

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with the information necessary to successfully facilitate a *Rooted* group. This book includes the definition and goals of *Rooted*, facilitator roles and responsibilities, tips for leading a group, as well as weekly guidelines for your group time and outside communication. Also included are additional resources, suggested outlines for experiences and the forms needed for the completion of the *Rooted* journey.





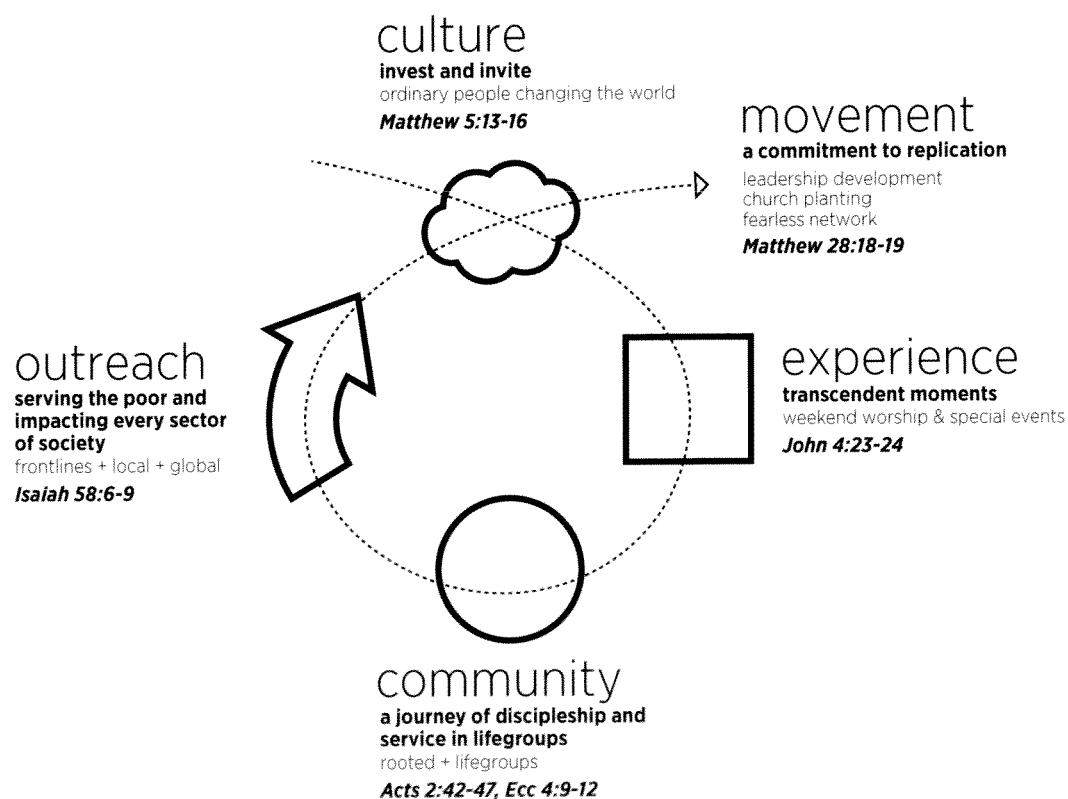
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THE LOOP

As followers of Jesus, we are called to change the world. As a church, we believe this is accomplished by getting rooted in the Word of God, growing as disciples of Jesus, and blessing others with that with which we have been blessed.

When we look at the practical strategy of how God can use us to change the world, it resembles a loop: as God transforms us, we reach out to others, whom God transforms, and thus, with God's grace, our culture moves toward God and will be transformed.



v.17

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7

THE ROOTED JOURNEY

Congratulations on accepting the call to lead a *Rooted* group. It can be a life changing event for you – as well as the members of your group – if you allow it to be. This Facilitator's Guide will provide you with practical information to successfully lead a group, but your ultimate guide will be the Holy Spirit. Much of your growth and the success of your group will be based on your ability to hear and obey God's direction of your efforts.

You must begin with the end in mind. What does the end look like for a *Rooted* facilitator?

- First, the next ten weeks should change you. No matter where you are with your relationship with God, if you pour yourself into *Rooted*, you will be different!
- You will help the members of your group connect with God like never before, especially through sharing their stories, the prayer experience, and the serve experience.
- You will help everyone in your group realize they have a story written by God especially for them, and that their story is a powerful tool for Kingdom building.
- Your group will bond together in a way that *Rooted* will not be the end, but rather the beginning of what will become a Life Group.
- Through *Rooted* you will start the process of training up leaders – either possible *Rooted* facilitators, leaders of Life Groups, or where God leads their hearts for his Kingdom.

The greatest tool you will have to lead a successful *Rooted* group is prayer. Don't skimp on this. God will get your attention regularly during *Rooted* with specific impressions, concerns, or directions for your group.

The telling of our stories is truly significant in the growth of *Rooted* groups. Sharing them should be part of your weekly time together. There are great tips on sharing your story in the *Rooted* workbook on page 178. Encourage these stories in your second group meeting and as part of every week's gathering.

FACILITATOR'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OVERVIEW

Your role as a facilitator is critical to the success of your group's experience and their future as a Life Group.

Your primary objective is to create an environment that promotes authentic discussions, deeper biblical understanding, and lifestyle transformation among group members that, in turn, give them a new or renewed passion for:

- A personal relationship with Jesus
- Knowing and hearing God's voice
- Living a lifestyle consistent with their faith
- The body of Christ and fulfilling their role within the local church
- An open and intimate prayer life
- Intentionally sharing their faith
- Issues of poverty and social justice in their community and around the world

This is accomplished in several ways:

- Weekly homework
- Weekly group time
- Three group experiences
- Ongoing communication and prayer with group members
- Final blessing, celebration and commissioning

A *Rooted* facilitator has many responsibilities that we will be highlighting in this book, but there is one responsibility you do NOT have, and that is teaching. All of the teaching is left to the written curriculum and to the Holy Spirit during the weekly group time. This is very important. It is so important, in fact, that if you feel as though you can't facilitate a group without teaching your insights on biblical matters, there are other important ways you can serve in *Rooted*, but facilitating is not the right place. Your role as a *Rooted* facilitator is to be a shepherd. You are to guide your group and care for them, but not preach your agenda or teach your perspective.

Though you aren't "teaching," remember biblical grounding is important in the facilitation of your group. If you sense a conversation is getting off biblical principles, redirect the talk to what the Bible says. If you sense someone is off-track in their interpretation of a topic, suggest the group look for the answer in Scripture. "Where do you see that in the

Bible?” or “Let’s find a passage that talks about this topic,” are a couple ways to redirect the focus to God’s Word.

Don’t hold back from sharing personal experiences to model depth and intimacy for your group. You are encouraged to share your journal entries and prayer requests as this will build trust and intimacy among you and your group members. Don’t be afraid to give them application stories or to sympathize with another person’s story.

Recognize that your group will be a mix of all different people, in different places in their spiritual journeys. You may have individuals who are learning about God and have not made a decision to follow Him. You may have young believers. You may have people who have loved Jesus for years and years. Your group is a picture of the beautiful body of Christ. In light of that, as people newer to the faith have questions, enlist the help and responses from more mature believers. No matter where we are on our path of faith, we can all learn from one another!

FUNDAMENTALS OF ROOTED

HOMEWORK

As the facilitator, you should contact each person in your group during the week to encourage them. The daily readings are intended to be completed within 30 minutes. Therefore, if they complete it each day, it shouldn't be overwhelming. A little encouragement during the week can make the difference in having a group prepared to participate during your weekly group time.

Also, each week there is a memory verse to support the teaching of that week. Encourage your group to memorize and share it in the group. It's not meant to be like Sunday School where they say it and get a prize, but we all know there is great value in having God's truth tucked away in our hearts. Be creative in ways to memorize the verse. Make up a game or a song or take a few minutes in your group to write it on note cards your members can place around their homes, offices, or cars.

It is extremely important that you, too, do your homework each week to be prepared for your group time. You will want the information to be fresh in your mind to lead discussions and participate. Don't rely on memory from past *Rooted* experiences. Reread each week to ensure timely recall, which also helps with addressing follow-up questions and making the group time flow well.

Note: If you have any questions regarding curriculum, please notify the Rooted trainer for clarification prior to your group time.

GROUP TIME

Be prepared for your group. Arrive early to be there to greet people by name. Consider bringing refreshments the first time you meet and then ask for volunteers to do this. Think about what would make you feel comfortable in a group setting and then create that environment for your group.

Create a safe place for sharing and inviting people to be open and vulnerable. Before your group begins to share, remind them that everything said during the group time, in prayer requests and any other *Rooted* communication is confidential and should not be discussed outside of your group. They will sign a contract of confidentiality, but remind them often. This will encourage trust and deeper sharing within your group.

Group time has been designed for two-hour sessions. If you are meeting for shorter or longer periods of time, adjust each portion of the meeting accordingly. The largest portion of the time is designated as "Discussion" time. Give the discussion enough time for people to share deeply, leading to trust and authentic community within the group.

MEETING SCHEDULES

Weeks 1 and 8 will be “large group” meetings where all of the *Rooted* participants will meet in one large gathering for messages from a pastor or core leader. Week 1 will begin with a welcome and introduction to *Rooted*, giving an overview of the upcoming weeks’ commitments and goals.

Week 8 will begin with a teaching segment on the topic of money and will be followed by shortened group time where you will discuss the week’s homework as well as the teaching you just heard.

At the end of *Rooted*, all the groups come together to celebrate what God has done throughout the ten weeks. We will also have a time of baptism for those who want to take that step in their faith journey.

All other weeks will consist of meeting with your *Rooted* group as previously described.

EXPERIENCES

In addition to the group time, you will lead your group through three experiences. These occur within specific weeks of the journey as they are designed to take your group to new levels of understanding, discovery, bonding, and growth. Get the dates all experiences on each person’s calendar as early as possible.

The first experience is fasting and prayer. While fasting is optional, it does increase the intensity of the prayer experience and should be encouraged. If your group participates in the fasting portion, they will be asked to fast from sundown the day before your planned prayer time. Your group will meet in a specific place to pray for two hours. Guidelines for suggested prayers will be provided, however you can customize your time to fit the needs of your group. Be sure each person shares prayer requests ahead of time and their requests are prayed for.

You can lead your group through corporate prayer where everyone prays out loud, or invite those who would like to pray out loud to do so while those who prefer not to can remain silent. We suggest you spend some time praying out loud and then have a specified amount of time where each person goes out to pray silently and listen to God speak to them. After two hours of praying, if time permits, break your fast together and talk about the prayer experience.

Debriefing the prayer experience is critical, whether immediately following the exercise or at your next group meeting. Questions to prompt conversation will be provided. This is the experience where groups tend to really bond. Many *Rooted* facilitators consider this particular experience a real turning point for their groups.

In the second experience, you serve the community together. If you are going through *Rooted* as a church, you may be provided with a list of organizations with whom your church partners. If not, you can research opportunities within your community to go

serve as a group. You may want to visit a homeless shelter, serve the military, work with pregnant/parenting teens or battered women. You may know of tutoring needs for underprivileged youth in neighboring communities. You can visit the elderly or infirm in assisted living facilities, or provide handyman services in mobile home parks or depressed neighborhoods. There are so many places to serve the needs of others. The main priority in this experience is that it should be highly relational, so choose experiences where you are with people, not putting boxes of food/supplies together or simply donating money, but actually interacting with those you are serving. There are two weeks in the *Rooted* curriculum which speak about the attitude of service and the blessings experienced by those served and who serve. It is during these weeks where you will oftentimes see people engage their passion and clearly hear their calling and purpose from God.

The third experience is telling our stories of faith. During their weekly homework, your group will be guided with tips on how to put the pieces of their story together and how to share it with others. They can use their story to invite someone to church or to the next session of *Rooted*, or simply into a further conversation about their faith. They are not being asked to stand on a street corner with a sign, or knock on doors in their neighborhood. We are called to share our faith story, and as we respond in obedience, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of the people to whom we are telling it.

It will be helpful to bring up the idea of telling our stories in the early weeks of *Rooted*. Encourage people to think about and pray for the people in their lives with whom they might share their story. Give your group the freedom to listen to the Holy Spirit and engage in spiritual conversations with others – not necessarily during a set week of *Rooted*. God's timing isn't always ours, and it's important to grasp the opportunities He gives us.

Additionally, take time each week to have people share their stories of faith in two to three minutes. Though there will be time in week 9 to write and hone their stories of their lives before Jesus and after Jesus, encourage one or two people each week to simply tell their story as rough or raw as it is presently. As they do, pay attention and take notes. This will help you as you pray for your group members each week and as you offer the final blessing in week 10.

Although not a separate experience outside the group time, the breaking of strongholds in week 5 is a significant moment for your group. As people open up and share their struggles, personal connections are strengthened and relationships grow.

ONGOING CONNECTION

Each week you will want to have a list of prayer requests for your group. Diligently pray for each person. Let the Holy Spirit guide your prayers for each person and then keep record of them for future blessings and prayers.

Follow up with group members who miss the *Rooted* group time. Let them know they were missed by the group. If they have had more than two absences, consider recommending that they participate in a future group, as consistent attendance leads to greater transformation and better *Rooted* experiences, as well as trust among group members. When you have

one person who is not there regularly, your other, more consistent members may feel less secure in sharing personal and intimate pieces of their lives.

FINAL BLESSING AND COMMISSIONING (WEEK 10)

Lead with the end in mind. You will read that phrase many times in the following weeks' tips. During the final session of *Rooted*, you will speak a blessing over each person in your group. This will consist of the passion/purpose God has for them, those they have expressed or you have witnessed during your time together. This is why taking notes during your group time and your personal prayer time is so critical. Observe them during the serve experience to gain insight into their servant's heart.

This blessing should be personal and pertain to each person's passion for serving and advancing the Kingdom of God. It should give them their vision for ongoing service in our church body, their community, or the world. For instance, you may have someone who has a passion for orphans. You could bless him or her with, "You have a heart for orphans and God will use that." Of course this doesn't mean he or she needs to adopt orphans, it just means he or she can provide a relationship that is missing in the children's lives. Or you may have someone who has the gift of administration. The blessing may be something like, "Your gift of administration will bless many people and will be used by God to help advance His Kingdom." You may have someone identify his or her gift to be part of the worship team or a Children's Ministry leader. You could bless him or her with, "God has gifted you with special talents to serve in the church, helping to bring others closer in relationship to Him."

Depending on your *Rooted* structure, you may also be commissioning your group for ongoing ministry in your church. This is to assign responsibility for praying for the hurting people in the church, sharing their faith and answering questions as they arise, modeling a lifestyle consistent with a Christ follower.

CONTINUING AS A LIFE GROUP

It is the goal for every *Rooted* group to continue on as a Life Group. Pray and plan for this as you lead your group each week. Look for leaders you can raise up to continue what God has started. *Rooted* is the beginning of the journey of living out a life of faith together. God will use your Life Group to change each other as you meet together, and then to reach out beyond your group in service to where God is calling you.

TIPS FOR LEADING A ROOTED GROUP

For the first few weeks you will be provided with “icebreakers” to open up the discussion with your group. These questions are designed to help people talk about themselves and give simple facts or fun stories that help you get to know them. They are not “spiritual” or related to the curriculum; they are merely creative ways to get people talking. After the first few weeks, your group will most likely not need these questions and you will move right into the “Introduction” questions. If the people in your group already know one another from a previous small group or circle of friends, these “getting-to-know-you” questions may be unnecessary. If you all have a rapport already, just go with it and do what feels appropriate/interesting/fun in the first moments of your time together.

The Introduction questions are designed to segue to the discussion of the weekly homework. These are suggested leading questions, and their format and value to small groups has been proven over time. They may seem overly simple, but they are designed to be non-threatening, easy to answer, “lean-in” types of questions. They evoke positive answers and are highly relatable, and therefore they encourage participation, which sets up your group for a good discussion. Once people have shared during easy questions they are more prone to share later on when the questions become more personal.

Next, you are provided with topical questions covering the themes from the week’s reading. While these questions paraphrase the week’s curriculum, the actual journal questions are included in each session for you as well, if you prefer to go through each day’s homework with your group.

You may find that your group has a lengthy and in-depth discussion on one particular topic. That’s great! The objective is not necessarily to get through the entire week’s homework; it is to go deeper into areas your group dynamically chooses. These areas are sometimes challenging for people, and encouraging them to elaborate in a group environment will allow for the Holy Spirit to do His work—enlightening, convicting, guiding, etc. If you cut off a discussion, there is a chance you will be eliminating the opportunity for a breakthrough, which could lead to spiritual transformation. This is different than allowing your group to go off on a tangent that is not related to the topic or helpful to the discussion (this will be discussed later). However, allowing for one of the week’s topics to be discussed further — provided all members are contributing and intensely involved — is healthy and even encouraged.

This may require you to come up with follow-up questions to those you have been given.

Listen intently to the person who is sharing and respond with another question to have them go deeper. For instance, if someone has shared they are struggling with the idea that God speaks to people, ask the group “Has anyone else ever struggled with this?” or, “What have some of you experienced in this area that might help with this idea?” These types of questions will often spur on a discussion that goes much deeper than the responses your group may have started giving. Always try to go beyond the easy answer and find what is underneath. This can take the entire ten weeks with some members, while others are able to open up each and every group time. The key is listening to what they share and asking

follow up questions, “Why do you think that is?” “How is that affecting...?” “When did you notice that beginning in your life?” “Where in your life is that true?”

GROUP DYNAMICS

You will need to speak loud enough for all of your group members to hear. If you are soft-spoken, request a smaller room where your voice will carry better and you will be able to be heard by your group. Sit in a position in your group where you are able to face the majority of the people when you speak so that you are the person in authority to facilitate, and able to maintain eye contact and hear each person as they share.

Since all groups consist of people with different personalities and different communication styles, a personality/communication guide is included at the end of this section to assist you with leading each style. Because of these different styles, as well as the fact that people will not feel comfortable sharing at first, it may take some energy on your part to get the group talking.

Ensure you have balanced dialog. It is important that each person is able to contribute to the discussion. Part of your responsibility is to guide the discussion so that each group member feels included and supported and to avoid allowing a more dominating personality to take over the discussion. This can be challenging, but it is important to the success of the group. If you notice one person is sharing more than is appropriate you can interrupt and say, “I can tell this is a topic that interests you, so let’s continue the conversation later, but right now we need to move on,” or “I love how passionate you are about this topic, does anyone else have anything to add? Otherwise let’s move on for now.” Follow up with that person later to let them know that you redirected the conversation to allow for everyone to be able to share, but that you are interested in their input. Hopefully they will become more aware in the future.

There are several tactics for drawing out those who are more quiet or reluctant to share. Perhaps the best way is simply ask them a question. A good way to do this is to say their name first, then ask the question. This accomplishes a couple of things. First, the person you call on will have a second to get an answer ready if you say their name first. Second, it will set the tone for the rest of the group, letting them know that they may be called on to share. It will usually help them be ready and more willing to share.

Along these same lines, you may have someone who is going through a very difficult time. Perhaps he or she lost his or her job, is having marital problems, or is dealing with illness or addiction. There is a fine line between your group supporting this individual through this and turning it into a support group. As the facilitator, balance the time for all group members. Be sensitive to their needs and then move the group along in their dialog. Lead the group through a prayer of support/comfort/peace or healing, and offer ongoing prayer support through the week as well, ensuring they understand it is not a lack of sympathy for them. To the contrary, let them know that you are deeply concerned and will follow up

with them, and reassure them that the group will come alongside him or her in tangible and supportive ways.

Avoid tangents. You may have someone in your group who goes off-track and wants to discuss something they heard previously or learned somewhere else. While you can let them comment, don't get distracted and let your group wander off-topic to the point they feel they didn't have an opportunity to discuss the week's topic. This can be frustrating for the group, as they will have come to the group time wanting to share or gain perspective on the intended topic. Value the time of all of the group members and the efforts they have put into their weekly studies. Gently bring the group back to the discussion at-hand and refocus the conversation.

Don't feel as though you need to lead everyone into agreement. Be okay with messy conversations. Affirm each person for sharing and then ask, "Does anyone have similar or different thoughts?" Remember, do not answer their questions or teach. The Holy Spirit is working and will reveal the truth. Be patient. Let people struggle. This will encourage them to look further, to study more, and to find the truth they are seeking. Again, you may need to redirect the conversation to the Bible. If you're asked a Bible-related question and you're unsure of the answer, say, "That's a great question" or "I'd like to answer that but I want to make sure I'm giving you the best answer", and tell them that you'll take note of the question, seek an answer from one of our pastors or leaders, and get back to them the following week.

Be careful not to judge people by the answers they give. Be respectful and open-minded to other ways of thinking. Sometimes this will bring about the liveliest discussions.

Be considerate of different viewpoints, as your demeanor will oftentimes dictate how the rest of the group responds. Be sensitive to the fact that members of your group might come from many different religious backgrounds and have different political viewpoints. By being open to differing opinions, you will promote a safe environment for people to share. If people know they won't be judged or ridiculed by presenting conflicting opinions or an answer they are unsure about, they will be more willing to open up. Again, people with viewpoints that aren't in line with the truth will discover the truth. They are in the right place.

Remember, it might be difficult to get people talking during the first few weeks. Help people make connections within the group. People will stay and contribute to the group because of how you make them feel.

Take notes on what your members are sharing. You will be praying to break strongholds in week 5, as well as speaking a prophetic blessing over them in week 10, and this will be much easier if you have notes on what they have revealed during group time. You can also take note of stories that may be shared at future celebrations.

CO-LEADING

Leading your group each week is a lot of work. If you don't have an assigned co-leader, you can ask one of your members to assist you. You can take turns leading on alternate weeks, or have one person do the icebreaker and the other lead the discussion. Or one person can take care of follow-up and weekly emails and the other can lead the group discussion. Look at your different gifts and strengths and decide what works best for you

both. This is a great way to get an idea of future Life Group leaders in your group and to get more people involved for greater group participation.

NEXT STEPS

Rooted is just the beginning of the journey. It is the goal to launch all *Rooted* groups into Life Groups which will continue to do life together, upholding and expanding upon the values and disciplines established in *Rooted*. This is a natural progression, as many groups form strong bonds and want to continue meeting beyond the journey of *Rooted*. It is through these groups that people's lives will continue to be transformed, their faith will mature and strengthen, and their passions and giftedness will be lived out.

The best scenario is that you, the *Rooted* facilitator, would continue with your group and take on the role of the Life Group leader. If you don't plan on moving into the Life Group and facilitating it, raise up a leader during the *Rooted* experience who can lead the Life Group once they have graduated from *Rooted*. The sooner you identify this leader, the better. Training and resources will be provided.

A Life Group leader:

- Is a committed follower of Jesus who attends this church regularly and has completed *Rooted*.
- Followed God's call into leadership and possesses one or more of the spiritual gifts of shepherding, pastoring, serving, and leading.
- Facilitates a discussion around God's Word, models vulnerability and intimacy within the group, manages group dynamics, and motivates the group to engage with community.
- Identifies spiritual gifts and helps develop others to use them to serve.
- Models values consistent with *Rooted*: praying, serving, stewarding God's resources, addressing and breaking strongholds, sharing his or her faith, taking part in communion.
- Determines group schedule and curriculum.
- Is mission-minded with a heart to impact the community.
- Is teachable and attends Life Group trainings and meetings with coaches.
- Embraces the mission and values of this church and lives them out as a Life Group leader.

LEADING DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

Although people are different, most fall into one of four personality styles: Analytical, Driver, Amiable, and Expressive. Below are basic characteristics of each of these personality styles as well as tips on engaging each person. Many people fall primarily into one category but also have traits in another category as well.

Highlighting these personality types is intended to give insight into how you might best guide conversation, affirm group members when they share, and redirect your group when tangents arise. They are in no means a hard and fast guideline for discussions or dealing with your group personally. They are given only to heighten awareness that what you say can be interpreted, ignored or misunderstood based on not only your words, but on their personalities as well.

Analytical - Analytical people are known for being systematic, well-organized and deliberate. These individuals appreciate facts and information presented in a logical manner as documentation of truth. They enjoy organization and completion of detailed tasks. Others may see them at times as being overly cautious and structured people who do things too much “by the book.”

Leading the Analytical:

This personality is strongly independent. Don't rush things. Plan to give the person plenty of breathing space and thinking time. They may be the people who listen, gather information and comment late in the group time, or they may think about it during the week and share the next time you are together.

Driver - Drivers thrive on the thrill of the challenge and the internal motivation to succeed. They are practical folks who focus on getting results. They can do a lot in a very short time. They usually talk quickly, directly and to the point. They are often viewed as decisive and pragmatic.

Leading the Driver:

Be to the point with Drivers. Speak specifically and understand that their responses will seem more matter-of-fact, less like opinions.

Amiable – Amiable people are dependable, loyal, and easygoing. They like things that are nonthreatening and friendly. They dislike impersonal details and cold hard facts. They are usually quick to reach a decision, but tend to be wishy-washy on the follow-through. They are often described as a warm people who are sensitive to the feelings of others. They are guided by feelings more than facts and will have a tendency to be compassionate to others in the group.

Leading the Amiable:

Nurture the relationship and work hard to gain their trust. Amiables love security and safety and will thrive in that type of environment.

Expressive – Expressive people are very outgoing and enthusiastic, with a high energy level. They enjoy helping others and are particularly fond of socializing. They are usually slow to reach a decision. They are often thought of as talkers, overly dramatic, impulsive, and manipulative. They are oftentimes “idea” people. They like recognition and compliments. They may come across as sarcastic at times.

Leading the Expressive:

Expressives like to be liked and appreciated. They need people around them and are anxious to develop and maintain relationships. They may dominate the conversation, so be prepared to steer and guide the discussion.

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Handwriting practice area consisting of 25 horizontal lines. Each line is preceded by a small, faint dot, creating a series of evenly spaced lines for letter height practice.





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WEEK 1:

WHAT IS ROOTED?

Objective: Introduce the Rooted experience, get to know your group members, explain the expectations and structure of the upcoming weeks, and begin to schedule the prayer and serve experiences.

PRAYER POINTS

In preparation for your first meeting with your group, spend time praying for the following:

- Everyone would attend the introductory session
- Your group would come together easily, without logistical issues
- God would prepare the hearts of those coming to *Rooted* to hear His truth, to be open to new ideas, and for the Holy Spirit to work in their lives
- People in your group in different places on their spiritual journeys (seekers, new believers and mature believers) would make the most of this experience
- The opening speaker would set the tone and expectations for the group
- Ask God to use you during your time as a *Rooted* facilitator. Pray boldly that God would stretch and grow you throughout this experience. Ask Him to meet you as you seek His guidance and direction while you lead people on this journey.

FIRST SESSION PREPARATION AND GROUP TIME

- Arrive early and set up your discussion area for your group, ensuring there are enough chairs for each person.
- Wear a nametag and greet each person as they join your group. Ask them to use nametags as well.
- Provide snacks the first meeting and then find one or two people who would like to take over this task for subsequent sessions.
- Be gracious if people are late, welcoming each one as they arrive, especially this first meeting as they may have check-in issues or got lost on their way to the group.
- Because people might not know each other on this first night, understand that they might not feel comfortable opening up and talking. Be prepared with discussion questions and/or additional icebreakers to help people engage.
- Be flexible. Remember that things might not go exactly as you planned. That's okay.

Timeline (Note: All large group timelines are designed for 2-hour sessions. Adjust accordingly for sessions of shorter or longer length.)

10 minutes – Check-in and arrival in large group

30 minutes – Speaker presents to large group

10 minutes – Large group breaks into their smaller groups

- Allow time for people to find your group.
- Remember, everyone will be arriving from all different places and experiences that day. Create a welcoming environment for them.

20 minutes – Icebreaker

- Use an icebreaker to help the group connect. Peaks and Pits, The Name Game, or Two Truths and a Lie are fun and easy to do.

20 minutes – Introductions

- Share your two-minute story of how you came to Christ, modeling for your group how to tell their stories. Ask someone else to share the next week (see notes for week 9), answering the question, “How has Jesus changed you?”
- What did they hear from the intro speaker? How does it impact the reason they are here?
- Break into pairs, have each person tell three or four facts about themselves. Come back together as a group and have each pair introduce each other to the group. If the group already knows each other, have people share a unique thing about themselves that others don’t already know.
- Ask each person the same two questions, “How did you end up in *Rooted*?” “What are you hoping to get out of *Rooted*?” Understand that some people might not want to be there. Some may have been brought there by a parent, spouse, or friend and might be resistant to the whole experience. Be okay with that. You can create a welcoming environment, but it’s the Holy Spirit who will change their hearts.

Leader notes: Even in this first session it is important to take notes. You will use the notes in week 10 when you pray a blessing for them. Listen to how your group members introduce themselves, as it will give you insight into each person. This may play a major role in a later session. You can use the pages provided in this guide each week to ensure your notes are organized for you to use in future prayers, blessings and commissioning.

25 minutes – Group time overview & Confidentiality agreement

- Confirm everyone understands the schedule commitment, including ten group sessions, three outside experiences and a final celebration.

- Set the dates for the experiences planned or remind everyone to bring his or her calendars to the next session so you can agree on a time then.
- Ask for volunteers to provide refreshments for meetings
- Ask group members to silence their phones and refrain from texting during the group time.
- Determine communication preferences for your group – Facebook, email, phone calls, Yahoo group, etc.
- Explain the *Rooted* Covenant, have each person sign it, and then collect it from the group.
- Close your time with a simple prayer for God to bless your group and your time together. Keep in mind that some people may have never prayed before, let alone prayed out loud. Be sensitive to that as you pray or as you ask others to pray.
- Remind everyone of your meeting location for the next session, especially if it will change. Remind group members to do the five days of Week 2 homework for discussion next week.



ROOTED COVENANT

It is our desire to promote a safe environment for sharing the most important things in life. We want to provide a place where people can reveal openly and confidently the broken areas of their lives without judgment or condemnation. We encourage openness, vulnerability and intimacy during discussion and prayer times. In order to ensure a safe haven for personal sharing, we ask that each *Rooted* participant enter into an agreement of confidentiality.

Additionally, to get the most out of this experience, our hope is that you make a commitment to attend all sessions and participate in the group discussions. If you cannot be there, group dynamics will be impacted. If you know you will miss the group meetings more than two times, we ask that you attend a different session of *Rooted*.

I agree to attend all group meetings and will keep all things shared by my group members confidential at all times.

Signed _____

Date _____

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WEEK 2:

WHO IS GOD?

Objective: Create a warm and inviting atmosphere, encourage vulnerable and honest sharing, listen to the heart of your group members, schedule upcoming experiences.

PRAYER POINTS

- People will be excited to come back, connect, and want to share openly and authentically as you share from your own life.
- God will give you wisdom and insights as needed for each person in your group.
- God will give you an open and non-judgmental heart to love and understand each person.
- God will help you root out false or incomplete images of Him.

LEADER PREPARATION AND GROUP TIME

- Remember you are key to the group's success. Take time to prepare your heart before you arrive.
- Review the homework for the week, as well as your journaling notes before you arrive.
- Be intentional in welcoming everyone. Use name tags again this session.
- Ensure you have enough chairs for everyone.
- Pay attention to what is said — as well as what is not said — as your group shares so you can ask good questions. Lead with the end in mind!
- Be sure to bring your Bible and encourage your group to bring their Bibles to guide their discussions around what God's Word says, rather than what they think it says.

GROUP TIME

10 minutes - Welcome

- Greet each person by name.
- Welcome them back and let them know you are glad they are there.

20 minutes - Ice Breaker

Create a safe way to help people get to know each other (one minute per person)

- Play Peaks and Pits. Have everyone share the best and worst part of his or her day.
- Play the Penny Game. Bring 20 pennies dated in the last 25 years and have everyone pick one and share something that happened in their life in that year.
- Play “Two Truths and a Lie.” Each person makes three statements about him or herself and one isn’t true. The group guesses which one is false.

See appendix for additional icebreaker questions.

20 minutes - Introduction Question

- What was a lie you told as a kid? What happened?
- What lie do you or did you believe about God?
- Have two people share their two-minute story of how they came to Christ and how their lives are different now that they are walking with Jesus.

40 minutes - Discussion

- As you transition into discussion, observe, listen, and ask questions.
- Watch for “over talkers,” create space for honesty, and redirect questions to encourage more conversation: “Has anyone else experienced anything like that?”
- You can ask a question about the homework: “Which day did you like the best? Which day challenged you the most?”
- You can pick one or two questions they answered in homework and use it as basis for discussion.

Leader notes: Not everyone will get a chance to answer every question. Direct the discussion to include those who have not shared and to keep others from over talking.

Take notes when each person shares part of their story, writing down things they question or may not believe, and breakthroughs in their spiritual journey. You will use all of these notes when you pray for them to break free of strongholds and during the celebration.

20 minutes - Prayer Requests

- Prayer requests can be presented as a group or you can break into prayer partners.
- Remind everyone the importance of confidentiality (ensure each person has signed and returned the *Rooted Covenant*).

10 minutes - Closing

- Set a time for the prayer and serve experiences and remind everyone of the dates.
- If you have decided as a group to set up a social network to keep in touch, follow up on the status of that. Designate someone to do this for the group.
- Ask for a volunteer to be responsible for set up and clean up of the table each week.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

Who is God?

The focus this week is on God, His creation and what happened to it, and His plan for redemption.

Day 1 The Mysterious God

- What have been your false or incomplete images of God?
- What new thoughts do you have about God?

Day 2 The World God Made

- What do you learn about God from the creation story?
- What questions does this account raise for you?
- How does creation declare the glory of God to you?

Day 3 The Crown of God's Work

- How do you see God's love and care for you?
- How does it make you feel to know God has given us the job to care for the earth?
- How do you respond to the idea that God wants a relationship with you?
- How have you seen this played out?

Day 4 What Went Wrong

- Where do you see the consequences of human rebellion in our world? In your own life?
- What kind of death have you experienced because of your sin?

Day 5 The Best News Ever

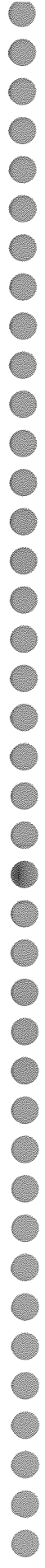
- Is the way of salvation, as is explained in this chapter, what you had previously thought? (If not, how is it different?)
- Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord? (If yes, how has that changed you? If you haven't, what is keeping you from doing it now?)





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WEEK 3:

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

Objective: Create a safe environment where people can discuss whether or not they have heard God speak to them and explore their desires to know Him better. Use this discussion to logically transition to the prayer experience, which should be intimate, relational, and transformational. Through the experience, people will be drawn together into a bond that is strong and deep.

PRAYER POINTS

- There would be openness in your group to share and be honest about what stumbling blocks they have experienced with prayer in the past.
- They would understand God's great desire to have a personal and intimate relationship with them through His Word and prayer.
- People in your group will make time for the prayer experience and would hear from God in an intimate and personal way.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Take time to prepare your heart before you arrive, praying for your group time and each person in your group.
- Watch for "over talkers" and those that make community unsafe for the rest of the group. Redirect them.
- Pray that God would show you who He wants to be future Life Group leaders and *Rooted* leaders. Begin giving them responsibilities for the group to develop them as leaders.
- If you are leading a mixed gender group by yourself, pray for God to raise up a member of the opposite sex who will be able to pray for people during strongholds and any other appropriate times.
- Listen to what is said and what is not said as your group shares so you can ask great questions. Lead with the end in mind!
- As you prepare for your group, see the appendix for more reading about the Holy Spirit.

GROUP TIME

10 minutes - Welcome

- Continue to use name tags to help everyone learn names.
- Appoint a future leader to help you welcome the group as they arrive.

20 minutes - Ice Breaker

Create a safe way to help people get to know each other (one minute per person)

- Play Peaks and Pits. Have everyone share the best and worst part of their day
- Play the Penny Game. Bring 20 pennies dated in the last 25 years have everyone pick one and share something happened in their life in that year
- Play "Two Truths and a Lie." Each person makes three statements about him or herself and one isn't true. The group guesses which one is false.

20 minutes - Introductory Questions

- Whom do you recognize on the phone before they say their name? What makes them so recognizable for you?
- What do you love/hate about caller I.D.? Do you use it to screen your calls?
- What do you think the face of God looks like?
- Have two people share their two-minute story of how they came to Christ and how their lives are different now that they are walking with Jesus.

40 minutes - Discussion

The main message this week is that God speaks to us and wants a personal relationship with us.

As you transition out of the opening questions, you can segue to this week's topics: talking to God (prayer) and hearing from God as He speaks into our lives.

Sample questions:

- What challenges you as we talk about prayer and hearing from God?
- Has anyone in the group ever questioned the authenticity of the Bible? What did you find out?
- How important is the Bible to you?
- What are different ways people hear from God? How do you hear from Him when you pray?
- Did this week's homework make you think of prayer differently? If so, how?
- You can ask a question about the homework. "Which day did you like the best?" "Which day challenged you the most?" (Homework questions are listed on the following page).
- You can pick one or two questions they answered in homework and use it as a basis for discussion.

Leader notes: Remember that throughout this discussion and those that follow, everyone will not agree. In fact, create room for people to disagree. Everyone is on his or her own journey. Bring in truth by redirecting questions to others in the group. Don't teach – lead.

Remember to take notes when each person shares part of their story, writing down things they question or may not believe, and breakthroughs in their spiritual journey. You will use all of these notes when you pray for them to break free of strongholds and during the celebration.

20 minutes - Prayer Requests

- Prayer requests can be done as a group or you can break into prayer partners.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.
- Pray about the future of the group and why God brought you all together. Pray that people in the group would find their purpose individually and collectively.

10 minutes - Closing

- Ensure you have a set time and location for your prayer experience and everyone has the specifics on their calendars and has arranged for child care if needed. 100% participation is the goal.
- If your group has decided to fast as part of your experience, review your goals for fasting and your plan for breaking your fast.
- Update status of social media/email group.

See appendix for additional notes on fasting.

LEADING A SUCCESSFUL PRAYER EXPERIENCE

PREPARING FOR THE PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Pray for your group as a whole and for each individual, for what it is God plans to do as they meet with Him in the first *Rooted* experience.
- A sample prayer: “Lord, I pray that those who have never heard your voice would recognize it in this experience. That through Your Spirit, You will reveal Yourself to the non-believers in a powerful way so they would see and know that You are the One True Living God who knows them and loves them. For those in the group who know your voice, my prayer is that You will meet them and give them what they need from Your abundance and grace.”
- Choose a location for your prayer experience. Some places to consider are a group member’s home, at church, in the chapel, at the beach, or a quiet park. Feel free to create a welcoming and inviting environment for the Prayer Experience. Use music, candles, or whatever you feel would enhance a peaceful atmosphere.
- Review the prayer experience card, included here and in your *Rooted* workbook, for guidelines of timing of prayer.
- This is a great week to have group members pray for an opportunity to share their faith. God may open doors to spiritual conversations before Week 9.
- As you lead your group in prayer, pray through your church’s mission statement and how God might use your group to fulfill that mission. You can refer back to this in your *Rooted* group and your Life Group.
- You can use the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-14 as a guide for your time:
 - v. 6:9 Worship, thanksgiving
 - v. 6:10 God’s Kingdom to come, justice, mercy, righteousness and peace on earth
 - v. 6:11 Our needs
 - v. 6:12 Confession and forgiveness
 - v. 6:13 Protection

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- There will be many people in your group who have never prayed for 45 minutes, so help them understand how it will work and encourage them that the time will go by very quickly. You may be asked why the prayer experience is so long. The reason is that it usually takes a while to quiet our hearts and focus on the Lord and what

He wants to say to us. In fact, some groups have wanted it to be longer and have taken a half day to pray. Use your judgment to determine the length of time.

- There may be people in your group who have never prayed before or who have never prayed out loud before. Be understanding of this as you lead them. Some people may not want to “lean in” to this experience. The thought of praying for an extended period of time may be intimidating to them. As their leader, be encouraging. Help them to understand that though this may be a challenge for them, God is working in and through their prayers.
- You may have people in your group who don’t have a personal relationship with Jesus. Invite them to explore who God is and how He talks with us. Encourage them to participate in this experience by asking Him to reveal Himself.
- See appendix for additional notes on the Prayer Experience.

FASTING (OPTIONAL)

Depending on your group, you may want to challenge them to fast as a group before your prayer experience and then celebrate the completion of your experience with a meal together. If you are meeting in the afternoon, you could begin your fast after your evening meal the night before, and through breakfast and lunch the next day. Should your group not be ready for this, you as a leader could fast and/or ask a few of your more spiritually mature group members to join you.

See appendix for additional notes on fasting.

DEBRIEFING TIME (BREAKING FAST TOGETHER)

Be sure to make time for debrief. Listen for how God moved in this prayer experience. Take notes as your group discusses what they experienced as they took the extended time to pray and listen for God’s voice. What did they hear? How did they feel? Did the time go quickly? What was unique about this time when they prayed versus other times they’ve prayed?

WORKBOOK REVIEW

How Does God Speak to Us?

The focus this week is that God speaks in many ways. We learn about the Holy Spirit, prayer, and listening to God.

Day 1 Our Divine Helper

- What was your understanding and your relationship with the Holy Spirit up to this point?
- What is it now?
- How can you keep in step with the Holy Spirit?

Day 2 God Speaks

- Does any of what you've read today surprise you? Why?
- Do you feel like God speaks to people as clearly today as He did in biblical times?
- How has God spoken to you?
- Do you really want to hear what God wants to say to you?

Day 3 The Sword of the Spirit

- What is the biggest challenge you have to reading or studying God's Word?
- How about believing or following God's Word?

Day 4 The Purpose of Prayer

- What new thoughts do you have about prayer?
- What is more challenging for you: to speak to God or to listen to God? Why?

Day 5 Connecting with God in a Meaningful Way

- What excites you and what seems daunting as you think about establishing a regular time to read the Bible and pray?
- What book of the Bible do you want to read/study first?

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Isaiah 65:24

The Church of Scotland defines prayer this way: "Prayer is an offering of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies." This summarizes well the components of prayer. Our hearts should be set right before praying and our desires within God's will in all things we bring to Him.

PREPARING FOR YOUR PRAYER TIME

- Review your notes from group time of how people have experienced hearing from God. This can help guide you, especially if you are new to prayer and hearing God speak directly to you.
- Review your journal for areas in your own life that you will want to incorporate into your prayer time.
- Come to the prayer time unencumbered, without your to-do lists or thoughts of what is scheduled next. Don't bring a mobile device or other distractions.
- Consider fasting prior to your prayer time.

NOTES ON FASTING:

In order to make the most of your prayer and fasting time with your *Rooted* group, we recommend that you spend time preparing to hear from God. One of the disciplines that helps with this is fasting. Fasting is a way we eliminate the noise and distractions of the world around us and focus more completely on hearing God's voice. While we fast, we are reminded and we become more aware of our dependence on God. By fasting, we intensify our prayers, place ourselves in a position of submission and become more sensitive to hearing God's voice.

GROUP PRAYER TIME (30 MINUTES)

- Begin with a devotional or read Scripture (Psalms 8, 19, 34, 121 and/or 138 are great options) to prepare your heart and mind for time in prayer.
- Move into a space where you will not be interrupted.
- Talk about what prayer is, why it's an important discipline, and what your hopes are for this experience.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER TIME (45 – 60 MINUTES)

- Begin praying. Take time to listen to what God wants to say to you.

You can use the following example of prayer structure and content. Remember prayer is a personal discipline. This is only an example of one way to pray. Write down any thoughts that come to mind so you can refer back and see how God answered your prayers.

- Praise/Thanksgiving/Worship
- Confession
- Ask:
 - Family, friends, specific needs from your journal
 - For your *Rooted* group requests
 - For your church and the Church in the world, to accomplish His will on earth as it is in Heaven
 - For your purpose
 - For those with whom God wants you to tell your story
 - Our community
 - Our nation and leaders
 - The world and world leaders
 - What God wants your group to do, where you should serve
 - People in whom God wants you to invest
 - In all things, pray that you are within His will

DEBRIEF AND CELEBRATION (1 HOUR)

After your prayer time, take time to share a meal together to break your fast. Share how you heard God's voice, what this focused prayer time meant to you, and how it affected you. Share how the fasting time prepared you and whether your prayer time felt more intense from this discipline. Share any other relevant feelings or revelations from God during this time in fasting and prayer and if it is something you want to continue to add to your life on a more regular basis.

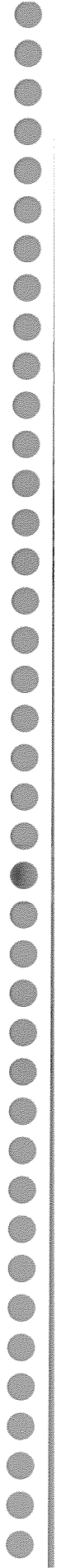
NAMES AND THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Abba	Romans 8:15	Love	1 John 4:8
Comforter	Isaiah 66:13	Merciful	Ephesians 2:4
Counselor	Isaiah 28:29	Mighty	Luke 1:49
Creator	Genesis 1:1	Miracle Worker	Matt. 19:26
Deliverer	Psalms 91:3	Never Changes	James 1:17
Faithful	Lam. 3:23	Never Weary	Isaiah 40:28
Forgiving	Num. 14:18	Peacemaker	Proverbs 16:7
Fortress	Psalms 91:2	Physician	Psalms 103:3
Gentle	Isaiah 40:11	Powerful	Psalms 66:7
Good	Psalms 145:7	Redeemer	Isaiah 54:5
Guide	Psalms 48:18	Refiner	Malachi 3:3
Healer	Exodus 15:26	Refuge	Psalms 46:1
Holy	Leviticus 19:2	Rescuer	Daniel 6:27
Husband	Isaiah 54:4	Rock	2 Sam 22:32
Jealous	Exodus 34:14	Shepherd	Psalms 23
Just	Isaiah 45:21	Steadfast	Daniel 6:26
Light	Psalms 27:1	Strong	Psalms 89:8
Living Water	Jeremiah 2:13	Teacher	Psalms 119
Longsuffering	Num. 14:18	Trustworthy	Psalms 144:2

NAMES OF GOD, TRANSLATED FROM HEBREW

HEBREW	TRANSLATION
El Elyon	The God Most High
Elohim	The Creator
Jehovah-nissi	The Lord my Banner
Qanni	Jealous
Jehovah-shalom	The Lord is Peace
Jehovah-saboath	The Lord of Hosts
El Shaddai	The All Sufficient One
Adonai	LORD, Master
Yahweh	LORD (Jehovah)
El Olam	The God Who Sees
Jehovah-mekoddishkem	The Lords Who Sanctifies You
Jehovah-jireh	The Lord Will Provide
Jehovah-raah	The Lord is my Shepherd
Jehovah-rapha	The Lord Who Heals
Jehovah-shammah	The Lord is There
Jehovah-tsidkenu	The Lord our Righteousness

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WEEK 4:

WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING?

Objective: Continue with the bonding from the prayer experience. Move your group to a more vulnerable and deeper level of discussion about surrendering their lives to Christ and their faith in His holiness, sovereignty and goodness. Place a greater emphasis on prayer time, continuing to develop a deeper prayer connection in the group.

PRAYER POINTS

- For deeper connections within your group as a result of the prayer experience. Pray that the people in your group experience God and their relationships with Him in a new way.
- For openness in sharing as you move into the next two weeks on surrender and strongholds.
- That God would draw people to a place of surrender to Him.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Pray that God would show you whom He wants to be future Life Group leaders and *Rooted* leaders. Begin giving them responsibilities in the group.

Good leaders are people who:

- like to engage with people in small groups
- are *Rooted* and mature in their faith
- are living a spiritually and morally disciplined life
- are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit within the group
- are good listeners and able to draw people out in conversation
- are passionate about growing people in their faith in areas of prayer, serving, and evangelism
- have the spiritual gift of discernment
- are able to handle difficult conversations about faith without “preaching”
- can ask good questions and guide strong people

GROUP TIME

25 minutes - Welcome and Connection

By now you all are getting to know each other. If you want, engage them in an opening question. This will help everyone collect their thoughts, put outside thoughts behind them and be present for group time. Some suggestions:

- What happened this week that surprised you? Why was it unexpected?
- Share anything that's come to mind about the prayer experience. How has it impacted your week?
- Go around the room and have the group give each person a one-word affirmation.

15 minutes - Introductory Questions

- When you were a kid, did your parents ever make you give up something that was yours and you knew it was not fair, but had to do it anyway?
- Have two people share their two-minute story.

40 minutes - Discussion

The theme from this week is surrendering to God and understanding that His plans for us are perfect.

In order for us to surrender our will to God, it requires that we trust Him. Below are suggested opening questions you can use. Keep in mind, you may have nonbelievers in your group. Help them to answer as is appropriate or give them permission not to answer and encourage them to ask questions.

- Where have you seen God at work around you recently?
- How have you seen God use you to accomplish His will?
- What plans do you think God might have for your future and how do they relate to your dreams for your life?
- How do you wrestle with surrendering to God's will today?

Leader notes: Recognize that more mature Christians sometimes share challenging experiences from many years ago. Encourage them to tell of times God has moved in their lives recently.

Be okay with disagreement. We are all on our own journeys and may not see eye to eye on everything. Encourage people to bring their Bibles and share their views based on what the Bible says, not just what they think the Bible says. Ask, "Where did you see that? Let's find the context for it."

Prepare your group for next week. The strongholds week is powerful and moving. Let them know they will be sharing their stronghold struggles in the group in a way that is sensitive, confidential, and honoring to God. Let your group know you will be praying for them throughout the week.

Observe, listen ask questions, and take notes.

30 minutes - Prayer Requests

- Prepare the group for strongholds next week.
- Increase the focus on prayer, giving everyone the opportunity to develop the spiritual discipline of quieting their hearts to listen to God.
- Prayer requests can be done as a group or you can break into prayer partners.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.

10 minutes - Closing

- Homework will take more time. Prepare the group to share and be prayed over.
- If you prefer, you can set additional time to pray over strongholds outside of the group time.
- Ensure you have a set time and location for your Serve Experience and everyone has the specifics on their calendars and has arranged for childcare if needed. 100% participation is the goal.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

Where is God in the Midst of Suffering?

The focus this week is surrendering to a good and gracious God, following Him, and holding on to faith during the bad times as well as the good.

Day 1 The Reality of Hardship and Suffering

- All of us have gone through times of despair or feeling completely alone. In that time, what were your feelings about your situation and about God?
- What lessons learned from David's life can help you through these challenging times?

Day 2 You Are Not Alone

- Describe a time when you have felt hopeless.
- Describe a time when, despite your circumstances, you have had hope from the Lord.
- If you are in a hard time right now, do you feel as though you are in God's hands? Why or why not?

Day 3 Double-Fisted Faith

- Describe your feelings of "double-fisted faith." Is this idea a struggle for you? Or do you embrace it?
- When have you had to clench your fists and cling tightly onto God's promises, not knowing the outcome of the situation?

Day 4 Our Response: Surrender

- What would it take to completely surrender your life to God?
- What is a care in your life you need to give over to God right now?

Day 5 Character Like Christ

- What challenges are you facing now that are helping transform your character to be more like Christ's?
- Where do you see God's hand working in your circumstances?



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WEEK 5:

THERE IS AN ENEMY

Objective: Continue honest and vulnerable discussions as you move into recognizing, admitting and breaking strongholds. Claim victory over the enemy and live in freedom from the bonds of sin and its consequences.

PRAYER POINTS

- For the people in your group to respond to the Holy Spirit as He reveals areas of strongholds that need to be broken in their lives.
- For truth to be heard and received so that each person may understand that we live in a spirit-filled world where Satan is a real adversary. Pray group members will live in victory over spiritual warfare.
- For those who are new in their faith or not yet Christians, to be open to these truths that are being read and spoken about regarding spiritual warfare.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Pray, pray, pray! The most important thing you will do for your group this week is to pray for them and for your ability to lead them. Pray they will move toward freedom in Christ through the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit.
- Remember, not every bad thing or every struggle is spiritual warfare. Much of what we struggle with is our own sin and the consequences of it. Some people tend to overemphasize spiritual warfare while others tend to underemphasize it.
- If you are leading a co-ed group, confirm you have someone to lead each group (men/women). If you are assigning someone to help you out for this session, make sure you adequately brief him/her on what he/she needs to do.
- Important: See appendix for notes on strongholds.

GROUP TIME

15 minutes - Welcome and Introductory Questions

- Open the group in prayer, inviting God into your meeting before you begin your discussion.
- Since our prayer experience, where have you seen or heard God?
- What has God revealed to you this week as you spent time with Him?

40 minutes - Discussion

The theme: Spiritual Warfare

As you lead this week, be sensitive to the different perspectives you will hear from people in your group. You will start your time with a general discussion on spiritual warfare from the homework, and then divide your group between men and women to discuss strongholds and pray for them. If you prefer, you can divide your group before the discussion.

- Have you ever contemplated the fact that we live in a spirit-filled world and have an enemy?
- How did this week's homework impact your thoughts about the fact that we live in a spirit-filled world?
- What questions do you still have about the spiritual realm or spiritual warfare?

Leader note: Remember to take notes when each person shares part of their story, things they question or may not believe, and breakthroughs in their spiritual journey. You will use all of these notes at the celebration.

45 minutes - Prayer Time for Strongholds

Leader note: Separate men and women. Share strongholds and have a time of prayer.

- Strongholds are areas of sin in our lives where our flesh and Satan have worked together to create destructive patterns that are sometimes hard to see. We have the authority and power through our relationship with Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to break free from these influences.
- How have repeated patterns of sin in your life caused problems or challenged your relationships?
- What types of strongholds do you struggle with that you circled on Day 5? (It's common to have more than one.)
- Some people will think they don't have any strongholds. Once others begin sharing, they will recognize places of concern in their own lives. Allow for discussion here. Don't limit sharing to one person at a time, but encourage back and forth dialogue.
- Help your group embrace the truth that contradicts the lie they have believed. Where the enemy has a stronghold, replace it with the truth of their identity in Christ. These are listed next to the main headings of each stronghold, but recognize there are others not listed here as well.

Prayer time - Before you break strongholds, consider if there are people in your group who might not be Christians. Remind group members we all have imperfections in our lives that are harmful to ourselves and others. As Christians, we have the ability to break these strongholds through the power of the Holy Spirit. When a Christian prays to break a stronghold, they confess the pattern of sin in their life and choose to replace it with a new character quality they want to adopt. The Holy Spirit works in this process.

For those who have not chosen to follow Christ, they have the ability to stop destructive patterns in their lives, and you can pray that for them. Each person in the group should be prayed over either way. We all need prayer to overcome the difficult places in our lives, but it is different without the Holy Spirit living in us. If there are non-believers in the group, you can give them the opportunity to accept Jesus and their Savior and Lord before praying for them.

Move your group into a time of prayer where you, as the leader, are praying with each person or the individual is praying and you are praying with him/her in agreement to break these areas of strongholds in his/her life. You will want to model your prayer after the prayer in your *Rooted* workbook. Make sure you pray out loud with each person in your group. Be careful to not let other people step in and try and rescue someone as he/she is sharing a stronghold or minimize it and its damage in his/her life.

As you end your prayer time, remind everyone this is just the first step. They must continue to do all they can to not repeat the patterns of sin that have led to these areas of strongholds.

Leader note: Hand out the Rooted bookmark with the "identity in Christ" verses listed. Read the verses aloud as a group. Have group members insert their own names for personal pronouns "I" and "me."

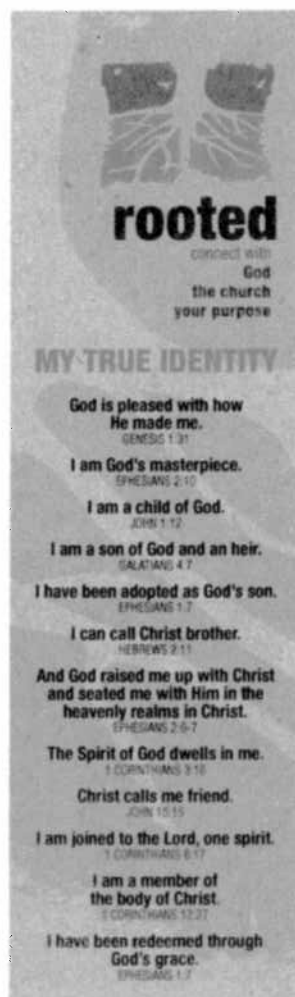
10 minutes - Prayer Requests/Close Group in Prayer

- Close by praying over the whole group according to who we are in Christ listed on the bookmark.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.

10 minutes - Closing

- Ensure you have set the time and location for your Serve Experience. 100% participation is the goal.

An example of the bookmark handed out during week 5



WORKBOOK REVIEW

There is an Enemy

The focus this week is on the enemy and his influence on our lives, to recognize and break strongholds and experience freedom in our identity in Christ.

Day 1 The Enemy is Real

- What new thoughts do you have about Satan and his kingdom of this world?
- What comforts do you find in knowing Jesus is victorious now and in the end?

Day 2 The Spiritual Realm

- Where do you recognize spiritual battles in your life?
- Where do you feel dressed in God's armor to fight them? Where don't you

Day 3 Tempting, isn't it?

- Where is the love of the world creeping into your life?
- How does this open a door to Satan/evil?
- Where is it creating weaknesses?

Day 4 The Enemy Within

- Where in your life do you experience what Paul does in Romans 7 (being a slave to sin and a slave to God's law)?
- What are examples of where "the flesh" is winning in your life?
- What are examples of where the Holy Spirit is winning?

Day 5 Strongholds

- Look at the list of strongholds. Mark it up. Circle or list any areas where Satan has a foothold or you have developed habitual areas of sinning. Then, in the box provided, write what the Truth could look like in your life.

Lined area for notes or writing, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.





Handwriting practice lines consisting of horizontal lines across the page.

WEEK 6:

HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF MY LIFE? PART 1

Objective: Celebrate freedom from strongholds and nurture a heart of service by gaining insight into the needs of our communities (both local and global), and moving into a serving lifestyle modeled by Jesus.

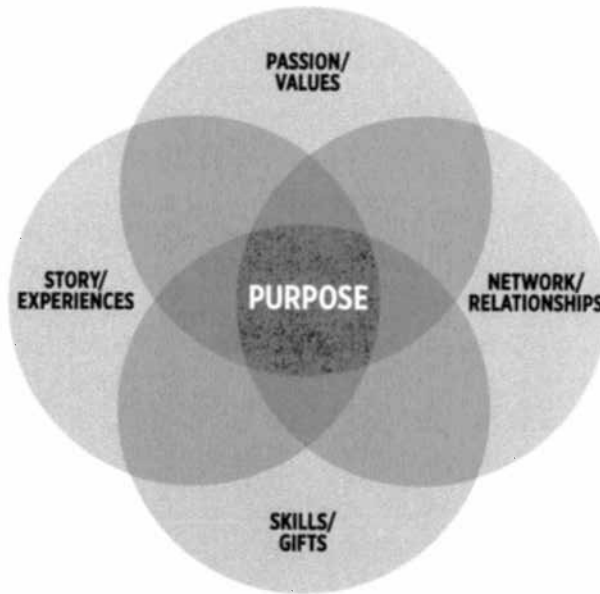
PRAYER POINTS

- People would begin to see they have a purpose bigger than living for themselves. Pray they would see how Jesus lived and modeled this purpose for us.
- God would change their hearts and give them the humility, the heart, and the compassion of Jesus to serve others in our broken and hurting world.
- Group members continue to experience freedom from strongholds and grow in the Truth that sets them free.
- God would show you whom He wants to be future Life Group leaders and *Rooted* leaders. Review the qualities of a leader from week 4.
- Pray your group will see its purpose collectively and individually.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Follow up with anyone who was absent last week. Arrange a time to pray with them for freedom from their strongholds.
- If your group members continue to sit in the same seats, change dynamics by having them switch seats. It will stimulate different discussions.

The diagram below is a helpful tool as your group discusses spiritual gifts, serving, and the purpose God has for us.



GROUP TIME

15 minutes - Welcome and Reconnection Time

Ice breaker question if you need it:

- Since we last met, what has been a highlight of your week?

15 minutes - Follow Up: last week's discussion and prayer time on strongholds

- Revisit what you covered last week on warfare and strongholds to see how everyone is doing since the last meeting.
- How did last week's discussion impact you this week? How do you see strongholds in a different way? Did you find freedom from strongholds or did you find yourself more able to lessen their grip in your life?
- Don't spend more than 15 minutes recapping last week as you will want to leave plenty of time for this week's topic.

15 minutes - Introductory Question and Testimonies

- Have one or two members of the group share their two-minute story.

The theme: Jesus' Heart

- Who do you know that reflects the heart of Jesus in the way they live their life?
- What would Jesus do in your community today? Where would He spend His time?

45 minutes - Discussion

- What does it look like to have the heart of Jesus today in our lives?
- Do you think people see Jesus in you?
- How have you seen God use people to make a difference in the world?
- To which of the six sectors of society are you called?
- What do you think your purpose is?
- If the power to shake the bridge comes from the Holy Spirit, have you seen any bridges shaking lately as you have been standing on them?

Leader note: Take notes when each person shares their story, things they question or may not believe, and breakthroughs in their spiritual journey.

- Share spiritual gifts websites in appendix for those who do not know their gifts.

10 minutes - Discussion about becoming a Life Group

Discuss the idea of going on as a Life Group again, and see what the response is. If you have someone in the group who has already agreed to lead, share that news with the group. Talk about what a Life Group is and how it will help them continue the spiritual journey they have begun in *Rooted*.

15 minutes - Prayer Requests/Close Group in Prayer

- Before you close in prayer, review your church's mission statement and talk about how your purpose collectively as a group and as individuals can help fulfill that.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.

5 minutes - Closing

- Confirm the time and location for your serve experience. 100% participation is the goal.
- Assign someone to follow up with anyone who was absent from this session.

TIPS ON LEADING A SERVE EXPERIENCE

Serving is less about fulfilling an obligation or even about helping other people. Serving is more about who God is shaping you to be. This comes from the biblical definition of poverty and the expression of fullness of the Gospel.

The Bible defines poverty in terms of Shalom shattered. There is brokenness between us, each other, creation and God. God's mission, or the Gospel, is the restoration of Shalom on the planet. In other words, we were not saved to stand around with other saved people talking about our saved experience, but instead we were restored to be restorers. We play a role in the restoration of the planet.

In order to do that, people need to wrestle with their stories. Most of us don't have a conscious awareness of the story that God has been writing in our own lives. He wants to use all the parts of our stories to help restore his Kingdom.

This is the serve experience. The desired outcome is not *doing*. Although important, it's not our main goal of the experience. We are after long-term impact and change in the individual serving. If that happens, he or she will serve more over his or her lifetime, rather than just hitting a one-time experience.

What is success for a serve experience?

An understanding of poverty. We are just as poor as the people we are going to serve.

A connection with our own stories. The events in our lives – good and bad – are all part of who we are. God blesses, redeems, and restores shalom in us.

A next step. Through hearing God, understanding our gifts and our brokenness, and "getting our hands dirty," we can define the next right step in fulfilling the purpose God has for us.

BEFORE YOU GO

At every serve experience, there are TWO primary leadership roles:

- 1) Spiritual Guide (most often this will be the Rooted Facilitator)
- 2) Host (most often this will be the ministry leader or staff)

Spiritual Guide

What do guides do? Guides help us understand what is happening. We trust them. They lead us through dangerous places. They give us context. They help us navigate and see things differently. As a guide:

- Help your group hear God's voice by removing the clutter. What are all the things that prevent people from hearing God's voice? Have some time before your

experience starts where you can walk through a short devotion or a passage of scripture to help clear the day away and focus on what you are about to do.

- Cast vision for the day and prepare their heart for what they will experience.
 - Focus on BEING vs. DOING
 - Understanding biblical poverty
 - Connection with and discovery of their purpose through knowing their own story
- Shepherd your group through the day – who is connecting? Who isn't? How can you help them engage in the experience? The focus is on your group rather than on the serve experience. We recommend facilitators are not assigned a role so they can focus on caring for their group.
 - Avoid "grouping," encourage our group to separate and go serve!
- Help them make a commitment to the next step. Helpful Questions:
 - What in your life is dead and not growing that God wants to restore back to life?
 - What are the fears and obstacles that would prevent you from connecting w/ a community like this?
 - What do you see? How is that a reflection of your heart?
 - Who has spiritually invested in you and who have you spiritually invested in?
 - How does your life reflect God's heart for children?

Debrief: Create space for your group to process their experience

- Before and after – plan to start earlier and end later than the designated time on the calendar
- No wasted time – use every moment to encourage discovery of their own story as well as connection and relationship with others
- Travel together if possible
- Questions to ask:
 - What did you see? What did you learn?
 - What are some of the emotions you experienced?
 - Where did you see God today?
 - Where did you hear his voice?
 - Facilitators will often have to help their group members "connect the dots" – based on what you know of the individual and the stories they've shared with the group, what insight does that give you about their purpose? Their gifts? Their passions?

Host

What role does a host have? Think about a time you hosted a party or a gathering at your home. As a host, we greet our guests, provide a place to put their belongings and most of the time we offer them a drink and a snack. We make sure they feel welcomed and we own the space we are providing for our guests.

As a ministry host we want to host Rooted groups in the same way. This is your ministry. Own it! If you are passionate about the ministry and what you are doing, your guests will be too. God has placed you as the ministry leader, something in your story called you to your specific ministry, and this is a great opportunity to be able to share a short version of your story to the groups that are coming to serve. It is so important to share your story and why you are in the ministry you are in – it can play a significant role in helping someone else connect with their story, their passion and ultimately their purpose. You are modeling this for others! As hosts we need to provide an orientation that includes the following:

- Cast vision for the ministry/God's heart for this ministry
- Share our stories: Why was I called to this ministry? How did God call me here? How have I connected with my purpose?
- Delegate people to specific roles. Make sure people understand what the goal of the day is – what will they do while they are also building new relationships?
- As you see gaps or opportunities to support the Rooted facilitator, please do so!
 - Do people need to be assigned different roles? Are people hesitant about serving?
- Set the tone for the day by reminding people to ask these questions as they serve:
 - How will you be aware of God in this serve experience?
 - Why am I really serving? (Not just checking a box)
 - How might God use my story to build relationships with the people I meet today?
 - How can I get out of my way? (Not letting "discomfort" or "awkwardness" rob you of serving others)

Once the serve experience concludes, groups will need a place to debrief. Some groups may choose to go to lunch or dinner together to debrief. Other groups may want a place at your location to debrief. Please discuss this with the Rooted facilitator beforehand so everyone is clear on what is possible as some locations don't afford the space for a group debrief. Most facilitators will want to lead the debrief with their group. However, as the host, you may want to confirm this with the facilitator to see if there is anything they need from you to lead the debrief.

Devotions:

The following are two suggested devotions to help set the stage before serving. Pick one and use it to help focus group members' hearts and minds on what it means to serve others.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

We're about to read one of the most well-known parables recorded in the Bible. The parable of the Good Samaritan. During Jesus' time Jews did not associate with Samaritans. Jesus begins telling the story of a man who was walking down one of the most dangerous roads of that time. So dangerous in fact, it was nicknamed "bloody pass." It was a road known for ambushes and thievery. We aren't told whether the man was a Judean or a Samaritan. In fact, we aren't told anything about him. It's as if who he was or what he had done or not done was completely irrelevant. The man was ambushed and left for dead on the road. Read what happens next as three individuals pass by him on the road.

Enter the Story

Read Luke 10:29-37.

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Imagine you are part of this story. Who are you in the story? The beaten man? The Levi? The Priest? The Samaritan? Maybe you're the one asking Jesus who your neighbor is. Or perhaps you're a spectator observing from the sidelines.

What stands out to you in this story? Both the Priest and the Levite were people who were very much involved with church. They knew the law and the commands of scripture very well and yet they didn't stop. Maybe they were rushing off and didn't feel they had the time to stop. Perhaps they were afraid they would also be ambushed if they stopped and helped. So what's different about the Samaritan? What does he do differently?

Who needs you to stop for them today? Be aware of those who may need a listening ear or a friendly smile today. Don't think about what you need to do later today or what you're making for dinner tonight. Is God calling you to slow down and be aware of others needs today? Be present where you are and serve those around you with compassion, mercy and love.

Serve

Debrief

What did you see? What did you learn?

What are some of the emotions you experienced?

Where did you see God, today?

Where did you hear his voice?

Where did you see the characteristics of God on display?

Wrapping up the story

We don't know why the Samaritan stopped but he did. The passage says "He went to him." He literally stopped in his tracks and crossed the dangerous road to reach the man. He allowed himself to be interrupted. The Samaritan valued the man more than himself and his own needs, timelines, agenda, etc. He considered the beaten man before himself.

Who in your own life do you need to stop and care for today? Who needs you to slow down and cross the road for them? Who can you step off the curb and cross the street for in your community?

Your acts of service today through smiles, conversations, etc., are extensions of Jesus' great love for you and all you came in contact with.

SPEAK LORD

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-11

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle."

Observations about the passage:

- They were spiritual people
- Three out of four times they missed God's voice
- Samuel surrenders: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."
- The Lord says, "I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel."

Below are examples of two pages from the Rooted workbook, to be collected by facilitator after the serve experience.

SERVE EXPERIENCE

This week *Rooted* groups will be serving in our community. Foster kids, inner-city youth, undocumented children, pregnant & parenting teens, the elderly, the homeless, and others in our community are going to see the love of Christ through your service. Consider these points as you serve:

LIFE-CHANGE

Serving is not something we do to check off a box, but rather a lifestyle to adopt. Our goal and prayer is that all people going through *Rooted* have a life-changing serve experience – one that makes them want to keep serving, making it an integral part of their lives.

BEING VS. DOING

All of the serving opportunities are designed to be highly relational. The biblical definition of poverty is a lack of shalom or peace in our relationships: our relationships with God, ourselves, each other and the land. This levels the playing field. We ALL experience poverty. Because poverty isn't just a lack of material things, we can offer not just help, but more importantly, relationship. This means we talk to, interact with, and listen to the stories of those we're serving. Your listening ear may be the only one that person has had. It's why you're there.

DEBRIEF

Gather as a group at the end of your time of serving to pray and to debrief your experience. Use the "Speak Lord" cards provided to help process the experience. What is God speaking to you about your life? About serving? About possible next steps? Share with the group.

NEXT STEPS

Hopefully you'll be asking how you can serve regularly after this serving experience. Most of the serving opportunities will have next steps presented at the end of them.

FLEXIBILITY

Serving can get messy and unexpected things will happen. Please be flexible and remember we are there to serve, ready and willing to do whatever is asked of us that day. It's all part of the adventure!

TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS, PRAYERS, STORIES AND MORE AS YOU SERVE

Name (optional): _____

Lined area for writing thoughts, prayers, stories, etc.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

How Can I Make the Most of My Life? Part 1

The focus this week is on learning the heart of Jesus, how to desire that kind of heart and put that desire into action.

Day 1 Call to Serve

- Where have you seen the redemption of Jesus in your life? Where has He made something new?
- Where do you feel God calling you to do good things?

Day 2 Motive to Serve

- What surprises you about Jesus' heart?
- Who are people you know who have hearts like Jesus? What attracts you to them?
- What does it look like to serve out of your purpose rather than agenda?

Day 3 Breadth of Service

- What are ways you can become involved in the Great Commission?
- What are your thoughts about being "blessed to be a blessing" when it comes to sharing the Good News?

Day 4 Power to Serve

- Where in your life do you need the Holy Spirit's power?
- What would you like to accomplish with the power of the Holy Spirit?

Day 5 Wired to Serve

- What are some spiritual gifts you have been given? How will you use these gifts in your life?
- As you look at your life and the gifts God has given you, what sense do you have of the purpose He has for you and how He wants to use you?
- How do you see yourself contributing to the needs of six sectors of society through your gifts?





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Lined area for notes or writing, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.





Lined writing area with horizontal ruling lines.

Lined area for notes or writing.



WEEK 7:

HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF MY LIFE? PART 2

Objective: Continue looking at your heart and bringing it into alignment with that of Christ. Assess spiritual gifts and driving passions in each person's life. Determine how their lifestyle of service fits into God's plan of expanding His Kingdom.

PRAYER POINTS

- People would see they have a purpose bigger than living for themselves and want to use their gifts for the Kingdom of God.
- Each person would recognize their passions, move forward using their spiritual gifts, and join God in His work, bringing help and hope to a hurting world.
- Each *Rooted* participant and leader would not be afraid to dream BIG! God has unlimited capacity and resources for us to accomplish His will for our lives.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Set aside time to pray for each person in your group and review what you have seen God do in their lives on their *Rooted* journey. How might that relate to what God is calling them to do? This newfound passion and purpose moves them from service projects to a lifestyle of service.
- Prepare to pray over each person at the end of this session. First, reaffirm they are free of their stronghold(s), speak their new identity in Christ over them, confirm their unique and special role in the Kingdom of God using their passions and gifts. Pray that God would remind them of their purpose. Prepare what you are going to say and pray bold prayers that release them to God-sized dreams.
- You may want to send your group an email telling them you are praying for them and reminding them to be courageous in listening to God and what He might be calling them to do based on their spiritual gifts and passions. Encourage them to dream big!
- If you had your group complete a spiritual gifts test, ensure you take the test and understand the gifts it specifies so you can answer any questions that might arise. See appendix for spiritual gifts assessment resources.
- Familiarize yourself with serving opportunities in your community and church where group members can use their gifts to serve on an ongoing basis. Your group members will be given a card listing serving opportunities in the church. Collect these cards at the end of the night. Challenge them to pick one area and serve there in the next few weeks.

GROUP TIME

15 minutes - Welcome and Reconnection Time

Let future leaders you have identified lead the opening and closing prayers. This is now an easy and enjoyable part of your gathering. You should find it effortless now to reconnect and gather everyone together for great discussion time.

Icebreaker/Opening Questions if necessary:

- Have one or two people share their two-minute story.
- Where did you see God show up in your life this week?
- We studied the story of the Good Samaritan. Did you have a chance to selflessly serve someone in need this week?
- If you had more money in your bank account than you could count, what would you pour your life into?

15 minutes - Introductory Question

The theme this week: Lifestyle of Service

- Who is your neighbor?
- What does poverty look like in your own life?
- What is your “go-to” gift or talent God has blessed you with?
What comes easily for you?

40 minutes - Discussion Time

- Do you see your spiritual gifts relating to your talents and passions? How do you see them working together? Have group members share what gifts they have and how they use them.
- If you took the spiritual gifts test for the first time, do you agree with the gifts it says you have? Do you see these gifts in your life?
- How long have you known you have your spiritual gifts? How do you use them?
- What do you think God is calling you to do with your gifts? Remember to dream big!
- Where in the church or community have you served before? What did you like most about it? What did you not like about that experience?
- How is it different for you to serve believers at church versus serving at-risk children, parenting/pregnant teens, or people living in a homeless shelter?
- Discuss serving opportunities in the church and community. Challenge group members to jump in. Have people fill out the Serve card and turn it in to you.

30 minutes - Prayer of Prophetic Blessings (two minutes per person)

Explain that just as we prayed for strongholds, we are now going to pray for God's calling

and purpose for us and the gifts that He has given us. As the leader, you will want to pray for each person individually by placing your hands on their shoulders and have the group pray with you.

Affirm the gifts and passions people have shared and pray big prayers for people to lean into the gifts they have and to pursue their God-given dreams. Again renounce the stronghold(s) they let go of two weeks ago and remind them how they are moving into their new identity in Christ.

10 minutes - Discussion about Becoming a Life Group

- Continue the dialogue from last week about becoming a Life Group. Answer any additional questions.
- Remind everyone about the large group gathering next week before the smaller group time.

10 minutes – Prayer Requests/Close Group in Prayer

- Try something new. Have everyone pray simultaneously, thanking God for what He did during group time. Then close the whole session after a few minutes.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.
- Remind group members to pray for opportunities to share their story of faith. Encourage them to look for where God is working around them.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

How Can I Make the Most of My Life? Part 2

The focus this week is on discovering and developing God-given gifts, in order to move into a lifestyle of service in our community and throughout the world.

Day 1 Compassion in Action

- Who are the marginalized people and outcasts of society today?
- Who is your neighbor?

Day 2 Hands-on Love

- Where have you seen Jesus "disguised" as someone in need? What was your response?
- Were you ever on the receiving end of another person's help? What did the person's actions tell you about him or her?
- Where are you more comfortable serving, in the church or in the community? Why?
- Why did Jesus instruct us to do both?

Day 3 Symbiosis (aka: Give and Take)

- How does this definition of poverty change your view of those in need?
- What is your reaction when you encounter situations of injustice?
- Where have you experienced the compassion of God in your life?
- Where have you experienced the compassion of others?
- Where have you experienced a lack of it?

Day 4 A Lifestyle of Service

- What are obstacles to a lifestyle of service that you have experienced?
- What are things you can do this week in service to someone in your life?
- How can you serve someone living in poverty?
- Have you served in your church? If so, what did you like about it? What didn't you like? If not, why not?

Day 5 Return to Shalom

- What are your thoughts about our call to help bring peace – shalom – to our world? Is it overwhelming to you or does it excite you?

Below is an example of the card handed out during week 7.

ON-CAMPUS

SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

Experience the life-change and community that comes through giving your time.

Look through our opportunities and let us know what's a good fit for you. Provide your info and a few specifics, and we'll get back to you about how you can serve our church community.

name :

email :

phone :

address :

city :

st :

zip :

birthdate :

You probably don't care about giving us your address, but birthdate? Here's the deal; the chance of someone in our database having your same name AND birthdate is pretty rare - so we use it to make sure you are who we think you are. Don't worry, we won't give your info to anyone.

ADMINISTRATION

- ☐ Accounting & Data Input
- ☐ Bulletin Assembly
- ☐ Front Desk
- ☐ Office Support
 - Children & Family
 - Students
 - Worship
 - Accounting

CHILDREN

- ☐ Nursery & Toddlers
- ☐ Preschool & Elementary
- ☐ Be a Friend to a Special Needs Child
- ☐ Computer Check-In/Hospitality
- ☐ Weeknight Children's Programs
- ☐ Craft Team

STUDENTS

- ☐ Weekend Volunteers
- ☐ Small Group Leaders
- ☐ Trips & Events

CREATIVE/TECH ARTS

- ☐ Band/Vocals
- ☐ Photography/Videography
- ☐ Audio/Visual/Lighting
- ☐ Camera Ops
- ☐ Stage Design
- ☐ Weekend Service Producer
- ☐ Writing, Proofing/Editing,
Social Media, Graphic Design

GUEST RELATIONS

- ☐ Welcome Center
- ☐ Inside/Outside Greeters & Ushers
- ☐ Parking Pastors & Shuttle Drivers
- ☐ Interpreters for the Hearing Impaired
- ☐ Security & Medical Response
- ☐ Recycle/Green Team

PRAYER

- ☐ Prayer Team
- ☐ Manage Prayer Requests

SPECIAL EVENTS

- ☐ Christmas and Tree Lighting, Easter, Harvest Carnival, Summer Saturday Nights, Mother's/Father's Day
- ☐ Children & Family
- ☐ Communion Support, Concerts, Special Worship Services

Please use the back of this form to share any specifics about your abilities you think might be helpful.





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WEEK 8:

HOW DOES GOD VIEW MONEY?

Objective: Gain insight on the priority God places on money and the place we put it in our lives. A speaker will teach boldly and honestly about the complexities of money — that it is both necessary to our lives but also a possible stumbling block in worshipping the Provider.

PRAYER POINTS

- Everyone will be open-minded to the truth that all we have belongs to God and He has entrusted it to us. We are not owners, but instead, we are managers of His resources.
- People will be honest in their assessment of how they manage their money.
- Those who have never tithed to the church would start.
- People will see this topic as an issue between themselves and God.
- Anyone needing help with their finances/budgeting will take the next step to find a financial coach or ministry to help them become godly money managers.
- That the shorter discussion time is managed wisely and God uses it to open people's hearts to His ways.

LEADER PREPARATION

- Prepare your future Life Group leader to help lead discussion tonight.
- Invite future *Rooted* leaders to join you at the facilitator meeting for this session and introduce them to *Rooted* leadership team.
- Your group time will be shortened tonight due to the large group speaker, so plan your time accordingly.
- Prepare to tell your story of stewardship and your view of money.

45 minutes – Large Group Speaker

15 minutes - Group Time

- What was the most valuable thing you had as a kid? Was there anyone you trusted with it?
- Are you a saver or a spender?

25 minutes - Discussion

- Share your own story of stewardship with the group. Where is it easy for you to live as God instructs and where is it difficult?

- Do you relate more to being an owner or a manager of God's resources?
- What questions or emotions did tonight's discussion of money bring?
- How can you remember that God is the owner and we are the managers?

10 minutes - Prayer Requests/Closing

- Pray for the whole group at once or break into pairs and have them pray for each other.
- Prepare for telling your story of faith next week. Ask members to pray for opportunities to share their faith.
- Confirm everyone knows the time and date for the *Rooted* celebration.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

How Does God View Money?

The focus this week is on gaining insight into God's provision, managing His resources, and living a God-honoring lifestyle with our money.

Day 1 It's a Heart Issue

- Look at the Bible verses above and on the previous page. Circle those which challenge or encourage you.
- How do these verses align with your current view of money?

Day 2 Owner v. Manager

- In your mind, what is the difference between an owner and a manager?
- Where have you been acting like an owner?
- Where have you been acting like a manager?
- What has been your experience with budgets?

Day 3 Joining God in His Work

- What is your experience with giving?
- How are you "blessed to be a blessing?"
- What gets in the way of you being a regular, faithful giver?

Day 4 Freedom from Debt

- What debt do you have? What is it doing to the condition of your heart?
- Why is it important to reduce/eliminate debt completely?
- What step are you going to take to begin getting out of debt?

Day 5 In God We Trust

- When it comes to providing for your needs, where are all the places you trust God (job, health, bank accounts)?
- What are the results?
- What would it look like for you to courageously trust Him with your finances?



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WEEK 9:

WHY AND HOW SHOULD I TELL OTHERS?

Objective: Better understand the need of our damaged world for the restorative power of Jesus Christ and how our story of faith can bring about that desired healing.

PRAYER POINTS

- Everyone in *Rooted* will be ignited with a passion to share their faith as a way of sharing the Good News
- Passion would not intimidate but excite people to be bold in sharing their faith.
- God will give everyone opportunities to tell their stories of faith this week.
- Anyone in your group who has never accepted Christ as their personal Savior would open their heart to the truth of the Gospel.
- You would be able to finish conversations from last week and still cover this week's topic well.
- You would be a bold leader, challenging people to set aside their fears when it comes to sharing their stories and that you can hold them accountable.
- As people share their stories during group time this week, they will keep their story to two to three minutes in length and will be bold, emotional, and passionate as they share.

LEADER PREPARATION:

- Prepare the future Life Group leader to lead the group this week and invite them to join you at facilitator training.
- Review your notes from the past eight sessions and see if there are any conversations you need to circle back to in order to complete what you need for the celebration.
- Due to time constraints, not everyone will be able to tell their stories of sharing their faith. Create a vehicle for these stories to be told to your group. Whether it's through email or a Facebook discussion thread, the goal is to find a way to get stories out in a timely way.
- Review your notes on group members to see if there are any clarifying questions you want to ask as you prepare to give the blessing next week.
- Read *What People Are Really Thinking When They Invite You to Church* found in the Appendix

GROUP TIME

15 minutes - Welcome and Reconnection Time

- Explain that the future Life Group leader will be leading this week's session.
- Where did God meet you this week? Surprise you?
- If anyone has not shared their two-minute story yet, have them do it this session.
- Do you have a story of talking with someone about your faith? Share it with the group.

15 minutes - Introductory Questions

- What is a great adventure you have taken? Did you have any fear on the journey?
- What is a dangerous thing you have done?
- Did you share your faith? How was that experience for you?

30 minutes - Discussion

The theme- **Sharing Your Story**

Explain to your group that they will each be sharing with the group the stories they have prepared throughout the week in their *Rooted* workbooks as a way to practice sharing their faith with others. Give instructions that each story should take a maximum of two to three minutes, ensuring an opportunity for each person in the group to share as well as react to each story.

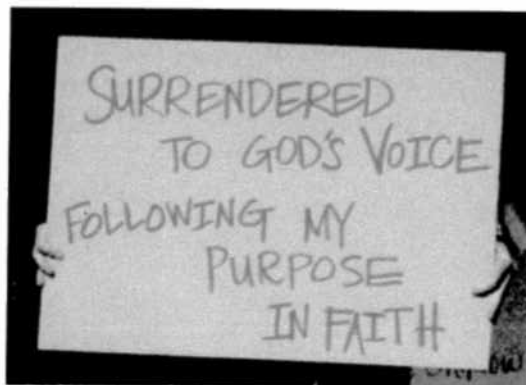
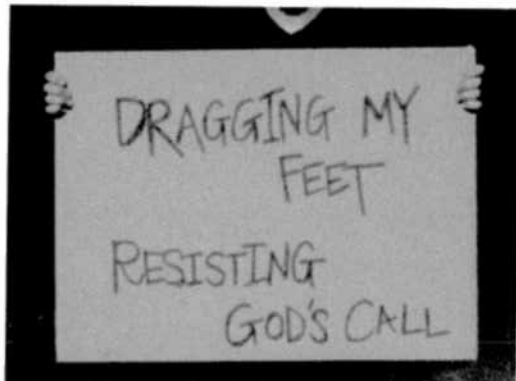
After each person has had an opportunity to tell his or her story, transition into discussing how they will now share it with someone in their life. Discuss the idea of loving and knowing our neighbors. If they don't know their neighbors, encourage group members to simply take a step of introducing themselves. In His timing, God will provide opportunities for them to tell their stories of faith.

- Discuss fears that might be associated with sharing their stories. Use the "neighbor map" found in the appendix to write down the names of their neighbors.
- Provide the challenge and lean into it. The goal is not that every person who shares leads someone to Christ, but that everyone follows His leading and shares his or her faith with someone this week.
- Talk about the importance of prayer and the Holy Spirit when we share with someone. Remind them that our responsibility is to go where God leads us. The results of the conversation and the condition of the heart of the receiver are God's responsibility.
- Assure your group you will be praying for them and communicating with them to encourage them.

30 minutes - Cardboard Testimonies

After stories, give everyone a piece of cardboard and ask them to write two or three words about where they were when they began the *Rooted* journey, then on the other side, where God has them today. "Ten weeks ago, I was..." then "Today, I am..."

Have each person share their cardboard testimony.



Watch a video of more cardboard testimonies at www.vimeo.com/4119793

20 minutes - Prayer Requests and Closing

- Help people define where they are and where they need to go spiritually. If any group members have not been baptized, find out if they would like to do this at the *Rooted* celebration.
- You can pray as a whole group or break into prayer partners.
- Remind everyone of the importance of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the Life Group leader who led the group tonight.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

Why and How Should I Tell Others?

The focus this week is on knowing the story of our relationship with Jesus and how to effectively tell others so that they may begin a relationship with Him.

Day 1 Getting the Word Out

- What comes to your mind when you think of evangelism?
- What's the biggest challenge you face in sharing your faith?
- Have you ever shared your faith with someone else?
- If you've done so, how did it go? If you haven't, why not?
- Who are three people in your life that don't know God?

Day 2 God's Story

- What do you think of God's story?
- Are there any parts you disagree with, or are there any parts that confuse you?
- Do you think you could write down from memory the major point of each of the four parts?

Days 3 & 4 Your Story

- How do you feel about telling your story to others?
- How does this (telling your before-and-after story) affect how you think about evangelizing?

Day 5 Time to Share

- Where are you meeting the needs of others? Have there been opportunities to share your faith in these situations?
- Remember the three people you have been praying for. Share your story of faith with them in a way that is relevant and succinct.
- Pray about whom you can invite to the next session of *Rooted*.



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WEEK 10:

WHY IS THE CHURCH IMPORTANT?

Objective: Understand that we are designed to be part of a church body, belonging, growing, serving, and worshipping within it. Gain insight into the symbolism and importance of baptism and Communion. We will also be saying a special prayer over each person in the group, helping them see God working in their lives as they courageously live out their purpose.

PRAYER POINTS

- Everyone in *Rooted* would have embraced the opportunity to share their faith story with the group before this week's group time.
- As you celebrate Communion tonight, you would have a special time as a group to celebrate what God has done in your lives the past ten weeks. As you remember His death and resurrection through the taking of the Lord's Supper, remember the amazing gift He provided for each of us.
- Every person would leave having been prayed over and able to embrace the truths shared about them and prayed over them. They would fully embrace what God has done in their ten weeks through *Rooted* and have a greater understanding of their purpose from God.
- Anyone who has not been baptized would want to be baptized at the *Rooted* celebration.

LEADER PREPARATION

- We will model the Communion Experience during the training meeting. Pick up communion supplies before your group time.
- Invite the Life Group leader to pray a prophetic blessing over the group.
- Pray about how you would like to lead communion. You may want to reflect on one of the following passages: *Luke 22:14-20, Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, or 1 Corinthians 11:20-30*
- Set aside a good amount of time to review your notes from all ten weeks. Look at their gifts, strongholds and calling. (Tip: keep large sticky notes for each person in your Facilitator Guide to collect information on each member throughout the weeks.)
- Bring index cards and write down words of affirmation shared by the group about each person. You can use these as you pray a blessing over each person. You can also give the cards to each person at the celebration.
- If members have not shared their faith, challenge them to continue to look for those opportunities as God leads. Talk about the difference it makes when we are

intentional in wanting to be used by God, and how He reveals opportunities we would not otherwise see.

GROUP TIME

30 minutes - Welcome and Introductory Questions

Theme: **Connecting with your church**

- What makes you feel connected to the church, like you belong?
- What does it feel like to worship in community with other believers?
- What does worship mean to you?

20 minutes - Affirmation

- Take turns affirming each person in the group for what you have seen God do in their lives during this ten-week journey.

40 minutes - Prophetic prayer

Pray over each person in the group, affirming the journey God has brought them through the past ten weeks. Affirm the gifts God has blessed them with and their purpose in furthering His Kingdom. Affirm the freedom from strongholds they are experiencing. If it is a co-ed group, be sure not to reveal the stronghold specifically, but pray the opposite. If the stronghold is bitterness, pray about the forgiveness he or she can extend. If the stronghold is insecurity, pray about the security he or she has in Jesus. See following pages for notes on prophetic prayer.

30 minutes - Communion and closing prayer

Take the bread and cup and give each person a blessing as they receive it. (This is another good opportunity to have your selected *Rooted* leaders or Life Group leaders give blessings as well. An example of a blessing you can give is, "This is Christ's body and blood shed for you. He died that you may live.")

Note about baptism: For those being baptized, remind them to wear dark clothing and bring a towel. When they are being baptized, have them bend their knees, cross their arms in front of their chest. Ask the person, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and died for you?" Let them answer. Then say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." You will lay them down in the water and then lift them up out of the water.

NOTES ON PROPHETIC PRAYER & BLESSING

You have been with your group for ten weeks now and hopefully have an insight into their struggles, breakthroughs, prayer lives, hearts' desires, and have seen authentic transformation in their spiritual journeys. This day is to celebrate all of that and more!

God calls us all to things bigger than ourselves, but we tend to move away from the big things God calls us to. This is the exact reason why what you are doing in this session is so important. This is why you have taken notes the past ten weeks and we have said to lead with the end in mind. This is a great blessing as many have never been prayed over in this manner. It will propel them into the calling and purpose God has been putting on their heart but they have been too timid to move toward.

In his book, *The Language of Blessing*, Joseph Cavanaugh III defines what a blessing is:

Blessings are prophetic in that they communicate the heart, mind, and will of God for an individual. They connect us with our Creator's dream for us. Words of blessing affirm and empower God-given intrinsic attributes, such as personality, gifting, talents, character traits, and intelligences.

As you pray over each person, you are reflecting their God-given beauty back to them, pointing them toward the heart of Jesus and His calling on their life.

Pray big, bold prayers

Call out the strongholds that were denounced in each person, the freedom they have, and what it has been replaced with from week five. Then, confirm the spiritual gifts that have been shared from weeks six and seven. (If the group is co-ed, do not name the stronghold, but do affirm what it has been replaced with.) Speak the words of God back to them as you call them to the purpose God has revealed to them.

A great way to start is by having each person in the group affirm what they have seen happen over the ten weeks in the life of the person you are about to pray for. This will give you a break in between praying for each person so it will not become mechanical. Often someone in the group will have seen God do something in the life of the individual that you might have missed.

The world tears us down

The words we speak to one another are powerful and life giving. After you pray over each person, ask them what they heard. They will repeat it in a soft, quiet voice or may have missed it. Make them say it again until they get it! Don't let them leave without the clarity of what you have seen God do and what He is calling them to. Don't worry about your words being perfect. The power of the Holy Spirit will guide you.

After praying over each person, you will present them with a card that captures their journey as it was revealed to you. As you compose your thought on this card, remember to use the notes you have taken about each person since the first session. These notes will give you the insight you need to bless them and to commission them in their next step of faith and to a lifestyle worthy of their calling.

Below are examples of what your prayer and your note might look like. Reminder: if you have a co-ed group, do not name the stronghold specifically, but affirm the freedom they are living in Christ.

SAMPLE NOTES:

Joan,

You are a treasure to God. You are free from the strongholds of fear and the lie that you are not worthy. You are instead strong and courageous in Jesus, and you are the loved daughter of your Creator. Your value cannot be measured in His sight. You are gifted through the Holy Spirit with organization, compassion and helps/service. With those gifts, along with your passion for the homeless of this community, you will minister to those who are on the streets, helpless and hopeless, providing both spiritual care and physical resources for their needs.

Sharon,

It has been amazing to watch you discover your identity in Christ for the first time. I have been honored to pray with you to receive Jesus as your Savior and stand with you as you have denounced sinful habits of your life, changing from a cohabitation lifestyle to one which honors God in both appearance and action. You are called to reconcile relationships of those broken by abuse and to minister to those whose hurts are raw and deep. God will be with you now as you move into this ministry.

Steve,

These past ten weeks have shaped your faith and it has been a pleasure to walk this journey with you. I stand with you as you declare victory over the stronghold of impurity and control. I will continue to pray for you to surrender to God daily. You have an amazing passion for the marginalized youth in Santa Ana and will be a shepherd to those lost in the system. Your caring nature and gift of compassion will serve you well as you serve with God's heart, in the work He has for you.

WORKBOOK REVIEW

Why is the Church Important?

The focus this week is on **solidifying** the value of the Church — its functions and each person's role within it — and **continuing to grow** and move into a lifestyle ignited in *Rooted* by establishing or joining a Life Group.

Day 1 All in the Family

- What makes you feel like an attendee at church?
- What makes you feel like someone who belongs to your church?

Day 2 Responding to God

- Where in your life do you worship in spirit and truth?
- What sometimes keeps you from authentic worship?

Day 3 Ceremonies

- What are your thoughts about the Lord's Supper?
- If you have been baptized, describe your experience and the events leading up to it.
- If you haven't been baptized, what are your thoughts about it?

Day 4 Maturing in Christ

- Have you decided to continue with your *Rooted* group as a Life Group? If not, where is your need for community being met?
- How can your Life Group join in with God's mission of restoration in your surrounding community and beyond?
- In what ways will your relationship with God be strengthened by committing to a Life Group that cares for each other and the world around them?

Day 5 Looking Back, Looking Ahead

- Think about your *Rooted* experience. What are some highlights? What are one or two truths you want to take away from this time?
- How have you heard God's voice?
- What's the next step you will take toward fulfilling the purpose God has planned for you?

Lined area for notes or writing.





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APPENDIX

- Icebreaker Questions
- Spiritual Gifts Assessment Resources
- Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know About the Holy Spirit
- Prayer Experience Devotional
- Fasting
- Notes on Strongholds
- Who Is My Neighbor graphic
- What People Are Really Thinking When They Invite You To Church

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

- What have you always wanted to do, but were too afraid to try?
- What phrase do you most want to hear?
- What was a defining moment in your life?
- What question has changed your life?
- Of what are you most proud?
- What was the best day of your life?
- When was the last time you had a great conversation?
- What is one thing you would like to see changed in the world?
- What are qualities of a true friend?
- How do you bring joy to others?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

- www.buildingchurch.net/g2s-i.htm
- www.gregwiens.com/gifts

Everything you've ever wanted to know about the Holy Spirit....

(ONLY NOT SO MUCH)

John 14:16-17

"16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."

Jesus makes this promise to his disciples as he is preparing for the cross and untimely his physical departure for this world. Later in John 16:7 he tells his disciples that it is actually for their benefit that he go in order that the spirit may come and be with them. What he leaves them with is not some cheap imitation or mere copy of himself but "another of the same kind." In other words another of himself to be with them and serve as an empowering advocate wherever they go.

As the Father sent the Son to glorify Himself, the Father and Son send the Spirit to the church in order that the Father and Son may be glorified. We, the church, are sent in the Spirit's power (John 14:26, John 16:7, John 20:21-22) to carry out the work of Father and Son.

The Holy Spirit exists in relationship with the Father and Son. He is the spirit of God not created by Him, but sharing in God's very nature. He is not an impersonal force. He is not an "it" but a he who possess unique characteristics and personalities traits. The Holy Spirit then is God and a person with specific roles.

He Is God

- He was present at creation (Genesis 1:2, Job 26:13, Ps 104:30)
- Omniscient, He understands all things, (Isaiah 40:13, 1 Cor 2:10-12)
- Omnipresent, ever present (Ps 139:7-10)
- Omnipotent, all powerful (Job 33:4, Ps 104:30, Romans 8:11)
- Distributes and works through spiritual gifts of the (1 Cor 12:4-6)
- Works along side the Father and Son (2 Cor 13:14)
- He is one with the Father (Ephesians 4:4-6)
- He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)

He Is A Person

- He can be lied to, resisted, grieved and insulted (Isa 63:10, Acts 5:3-4, Acts 7: 51, Heb 10:29, Eph 4:30,)
- Intelligence (Romans 8:27, I Cor 2:13)
- Emotion (Ephesians 4:30, Hebrews 10:29)
- Will (1 Cor 12:11, Acts 16:6-11)
- Capacity for relationship (2 Cor 13:14)

He Has Specific Roles

- He comforts (John 14:16)
- Teaches and instructs (Neh 9:20, Luke 12:12, John 14:25-26, John 15:26, 1 Cor 2:13, Eph 1:17)
- He convicts (John 16:8-11)
- He guides (John 16:13, Acts 11:12, 15:28, 21:4)
- Commissions and empowers and believers for ministry (Isa 48:16, Acts 1:8, 4:31, Acts 13:2, Acts 20:28, 1 Cor. 2:4-5, Eph. 3:16; 1 Tim. 1:6-7)
- Gives us strength to stand against sin (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25)
- Inspires prophesy (Num. 9:30, 11:25, 29; 2 Sam. 23:2-3; Acts 21:4, 28:25; 2 Peter 1:21)
- Distributes spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12- 14; Rom. 12)
- Capable of performing miracles (Acts 8:39)
- Intercedes/aides our prayers (Romans 8:26, Jude 1:20)
- Pours out God's love (Romans 5:5, 15:30)
- Sanctifies the believers

HOW IS ONE “FILLED” WITH THE SPIRIT?

Ephesians 5:15 – 21

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

A person receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of Salvation. It’s a packaged 3 for 1 deal... Father, Spirit and Son (Eph 1:13-14, 2:22, 4:30). At the same time Paul instructs us in this passage to be “filled with the spirit” implying that while one does not receive salvation more than once it is possible to be empowered by the Spirit many times. What he is actually saying is to be full of what you are already filled of, or to go on being filled as in a present and continued reality. Being filled or walking in the Spirit is something every believer is capable of but must engage in order to more fully express what has already been given.

Being filled with Spirit is ultimately about the development of a deeper relation with Father and Son. The result of this relationship is a lifestyle of worship that points to God and His kingdom.

Rooted Prayer Experience

This experience follows an Up, In, and Out movement of prayer designed to help guide your time together. During this prayer experience you will be lead to...

Look Up :: By focusing first on the greatness and goodness of God.

Go Deeper In :: Into God's truth and what it reveals about who He is, and who He is calling us to become.

Pray Out :: That His kingdom would come to transform our hearts and the world around us.

LOOKING UP – 30 MINUTES (ALL TOGETHER)

All things begin first with God... His glory, majesty and power. We want to begin our time by simply looking to Him and acknowledging His worth above all things. In looking up we set out to focus our hearts together on Him.

- Scripture Reading 1: Psalm 8
- Silent Reflection
- Responsive Group Prayer

- Scripture Reading 2: Philippians 2:1-11
- Silent Reflection
- Responsive Group Prayer

- Scripture Reading 3: Psalm 148
- Silent Reflection
- Responsive Group Prayer

DEEPER IN – 50 MINUTES (INDIVIDUALLY)

In prayer we are lead by the Holy Spirit to look deeper in. Deeper into the truth of His word and deeper into our own hearts as He reveals to us those areas that we have attempted to hide away from His view and the view of others. Take time to allow him to speak by His word and by His spirit as you journey deeper in.

Divine Reading (Lectio Divina)

1. Read: Don't give in to the temptation to simply glance over these passages, some of which may be very familiar to you. Take time to read them and in turn allow them to read you. You may find it helpful to read each passage a few times pausing each time before reading and asking God to speak the truth of each word to your heart.

2. Reflect: After reading allow time and space to reflect or ponder in your heart what you have just read. Allow God's word to become His word to you and illuminate the deep truth of the text by the Holy Spirit.

3. Pray: After you've read and reflected on the passage move on to prayer. Through your spoken and written word and dedicate the truth of His word to Him in your heart.

4. Contemplate: Then contemplate on the truth of what has been revealed through his word. God speaks... take time, listen, wait and rest in the reality of His presence and the fullness of His love.

- Scripture Reading 1: Psalm 139
- Silent Reflection
- Responsive Prayer/Journaling

- Scripture Reading 2: Romans 6:1-14
- Silent Reflection
- Responsive Prayer/Journaling

- Scripture Reading 3: Eph 1:3-11, Gal 5:16-26
- Silent Reflection
- Responsive Prayer/Journaling

PRAYING OUT – 40 MINUTES (ALL TOGETHER)

Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:10, “Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” We live in the tension of two worlds, that is age that is now (our world) and the age that is to fully come but has already begun to breakthrough, the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus teaches us that the Kingdom of Heaven is not something or someplace else we wait for but that it is a present reality that we can experience now! This is why we pray for broken things to be made right, for the sick to be healed and for the oppressed in mind, body, and spirit to be set free... because the Kingdom has come and it is bringing life! It is with this understanding that we pray for ourselves, others and the world around us.

In peace and expectation we pray to you Lord, hear us now for your mercy is great!

Suggested Points Of Prayer

- Our nation and leaders
- Our loved ones and relatives who do not know Christ
- The sick among us
- For our church community
- For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.
- For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

DEBRIEF/CELEBRATION – 45 MINUTES (ALL TOGETHER)

Take time to debrief the experience, over a meal if possible, and discuss how each person was able to meet with God and engage His voice through prayer and scripture.

Fasting

“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord God, and made my confession...” Daniel 9:34

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I. Is there a place for fasting in New Testament times?

- A. Fasting was not required of the disciples of Jesus.
Matthew 9:14 (Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33) “Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not?”
- B. But Jesus spoke of a day when there would be a place for fasting.
Matthew 6:16-18 (Not “if,” but “when ye fast ...”) “Moreover when ye fast, ...But thou, when thou fastest...”
Matthew 9:14-15 (Luke 5:34-35) “And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.”

II. What guidelines are set forth in scripture concerning fasting?

- A. It is to be done in a manner of humility and secrecy.
Matthew 6:16-18 “Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ...”
Luke 18:9-14 “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray. . . The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . . I fast twice in the week, I give tithes . . . And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to this house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”
- B. Fasting is closely related to prayer and reading of the Word.
I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, etc. “And her adversary . . . provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? ... Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him . . .”
Nehemiah 1:4 “. . . when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.”
Nehemiah 9: 1-3 “. . . the children of Israel were assembled with fasting . . . and stood and confessed their sins . . . and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God.”
Daniel 9:3, 20 “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting . . . and while I was speaking, and praying, and

confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication . . .”

Joel 2:12 “. . . turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.”

Jonah 3:8, etc. “For word came unto the king ... and he caused it to be proclaimed and published ... saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God ... Who can tell if God will ... turn away from his fierce anger ... And God saw ...”

Luke 2:37 “And she was a widow of about 44 years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”

Acts 9:9, 11 “And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.”

Acts 10:30 “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing.”

Acts 13:2 “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said . . .”

Acts 14:23 “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord . . .”

I Corinthians 7:5 “. . . that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer . . .”

C. A fast may be either absolute or partial.

1. Examples of absolute (complete) fasts:

Deuteronomy 9:9, 18 “. . . 40 nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water.”

Ezra 10:6 “Ezra. . . did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned . . .”

Esther 4:16 “Go, gather together all the Jews . . . and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day . . .”

Acts 9:9 “. . . and neither did eat nor drink”

Acts 27:33 “. . . This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.”

2. Examples of partial fasts (abstinence from certain foods only):

I Kings chapter 17

Daniel 10:3 “I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.”

D. There is a place for both the corporate (group) and the individual (personal) fast.

1. Examples of corporate fasts:

I Samuel 7:5-6 “And Samuel said, Gather all Israel ... and they gathered ... and fasted ...”

II Chronicles 20:34

Ezra 8:21-23 “Then I proclaimed a fast ... So we fasted and besought our God ...”

Nehemiah 9:1-3 “. . . the children of Israel were assembled with fasting ...”

Joel 2:15-16 “... sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people ...”

Jonah 3:5-10 “the people ... proclaimed a fast ... from the greatest of them even to the least”

Acts 27:33-37

2. Examples of the individual fast:

II Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23 “... and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.”

I Kings 21:27-29 “When Ahab heard those words, he... fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.”

Psalms 35:13 “But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was

sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting ...”

Daniel 9:3 “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer ... with fasting ...”

Luke 2:36-37 “And there was one Anna, a prophetess ... a widow of about 44 years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”

Acts 9:9 “... and neither did eat nor drink.”

III. Fasting in itself is of no spiritual value

(Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12; I Corinthians 8:8) –

“that which is of the flesh is flesh,” John 3:6 – but it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with blessing.

Joel 2:12, 13 “Rend your heart, and not your garments ...”

Romans 14:6, 17

I Corinthians 15:50

- A. Only fasting that is done with the right motive, that of glorifying God, can be pleasing in His sight.

Isaiah chapter 58 “Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? ... Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure ... ye fast for strife and debate ... ye shall not fast as ye do this day ... Is it such a fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands ... to undo the heavy burdens ... to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ...”

Zechariah 7:5-6 “... When ye fasted and mourned ... those 70 years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?”

Matthew 6:16-18 “The hypocrites ... disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.”

Luke 18:9-14 “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I am not as other men are ... I fast twice in the week ...”

- B. The same Bible that teaches abstaining from foods (as God leads) also warns us against testing the Lord (Matthew 4:7).

1. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:9), and we are to care for them as such (v. 20).
2. It may indeed be profitable for a season for us to exercise severe discipline, to “keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (I Corinthians 9 :27), to be “temperate in all things” (I Corinthians 9 :25), but we must also realize that “that which is flesh is flesh,” and we cannot produce spiritual results – however sincere our intentions – from that which is purely flesh.
3. To deny the flesh of its natural desires may cause us to be more “in tune” to hear the voice of the Lord (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25, etc.), but it also places us in a realm more easily prone to the attack of the enemy. It was when Jesus had been fasting for 40 days that He was faced with the greatest Satanic attack (Matthew 4:1-3; Luke 4:1-2).

- C. Scripture warns that in the last days there will be many “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,” etc. (I Timothy 4:1-3). We are to test the spirits, to see whether they be of God (I John 4:1).

IV. How long should I fast?

- A. Bible personalities fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they desired (see the examples of Hannah, I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; and Paul, Acts 9:9, 17-19) – or until the Lord made it evident that what they requested simply would not be obtained (as in the case of David, II Samuel 12:15-23).

- B. The length of a fast may vary.
1. One night.
Daniel 6:18
 2. One day.
I Samuel 7:6
II Samuel 1:12; 3:35
Judges 20:26
 3. Three days and three nights.
Esther 4:16
Acts 9:9, 17-19
 4. Seven days.
I Samuel 31:13
II Samuel 12:16-23
 5. Fourteen days.
Acts 27:33-34
 6. Twenty-one days.
Daniel 10:3-13
 7. Forty days.
 - a. Moses (at two different times).
Exodus 24:18; 34:28
Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10
 - b. Elijah.
I Kings 19:8
 - c. Jesus.
Matthew 4:2 (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2)

V. When should I fast?

Many occasions for fasting are recorded in scripture.

- A. The ordination of elders and commissioning of apostles to ministry.
Acts 13:3 "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."
Acts 14:23 "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord..."
- B. Intercession for the people of God.
Exodus 24:18
Deuteronomy 9:8-9, 12-20, 23-27
Ezra 10:6
Daniel 9:3-4
Joel 2:12-14, 17-18
Jonah 3:5-10
- C. Humbling and chastening of oneself.
I Kings 21:27-29 "... Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?"
Psalms 35:13 "... I humbled myself with fasting ..."
Psalms 69:10 "I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting ..."
- D. Seeking the Lord and His way.
Judges 20:26-28, etc. "Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until evening, and ... inquired of the Lord ... (whether to) go out to battle ... And the Lord said, Go up ..."
II Chronicles 20:3 "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."

- Ezra 8:21-23 "Then I proclaimed a fast ... that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to ask the king ... to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our god is upon all them for good that seek him ... So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us."
- E. Repentance and confession of sin.
 I Samuel 7:6
 I Kings 21:27-29
 Ezra 10:6 "... he ate no bread, nor drank water: for he mourned because of the transgression ..."
 Nehemiah 1:4-7, etc. "...when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed..."
 Nehemiah 9:1-3 "... the children of Israel were assembled with fasting ... and stood and confessed their sins ... one fourth part of the day ... they confessed ..."
 Jeremiah 36:6-10
 Daniel 9:3-5, 20 "... confessing my sin and the sin of my people ..."
 Jonah 3:5-10
- F. Receiving healing.
 I Samuel 1:5-11, 18-20
 II Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23
 Isaiah 58:8
 Acts 9:9, 17-19
- G. Petitioning God to withhold His hand in judgment.
 Deuteronomy 9:18, 25 "And I fell down before the Lord ... I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins ... because the Lord had said he would destroy you."
 Isaiah 58:9
- H. Preparation to receive word from God.
 Deuteronomy 9:18, 25
 Isaiah 58:9
- I. Spiritual deliverance.
 Isaiah 58:6 "Is not this the fast that I have chose? To loose the bands to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"
 Mark 9:29 (Matthew 17:21) "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."
- J. Seeking assistance in time of fear.
 II Chronicles 20:3 "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast ..."
- K. Mourning another's death (II Samuel 1:12; 3:35); out of concern for another's safety (Daniel 6:18); or when faced with threats on one's own life (Esther 4:3; 9:1-3).
- L. Seeking protection.
 Ezra 8:21-23
- M. Lacking material provision; in need.
 II Corinthians 11:27 "... in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often..."

VI. Fasting is an extremely valuable and important facet of the Christian life; but it is not an infallible means of “getting what we want” from God.

(Jeremiah 14:12 “When they fast, I will not hear their cry ...”) Example: II Samuel 12:15-23 (David’s son died anyway.) Obedience is better than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22).

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NOTES ON STRONGHOLDS

Strongholds might be a very emotional time in your *Rooted* group. As we feel safer in our groups and some begin to hear God's voice, old scars, wounds, fears and secrets may surface.

- Make sure you have tissue boxes where everyone can reach them. Allow group members to be responsible for getting their own tissues so that no one goes running for the box. This can stop the flow or give the person a reason to stop talking. It can be very difficult for people to share and any distraction might stop them from moving forward and telling their story.
- Discourage anyone from jumping in or giving advice. Let the person completely finish. Others in the group may feel compelled to piggyback on his or her story with comments like, "I know how you feel," "That happened to me," etc. Be a strong leader and gently ask the group to let the person finish. In some cases, these stories are of graphic nature and this may cause certain group members to be uncomfortable. They may try to curtail the conversation by saying something like "It's not so bad," or "Just give it to the Lord," or "You'll be okay." This will stop the person from telling his or her story.

In past *Rooted* groups, brave people have shared about abuse they experienced growing up. Here are some of the things to watch out for when people share about strongholds and abuse:

- As people share their stories, be aware of the audible cues or noises coming from other group members. People are very sensitive to rejection and have antennas up for any sort of disgust or negativity. One leader shared that in her group, a woman was so saddened by what a victim dealt with, she was saying "Oh no," and "Oh my." The victim interpreted that to mean she was bad or disgusting, continuing the lies she already believed about herself.
- Make sure the victim knows none of this was his or her fault. He/she is not disgusting, but brave, courageous, and beautiful!
- As much as possible, ask before reaching out to touch a group member, whether it be holding their hand during prayer, hugging them, or putting your hand on their shoulder. Be sensitive to their reactions. In certain cases, touching may be confusing to them.

Remember that the reason that victims don't want to talk about this is that they may feel (incorrectly):

- It was their fault
- No one will believe them
- The abuser still has power over them and they will get into trouble if they talk about it (no matter how much time has passed)
- Men especially may feel they should not be victims and this abuse shows they are weak
- This is private, and such a personal secret has to be kept inside and stuffed down deep

When the secret or wound is brought to the light, God can begin to heal.

Hindrances to Spiritual Leadership

Warnings given to followers of Jesus because we are susceptible to demonic attack:

- *Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* Ephesians 6:11
- *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms.* Ephesians 6:12
- *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* 1 Peter 5:8
- *He (Satan) was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.* Revelation 13:7
- *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.* 1 Timothy 4:1
- *Those who oppose him (the Lord's servant) he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.* 2 Timothy 2:25-26
- *But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.* 2 Corinthians 11:3

We can clearly see by these verses that Christians today are indeed engaged in the same manner of spiritual warfare that Jesus and His disciples confronted. Both the Old and New Testaments are full of references to evil and unclean spirits.

The overwhelming evidence in the Bible shows that our Father desires all his children to grow in character and power to conform to the image of Jesus Christ. Because of their potential to grow more like Jesus and to extend the Kingdom of God, those who follow Jesus are under greater demonic scrutiny than unbelievers.

What can you know about Satan from the following verses:

- He is the ruler of the kingdom of the air, now at work in those who disobey God

As for you, you were dead in your transgression and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. Ephesians 2:1,2

- He masquerades as an angel of light

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15

- He takes people captive to do his will

That they will come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:26

What can you know from the following verses about the battle going on over your mind, will, and emotions?

- We are not fighting a habit, a character weakness, or even other people

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

- Satan is committed to our destruction

Then the dragon (earlier described as Satan in Rev 112:9) was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 12:17

- Jesus came to destroy the work of Satan in every believer's life

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 1 John 3:8

- Satan is always at work sowing destruction

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

Satan's influence in your life is often hidden, controlled through strongholds in your mind, will and emotions. The spirits of darkness have been given permission by your sinful decisions and those of your forefathers to take up residence within those areas of your mind, will and emotions that are not yielded fully to Christ. The freedom available to you in Christ is thwarted, and you are kept imprisoned by the influence of those demonic strongholds.

Key to the operation and destruction of strongholds is 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

The Definition of Strongholds

A stronghold is a demonic fortress of thoughts housing evil spirits that

- control, dictate, and influence your attitudes and behavior
- oppress and discourage you
- filter and color how you view or react to situations, circumstances or people

As you entertain thoughts and participate in activities that are contrary to the will of God, you open yourself up to demonic inhabitation in those areas. When these thoughts and activities become habitual, you allow a spiritual fortification to be built around that demonic spirit and its influence. You become so accustomed to responding to the influence and control of the “voice” of that spirit that you believe it’s the voice of your own mind.

A demonic stronghold is anything compelling enough to hold you in its power to keep you from receiving God’s love and truth. Within a stronghold that’s been erected in your mind, will and emotions, that spirit arouses a defensive posture that causes you to “rationalize” your current situation. The existence of a stronghold can be recognized because it will be that area of your life in which you consistently have problems and cannot live in victory. You can tell a spiritual stronghold is established because a habitual pattern of failure or hopelessness exists. This isn’t a one-time event or response, but a consistent ungodly thought pattern or action that is your first inclination. And those areas of your mind, will and emotions that you have willingly yielded to sin are fair game to become footholds for satanic involvement. Heed the warning in Luke 11:35, 36 *“See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely light, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”*

A chief demonic goal is to destroy your intimate relationships: your relationship with your Father and His Son, Jesus, with those in your household, and with those with whom you share close fellowship are targets the demonic forces seek to destroy. Why? Because emotionally isolated people are easier for them to influence, control, and oppress than people who have loving, supportive relationships.

Yes, Christians Can Be Demonized

“Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal bodies, so that it makes you obey its desires; and do not offer any part of yourselves to sin as an instrument for wickedness. On the contrary, offer yourselves to God as people alive from the dead, and your various parts to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under legalism but under grace. Therefore, what conclusion should we reach? ‘Let’s go on sinning, because we’re not under legalism but under grace’? Heaven forbid! Don’t you know that if you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, then, of the one whom you are obeying, you are slaves – whether of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to being made righteous?” Romans 6:12-16

When fortresses of demonic influence – strongholds – have been built in your mind, will, and emotions, your

- hearing from God is altered
- belief in God is shaken
- desires are distorted
- actions are disobedient
- relationships are debased

Identify And Demolish Strongholds

Spiritual strongholds are:

1. inherited from past generations;
2. established when you try to meet any of the seven basic needs (Dignity, Authority, Blessing & Provision, Security, Purpose & Meaning, Freedom & Boundary, Intimate Love & Companionship) that God created in you through ways that are contrary to His will;
3. maintained when you live in a state of unrepentance. The end result is demonic influence in areas of your mind, will and emotions.

Remember, Once a stronghold is established, you provide a “foothold” for the devil (see Ephesians 4:27), a base of operations for the “strongman” (see Matt 12:29). You then become vulnerable to demonic control, direction, influence and/or oppression in that area of your life. Not dealing with this stronghold can engender further demonic activity and lead to the establishment of other strongholds with additional demonic harassment in other areas of your mind, will and emotions.

Demolishing the Strongholds in Jesus’ Name

Freedom is available to you. All demonic forces submit to the authority of the name of Jesus. Your eviction of their control, influences, arguments and pretensions is totally dependent on their submission to our Lord Jesus. The name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ delivers you, not your own strength or some prayer technique.

Remember:

- You are dealing with demonic spirits and fortresses that occupy your mind, will and emotions.
- Don’t delay in praying for your own deliverance – keep going!
- Demonic forces will do all they can to delay or stop their eviction. Your earnest follow-through is critical at this time!

Your Repentance Is Essential In Renouncing Spiritual Strongholds

You may have identified several demonic strongholds in your mind, will and emotions. No matter how many you're about to demolish, remember this: You are Responsible for the sins you committed while being influenced by the strongholds. Take ownership of your responsibility.

Repentance is a critical part of our pilgrimage to salvation. Biblical repentance is far more than acknowledging that you've sinned by violating God's commands. True Repentance flows from you taking full responsibility for the hurt and harm you have brought about in your fellowship with God. True Repentance always demands a heart conviction that you both turn away from that sin (your violation of God's Word), and that you turn to God and discover that which His Word requires of you. You need to purpose in your heart to leave those sins behind! (Acts 20:21; 2 Corinthians 7:10) Repentance calls for action.

If you don't recognize the hurt you've caused, you won't take heart-felt responsibility for it. And, if you don't seek God's way to fill in the ruts of your sinful actions, you'll return to the same sins "like a dog to its vomit." You'll fall prey to the same pattern of ungodly thoughts, ungodly emotions, ungodly actions, habitual action, which becomes a controlling stronghold in your mind, will and emotions. Jesus warns what will happen if you are delivered from an evil spirit but don't fill in that sin area God's way:

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean, and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation. (Matthew 12:43-45)

Continue to stay immediately repentant throughout your life. A heart that is ready to repent is harder for demons to seduce. Be quick to confess your sin when you fail, and turn away from further tempting situations. Unrepentance will lead you back to stronghold development. How life-giving to hold onto this rich truth because of the shed blood of Jesus: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9) So do as Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, *"Now go, and don't sin any more."* (John 8:11b)

You Have Divine Power In The Name of Jesus

Each follower of Jesus has the power of the Holy Spirit to renounce spiritual strongholds with the authority of the Name of Jesus our Lord. We *"have divine power to demolish strongholds"* (2 Corinthians 10:4). After you've examined the symptoms that identify the strongholds, renounce each stronghold by name. Confess any sins of which the Holy Spirit convicts you that you committed under that spirit's influence. Pray, relying on the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus and the power of His shed blood to demolish these strongholds. As a reminder, read the following verses and consider the power and authority that Jesus has given His followers:

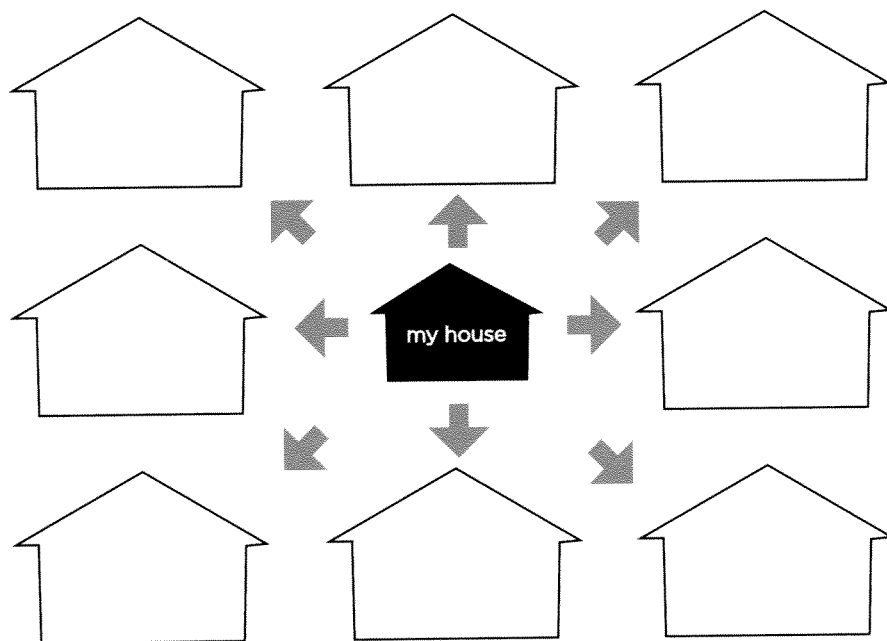
- *“He appointed twelve – designating them apostle – that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:14, 15).*
- *“They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them” (Mark 6:12, 13).*
- *“And these signs will accompany those who trust Me: In my name they will drive out demons” (Mark 16:17)*
- *“The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’...‘I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you” (Luke 10:17, 19).*

Demolish The Strongholds In The Name of Jesus

Now go back, beginning with the stronghold of Deceit, and renounce in the Name of Jesus each prevailing stronghold – those you’ve marked the symptoms as being something you have. Let the symptoms also be a trigger to guide you in remembering the type of sins you may have committed under the stronghold’s influence.

Remember, You must repent of any sins as the Holy Spirit convicts you, purposing in your heart to not repeat them.

who's my neighbor?



getting to know the **people next door**

WHAT PEOPLE ARE REALLY THINKING WHEN THEY INVITE YOU TO CHURCH

Angela Jamene
Freelance Writer
The Huffington Post
11/22/2013

In the new era of “The Pope Francis Effect”, and people of all walks coming out for the release of Pastor Saeed Abedini, a lot of previously shy Christians are feeling more confident stepping up and out, and inviting you to church.

Which can be really annoying when you have zero interest in going to church, maybe that’s why you’re reading this. You may even be reading this thinking some version of “Anyone who would believe in some all-powerful man, who watches every little thing that every single person does, telling us to love each other, while he lets whole nations suffer from starvation and genocide, is out of their mind.” That’s what I used to think.

But I don’t anymore.

Just over two years ago, I picked up a free bible, I had read it before but, this time, almost instantly, in a wave of emotions and realizations and revelations and a wide variety of indescribable sensations, I became a Christian. It happened. It was not deliberate and it was not a choice. It was what I thought never happened to anyone, it was what I had been so sure did not exist the way any of these nut jobs described it, but I’ll be damned (pun intended) if it didn’t happen to me. I got saved.

In any movie centered around a coming of age love triangle, the title character will ask “Dad, how did you know you loved mom?” or, if our lead is female, “Mom, how did you know you loved dad?” and whether mom or dad are answering, the answer is always the same, “I just knew.”

It was like that. I just knew.

That’s what they want for you. That’s what the person that has sent you countless emails and texts about next Sunday, or called you every Saturday night asking to pick you up in the morning, wants for you. Every card from your grandma with bible passages written on it means she wants this for you. Every flyer from your neighbor, or old high school friend, about another church event means they want this for you. Every invitation to church is an “I love you and I want this indescribable love, peace, and joy for you because I genuinely care about you.”

The people that invite you to church are just like that friend that insists that you try the new Puerto Rican restaurant downtown, they have experienced something amazing and they want it for you too. It’s like that, but on almighty steroids. When a friend or a kindly stranger, a relative or a playgroup parent, says “Hey, why don’t you come to church with me on Sunday?” what they mean is “I love you so much, I cannot describe what I know

you can get from this because I can't even put into words what it has done for me." We understand that when you live in a world of sneaky advertising and suspicious sales scams, this sounds like just another one. But, it isn't.

On behalf of Christians everywhere, I would like you to know that we really, just wholeheartedly, love you. And, we want to share this infinite and ultimate love and acceptance with you. Whoever you are, whoever you love, and whoever you see yourself as or becoming or voting for, we love you. We want you to know Christ loves you, that's why we do that thing that used to annoy me so much and we remind you (and each other) in every way possible, through music and bumper stickers and even, well-intentioned but misguided, "Jesus Saves" graffiti. We apologize, collectively, for anyone who may have hurt you or wounded you in the name of a God they obviously needed more time getting to know, they had no right to do that, and we pray for the healing of those wounds.

And, yes, we would like to invite you to church.

[Used with permission]