouts up before draining away. Jesus is talking about God's flood of love and his ocean of grace to quench every thirst.

Jesus intended his words to echo a story from the Old Testament. A story of deep dissatisfaction and true need.

The dissatisfaction of the Israelites in Exodus 17 isn't hard to put your finger on. They were in the desert. It was hot and dry. They had traveled a long way from Egypt, and now there was no water.

This wasn't their first brush with such dissatisfaction though. Twice before they'd encountered similar obstacles. First, they had found water, but it was bitter and undrinkable, before God, through Moses, cleansed it (Exodus 15:22-27). Then, they lacked food, before God sent manna and quail (bread and meat) to feed them (Exodus 16). This time the need was dire. They had no water, but this time they seemed sure God wouldn't come through.

Think back to your own seasons of dissatisfaction. While lacking water has an obvious solution, our own seasons of thirst aren't always so black and white. Do I really need a new car or new phone, or am I just comparing myself to others? Why do I need a good grade? Why exactly do I want a good review?

The good news is that God still wants for us what he wanted for the people of Israel; to look to him to meet our needs, and to trust that he will. God repeatedly met their needs. He provided water, he provided food. God had proved to them that they could trust him. Yet they cared more about having their needs met than about leaning into this relationship of trust. To them, God was a cosmic vending machine, not a loving father who knows what his children need.

Despite this mindset, God graciously provided the water they needed. Without a word of rebuke, God instructed Moses, “*Strike the rock, and water will come out*” (Exodus 17:6). He did not withhold what they needed, as though waiting for them to get their hearts right. He immediately supplied their thirst because he loved them.

While our own dissatisfactions may be more complex, what God wants for us is the same—a deep and abiding relationship of trust. When Jesus stood up and said, “*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink*,” (John 7:37) he wasn’t talking about water. John explained it for us: “*By this he meant the Spirit*,” (John 7:39).

God wants to have a relationship with us. That relationship comes by His Spirit, living in us. But we can easily fall into the same ways of thinking as the Israelites. We are tempted to trust God only if he gives us what we want, whether or not it’s actually good for us. God is a good father, and he only gives us good gifts.

When we are dissatisfied, he wants us to come to him. Not withholding our love and trust until he provides, but rather expressing our desires, believing that God will give us exactly what we truly need. Every good and perfect gift comes from God, and when we live in trust, we can live carefree, knowing God will provide everything we need.

Ultimately, God satisfies our needs by giving us his Spirit. He knows what we need because Jesus understands our dissatisfaction. Jesus knew what it was to grieve, to thirst, and to bleed. And the Spirit that was in Jesus is the same Spirit who lives in us, telling God what we need.

God’s Spirit is the spring of living water who satisfies every thirst. Elsewhere, Jesus said, “*Whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst*.” (John 4:14). God won’t satisfy every desire, but he will satisfy every need. As you learn to trust him for each one, even when dissatisfaction creeps in, you can learn to live carefree.

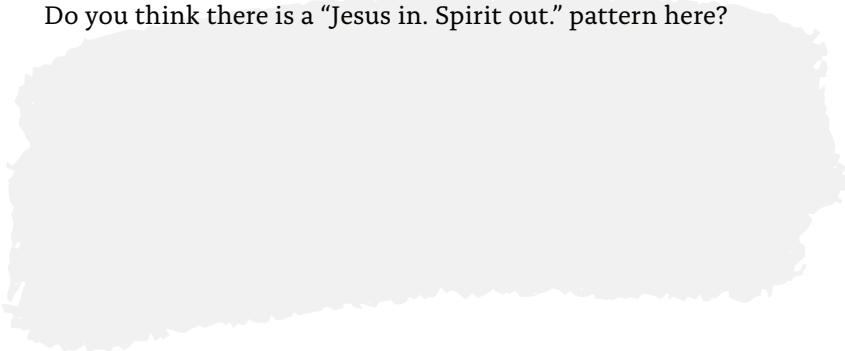
Week 6:

DEVOTIONAL 2

Reread this week's passage, John 7:37-39.

How thirsty (as Jesus uses the word) are you?

Do you think there is a "Jesus in. Spirit out." pattern here?



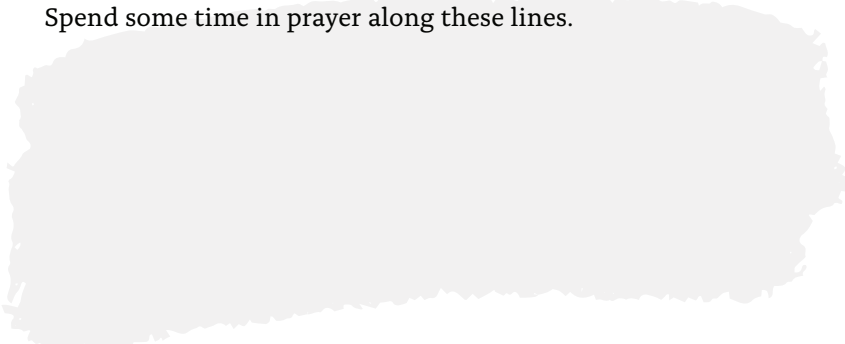
Week 6:

DEVOTIONAL 3

❶ In what areas of your life are you easily satisfied (for better or for worse)?

❷ In what areas of your life are you not so easily satisfied (for better or for worse)?

Spend some time in prayer along these lines.

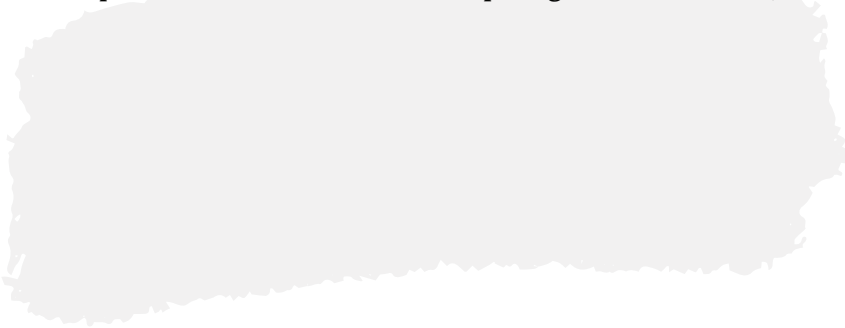


Week 6:

DEVOTIONAL 4

Read John 4:1-26.

Compare the themes of thirst in this passage with John 7:37-39.



Week 6:

DEVOTIONAL 5

Select and reflect on an area of your life where you feel some level of dissatisfaction.

What do you think are the root causes of this dissatisfaction?

Express your thirst to God in prayer.



Week 6:

BONUS DEVOTIONAL

“The Lord’s Prayer” can be found in Matthew 6:9-13, or perhaps you have it memorized. Pray and repeat as desired.

What part of Jesus’ model prayer is nearest to you today?



[illegible]

Week 6:

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Starters *(Choose One)*

- For you, what is the greatest day of each year?
- Describe a time you were very thirsty (literally or metaphorically).

Message Reflection

- What stood out to you from the teaching this past weekend?
- What questions did the message prompt in you?

Scripture Discussion (John 7:37-39)

- What do you think Jesus means by “believes in me”? (verse 38)
- What do you think Jesus means in the entirety of verse 38?
- Why do you think Jesus uses so many metaphors?
- Why do you think John explains the metaphors?
- How do you think the crowd might have responded to such words?



Application

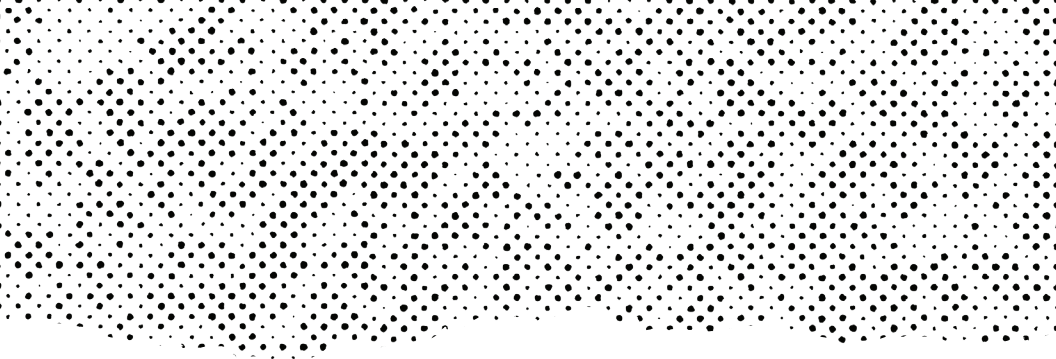
- Describe an area of your life where you feel dissatisfied.
- In what ways, if any, has the Spirit satisfied your thirsts and longings?
- How would your environments (school, team, club, work, etc.) change if people understood this message and lived it out?
- Who do you know that might be interested in attending an upcoming service at Wawasee Bible?

Ideas for Group Facilitators

Spend some time discussing the He Gets Us series. What was most meaningful or had the biggest impact? Which of the elements of the experience were most helpful to you? Which elements were not so helpful to you?

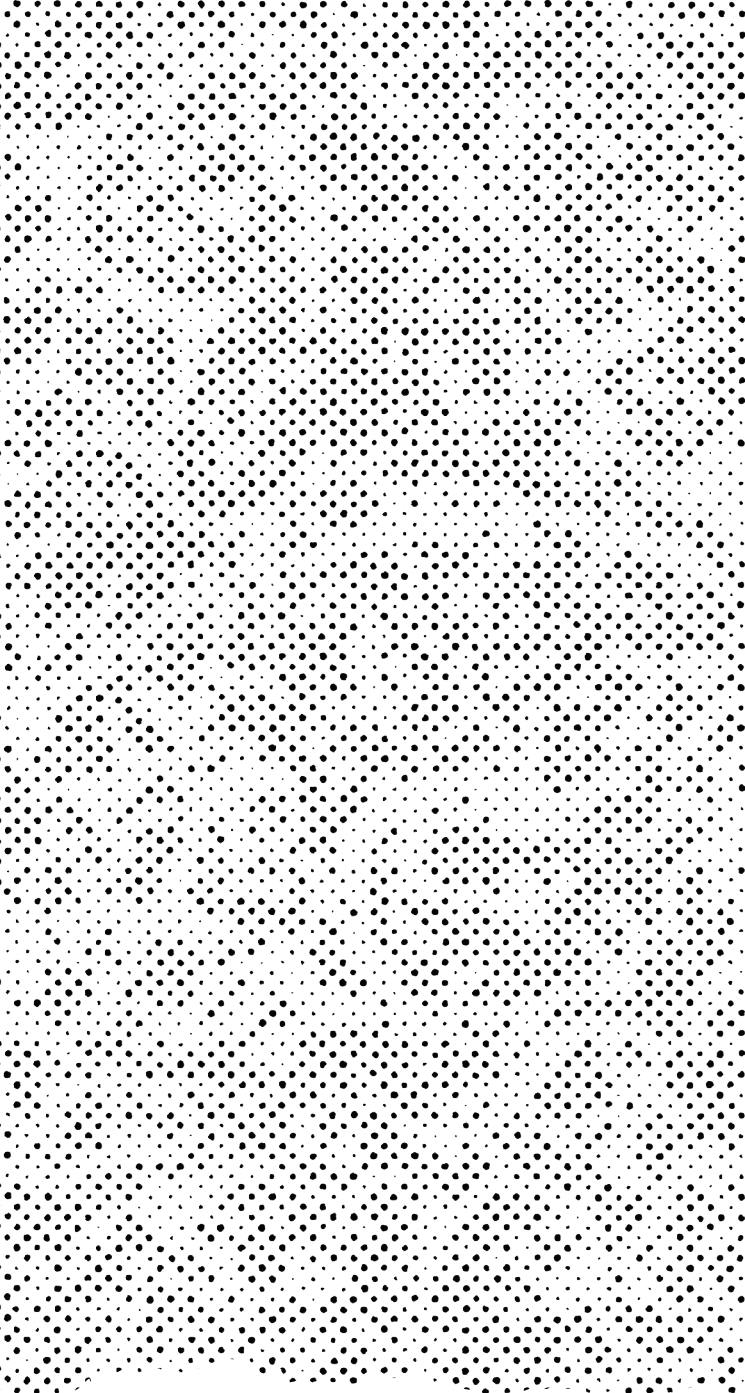
NOTE FOR HE GETS US GROUP FACILITATORS [& LIFE GROUP LEADERS]

- A key purpose of a Life Group or He Gets Us group is to provide a relational and sharing-based environment where participants, at any stage of spiritual curiosity, can get to know each other and discuss the theme and scriptural passage for the week.
- **Facilitate, don't teach.** Your role is to allow participants to explore the depth of Scriptures and allow the Bible to speak for itself. Encourage and model listening by allowing group members to share their thoughts and feelings without being "corrected".
 - » Stay focused on the text at hand.
 - » Listen and allow time for people to reflect on the question that was asked.
 - » Don't assume that everyone knows the Bible or Christian vocabulary.
 - » You don't have to come to a theological conclusion.
 - » Give everyone a chance to answer each question.
- Your role as facilitator is critical. However, be sure to help everyone to own the group by involving all participants as ^{1p} contributors in ways that make them indispensable to group success. Think of yourself as a conductor, not a solo artist.

- 
- The Group Discussion Guide questions and elements should be customized for your group. Some groups will use most of the questions and ideas while some groups will simply include the Starter or a single Message Reflection question as a tie to the weekend message. Add your own questions and adjust the given questions to tailor the Discussion Guide to your group.
 - While they are related by a common theme, the weekly topics can stand alone. This makes it easy for newcomers to join at any time.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION

In order to increase your group's attention to the weekly Scripture passage, allow five to ten minutes of silence for rereading and personal engagement after the initial group reading of the Bible passage. It can be particularly helpful for group discussion if individuals use pens and highlighters to record observations, write down questions, and note personally meaningful parts of the passage. God's voice is often heard in a focused, silent, and faithful examination of his Word.



Take care of your
body as if you
were going to live
forever; and take
care of your soul as
if you were going
to die tomorrow.

- AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Theologian & Philosopher



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We are sent

to love people and invite them
to follow Jesus with us.

